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FROM MEANING TO VALUE, OR NEW PERSPECTIVE OF ANALYSIS*

The period since the Russian edition of *Meaning and Conceptual Systems* was published has permitted me to reconsider both the ‘problem of meaning’ itself and the effectiveness of the approach I proposed for analysing it. The variety of new semantic conceptions that have appeared in this period, and of the ‘old’, further developed ones, does not prevent one from seeing what is bringing investigators of meaning closer together and what is separating them. For all the diversity of the initial intuitions and notions about the nature of language and meaning, there is an obvious striving to allow systematically, to the greatest possible extent, for the *pragmatics* of language by an ever broader spectrum of ‘contextual factors’ like ‘unexpressed assumptions and practices’, ‘encyclopaedia knowledge’, ‘beliefs’, ‘desires’, ‘intentions’, etc., being introduced into the schema of the explanation of meaning.

The analysis of the meaning of linguistic expressions in the context of analysis of *understanding* them is becoming more and more characteristic of present-day philosophy of language. Correlation of meaning

and understanding has reached a level, in turn, at which a comparative evaluation of the contribution of analytic philosophers, hermeneutists, semioticians, and linguists, to the philosophy of language is possible.

What is meaning, and what does it consist in – in the world, in ourselves, in the texts we deal with, or in some sort of relation embracing us, the world, and texts? What is understanding – is it knowing or believing? On what then is our behaviour, knowledge, and intercourse based? What relation does language have to all this? Is language indeed the most important precondition of our rationality and so of our capacity to understand and cognise the world and ourselves, and to communicate with others? Can something common and constructive be found among the positions of the analysts who suggest that the theory of the meaning of linguistic expressions should be a theory of understanding them, of the hermeneutists, who treat the theory of understanding as one of interpretation, and of the semioticians who consider that the objects of interpretation are texts as aggregates of linguistic or non-linguistic signs, and build models of meaning as models of the meaning of texts? And if an explanation of the understanding of language is impos-

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sible without explanation of our capacity to understand the world, do linguists then turn out to have nothing to do with the investigation of language?

Let me prolong this series of questions.

Is the conflict between the two dominant approaches to the analysis of meaning in contemporary Western philosophy of language not illusory? That is to say, the conflict between the phenomenological (in which I include both the classical studies of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and the contemporary hermeneutical doctrines of Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, and others) and the analytical (with which, in this case, I associate the studies of Davidson, Kripke, Putnam, Searle, and Hintikka). Is there not something in common between them and the leading French semiotic school of Algirdas Greimas? And, finally, isn't there a need both for constructive use of the results obtained in these trends of the investigation of language and meaning, and for changes in the *very* methodology of the approach to analysis of language and meaning?

Below I shall try in extremely condensed form, and basing myself on the conception of language and meaning proposed in this book, to sum up my possible answers to the questions posed and with that to note some new lines of development of this conception.

(1) With the phenomenological approach an ontological conception of the *linguality* (*Sprachlichkeit*) and the *semanticty, or semantics, of the world* is adopted. The concept of meaning is interpreted in terms of concepts of *intentionality, value, interest, etc.*, intended to express a person's 'involvement' in the world and the *significance of the world-for-man*. With the analytical

approach a conception of the '*semantics of language*' is assumed as a certain aggregate of meanings contained *in language* and disclosed through examination of the relation of language and the world. In that case the concept of meaning is interpreted in terms of the concepts of *intensionality, truth, information, etc.*, expressive of the referential ties of language and the world. In semiotic analysis (as represented in the works of Greimas)¹ a postulate is also adopted of the '*semantics of language*', or rather of the '*semantics of a text*', that is based on the '*semantics of language*' without the treatment of referential relations between language and the world, or the text and the world. The problem of meaning is explicitly linked in this analysis with that of *value* (*valeur*). Their relation is explained in terms of the intentionality of human behaviour as a search for value objects, material or immaterial, as a perennial history of mutual exchange, acquisition and/or loss of values.

In all these cases a definite *objectivist* conception of meaning is adopted (of meaning-in-the-world, or '*semantics of the world*', and *meaning-in-language*, or '*semantics of language*', and *meaning-in-text*, or '*semantics of text*') in various versions and modifications. The possibility of explaining understanding as it is accomplished by a *real human subject* possessing a definite competence, and not by some construct of theory, is lost through this 'objectivising' of meaning. The mutual incommunicability of the approaches named rules out the very possibility of a systematic and constructive comparison of the concepts of inten-

¹ See: A. J. Greimas. *Du sens* (Seuil, Paris 1970); *Du sens II* (Seuil, Paris, 1983).

tionality and intensionality, of value and information, of interest and truth, of belief and knowledge, etc., that from my point of view *interdependently* characterise human perception and understanding of the world, and man's behaviour in it. It is consequently also impossible to disclose the phenomenon of the understanding of language without such a correlation of these concepts. From my point of view such understanding calls for an inclusion of the human factor in our schema of explanation of meaning, by which meaning is no longer treated as some entity alienated from man, but constitutes the essence of his *orientational – cognitive* and *evaluating* – attitude to the world.

(2) It is possible, on the basis of the proposed conception of meaning, as a first step in that direction, to tie up the phenomenological concept of the *intentionality* of acts and states of consciousness (i.e. as the *directedness* of consciousness to existing or non-existent objects), with that of meaning as the content of these acts and states, i.e., with the analytical concept of *intensionality*, related to the meaning of linguistic expressions, to the *information*, or *content*, expressed in them.

The interest displayed by some analysts in the phenomenological conceptions of perception of the world seems symptomatic to me in this regard.² Although loyalty to the doctrine of the 'semantics of language' is maintained in principle, and correspondingly to the objectivist interpretation of meaning and understanding, one cannot help seeing a striving to overcome the at-

traction of this semantics and to come out into the open space of phenomenological realities. For Searle, for example, who delimits intentionality and intensionality, man's capacity to correlate himself with the world by means of various intentional states (knowledge, beliefs, desires, etc.) is biologically more fundamental than his capacity to use language.³ Intentionality is therefore not supposed to be derived from language but language, on the contrary, is considered logically derived from intentionality. Since, from that point of view, any adequate, complete theory of language calls for explanation of how our brain relates us with the world, the philosophy of language is treated as a branch of the philosophy of mind (*consciousness*). For Hintikka identification of intentionality and intensionality means first and foremost their identification with the concept of informativeness as compatibility of what a speaker knows, believes, desires, etc., with a definite state of affairs in the actual or some other possible world.⁴ But in the one case as in the other of such an allowance for 'phenomenological realities' it is not sufficient to bring out the relationship of *meaning* and value, of *meaningfulness* and *significance* as the most important characteristics of human *understanding* and behaviour. What, then, is the importance and perspective of relating these characteristics?

(3) According to the hypothesis of meaning as part of a conceptual system presented above, understanding of language and of the world primarily presupposes *percep-*

² See, for example, H. L. Dreyfus (editor), *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science*. Compare, as well, Saarinen's paper 'Davidson and Sartre', particularly relevant to the considerations set out here.

³ J. Searle. *Intentionality*.

⁴ See: J. J. Hintikka. *Intentions of Intentionality*; idem. Phenomenology vs. Possible-Worlds Semantics.

tion of them. Perception of an object, in turn, implies not only its perceptual but also its *conceptual* singling out from other objects by attributing a definite *meaning*, or *concept*, to this object as a mental, semantic representation of the object, as its conceptual 'picture'. I shall treat these semantic representations as *intentional states* of consciousness (mind). On this view the perceived (conceived) objects are *signs*, and the meaning attributed to them is the true or false information the subject of perception has at his disposal about them. Configurations of these signs form *texts* (of the world).

It is fundamental for this constructing of the meanings of the signs-objects that new meanings are built up (generated) from meanings the subject of cognition already possesses. These meanings thus serve simultaneously as semantic analysers of the perceived (conceived) object and as components of the meaning or structures of meanings constructed in that way, i.e. as parts of a resulting *system of meanings*, or *conceptual system*. Such a system represents the subject's semantic medium of perception (conception) of the world and of himself, of transcendent and immanent reality, including the semantic representation of nonexistent states of affairs in the real world. By concentrating on the logical and not the substantial properties of these representations, we have grounds for saying that the structure of the conceptual system itself brings it about that we only perceive those objects that we can 'grasp' by means of the meanings contained in our conceptual system, and that presupposes a special mode of *interpretation* of these signs-objects, a mode of *our comprehending* them *for us*, a mode of *our understanding* them.

To be comprehended is consequently to be interpreted by means of a definite structure of concepts in a definite conceptual system that embraces any information and any possible mode or method of cognising the world. To make an object comprehended is to build a definite structure of concepts that is *connected* (because of the nature of the conceptual system) by a relation of interpretation with other structures of the system. Since meanings are treated here as information about the actual or possible state of things in the world, comprehensibility is the *constructibility* of a definite 'picture of the world' in a definite conceptual system, it consists in the feasibility of constructing a definite 'picture of the world' interpreted in the conceptual system through the meanings (concepts) contained in it.

(4) It is this property of the *connected nature* (connectedness) of the concepts of a conceptual system, of the formation of a *whole*, of the *in-forming* (as the attribution of form to the integral whole), of the filling in of the 'gaps' or the 'building of bridges' between concepts, and thus of constructive overcoming of the *distances*, *differences and contrasts*, and any other kind of *incompatibility* (itself the source of meaning), that constitutes the essential nature of meaning and understanding. It is obvious that the signs-objects thus interpreted, or understood, and serving as points of reference of the relevant concepts may have any nature, 'natural' or 'artificial', 'concrete' or 'abstract': the sounds that form language, noise or music; arguments and theorems that form proof; the colours that form a picture; the shapes and volumes that form physical bodies; birth and death, which form life or, rather, a fundamental incompatibility of

human life as an object to be understood, to be accepted as a *whole* to be filled with some activity, in short, any real or imaginary signs-objects as objects of understanding.

It is worth noting that this simple idea of ‘connectedness’, ‘binding’, ‘tying things together’, ‘bringing things close’, ‘reaching’, etc., etymologically underlies the set of linguistic expressions that cover the ‘semantic field’ of meaning and understanding (for example, Latin *comprehendere*; English *to catch, to seize, to follow*; French *saisir, comprendre*; German *fassen, ergreifen, begreifen*; Lithuanian *pagauti, suprasti*, etc.). That there is always a distance between the subject and object of understanding is similarly reflected in the etymology of such expressions as the German *verstehen* or English *understand*, while the two very indicative Lithuanian expressions *prasmė* (meaning) and *suprasti* (to understand) tell us that understanding is the overcoming of this distance, the bringing of the object of understanding closer to the subject, making the object familiar to the subject, it is the object’s assimilation by the subject.⁵ It is not difficult to recognise in this ‘semantic field’ the idea of *purposefulness, directedness, or intentionality* – in itself the hallmark of meaning. It is therefore by no means a simple historical accident that the French *le sens*, for example, acquired the meaning of ‘meaning’ (as information) and the meaning of ‘direction’. The idea of the *connected-*

ness is concealed in both interpretations; it is as essential to them as to understanding itself. (That is beautifully reflected in the semantics of the saying *Comprendre c’est pardonner* (To understand is to forgive), which is nothing else than an invitation to look for justifying motives in some one direction: back, in the past (for causes), or ahead, in the future (for aims), and so to connect what is understood with the past or the future.

(5) Linguistic signs are perceived (comprehended) as any signs of the world. But the fact that they are employed to designate other signs-objects already singled out by us perceptually, or rather that they are linked with the meanings we have attributed to these signs-objects, makes them *signs of signs* – both interpreted in *one and the same* conceptual system. Thus, because of (a) the interconnectedness of the meanings (concepts) of a conceptual system and (b) its capacity to ‘retain’ previous perceptions (conceptualisations) in the memory by the conceptual structures constructed in it, one can say that *the whole* conceptual system is involved in the interpretation of a sign, and that itself is the *sole possibility* for the sign to *express* meaning. It is in this that indexicality as an essential feature of a sign is concealed; its ‘meaning’ is an integral part of *the whole* conceptual system: no verbal formulation can in principle exhaust the content associated with it. The whole richness and complexity of our sign games lies in this dialectic of the openness and givenness of a sign (text) and the latency and immanence of their interpretation. Language does not express any meanings in itself that exist independently of conceptual systems; it does not express anything if its interpre-

⁵ Cf. hermeneutic concepts in this context; for example, Ricoeur’s ‘decontextualisation’ and ‘recontextualisation’ (P. Ricoeur. *La fonction hermeneutique de la distanciation*); Gadamer’s ‘Aneignung’, ‘Applikation’, ‘Verfremdung’ (H. G. Gadamer. *Wahrheit und Methode*); also the comparative analysis of Sartre’s ‘*pour-soi*’ and ‘*pour autrui*’, ‘regard’ and Davidson’s ‘radical interpretation’ discussed by Saarinen (see note 2).

tation is not presupposed in a definite conceptual system. One and the same language can serve for the further construction and symbolic representation of the content of different conceptual systems that embrace a speaker's other possible notions about the actual or for some possible world. Natural language consequently is not a universal means of interpreting other languages. Any language, including natural language, is interpreted in *conceptual systems*, although – and this must not be underestimated – such interpretation is largely realised through meanings constructed by *means of natural language*. This explains the significance of natural language in ordinary, scientific, esthetic, and any other communication.

The locution 'language serves to express a definite meaning' must therefore be understood in the sense that it is by means of language that a definite meaning (concept) can be fixed (thanks to its coding function) or built (thanks to the function of manipulation of concepts) into some other (trivially, in the same) conceptual system. These two functions also make it possible to 'transmit' information from one speaker to another by means of texts, whatever they relate to: i.e. when meanings (concepts) belonging to a definite conceptual system are coded by some text at one end of such an information 'transmission line', and the *same* text is decoded in some other conceptual system at the other end. It is in this sense that texts 'preserve' information on the time axis and in historical perspective.

(6) The circumstance that the content of a semantic representation as an intentional state is determined by its *connection* with other representations and with the *whole* system of them as the basis of interpretation

of any texts (non-linguistic or linguistic) determined the essentially *intensional* nature of any perceptions and conceptualisations of the world, and any judgments about it. To speak of meaning in particular as something associated with definite signs (texts) can therefore be no more than metaphorical, i.e., no more than a definite *façon de parler*, because the 'meaning' is what is constituted by the *whole* conceptual system, in this case, the *whole* of its intentional states. Some of them, being more indirectly related than others to a definite sign (text) in a definite act of interpretation, simply play a more active role in its interpretation. The conceptual system itself is a *constantly* present intensional context of interpretation, i.e., it is present in any act of interpretation of any (non-linguistic or linguistic) text.

From this standpoint a conceptual system is not a dictionary or an encyclopaedia, or a totality of rules of the use of linguistic signs. It is a system of interconnected semantic representations reflecting the subject's cognitive experience at very different levels (including pre-verbal and non-verbal) and in very different aspects of his consciousness of the world and himself. The most abstract meanings (concepts) in it are systematically linked with meanings (concepts) relating to the subject's everyday experience as part of a *single* conceptual system. It is in that status that a conceptual system constitutes the final instance of the interpretation of any signs (texts), non-linguistic and linguistic. The status and nature of semantic entities as ingredients of a conceptual system thus differ in principle from the absolute entities of the meanings postulated by theories of the 'semantics of language'. The latter represent as a rule a list

of atomic artefacts qua semantic universals of natural language that simulate certain stereotypes of objectivist concepts, something in between speakers' ordinary or quasi-scientific 'ideas' of the world. The boundaries of such a 'semantics' (i.e. what should be included in it, and what excluded and left over, for example, to the 'semantics of the language of science' or any other mode of describing the world) remain unclear, not to mention the absence of an explanation of the transition from ordinary language to scientific etc., i.e., the relationship between different conceptual regions.

(7) The fact that a conceptual system is constructed by *interconnected* semantic representations that reflect the definite cognitive experience of the subject of the system not only makes the process of interpretation-understanding itself ambiguous, but explains the possibility of a broad spectrum of differences of understanding between the subjects of different conceptual systems.

However, it does not follow at all from the fact that the subject of a definite conceptual system can – within the limits of his conceptual competence – interpret (understand) some text or other of the world and consequently build a corresponding 'picture of the world', that he *holds* these pictures to be *true*, or that he takes them as part of his own vision of the world. In other words, such a subject is never simply an uninterested interpreter of non-linguistic and linguistic texts who supplies them with true or false structures of meaning, like a mirror pointed at the world, i.e. intentionally orientated, but indifferent to everything reflected in it. The need to orientate in the world – initially physical but later intel-

lectual – and to find his place and way in it, compels man to 'choose' from the set of texts he encounters and which he is able to interpret, i.e., to render meaningful, in his conceptual system, those that he *holds to be true*, that he *accepts*, and that are therefore not only meaningful but also *significant for him*, and that represent a *value*, an *interest* for him.

The point concerns the singling out in a conceptual system of those semantic structures that represent the subject's beliefs about the world. The set of these structures, linked with one another and with the whole conceptual system, forms a system of beliefs as a subsystem of the conceptual system embodying a subjective (individual) picture of the world, often but by no means necessarily signalled by such contexts as 'I believe that', 'N believes that', etc. It is precisely within the theory of conceptual systems that semantic structures can be treated as semantic representations of the world and consequently analysed as intentional states oriented (directed) to sign-objects of the actual or some other possible world. It is thus that comprehended objects become *significant* objects for the subject interpreting them, acquiring or losing value for him in regard to his conceptual system. This way a conceptual system, or a semantic system, transforms itself into an *axiological* system, conjoining *meaning* and *value*. It is thus that these objects become *desirable* objects, objects of search and quest, provoking *actions* of the subject of belief.

Incompatibility plays an essential role here – in defining the *significance* of objects of interpretation – and also in comprehending them, i.e. in determining their meaningfulness with regard to the system.

This time it is incompatibility ('distance', 'gap', 'difference', 'contrast', etc.) between the subjective (individual) 'picture of the world' on the one hand, and the real world on the other, or between the 'picture' that the subject of interpretation has and the 'picture' he projects in relation to some possible world, and so on. It is a matter of the absence of definite signs-objects in some of these 'pictures' and their presence in some others that are projected, i.e. are formed in the conceptual system.

Incompatibility of that kind alters the ontological status of the semantic system that a conceptual system represents, converting it into an *axiological* system pursuing definite *aims*, possessing definite *intentions*, and striving to realise them by means of certain *actions*, to achieve the desired objects and convert them from the status of possible objects to that of real ones. Such an incompatibility, represented in terms of the subject's dissatisfaction (physical and/or intellectual) lies at the roots of human behaviour and is inseparable from this process of converting meaning into significance, making up the semantico-axiological basis of human action. It is within the framework of the conceptual system, subsuming a belief-system, that not only is the subject's *cognitive* relation to the world thus realised but also his *axiological*, *volitative*, and *operative* attitude to the world.

Examination of a conceptual system from the angle of its formation and functioning indicates the quite natural link of meaning and belief, of the will and action of the subject of interpretation. As a result, semantics, instead of being (as usually supposed) an absolute in which *meaning* and *sign* (linguistic and non-linguistic) are cor-

related, is naturally converted into a domain in which *meaning* becomes *significance* and the interpreting subject the evaluating, willing and acting subject. The static character of abstract and autonomous semantic structures postulated in theories of the 'semantics of language' and based on stock of so-called primitive semantic universals, gives way to the dynamism of conceptual systems formed from interconnected intentional states treated as vehicles of definite value attitudes and the semantico-axiological basis of the behaviour of the subject of interpretation.

(8) If such a subject orientates himself more or less efficiently in the world, some of his beliefs about the world will obviously *be true*. These are the structures that constitute *individual*, or subjective, *knowledge of the world* as the part of the system of beliefs that embraces, and is no less limited by, what the subject knows of the world. This knowledge (signalled, similarly to belief, but not necessarily, by the context 'I know that', 'N knows that', etc.) embraces both information relating to the subject's everyday cognitive experience, and to his personal history in the world, including the pre-verbal period of the constructing of the conceptual system, and also the more complicated, systematised, theoretically loaded information that is coded by scientific texts. A considerable part of this information can be called 'intersubjective' and in *that* sense objective. It represents conventionally accepted knowledge of the world or what some subjects at least, taken to be competent and authoritative, think about the world: such information may be revised in the course of cognition. In any case it is *part and parcel* of definite conceptual systems

in which it is connected by a network of interpretation relations with other, possibly less conventional, more idiosyncratic, and less theoretically loaded, more 'down-to-earth' and 'cruder' but pragmatically satisfactory meanings (concepts) of the conceptual system.

Conceptual systems thus contain both individually accepted constituents, specific to the system, and other 'conventional' ones, socially acceptable, that reflect the individual's social cognitive experience. (Theoretical analogues of these 'intersubjective' constituents, or so-called 'objective' meanings, form the subject-matter and substantial basis of theories of the 'semantics of language').

When subjective knowledge as part of individual systems of beliefs, is treated abstracted from them, it is transformed into 'objective' knowledge as part of what could be arbitrarily called an 'objective system of knowledge', which is in fact a theoretical construct. This construct, being an abstraction from individual systems of knowledge, exists exclusively symbolically in a set of scientific texts as in historically and socially determined 'scientific pictures of the world'. The 'content' of an 'objective system of knowledge' is a symbolic accumulation of appropriate information from individual systems of knowledge. Such knowledge, it should be noted, is often represented, by contexts like 'It is known that', which are, as a rule, omitted because of their depersonalised character, i.e. they are present but implicitly. The corresponding sentences then appear as impersonal statements about the world. It is of such sentences that texts of science, irrespective of their subject-matter, are composed. But

even such knowledge is neither absolute nor final, but is historically, individually and socially determined, even with those who proclaim it in the name of Science, History, Progress, or Nature herself.

In logic, according to the old tradition, these contexts of objective knowledge are taken as *extensional* in opposition to *intensional* ones that signal that the sub-contextual part belongs to definite subjects (in my understanding, to definite conceptual systems). The considerations set out above indicate that when allowance is made for the factor of conceptual systems that embrace knowledge as part of a structure of belief, the opposing of extensional contexts to intensional ones is clearly relative: any extensional context is always part of a definite intensional one because knowledge put into the intensional context is always related to a definite conceptual system. Such a structure of a conceptual system explains the *interdependence* of the intentional states forming the system. It is this dependence of intentional states on a particular conceptual system and the consequent interdependence of intentional states which accounts for the essentially *intensional* character of any act of interpretation. That is why so-called extensional contexts of interpretation are a partial case of intensional contexts corresponding to how semantic structures that represent knowledge are a partial case of structures that represent belief within a single conceptual system.

(9) It follows from the relation of the structures of belief and knowledge as parts of a conceptual system that it is precisely the subjects *value* oriented attitude to the world and his relation and interaction with other subjects that depends of the *structures*

of belief. In order to represent the contrast in its most general features between what is known and what is believed on the one hand and between what is known objectively on the other, it is sufficient to say that it is precisely (objectively) *false* beliefs that often constitute the basis of the subject's orientation relation to the world and the criteria of the significance of the world for him. That is why the truth is by no means always what a person is striving for; even on the moral plane communication of the (objective) truth to a subject may do him harm, while to let him live according to his subjective 'picture of the world', according to his beliefs about the world, even when they are (objectively) false, on the contrary, may do him good. In other words, knowledge in the context of a conceptual system is a relative value both as part of this system and as the measure of the world's significance for the subject of the system. From that standpoint cognition is a construction not only of new knowledge but also of new false information (although possibly satisfying the subject and useful to him) – both being indissolubly linked as parts of a *single* system of meanings.

(10) It follows from what I have said that understanding of a linguistic or non-linguistic text is always interpretation of it on a definite level of a conceptual system. (A) It may happen on that neutral plane in which the interpreter simply comprehends (renders meaningful) the text without expressing his attitude (acceptance or non-acceptance) to it. The quality of the interpretation moreover depends exclusively on the meanings involved in the interpretation. (B) Understanding may be reached at a level of meanings that form a system

of belief as part of a conceptual system. (C) Finally, understanding may occur at the level of meanings that form a subjective system of knowledge as part of a system of belief. To understand, consequently, means to interpret, but not necessarily to hold to be true (to believe), and furthermore, to know. But to know always means to hold to be true (to believe) and, consequently, to be part of a definite conceptual system. One can therefore say that someone does or does not understand something only when one allows for a definite conceptual system and for what constitute the cognitively basic subsystems of belief and knowledge in it. One can also speak of the univocity of understanding in relation to conceptual systems and what is common to them (because of the uniformity of our nature and the possible similarity of cognitive experience). But to ascertain such univocity one may not quit one's conceptual system and pass to another and, so to say, look at the world through its eyes. We may understand the others only when we interpret them in our own conceptual system.

A linguistic or non-linguistic text does not in itself determine what should be understood; it is open to *any* interpretation. Putting it metaphorically, 'it waits for those who can read it', 'it is a scheme calling for filling', or 'it is a *pretext* of a possible interpretation', and so on. In saying that, I do not belittle the significance of texts, but rather get a chance to reformulate the answer I gave above about the expressibility of linguistic texts in terms of any *text* as an object of interpretation.

My possible answer to the earlier posed question of where the meaning lies – in the text, the author, or the interpreter? – can be

formulated in the context of these considerations as follows. The short answer I suggested above – that a text expresses nothing until it is interpreted – can now be supplemented. In answering this question in *such* a way I would be taking only one agent of communication into consideration, namely the interpreter, while the role of the author of the text would remain unclear. A more adequate answer would be this: to express is on the one hand to designate (codify) the meanings (concepts) of one conceptual system and on the other hand to read this designations (signs), to decode them in another (trivially in the same) conceptual system.

In allowing for the variety of participants in the processes of communicating conceptual systems and the ambiguity of their structure, we get a no less impressive variety of similarities and dissimilarities of understanding, including (among other cases) those in which the author of a text and

his interpreter are separated by a definite interval of time, history, culture, individual experience, and even nature, which determine not only the sphere and scope of the *meaningful* but also the sphere and scope of the *significant*.

It is the singling out of the *significant*, and not simply of the meaningful, that determines the behaviour of the *subject* of the conceptual system, and his attitude to the world, his interaction with other bearers of conceptual systems. It is therefore only when we are conscious that man is a conceptually competent being capable not only of accumulating definite information about the world but also of expressing his attitude to it by choice, evaluation, and preferences, not only to ‘reflect’ the world but also to accept, or not accept it, only then can we be sure that we are doing something constructive in the analysis of language, meaning, and understanding.

Vilnius
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