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**ЛОГИКА**  
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**LOGIC**

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**LOGIC OF SENSE**

**Chapter I, §§ 1–2**

**Foreword to English publication**

What happens when we hear words spoken in a familiar language? If they make sense, we understand them. Now, what does it mean to make sense? Is it an English idiom, or should this expression be taken in its direct sense?

Semantic and semiotic theories hold that making sense means referring to something in the external world and/or to a mental image. But how is that reference “manufactured”? We never get an answer to that question. All we hear boils down to the statement that it is just there. It is a relation between sign and signified which is arranged and rearranged according to very different factors. But where does it come from?

Let us imagine that the same phrase in the same situation and for the same interpreter makes sense in two absolutely different ways. All other things being equal, we have to admit that the sense-making procedure is functioning differently to produce two different meanings under the same circumstances.

Then we can say that the words as such mean nothing or next to nothing. What really counts is the sense generating procedure that runs in our heads triggered by the words we hear or read. Same words may make sense differently because the sense generating procedure functions differently. Languages and cultures happen to be inclined to this or that variant of it. Western philosophy, beginning with the Greeks, maps the universe as a collection of substances that possess some qualities and stand in certain relations to each other. The Arabic culture proposes a different pattern of the universe as a collection of processes. The substance-related and process-related visions of the world are based on two different variants of the sense generating procedure.

I addressed this issue in my “Logic of Sense” published in 2001 in Russian. I am happy that the Editor of *Ishraq* Prof. Yanis Eshots proposed to publish an

English translation of the two first paragraphs of Chapter I. Let me express my sincere appreciation to him and to the Islamic Culture Research Foundation for their support.

*Andrey Smirnov*  
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## *Chapter I*

### **General Approach to Sense Generating Procedure**

#### **1. Does the Sense Generating Procedure Exist?**

##### **1.1. Astrologer's Prediction and Its Interpretation: "Our" Understanding**

###### **1.1.1. The prediction**

The recently published book, *Kak Zhit' i Vlastvovat'* (*How to Live and Rule*), by Russian Arabist A. Ignatenko contains the following story:

*How the Caliph Al-Mansur Found His Death between Fire and Water*

The famous *Book of Songs* by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani recounts that the Abbasside Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur died in exactly the same manner as predicted by his court astrologer Abu Sahl al-Fadl ibn Nawbakht, who once performed all the necessary actions for the Caliph's horoscope causing him immeasurable grief. It was written in the stars that al-Mansur was to leave this earth aged forty, and between fire and water. It's easy to imagine how the ruler was afraid to pass between a river and a bonfire lit on one of its banks or to get to other similar places. Eventually, he died by assassins' hand in his bath ("between fire and water"). He was forty then... [Ignatenko 1994: p.73]

Let us have a closer look at this story. Its purpose is doubtless to impress the reader. The latter is expected to be astonished not so much by the fact that the astrologer's prediction came true as by the manner in which this happened—*unexpected* both for the story's protagonist himself and for the reader. The astrologer, a possessor of uncommon, esoteric knowledge, having performed actions intelligible only to himself, phrased his foretelling in a way he alone could fully comprehend. To be more exact, he described the event and the time of its coming with perfect clarity and quite unambiguously, but he encrypted the place where it would occur.

A prediction strictly defining the "what" and the "when" of the future event but leaving us in the dark as to the "where" acquires a mysterious quality, which

agrees with the vocation of astrologer. There can be no doubt that the astrologer knew what was going to happen. He knew that in every detail, but he would not (or could not) define the place of the event with precision matching his knowledge.

Knowing the outcome—and, consequently, the riddle’s solution—we see that the prediction had the nature of a *hint*. The straightforward Caliph’s error consisted, quite obviously, in his attempt to interpret that hint literally, which prompted him to avoid the wrong places—not those that he really had to shun. Having taken every precaution against everything that could lie “between fire and water,” he failed to perceive that the phrase “between fire and water” was a mere metaphor. A cryptic hint, a vague symbol that could be rendered this way and that, never deceiving us, but never telling us anything forthright either—that is the “between-fire-and-water” of a medieval court astrologer.

Once we grasp this, we will be able to realize—as a further step forward—the inevitability of the prediction’s taking such a vague, hard-to-decipher form. The thing is that a prediction prophesying doom that can be avoided becomes thereby false; it seems that the only way to evade a paradox, preserving the truthfulness of the foretelling which partly reveals the future (and, consequently, opens an opportunity to change it) is to foretell so as to present non-false information in a manner precluding unambiguous interpretation that could lead to an action making the prophecy invalid as regards its content.

It is in this, or very similar, way that the reader is expected to perceive the story just told. The haziness of the prediction and the unexpected nature of its true meaning constitute the principal impression that the story’s text strives to convey. Its very structure is subordinated to this goal. Let us consider said structure in more detail.

Caliph al-Mansur died in exactly the same manner as his astrologer had predicted. This starting point is psychologically important. It makes us take the astrologer’s foretelling seriously. From now on, together with the Caliph, we would strive to understand it, to understand what exactly it imparts, since we know it to have come true. However, what exactly is our—and the Caliph’s—reconstruction of the meaning conveyed by the words “between fire and water” (only these words concern us, as the rest of the prediction is clear)?

In our attempt to answer this question, we discover something quite important to our further reasoning. The sentence, “It’s easy to imagine how the ruler was afraid to pass between a river and a bonfire lit on one of its banks or to get to other similar places,” turns out to be the author’s interpolation inserted into his retelling of the Book of Songs. It is this interpolation that enhances the impression of unexpectedness made by the story’s denouement, creating such an excellently contrasting background that tells us: this is what the Caliph thought—and that is what the astrologer actually meant!

And indeed, that which the reader discovers to be the actual meaning of the prediction is so *unexpected* as to prompt the author to repeat parenthetically the corresponding words of the astrologer; he makes sure that the “bath” as the astrologer’s exact meaning of the phrase “between fire and water” does not elude us. The text would have lost much of its dramatic quality without this interpolation, which could be easily proven by reading the former without the latter.

However, A. Ignatenko’s interpolation is by no means an intentional distortion. Moreover, I would take the risk of affirming that in no manner does it violate those intentions of comprehension that are typical of the Russian reader. In other words, the text of the astrologer’s prediction without the author’s interpolation would have been understood by most (if not all) our readers precisely as if they had taken their cue from it. The interpolation merely draws our attention to the meaning the reader would have constructed on his own, but in no way falsifies it.

The only thing still remaining in question is how the above reasoning relates to the Caliph himself. We might agree that, as an interpretation of the astrologer’s “between fire and water,” *we* would have suggested “between bonfires on the bank and a river” or something like that. Had the Caliph actually done so?

Had the astrologer’s foretelling appeared vague to the Caliph to the same extent and in the same respects as it seems to us? Had he attempted to decipher it in *this* way?

### 1.1.2. The first doubt regarding the validity of “our” understanding

The question just posed also presupposes a more general formulation of the problem: are there grounds to believe that, in another culture, the process of understanding is arranged after the manner it is in ours?

It is not a question of specific meanings attached in a different culture to the “same” words (e.g., “fire” or “water”) or of how their sundry connotations, let alone their content as such, differ from those in our language and culture. The crux of the matter lies in the manner—identical or different—in which *the way from a word to its sense* is paved.

For the time being, I refrain from discussing what a “word” is and what its “sense” signifies. Restricting myself to vaguest, most general, intuitively felt perceptions of these concepts, I now concern myself solely with the method in which the connection between them is created. Such a vantage point implying non-clarification of these pivotal (to us, from here on) concepts is forced; we just have to adopt it at this juncture, as will be shown in time. As our study unfolds, they will be clarified: furthermore, the whole work has been undertaken, in a sense, for the sake of their clarification.

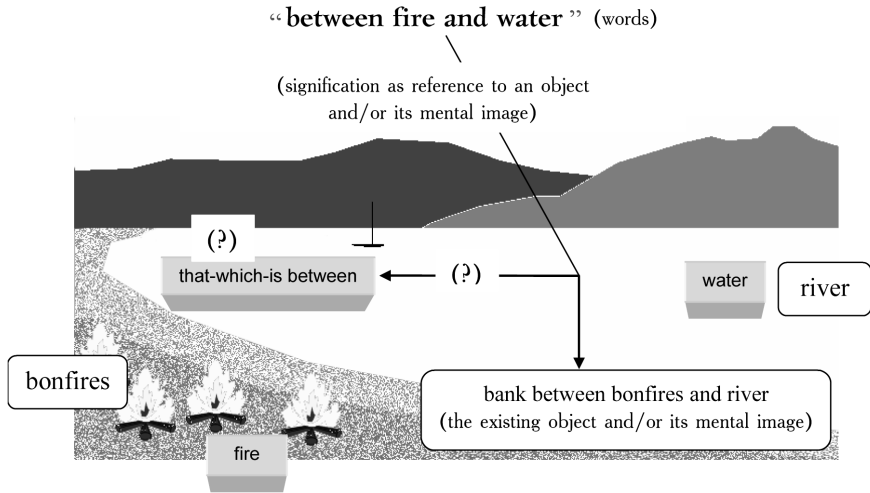
So, is the *strategy of transition* from a word to its sense identical in different cultures—that is the question I ask. The question is posed on a general plane,

regardless of particular words and their specific meanings, it concerns only the procedure of connecting the one to the other. Can we regard this procedure as (1) quite obvious and trivial, and as (2) essentially identical in different cultures?

### 1.1.3. Understanding as a procedure

I will now attempt a more detailed explanation of what I mean.

**Fig. 1**



The question I asked refers to that ("that process" or "that procedure," we might elaborate) which Fig. 1 shows as an arrow connecting the words ("between fire and water") to their sense ("bank between bonfires and river").

In this case, it is of no consequence if we choose, (a) following such thinkers as G. Frege, to distinguish meaning from sense stating that "bank between bonfires and river" is the sense of the expression, "between fire and water," while the reference to the bank itself is a meaning common to this and many other expressions that would have different senses as regards their content ("a strip of sand washed by water on the right and flanked by some burning fires on the left," "a terrain adjacent to a river and some fires," etc.), or (b) to ignore the opportunities presented by the above distinction sticking to the vague, intuitive statement of difference dividing word and its sense for which "meaning" and "sense" (in Frege's or any other usage) are still indistinguishable. This is not important in that it has no effect on the central issue we are about to discuss.

Which is: Can we understand the strategy behind this drawing of the arrow from words to their sense as an unquestionably *obvious* and the *only possible*

one? Is such a *procedure* of connecting words to their meaning, which involves referring us to an *existent object* (and/or its mental image), — is such a procedure self-evident?

At this point, I do not ask what kind of being this object of reference<sup>1</sup> possesses; it is of no consequence to us if this “bank between bonfires and river” actually exists or if it is but a fruit of the Caliph’s unsuccessful exegetical activity undertaken in the attempt to foresee his future. What matters is solely the fact that the “bank,” as an object, *might* exist and that, consequently, the words, “between fire and water,” refer us to a certain substantial thing which, without being either “fire” or “water,” is *that which* divides them and that which, at the same time, is confined, and consequently defined, by them; it is *that which exists* “as such” (no matter whether “exists” means here “exists in reality” or “exists in imagination”).

This is where our question lies: Can we unquestionably accept the procedure of referring words to an existent object as the only conceivable, self-evident procedure of their comprehension?

The term “procedure” is used intentionally. Here we discuss the kind of manipulation with the expression in question (“between fire and water”) that is not affected by the content of the individual words. This is easy to notice if we turn our attention to the captions against the dark background on Fig. 1. This figure illustrates one of the possible interpretations of the expression, “between fire and water”—an interpretation suggested by A. Ignatenko as a version of deciphering the astrologer’s prediction by the Caliph. The author’s words, “other similar places,” also indicate that that was *one* of the versions, as does the very sense of the situation discussed: no one would argue that “bonfires” present the only conceivable rendering of the word “fire” or that a “river” is the only way to interpret the word “water.” In fact, there can be a vast number of such versions; the question is: what is the invariant of all these interpretations? What is it that remains immutable in these “other similar places,” what makes them similar in spite of all the differences?

They are similar in being “*that-which-is* between fire and water.”

No matter how we picture “fire” or “water”, the meaning of the entire expression remains unchanged: it is “some-thing which” can be found between these

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<sup>1</sup> From here on in this work, I intend to use the word “reference” in the sense of “reference to an external object,” which is normally understood or—to be exact—accepted as an existent one. The meaning of the word “reference” may disagree with certain nuances of the term’s usage in individual theories, which is inevitable in view of the wide scope of senses it includes. Said meaning is adopted by me as one expressing a common notion about a universe of objects predefined for language—at least, if not exclusively—as the required field of meanings of its units. I will abstain from discussing border cases, when the object of reference possesses an imaginary existence, e.g., as in the statement, “Dragons can fly”: it is more important to us to analyze simpler cases, when the object is either definitely real or is unquestionably regarded as such by all who discuss it.

“fire” and “water”, no matter what “fire” and “water” boil down to (some bonfires and a river, etc.). The reference to “that-which-is” is exclusively procedural: it is not influenced by specific meaning-related interpretations of the elements of the expression, “between fire and water”.

Fig. 1 reflects how the expression, “between fire and water,” makes sense to us. Captions against the dark background correspond to the words of the expression in question, whereas explanatory inscriptions in boxes represent the sense of these words (let me remind the reader that I still refrain from putting a distinction between “sense” and “meaning”). The overall figure’s configuration reflects the *integral sense* of the expression, “between fire and water,” while the fact that the signification arrow is drawn from the analyzed words to the “bank between bonfires and river” indicates that it is this very “bank” that represents the integral sense in its current, variant interpretation of the invariant “*that-which-is* between fire and water.”

Let us now illustrate via a simple chart how “between fire and water” makes sense to us:

**Chart 1**

fire	⇒			bonfires
water	⇒			river
between	⇒	<i>that-which-is-between</i>	⇒	bank

### ***1.1.3.1. What does the sense generating procedure amount to?***

We can see now what exactly took place *en route* from words to their meaning. That which appeared to be a mere “drawing of an arrow” from the signifier to the signified, a mere establishing of connection between the two already-present elements, turned out to presuppose an important operation. The latter consists in attributing existence to something that we seek as the meaning of the word (“between”) and, after that, of the whole expression (“between fire and water”). Transition from the verbal expression to its meaning proves to be more than just a crossover to what is expected to constitute the sense of that expression—something supposedly existing *before* we started looking for it, as if all we had to do was only to *disclose* it.

What I am talking about has nothing to do with the impossibility of pinning down the exact meaning of a word or an expression with unambiguous accuracy. I mean something entirely different: no matter how ambiguous are the meanings to which words refer us, no matter how crowded is the right (“meanings”) column of Chart 1 with its meanings queuing up to interpret the words in the left column (thus, instead of “bonfires,” we might get “torches,” “fire in the hearth,” “flame in a gas-cooker,” etc.)—all this has no effect on that to which I intend to turn the reader’s attention. We should focus on the *middle* column: that which passed for a “mere arrow” linking the word we are trying to comprehend (the left

column) to its meaning (the right column, regardless of either the meaning's "rigidity" or its "fluidity" in the endless play of sense-shifting nuances), turns out to be a procedure having an internal structure of its very own.

Consequently, we can register the presence of a *procedure* instrumental in constructing the sense of an expression. The sense never precedes the signification arrow that links it to the corresponding words; rather, the sense is being constructed simultaneously with the drawing of that arrow. The path from words to that which is to become their sense is a *creative* path: it is only by walking it that the sense is created.

### 1.1.3.2. *The procedure and the content in sense generation*

To continue, the procedure in question is shaping the sense of the expression. Having departed from words ("between fire and water"), we arrive at something *which is not defined by them* as such, taken nominally. Words as such, with all their meanings and connotations, are not sufficient to predetermine the nature of the sense-to-be. To understand to what sense we are about to arrive, we have to know the procedure actualizing the transition from words to what we consider their sense.

It must be pointed out that the procedure in question "generates" the sense of verbal expression. I therefore shall refer to such a procedure as the *sense generating procedure*. The words' sense becomes inbuilt into that logical configuration which is defined by this procedure. This logical configuration precedes our comprehension of the content of expression. The creation of a "logic-and-meaning" configuration as a result of the sense generating procedure should be called the *logic of sense*—though not quite in the sense in which this expression was used by G. Deleuze. I am far from talking about hazy vaguenesses brought on by hardly perceptible and ever-evasive hunches that defy strict rationalization inherently. Realized in sense generating procedures, the logic of sense is expected to possess perfectly clear-cut outlines. The degree to which these are clarified is the measure of success in the study of this logic.

Let us turn once more to Fig. 1 to get a closer look at the sense generating procedure. Captions against the dark background are not the meanings of the words composing the expression "between fire and water". The captions simply repeat those words, *placing* them after the manner in which they are configured in the above expression. The verbal phrase, "between fire and water," tells us nothing about such a configuration, so I resorted to pictures to depict the fact of the *configuring*, not just to practice in drawing lines and diverse figures. The fact of configuring is concealed in the verbal phrase—but it is revealed in the figure I propose. The very fact of such configuring reflects the inevitability with which sense generating procedure occurs.



### 1.1.3.3. How sense generating procedure builds up the content

Paying attention to the central element of configuration, we will get closer to the specific type of sense generating procedure under discussion. This element is represented by the caption, “that-which-is-between,” against the dark background on Fig. 1. The most important point now, worthy of our special attention, is this: the words, “that-which-is,” are *added* on the figure, which makes it different from the verbal expression in whose formulation they are not used.

“That-which-is” is not a meaning of the word “between” to be found in any dictionary. There are two rationales for this. Firstly, we feel the need of this addition at the stage *preceding* the definition of meanings of the words that compose the expression, “between fire and water.” This is because, at this point, we are merely configuring the words of this expression in such a manner as to make their spatial arrangement reflect the logic-and-meaning relations between them,<sup>2</sup> as our intuition prompts us. We configure words *without* involving ourselves with their concrete meanings and *before* we do that—and in the course of this very configuration we suddenly feel the need of the above addition. Strictly speaking, this need is so urgent that we might state that the very configuration could not have taken place without this addition—at least, it could not occur in the form presented as Fig. 1.

Secondly, the effect of this addition goes far beyond the word “between” as such and beyond that which might be conceived as its meaning.<sup>3</sup> This addition

- (a) stipulates the *existence of the object* which is situated “between fire and water”

and thereby, at the same time,

- (b) stipulates the *discrete* and *actual* existence of “fire” and “water” “between” which the supposed object—see (a)—is found.

Thus the role played by this addition is effective for the whole expression. The addition establishes the actual existence of the substantial objects that will be found by us to function as meanings of the words “fire” and “water,” as well as the actual existence of a certain third object restricted, and thereby defined, by the former two, separating them from one another and distinct from them—the object that will be discovered as the meaning of the word “between.” The signification arrow running on Fig. 1 from the words to the object (and/or its mental

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<sup>2</sup> The fact that logic-and-meaning relations can be reflected spatially is far from trivial, in my opinion. However, I restrict myself to pointing out its significance—for the time being. For a detailed discussion of this problem, see Chapter III.

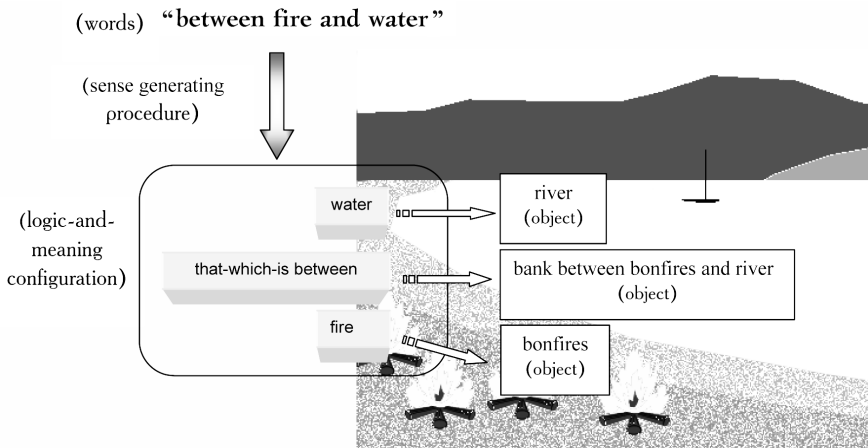
<sup>3</sup> This is easy to prove by comparing various meanings of the word “between” given in different dictionaries to that which we are going to find as a result of discussing the addition in question.

image) they signify actually passes *through* the stage during which the addition is being made. The words do not reach their meaning directly; they do so through a “medium”—that is what I want to say. What exactly that interagent might be, and whether it really exists are matters which so far were left without attention.

Fig. 1 depicts the general way in which signification is conceived of in semantics and semiotics. Here, the fact that the path from a word to its sense passes through that stage of the above-mentioned addition, which was called the stage of the sense generating procedure, is overlooked. The addition, “that-which-is,” attached to “between,” features on Fig. 1 as a question mark because in semantics and semiotics we find no fitting term for it. The relation of the signification arrow to our addition is, likewise, in question: the sense generating procedure is ignored in these theories.<sup>4</sup>

Editing Fig. 1 in accordance with the results we obtained, we get Fig. 2.

**Fig. 2**



What remained obscured on Fig. 1, is now plainly visible: the meaning “bank” becomes possible through “that-which-is,” not through “between” as such. The answer that the Caliph sought so persistently, the solution that his life depended on, never resided in the astrologer’s words as such or in the purely verbal form of his statement. The answer to which—according to the author’s design—the Caliph was to arrive (including all possible versions thereof) was

<sup>4</sup> In other words, if Fig. 1 was rendered by means of semantics or semiotics, the signification arrow would be drawn either to the external object alone (the “signified” one), or at once to the latter and to something else that would perform the function of its mental copy. In any case, the configuring—as a *process of sense generation*—would not be reflected there. The difference between Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 is that the last of the two does reflect it.

not defined solely by the *actual words* (taken at their face value, regardless of their interpretation in either literal or figurative sense) used by the astrologer in its formulation; it was defined first and foremost by that sense generating procedure which the Caliph supposedly employed while interpreting those words.

Let me remind that we still presume that the Caliph was interpreting the astrologer's prediction through the same procedure as employed by us in our forecast relating to the possible meanings of the words, "between fire and water." From this standpoint, the Caliph was trying hard to guess what the astrologer's foretelling could mean. As will be shown later, those words could be understood without any guess-work, in their direct, literal meaning, — but as a result of a different implementation of the sense generating procedure. However, I think it is important to make it clear that—even if we accept the hypothesis about a deliberate distortion of his prediction by the astrologer in order to complicate its correct perception, even if we start searching for the true sense of what we suppose to be a deliberately garbled expression—we can by no means avoid employing the sense generating procedure that will, likewise, be actualized for comprehending this expression in its literal meaning. The difference between the two cases is the difference of *modes* in which sense generating procedure is carried out and, consequently, the difference of how the same verbal expression makes sense to us.

This means that the logic of sense deals with things lying *deeper* than that area of meanings' interplay or of their strict and "proper" behavior which normally becomes the focus of attention for analytical philosophy or deconstruction technique. This is the invariant of all those variants that are, as a rule, studied by the above branches of philosophy; this is what serves as a basis of such a variation. Therefore the process of interpreting the prediction, which occupied such a prominent place in the Caliph's mind, is no different—in the respect that concerns us—from the process of "commonplace" understanding; the only minor exception is that the sphere of meanings from which the Caliph could choose was broader than one that standard dictionaries would ordinarily furnish. Endeavoring to lift the veil of the future, the Caliph was careful not to leave out any conceivable interpretation. In doing so, he could arrive at such meanings of "fire" and "water" as would have hardly occurred to a common individual under normal conditions, which means that the enigmatic object "between" them could be chosen by the Caliph from a broader pool of meanings than that at the disposal of an ordinary person in a standard situation of understanding. It seems, however, to be the only difference between the two situations: it has no influence on the necessity of performing the sense generating procedure of which I speak and which is equally inevitable in either case.

So what was it exactly that the Caliph interpreted? Of course, he was interpreting the words, picking through their possible meanings. However, he was doing it only after he had chosen the procedure of their *logic-and-meaning configuring*. The meanings he arrived at had to belong in that configuration, which

had been defined by the sense generating procedure; moreover, the sense he discovered could only be such as to fit into that configuration. The logic-and-meaning configuring has set the ultimate terms of finding words' interpretations; it has drawn the allowable borders of semantic fields under consideration.

#### 1.1.4. Is an alternative procedure of understanding possible?

The Caliph's exegetic activity proved to be a failure, A. Ignatenko tells us. He never arrived at the true solution of the riddle offered by the astrologer. The answer, as we already know, is "bath." Where did the Caliph's error lie, then?

Attempting to discuss this problem, we come across what is actually an amazing fact right from the start. The correct answer was neither symbolic nor deliberately encoded. Similarly, the words, "between fire and water," had no special, esoteric meaning. The crux of the matter never lay in the intricacies of possible interpretations of the words *as such*; no matter how hard we rack our brains, emulating the hapless Caliph in an attempt to get at the sense of the astrologer's prediction adopting the strategy of understanding suggested by A. Ignatenko ("other similar places"), we will never find the necessary answer. The point is, there was no need for any *interpretational* intricacy whatsoever,<sup>5</sup> and one did not have to be an expert on meanings of the words "fire" and "water" to establish the sought-for position "between" them. The strategy of understanding suggested—or, to be exact, conjectured—by the author and adopted by the Caliph could not lead him to the correct answer *in any case*. That is so because such an answer is impossible if we posit the actual existence<sup>6</sup> of "fire," "water" and the object "between" them as something distinct from them, separating them and confined by them. In other words, the correct answer is impossible on condition that the Caliph employs that sense generating procedure which, according to A. Ignatenko, he does employ.

Before we proceed, let us return once more to Chart 1. We were able to discover the addition, "that-which-is"—a phrase that apprised us of the existence of the sense generating procedure,—being related to the word "between." Having discovered it, we observed that the transition from words to their sense is achieved in two stages rather than in a single one, as traditional semantics and semiotics generally assume. We can now state that the first stage, which we called the stage of logic-and-meaning configuring (or the phase at which the sense generating procedure is performed), affects more than just the word "be-

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<sup>5</sup> In other words, the text we were dealing with was no riddle—at least, not in the way we first thought it was. The expression, "between fire and water," never implied *that* ambiguity which we discerned in it. I intend to return to this subject below, in Chapter I, § 2.1.4.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to point out once more that, by the "actual existence," I do not mean any material existence as opposed to the ideal one. The crucial point is that the procedure of comprehension implies a real existence of the objects that we call "fire" and "water," no matter what kind of reality it is—material or merely imagined.

tween.” It is quite universal in extending its influence to all the words present in our expression. The configuration that is being achieved at this stage forms a single whole, in the sense that the assertion of a real existence of the object “that-which-is between” is impossible without the assertion of a real existence of the objects to which the words “fire” and “water” refer us. By adding “that-which-is” to “between,” we apply the sense generating procedure to all words of the expression, not just to that single word.

Therefore Chart 1 can be revised as follows:

**Chart 2**

fire	⇒	<i>that which exists as fire</i>	⇒	bonfires
water	⇒	<i>that which exists as water</i>	⇒	river
between	⇒	<i>that which exists between</i>	⇒	bank

Let me emphasize the fact that we were able to detect the procedure reflected in the middle column and affecting the words “fire” and “water” only after we had found said procedure pertaining to the word “between.” If the sense generating procedure indeed exerts its influence over all words, there probably exists a class of words that reveal it or, to be exact, render it more noticeable than other words. It is to this class of words that “between” belongs. Pointing out its special status, we have yet to explain it.

Also noteworthy is the fact that our attention to this special role of the word “between” was attracted by the contrast between the hypothetical course which the Caliph’s exegetical activity has been taking and the direction in which the true answer lay. This contrast compelled us to examine the process of transition from words to their sense more closely—a scrutiny that resulted in the detection of the sense generating procedure. Comparative research in the field of history of philosophy plays, in my opinion, exactly that role: using such cases of contrast, it enables us to see things unnoticeable against the uniform backdrop of sameness.

It is not by accident that semantics and semiotics fail to discern that which comprises the middle column of my Chart 2. The universal nature of the sense generating procedure within the confines of one individual culture implies the possibility of ignoring it: the transition from words to their sense can be described in such terms as to dismiss the procedure as nonexistent. Its action might be compared to that of the universal forces in physics—postulating either the presence or the absence of those forces has no effect on the resultant description of physical reality. Had the sense generating procedure been genuinely universal, it would have had a good chance of remaining undetected just like the universal forces of physics.

Theories propounding in this or that form the universal nature of human mind also presuppose (as an implicit premise) the absolute universality of sense generating procedure, because such theories become impossible once we presume

that the modes of this procedure are somehow delimited. It is this universality that I now bring into question. Is it really an attribute common to the entire human race, or are its limits confined? Moreover: do the limits of what we generally call “local color,” “individual aspect of a culture,” “peculiar traits of a civilization” coincide with the limits within which this or that variant of the sense generating procedure proclaims its universality? No matter how we try to define the notions of “culture” or “civilization” (I by no means intend to become part of the already long tradition of heated debate over these), a definition based on the perception of the specific manner in which any given culture constructs its senses would not eventually prove to be the worst possible one.

So, the sense generating procedure predetermines the sense of the expression which is being interpreted. It does not predetermine its specific form: the right column might display nearly all conceivable senses (to put it differently: a word could be used in both its apparent and concealed meaning). However, all these senses will in any case (regardless of how obscure or, on the contrary, literally plain is the meaning) be configured in a certain manner. It is this fact of configuring that is determined by the sense generating procedure.

This fact could also be expressed as the adoption of certain premises that reflect our notion of the prerequisites of “making sense.” Their very status determines the fact that, under normal conditions, this notion does not pop up at the surface of our consciousness—simply because it in itself constitutes a premise of “making sense.” The term “notion” is therefore quite conventional: we have been merely *attempting* to uncover it, making it a notion in the process. Will the prerequisites of sense generation be revealed before us (to enable us to have a “notion” of them), will they manifest themselves? This depends on the success of the strategy we pursue here to bring them to light—the strategy I call the “contrast apprehension.”

Let us return to the astrologer’s prediction. It is high time to unravel it at last, especially now that we understand that the real solution lay far from where the Caliph had been looking for it, which A. Ignatenko tried to get across to us. At least, it is safe to assume that something *we* took for a riddle lies elsewhere, for we have no proof that the Caliph saw it the same way; in fact, the more we advance in our reasoning the less obvious the assumed similarity becomes.

It is now quite clear that interpretational skill is not the key, whereas a correctly applied sense generating procedure is. Its application precedes a figurative (or literal) understanding, and it takes place regardless of the specific manner of interpretation and of the metaphorical senses it leads to. As mentioned above, the previously described sense generating procedure represented on Fig. 2 could not possibly lead to the correct answer. Let us now try to find such one as would yield the desired result. For this, I intend again to use the medium of illustration, as pictures bring out most effectively that which is hidden behind words.

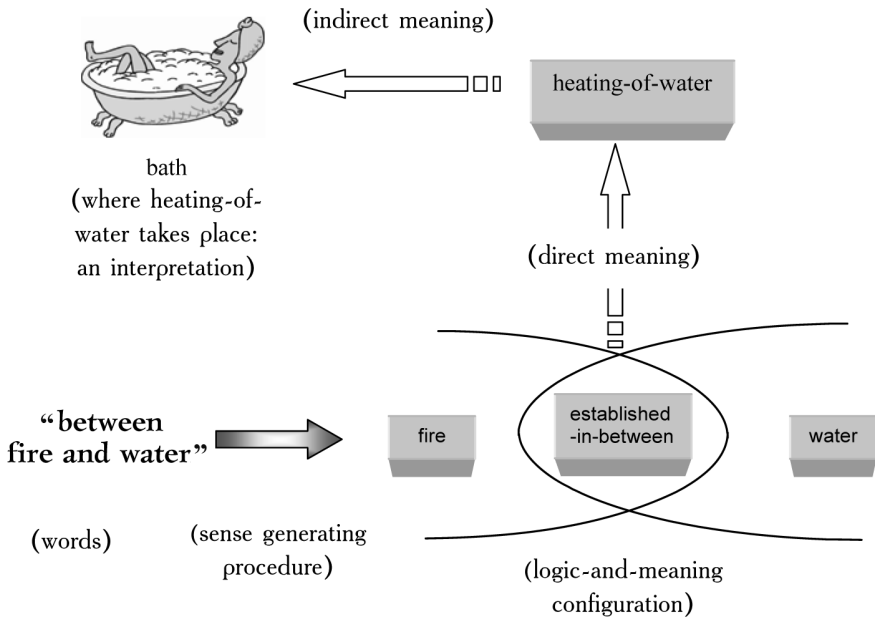
**1.2. Astrologer’s Prediction and Its Interpretation: an Alternative Understanding**

**1.2.1. A description of logic-and-meaning configuration**

**1.2.1.1. Illustration**

The true answer implied by the astrologer’s words could be rendered in the following figure:

**Fig. 3**



What has the astrologer really said uttering his words, “between fire and water”? Fig. 3 suggests the following vision of the procedure enabling the transition from his words to their sense. As it turns out, the astrologer said: “That [place] where fire and water merge, but that which is neither fire nor water as such, nor a combination of them as such; something that is, however, impossible without fire and water being merged.”

Let us try to grasp the essence of the logic-and-meaning configuration built up in the process of implementing the sense generating procedure shown on Fig. 3.

To do that, we must pay our attention to the role played by “between” in this procedure. The area posited as “between” is formed by an overlapping of the

areas of “fire” and “water.” The question is, what kind of overlapping it is, and what, strictly speaking, do we mean by overlapping?

The suggested interpretation of that concept is merely a hypothesis at this stage. I am not striving, so far, to *prove* that the overlapping under discussion is exactly such as I picture it. We will be able to approach that task only near the end of the present research. For the time being, suffice it to say that the hypothesis I suggest is good at explaining the facts that require explanation. Somewhat later, I will try to demonstrate that this very hypothesis enables us to develop an integral strategy of understanding the way in which the medieval Arabic culture arranges its universe of senses.

To formulate and expound this hypothesis, I will have to resort to words whose true sense would not immediately reveal itself. I would like to warn my reader about the following: entering the realm of the unusual (and there is nothing more unusual than the unconventional—for our perception—procedures of sense generation, since they are responsible for the forming of sense which is intrinsically something we are not used to), one is bound to encounter unusual words quite unlike the “proper” terms used in science and philosophy. They are not “weighty” as yet, they have not had time to absorb the entire import of theories behind them. They tell the reader nothing yet—or next to nothing.

For all that, we cannot do without this new, unconventional terminology; moreover, we have nothing to use in its stead. The seeming “terminological deficiency” of these words turns out to be their merit in this case: it enables us to get rid of the oppressive domination of customary connotations, which makes it easier to consider—and to accept—the unusual. Together, we will be endowing these words with more and more sense, until they reveal their genuine terminological worth to the full.

They are by no means made up by me, nor are they invented for the occasion—to facilitate the explanation of hypotheses I happen to like; they comprise the treasury of genuine means of expression of theoretical premises typical of Arabic thought, both medieval and modern. Incidentally, the failure of one culture to perceive the terminological status of concepts used in another is an extremely widespread phenomenon, and the study of Arabic thought is no exception. Besides, this phenomenon is always symptomatic, since it is indicative of a possibility of misconception of the kind we are dealing with right now.

### ***1.2.1.2. The first two constituents of logic-and-meaning configuration***

Two concepts are now to be introduced: “the exterior” and “the interior.” The hypothesis explaining the essence of the sense generating procedure shown on Fig. 3 requires that the “overlapping” emerging as a result of the procedure’s implementation should be conceived of as a configuration of two senses, an “exterior” and an “interior” one. The exterior is “in plain sight”; it is, in a manner of



speaking, presented to us—not “as is,” not independently, but as something that implies its own interior aspect which is concealed behind the manifest. Or, in other words: we *disclose* the concealed interior *behind* the manifest exterior and *after* it.

The exterior and the interior “between” which the object they define is posited cannot possess the same ontological status as that which fire and water in our first example possess (Fig. 2). In the above case, fire and water exist on a par, they equally delimit that which is between them. In this case, the very essence of the “exterior–interior” correlation, which is being established, implies that neither relates to reality the way fire and water relate to it in the first example: neither is an independently existent object.

The interior, which lies *behind* the exterior and which we necessarily reveal *after* the exterior (take note of the compulsory nature of this sequence: it cannot be violated), is actualized in the latter. The interior is present in the exterior, albeit not as such, not as *that-which-is*; it cannot be pointed out as an existent object. However, the exterior, having been instrumental in actualizing the interior in itself, has become thereby transformed: it is no longer “that-thing” as such. Inasmuch as the exterior actualizes in itself the interior, it turns out to be the area where they both overlap, without either of them being existent things. This area of their overlapping ends up as a “third party” in relation to them. It is this area that represents what the words, “between fire and water,” point to.

The sense generating procedure taking place in this case and the resultant logic-and-meaning configuration could be rendered schematically as follows:

### Chart 3

fire	⇒	<i>exteriority-of- fire</i>	⇒	
water	⇒	<i>interiority-of-water</i>	⇒	
between	⇒	<i>making fire manifest and water concealed</i>	⇒	heating-of-water → bath

#### ***1.2.1.3. Distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings with regard to the sense generating procedure***

It is now clear that the astrologer’s words never contained that very riddle which we saw in them, or, to be precise, that *kind* of riddle which we thought was present there. Instead of shunning areas “between bonfires and river” and similar localities, the Caliph should have avoided that place where the manifest fire is actualized by the water hidden by it. “Heating-of-water”—*that* was the reference of the words “between fire and water.”

Strictly speaking, the element of interpretation (uncertainty, guesswork) resided only in the “heating-of-water”→“bath” transition: the Caliph had to guess where exactly “heating-of-water” could take place, not to ponder about what lay

between the actually existing objects referred to as “fire” and “water.” It was only this interpretational transition that was purely “astrological” (esoteric, going beyond the limits of ordinary understanding), whereas the indication “between fire and water”  $\Rightarrow$  “heating-of-water” must be regarded as a *normal indication*.

Returning once more to matters discussed above (see the subsection 1.1.3.3), we might say: the problem is not how—literally or as a figure of speech—the Caliph and we, his “imitators,” are expected to interpret the astrologer’s words. As long as we restrict ourselves to guessing whether the prediction is a riddle and what the solution to that riddle might be, without noticing that the very solution to this riddle could be sought in (at least) two markedly divergent directions (that are parallel, i.e., they never intersect, presenting two distinct alternatives), we miss the main thing. Until we fail to notice the possibility of carrying out (at least) *two* variants of the sense generating procedure that offer us two parallel logic-and-meaning configurations which form the only real basis of the riddle’s interpretation (“that-which-is between fire and water [existing separately]”  $\rightarrow$  “the bank” etc. in one case; “heating-of-water”  $\rightarrow$  “bath” etc. in the other), we also fail to notice a very important fact that can be revealed only as a result of contrasting the two variants of the sense generating procedure and the two logic-and-meaning configurations they entail.

This fact is the following: that which functions as a *literal* (or *direct*) meaning of the words, “between fire and water,” when they are understood in accordance with the second variant of the sense generating procedure (i.e., “heating-of-water”), becomes their *indirect* meaning as soon as they are taken in accordance with the first variant of the sense generating procedure. If we ignore the difference between the two variants of sense generating procedure (how *not* to ignore them, if the existent theories fail to register their very existence?), regarding “that-which-is between fire and water” and “heating-of-water” as placed in a single perspective and, consequently, directly comparable meanings of the expression, “between fire and water,” it will turn out that the former is a literal meaning, while the latter is a figurative one.

Such is the conclusion to which the situation’s analysis will inevitably lead us if we perform said analysis using the available apparatus of philosophy and linguistics. But this conclusion is basically distorted, since “heating-of-water” may also function as a *literal* (or *direct*) meaning of the words, “between fire and water.” What matters is that the meanings “that-which-is between fire and water” and “heating-of-water” never stay in the same perspective (in which case one of them would be treated as literal and the other as figurative). They are parallel—either is equally literal (direct), though each is obtained as a result of a different variant of the sense generating procedure applied to interpret the (verbally) same expression, “between fire and water.”

#### 1.2.1.4. *Qualifying the third constituent of logic-and-meaning configuration*

Let us get back to the “heating-of-water.” This phrase reflects the nature of sense generation under discussion. The “heating-of-water” is a *process*, not an existing substance. It is a simple unit emerging as the area where “fire” and “water” overlap (the “between” area). The “heating-of-water” is a *simple* entity that does not presuppose multiplicity *within itself*. Ergo, Fig. 3 shows a *single* object (bath) corresponding to this *simple* entity (“heating-of-water” process) as its interpretation.

The simplicity of this third constituent is determined by the sense generating procedure. It is an indispensable trait of the logic-and-meaning configuration. Let us note that both simplicity of that constituent and its process-related nature are established *before* we start filling this area with any concrete content. Before one can pronounce this phrase, “heating-of-water,” before one can extract this “heating-of-water” from some semantic field, one has to have a “between” area as an area implying just such an amalgamation of the two adjacent areas (the “fire” and “water” areas). The logic-and-meaning configuration dictates that we should look for the concrete content picking out “heating,” “warming,” “boiling,” and the like processes, totally ignoring the “bank” and similar substance-related meanings. As in our first example, the logic-and-meaning configuration created through the sense generating procedure delimits—quite strictly and definitely—the area of admissible contents with which the created sense area might be furnished.

The simplicity of this third constituent (the “between” area in our example) is determined by the logic-and-meaning configuration. Though this unit is simple within itself, it *does* imply a multiplicity. This multiplicity is, however, posited *outside* the unity, not within its bounds. In our example, such a multiplicity is comprised of “fire” and “water”; and it is posited outside the “heating-of-water” simple unity.

The nature of such an *externally posited* multiplicity<sup>7</sup> is directly linked to its relation to existence which is established by the sense generating procedure. The “heating-of-water” to which the expression, “between fire and water,” refers, is not “existent”. I want to say that existence cannot be attributed to it in the same way it is attributed to the substantial object to which the same expression, “be-

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<sup>7</sup> The nature of unity is also determined by this external postulation of multiplicity. Here this correlation between unity and multiplicity is revealed to us as something resulting from the core of logic-and-meaning configuration. Finding examples of just such an understanding of correlation between unity and multiplicity in classical Arabic philosophy presents no difficulty whatever. These examples demonstrate that the contents of philosophic theories in the most important, logic-and-meaning, respect are determined by factors that lie outside the area of pure content and define the manner in which those contents are arranged.

tween fire and water,” points when comprehended in accordance with the first variant of the sense generating procedure (Fig. 2).

It is so because, unlike the first case, here the referent of our expression is represented by something which is not substance-related and is never referred to as “that-which-is.” Here the logic-and-meaning configuration includes no such indication. The act of pointing to “that-which-is” (the first example, the first variant of sense generating procedure) implies that the object to which the words point is already present as such; the act of pointing is only a reference to that which is “already-there” existing *independently*. We mean exactly this when we speak of the *existence* of the thing to which the pointing refers us; and, conversely, the sense of the word “existence” obviously resides in the possibility of such a reference.

That kind of reference, an ostensive indication, applies only to substances, and not to processes. We cannot point by a finger to the process of, let us say, speaking or writing; rather, we would point to the speaker and to the spoken (provided we could see sound waves), or to the writer and the written. Those two “sides” of the process (speaker and spoken, writer and written) do exist, although not quite like substance-related objects of reference do. They never exist independently of the process of speaking or writing, while the process of speaking or writing is there only if both of its “sides” (speaker and spoken, writer and written) are present and, consequently, linked to each other by that process. We may say, getting back to our topic, that they in a sense “overlap” due to that process, and the process itself is exactly that overlapping.

Let us attempt to grasp the ontological status of the third constituent of logic-and-meaning configuration. It does not *exist* as the substance-related objects do, for we cannot say that it is independent of the flow of time. It is not there *always* and *eternally*, as Platonic idea is, independently of time. On the contrary, the flow of time is embedded in it, for the “heating-of-water” could not be there if the fire (the heater) would not be heating the water (the heated). The heating-of-water is *established* and *fixed* by direct link between the two; in a sense, it is that link.

### ***1.2.1.5. Describing a logic-and-meaning configuration in terms of Arabic thought***

We have introduced three concepts: “exterior” (the manifest), “interior” (the concealed), and “fixedness”. These concepts, as I have noted, were not invented here *ad hoc*; rather, they belong in the stock of fundamental categories indispensable to the tradition of Arabic thought. They are (respectively): ظاهر *zāhir*, باطن *bāṭin*, إثبات *ithbāt*. Let us restrict ourselves to just mentioning them, without delving deeply into how they are used together with their numerous derivatives such as: ظهور *zuhūr* ‘manifestation’; ظاهرية *zāhiriyya* ‘the state of being mani-

fested'; بطون *buṭūn* 'concealment'; ثبات *ṭhabāt* and ثبوت *ṭhubūt* 'the condition or fact of being fixed (established),' etc.

Somewhat later, we are going to have a serious discussion about how the sense generating procedure in question operated in the Arabic intellectual tradition. If I am right, and the discovered variant of sense generation procedure is indeed determined by that logic of sense which medieval Arabic culture followed, we will find that the above-mentioned concepts function as the fundamental procedural concepts; I call them "procedural" because they reflect the mode of sense generating procedure actualized by that culture.

As to the degree to which that reflection was accurate (in other words, how distinctly Arabic culture itself perceived this procedure and how clearly and graphically it formulated it), this is another matter, which I intend to investigate. In any case, the reflection did occur, in one form or another; it would be hard to imagine that the fundamental aspects of sense generating procedure had no impact whatsoever on the shaping of terminology and none of them ever materialized in it. On the contrary, in the course of our research, we are bound to find that these very concepts form the framework of terminology by means of which this culture construes fundamental structural aspects of its own sense arrangement.

Naturally, the concepts in question are not the only ones of this kind, and other terms exist side by side with them. However, they are the innermost *native* and *proper* concepts of Arabic culture forming the basis for creating further notions that are employed in the description of diverse operations through which sense deduction and sense construction are accomplished.

### 1.2.2. Is the *zāhir-bāṭin* "exterior-interior" opposition peculiar to Arabic thought and irreducible to similar oppositions in other traditions?

It would come as no surprise that terminology marked off as fundamental and procedural is *unconventional*. In a manner of speaking, it falls short of this fundamental status; it appears too shallow, it is seemingly devoid of any really profound content. In other words, it yields nothing of particular interest; it does not appear to have the ability to engender really productive ideas. This terminology, it seems, does not have what it takes to stand out among the mass of other similar terms.

To make matters worse, it does not even appear to be *specific* to Arabic intellectual tradition. And indeed, is the contrast between "being manifest" and "being concealed," between "the outward" and "the inward," wholly absent from Western thought? Moreover, is this contrast anything but a badly formulated contraposition of the phenomenon to the essence, of the material to the ideal, of the physical to the metaphysical, etc., etc.? Furthermore, why restrict ourselves to Western tradition alone? Are similar terms totally unknown to the so-called

non-Western traditions? Does not, for instance, Indian thought depict the material world as a mere game, as the “maya”—an illusion *manifested* to us and *concealing* behind it the singleness of the Brahman?

Anyone who has taken the trouble to thoughtfully read the above, must surely have asked him/herself such, or similar, questions. These questions are fully justified: had they never arisen, understanding an unfamiliar tradition of thought would have been simple and unimpeded.

Indeed, if we are to consider the categories of “phenomenon” and “essence” as perceived by Western tradition, comparing them to the *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” pair as it functioned in Arabic tradition, we can easily find that they have a lot in common, — provided we consider them content-wise only, ignoring what was described above as the sense generating procedure and ignoring the fact that the content of these concepts is defined *mostly* by said procedure.

Disregarding the logic-and-meaning aspects of these concepts, we will have no difficulty whatsoever in proceeding from observing “coincidences” and “concurrences” to affirming that either terminological pair expresses the same “common” intention of understanding, though each in a slightly different manner. By doing so, we will extend the “phenomenon—essence” pattern to the analysis of the concepts themselves: it will turn out that thus was discovered the *essence* of philosophic approach and philosophic cognition that manifests itself in various *phenomena*.

In that case, the *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” pair of categories will appear essentially the same as “phenomenon—essence” opposition of the Western philosophy, though differing in appearance; however, the *zāhir-bāṭin* and “phenomenon—essence” oppositions from that point of view are only the phenomena disguising a general and essentially the same strategy of cognition and sense generation. The fact that some of these phenomena eventually prove more apt to uncover the essence (in other words, some terminological systems turn out to be more developed and more suitable for applying this general approach to philosophic cognition) than others is only a natural consequence of such seemingly discovered “general” understanding. So it would not be hard to guess that Western philosophic tradition is bound to prove more “essence-wise” than other ones. Examples of such interpretation of other traditions of thought and of such understanding of the methodology used in comparative historical-philosophic studies abound; there is no need to quote them, since many a work on this subject may serve as an illustration of this approach.

Such a reduction to the general, which we observe as a basic interpretation strategy in fact anywhere, even in postmodern studies, is only possible if one disregards those differences in contents between the terms being compared (while comparing, e.g., the “phenomenon—essence” pair to the *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” pair) which are defined by the discrepancies in varying modes of the sense generating procedure embedded in such terms. And indeed, how do we

distinguish “the essential” from “the nonessential” comparing the contents of the two concepts? What do we regard as a decisive difference, and what as a mere variant to be neglected? Lacking the criterion of which I speak, one might easily come to disregard the very differences that become *decisive* when we start viewing them from the standpoint of said criterion.

Moreover, they will be all the more readily neglected, since these essential differences sound strange to those whose perception is shaped by Western tradition; they seem to disagree entirely with what the terms in question *are supposed to* contain (take our *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” pair, for example). If so, then these differences may be easily dismissed as exemplifications of the “peculiarity of Oriental thought,” which peculiarity becomes in this case “justifiably” sacrificed for the sake of the general and the essential.

We must observe that the certainty of our hypothetical researcher (the one who examines an unfamiliar tradition of thought) that he knows for sure what exactly *ought to be* (*mutatis mutandis*) conceived in such concepts is an integral part of his entire reasoning, since without that certainty the end result of his reasoning would have been unattainable. Should someone object that the thinker I conjured up is but a crude caricature of a real philosopher, I would hardly agree with such an objection: below, I adduce some vivid and representative examples that demonstrate all traits of just this approach.

### 1.2.2.1. The *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior—interior” pair in relation to the truth

After the above introduction, it is time to get down to business and to announce, finally, what are the key features of the *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” pair—the features that are defined by the sense generating procedure depicted on Fig. 3.

They can be expressed as follows. In “exterior-interior” pair, neither of the members enjoys the status of greater authenticity (greater trueness) than the other. They are *equal* in their relation to truth.

This means that the transition from exterior to interior is by no means a transition from something less authentic (or non-authentic at all) to something more authentic (or really authentic and expressing the truth).<sup>8</sup> This also works vice versa: the transition from interior to exterior does not diminish the degree of truth and authenticity and does not function as a qualitative threshold between the truth and the non-truth. Therefore the *zāhir* “exterior” of Arabic thought cannot be equated with the Western “phenomenon,” nor the *bāṭin* “interior” with “essence.”

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<sup>8</sup> However, the transition from either of them to *thābit* “fixed,” “established” is a transition to authenticity and truth. The fixedness (*thubūt*) treated as authenticity, in its turn, implies the presence of the *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” pair, which displays exactly this sequence of its constituents presupposing a possibility of their mutual transition. Hence the intuition of authenticity and truth as a state of being established (*thābit*) so typical of Arabic thought.

The equivalence of *zāhir* “exterior” and *bāṭin* “interior” as regards their relation to truth will be demonstrated below, for which I intend to use numerous examples from the history of Arabic medieval thought. For now, let us start with the already familiar example to illustrate this equivalence.

In attempting to describe the “heating-of-water,” we cannot say that water (the interior), rather than fire (the exterior), conveys the true nature of the whole, or that the transition from fire to water means a transition from the phenomenon of the heating-of-water to its essence. This is hardly the case; we could rather say that it is only through the transition from fire to water and back that the heating-of-water becomes truly *established*. The very *possibility* of such transition between fire and water means the establishment of a third sense, viz. the heating-of-water. And only when speaking about the heating-of-water, we can say that the transition from fire to water is possible *not* as a transition from the phenomenon to the essence but as a transition from the *zāhir* “exterior” to the *bāṭin* “interior”. For the heating-of-water, which is established through a possibility of such transition, fire and water are equally necessary; neither can be viewed as “non-authentic” or “less authentic,” neither can therefore be “overcome” or “discarded” as a step in the ascent to the authentic truth. Rather, the process of heating-of-water is an interplay of fire-and-water as the heating-and-heated, both being equally necessary and indispensable.

Discussing the possibility of a “fire  $\Leftrightarrow$  water” transition, we seem to have stumbled on an expression that defines the understanding of truth under the analyzed mode of the logic-and-meaning configuration. The “fire  $\Leftrightarrow$  water” transition (or, speaking more generally, the *zāhir*  $\Leftrightarrow$  *bāṭin* “exterior  $\Leftrightarrow$  interior” transition) is not a transition from the untrue (non-authentic) to the true (authentic). However, it *is* a transition through which truth and authenticity is *attained*. The very possibility of a “fire  $\Leftrightarrow$  water” transition establishes a third sense, namely the “heating-of-water.” Truth, as a state of “being established” (*ṭhubū*) achieved due to the possibility of a *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” transition,—that is what Fig. 3 implies.

### 1.2.2.2. “Exterior—interior” and “phenomenon—essence”: a putative analogy

In the *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” correlation neither of the terms involved expresses greater authenticity than the other one: only together, and as a result of their mutual transition (*zāhir*/the exterior  $\Leftrightarrow$  *bāṭin*/the interior), can they create the authenticity of the third sense established as that mutual transition. Such understanding covers more than just the terms in question—it extends to any pair that may be described as bound by *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” relation. Vice versa, if we say that two concepts are bound by *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” relation, we thereby imply that neither of them claims to hold the status of great-



er authenticity as compared to the other, but a mutual transition between them is necessarily possible, which possibility establishes a certain third sense, being—in its turn—itsself established by this third sense. Our observation therefore applies not only to the discussed *zāhir-bāṭin* pair itself but also to any pair of terms described as bound by *zāhir-bāṭin* “exterior-interior” relation.

Let us take a look at some examples of the “phenomenon—essence” correlation, such as: the corporeal—the spiritual, the material—the ideal, the physical—the metaphysical, the mundane—the heavenly. Similar examples of this cognitive pattern are countless, and they go far beyond the realm of philosophy. All of them exhibit the opposite: a transition from the former to the latter is always a *deepening* of our knowledge, an *ascent* from the transitory to the permanent, from the false to the true, from the determined to the determinant, from something negligible to something genuine and treasured. Being accomplished, such a transition spares us the necessity of using the step from which we began our ascent to the true and the authentic: after we have grasped the essential and authentic, we can neglect the outward and deceptive.

There is no denying the fact that the above expresses the gist of understanding the “phenomenon—essence” correlation in Western thought; of course, this description might be expanded or modified but, fundamentally, it will remain the same. This vision hardly needs any special proof, for such proof is produced by the entire Western tradition.

### 1.2.3. “The established” (*thābit*) as a mutual transfer of *zāhir* “exterior” and *bāṭin* “interior”

Earlier, we discussed the “fire  $\leftrightarrow$  water” transition as an instance of “*zāhir*/exterior  $\leftrightarrow$  *bāṭin*/interior” transition and those of its traits that are defined by the analyzed variant of logic-and-meaning configuration (Fig. 3) in comparison with the relation described by the phenomenon—essence pair. We may now advance a little further and put forward the question of transfer instead of the question of transition. What do we need to transform a *transition* from one to another into a *transfer* of one into another?

It is obvious that, to achieve this, we’ll need “one” to be one with “another.” Consequently, we might rephrase our question as follows: are “fire” and “water” one in this or that respect?

Yes, they are one in respect of the sense they “establish” (fix, assert): with respect to the “heating-of-water.” To be more specific, fire—regarded as the “heating-of-water”—is the same as water, albeit differently. It means that, in addition to transition from “fire” to “water,” *transfer* of “fire” into “water” is possible as well. By using the word “transfer,” I imply that the transition from one sense (e.g., “fire”) to another (“water”) is a transition of equivalence. “Fire” in some respect *equals* “water”—inasmuch as, in the “heating-of-water,” fire and water are indistinguishable.

The conclusion at which we arrived is quite natural. Indeed, the equivalence of “fire  $\Leftrightarrow$  water” transfer is based on the *unity* of the “heating-of-water” established (fixed, asserted) through the appropriate variant of logic-and-meaning configuration (Fig. 3). This unity does not comprise its own multiplicity, does not contain it ‘inside’ itself. The constituents of this multiplicity (“fire” and “water” in our example) possess nothing common to share. They have to transfer into one another to become one, there is no other way for them to achieve unity. The “heating-of-water” is exactly *their* unity and is accomplished by virtue of their mutual transfer.

Strictly speaking, unity is possible only because the elements of multiplicity are in some way equal to one another. This holds for any unity regardless of how and on what logic-and-meaning basis it is achieved. However, the point is that such bases, being determined by different modes of sense generating procedure, may vary.

Depending on the way in which the elements of multiplicity are equal to one another, unity is achieved on this or that basis; ergo, the relationship between unity and multiplicity will in each case be different. What transfers into unity in one case would not transfer in another, depending on sense generating procedure which determines *how* this transfer is accomplished. “Fire” and “water” are nominally the same for both variants of the sense generating procedure (Fig. 2 and 3), but they merge to transfer into unity in the second case, and not in the first.

Or again, the very content of the concept “unity” would in one case widely differ from its content in another case (the same is true regarding the concept “multiplicity”). The correlation between unity and multiplicity will also vary from case to case, depending on variant of sense generating procedure that runs in our consciousness.

#### **1.2.4. How content is determined by procedure**

Analyzing the sense generating procedure shown on Fig. 3, we arrived at the following results. It turned out that a number of categories and issues raised through them could be understood as descriptions of logic-and-meaning configurations created in the course of applying different variants of the sense generating procedure; further, they could be viewed as deliberations concerning transformations occurring within those logic-and-meaning configurations (transition from one constituent to another, establishment of their unity, etc.). This means that there is at least a number of issues (e.g., the unity—multiplicity problem) the very formulation and solution of which are determined by logic-and-meaning factors.

The fact that sense is determined by the sense generating procedure or, in other words, its *inner* logical determination, discovered in the course of our reasoning, demands fixing a number of points and posing a number of questions.

The sphere of objective logical laws was always conceived as made up of relations *between* meanings—relations existing independently of the content and, for this very reason, readily detachable from any concrete situation and composing their own sphere of universal regular formal patterns. We have discovered that the inner structure of sense, or *what exactly* this or that sense turns out to be (to use our example: what exactly “between fire and water” is, and what other senses is it connected with—meaning *content-related* and not formal connection; and also, what other senses do these ones entail, content-wise) is also determined—partly, at least—by sense generating procedure. This is what enabled us to introduce the notion of “the logic of sense.”

### 1.2.5. The first definition of the concept “sense”

The above allows us to suggest such a definition of the concept “sense” as would comply with the spirit of this work. I suggest applying the term “sense” to that which can refer us to the sense generating procedure that provides a basis for it. For any sense we can always demonstrate the logic-and-meaning configuration defining its logical (objective and independent of concrete content) relation to other constituents of this configuration.

This definition of sense points at the main thing we are discussing here: we are not free in our handling of senses until we comprehend their vital logical dependence on sense generating procedure. Modes of this procedure may vary; the example we analyzed demonstrated that at least two are possible.

### 1.2.6. The dependence of sense on sense generating procedure: some theoretical points

That sense is determined by its sense generating procedure has at least two consequences affecting any random sense  $S$ .

1. We are not at liberty to fill  $S$  with just “any content.” This  $S$  (what exactly it *is*) will be determined not only by the manner in which we endow it with a certain sense-related value (its “nominal content”) but also by the mode of the sense generating procedure in which  $S$  is conceived and understood, and in which it functions. For  $S$ ’s relation to other senses is determined not only by that sense-related value (“nominal content”) with which we are entitled (as it is normally assumed) to endow  $S_1, S_2, S_3$ , or any  $S_j$  at all, but also by the mode of sense generating procedure which configures and correlates  $S$  with  $S_1, S_2, S_3, \dots S_j$ . In other words, the way  $S$  “behaves” is defined by the logic of sense no less (if not more) than by the sense-related value (“nominal content”) assigned to it.

2. The question of whether a certain sense  $S$  is “the same” in two situations may be posed and answered only when we take into account the relevant mode of sense generating procedure. This could be expressed as follows: “the same” can really be “the same” only on condition that it is understood in accordance

with the same sense generating procedure mode and, consequently, is incorporated into the same logic-and-meaning configuration. To be “the same” means more than just being “nominally equal”; for the nominal oneness to be accompanied with the sameness of content, it is necessary to retain the sense generating procedure mode that defines that content. The “fire” of Fig. 2 and the “fire” of Fig. 3, being nominally equal, are *not* “the same fire,” and this also applies to any other senses represented on these figures.

Proceeding further, we may formulate two points bearing on the universality and translatability of sense generating procedure modes:

3. Different variants of sense generating procedure normally cannot be “mixed.” If, to interpret a certain word, a certain sense generating procedure mode has to be applied, then, to interpret a sentence, a text or any other sense-containing fragment, the same sense generating procedure mode is operative. This implies that a certain tradition of thought is homogeneous, at least largely, in regard to the logic-and-meaning configuring procedure mode “responsible” for sense generation in that tradition.

4. The statement that we deal with “one and the same sense” can be construed in two different ways: in its nominal aspect and in an aspect determined by a sense generating procedure (see point 2 above). The very possibility of a nominal coincidence of what is determined by different modes of sense generating procedure and therefore *cannot* coincide as regards the logic-and-meaning content means that we face a certain question.

Our expression, “between fire and water,” without changing formally (i.e., remaining the same phrase of the Russian language), can nonetheless be filled with different content based on different (two, at least) sense generation logics. On the one hand, this demonstrates that the problem of understanding is not a problem of merely recognizing the content but, to a larger extent, a problem of understanding the logic-and-meaning procedure that generates that content.

And, lastly, the question of correlation between word and sense:

5. If sense is defined by a sense generating procedure, are we expected to find a special way of pointing out that dependence? The problem is that such state of being defined is by no means detectable in a word (or words) *per se*, taken nominally; it is no accident that we had to resort to pictorial representations to reflect the fact of sense being determined by a sense generating procedure and by the logic-and-meaning configuration created in the process of its implementation.

## 2. Some implications of the logic-and-meaning theory

Let us to examine two more issues from the standpoint we secured. These are the problem of translation (and, in this connection, of concepts “word,” “sense,” “meaning”) and the problem of comprehending unfamiliar philosophic traditions.

Although seemingly unrelated, these issues have much in common, since they both deal with the strategy of penetrating *beyond words*. How can we learn what lies there, *beyond* that verbal cover with which we deal in our speech or writing? As we have observed, the passage to this “*Trans-Wordia*” is an orderly process divisible into distinct parts. Do theories that interpret the process of understanding and translation also depict it this way?

## 2.1. Sense and semantic theories

### 2.1.1. The signifier, the signified, and the sense

In a recently published book by J. Fodor and E. Lepore, the current situation in the sphere of semantics and the prospects of its development are characterized as follows:

Contrary to widely received philosophical opinion, there are, as far as we can tell, practically *no* closed options in semantics; the arguments that were reputed to close them are, in our view, comprehensively flawed. ...If semantic properties are typically anatomic and there is no a/s distinction, then meaning holism is true. On the other hand, if the arguments in this book are right, then there is no very pressing reason to suppose that semantic properties are typically anatomic. But, on the third hand, if the reason why there are no pressing reasons to suppose that semantic properties are typically anatomic is that, as a matter of fact, semantic properties are typically punctate, then... we desperately need an atomistic theory of meaning... Whichever point of view you take, the present position in meaning theory would seem to be quite unstable [Fodor–Lepore 1992: pp. 207, 206].

Let us accept the authors’ conclusion inasmuch as it reflects, in a most generalized form, existence of two major trends in semantics. The first is based on the belief that the significance of a linguistic symbol is formed by its relation to extralinguistic objects. The proponents of this “atomistic” tradition of semantic research are represented, according to our authors, by empiricists and pragmatists like Ch. Pierce and W. James, the Vienna Circle, B. Russell, behaviorists, and scholars advancing models of semantic representation of information. The other trend—which asserts that the significance of a symbol (the “semantic properties” of a linguistic sign) is determined, partly at least, by its role in language—adheres to holistic theories of meaning. This latter bases on the works of the followers of G. Frege, L. Wittgenstein, and linguists-structuralists. It is represented by such names as D. Davidson, W. Quine, D. Dennett, H. Putnam, R. Rorty, by AI experts, etc. This school adheres to the holistic outlook according to which, to determine the significance of one symbol, we first have to determine the role of this symbol in all conceivable situations, defining thereby the entire language [Fodor Lepor 1992: p. 7].

Let me repeat: the discussed quotation from the book by J. Fodor and E. Lepore is of some interest to us here only because it gives a good idea of the two major trends in semantic research. What matters to me the most is to draw the reader's attention to the *foundation* on which semantic theories rest, not to their contents. This common basis is seemingly overlooked by our authors, who discuss the two alternative principles of semantics, most probably because they do not find it necessary to mention this *obvious* unity. To us, however, it would be interesting to expose it to the light.

The crux of the matter is that both the above-mentioned classification and the linguistic, semantic and philosophic tradition being classified, regardless of the differences between its schools, is based on the firm belief that it is unquestionably possible to construct a semantic theory as a discussion of meaning. The latter is viewed as a certain ready-made entity that has no longer to be substantiated, since it implies no analytical levels deeper than itself. The signified features in these theories as already-present to discover, as something ready-made for this function of its own. These theories differ in how they solve the question of the location of the signified and, consequently, they differ in their vision of the way paved from the signifier to the signified of their choice: this way could be straight and immediate or tortuous and indirect. Consequently, the signification arrow connecting the signifier with the signified could either run straight from the language sign to the object (or to the mental image corresponding to it) or lead us from the sign to other signs of language (to all or most of them) and only then, to the object(s). However, one way or another, the problem of the *inner complexity* of this signification arrow at its every joint is not posed inasmuch as there is no idea of how to calculate it on the basis of studying deeper levels than ones dealing with the relation between the signifier and the signified.

I propose a fundamentally different understanding of sense. It is *between* the language sign and its meaning, between signifier and signified, that the sphere of sense generation is located. Here sense generating procedure takes place to determine the direction in which the symbolic arrow from the language sign will point. Depending on the mode of sense generating procedure being executed, this arrow proceeding from the language sign moves in this or that direction. Therefore the meaning of a language sign is determined by something more than just the manner in which it is "assigned" to this sign (if we are to stick to the atomistic theory), by something more than just the way in which it is "smelted" from the variety of connotations emerging in the functioning of language (if we favor the holistic theories of meaning), but also—and this is perhaps the most important factor—by the way in which it is built up in the logic-and-meaning configuration.

This sense-constructing procedure evades the authors of both atomistic and holistic theories of meaning. This fact is easily noticeable if we compare the reasoning I have put forward above with the manner in which representational theo-

ries would have tackled the problem of two totally different meanings of nominally the same phrase we have raised. Let me take a certain generalized image of such theories, ignoring the differences between them and focusing only on the principles of their typical approach to analysis of the correlation between the language sign and its meaning.

## 2.1.2. Representational theory and the logic of sense

### 2.1.2.1. *How are the deep and the surface language structures connected, or is representational theory capable of explaining the two different visions of the astrologer's prediction?*

In those theories, the straightness and simplicity (i.e., the absence of any inner structure: the arrow links two points—the signifier and the signified—*between* which nothing occurs) of the arrow that connects the language sign to its meaning reflects the fact that the same starting conditions result in the same consequences: the same “surface” (directly manifested) language structures lead us to the same “deep” (sense-generating) structures. The question is how to determine the “sameness” of surface structures. Will the language structures, which we analyzed on Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, be recognized as the same by the theories in question? Do these two structures contain anything pointing to such a difference as would justify differences in the results (in the implied sense)? Can one explain why, having departed from seemingly identical surface structures, we arrive at different deep structures?

It seems that answering this question in the affirmative is difficult. The answer is all the more difficult, since the two figures depict *the same* situation, not two different ones. Properly speaking, we distinguish the situation on Fig. 2 from that on Fig. 3 solely by using the concept of a sense generating procedure; whether representational theory would be able to tell one from the other, remains a question.

We discuss here the same text, literally—as though the Caliph and his prophesying astrologer spoke Russian, or as though the Arabic text that had actually been the object of their attention were presented to us in a perfectly accurate Russian translation. Of course, in this particular case, such assumptions can be easily called into question: neither the astrologer nor the Caliph could have possibly known Russian (the language that had not yet formed in its present shape by their lifetime, to boot), much less have spoken it; as for the accuracy of translation, it is unlikely that anyone would defend it quoting any given text as an example, leaving aside the dubious clarity of the notion itself.

However, the fact that our reasoning never became any faultier for our initial ignoring the falsity of the above assumptions is beyond any doubt. The thing is that the situation is expressly an “as though” situation, so their falsity may be disregarded. We were able to create *two* sense-interpreting strategies for *one and*

*the same* language structure. They both turned out to be correct, if we assume that “correctness” implies reflecting the real—moreover, regularly stable—process of words interpretation: the former corresponds to the understanding suggested by A. Ignatenko (which we initially agreed with), the latter corresponds to the vision that the astrologer himself had in mind and whose plausibility and correctness became obvious to us on careful deliberation.

The fact that the Caliph and the astrologer understood the words “in Arabic,” whereas A. Ignatenko perceived them “in Russian,” is immaterial to us for the time being, as long as we were able to reproduce the astrologer’s understanding without resorting to the specific apparatus of the Arabic language, remaining entirely in the milieu of Russian. What really matters to us, is that it is *in principle* possible to apply two different modes of sense generating procedure to the same linguistic symbol, obtaining essentially different meanings for it. Theoretically, we could have been totally ignorant about the time and place in which the story in question came to pass, about its main characters and, consequently, could have perceived it as though it were originally created in the form it took in our reproduction, as though it were the only form it ever existed in.

As we have seen, it turned out that, in principle, at least two different variants of a sense generating procedure could be applied to the same language structure. The resultant two logic-and-meaning configurations predetermine differences in meanings that the same phrase is bound to have in the two cases under discussion. These differences are determined solely by the dissimilarity between the variants of the sense generating procedure, and by nothing else. Representational theory possesses no means of reflecting this difference (in this respect, it is no different than other semantic theories) and, because of this alone, cannot explain it.

The above might be rephrased as follows. For representational theory, the nominal sameness of two surface structures equals their sameness on the level of content. This theory cannot distinguish between one and the other: if we deal with the extreme case of sameness (one-and-the-same surface structure, as in our example), we cannot refer to possible fluctuations of meaning caused by the difference between pragmatic contexts and the like, which otherwise would have explained the difference in the contents of technically identical units of speech. Unlike representational theory, the logic of sense enables us to see why, in the same situation and other things being equal, the same speech unit can *objectively*, irrespective of our desire and any other varying subjective circumstances, be filled with different content; further, this logic equips us with means of calculating these different contents.

Let us look at it this way too. If the conditions at the starting point are equal, representational theory will be able to suggest only an *ad hoc* hypothesis to explain the difference between the results on Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. To do so, it will resort to the concept of language synonyms. If “between fire and water” equals in one case “a strip of land between bonfires and the river” and in the other case



“the bath,” then the three expressions are but semantic—or conceptual—synonyms. Do we really have to discuss the efficiency of such explanations?

***2.1.2.2. Deep structures and sense, or how the language ability may be conceived***

The concepts “deep structures” and “surface structures,” as well as the thesis that the latter are actual pieces of speech, while the former are represented by rules common to all speakers of a given language, are vital to N. Chomsky’s theory of language at an early stage of its development. They form the basis of the generative grammar. Incidentally, basically the same approach is typical of one of the authors who expressed an opinion about the current prospects of semantics that I discussed above. J. Fodor styles himself a “psycholinguist,” distancing himself from philosophic approaches, since their grasp of psychological reality is not good enough, as he maintains. He sees the process of thinking as a computational process, in which transition from deep structures to surface structures takes place. The generative semantics describes the transition from the former to the latter (cf., for example, [Fodor]). There was time when linguists, inspired by such ideas, sought a “minimum grammar” of human languages—a set of grammatical rules that are inevitably present in *any* language<sup>9</sup> and that are supposed to correspond in some way to the “basic rules” of Chomsky’s theory. It is interesting that the failure of this program never discouraged the still numerous adherents of Chomsky’s perception of language. However, the point is not that it is difficult to find empirical proof of the existence of some universal common rules for all languages that would embody the core of common human rules of thought. The point is also that the thesis in question is not readily provable theoretically.

We have seen that the same surface structure could result out of very different deep structures and that, as a consequence, it is impossible to establish a mutually unequivocal correspondence between words and their sense, since the establishment of such a correspondence depends on the logic-and-meaning configuration in the course of which the sense of a phrase is formed. The most appropriate question to pose at this point is that concerning the thesis about the “sameness” of deep structures. Is the assumption that the basic structures of all languages have a common nature grounded? The postulate about the modes of sense generating procedure whose implementation triggers the formation of logic-and-

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<sup>9</sup> As M. Merleau-Ponty pointed out, the concept of universal grammar was put forward by E. Husserl in section 4 of his *Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations)*; subsequently the standpoint of the father of phenomenology underwent substantial changes—he no longer viewed language as an object presented to our comprehension and investigation with an eidetic system of its own, but started to regard it as the domain of thought and as the origin of intersubjectivity and ideality of thinking. Linguistics underwent a similar evolution of ideas too.

meaning configurations calls the above thesis into question. If different languages embody different variants of sense generating procedure, then no unity of the basic structures is possible in principle, since in different languages different variants of the sense generating procedure function as the base of expressing sense.

The thesis about the unity of the basic sense expressing “instruments” was put forward in the context of discussion of the actually striking phenomenon—the uniform human faculty for mastering language. It seems that all children are capable of mastering any language as their mother tongue, and all human adults are able to learn any second language. Furthermore, humans are able to grasp any (including previously unfamiliar ones) constructions of a language known to them, *provided those have a sense*. Taken jointly, these premises lead us to the idea that the language ability is inborn and common to all humans, and that it finds its expression in the uniform human notion of what is meaningful and what is senseless. According to Chomsky-inspired thinkers, this universal and common notion may be expressed via a set of rules that is *common* to all languages, while the rules of transformation of this common “core” into various linguistic structures yield a variety of means of expression within a specific language as well as a variety of different languages. We might add that the amazing phenomenon of the possibility of translation from one language into another substantiates the thesis that the way of expressing sense, which unites all humans and all languages, has a certain deep-level unity: without such a unity translation would be impossible.

Consequently, the ability to master any language, to understand any phrase of a familiar language (provided it makes sense) and to translate from any language into any other language cannot fail to be recognized as proof that there is one common way of sense formation and sense expression. Representational theories maintain that this common way of sense formation may be formalized in patently expressed, concrete and *content-furnished* theses. I mean that these theses have perfectly definite content, and this content, as expected, is expressed clearly, fully and unambiguously.

Therefore the formulation of the basic rules defining the deep structures of language is possible. And for the same reason the assumption that the sense of a sentence of the language  $L_1$  can be first patently formulated in a certain metalanguage  $M$ , which is common to all languages, and then translated into a corresponding phrase of the language  $L_2$  is axiomatic to the authors of theory of machine translation. I refrain now from discussing what could be lost in translation on the steps  $L_1 \Rightarrow M$  or  $M \Rightarrow L_2$ , or the issues associated with the construction of metalanguages; I am solely interested in the conviction that the sense of any piece of speech could be reflected in precisely formulated theses conveying concrete content, which is a conviction common to all theories under discussion.

The obstinacy with which authors accepting this assumption refuse to notice a plainly obvious thing is truly amazing. They admit *de facto* the regression into

infinity. If the sense of an  $L_1$ -phrase is expressed as an  $M$ -phrase having concrete content, also of a linguistic nature, then this  $M$ -phrase, to be understood, has to have a sense of its own. This means, however, that the reference to such an expression of the sense of an  $L_1$ -phrase on no account transfers us to a level higher (or, if it makes anyone happier, deeper) than the one we are analyzing; it merely presents a reformulation of one structure into another, but does not provide us with the basis for such reformulation. To put it differently, there is no real difference between  $L_1 \Rightarrow L_2$  translation and  $L_1 \Rightarrow M$  translation: to formulate the meaning of  $L_1$  sentence in metalanguage  $M$ , we already need the translation rules. This leaves us on the same plane of un-achieved sense. Such reformulations never allow us to get down to the sense, time after time they leave us at a point where sense is indicated but by no means attained.

That is why, while agreeing that the above-described phenomena doubtless point to a universal unity of the way of sense formation, I absolutely refuse to share the conviction that this common way could be expressed in finished, precisely formulated theses. By the way, this conviction is very similar to the age-old philosophic belief in the unity of human reason reflected in *finished* and universally accepted tenets of logic.

Sense could be *intimated* to us as a state of being built-up, or rather as a possibility of being built-up. The process-related nature of sense is implied by the very concept of sense generating procedure. A “finalized” sense ceases to be, properly speaking, a sense—it becomes something else, something for which a procedure of transition to its own sense has to be specified. Sense is the ability to line up its own orderly cohesion. The sense generating procedure is exactly that which detects this ability. It is only by passing from a finalized, fixed meaning of a word or a phrase to its ability to actualize itself as a sense generating process that we can really proceed to another level and descend from the surface of language to the sense generation process that underlies it.

Describing sense as an ability to display its cohesion and re-build itself in relation with other senses, I do not reproduce the thesis typical of holistic theories of meaning. The point is that I strive to grasp merely the *ability* to build up sense, not the *content* of sense. I also affirm that this ability may be expressed logically. The question of correlation between the way of expressing this ability and the expression of finalized meanings will be of interest to us in the future.

I also must observe that, by rejecting the thesis about the possibility of finalizing the unity of the universal human method of sense expression in finished texts of concrete content (no matter how these texts are represented: as sets of rules, as lists of basic meanings, as concrete “sense representations” of certain language structures or in some other manner) in favor of notions of the logic of sense, we by no means deprive ourselves of the possibility to provide an explanation for the above-mentioned phenomena of language mastering, understanding and translation. Quite the reverse, such an explanation becomes all the more

satisfactory. If we admit that these phenomena can be explained through the universal human language ability, then, to harmonize this postulate with the obvious variety of languages, we'll have to admit that this ability depends on no specific language, and ergo is the ability of mastering *language in general*. The difficulty of formulating the concept of "language in general" (including this task as applied to the mentioned linguistic theories) is quite obvious. But the point is that there is no need to explain said phenomena via the concept of *language* ability.

Instead of this, I suggest the following. Would not it be more proper to say, "Human beings have an inborn faculty of *X*, which is actualized, among other things, as their mastery of a specific language (Russian, English, Arabic, etc.)," instead of, "Human beings have an inborn language ability, which is actualized only as their mastery of a specific language (Russian, English, Arabic, etc.)"? By *X*, I mean the "sense generation ability," which can more precisely be recognized by us as the ability to perform various modes of sense generating procedure. That the varying modes of this procedure, while in all probability determining concrete languages, have an extra-linguistic nature was demonstrated above quite clearly. By avoiding references to "language-in-general," we will only enhance the explanatory power of Chomsky's hypothesis. We will also substantially modify it if we suggest that what is essentially common to all humankind is not the finalized "deep structures" but the ability to run sense generating procedure which does not have any concrete universal, general mode but is presented to us as a set of variants.

### Afterword

No doubt the reader noticed that I never quoted the Arabic text of *Kitāb al-aghānī* (*Book of Songs*) by al-Iṣbahānī. Let me elaborate on that issue.

A. Ignatenko does not provide a reference, and I must confess that, no matter how hard I tried, I could not find the required quotation in al-Iṣbahānī's text. I admit the fault is solely mine. This failure caused me certain grief first. On second thoughts, however, I dismissed those feelings. What is important for me is not the authenticity of A. Ignatenko's rendering of al-Iṣbahānī; rather, it is the possibility to discover two different ways in which the same words may make sense, and to demonstrate that those two sense-making strategies may be grasped and shaped logically, not as a vague intuition. For the first strategy, called "our" understanding, I relied on A. Ignatenko's reasoning and his analysis of al-Iṣbahānī's text, presuming his rendering of this issue is quite typical, and an "average" Russian (or, for that matter, English) reader would read and interpret the story in the same way. But what about the second strategy?

There is an anecdote strikingly similar to the one that A. Ignatenko discussed. It is repeated in a number of books on history and *adab* almost word by word, with minor deviations which do not interfere with the core of this narrative that

concerns us. Let me quote the most concise version, in fact one phrase, related by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī in his *Muḥāḍarāt al-'udabā'*:

من حكم بتنجيم وافق قوله القضاء  
كان الفضل بن سهل حكم على نفسه أنه يعيش أربعين سنة ثم يقتل بين ماء ونار،  
فعاش هذه المدة ثم قتل في حمام سرخس.

### **Astrological predictions that coincided with predestination.**

Al-Faḍl bin Sahl predicted for himself that he would live forty years and then would be killed between water and fire. He lived that time and then was killed in a bath in Sarakhs [Iṣfahani 1999: V. 1, p. 185].

Al-Ṣafadī in his monumental *Al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt* provides us with much more detail. Al-Faḍl bin Sahl, the famous wazīr of the 'Abbaside khalīfa al-Ma'mūn, was skilled in astrology, and many of his predictions proved to be true. After his death al-Ma'mūn ordered that what was left by al-Faḍl be brought to him. A sealed basket was brought, inside a sealed chest was found, and in the chest there was a roll in which it was written by al-Faḍl's hand:

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate. This is what al-Faḍl bin Sahl predicted for himself: he will live forty eight years and then will be killed between water and fire [Safadi 2000: V. 24, pp. 32–33].

Here, as in other works, the lifetime is 48, and not 40 years, but *bayna mā' wa nār* "between water and fire" stay the same, as they do in all the version that I could find (cf. [Ibn Khallikan: V. 4, p. 42], [Dhahabi 1413: V. 10, pp. 99–100], [Yafī'i 1993: V. 2, p. 6], [Amili 1998: V. 2, p. 223]). And this 'between water and fire' always turns out to be a bath in Sarakhs where al-Faḍl bin Sahl was assassinated by al-Ma'mūn's servant, as historians state.

So, this *contrast* between the two readings of the same story is there. Both variants may be produced in our head if, first, we adopt a substance-related pattern of the universe and presuppose that "between" refers us to a substantial thing ("bank" or the like), or, second, see the universe as a collection of processes and understand "between water and fire" as a "firing-of-water" process (and, then, interpret it as a "bath" or the like). I argue that the Arabic culture is inclined to adopt the second vision, and what I see as a proof of it is discussed in other parts of the book.

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