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STALIN AND THE LINGUISTIC TURN IN SOVIET PHILOSOPHY

In this paper I wish to examine the context of Stalin's decision to present himself as a theorist of the origins and nature of language. The most well-known element of Stalin's theory is the claim that language is part of neither the superstructure nor the base in a society, and so that there can be no such thing as a „class language.“ The Russian language, for instance, was to Stalin on a par with the railroad system built by capitalists in Tsarist Russia: it was a tool, which in itself was not bound to any class or period of history, and both could be unproblematically taken over by the ascendant representatives of the final era of history. This theory, presented in 1950 in Stalin's *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*, came in marked contrast to the early, party-sanctioned linguistic theory of N. Y. Marr, which had it that language is part of the superstructure of society, and so that distinct natural languages are necessarily attached to distinct social classes.

I am not, primarily, interested in providing another account of the content of Stalin's theory, though a brief summary is certainly in order. In the first section of this paper, I wish to determine why exactly Stalin felt compelled to refute Marr. I take it almost for granted that, whatever Stalin may have represented himself in public as believing, he had political or pragmatic reasons for doing so. Thus, in the first section of this paper I will endeavor to extract these reasons from Stalin's 1950 treatise on language. In this section, I also wish to look at another, less well-known aspect of Stalin's theory, and one I consider more relevant to the philosophical activity in the West that was going on in Stalin's day. This is the claim, one that Stalin shares with Marr and other earlier Soviet theorists, that there can be no language without thought, nor thought without language.

In the second section, I wish to consider why in 1950 Stalin chose to present himself as a theorist of language at all, rather than as, say, a psychologist or a literary critic, though of course he dabbled in these fields as well. In a sense, Stalin was in a position to proclaim himself an expert on anything, since nobody else was in a position to dispute his expertise. He chose language. My interest in exposing the reasons for this is part of a larger project to determine the to effect

the linguistic turn in Western philosophy had on the seemingly closed world of Soviet philosophy. It seems to me that the totalitarian leader's decision to present himself in this way says a great deal about the general intellectual climate of the mid-20th century. The linguistic turn, heralded by the Logical Positivists and continued by the Oxford ordinary-language philosophers and by Wittgenstein, happened primarily because it began to dawn on the successors to Plato, Descartes, and Kant that the inability to discover firm foundations for our philosophical intuitions might be an effect of our crude understanding of how the language in which we attempt to describe these foundations actually works. From Lenin's day until the collapse, party-line Soviet philosophy consistently described all varieties of Western philosophy of language as "bourgeois idealism." But this does not mean that Soviet philosophy was entirely resistant to the turn. In the second section of this paper, I will argue that Stalin's „philosophy of language“ ought to be seen as a product of the times; this project of Stalin's did not emerge out of factors wholly specific to the communist world, but indeed were, at least to some extent, the product of the same global intellectual milieu which gave rise to the work of Russell, Carnap, Dewey, and Wittgenstein.

In the final section, I wish to consider Stalin-era Soviet philosophy of language in view of recent developments in analytic philosophy of language. It will be my claim that much of the metaphilosophical understanding in contemporary analytical philosophy of the deeper motivations and assumptions of early philosophy of language was anticipated, strangely enough, in the Soviet polemic of the Stalin era against early „bourgeois“ philosophy of language. In other words, the historical self-consciousness that has developed in the analytic tradition out of the work of Sellars, Quine, Davidson, Rorty and others, is something that might have developed earlier had greater attention been paid to the substantive, as opposed to polemical, philosophical claims of the enemy.

1. The Content of Stalin's Theory of Language

In the introduction I noted that the most important aspect of Stalin's theory of language is thought to have been his removal of it from the superstructure of society, where it had been placed by N. Y. Marr. In so doing, Stalin broke with Soviet Marxist orthodoxy by claiming that there could be a social phenomenon that was part of neither the base nor the superstructure of society. The specific feature of the base, according to Stalin, is that it serves a society economically; the specific features of the superstructure „consist in that it serves society by means of political, legal, aesthetic and other ideas and provides society with corresponding political, legal, aesthetic, and other institutions.“¹ Language, on the other hand, is distinguished from other social phenomena in that it serves society

¹ Stalin 1976, 34.

as a means of intercourse between people, as a means for exchanging thoughts in society, as a means enabling people to understand one another and to co-ordinate joint work in all spheres of human activity, both in the sphere of production and in the sphere of economic relations, both in the sphere of politics and in the sphere of culture, both in social life and in everyday life.

An important point to extract from this account of language is that, in being described as a tool that can be used „in all spheres of human activity,“ it is something that doesn't change along with a change in these spheres, for instance, a change from the capitalist to the communist mode of production. This is in distinction to the institutions making up the superstructure, which must be razed and built anew after the revolution. For Stalin, there is a certain analogy between language and the instruments of production, including those instruments that we today would identify as part of the "infrastructure", such as highways and railroads. Stalin compares those who would place language among the institutions of the superstructure rather than among the instruments of the „infrastructure“ to those who once „asserted that the railways left to us after the October Revolution were bourgeois railways, that it would be unseemly for us Marxists to use them, that they should be torn up and new, ‚proletarian‘ railways built.“² Stalin calls this a „primitive-anarchist“ view of society, language, and classes. Yet, he concedes that language is not in fact an instrument of production, but only highly analogous to one. It fails to fully qualify since „it is not difficult to see that were language capable of producing material wealth, wind-bags would be the richest men on earth.“³

It is difficult, as I mentioned above, to believe that Stalin proclaimed the truth of *anything* in virtue of some deep philosophical conviction that it was true. It is my opinion that the political motivation behind Stalin's rejection of Marr's theory of language as superstructure was his interest in preserving the distinctness of Soviet nationalities. Stalin was, as Antón Donoso points out, extremely concerned about the role of individual nationalities in the continuing Soviet revolution, and this concern is reflected in his theory of language.⁴ Bulakhovskii notes in his article, „On the Road to a Materialistic Linguistics,“ „Comrade Stalin has given a classic definition of a nation, which is extremely important for linguistics.“ A nation, writes Stalin, „is a historically formed stable community of people which arose on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up, which is manifested in a common culture.“⁵ The individual nationalities making up the Soviet Union, as Stalin famously declared

² Stalin 1976, 17.

³ Stalin 1976, 35.

⁴ Donoso 1965, 267-303, 285.

⁵ Bulakhovskii 1951, 57.

at the XVth Party Congress in 1930, should be „national in form but socialist in content.“ Donoso explains this apparent contradiction:

[Stalin] was to maintain that the period of building socialism in the USSR is the opposite of the period of the collapse and abolition of national cultures – it is a period of the „flowering“ of national cultures so as to fulfill their potentialities and create the appropriate conditions for merging them into one common culture with one common language in the period of worldwide socialism.⁶

Stalin concedes that this is a contradiction, but, thanks to the nature of the universe, governed as it is by the laws of dialectical materialism, this contradiction is one that can be lived with: „[A]nyone,“ says Stalin, „who fails to understand this peculiar feature and ‚contradiction‘ [*protivorechie*] of our transition period, anyone who fails to understand these dialectics of the historical process, is dead as far as Marxism is concerned.“⁷ Stalin appears to wish to explain away anything that does not fit into his world view by characterizing his world view as one that essentially involves ‚contradictions‘, which is to say things that don’t fit into his world view. This was Marxism at its crudest, but, from a pragmatic point of view, it was brilliant. As Donoso points out, the resurrection of nationalism in the name of communism was of the greatest practical advantage to the Communist Party, and was likely among the deciding factors in the Soviet Union’s victory in World War II.

While the removal of language from the superstructure was likely the most significant aspect of Stalin’s theory of language relative to Soviet Marxism, there is another aspect of Stalin’s theory which I think is of more philosophical interest, or which at least looks more like a philosophical claim. This is Stalin’s thesis that there can be no language without thought, and no thought without language. This thesis, as we will see particularly in the next section, was to a great extent a reaction against the „idealistic semantics“ of Marriians, Saussureans, logical empiricists, and other Western philosophers of language who, „having an excessive passion for semantics... divorce thinking from language.“ This separation contradicts Marx’s claim that „Language is the immediate reality of thought,“ and so that „[t]he reality of thought is manifested in language.“ Stalin reasons that „[o]nly idealists can speak of thinking not being connected with the ‚natural matter‘ of language, of thinking without language.“⁸ Stalin’s primary target in this polemic is Marr and his disciples. However, as we will see in the next section, Stalin’s entry in 1950 into the „discussion“ of linguistics, and particularly of idealistic semantics, was precipitated by heavy criticism of Dewey, Russell, Whitehead, Carnap and others in the pages of *Voprosy filosofii* between 1947 and 1950.

⁶ Donoso 1965, 285.

⁷ Stalin 1951.

⁸ Stalin 1976, 36–37. Stalin does not give a citation for the quotation from Marx.

While Stalin describes language as the manifestation of the reality of thought, and explains that thought and language are „closely connected,“ he does not, as far as his view can be made to make sense, seem to believe that there can be no thought without language. Stalin’s most comprehensive definition of language identifies it as a „medium, an instrument with the help of which people communicate with one another, exchange thoughts, and understand each other.“⁹ Stalin writes that language „registers and fixes in words, and in words combined into sentences, *the results of the process of thinking* and achievements of man’s cognitive activity.“¹⁰ I emphasize the characterization of language as a result of thinking, rather than as the medium of thinking itself, since I think this is the key to understanding this relation considered so important by Stalin. Thought, it would seem, does precede language. However, since everything that makes us human stems from our interaction with other humans, thought without language is entirely without value. Some pages later, Stalin insists that it is „absolutely wrong“ that thoughts might arise without „material linguistic integument.“ „Whatever thoughts arise,“ he writes, „can only arise and exist on the basis of the linguistic material... Bare thoughts, free of the linguistic material, free of the ‚natural matter‘ of language, do not exist.“¹¹ I do not see at all how, if language results from thought, there can be no thought without language. I think the view of the two as „closely connected“ is the fairest one to attribute to Stalin, rather than the incoherent view of the two as each the cause of the other.

The contrary, language without thought, seems to be more disagreeable to Stalin. It is difficult to discern what exactly he might mean by this. Stalin berates Marr for waxing futuristically thus:

Language (spoken) has already begun to surrender its functions to the latest inventions which are unreservedly conquering space... The language of the future is thinking which will be developing in technique free of natural matter.¹²

From the context, it is impossible to discern what Marr is talking about, though one could imagine that Stalin prefers it this way. In the study of semantics, Stalin writes, „its significance must in no way be overestimated, and still less must it be abused.“ Marx and Engels, Stalin notes, understood language as practical, actual consciousness. Semantics, as the study of language without regard for its use, lands one in the swamp of idealism.

Stalin’s denial of Marr’s theory had an important effect in the Soviet understanding of Marxism. As we have seen, the denial was motivated by one of Sta-

⁹ Stalin 1976, 20.

¹⁰ Stalin 1976, 20. Italics added.

¹¹ Stalin 1976, 37.

¹² Quoted in Stalin 1976, 36.

lin's political concerns, namely, his interest in unifying Marxism with nationalism, and so in preventing the absorption of national cultures into one generic Soviet culture. Even if the superstructures of these cultures would have to be transformed into socialist ones, the languages had to be recategorized as part of neither the superstructure nor the base, in order to make the loss of everything in the superstructure, including the aesthetic and philosophical institutions, seem something less to the Soviet nationalities than total obliteration.

This unadmirable political end compelled Stalin to offer, on the one hand, a somewhat more reasonable view of the relation of language to class than that offered earlier by Marr, and, on the other hand, a new, dynamic conception of Marxism that enabled Stalin to openly concede, and even celebrate, the deviation of Soviet Marxism from its origins in Marx and Engels. At the end of his treatise on language, Stalin defines language as „the science of the laws governing the development of nature and knowledge.“ As a science, Stalin continues, Marxism „cannot but be enriched by new experience, new knowledge - consequently some of its formulas and conclusions cannot but change in the course of time, cannot but be replaced by new formulas and conclusions, corresponding to new historical tasks.“¹³ In imposing his new dogma on Soviet Marxism, proclaims that to resist doing so would be un-Marxist, insofar as Marxism is, most importantly, „the enemy of all dogmatism.“

2. The Linguistic Turn in Soviet Philosophy

In the previous section, we saw that Stalin's theory of language involved two substantive claims, namely, the claim that language is neither part of the superstructure nor of the base of society, but rather something analogous to a productive force, and the claim that there can be no language without thought and no thought without language. The first claim was something wholly new in Stalin and constituted something of a revolution in Soviet theory of language, putting an end to the sovereignty of Marr's theory. The latter claim, which is the primary object of our investigation in this article, is rooted in earlier Soviet Marxist thought. The latter half of the second claim, the denial of the possibility of abstraction of language away from thought, was seen most importantly as the denial of an idealistic view of language. As we saw in the last section, the study of semantics, conceived of as the science of language in abstraction from its use (or, as the „semantic idealists“ would describe it, the study of meaning without regard for pragmatics), was seen by Stalin as inherently idealistic. This opposition to semantics was not new in Stalin. It can be found in accounts of contemporary Western analytic philosophy in Soviet scholarly journals as early as 1947. In this section, I wish to look at these accounts, and then to argue that

¹³ Stalin 1976, 52f.

Stalin's stance concerning semantics is largely a reaction to the work of Western philosophers of language. Though there is no evidence that Stalin read the works of these philosophers, there is no doubt that other Soviet writers did read them, and, moreover, that Stalin accepted and advanced these writers' view of semantic idealism.

Prior to Stalin's entry into the discussion of linguistics, Soviet writers were happily perpetuating the *status quo* with article after article of praise for Marr. Consider A. G. Spirkin's contribution to *Voprosy filosofii* in 1949:

Academician Marr's teaching on language, erected on the firm base of dialectical and historical materialism, constitutes a genuine, revolutionary upheaval in linguistics. The new teaching on language formulated by N. Ya. Marr, ardent patriot and true son of the party of Lenin and Stalin, is the product of the great October socialist revolution.¹⁴

And now, in contrast, a typical account of Marr's contribution after Stalin's entry:

The unsatisfactory state of linguistics, its stagnation, particularly the confusion and erroneousness of Academician Marr's theories, have had their effect on the development of linguistic thought in the national republics [...] J. V. Stalin's „On Marxism in Linguistics“ [...] marks a turning point in linguistics. The great Stalin has opened before Soviet linguistics a bright path, clear prospects.¹⁵

While the reputation of Marr changed radically in 1950, the reputation of Western philosophers of language stayed the same. Marr, after his banishment, was portrayed as defending essentially the same theory of language as the Anglo-American philosophers of language and as the French structuralists. In 1947 M. G. Yaroshevskii begins an article on „The Problem of Language in the Investigations of the Lackeys of Anglo-American Imperialism,“ with the forceful statement that

Surrounding the problem of language in contemporary English and American philosophy and psychology there has arisen an unlikely ruckus [*shum*]. The disintegrating philosophical mentality of the West has thought up a fashionable medicine for its salvation.

This medicine, Yaroshevskii explains, was prescribed by the innovators of the linguistic turn:

¹⁴ Spirkin 1951, 1.

¹⁵ Sauranbayev 1951, 88.

Their books and journals are filled with semantic exercises, projects for linguistic reform, calls for the critique of language and laments [*vopliami*] over the troubles that are allegedly wrought by the use of normal human speech. The basic meaning of all this hubbub [*shumikhi*] is that it is an effort to conceal the true reasons behind the failure of idealism by transferring the blame to language.¹⁶

Shortly after Stalin's entry into the debate in 1950, M.D. Kammari places the former hero of Marxist linguistics among these failed idealists, comparing his work to that of Saussure and Cassirer. Stalin, Kammari writes, destroyed the antiscientific, anti-Marxist theory of N.Ya. Marr concerning the class-specificity of language.

Marr's misuse of semantics led him to idealism, while idealistic semantical philosophy has taken on as its specialty speculation with semantics in the interests of strengthening idealism and Popovism [*popovshchiny*] „Semanticians“ suggest that we reject the concepts [*poniatii*], thought [*mysleniia*], language, and parts of speech that have been developed by humanity over the millenia, and replace them with various idealistic twists [*vyvertami*]. All of this testifies to the degradation and marasm of bourgeois philosophy and linguistics, which present themselves as weapons of the imperialistic reaction, underlying the plans of the Anglo-American imperialists.¹⁷

I feel the need at this point to excuse the vagueness in my own references to „bourgeois philosophy.“ This is a vagueness I would ordinarily seek to avoid, recognizing, as I do, the immense difference between the theories of language of the Pragmatists, of the Logical Positivists, of Sartre, of Saussure, of Russell, and so on. However, in this case, my primary interest is in conveying a feeling for the philosophical temperament of Stalin-era philosophy, a temperament that fed on vague and summary condemnations of all non-Stalinist thought. All Anglo-American philosophy being, in the Stalinists' eyes, merely a veiled defense of imperialism and class inequity, it stands to reason that the thought of Russell and Dewey and Ayer would be reducible to one another. Nonetheless, Russell, perhaps as a result of his stance as a public intellectual, was the most sharply criticized of the semantic idealists:

One of the most fashionable and influential figures among the bourgeois reactionary philosophers, throughout his life Russell has been active in teaching and in journalism, as the author of popular brochures and a number of „scientific“ books, such as: *Principia Mathematica*, *The Analysis of Matter*, *An Outline of Philosophy*, *Mysticism and Logic*, *History of*

¹⁶ Yaroshevskii 1953i, 258.

¹⁷ Kammari 1950, 20.

Western Philosophy, and others. This entire massive production is aimed towards a single goal: in politics, a battle against the Soviet Union, against the English working class, against the liberation movement of colonial peoples; in philosophy, a battle against dialectical materialism and against the truly materialistic, scientific world view.¹⁸

Russell, on the Soviet view, was at the forefront of a movement the primary function of which was to do intellectual battle with the Soviet Union. „Logical empiricism“ was used as a blanket term covering a wide variety of non-Soviet schools of thought. The basic picture of the history of philosophy is easy to summarize: with Marx, materialism emerged forever victorious over idealism. To continue to promote the philosophy, or at least the ontological views, of the majority of pre-Marxian philosophers, is not only philosophically but politically reactionary. Philosophers in politically reactionary countries, not surprisingly, were accordingly ontologically reactionary. Logical empiricism, represented most prominently by Russell but also by philosophers as diverse as Dewey and Tarski, was nothing but the latest version of pre-Marxian confusion, all the less forgivable in view of the availability in the 20th century of a better alternative:

In search of theories which might be used as a weapon in the battle against Marxism, the ideologues of the modern bourgeoisie take advantage of all the old idealistic systems, updated by means of new terminology. Berkeleyanism, Humeanism, Kantianism, Hegelianism, Platonism and other idealistic theories have been reborn, under cover of newly fashionable names. Berkeleyanism, Humeanism, and Kantianism have „had it best“, gaining acceptance under the title of Machism, empiriocriticism, fictionalism, pragmatism, etc. The numerous neomachists, positivists, fictionalists, pragmatists, and other groups and grouplets, up until now presenting themselves as self-sufficient schools, each allegedly having its own, original views, to be distinguished from the views of other, similar little schools, have now thrown off their masks of self-sufficiency and originality and have unified for battle against Marxism. Logical empiricism, as this hodge-podge of obscurantism [*mrakobesii*] is called by its participants themselves, constitutes today the most widespread reactionary tendency in the USA, England, and West Germany.¹⁹

Bakradze identifies two principle claims of logical empiricism:

- 1) The subject matter of logic is language.
- 2) The principles of logic are the principles of philosophy, since philosophy, in essence, is logic.

And logic, at least the non-dialectical variety, as the editors of *Voprosy filosofii* collectively explain, is, again, but another vehicle for idealism:

¹⁸ Kol'man 1953, 169.

¹⁹ Bakradze 1953, 138.

It is clear that the solution of the task of the logical foundation of mathematics can be realized only on the basis of the Marxist dialectical method. However, foreign „foundationers“ of mathematics have gone right down the opposite path: down the path of idealism and metaphysics, down the path of further formalization of logic, thereby removing from it any actual content.²⁰

It is not the aim of this short paper to determine whether there is anything in particular about mathematical, non-dialectical logic to which Soviet philosophers were opposed, other than its threatening symbols and the fact that it was expounded by enemies of the Soviet Union. It would be interesting to look into this subject more deeply. One might find some substantive philosophical opposition to the law of the excluded middle, Stalin's version of dialectical materialism being rather Heracleitean in spirit. The only evidence I have for this claim, for now, is the immense interest of the Soviet mathematical logicians in the 1930s, such as Bochvar, in developing trivalent alternatives to classical logic.

For now, I wish to leave this question aside and turn to a brief discussion of the significance of the Stalin-era critique of Western philosophy of language.

3. A Moral?

Until now, I have remained intentionally silent on the question as to why all this might matter. It would be very easy to write off all of the Stalin-era critique of analytic philosophy as propaganda, produced under conditions that entirely prevented whatever quasiphilosophical argumentation it employed from qualifying as serious philosophy. Certainly, we should not take seriously the accusation that Bertrand Russell was a promoter of imperialism and an enemy of the English working class, particularly when it is advanced as an argument against his mathematical logic! It is very clear, even from the titles of the articles in *Voprosy filosofii*, that the primary aim of the regular „Against Bourgeois Philosophy“ section was to indict Western countries for their political systems, and the philosophy produced in these countries would undoubtedly have been depicted as reflecting and supporting the values and policies of these political systems, even had logical empiricism and „semantic idealism“ never appeared.

I do, however, think that the philosophical pith of Stalin-era theory of language can, to some extent, be extracted from the propaganda in which it's embedded. The claim that Western philosophers had shifted the blame for the failure of idealism to language, in my opinion, is an interesting one, and, in view of the developments in recent metaphilosophical discussion among analytic philosophers, a prescient one. After Rorty, we call it the failure of the Kantian program; Stalin's people called it the failure of bourgeois idealism. But both agree

²⁰ Tugarinov and Maistrov 1950, 331f.

that attention was refocused on language as a result of the perceived inadequacies of clear and distinct ideas, pure reason, or however it may have been called. As Rorty writes:

[T]he kind of philosophy which stems from Russell and Frege is... simply one more attempt to put philosophy in the position which Kant wished it to have – that of judging other areas of culture on the basis of its special knowledge of the „foundations“ of these areas. „Analytic“ philosophy is one more variant of Kantian philosophy, a variant marked principally by thinking of representation as linguistic rather than mental, and of philosophy of language rather than „transcendental critique.“²¹

Marxism, from the Soviet perspective, broke out of this pattern of failure by ceasing to search for an *a priori* framework. How, exactly, Soviet Marxist philosophers justified their certainty concerning the laws of dialectical materialism, if not as *a priori* truths, is another, important question. Rarely in the Stalin-era critique of analytic philosophy is an accusation of apriorism or foundationalism leveled; the preferred epithet is more or less consistently „idealism“. But, as we have seen, Soviet Marxist philosophers found „idealistic“ any kind of reasoning that abstracted away from, or began from a starting point other than, human social experience.

The critique of Kant in the Stalin-era is little different from that of Russell. Consider Z.Y. Beletskii's characterization of Kant in his polemic against G.F. Aleksandrov's 1946 work, *History of Western European Philosophy*:

Apriorism, the transcendental method, all of this served only as a means for his „theoretical“ constructions, designed to justify the obstinacy of the Prussian state.²²

Beletskii, rather than go into any great detail concerning the content and method of transcendental idealism, simply denies that it is a philosophical system at all, insisting instead that it is a thinly veiled display of political reactionism:

The works of Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason* – these are not abstract works, nor are they works derived from concrete reality. They are militant political works, in which Kant theoretically established the necessity of the existence of the Prussian state [...] The philosophy of Kant defended the German reaction against the French

²¹ Rorty 1979, 8.

²² Beletskii 1947, 320. Aleksandrov's work was meant to be the first „Bolshevik textbook“ on the history of philosophy, but was harshly criticized shortly after its appearance for „going too soft on idealism“. What followed was a 9-day meeting of the members of the Institute of Philosophy in June of 1947 to „discuss“ the work in the light of Stalin's pronouncement.

revolution; it defended idealism against materialism, and religion against science.²³

Nonetheless, what little substantive criticism of Kant's thought is offered by Beletskii significantly resembles the criticism offered by other writers for *Voprosy filosofii* of Russell and his contemporaries, as it also resembles Stalin's criticism of the semantic idealists: all of these reactionary systems betray themselves as idealism in their effort to find foundations outside of actual human experience, and particularly outside of social activity and interaction.

Kant, in his work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, investigates one fundamental question: can we deduce our ideas from the objects of the external world? And he proves that the external world cannot be fundamental to the emergence of ideas, that man obtains his ideas in a superexperiential [*sverkhopytnym*] way. They are obtained as a result of the pure activity of reason. Ideas, in Kant's view, help us to orient ourselves within the ends and principles established by god at the creation. Everything that man confronts in this life, all of it, Kant teaches, is given from above, by god. We cannot change anything in society, Kant says; we do not have the right.²⁴

This consideration, of course, makes the Stalinites unwitting comrades of Dewey, the late-Wittgenstein, and Rorty himself. What should we make of this? To point out an aspect of Rorty's thought that is shared by Stalin is, of course, a shame for Rorty. But, depending on how one sees things, to point out an aspect of Stalin's thought that is shared by Rorty might be seen as a plus for Stalin.

It seems to me that one moral that might be drawn from all of this is that, whatever we think of foundationalist philosophy, we should be extremely cautious in attempting to draw parallels between it and totalizing ideology. The fact that Stalin's philosophy of language is more appropriately grouped with that of Dewey, Rorty, and the late-Wittgenstein than with that of Frege, Dummett, and the early-Wittgenstein suggests, if anything, a quite different parallelism.

As Donoso points out, much of Stalin's theory of language was by and large reasonable. Language is more like a force of production than, as Marr had said, a class-specific superstructure. Moreover, as many Western philosophers of language since Stalin have been keen to point out, use really does determine meaning; semantics can't get off the ground without pragmatics. What was *un*-reasonable about Stalin's theory was not anything about its content, but that others were forced to accept it. Similarly, what was unreasonable about the Stalin-era picture of Western philosophy of language was not that it was completely false, but rather that everyone involved in the Soviet discussion of Western philosophy of language was forced to agree with this picture. To be sure, the politi-

²³ Ibid. 321.

²⁴ Ibid.

cal motivations behind Western analytic philosophy were grossly overemphasized in Soviet philosophy, but arguably no more than they were grossly *underemphasized* by the Western philosophers themselves.

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