Rozhdestvensky and Communication Theory

Russian Evolution: Russian Reflections

A Conference on the work of Professor Yuri Rozhdestvensky: his Contribution to Linguistics, Rhetoric, Communication Theory, Semiotics, Poetics and Narratology

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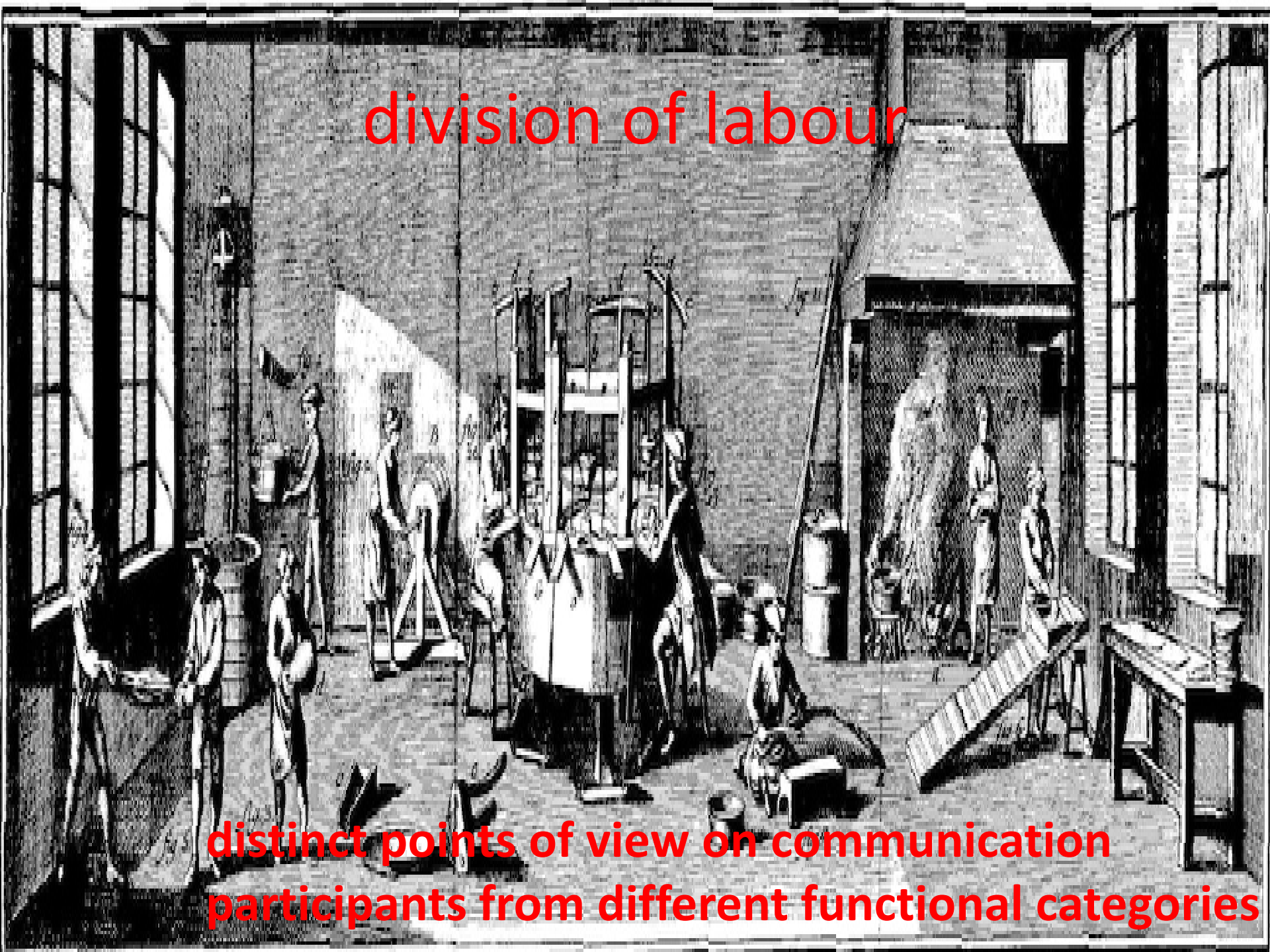
Middlesex University London

Rozhdestvensky

a sideways glance at communication

Cultural intermediaries

division of labour

distinct points of view on communication
participants from different functional categories

'medium theory'

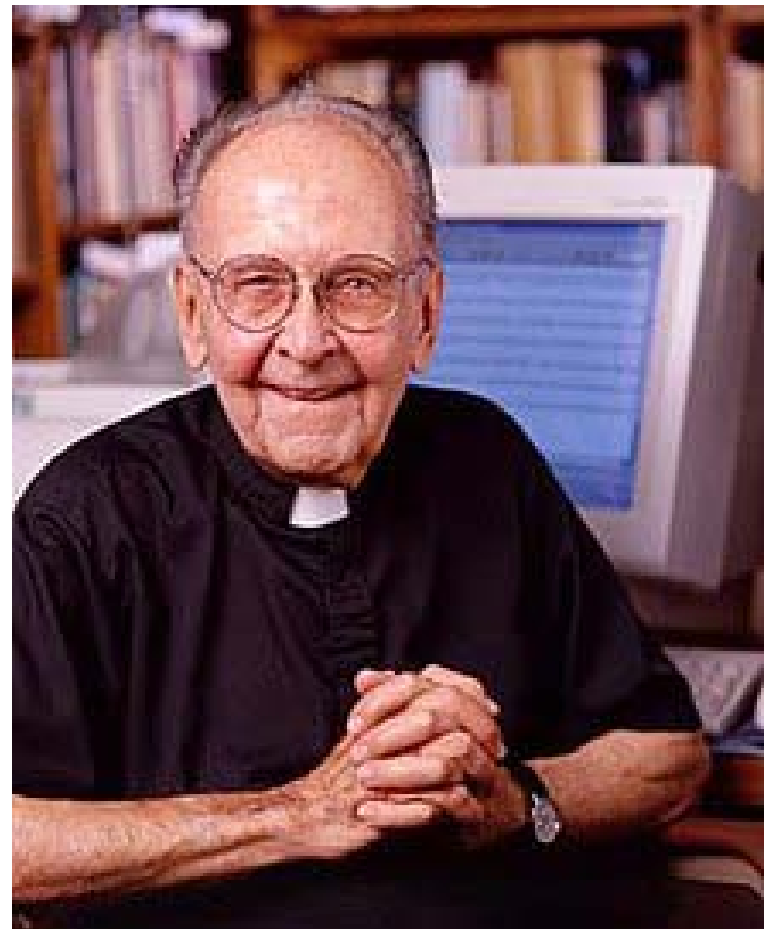Marshall McLuhan

'medium theory'

Eric Havelock

'medium theory'

Elizabeth Eisenstein
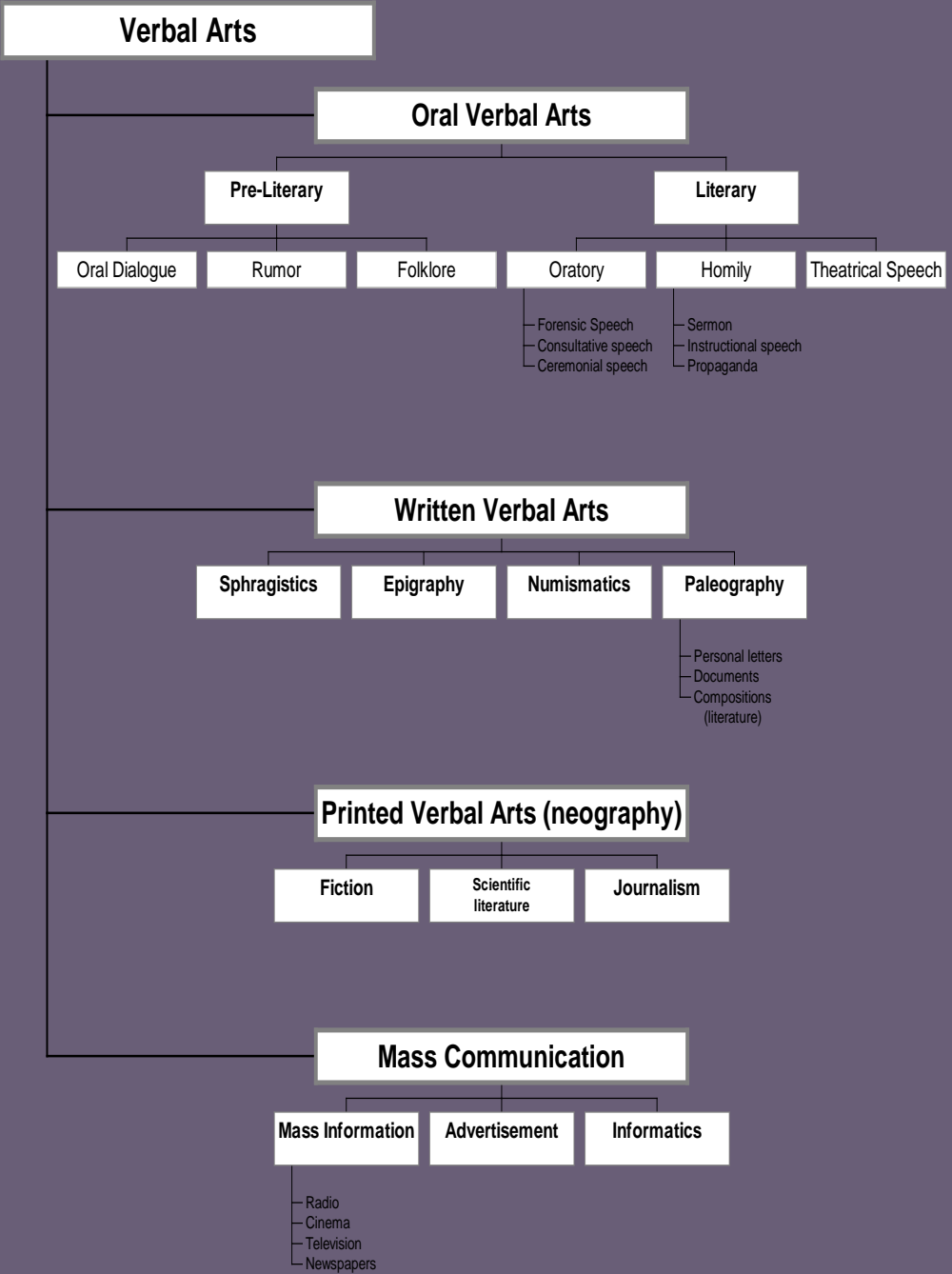
'medium theory'

Walter J. Ong

'medium theory'

Jack Goody

printed discourse

- creator = a collective team
- audiences
- the reader – and other readers
- continuous presence of the text author in the receiver's life (through the personal library)

Verbal Arts

Oral Verbal Arts

Pre-Literary

- Oral Dialogue
- Rumor
- Folklore

Literary

- Oratory
  - Forensic Speech
  - Consultative speech
  - Ceremonial speech
- Homily
  - Sermon
  - Instructional speech
  - Propaganda
- Theatrical Speech

Written Verbal Arts

- Sphragistics
- Epigraphy
- Numismatics
- Paleography
  - Personal letters
  - Documents
  - Compositions (literature)

Printed Verbal Arts (neography)

- Fiction
- Scientific literature
- Journalism

Mass Communication

- Mass Information
  - Radio
  - Cinema
  - Television
  - Newspapers
- Advertisement
- Informatics

Textology

"A philology specialist who studies a text of a printed work, no matter what culture and time it belongs to, has to always consider printing laws".

philology vs. linguistics

Roy Harris (2001: 118):

"Linguistics is a term of no great antiquity. It came into fashion in the nineteenth century when scholars began to distinguish between various possible approaches to the study of language and languages. Many, including Saussure, insisted on a distinction between traditional philology, focused on the study of literary and other texts (particularly those of earlier periods) and a more general form of inquiry which sought to study languages themselves, irrespective of whether they had produced texts of literary or cultural importance, or of whether they had produced any texts at all".
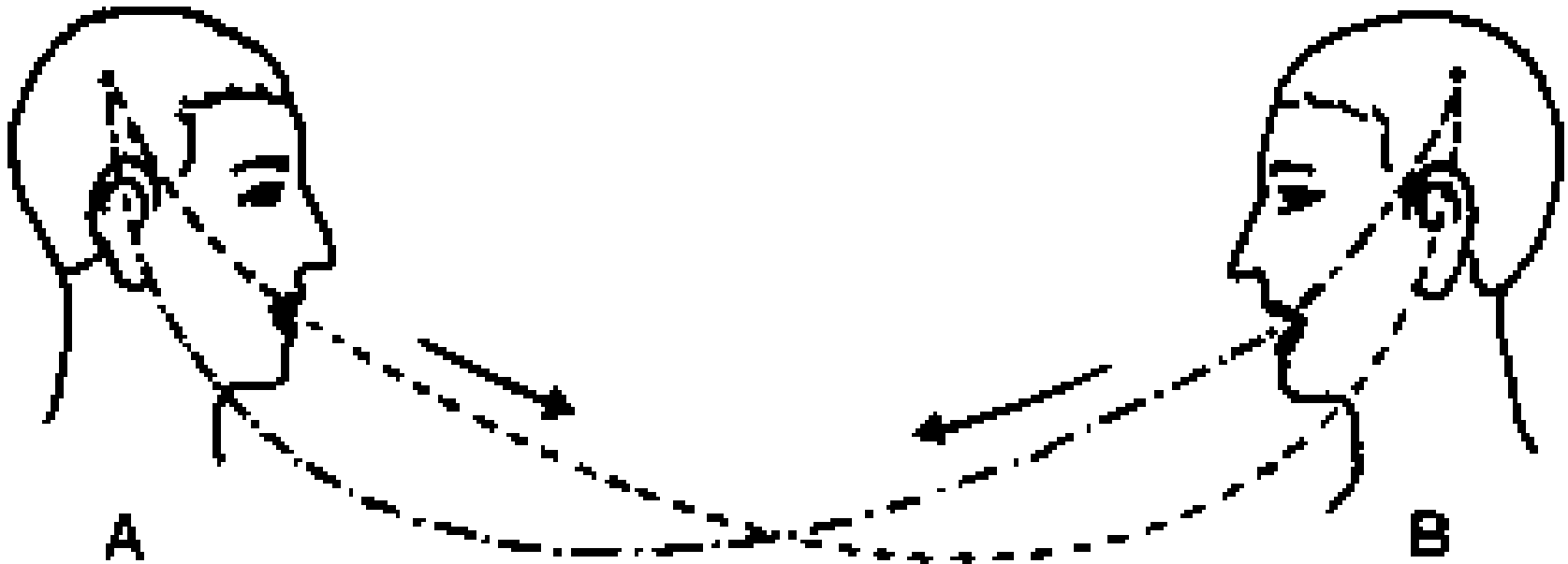
Harris

Linguistics established itself by insisting on the primacy of speech (not writing) as its object (2001)
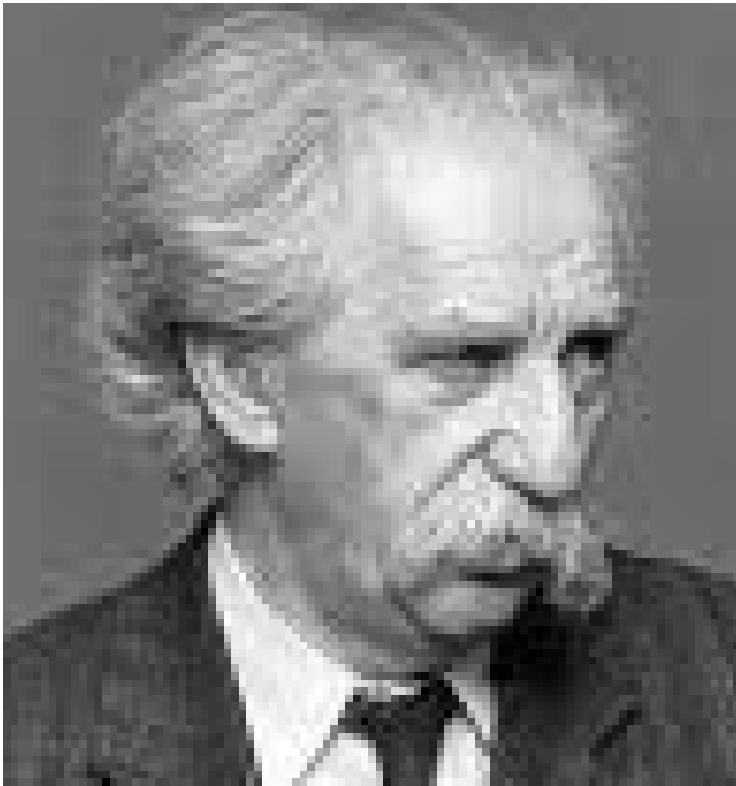
segregational - the notion that communication systems are one thing, what people do with them another (1996)

Saussure (1916)

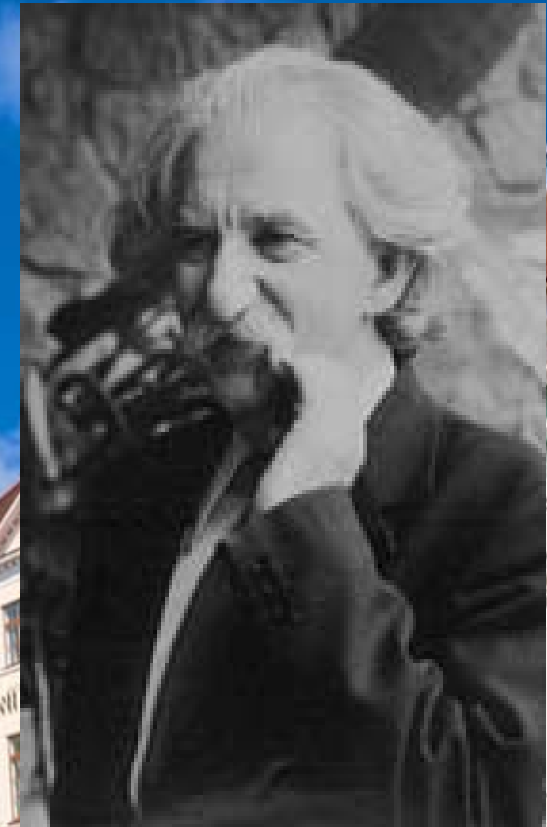# Lotman

Tartu School

Modelling systems

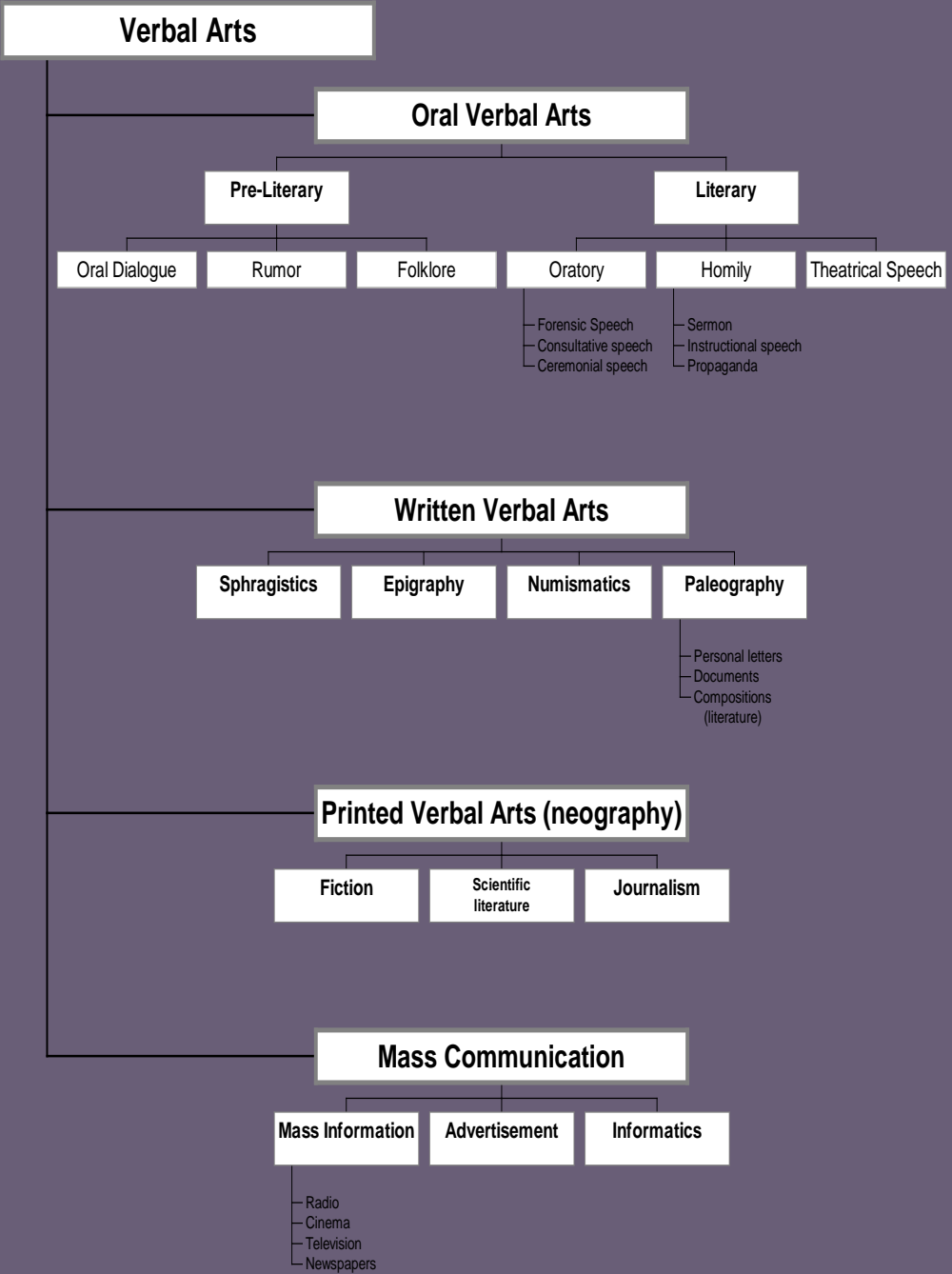**Symposium on the structural study of sign systems – Moscow, 1962**

"The idea that all aspects of human culture, however obscure, or disreputable, are proper subjects for semiotic study"

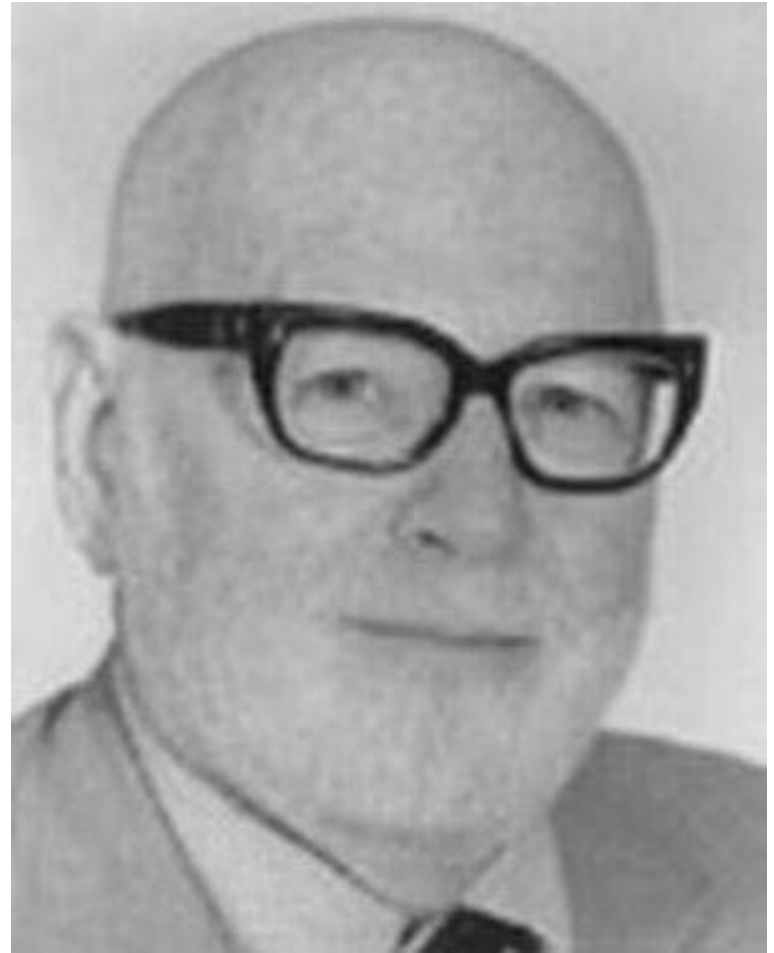**First Summer School on 'secondary modelling systems', Kaariku, August 1964**

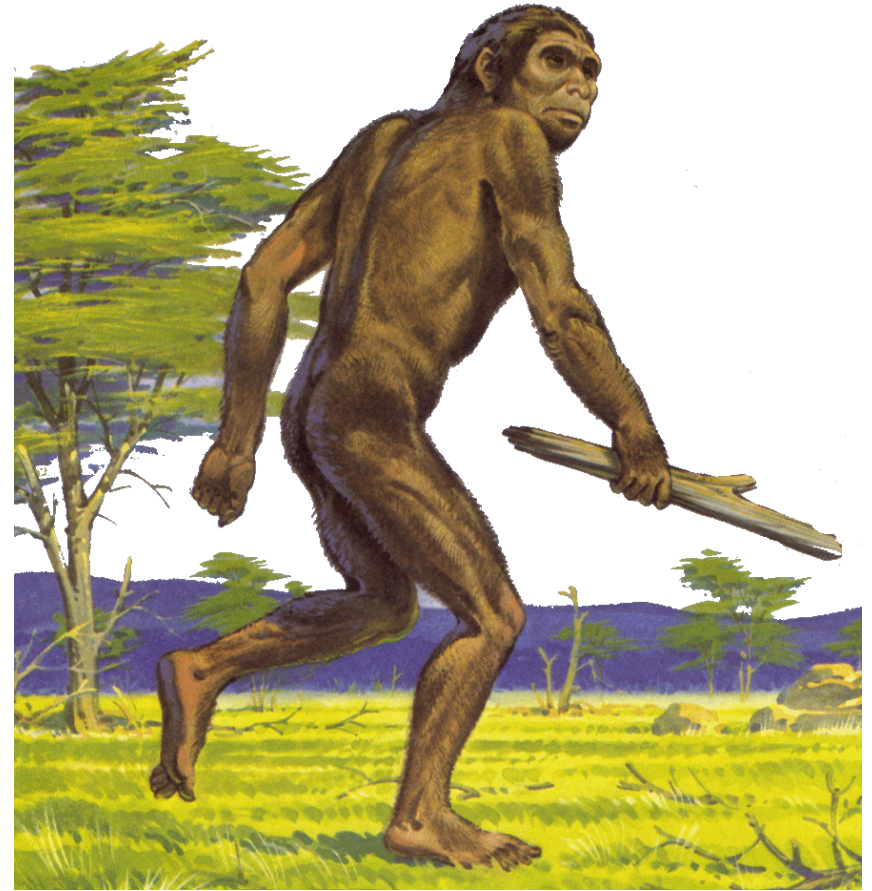primary modelling system

SECONDARY MODELLING SYSTEMS

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Oral Verbal Arts

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- Rumor
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Literary
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- Advertisement
- Informatics

Sebeok (1988)

'In what sense is language a "primary modeling system"?' in H. Broms and R. Kaufmann (eds.) *Semiotics of Culture*, Helsinki: Arator, pp. 67-79

early hominids

Homo habilis, about two million years ago - possessed 'language', grammar or modelling 'device'in their brains.

early hominids

Homo erectus, about one and a half million years ago), with an increased brain size over his/her predecessor, also possessed the capacity

However

verbal encoding and decoding abilities only came into use about 300,000 years ago with early *Homo sapiens*.

humans therefore possessed the capacity for language long (nearly a million years) before they started to implement it through speech for the purposes of verbal communication.

prior to this: non-verbal communication

Speech

an exaptation of the language capacity

So:

not a matter of 'language' conceived as 'chatter'

not even a matter of communication conceived as message transfer (as might be discerned in just the non-verbal communication of hominids)

Language

an acute and developing cognitive capacity to *differentiate*

- In sum,

primary modelling system

SECONDARY MODELLING SYSTEM

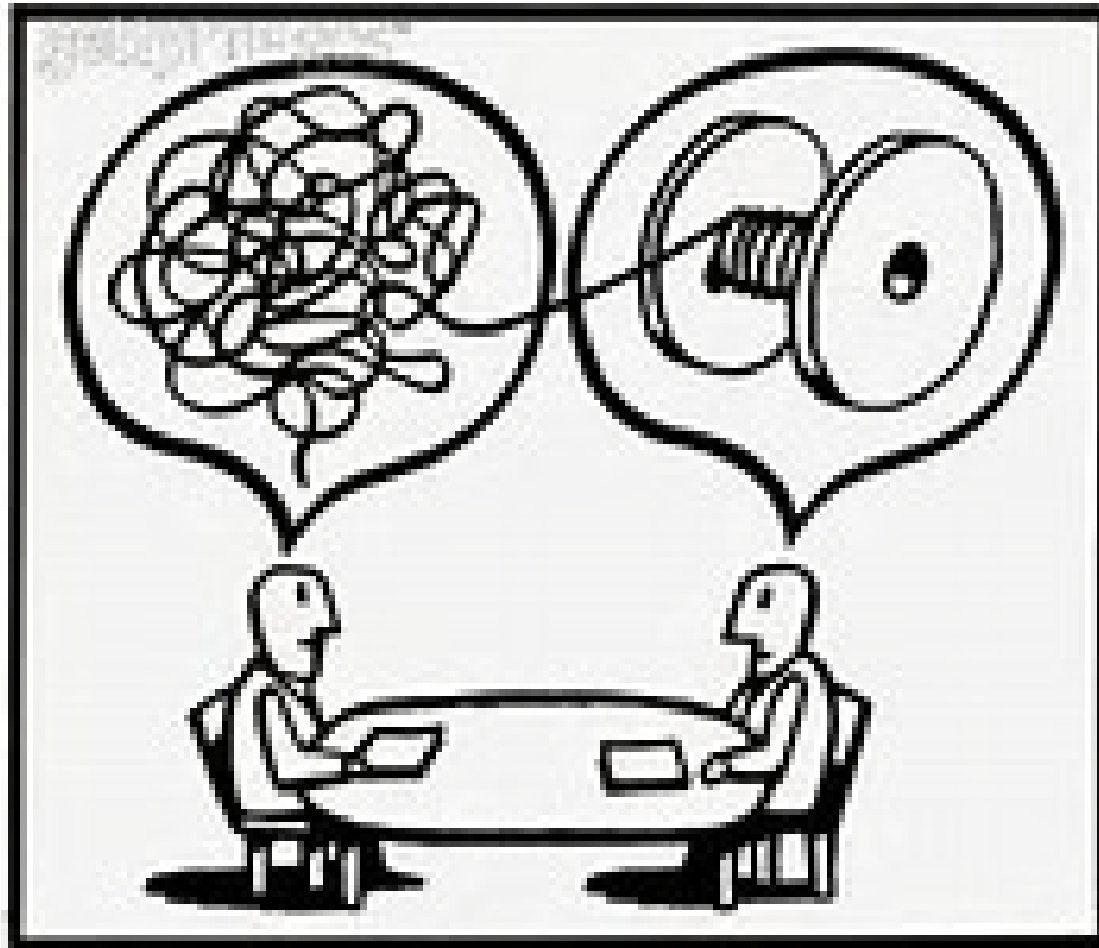**T E R T I A R Y   M O D E L L I N G   S Y S T E M S**
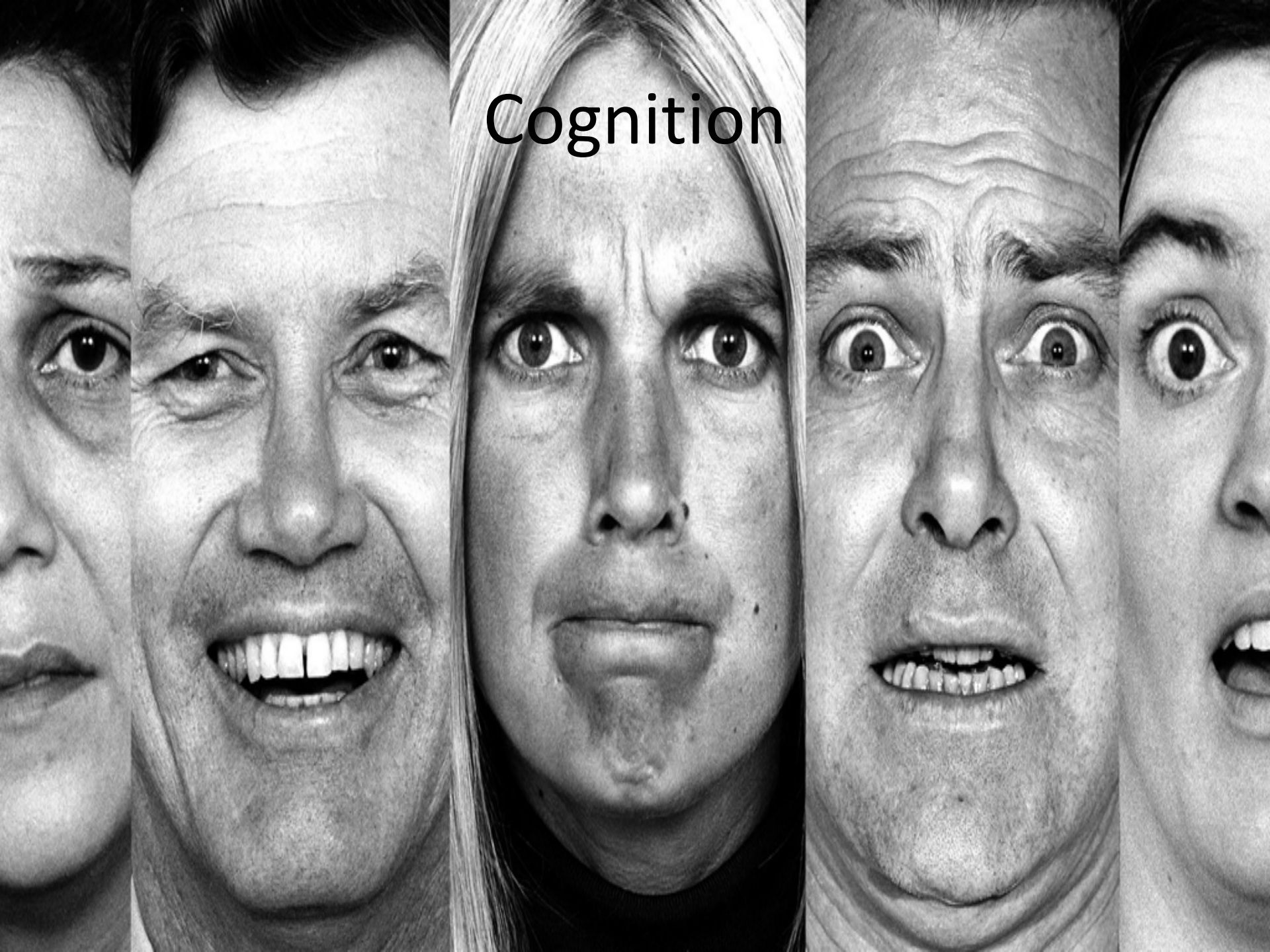
General philology

- Text production
- Distinction between the discourses of the hard sciences and the human sciences
- Definitions of culture
- Differences of spoken and written language
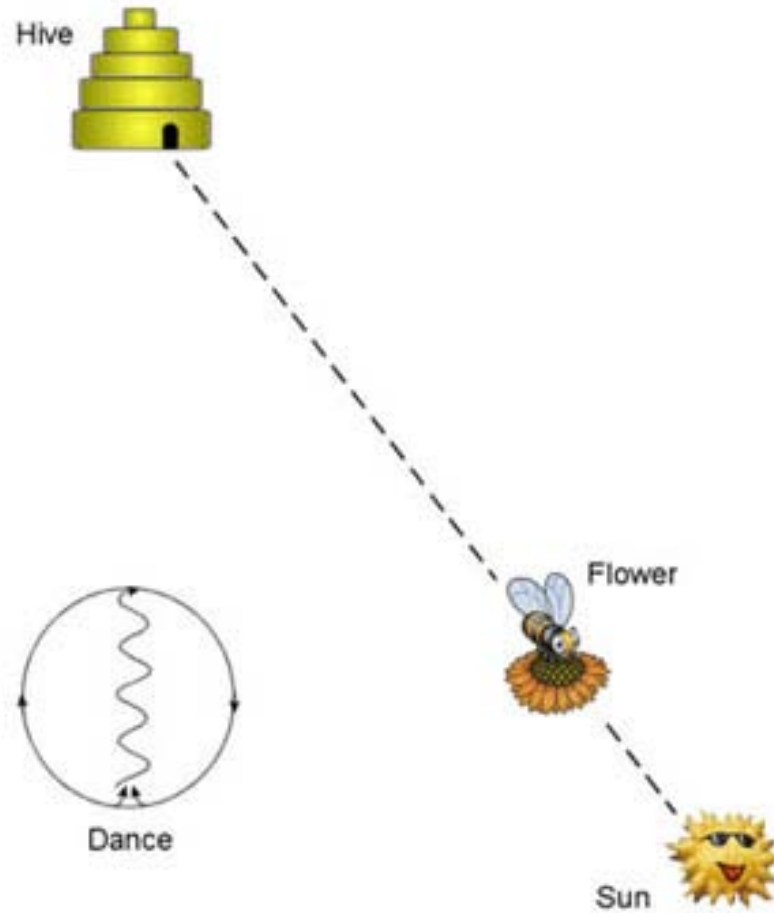- Fiction and non-fiction
- Authorship

Interpretation

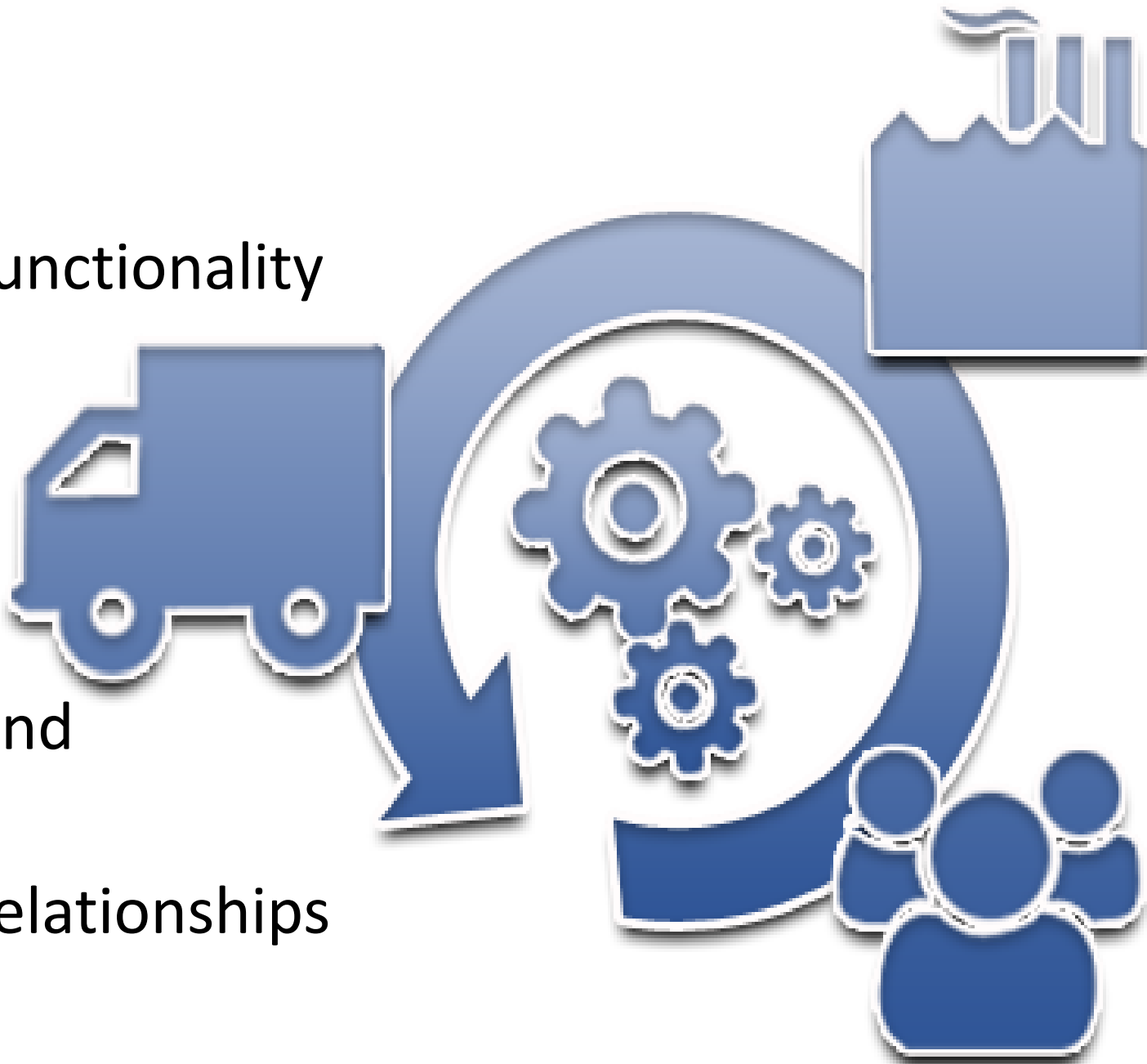Cognition
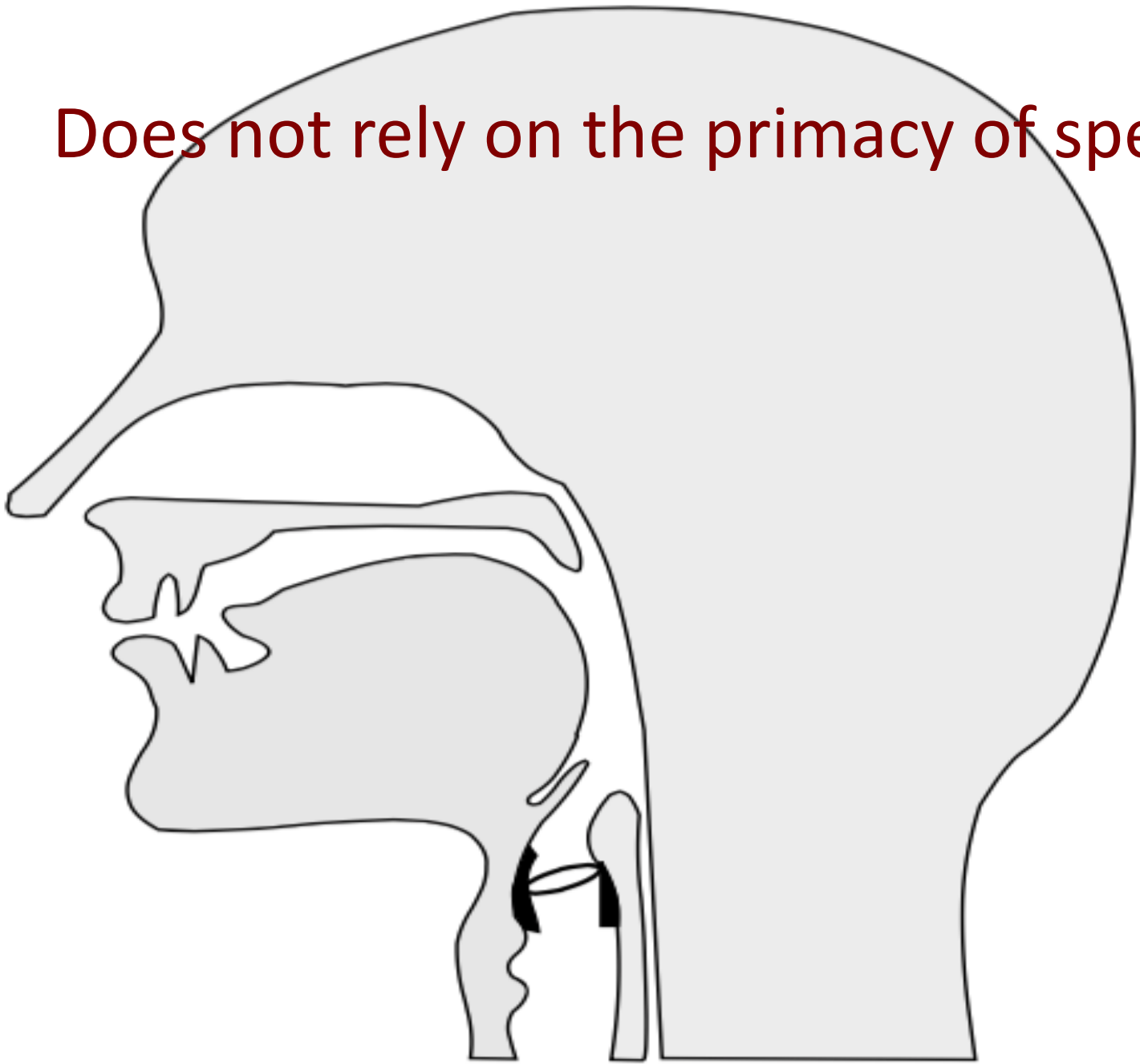
Non-verbal communication

Holism

functionality

and

relationships

Does not rely on the primacy of speech

Спасибо

References

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Sebeok, T. A. (1988) . 'In what sense is language a "primary modeling system"?' in H. Broms and R. Kaufmann eds. *Semiotics of Culture*, Helsinki: Arator, pp. 67-79.