

Titel: notes, [Uldall] 008-0010

Citation: "notes, [Uldall] 008-0010", i *Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds*, s. 8. Onlineudgave fra Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds: [https://tekster.kb.dk/catalog/lh-texts-kapsel\\_008-shoot-wacc-2009\\_0049\\_008\\_Uldall\\_0010\\_p8\\_bP7\\_TB00004/facsimile.pdf](https://tekster.kb.dk/catalog/lh-texts-kapsel_008-shoot-wacc-2009_0049_008_Uldall_0010_p8_bP7_TB00004/facsimile.pdf) (tilgået 06. juni 2024)

Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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short time. If an old lady ~~x~~ of 70 had said to you two months ago "I am going up the mountain to-morrow" you would have been amazed, for how could so old a person climb the mountain? Now you would smile and say "oh yes, how nice for you". For obviously the old dear is going ~~up~~ up on the cable-way. Ten years ago "I am going to France" meant the War; now it means nightclubs, Art, Music, whatever you go to France for. "I saw a woman in the street this morning" What a difference in meaning a hundred years ago and now; the street is different, the woman is different, and our outlook on both is different. And it works the other way too. Can you really understand, when you read Shakespeare or even Dickens, what was in the writers mind? Can you really imagine yourself in Samuel Pepys's shoes, living in a world where not only there were no motorcars and no matches and no long trousers, but <sup>the</sup> the whole outlook, all experience, upbringing, knowledge, emotion, even, was so completely different from what we have today. Can you say that you understand their language completely? No! In other words, the language we spoke yesterday is not the language we speak today, and tomorrow we shall speak yet another.

~~xx~~ What we call a language, then, really consists of many languages separated by time or space, the speakers of which only partially understand each other. And if we reflect on how often the people of our own set, our best friends fail to grasp what we are trying to say, we find that when it comes to expressing our innermost thoughts, nobody really completely understands our language. Nobody has exactly the same set of experiences as I, therefore nobody gets exactly the same associations as I, ~~and~~ therefore nobody speaks exactly as I do, and therefore nobody understands exactly what I mean <sup>by</sup> words to suggest. Or to use ~~our~~ old metaphor, nobody has exactly the code in which I am speaking.