

Education and the experience of language:
a phenomenological approach to pupil talk

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Abstract

The thesis argues that language research in education is implicitly positivistic, and that in focussing on communicative functions, most investigations ignore the processes of expression. This imbalance has influenced theory and method in English Studies, which should acknowledge both aspects. After a review of linguistic influences, a phenomenological epistemology is developed. This provides the basis for an account of language which restores the element of expression. The centre of the work comprises two parallel strands of enquiry which have an elaborated distinction of de Saussure's *langue* and *parole* as their common structure. After sketching a simple model of some of the features of *langue*, one part draws on phenomenological writing. It shows how the formal structure of language has its roots in experience; *langue*, therefore, - as a science of elements - is extended to comprehend the relationship of those necessary abstractions to the structures of experience underlying them. The other part shows how such a philosophical account has an empirical and useful validity; literary method is used to describe the expressive acts of students as they discuss poetry. Consonant with the first part, *parole* is viewed as so many instances of experience disposed to sharing meaning. This illumination of *parole* suggests some truths which research methodology must respect if it is to recognise the character and event of meaning. In conclusion, several principles of art which the expressive nature of language shares are elaborated with examples from literature, and pedagogic implications illustrated from the author's experience. Finally, phenomenological enquiry is characterised as a method which can investigate the experience of language in education; such work respects the personal experience of meaning, and so the moral dimension of research lies in the problem of communicating that effort for meaning to others.

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CHAPTER ONE

An overview of the study

Intelligent thought about the nature of thought and the criteria of good thinking is impossible apart from intelligence about the nature of language, and the necessary intelligence about language involves an intimate acquaintance with a subtle language in its fullest use. English is a subtle language; its literature is very rich, and its continuity stretches over centuries, starting long before the great seventeenth century change; so there is point in saying that for the English speaking philosopher the fullest use of language ought to be its use by the creative writers of his own time, and he needs to take full cognizance of this truth.

(Leavis, 1975, p.13)

How should an English teacher start thinking about language? This thesis started out in dissatisfaction with accepted approaches in language research. The English teacher who carries out research in his area of teaching is normally faced with a limited number of choices. These range between literary study for its own sake and enquiry into language as some sort of object. The first would probably not anyway be carried out in a Department of Education, except possibly as the subject of a more global analysis of language interaction, say. The second usually entails some enquiry into the functions of language from the perspectives (and using the techniques) of sociology, of psychology and linguistics. Inherent in this approach is the idea of language as essentially disembodied and functional.

Some explanation for this state of affairs can be found historically in the sophistication of the theory of education which accompanied the burgeoning of social science in the 1960s and 70s; prior to this, theory had, for the most part, been in the hands of 'great thinkers' like Dewey (1964) and Whitehead (1962). In this later period, the philosophy of education established its tenor

with the occupation of academic philosophy in conceptual and linguistic analysis, and similarly jettisoned interest in ethics and aesthetics. And while these moves towards a particular sort of coherence were attaching a more or less benign positivism to the study of language in education, the literary influence went unself-consciously and unfashionably along, and, with a few exceptions, remained virtually unexplicated.

One notable exception was F.R. Leavis' *The Living Principle* (1975), whose title anticipates his project for English Studies as the basic structure for intelligent and humane thought in the universities. Language, the argument goes, is nothing if it is not deeply expressive and creative of human value. By extension, linguistics is the systematic account of that 'nothing' writ large: it is what is left in the wake of removing from the purview of language the indispensable element of human consciousness which is the foundation of all utterance. The incongruity of this view with the prevalent understanding of language needs no comment; the opposition of the linguistic and the literary approach to language is endemic. So this thesis opens by considering some of the influences which have shaped the current understanding of language in education, and then proposes a structure for departing from this model (Chapter 2).

Leavis and a few others were at pains to preserve a way of using and of thinking about language which had little status in British philosophy. In Continental movements, however, the view was central to phenomenology, and to such phenomenological schools as existentialism and hermeneutics. Phenomenology deals equally with human experience and human behaviour in a manner which is systematic without being grossly reductive. Questions of the will, of morality and of beauty are all of a piece with observations on the structure of language, of perception and of the body. The method, most simply, is that of radical

self-reflection; the standard questions of philosophy - What is it to be a man? What is it to know such and such a thing? and so on - must be confronted not according to hallowed techniques and models of enquiry but, as far as this is possible, by reflecting in the only way I can come to know things: by their passage through my own experience. The thesis is thus developed in Chapter 3 with a general statement about the aims of the phenomenological project, and also a personal attempt to grapple with the knotty subject-object problem. Such an establishment of the principles of enquiry, the status of the object and the orientation of the enquirer is surely essential preparation for any piece of research, but it is particularly important in a study like the present one. The intention is not to raid popular understanding anarchically, but to show how the alternative has a proper structure and that it is one shared with, yet taken for granted by traditional methods.

The hub of the work is based on de Saussure's distinction of *Langue* and *Parole*, described like this: *Langue* is

a hoard deposited by the practice of speech in speakers who belong to the same community, a grammatical system which, to all intents and purposes, exists in the mind of each speaker.

Parole is

the executive side of language ... (involving) ... the combinations by which the speaker uses the code of the linguistic system in order to express his own thoughts ...

and

the psycho-physical mechanisms which permit him to externalise these combinations.

(Saussure, 1974, p.13,14)

The terms have been freely used in various disciplines, chiefly for their capacity to explain the occurrence of the actual in terms of, and against the possibility of the virtual. What I have done is to posit *Langue* as the general ground of experience and to describe, in Chapter 4, how other concepts in addition to the purely linguistic are required if we want to show how this personal experience

finds expression. Building up a model of language through some of the levels suggested by linguistics - the phoneme, word, sentence, and so on - I have elaborated in each case a phenomenological understanding of the process.

In the limited 'empirical' enquiry which comprises Chapter 5, these augmented levels of language are used to describe how language reveals something of the experience of meaning making. I have set the instances of 6th formers discussing a poem against some methodological propositions generated by the analysis of Chapter 4. My suggestion is that if we presume to interpret *Parole* - the observable portion of meaning - then we must do so with respect for the experience which gives rise to it, and not merely in terms of its phenomenal shape.

It is important that these two chapters of the middle section be understood as parallel; their common structure reflects the way in which they report on different aspects of the same phenomena. But, even more importantly, together they reflect the unity of the apparently separate processes of my enquiry which were going on at the same time. That is, I was involved in teaching, in reflecting on that teaching, and in reading in language studies, in philosophy, literature and education. The thesis now has a shape which is a rationalisation of the processes of discovery which went on. Perhaps it is inevitably true of all theses that their final form is the result more of a lyrical cunning than of historical accuracy. But in giving a particular order of presentation to the work, I realise that I am now choosing to emphasise certain connections which were not always explicit in the development. The connection I should now want to emphasise in this overview is the inseparability of thoughtful practice and heuristic thinking.

The last two Chapters, 6 and 7, have a similarly necessary

connection. One of the chief effects of describing the experiential character of language is to discover an account of the general symbolising processes common to all forms of experience, and maximised by art. This is the idea which informs the conclusions, where the study is firstly re-implicated in the classroom (Chapter 6). Here I have elaborated three principles of art-making which show the contiguity of the processes of art and of speaking, principles which must have very clear implications for teaching. But this expressive character of language - and the linguistic structure of experience which it reflexively implies - make particular demands of research as well. The thesis ends by turning back on the original problem : How shall we carry out research into language ? The thesis has restored the literary and practical dimension of experience to the abstraction of language created by linguistics; it follows that research into language in education must be based in this literary understanding of language, because such an approach demands the engagement of the researcher with the human values which constitute his object. Such research must then be 'practical' in the sense of its engagement with the real things which language points to, rather than with the false objects which standardised, linguistic research techniques interpose.

But how would such 'personal', such 'literary' work be evaluated ? The insight that values in language occur not in syntax but in the experience of the reader does not mean that there is no shared text, just as the parallel view that research must involve the consciousness of the enquirer does not mean that his work remains removed by his 'subjectivity' from common concern. The presence of the reader or researcher is in a very literal sense a condition of there being a text or a research event at all. The object, and the values which sustain that object, are what critical or technical devices point to; the linguist,

philosopher or educational researcher who reveals no experience of that object remains locked in the insubstantiality of such devices. The point in both cases is brought home by the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5: there are structures to language and to experience which scientific enquiry can explicate, but those explanations depend for their very conviction on a quality of attending in the listener which is beyond the brief and capacity of our usual sciences to describe.

CHAPTER TWO

Can language be an object for enquiry ?

- 2.1 Research in education is practised within certain generally well-prescribed limits. Some of these limits are determined directly by local policies, preferences and expertise; a broader set is defined by the influences on educational theory of 'pure' social science. Many such research exercises are based on the model provided by natural science, where observable phenomena are explained in terms of explicit and general interpretative schemes. This is obviously not the case in research in educational philosophy, where the absence of an empirical component provides for a more reflective or theoretical work. But, even in this area, research has not escaped the infection of a scientific drive to explication, and educational philosophy has followed the analytic trend of academic philosophy. Of course, the point is not that there is anything wrong with the application of science to education, and all enquiry is to some extent scientific; but these influences do raise the question whether educational research, as traditionally practised, is properly oriented to deal with certain areas of experience.

Language research is one such area. The spirit of research into language has been concerned to find 'real', useful, certain, precise, organic things to say. Of course, it is a chronic problem for research that looking at language must be done in language: language must be, that is, both subject and medium of the focus. As the subject of philosophical enquiry language remains at the level of generality, unbounded by empirical requirements and the medium is in fact an exultation in language - language interacting self-consciously with language. Outside of such work, the subject of research is more often a 'corpus' of actual utterances, defined according to the requirements of the discipline; the medium, accordingly, is an equally well-

defined mechanism for sorting this language out; in the common research tradition data and a scheme fulfil each other. A subtle alloy of Cartesian duality and empiricist methodology generally prevents any proper philosophical burgeoning of the enquiry; it proceeds in the positivist shadow, and 'rigour' denotes measurability rather than commitment.

The problem of language research should be a particularly acute one for the English teacher preparing for educational research; he is faced with an implicit model of language quite foreign to the one which he took for granted in the literature faculty. It is almost as though the educationist and the professor of literature were talking of different subjects when they spoke of language. Language in literary studies is a matter of engagement with the subtleties of value in human concerns; in education the dominant trend is to seek to neutralise language through making explicit its various functions. These functionalist descriptions - though aimed at disclosing their objects - have tended to be more eloquent of their own method than illuminative of the character of language.

In this chapter I shall firstly discuss in a general way some of the current influences on language in education, and then outline the epistemologies which lie behind them. I shall finally characterise phenomenology as the alternative epistemological ground for educational research which will reveal a radically different understanding of language. This understanding should be recognisable to to educationist and literature student alike.

- 2.2 The chief philosophical influences on education in this century undoubtedly echo, if not directly derive from the two systems of thought developed by Wittgenstein (1961; 1963). The positivism of the earlier system still survives

but it is the later, 'therapeutic' and prolegomenary linguistic philosophy which has spawned an analytic tenor for the virtual monopoly of educational philosophy by R.S. Peters and like-minded colleagues (Peters, 1967 ; Peters and Hirst, 1971.).

Interpreting Wittgenstein literally on the subject of the philosopher's attention to language ('Never mind the meaning, look to the use !'), Peters and White (1971), for example, identify themselves with the philosophers who

have abandoned the view that they are spectators of all time and all existence whose job it is to make oracular pronouncements about the purpose of life and of education.

(p.110)

What remains to them is the task of neutralising language; the *a priori* concerns of the possibility, nature, aims and methods of education are considered to be isolable by clarifying the everyday uses of language. "What is it to be educated ? What is indoctrination ? What do we mean by a worthwhile activity ?" : this is the stuff of educational philosophy, and it is the claim of such philosophers as Peters that the answers they have offered to these questions are neutral, apolitical and simply descriptive.

However, as the field of philosophy 'proper' has recently begun to open up to other, social concerns, so the hold of this way of doing educational philosophy has been broken; a philosophy which "leaves everything as it is" - even if it were possible - suddenly seems as glaringly inappropriate now as its method seemed eminently practicable ten or so years ago. The passive 'underlabourer' role is beginning to be abandoned in favour of more obviously prescriptive systems. Aspin (1982) identifies phenomenological, pluralist, utilitarian and Marxist in addition to purely analytic approaches to specific curricular, social and personal questions.

But these developments are not unequivocal improvements, and two points should be made here. The first is that,

although there is this new exploration of personal and more immediate issues, approaches to the transcendent problems of meaning and to the epistemologies which they represent are still in the main socially rather than personally oriented. What appears to be a chronic and ineradicable legacy of positivism is the tendency to view 'meaning' as more or less explicable since it is 'on the outside' of experience. In parallel with the scientific drive to more concise and communicable characterisations of experience, philosophical approaches to meaning still assume that words have more or less firm values, and that they are susceptible to dialectical, or determinist, or pluralist or plain positivist devices. There is no genuine exploration of truly personal experience. (And this holds true for the literary approach to meaning of Ogden and Richards (1949)).

The second point partly explains this. Philosophy has traditionally been practised as a strictly non-empirical activity, seldom by teachers themselves, and almost always with 'detachment' as a condition of validity. The meaning of his involvement has usually been explained by the philosopher in terms of the system within which he works; the event of that involvement he excludes from his brief. But if philosophy is to take on real problems, as these recent modulations of empiricism suggest, how can it do so without explicitly attaching to its reflections the evidence of real engagement with its objects ?

By contrast, although its foundations are in the tradition of reflection (Dilthey 1976, 1977), psychology proceeds as an empirical activity in the main. The question "How can language be an object for study ?" is meaningless for most psychologies, since it is manifestly susceptible to enquiry. But it is only the observable portion, as it were, which is visible to most research. Even in the Romantic tradition of Freud, where it is seen as substantially more than a function of the individual's behaviour, language has no obvious moral dimension.

The influences on education are, therefore, rather predictable and two schools dominate these. The first, Behaviourism, has been described (by Koch, 1969) as 'the enduring predicament of psychology', and it is no less a persistent bogey of education. The empiricist and positivistic project of conceiving psychic life under the category of the conditioned reflex means that language is no more than a function of behaviour, and 'meaning' something revealed by instruments brought to bear on this behaviour. Although Behaviourism has passed out of fashion in a pure form, there are enduring influences in, for example, the modification technology of special education, less explicitly in interaction studies, and more subtly in the uncritical, positivist lore of teachers understandings of learning processes.

The second major influence on educational theory, if not so much on practice has been the rationalist response to such full-blown empiricism, chiefly in the work of Piaget. By contrast with the Behaviourists, cognitive psychologists allow privacy and meaning to the psychic life, and the relationship between language and thought has become a major question for them. For Piaget (1969), language attends cognition as part of a greater symbolic function, developing only in measure with prior operational structures. Where for associationist psychology language is effectively a structure learned from the environment, for mentalist psychology it is an innate structure imposed on, though to some extent modified by that environment. Similarly rationalist in character is Chomsky's project (1957, 1965) to explain the structural interdependence of language and the psyche in terms of a Language Acquisition Device, though the highly theoretical nature of this and other psycholinguistic enquiry has brought about renewed empirical interest in the social rather than purely psychological aspects of language.

Reviewing various approaches to language in psychology, Donaldson (1978) has noted that

The living child does not seem to enter into the business very actively (not to say fully) ...
 What does the warm blood in the veins matter ?

(p.38-39)

Whilst this is not strictly true of Piaget's work, the fact remains that the experience of meaning is no more a part of his brief than it is a possibility for the behaviourist - this despite the fact that feeling is a recognised mode of experience for the cognitive psychologist. In either case language is an index, whether it be of signification 'with concealed musculature', or of cognitive achievement. The possibility of a 'language of the affect' has been explored only in abnormal psychology.

The approaches to language of sociology seem easiest to characterise. Where the nature and mediation of 'the real' is problematic for philosophy and psychology (a problem to some extent given with their constitution) the datum for sociology has traditionally been precisely that reality in its concrete form. The question of what language is is subordinated to the functional one of what it *does*, and the sociologist is rather concerned with how the signified is realised for a social group than with its metaphysical relation to the signifiers which accomplish it. Similarly the life of these signifiers in the experience of the individual has not been an admissable concern. This has been qualified to some extent by the 'new' sociology which speaks of a 'sociology of knowledge', based in the relativistic work of such as Schutz (1967), Goffman (1961), Whorf (1956). Qualitative methods have been developed which enact the principle that reality is socially-constructed and linguistically mediated. But this invitation to participate in the construction of a fragmented reality barely differs from the traditional empiricist one in its conception of language as an instrument: individuals receive meanings through a language which houses the values of their culture. Perhaps the best-known and most enduring working out of this general sociological understanding of language is to be found in Bernstein (1975). His theory

has undergone modifications since it first appeared but still points - in his elaborated and restricted codes, his framing of knowledge, etc. - to the social control which language accomplishes by this account. The structure, processes and effects of this relation between society and language is the concern of the specialist field of sociolinguistics. Labov's (1969) work with coloured sub-cultures is standard here, and the so-called London School founded by J.R.Firth (1957, etc.) has promoted such as Halliday (1969) and Mitchell (1957). In reaction to what was considered an excess of theoretical speculation after the manner of Chomsky, this present approach is characterised by field-work supporting empiricist theories.

The direct effects of sociology and sociolinguistics on educational theory, practice and research can be seen in the functional and empiricist models of language which lie behind the Bullock Report (HMSO, 1975), like-minded language enrichment schemes like *Language in Use* (Doughty et al, 1971), and the various schemes of interaction and discourse analysis. Finally we can observe that there is nowhere in the sociologist's understanding of language - not even in the schemes of the 'sociological phenomenologists' - an adequate account of the purely personal genesis and history of meaning.

Reference has been made to the methods of linguistics applied in psychological and sociological fields without really identifying the ground of the science itself, which will now be looked at in more detail. Although there is little formal presence of linguistics in educational theory, the growth of the science of language has undoubtedly had direct as well as subtle effects on the traditional educational disciplines, and hence a direct and determining influence on the dominating understanding of language in education. 'Pure' linguistics is concerned with language as a datum in itself, and not as an index of some other value. To this end - of establishing finite values - it

is called a science. Actually of course, practice has determined the character of the enquiry, and the persuasion firstly of psycholinguistics and then of sociolinguistics insists that language cannot be studied too far away from the fact that it is people who use it, and that the contextual detail of these specific useages cannot be missed out of any realistic account.

Linguistics has thus followed the fashions of social science, Its high point as a science was arguably its identification by Bloomfield (1933) with the principles of behaviourism. The American tradition actually arose out of a practical concern at the turn of the century to record the rapidly-dying Amerindian languages. One development of this was Sapir's (1949) work which was culturally-based but emphasised the 'purely human' and 'non-instinctive', rational and cognitive aspects of language. The other was the behaviourist tradition against which Chomsky was to react. It is perhaps finally the interpretation which linguists put on *meaning* and on its location which distinguishes them from each other. The more rationalist (and generally psycholinguistic) approaches - such as transformational-generative linguistics - stress mental process, whilst the current hue of linguistics is decidedly empiricist.

This said there yet remains an identifiable core to theoretical linguistics. It is Ferdinand de Saussure (1915;1974) who provides the basis for modern linguistics, and all the various schools we now know proceed from the tone and principles of his enquiry. Modern study is to be distinguished from Saussure's predecessors' on several points. Firstly, it stresses the priority of the spoken language, where earlier accounts assumed the superiority of the written. Notions of correctness attach to a literary grammar and it is on this feature that the second innovation depends; modern linguistics claims to depart the prescriptive, oracular function of previous enquiries and to offer a

descriptive account of all languages, recognised as legitimately such whether they be apparently 'primitive' or acknowledged as 'sophisticated'. An important conceptual and methodological distinction which accomplishes this descriptive work is Saussure's opposition of *synchronic* and *diachronic* study. The latter is concerned with the historical development of a particular language and hence has some normative character, where synchronic study considers language as it is arrested in its special state at a particular time. The spirit of modern science is evident in this concern with the 'raw', observable data rather than with the qualifying speculation of a historical method. But the signal character of Saussure's work is his structuralist understanding of this synchronic language, that is to say his demonstration of the system of relations which makes a language coherent and which validates the separate components only in their contrastive relation to each other. Saussure's provision of a distinction between a language which comprehends all possible utterances by acknowledged speakers of that language (*Langue*), and a language which is the actual instances realised by an individual (*Parole*) anticipates the application of linguistics to other fields.

Aspects of structure, of phonology and of a wider grammar, and some methodological procedures provide the core of a theoretical linguistics. But, as the enquiry of Fodor and Katz (1964) showed that the semantic area was not susceptible to the same treatment as the syntactic, it is finally at the point where 'signifier' meets 'signified' that linguistics must be seen to relinquish an authoritative hold on the character of language. Linguistics can provide structural models of the observable phenomena of language, and in this respect can do so with a scientific respectability. But where the venture shades into the moral concerns of literary stylistics (see e.g. Sebeok 1966) and hence has to spawn an endless catalogue of scholarly antinomies such as sense and reference, emotive v. cognitive meaning, etc, it becomes both speculative and reductive,

adding little increment to our understanding of the experience of meaning.

Linguists might say that experience is not in any event their concern, and this invites questions not so much about the uses as about the moral foundations of such study.

An area of study where there is some acknowledgement of the importance of the participating individual in the creation of meaning is discourse analysis. The problem of meaning at which a 'pure' linguistics must hesitate has been put again by linguistic approaches which draw on anthropology, sociology, psychology and, not curiously, linguistic philosophy. The application of the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1965, etc.) to linguistics actually returns the present survey to its beginning with philosophy, although it is a very different conception of philosophy from that of the Greeks. It is a scientific empiricism which provides 'speech acts' and 'events' and, generally, a view of meaning as an empirically accessible ground. Austin (1962) observed that philosophy had assumed that

the business of a statement can only be to describe some state of affairs or to "state some fact", which it must do either truly or falsely.

(Austin in Coulthard, 1977, p.11)

Austin's work, and the later work of Searle show that this is not the case, and provide the rationale for the measured hermeneutic which linguists have turned on discourse. The method of discourse analysis, combining as it does these strands from various other enquiries, typifies the current attitude to language in linguistic enquiry, and indicates its status as a subject for that enquiry. The field is of course wide and diverse across commitments to particular theories.

Before moving on to alternative approaches to the study of language, I should like to illustrate the effects of the influences just described (from philosophy, sociology,

psychology, linguistics) on a specific area of educational research. In classroom interaction studies, classroom language itself (or extracts from it) is taken as data, and meanings are fashioned from it. Research workers in the field clearly view language as functional, since 'meaning' is deduced on the basis of inferred 'uses'. In addition, reduction of the data, which may be extreme or more benign, inevitably results in the demotion, if not the total exclusion of the expressive nature of language. Inevitably, because it is so much easier, the focus is on communication.

Classroom interaction studies arose from a belief in the causal relationship between language use and educational achievement. Research workers claim variously to show that certain kinds of language are essential for particular cognitive processes, or that 'superficial' aspects of style and register contribute to educational success. For years classroom research had looked only at 'presage' and 'product' variables, and had overlooked the 'black box' which classroom process represents. Educators became interested in the function of an utterance in a sequence, as a specific contribution to a developing discourse, and that within a particular social setting.

One of the main reasons for the small amount of hard evidence to emerge from the large volume of work on language in education is certainly that language has been used with abandon as a research tool, and its organisation and complexities largely ignored. As some of these complexities were recognised, it became necessary to postulate another level of organisation of language - the level of use or discourse representing the structure of patterns of speech, and at this level all kinds of new, additional factors impinge on the analysis: paralinguistic features, such as intonation, register, etc; non-verbal communication, subtle transmission

of the 'hidden curriculum' by linguistic and non-linguistic means, etc.

The main types of approach to classroom research might be grouped in three ways, the first being interaction analysis studies. These are based on the coding of public talk, the focus being on the frequency of occurrence of various standardised categories of (linguistic) behaviour (e.g., Flanders 1978; Eggleston, Galton and Jones, 1976). The second group largely avoids placing context-free snippets of language into pre-specified categories, and attempts analysis of transcriptions based on large sequential units of speech such as the *episode* (Smith, Meux *et al* in Nuthall and Lawrence 1965) or the *incident* (Nuthall and Lawrence, *op.cit.*) They often use a mixture of psychological, pedagogic and linguistic criteria in the same analytic operation, and result in very complicated analytic schemes whose practical value to other research workers, and certainly to the teacher, is dubitable. The last group of studies, using a more subjective approach in an attempt to delve more deeply into meanings is that of anthropological study. This approach has been adopted in the USA most particularly to investigate the classroom language of black and Amerindian children (Cazden, John and Hymes, 1972). One variety of this approach is participant observation (e.g., Stubbs and Delamont, 1976; Delamont, 1976). The method claims to take account of the totality of the classroom scene, and to be illuminative and descriptive rather than normative. It is based on case-studies and investigators often deliberately choose to look at atypical examples. Such an approach answers some of the criticisms of the more 'objective' language studies. The observer does not make inferences from sections of classroom talk, but asks the teacher, and especially the pupils, about their feelings, their interpretations of the situation, the meanings they attach to events, etc. Objections which critics of the method voice usually start with the observation that such

data does not amount to 'evidence' at all, or at least not as it is usually thought of.

Finally, of particular relevance to English Studies - though the work deals deliberately with classroom language in a variety of subject contexts - are the enquiries of Barnes (1976) and Barnes and Todd (1977). These do not easily fit into any of the three broad types of research mentioned above. Barnes clearly takes pains to avoid rigid classification of speech, whilst equally clearly feeling some obligation to be 'scientific' about data; so his commentary on recorded instances of children talking is poised somewhere between a linguistic and a literary account, on the one hand adducing language functions, on the other offering interpretative paraphrases. This reaches an extreme form in Barnes and Todd (1977), where talk is analysed according to two separate categories of observation, a 'Content Frame' and an 'Interaction Frame'. Undoubtedly Barnes has had a most valuable influence on teachers' attitudes to classroom talk, and this should not be underestimated. However, the prevailing sense is finally one of a communicative and linguistic, rather than expressive and literary tone to the work.

2.3 Although the foregoing can claim to be no more than a very general look at some of the boldest influences on education and language, there are several conclusions which can be drawn from the survey. These inferences hold for the character of educational enquiry at large, and for its more specific ways of investigating language. Firstly, enquiry is guided in the main by scientific principles of clarity, exactness, communicability, etc. Secondly, the object of enquiry is almost always a function of observable behaviour. Thirdly, although 'meaning' has become a general occupation of educational research, it is to be understood there as a

function of these concerns with the explicitation of a world conceived as data.

But the general account necessarily misses out some of the less obvious persuasions, and in the case of each of the contributory disciplines there have always been influences so subtly effective that they are barely counter-movements. By contrast, they are guided by principles of value, of experience, particularity, etc.; their concern is with the illumination of personal experience, and hence 'meaning' indicates an expressive rather than merely communicative event.

In philosophy such influences are minimal; although phenomenology and existentialist philosophy enjoy some status in philosophy departments, their effect on the philosophy of education is nugatory, and publications like Curtis and Mays (1978) almost unique in this country (though the less direct contributions of Collingwood (1938) and MacMurray (1935) should not be overlooked). Certainly Freire (1977) has had some influence here, though his focus on repressive societies rather than on the creative person has meant that language is still seen largely in terms of its social medium.

For the mainstream of psychology, and for educational psychology, the drive is obviously scientific, although a small and only relatively local influence continues to urge phenomenological approaches (Bolton, 1978, 1979 etc). It is in psychiatry that there is a methodological interest in combining observation and reflection; poised uneasily between medicine and belief, modern psychiatry encourages reflection on language in the face of its experiential nature. The importance which the existentialist-phenomenological psychiatric attaches to the centrality of language (Szasz, 1962; Laing and Cooper, 1964, etc.) is one it shares with Freudian principles. Psychoanalysis provides for a combination of the hermeneutic intention

with the principles of science, defining as its ground the discontinuity between the experience and the expression of the subject. Language is thus held to be the medium of all psychiatric processes; combining linguistic analysis with a theory of psychological causality, the methods variously explore the fit between symbols and experience. A similar concern characterises the therapeutic projects of such as Lomas (1973) and Winnicott (1971) which - like those of Freudian and existential psychiatry - have at most an indirect effect on educational studies.

Since Schutz (1967) and others, sociology has developed 'qualitative' methods in case-study, and in the illumination of meanings for participants in an event. But its concern is still with the social construction of meaning, and hence with language as an instrument. Such methods are only obliquely related to the principles of phenomenology which are sometimes adduced in their justification.

The remainder of 'positive' influences has come from outside the traditional disciplines of education, from such highly individual - and therefore not systematically disseminated - work as Hourd (1977), Leavis (1975) etc. It is barely an exaggeration to say that such work, conceived in the tradition of the arts, has no direct effect on educational theory nor on educational research. On the other hand, the influence of social scientists like Bernstein (1975), Halliday (1969) and Bruner (1964) has persuaded arbiters of English Method like Britton (1969) and, to some extent, Barnes (1969) to develop pseudo-scientific positions in an area traditionally, though inexplicitly allied to the arts (see Abbs, 1982; Harrison, 1983). The Bullock Report (HMSO, 1975) is a testimony to this influence.

All this means that the explicit as well as the subtle influence exerted on the would-be researcher recommend to him an understanding of language almost wholly couched

in terms of its social functions and psychological processes. "Look for the use !" is still the methodological injunction, and 'meaning' is still by and large the explication of this use. It is no exaggeration to say that the event of origination of meaning, and the nature of the objects so originated are virtually nowhere in education theory deemed important or even respectable concerns. This is not because they have in any way been 'solved', but because their solution is somehow *taken for granted* in the rationalist or empiricist epistemologies which lie behind the various educational theories. Either the fact of consciousness is uncritically given, or else the given is the order of an empirical world.

To the literary mind this is curious, because there seems to me always to have been the seeds of an alternative epistemology in literary studies - this despite the disservices done by work like Ogden and Richards (1949), with its notion of the 'pseudo-statement' of art, or the later structuralist accounts which exclude consciousness from the events of meaning. This tacit epistemology is based on the *practical* understanding of those who work with literature firstly, that language has an expressive function at least as important as its communicative one, and secondly that meaning is not 'out there' any more than it is 'in here'. The idea of *negotiation* of meaning provides a structure for admitting the insights of both rationalist and empiricist accounts of language. But it is not a question of merely synthesising the two in order to furnish a convenient theory to explain this alternative epistemology of the arts; it is a matter of fundamentally revising our account of understanding.

- 2.4 In what has gone before positions have often been identified as variously empiricist or rationalist as if, indeed, all scientific stands must be based on these philosophical understandings. To some extent it is a useful measure to

be able to point say to a scientific characterisation which sees the mind as originating what it knows, in contrast to one which insists that our knowledge is the direct creation of external shaping. In contemporary practice the distinction is not always so sharply to be drawn, and most accounts of human experience now acknowledge the interpenetration of native and received intelligence, though a discernible bias may remain. The question of origins has a practical purchase beyond its traditional debate by philosophers, and this currency has already been identified in, for example, the implicitly rationalist approach of Chomsky (1957), or in Bernstein's (1975) elaborations of empiricism. The terms remain broadly useful as ways of identifying such scientific characterisations with historical traditions. They attach a particular understanding of knowledge to the characterisation they describe. To identify such and such an approach to language, then, as empiricist or rationalist is to say that this approach proceeds from a prior and particular view of how we come to know. Since the final part of this chapter, in preparing the way for a phenomenology of language, will indicate how such an understanding departs the traditional methods, it is necessary at this point to offer a brief summary of these traditions. The epistemological questions - Can we know? What can we know? How do we know it? etc. - arise only from the negative, sceptical view that everything is to be doubted; they later revolve around basically linguistic enquiry into what knowing means. When the question is first considered with a modern rigour by Descartes (1887), there is little in the tone of the enquiry to suggest that knowledge will not be demonstrated eventually; the question is rather one of how its certainty is to be established. Several hundreds of years later the prime question 'Can we know?' has undergone the modulations of an enquiry into meaning, and its various answers are held to lie in empirical instances rather than at the end of an exercise in reason.

Arising, then, from the sceptical objection that knowledge is impossible, the account of knowledge is usually an attempt to point to that which is certain in experience. What is necessary, what is true, what is indubitable - these are the stuff of knowledge proper, and the known will always derive from it. The most enduring account of knowledge remains that of Descartes (1642), who systematised scepticism in order to subject everything to a method of doubt. Arriving at his ineffable truth of the *Cogito ergo sum*, he identified the separate substances of mind and body and thus established what Whitehead (1948) has called the 'bifurcation of nature'. It is an egocentric theory in effect, though ultimately a theocentric one which shows how it is primarily through the light of reason that we arrive at something impossible to doubt; reason equally guarantees belief in the objects of the senses. Descartes' conception of reason accords with the contemporary spirit of mathematics where, if anywhere, truths can be said to reside quite independently of perceptions. The Cartesian view of knowledge - dubbed by Ryle (1963) as the 'Official Doctrine' in view of its continuing pervasiveness - subtly as well as overtly informs the theory and the practice of both our science and our everyday life, and its chief characteristic is the either/or of Descartes' separation of mind and body. The divisions of nature and of experience that we now take for granted can be traced to the same philosophical moment; subject and object, reason and emotion, thought and language - these are the functions of the rationalist insistence on the primacy of a mind distinct from its embodiment, a 'Ghost in the machine'. Descartes can thus approve the mechanics of Galileo which as a scientist he could only admire; but his theism urges him to the morality implicit in a mind freed of the causality which governs 'extended substance', and it is his mathematical acuity which accomplishes the insight.

The view which broadly characterises the epistemology of the Continental rationalists Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza

is thus that the mind can originate its contents; by contrast, the British empiricist argument - identified mainly with Locke (1964), Berkeley (1901) and Hume (1955) - is that knowledge derives largely from sense perceptions. Hamlyn (1970) points to the fact, however, that the seventeenth-century empiricists shared with the rationalists a desire to provide what is clearly a rational justification for knowledge. Theirs too is a quest for certainty and their mission to establish proof by pointing to necessity. But the approach is rather through the Machine than via the hallowed Ghost. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1964) Locke's argument rests on the truth of things; we have simple ideas of things *caused by* those things. It is the mind which creates complex ideas (and hence error) by compounding simple notions; what is given, the data, cannot be wrong, although human judgment may so construe it. All our ideas come from experience, derived from sensation itself or else from reflection on sensation or from the secondary process of (rationally) compounding complex ideas.

Descartes' belief in the mind's ultimate reference to a truthful God, and Locke's faith in the integrity of things appear to have as little in common as do Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device and Bernstein's Codes. But actually one thing at least which all four schemes share is a need to establish an explicit project on behalf of the mind or of experience. To be sure in no case can this project be realised wholly and exclusively by reason or by a material world; all accounts acknowledge some play of mutual confirmation between origination and instance. But one cannot overlook the implications of these projects *in extremis*: the empiricist mind is the creation of its stimuli, and the thinking or willing subject is a fictive superfluity; the world of the rationalist, on the other hand, is not realised by action in the physically-extended plane which is a contingent echo of its project. Thus one character of both designs is their insistence on a useful inner and outer division. There is an equally firm

commitment to fulfilling the programme with an apodictic certainty. The movements in scholarship which stand out in this century indicate a distinct empiricist bias and an acquiescence in that spirit of dualistic explicitation.

Against this spirit of thoroughgoing scientism there has been little resistance in British scholarship. Polanyi (1969) has inspired a small number of philosophers and scientists to recast their understanding of knowledge as an area of experience resisting fine definition. Polanyi and his chief apologist, Grene, deny the physical tract which traditionally separates the knower from the object of his knowledge, sketching coming to know as a movement from the proximal to the distal, a process of organisation of tacitly-known structures. The stuff of knowledge itself has rather a verbal than a nominal character, which is to say that knowledge is a highly-organised moment in experience and not an independent body of facts indifferently apprehended. Polanyi avoids the accusation of subjectivism by charging the individual with a commitment to the truth of shared experience. Polanyi's is a lonely voice, though his insistence on the participation of the subject is by no means unique; it is implicit in positions as various as those of Bruner (1964) and Kelly (1955), in Popper's 'three worlds' (1972) and in the 'phenomenological' sociology which Schutz (1967) generated. Polanyi's particular gift to the insight, however, is the rather unfashionable one of treating the 'logical geography' (Ryle, 1963) of knowledge with a *logic of poetry*; this design can only be described as moral. If it seems inappropriate to talk of work in this area as moral, it is precisely because enquiry generally has been moved out of the hands of enquirers themselves into the necessities and structures of their disciplines. No special sense of 'moral' need be adduced either; it is precisely in the everyday sense of a concern with right and wrong that it is used here. Now if science itself is agreed to lie by definition outside the purchase of morality, and scientists are surrendered to their art, then one could ask ingenuously where are to be

found the values which authenticate the practice. It was in the face of such a situation that Husserl inaugurated a system of philosophy with that moral concern.

Scientific points of view, says Merleau-Ponty

according to which my existence is a moment of the world's are always both naive and at the same time dishonest, because they take for granted, without explicitly mentioning it, the other point of view, namely that of consciousness, through which from the outset a world forms itself round me and begins to exist for me

(1962, p.ix.)

If knowledge is held to lie in principle in structures outside of the individual, then logically the world is sundered from its inhabitants. Further, if the whole life of experience is minimised or subordinated to those scientific structures, then consciousness is no longer required to proceed with responsibility. Returning knowledge to the authority of the knower - an authority shared with the inexorable fact of the world - is thus a moral project and one which Husserl (1970) saw as rescuing enquiry from the 'crisis' of European philosophy.

Briefly, the phenomenological project is concerned with the original questions of philosophy, such as occupied the pre-Socratic philosophers; the answers to these questions are no less than essential to provide the foundation for all other enquiry. In establishing these foundations, it obviously cannot call upon the second-order characterisations provided by science, and so it requires to do without presuppositions and to get to the nature of things as they are. These things start for us in consciousness, which must hence be the ground of our enquiry. However, phenomenology will not separate the world from our willing insertion in it, so consciousness must not be conceived as a subject operating on an indifferently-held object, and a phenomenological method does away with rigid distinctions between originator and originated.

Such a broad outline does feeble credit to the density and

variety of phenomenological enquiries and, since in any event

It is less a question of counting up quotations than of determining and expressing in concrete form this *phenomenology for ourselves* ...

(Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.viii.)

a fuller and more engaged account will be given in the course of describing a phenomenology of language in the following chapters. However, these features hold for any phenomenological venture; these and what is the backbone of any such epistemology, the notion of intentionality. This is a technical term to be distinguished from the use of intention to indicate the subject's deliberate and particular attitude with regard to something. Intentionality for the phenomenologist is rather 'operative intentionality', the subject's involuntary openness to the world. His mind is not, *pace* Hume, 'a bundle of different perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity' (1955) nor yet, after the critical-realist account, the originator of forms and structures imposed on the world and subsequently confirmed by a content which that world provides through the senses. Intentionality rather guarantees the negotiation of a necessary reality by insisting on a tripartite structure of thought. Descartes arrived at the certainty of the *ego* by identifying its thinking function, the *cogito* which - if it were possible - would remain an autistic and wordless project for itself. Since thought cannot exist for itself as mere process, and needs for its very activity to be thought of, Husserl's task is to demonstrate how the *ego*, the *cogito* and the *cogitatum* are each distinct from whilst seamlessly supportive of the other. In perception there is always the act of perception, which Husserl calls the *noesis*, and the percept as it is given to the subject, the *noema* (Husserl, 1960). This is further distinct from the object *itself*; as I hear my neighbour playing his guitar, my act of perception accomplishes a particular and well-determined perception. Of course his playing is revealed in a multiplicity of perceptions - according to the identity of the listener, his physical position, etc. - and is therefore not to be identified with any number of my *noemata*. But the object in my

perception is to be distinguished from my act because it does not, as does my act, exist in consciousness. My act of perception, the *noesis*, is not continuous, whereas the *noemata* have identity such that they outlive any number and instance of acts of perception. Because of this consistency of *noemata* my acts of perception are said to aim at fulfilment by the intentional object. Since they transcend my (subjective) acts of perception, *noemata* guarantee the correspondence of perception to truth; Merleau-Ponty speaks of the 'intentional arc' which maintains coherence for the subject, and when this 'goes limp', for example in illness, this relation of subject to truth of things is impaired (1962, p.136). Finally, then, intentionality can be said to refer to the objectivating duty of consciousness, where objectivity is understood not as a finite virtue exterior to the subject, as it were, but as the possibility of an identity which persists beyond the life of immediate perception.

The actual object at which our perception aims has been said to exist independently of the *noesis* and to transcend all *noemata*. Actually to approach the thing itself we need to pass through its outer *horizon* - which describes its perceived spatial relation to other objects as well as its occasional essence as a member of a class of objects - and to arrive at the 'essential essence' (Heidegger, 1965) which should reveal to us more what is given with the object *for itself*, as well as what is realised noetically. We can do this for an object whether it be concrete - like this paperweight before me - or abstract, like a particular quality of beauty, the nature of time, or, indeed, the character of thought itself. It is, in a sense, in each case to put the Kantian questions anew: What is it which determines *this* paperweight? Or which reveals to me the truth about my friend's behaviour? We must at the same time try to set aside what we know, or take for granted, is usually the case.

This is the process of *eidetic intuition*, and it is by this

method of *bracketing out* and thus of transcending the *natural attitude* that we arrive at *the things themselves*. These things, as intentional objects, celebrate phenomenology's avoidance of both a psychologism which would see an object of cognition as a mental act, and of the empiricist object which can transcend consciousness. It is intentionality's project to introduce consciousness to the ground which properly belongs to the object, whilst the object itself is only fulfilled in consciousness. In this way, the whole phenomenological approach can be said to comprehend the directions of both an idealist and a realist characterisation of understanding simultaneously, because phenomenology sees the one as necessary to the other, and neither as enjoying any logical priority. Husserl has called this mutual necessity a *Fundierung*, and Merleau-Ponty elaborates this :

... every factual truth is a rational truth, and vice-versa. The relation of reason to fact, of eternity to time, like that of reflection to the unreflective, of thought to language, or of thought to perception, is this two-way relationship ... the founding term, or originator - time, the unreflective, the fact, language, perception - is primary in the sense that the originated is presented as a determinate or explicit form of the originator, which prevents the latter from reabsorbing the former, and yet the originator is not primary in the empiricist sense and the originated is not simply derived, since it is through the originated that the originator is made manifest.

(1962, p.394.)

The 'either/or' opposition is endemic in systems of thought, and in an obvious way is necessary. The *Fundierung* does not dilute the purity of conceptual poles with the compromise of synthesis; its innovative strength is in positing their relation as horizontal rather than oppositional, so that a term has a distinct meaning only against the general licence of sense provided by its apparent opposite. Put like this, less obvious instances of *Fundierungen* spring to mind - Chomsky's 'Competence and Performance', for example, or the Gestalt 'Figure and Ground'; but chiefly, one thinks of Saussure's *Langue* and *Parole* (1974). These terms have suffered some neutralisation in the hands of recent Structuralist accounts, where there is little or no elaboration of human participation in their operation. But it should

be noted that Saussure's understanding of the terms was a more generous and humane one than normally attaches to their use in linguistics, and he himself referred to Durkheim's psychological and sociological theories to describe their relationship (Durkheim, 1972).

This Chapter opened with the question "How can language be an object for enquiry?" The Chapter has indicated some of the ways in which language has been made an object for study within certain disciplines; the question remains unanswered because we have yet to determine quite what language is, if it is not the thing described by linguistics. It is proposed in the next Chapter to return to Saussure's position of *Langue* and *Parole*. By contrast with their use as the basis of a science of language, the terms will be re-examined from a phenomenological viewpoint as an introduction to a more detailed enquiry into subject-object relations. What will eventually be shown in later Chapters is how the expressive character of language is illuminated by the relation of *Langue* and *Parole* understood as structures of experience.

CHAPTER THREE

The phenomenological project

The terms *Langue* and *Parole* are used by Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1974). *Langue* can be readily defined as a system of possible phonological, grammatical and semantic relations which exhausts the possibilities of a given language. As such, it is not itself realised, but is like a theory describing and guaranteeing the coherence of actual speaking and listening, of reading and writing. What people actually say is to be understood by *Parole*. It is important to realise that if we added up everything you say and everything I say, and everything said by all other speakers of our language we should not be any nearer to articulating *Langue*, not even if we abstracted from this data all apparently consistent and necessary features. The relation of *Parole* and *Langue*, then, is a more subtle one than that of a set of co-ordinates to a complete map; if we worked through all such references we could produce the map, but it is most particularly the third dimension given with the lack of concretion of the semantic element which frustrates this analogy. *Parole* does not refer to *Langue* in the way that our co-ordinates indicate a point on the map. If this analogy is useful it is only in the sense that the co-ordinates have meaning in terms of the whole map; they are relatively significant only. If we accept these terms as basic and useful to an enquiry into language, the prompt question is : How is this relation between what I say and the theoretical guarantee of meaning accomplished ? *Langue* is not spoken by persons and is a wholly intellectual creation; *parole* is manifest and eventual. Since we explain *Parole* in terms of *Langue* it soon emerges that they must be terms of a different order, and the basic distinction is this: *Langue* is a term which must describe language at the level of its ontology, since

it is clearly a theory of the existence of language, of the elements and their relations necessary to language. *Parole*, on the other hand, describes language at an empirical level, and is hence a term for methodology rather than metaphysics. What is missing from the account of *Langue* is the ontology of the speaker, whilst the instance of *Parole* must call on the systematic nature of *Langue* to guarantee methodological coherence. Their interpenetration is a clear case of *fundierung*.

Parole, like its speakers, exists but *Langue* is endorsed only by a system of abstractions. Broadly speaking, linguistics has seen the relation of the terms in a structuralist and abstract point of view, and has not seen the ontology of the speaker - and the ground of these abstractions - as lying within its brief. A phenomenology is required to show not only how a critique of existence is necessary to the account of *Parole*, but equally how abstraction itself is adumbrated by this critique. The first task is to establish the necessary conditions for speaking, to ask what is essentially true of language and what merely contingent.

There are few purely physical conditions necessary to language beyond existence. Work with the deaf (Furth, 1966), the emotionally disturbed (Goldstein, 1948), the mentally-ill (Binswanger 1945) and so on minimises the role of the wholly-physical in language. This is not to deny that language does indeed require certain well-defined physical performances, whether these are at the level of neurone or phoneme or morpheme. But impairment can be various and severe and yet we should still have to concede that such a subject 'has' language. After a more loosely-defined point we should have to say no, this subject does not 'have' language. The criteria we bring to this decision may refer to the absence of

particular physically-realised skills or attributes, and this by trying our subject against normative scales of ability; but quite in the manner that death is difficult to distinguish criterially from life for medicine, so the function of language for a subject cannot be empirically established. This is no more than a reflection of the partial contributions which medicine itself, psychology, linguistics etc. make to the study of language. The question remains : What both unifies and transcends the processes illuminated by these studies ? Existence by itself is clearly no guarantee of language, since animals 'exist' without language as we understand these terms. At the same time, in an obvious way it cannot be missed out of an account of language. We require, then, something between existence as commonly understood and language as physically realised for science; that is to say a concept or area of understanding which comprehends both the silent privacy of personal existence and the shared physical reality which language both describes and participates in. Such a concept is necessary to guarantee meaning for the individual and for the context which generates this meaning.

Such an area is provided by *being-in-the-world*, understood by the *Lebenswelt* of Husserl, and given with Heidegger's *Dasein*. Broadly this concept provides for the practical contribution which the individual makes in constituting the world (*Parole*), but it is a world which is already there (*Langue*). The relationship is not to be understood in spatial terms, but rather in temporal and hence existential ones. The meaning of the world arises directly from its manifest, three-dimensional nature, and not primarily from abstractions. The world must be dealt with as it presents itself, which is to say practically. Man is surrounded immediately by materials and tools which represent opportunities; they are not the *res extensae* of Descartes, merely there, *vorhanden*, indifferently located.

The world is stuff for use, *zuhanden*; in their various other fields Bergson (1946) similarly points to man as pre-eminently *homo faber*, Dewey (1964) exalts praxis over the given world of Newtonian and Cartesian science, and Kelly (1955) identifies 'man the scientist'. For Heidegger

Human being is not a thing which has additionally the gift of being able to do something, but it is primarily possibility.

(Greene, 1957, p.143)

However, being-in-the-world is actually more radical than the projects of such as Dewey, Bergson and Kelly, and is not to be understood as a sort of linguistic compendium which allows us to alternate focus and ground between separate notions of 'being' and 'world' according to accent. Being-in-the-world insists that the terms have meaning only in the full presence of each, which involves the entanglement of all history both personal and mundane. The concept is most important to this study because only in terms of it can such phenomena as the experience of the literary text be understood. In a discussion of T.S.Eliot's poetry, Harding (1963) speaks of the poet's exploration of the "possibilities of meaning that lurk in the interstices of familiar ideas" (1963, p.108). It is such an exploration that we need to rid 'being' and 'world' of any mutually exclusive properties; the history of Being in philosophy is characterised by a concern with its status as either the property of an object, or as an object possessing properties. To enquire about Being is generally to attempt to isolate the criteria for use of the word 'is', to discover what unifies all such uses, and to view Being finally as a name for something else which is in the world. Answers to the question 'What is Being?' tend to describe it as an abstract synonym for a nominal function in an extended and separate world. There seem to be thus two competing strains at work in the enquiry, which are to abstract from the real world an essence, which must yet 'be' in a distinct, independent and transcendent fashion. Dewey (1929) has similarly pointed to two sources of error in the concern with Being. One of these is the survival

of an (often implicit) preference for a Divine Being, or some state which, reflecting 'Him', represents immutability and permanence, distinct from the world of sense perception. Such a view cannot separate a search for universal truth from a divine authorship which hence unifies our experience. Even outside of clearly theological ground, modern mythological thought still has an impulse towards such a structure of Being. A second confusion of the question, according to Dewey's account, is the reification of abstract truths away from the context in which, and only in which, they derive their meaning; thus we expect to arrive at essential Being by a local empirical programme. Dewey thus criticises both the idealist and the nominalist tendency.

The reflection of Being which science discovers bears an obscure relation both to Being as an area for metaphysical speculation, and to the Being which daily experience assumes linguistically or, more rarely, in moments of reflection. Heidegger (1962b) identifies the regrettable diffusion of the search for Being with the foundations for metaphysics and science laid by the projects of Plato and Aristotle. These movements of idealisation and analysis take existence for granted where the earlier 'thinkers' such as Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides - whom he distinguishes from 'philosophers' - had seen Being, language and world as co-present moments of the *logos*. It is the search for Being in a temporal dimension which authenticates Heidegger's claim to be returning to the spirit of this original, pre-Socratic thought; it is man's finitude in this world which provides the basis for Being, not an enduring other-world of Forms, or other metaphysical abstractions.

What is the world which phenomenology discovers for consciousness? It is not the same world as that

elaborated by physics or by geography; these worlds prove to be contingent on Being's first locating itself in the field of its intentionality. Such schemes permit Being to move the extended world coherently from its perception to its cognition and to reflect on it. But the world which is constituted with Being has none of the properties of science which define these secondary worlds. The world in which Being finds itself must be meaningful, but it is an immediate meaning which arises because Being is practically engaged with a world of intentional objects. Phenomenology can hence understand Being by substituting for the term itself 'a world of objects'. In the growth of consciousness, this world is not primarily given as object itself, in the usual sense of the word, but as the limitless possibility of subjective consciousness. Again it is thus not the totality which exists for physical science, but rather a contextual mass which shifts meaningfully with the instances of pre-reflective experience in which the individual acts. The only possibility of coherence for this world is the incrementation of intentional acts which seek their unity in the horizons of the world. That is, it is only as consciousness begins to distinguish meaning against a horizon that this horizon itself takes on definition; as consciousness perceives the limit and value of its own intentionality, it grants objectivity to the boundless surplus of the world which (as we have said) physical science is later to characterise. Objectivity is then defined as the infinite totality of perceptions which do not - in the manner of the Ideal object - transcend our subjective acts, but to which mass these acts inexhaustibly address themselves. Objectivity does not find itself in an antinomy with subjectivity through mutual exclusion; objectivity should be seen rather as the conclusion at which subjectivity aims as the very condition of its having a will. It acts to be understood and how else should it achieve recognition unless it acts in a shared world. This world participates in the life

of the subject but extends variously far beyond the instances of existence which determine that subject. Does not this world begin to sound rather like *Langu* ? Of course, the world is not a 'theory' in the way that *Langu* is, but the guarantee of coherence it provides for the possibilities which the subject realises echoes the relation which holds *Parole* and *Langu* together.

Gadamer (1976) speaks of the three peculiarities of language. Firstly, it is 'essentially forgetful', since we launch into speech innocent of the grammatical rules which subtend our utterances: '... the more language is a living operation, the less we are aware of it.' (p.65.) Secondly, there is the 'I-lessness of language which is its necessary directedness towards another person and, indeed, its realisation only in the (albeit sometimes imaginary) presence of an Other. Thirdly, Gadamer speaks of the 'all-encompassing' nature of language, not as 'a delimited realm of the speakable', (*ib.*) but as the possibility of all being itself. This characterisation of language actually provides us with the conditions for the subject's assumption of the world. He is always in a world of whose boundaries he is not primarily aware; but his existence becomes an expression in the light of, because of the existence of, this bounded world. Finally the world is unified by his consciousness and is 'all that is the case'. So just as a reflexive linguistics can elaborate a *Langu* which clearly precedes only in logic the instances of *Parole*, so the world grows as a sort of tacit theory which the subject needs to ground the possibilities of experience. The world itself remains bound by his experience - as *Parole* has no actual need of *Langu* - but liberates itself as a theory when the subject requires some guarantee of existence. It is a moment of the same order which identifies *Langu* as that which endures

beyond particular utterances.

In summary, the first step in performing this phenomenology of language has been to identify being-in-the-world as the ground in which *Langue* and *Parole* meet. It is suggested that this term is transcendental in the operation of language because it allows for both subjective expression and a more or less ideal context. The term has not been fully described because, although it is basic to the life of language it depends on the introduction of another, further regressed term. If being-in-the-world guarantees language, what *dynamic* conceptual area do we need to call on to describe how being-in-the-world itself is originated and accomplished? It is still an abstract principle of metaphysics. Being-in-the-world allows us, as yet in outline, to distinguish the speaking subject from his comprehending context, but phenomenology requires we establish perception as the gate through which chaos issues as coherence. For Merleau-Ponty particularly, perception is the end of the final reduction, or, to put it the other way round, is the first conceptual area which also makes sense. In his thesis of the primacy of perception, Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964a) thus brings ontogeny to ontology. I propose to echo his scheme and begin the enquiry proper with an examination of how the world starts in perception and thence how it is that the competing strains of ideal abstraction and direct experience find the subject in a speaking world.

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Is perception really such a gate, or does that metaphor reflect rather a logical structure necessary to relate chaos and coherence? Certainly perception does not operate with the effect of an electric switch, suddenly completing and galvanising and illuminating, though all

these features are salient to it. It is required to cast perception not as the pivot necessary to a dualist epistemology, relating only by holding apart inner and outer, but to see it as the only means of a validation which each seeks in the other. It is therefore the *mode* of reality allowed to the subject in the presence of the object and as such has only contingently an empirical reality. This latter reality is the quantifiable function established by mechanistic psychology, which sees perception as something actively done by or at least through the sense-organs; it becomes the way in which the whole subject holds an object intentionally 'outside of' himself. The notion of 'successful division' is actually given with the use of the term perception in these instances. Phenomenology, on the other hand, in refusing either to hypostatise the sense-organs or to use them as machines - in which cases organs and objects have no need of each other - phenomenology sees perception rather as the act of the subject *placing* the object as it were 'outside'. So the perennial question of the relation of subject and object turns primarily on the nature of perception. Merleau-Ponty puts the task of understanding the question this way :

We must discover the origin of the object at the very centre of our experience; we must describe the emergence of being and we must understand how, paradoxically there is *for us* an *in-itself*.

(1962, p.71)

If we return to the question of the reality of perception for mechanistic psychology we see that the term can actually be used as the indifferent generic substitute for 'successful' seeing, hearing, tasting, etc. In so far as there is a unity of meaning which covers all these functions, it goes something like this : perception generalises the particular sensory manner in which I acknowledge a discrete object. In this account the emphasis on the sensually-given object diminishes the

constituting power of the perceiver, and the question remains as to how sensation and intellect together perform this realisation of the object. The empirical fact of this is obvious, since some operation is necessary to guarantee that my well-defined perception of this coin from an angle which suggests an elliptical shape can yet allow me the knowledge of the circular coin itself. Attempts to describe perception in terms of the functions which realise it take for granted the objects of the senses; only that part of the act of perception committed to objects as we uncritically know them can be said to have an empirical reality, and that part is only as real as those objects. The remainder, the larger part one could say, belongs to the condition of the subject being able to entertain those objects. In this sense perception goes beyond correlation to understand, in a way which only philosophy can provide, the very possibility of existence. By this token we can understand man - quite in the manner of Cassirer (1944), etc. - as the animal who can 'have' objects symbolically, or simply 'have' symbols in the absence of those objects. Perception is the means by which those objects can be constituted, that is to say can be meaningful. The objection that other animals do this is no objection at all, and we can point to the sick and to children for instances of impaired, distorted or limited emergence into the perceptual field. The intellectualist argument separates the normal perceiver from these marginal cases by introducing judgment as the element necessary to make perception possible and distinct from mere sensation, and so the concept of 'attention' is invoked as a general power to enable 'judgment' to construe an otherwise indifferent mass of 'sensations'. But how attention fastens judgment to sensation, and more importantly why it should bother remain unanswered questions. Approaching these questions from a certainty of the object, the empiricist

explains the presence to the subject of a meaningful object in terms of memory and association which promote an accretion of identity. But in the first instance what is it which 'knows' to call on particular memories other than a construction which is not furnished by these memories but rather itself gives character to that storehouse? And how, unless this construction is fairly well-determined, is the subject not flooded by myriad association? What filter should we have to introduce? These are forms of the questions of the *Meno*, and Merleau-Ponty comments that

A thought really transcended by its objects would find them proliferating in its path without ever being able to grasp their relationships to each other, or finding its way through to their truth.

(1962, p.371.)

The phenomenal field must be guaranteed by something less volatile than a world of objects and less axiomatic, less resolute than a rational project. To do this it is not merely a matter of synthesising the extremes which the traditional accounts go to, not a matter of saying truthfully that judgment and sensation negotiate reality between them, for the truth of this is in any event contained in seminal form in these original accounts. What is really defective in these accounts is their emphasis on *functions*, so that sensory apparatus is characterised as a conductor, or judgment given the 'job of offsetting the possible dispersal of sensations' (*ib.*, p.32).

This functional emphasis is variously unsatisfactory. Firstly, it cannot provide a purpose for the occurrence of a function other than by referring it to other functions, so that the whole operation has only the coherence of a machine. So, secondly, if judgment operates to qualify sensation, the identity of the objects 'causing' that sensation is arbitrary; conversely, if those objects are firm in experience, then judgment's task is merely to confirm. Chiefly, however, these accounts separate in time subject and data, the one serving to realise the other. Perception appears as either a single act of

acknowledgement, or as the process serially realised by separate functions (seeing, feeling, wondering, judging, etc.) over a period of time. This process has overall functional coherence but apparently no direction; the focus of the operation lights now on the object, now on the subject. If we relate world and subject in this way perception is at best accidental, more often mechanical. The guarantee we seek is to be had by shifting the argument from the plane of functions to the world of *direction* and of the will which achieves it. So far perception has been identified with the acts which realise it. In characterising perception as only contingently functional and as primarily the *condition* of all functions, it can be separated from the cupidity of empirical demonstration and recast as a *priori* necessity.

And yet it remains an act. Although it has no remarkable beginning nor end, and will not be measured by its various skills, perception is an act because it is intentional. Again, it is not just the gate or the pivot, but the very possibility of these functions and that which necessitates (rather than merely facilitates) relation. In replacing causality with the *lebenswelt*, phenomenology abolishes the need to identify the margins of perception - the subject is always already in a world and 'the beginning is not a matter of fact, but an action' (Husserl, 1931). The boundlessness of this action arises from what Husserl distinguishes as 'operative' intentionality (from our normal understanding of intentions). Kant's *Refutation of Idealism* is probably the earliest indication of a sort of intentionality which could link 'inner perception' with 'outer perception'. He later posits the unity of imagination and understanding confronting the unity of objects (*Critique of Judgment*, 1952). But there remains to Kant's subject a categorial activity, even though he is no longer the sole author of his world

and Kant's intentionality is a virtual cognate of judgment. But the notion of a pre-reflective or antepredicative consciousness finds the individual in a world which is realised by operative intentionality; perception is the actual, fleshly way in which these theoretical glances over the shoulder are unified. Is this to contradict what has gone before? Having said that perception must be freed from mechanistic accounts and understood as the guarantee of *all* functions (and accounts), I have now returned to it a solid and three-dimensional task. But this task is commensurate with the size I want to claim - in a philosophical way - for perception. This task is not exhausted by any or all of its performances, for the task is always to anticipate coherence rather than at any instant to dwell on it. Reason and imagination and memory will do that, whilst perception runs ahead into a world of action. This is why perception is never just a realised act, but is also always the condition of all acts. Husserl thus talks of the 'teleology of consciousness', so that

When we consider what we may call the *history of the subject* the beginning is not a matter of fact but an action ... To be a subject is not only to act, but also necessarily to proceed from action to action, from the product of one action through a new action to new products.

(Husserl in Føllesdal, 1979, p.372)

The account of perception traditionally elaborated by science and philosophy is deceptively and superficially similar, but it sees the object as it were unifying perception, the act serving the object. The scientific concept becomes the means and equivalent of an object held to be the invariant of all sensory and perceptual fields;

The tacit thesis of perception is that at every instant experience can be co-ordinated with that of the previous instant and that of the following, and my perspective with that of other consciousnesses - that all contradictions can be removed, that monadic and intersubjective experience is one unbroken text -

that what is now indeterminate for me could become determinate for a more complete knowledge, which is as it were realised in advance in the thing, or rather which is the thing itself.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.54.)

However, the process described by Husserl is not primarily intellectual but derives from the subject's insertion in a world which pre-dates conceptual abstraction, a world primarily aesthetic. We do not 'know' objects in the way that 'the tacit thesis' would require, standing behind our acts of perception adding increments like building-blocks until we have the pre-determinate thing. We know them by dwelling in them and this precisely because we find ourselves in a world. The case of aesthetic appreciation of the work of art crystallises this. For scientific enquiry the object is invariant and the focus which all perceptions must aim to exhaust, to possess entirely. The object, any object, is by definition discrete. Indeed, this is what is meant by intentional objects, things as they appear to consciousness, well-defined, 'dispersed and distributed each to its due place' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.371). Objects in this sense can be exhausted by explicit knowledge. In the equally ordinary sense of subject, we attribute as it were an 'inside' to the entity, an internal necessity which can never be yielded up entirely to conceptual thinking; art-objects appear to have this character. The aesthetic object does not 'live a life of its own', but it does 'live' in its presentations, which extend beyond the lives of all who perceive it. It is for this very simple reason that the literary text, the symphony, the painting (or whatever art work) actually persist, or fail to persist; the extent to which they frustrate their 'objectivity' determines their life. The aesthetic object is then defined as that which, having a truth, can be dwelt in. 'Dwelling in' means sharing a perspective and a particular horizon with

something, so that it is not only materially distinct from all other objects *qua* intended entities, but in virtual relief against the class of objects to which it normally and usefully belongs. Bruzina (1978) talks of aesthetic imagination as making 'what otherwise would be merely an appearance of something the appearance of it' (p.157). What such activity does is in fact to return the object from the generality given it by the concept to its particular nature. But this particular nature is ever-present to the subject, is properly his first experience of what will be object, and its aesthetic presence is occluded by the growth of abstraction. What is true for sophisticated aesthetic imagination is more simply the case of our receipt of the world. We are primarily in a world of objects. The categorial object is that secondary place which, having been dwelt in, can become discrete for Being. This is why we can say without contradiction that Being is a world of objects. This is also the simple truth of Merleau-Ponty's observation that 'We are in the world and the world is in us.'

We need finally to outline, within the thesis of the intentionality of consciousness, the various ways in which 'the thing itself' appears as an object for an intending subject. It is clear that since we objected to Descartes' methodological separation of subject and object, some redefinition of the terms would be called for. In a sense this is overdue, because it is the relation of subject and object that this whole study would seem to stand on, for the question takes us back to basic epistemological considerations, and to the very character of the thesis of intentionality. The discussion occurs here because we need to describe the ways in which a subject can firstly 'have' objects, so that we can describe how he later has words in their stead. The natural attitude polarises subject and

object and accounts for their relation partly by a theory of abstraction which is less than satisfactory. What is chiefly absent from this account is the way that subject and object participate in each other in a subtle way which their material distinctness occludes.

Because there is no absolute subject nor absolute object, we cannot describe one in the absence of the other. Object is always object 'for' a consciousness, whilst the subject we take for granted as that consciousness in the condition of entertaining objects. But the marginal case - such as aesthetic perception of the work of art - of horizons falling away so that the subject dwells more fully in the object (and 'there is for us an in-itself', Merleau-Ponty says) reminds us that in antepredicative knowledge there is no other than this indivisible perceptual unity; but the *idea*, creating a space which did not previously exist, interposes between my experience and what is suddenly an object for my experience. It is such ideas which maintain the object and its boundaries distinct from those of the subject. Finally the 'idea of me' must replace the uncritical 'experience of me'. I can become for myself an object, I can posit myself in a narrative and only rarely, if ever, experience the reality of myself in the re-discovery of 'the thing itself'.

But this transcendental ego has a shorter history than that of the world of perception. If we remember that perception is not an act or set of acts performed by me on a world about me, but is rather the condition of there being a world at all, then we can avoid the idea of the primacy of the subject. The truth of Merleau-Ponty's dictum, that 'We are in the world and the world is in us', asserts itself repeatedly. The real meaning of the pre-reflective and ante-predicative life is just that subject and object are not originally to be

distinguished in experience. Only when objects are detached from this pre-reflective life do we enjoy an attitude towards them, and so know ourselves as subject. How is it that they are detached, or are expelled ?

The traditional account of the emergence of the thinking individual favours abstraction as the means of concept-formation, thus taking for granted a discrete subject and object. The thesis equally takes as axiomatic what it is asked to explain, which is the relation of the particular to the general. For this account, abstraction is the drawing away from a number of particular impressions of a generalisation, which is hence seen as that which unifies the resemblances which the particulars are held innocently to exhibit. But how could the individual do this without he already has that generalised scheme to marshal the myriad impression ? And what, anyway, could a particular impression be other than a theory of its generalised possibility ? If it is particular, it is by virtue of its significance against a positing horizon; significance is always relative and oppositional and depends for its life on its reference to other instances of itself. Again like *Parole*, the particular can only signify because it is anticipated and guaranteed by the general, a sort of *Langue* against which the intending subject makes a coherent template of undifferentiated impressions. This template 'works' to the extent that it enables the subject to act in a shared world, and so to proceed from action to action, and thus to new products. Perception is charged with creating and maintaining objects, which are generalised instances of themselves; Merleau-Ponty describes this:

The whole life of consciousness is characterised by the tendency to posit objects, since it is consciousness, that is to say self-knowledge, only in so far as it takes hold of itself and draws itself together

in an identifiable object.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.71)

This is the Kierkegaardian objective thought, which has forgotten if not severed its roots in perceptual experience and operates with the structures of science and common-sense. This dissipation of experience in the fact of an object is also an arrest of the subject and Merleau-Ponty continues,

And yet the absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness, since it congeals the whole of existence, as a crystal placed in a solution suddenly crystallises it.

(Ib.)

The truly particular, on the other hand, cannot be had in a generalised fashion. Its precise status as an object for us depends on how it is constituted in consciousness.

Subject and object must be described in terms of the continuously-related ways we have of being in the world, and as correlated with different forms of consciousness. The project to demonstrate the unity of subject and object would be vitiated if, at the same time, we did not jettison another traditional separation, that of thinking from feeling. MacMurray says that 'Reason is primarily an affair of the emotions' (1935); this manifestly does not mean that thinking cannot prosper beyond the concrete, but that the affect always participates in thinking; again, it does so because thinking has forms which correspond to different intentional objects. Bolton (1982) suggests that the world of experience is organised by three ubiquitous ways of having objects. The first, the 'world' of imagination, is characterised by the aesthetic presence of things to us; we dwell in this world in a way which precedes and yet also transcends reflective thought. The 'world' of abstraction, by contrast, is established by *standing back* from things, and Bolton elaborates the conceptual structures which organise this. So concepts of things

emerge from the perception of resemblances between particular objects; concepts of acts reveal the structural properties of those acts; finally, we form concepts of persons 'through a sympathetic reflection which reveals them as modes of fulfilment of intentionality'. Through this abstraction we are returned to the world of imagination and of immediate experience. The third 'world' of Bolton's account is that of *faith*, understood as ultimate concern for the coherence of the many realities which make up lived experience. Faith refers

to the whole structure of experience in a way that combines the actual and the ideal.. (and) in so far as it necessarily incorporates the ideas of commitment, transcendence and sharing; it is faith that inspires the commitment of our imagination, the "plunging forward" of intentionality that makes the world real for us, but it is faith too that allows us to acknowledge the necessity to surrender our subjectivity, to recognise that experience can only be fulfilled in that which can stand as its measure, and thus be sacred for us; and the meeting-point of commitment and the sacred object is where persons can meet to know one another and themselves.

(Bolton, 1982, p.75)

This is why objects must be understood as correlates of consciousness, and described by the mode of the subject's being-in-the-world, which itself precedes any subject-object distinction. Objects can only be known by the intentional acts which realise them, and these acts are themselves known by different forms of thought, and therefore different forms of participation of subject in object, of object in subject.

This analysis calls into question Roquentin's separation of the subject, the word and the thing in *Nausea* (Sartre 1965). For Sartre, it appears that words are a sort of deluding medium between consciousness and the thing. In his account of Roquentin's vision of the root, Sartre

describes the discrepancy which separates the thing from the word:

In another world circles, musical themes, keep their pure and rigid lines .. a circle is not absurd, it is clearly explained by the rotation of a segment of a straight line around one of its extremities. But neither does a circle exist. This root, by contrast, existed in such a way that I could not explain it. You could not pass from its function as a root, as a suction pump. to *that*, to that hard and thick skin of a sea lion, to this oily, callous stubborn bark. The function explained nothing: it allowed you to understand in general what a root was, but not at all *that one there*.

(Sartre, 1965 p.194)

This experience brings on the 'nausea' of the title. Now in terms of Bolton's scheme, Roquentin's experience could be seen as a collapse of faith which maintains the categorial attitude, so that the object becomes detached from the conditions which normally describe and delimit its existence. One could conclude from this that for Sartre, the *epoche* - which this is a form of - is always disastrous. But surely, Roquentin's experience, on the contrary, is the very celebration of faith, as the root maintains its coherence as the thing that it is, and Roquentin remains unified with the object of his consciousness; and this because words are intentional. Sartre's mistake is to over-intellectualise the word, seeing it, indeed, as the bearer of functions, and overlooking the *imaginative* power which gives it any effect it may have, and which is continuous with our ability to dwell in the object so intended. It is the enhancement of the imagination which makes particular this root for Roquentin, and which he is at pains to communicate. Of course, he must do so in language, and because 'the word' is not 'the thing', he feels he must fail. But the word *intends the thing*.

Again, the general mistake is to see the life of words as something extra to the life of things and of

consciousness, and not as a mode of their participation in each other. In the same book Sartre observes that it is by making a narrative of our lives as we live them that we diminish their existential meaning for us in the attempt to make them meaningful:

... a man is always a teller of stories, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through these stories; and he tries to live his own life as if it were a story he was telling.

(p. 56)

So - according to Sartre - we must fail to realise properly what we are if we organise narratives around our experience so that we dislocate our more immediate, imaginative insertion in the world. Of course there is some truth in this; but narrative, far from being an ornament, is a supremely intentional function, and what any given narrative intends is the coherence of a situation correlated with a consciousness. Narrative is not a later and enervating function of language, but is itself a character of consciousness.

Forms of language reflect the structures and processes of consciousness exactly, and of course they do because they are as much constitutive of consciousness as we can know it, as consciousness determines what we can say. It requires a phenomenology of language finally to resolve and describe this relation of word and thought, of subject and object. These relations are endlessly debated, but only in the phenomenological account does the truly philosophical ground of human consciousness feature. In the traditional accounts a description of expression - the radical accomplishment of consciousness - is methodologically impossible. We are left with structures of 'mental' life posited on the one hand, and instances of empirical linguistic performance on the other. The view that language 'does' something is, of course, quite acceptable: it points

to real or imaginary objects or experiences; it evokes memories and creates possibilities; it bears literary as well as colloquial sense and meaning; it is a medium and it is functional. But what is difficult to imagine - because difficult to observe - is how language has all these - and more - functions simultaneously. It does so because language is not itself realised by any or all of these functions, but because it is, by virtue of its correlation with consciousness, the condition whereby any functions have sense or meaning. Linguistic data is what is left in the wake of identifying local expressions of this condition. But the whole eludes us like consciousness itself.

"How can language be an object for science?" is still the question. For Heidegger, for example, the co-occurrence of language and consciousness prevented any such enquiry; language is the 'House of Being', and for such a position is methodologically inaccessible. Can we learn nothing from linguistic enquiry?

A scheme suggests itself. We could see *Langue* as all the virtual possibilities of consciousness, and hence of language. *Parole*, therefore, represents the actual instances of consciousness made manifest. Then, still within this linguistic register, we could construct a picture of language built up through some of the elements which linguistics has found methodologically necessary, but indicating in each case the correlative structures of consciousness which achieve this observed coherence. Chapters 4 and 5 are based on this metaphor.

CHAPTER FOUR

A phenomenology of language: a reflective account

This chapter deals with language on several levels suggested by linguistics. In the creation of these levels for the purposes of this chapter, various terms are used which for linguistics are technical, though often contentious. It is important that the status of both terms and levels be indicated at the outset, so that the scheme and the character of the chapter can be understood as a whole; a more detailed account will obviously occur in the course of the argument.

What is phenomenally true of speech, and by virtue of this generality beyond contention, is that it appears to organise human sounds into clusters of noise which, in a string of such clusters, is said to have meaning. Do those sounds have a simple character which can be revealed by analysis? What is the nature of a single cluster of sound? And these 'strings', what is it determines their combination? In the case of each of these questions analysis has elaborated hypotheses which go some way towards explaining the operation of language in a scientific manner. In so doing, analysis has created units, levels and categories which are moot across the different schools; in fact the determination of such levels and the description of their interaction is in large measure what distinguishes the schools. There is no 'typical' system, nor universal measure, and two examples should illustrate the variety of categorisation.

The 'Tagmemics' of K.L.Pike (1976) are based on a hierarchical arrangement of units on the related strata of morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph and

discourse. By contrast, the 'Systemics' which M.A.K.Halliday (1969) developed after the work of Firth (1957) is a far more complicated affair, predicating three primary levels of form, substance and context; four fundamental categories of unit, structure class and system; and three scales of rank, exponence and delicacy. It follows that the use of categories - like 'the word' - must be special to the systems in which these units occur. Nevertheless, some basic schematisation of language as sounds, as words and as the combination of words into sentences is discernible in all linguistic systems.

The first three levels described in this chapter reflect this common division. In each case I have assumed a basic aspect of what I shall call *the linguistic attitude*, and described the additional concept, or concept-area, necessary to see how this science of categories reflects a living experience. To the linguistic account, we could say, has been added the intentional structures of which such accounts are abstractions. The last two levels of this chapter extend these structures into the general context of speaking persons, and the intentional worlds of their discourse. The scheme can be summarised in this way :

<i>Chapter section</i>	<i>Representative linguistic concept</i>	<i>Intentional concept area</i>
4.1	phoneme	experience
4.2	word	communication
4.3	sentence	style
4.4	discourse	will
4.5	world	Being

A fuller scheme, showing the relation of this chapter with Chapter 5, is given in Appendix A. p.232

Such a linguistic scheme is unmistakably hierarchically progressive, but it should also be clear that *in experience* there is no such division. Being is not a result or accumulation of these processes, but the very reason that they and all other phenomena can be coherent. This must also be true for the linguistic concept of world, therefore. The artificiality of such hierarchies, and their tendency so to misrepresent the character of experience is commented on in the course of the chapter.

4.1 *Experience and the phoneme*

What then does language express if it does not express thoughts? It presents or rather it *is* the subject's taking up of a position in the world of his meanings. The term 'world' here is not a manner of speaking: it means that the 'mental' or cultural life borrows its structures from natural life and that the thinking subject must have its basis in the subject incarnate.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.193.)

Organised signs have their immanent meaning, which does not arise from the "I think" but from the "I am able to".

(Merleau-Ponty, 1964b, p.88.)

Structuralism identifies language firstly as a finite and closed system of phonetic elements pre-existing signification. These elements are thus not signs, since they have no referent outside of the system, and are coherent only as they appear within this relative and oppositional scheme. (This is why language must be learned 'globally', since the elements of a language have no sense outside of the rules of relation which bind them each to the others.) Such an understanding explains to us how words without referents - "to", in 'I intend to work', for example - are yet meaningful; their value derives from their 'syncategorematic' function within a larger phonological structure. Merleau-Ponty confirms the structuralist canon that 'For a word to keep its sense it has to be held in place by all the others ...' (Merleau-Ponty, 1973b, p.92). He adds, however, an investment of structuralism with existence by showing

how the apparently impersonal rules of *langue* are formalisations of the experience of the speaker of *Parole*; that is, he claims that there is an immanent meaning to words beyond the rules of relation which structuralism uses to connect them, and that this meaning is in the first instance the expression of an intending voice which has yet to learn the abbreviations of communicative form. To the level of immanent meaning described by Saussure (1974), we can now add the insight that this phonology arises in infant gesticulation and that this same expressive element remains to adult speech as an affective, sound-sensuous dimension of aesthetic communication.

Now, almost without exception, philosophers from Plato onwards have dealt with language as a system whose coherence issues at the level of the word, or the sentence. Language itself *means* according to the fairly stable values of the particular words of a specific utterance: it is for this reason that philosophers in general, and post-Wittgensteinians in particular have felt confident that they could address philosophical questions by examining *corpi* of language. Questions of what is meant by, as much as of who means *what* collapse into the methodological injunction laid down by Wittgenstein: 'Don't ask for the meaning; look for the use !'

Though the work of the *Philosophical Investigations* is a refutation of the positivistic *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1963; 1961), the equation of words with translatable conceptual thought still requires that we minimise their phonological or aesthetic value, a thesis which implies at least the possibility of an *a priori*, eidetic universal grammar. Now it is arguable whether Merleau-Ponty's linguistic becomes the foundation of his phenomenology rather than a concomitant development; but surely his re-introduction of meaning - after the pre-Socratic manner - at the level of the aesthetic is an epistemological as much as

linguistic project which requires us to recast language as ontological. The view that language is a late sophistication of *homo sapiens*, added on out of evolutionary necessity is partially true: Merleau-Ponty himself defines speech as 'the surplus of existence over natural being' (1962, p.173). But Merleau-Ponty would not want to distinguish too shrilly between the noises of man and those of the other animals, and his thesis of language insists that it communicates primarily at a pre-reflective level. This holds for language across all instances of animal communication, and is the core of the argument that language is essentially expressive, arising gesturally from a bodily orientation and intention.

Put in this way, the argument seems obvious. But like so many which the phenomenologist undertakes to make explicit, it is one taken for granted in the 'natural' and the 'linguistic' attitude. The general occupation with the observable and communicative features of language which characterises the various accounts of social science, and which is rationalised in linguistics, minimises if not entirely ignores the expressive element. The natural attitude sees language as a vehicle given to us 'indifferent as a means of public transport', as Steiner (1978) says. Building on this the scientific attitude measures the instruments and effects of the system as though they were not embodied. Of course, in a sense which is not merely metaphorical, language is properly the individual's first science; it is the means by which man becomes reflexive, by which he can turn round on his experience and know it - but more importantly communicate it - by a system of symbols. The movement into language is an emergence into the world, which by definition is a shared place. Cassirer (1944)

updates the response to Kant's question 'What is man?' with the observation that he is uniquely the animal which can have objects symbolically. It is easy to see how this view of language as a sort of supra-affective scientific coating might allow us to forget that while language delivers us from a world of mute perception, it is from such a world that it arises and to which it essentially refers. Language no less than other forms and fashions of knowledge is gained 'from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.viii). Merleau-Ponty then extrapolates as an ontological principle of language what he discovers as an ontogenetic feature: the way children come to language demonstrates for us its roots in perceptual experience, in what phenomenologists usually call the antepredicative or pre-reflective life. Now where for such as Piaget (1969) the child transcends or quits the schemes of infant experience, this base of experiential coherence remains for Merleau-Ponty's linguistic as the guarantee of meaning. To be sure the adult world is intellectualised, is symbolic, but its origins in the structures of experience must remain to mediate the second-order scheme of science.¹

The foregoing rests on our acceptance of the phonological level of language as *in itself* expressive and signifying. Merleau-Ponty deduces this from infant speech, and it is against the canon of language acquisition from which it derives that this thesis should be presented.

The traditional account of language acquisition pictures

¹ It is axiomatic to this view that insanity results from the detachment of symbolic experience from prime, existential experience; less marginally, it will be seen later (p. 79-91) that inauthentic language is that which has a high communicative but impoverished expressive value.

the child as gradually habituated to the language which surrounds him by behaviouristic processes of copying, of stimulus and response, of reinforcement and reward; in this way his language is shaped by the models of adult language. Chomsky's (1957) is the first properly developed reaction to this account, and two arguments are particularly challenging. If imitation is the chief principle of acquisition then, firstly, we should expect children to adopt, for example, the patterns of intonation with which adults commonly address them; secondly, and more profoundly, the thesis of imitation cannot account for the fact that children produce errors for which they have had no model - "He goed", "mouses", etc. The evidence to the contrary is that children are somehow deaf to certain social influences, and develop rather in some ineffable fashion which has its own logic and pace, and which is effectively impervious to many forms of encouragement or inhibition. Chomsky's solution is rationalism writ large in the form of the Language Acquisition Device, a hypothesis about the serial development of language structures which the child brings to bear on the language behaviours to which he is exposed. The founding thesis is that the child has an innate capacity for language, that human being itself is pre-pared to operate linguistically upon sense data. At a broad level of theory the model is plausible, particularly in its explanation of such facts as the child's basic linguistic competence at around 3½ years, and the generally uniform pattern of acquisition of various structures across different children. The lack of empirical evidence, however, and in particular Chomsky's deduction of his thesis from idealised utterances have caused linguists to return to more empiricist accounts. Still undoubtedly rationalist in persuasion yet based on empirical evidence, Piaget places language within the context of general cognitive development; linguistic structures hence attend corresponding and prior

intellectual operations. Both these accounts imply some essential separateness of language and thought processes from each other and from the more global functioning of the body. More commodiously, Bruner (1975) attaches some forms of language to general patterns of activity of which the utterances form a part, and he thus goes some way to embodying speech. But this is a pragmatic account which should be distinguished from the phenomenological. In their extreme avoidance of behaviourism, these accounts minimise the possibility of meaning at a simple phonological level. Again the necessity to attach 'meaning' only to such explicitly conscious behaviour as can be rendered by words is a function of the categorial either/or which separates such intelligence from its embodiment. But 'The spoken word is a gesture,' says Merleau-Ponty, 'and its meaning a world.' (1962, p184) His thesis typically admits and balances the authority of intelligence which the rationalist account emphasises and the communicative nature of language stressed by the empiricist. The true novelty, however, is his situation of meaning primarily *in the body*, and his identification of infant phonology as expressive of this body's relation to the world. Language thereafter, however mediated by intellectual structures, and shaped by convention, must be understood as intentional of a world perceived by an embodied consciousness.

Merleau-Ponty thus departs from the philosopher's (including Husserl's) usual concern with syntax and celebrates precisely those features of language which philosophy sees as marginal or contingent, and which linguistics itself characterises as pre- or non-linguistic; these are the emotional, biological and expressive elements. Crystal, commenting on the first stage of phonological acquisition says

The important point to note here is that this is not a linguistic stage, as far as the production of the sounds is concerned.

(1976) .

He here identifies the linguistic with that which distinguishes a given community, and it is only at the second stage that he would describe the child's speech as linguistically significant. Whilst allowing, then, that mature speech is emotional and expressive, it seems that Crystal's conception of the linguistic is a largely sociological one, requiring that utterances should primarily realise a form of the given communicative context. *Ergo* language is essentially a communicative contract. For Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, the communicative signifies the context within which the prime, existential will to expression may become conventional and may indeed reach its mark of being understood. Our first step, then, must be to extend the category of 'the linguistic' to include the expressive, if raw phonetic impulses which announce a presence in the world. *We must begin* - as we did for perception - *with the resolution not to identify language with the processes which realise it.* Perception, we said, is not to be understood by acts of seeing or hearing, nor even by complex relationships of sense-data to electrical brain activity. These are in the end contingent; perception is rather the basic condition necessary to the meanings which are elaborated by these acts. Meaning extends beyond perception, but it is perception which originates it, and this because consciousness is intentional. Language is coherent not when it occurs at the explicit level of the sign properly constituted, but only if it extends and intellectualises a more fundamental articulation of the world by an intending being. The intention of a world starts before reflexive consciousness, and the movement into a personal science - which words represent - is the formalisation of a single gestural process begun

with the infant's motile and affective presence. Merleau-Ponty relates the motor responses of the child to an alphabet of gestures thrown up by evolutionary requirement, and suggests how language similarly arises in spontaneous gesturing at a phonetic level :

the knitting of the brows intended, according to Darwin, to protect the eye from the sun, or the narrowing of the eyes to enable one to see sharply, become component parts of the act of meditation, and convey this to an observer. Language, in its turn, presents no different a problem : a contraction of the throat, a sibillant emission of air between the tongue and teeth, a certain way of bringing the body into play suddenly allows itself to be invested with a figurative sense which is conveyed outside us. This is neither more nor less miraculous than the emergence of love from desire, or that of gesture from the un-coordinated movements of infancy.

(1962, p.193.)

Since language clearly has an 'inner' content which is not by this account 'self-subsistent and self-conscious thought',

What then does language express, if it does not express thoughts ? It presents, or rather it is the subject's taking up of a position in the world of his meanings. The term 'world' here is not a manner of speaking; it means that the 'mental' or cultural life borrows its structures from natural life and that the thinking subject must have its basis in the subject incarnate.

(Ibid.)

This view is crucial to Merleau-Ponty's whole philosophy, and is one of the best statements of the general phenomenological project to recover the ground of science in experience. Its achievement is that it gives 'the sign' a value in pre-intellectual operations, showing how at a mute, perceptual level our behaviour itself polarises, selects and announces. This gives the lie to the wholly empiricist position; similarly for mentalism, a disposition to language does not then mean merely the presence of intellectual powers awaiting activation, but a more general givenness to meaning-making which the body initiates, and which modal faculty indeed becomes the intellect

itself. Thus a 'mental life' is not a delimitable faculty which sits on top of an inferior body (like Ryle's Ghost), but it is the most refined way the body has of declaring its intentional structure.

The Saussurean understanding of 'the sign' is of an image - the *signifiant* - and a meaning - the *signifié* - inseparably linked, and Merleau-Ponty's demonstration of the gestural basis of language not only confirms this definition but locates the sign in experience, for

... we can no longer consider the learning of language as an intellectual operation of reconstituting meaning. We are no longer in the presence of two entities (the expression and its sense) the second of which would be hidden behind the first. Language as the phenomenon of expression is constitutive of consciousness.

(1973, p.50.)

So just as a smile or a raised fist do not convey pure, conceptual thoughts between minds, so the word is uttered and grasped globally as an indissoluble act of expression. The expression (of a meaning) does not interpose between an intention and (an intuited) meaning, but is indeed the instance of meaning itself, and this primarily on a phonological level. Long before words achieve sedimentation in lexicons, they arise as elements of expression whose meaning is not intellectual :

Here the meaning of words must finally be induced by the words themselves, or more exactly, their conceptual meaning must be formed by a kind of subtraction from a *gestural meaning* which is immanent in speech.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.179.)

This means, of course that the relationship between words and sounds cannot, *pace* the account of linguistics, be merely conventional :

If we consider only the conceptual and delimiting meaning of words, it is true that the verbal form ... appears arbitrary. But it would no longer appear so if we took into account the emotional content of the word, which we have called above its 'gestural' sense, which is all-important for poetry, for example. It would then be found that the words, vowels and phonemes are so many ways of 'singing' the world, and that their

function is, to represent things not, as the naive onomatopoeic theory had it, by reason of an objective resemblance, but because they extract, and literally express, their emotional essence. If it were possible in any vocabulary, to disregard what is attributable to the mechanical laws of phonetics, to the influence of other languages, the rationalisation of grammarians, the assimilatory processes, we should probably discover in the original form of each language a somewhat restricted system of expression, but such as would not make it entirely arbitrary to call night by the word *nuit* if we use *lumière* for light. The predominance of vowels in one language, or of consonants in another, and constructional and syntactical systems, do not represent so many arbitrary conventions for the expression of one and the same idea, but several ways for the human body to sing the world's praises and in the last resort to live it. We may speak several languages, but one of them always remains the one in which we live. In order completely to assimilate a language, it would be necessary to make the world which it expresses one's own, and one never does belong to two worlds at once ... Strictly speaking, therefore, there are no conventional signs.

(*Ib.*, p.187-8.)

This summary passage both establishes the primacy of the expressive origin and character of words and refutes the relativist philosophy of language. Its particular neatness is in fact this relationship it suggests between man, his world and the other men who inhabit it. It allows us a single world which is wholly shared, and yet it is the manner of this sharing which makes for local and conventional accent. But this specialty, the passage insists, is not initially at the level of word, or syntax, but at the level of phonetic expression through which the child invents for himself the linguistic values of his community. We recall that 'every scientific schematisation is an abstract and derivative sign-language' (*Ibid*, p.ix) which is meaningless unless experience has validated it. Speech, then, always reaches back into a semantic and therefore conventional store-house which was created by the selective impoverishment of a gestural response to the world.

This account is not particularly novel, but Merleau-Ponty brings a novel accent to it. He emphasises how babbling

ranges across all phonetic possibility in the world of speech, and how this unrestricted play of sounds gives way to the cultural influence of prosodic features and thus to a will to communicate. But language obviously means at a pre-conceptual and pre-verbal level and even in adult language this expressive element remains. Our common understanding of words drains them of this affective character so that we take them to be coherent abstractions which have left behind *the urge to mean*, and which rather mean by virtue of an intellect operating on them. The structuralist insistence that phonemic 'signs' have no meaning in themselves beyond our ability to distinguish each from the other overlooks the world of experience which this world of noise moves directly out of. It is because experience cannot be an object for science that linguistics excludes it from its field of enquiry, and hopes thereby to avoid a methodological schism which the problem of meaning at a purely phonological level would open. For Merleau-Ponty, however, complex adult language has its roots in babbling and is subtended by a world of phonetic gesturing which resists explicitation.

One of the aims of this section has been to remind the linguistic account that

The word owes its efficacy to the fact that it is not an objective notation, but an *index of value*.

(Gusdorf, 1965, p.9)

So a word does not isolate a referent from its context but rather determines it 'as a function of its environment' (*Ib.*) That environment rendered in speech is the intentional product of the speaker exercising a particular orientation. I shall summarise and conclude this section by drawing on some related points which Ricoeur has made, chiefly in his discussions of structuralism (1978; 1981). The question which motivates Ricoeur's enquiry and remains as a motif to this section is whether and how language can be an object for empirical science. Ricoeur points

out that Husserl's early work (from the *Logical Investigations* to the *Cartesian Meditations*) defined consciousness not by perception, by its presence to things, but by its ability to distance itself from them by signification. In the last ten years of his work Husserl admits perception and so shifts to a more existential phenomenology which therefore opposes any final separation of subject and object. Structuralist linguistics, however, operates on the understanding of the sign as a distancing device. Broadly, the phenomenological reduction to the level of phonology in language has the same effect as its regression of consciousness to perception, which is to posit the subject as acting and as having always acted in a lived world.

The definition which Hjelmslev (1970) has provided for structure as 'an autonomous entity of internal dependencies' permits 'the subordination of inductive operations to deduction and the calculus' (Ricoeur, 1978, p. 109) by which structuralist linguistics functions. In this way language has no 'outside', since this would work against the closure of signs. It is equally severed from individual performance and the evidence of personal creation of meaning by combination. Now Ricoeur's objection to structuralism is based on its identification of language with the structures and procedures with which it is customarily analysed. This is to say that language is no more nor less than these rules and those principles and such and such a system; what Ricoeur seeks to do, whilst applauding the usefulness of structuralist analysis, is to relocate *Parole* as a character of existence without impairing the increment to science which the elaboration of *Langue* has given. Ricoeur approves the levels (of phonology, of morphology and syntax, etc) which structuralism sets us, but points out that a change from one hierarchically-positing unit to another is a change 'from structure to function'. So as phonemes combine to form words, say,

they do so in the service of the intentional use of those words; words similarly form sentences because a particular meaning demands an equally special combination. What unifies these operations is the act of the speaker, not the mere presence of a structure. Discourse extends beyond any virtual system because it is an actual event. The structuralist systems point to the internally referring character of signs, but Ricoeur adduces Frege's *Sinn* (ideal sense) to account for this while the complementary *Bedeutung* describes how language simultaneously refers to a real world (Frege, 1952). Elaborating a system of antinomies, Ricoeur opposes the terms 'eventual', 'choice', 'innovation', 'reference' and 'allocation' to the structuralist values of 'virtual', 'constraint', 'institution', 'closure' and 'anonymity'. This latter set describes the elements of *Langue* while the former introduces a 'regulated dynamism' which is a science of operations upon those elements. We thus move from the view of language as a system of nominal relations indifferently combining to a dynamic recasting of those same relations as intentional processes.¹ In so transforming these elements we 'return the sign to the universe' (Guillaume) to oppose Levi-Strauss' demonstration of its absence from reality (1963).

One can hold to this point of view as long as he considers the closed system of discrete units which compose a language; it no longer suffices when one approaches discourse in act. It would appear then that the sign is not only that which is lacking to things, it is not simply absent from things and other than them; it is what wishes to be applied, in order to express, grasp, apprehend, and finally show, to make see.

(Ricoeur, 1978, p.118.)

This hypostatisation of the sign thus also returns it to the experience of the speaker. In Chapter 7 I shall

1 - Ricoeur counters possible objections: 'And let no one raise the accusation of mentalism. This accusation, which inhibits too many investigators, is valid against a psychologism of the image and of the concept, against the claim of psychic contents accessible to introspection alone. It is foolish when directed against operations.' (1978, p.117.)

again explore the gap which exists between experience and science, which I believe the question of phonological or 'immanent' meaning illustrates, and which is a chronic problem for methodology; meanwhile I mention an obvious case of experience which finally resists any scientific explanation. Poetry stands as the supreme example not only of untranslatability but also of the effects of words which, to be sure, can be alluded to by a critical terminology but which, as Eliot has reminded us, may communicate before being understood.¹ Our talk about poetry is usually a rationalisation of eventual experience in terms of the signs which words are; we need to remember that these signs are not merely 'internally dependent' on each other for meaning, but that they serve - and later we shall say *they are* - our intention to create meaning.

4.2 *Communication and the word*

... to name a thing is to tear oneself away from its individual and unique characteristics to see it as representative of an essence or a category.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.176.)

It is proposed in Ch.4.iii to describe in greater detail the expressive character of language established in 4.i, and to show how this will to expression has communication as its mode of realisation. Since 4.i concentrated on the experience of the individual, we shall here describe the ideal character of *Langue* which trains this speaking voice and which is deformed by it.

Speaking being an essentially expressive act arising from the speaker's private experience of the world, the question remains as to how it is that this speech is understood by other people. We said in the last section that where

1 - So we can explain onomatopoeia in terms of its high iconicity, say; likewise the effects of alliteration or assonance. Of course, even such phonaesthetic significance becomes ritualised, so that it is unlikely that the effect of the palatal-alveolar fricative - as the linguistic account might have it - in "Splash !" or "Soft the sea sighs"

for structuralist linguistics the meaning of 'the sign' is precisely its absence from experience, its capacity for detaching meaning from an immediate situation, for phenomenology such a sign is initially the gesture of an intending individual, a mark of his presence to the world. Saussure (1974) defines the sign as an indissoluble unity of the *signifiant* (a physical image) with the *signifié* (a conceptual entity), and in the first section we concentrated on the physical presence of the sign. Now since language clearly refers to things which need not even exist, it follows that this concept, in distinction from the physical image, must refer to an ideal entity. So, as consciousness is always 'of something', speech likewise has a referent which is only contingently real; the act of speech is intentional and posits objects *noetically* in just the way that thought entertains them. When we speak of an object, or think of it, we interpose an ideal form between consciousness and the thing itself. What a word expresses, then, is not merely a personal or 'mental' experience, but a meaning which appears to transcend this present use and which may appear in any language and context. Its pointing to something in the experience of the listener, its communication of sense, that is, completes the act of expression by turning it into a shared event. In this moment the sign itself is transcended as the ideal sense meets up with the reality of the thing and the truth of experience. This operation is described similarly, and more formally by Frege (1952).

Briefly, Frege contrasted the logical term 'concept' with the actual object by saying that objects can be

derives entirely from an emotional response. That different languages realise different onomatopoeic forms for what we would agree to be the same phenomenon reminds us that even in the highly iconic word there remains an element of the arbitrary and conventional. For the vast majority of words we must admit that there is minimal and more often no iconicity, though this does not mean that those words do not communicate at a sub-verbal level, and we have demonstrated how 'the sign' is an expressive and intentional process.

talked about while concepts are what we use in order to do this talking. So in "Brutus is an honourable man", the predicate 'is ... man' is a concept, an ideal entity, since Brutus is the real object. This movement from simply saying something to saying about something is a movement from object to concept. Of course in the real world of natural languages, even to say just "Brutus" must have a context such that the utterance is an intentional statement, carrying with it somehow its predicating concept. Language can do this because for Frege it has the double aim of an ideal sense and of reference, of *Sinn und Bedeutung*. The ideal sense is inexistent since it is an object of thought, but it undoubtedly refers to reality. So the movement we spoke of is a double one, for although at the level of the sentence the concept 'qualifies' a pre-existing object, at the broader ontological level of discourse the movement is from concept to object in the attempt to root the ideal sense of a whole utterance in the shared physical world which it intends.

In talking of a 'shared physical world' in this context, we can here deal with and finally dismiss the so-called Whorf-Sapir thesis of relativity. This thesis holds that different languages represent what may be fundamentally different ways of experiencing the world. This being so we could conclude that there are as many different worlds as there are languages, and presumably as there are people. Such a view finally separates each of us from the other, condemning us to our private worlds and to vain attempts to break out. To be sure, languages are never fully translatable into each other, primarily because of their phonological distinction and the phonaesthetic quality which resists explicitation. Apparently more damningly there may even be concepts exclusive to particular languages; there is plenty of empirical evidence of languages

having conceptual schemes not immediately accessible to our own tongue (Lyons, 1968; Evans Pritchard, 1937, etc.). But in the fact that we can talk of them, however obliquely, and that they do, finally, yield themselves up to our circumlocutions lies the evidence that we are after all talking of the same world, though we do it in different ways. That linguistic signs are said to be particular is not in itself proof that the reality they refer to is particular and partial. In practice we experience a variety of signifiers addressing a single phenomenon; in fact we see that what unifies such variety is the other feature of the Saussurean sign, the signified. In Fregean terms the ideal sense of a word actually goes beyond a merely local occurrence in a closed system because it is required to refer to reality. Thus whilst it may be futile to look for linguistic universals at the level of syntax, we should yet expect to find the possibility of the universal as the very condition of any translation. In any event, such universals will be found in the real rather than the virtual world of signs and concepts, and the value of the Whorf-Sapir thesis is that it reminds us of this virtual character of language; the real world exists independently of our words, and this is what we mean by the ideality of language: it is a correlate of experience which enables us to share that experience with others.

In the last section we examined language at its simplest level of meaning, the phonological. Structuralist linguistics has shown how meaning at this level is immanent, deriving from the contrastive, oppositional, diacritical occurrence of phonemes. But what is a phoneme itself? "The phoneme /p/" is simply a way of idealising the real sound we produce or hear when "pot" is said, or "sip" or "Cupid"; spectrographic analysis has shown that no two realisations of this /p/ sound are ever the same, and yet we are seldom deceived by the

variety of forms. Similarly with the vocal realisation of words, we can as easily recognise the West Country articulation of "bath" as that of the Lancastrian or RP speaker; in each case we know it refers to that (often) long, (variably) deep, (increasingly-often) fibre-glass vessel in which we (sometimes) (not wholly) immerse ourselves in order to wash (our bodies). At the semantic level it is no less curious that this word 'bath' guarantees the inclusion in a non-explicit category of a variety of devices whose commonality would be difficult to specify. Both cases of meaning - the phonological and the semantic - are explained by our tacit ability to locate sounds spontaneously within two interdependent contexts; one is the abstract system of the given natural language understood globally, the other the total but local context of the given conversation. This analysis extends through sentences to the 'sedimentations' which are literary texts. There is an ideal character to the text which is present at all its readings and which transcends these local and temporal realisations. Though recent structuralist critics (e.g., Barthes, 1975) have emphasised this feature, it occurs early in Husserl's work :

In a treatise ... every word, every sentence, is a one-time affair, which does not become multiplied by a reiterated or vocal or silent reading. Nor does it matter who does the reading, though each reader has his own voice, his own timbre, and so forth. The treatise itself (taken now only in its lingual aspect, as composed of words or language) is something that we distinguish, not only from the multiplicities of vocal reproduction, but also ... from the multiplicities of its permanent documentations by paper and print, parchment and handwriting ... The unique language-composition is reproduced a thousand times ... we speak simply of the same book with the same story, the same treatise. And this self-sameness obtains even with respect to the purely lingual composition ...

(1969, p.26)

This is obviously not to say that the text has one meaning, but that "there is an element of identity to the meanings it may have. It is in fact *identity* which is

the vehicle of ideal sense. It is because we respond to, or recognise in words a central core, however phenomenally fuzzy, which attends their use in any indifferent situation that we can speak of this ideal or virtual sense. Aristotle suggests that identity is simply the greatest degree of similarity, but Husserl points out that the notion of similarity depends on the prior concept of identity (Husserl, 1970). If we can recognise the consistency and repeatability of a phenomenon over time, our recognition is precisely the intentional act of positing identity. What unifies these acts is the ideal sense, the noetic identity of the given object. It is important to remember that this identity is after all a tacitly understood 'area' which is better described by the exceptions which relieve its margins than by any shot at rigid definition. Returning to the example of the semantic nature of the lexical item 'bath', we should arrive at a characterisation of the real thing partly by combining sets of physical attributes with functions and as much by a process of exclusion, or licensed inclusion of apparently less central features. More commodiously we could look to the dictionary for a minimal definition, though such an entry would not tell us how to use the term.

It remains that actual use goes on effortlessly. If we asked our neighbour what was a bath, he would probably point to one, in the same way that his words point to the ideal sense we share. There is this ostensive function in both of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. When I talk of these flowers on my table, my words point to a particular vase of daffodils. My speaking of them brings them from the fulfilled intention which they are in themselves to an ideal representation in the expression of my subjectivity. This depiction is ideal because it is a cypher which must stand for all flowers in all instances, for the attributes of all flowers, for the exclusion of all features not floral, etc. And it must be fulfilled by the instance and form of these particular

flowers. I.A.Richards (1924) talks of the process of reading as requiring 'approximate understanding, a sense of the diversity of word-senses (and) ... essential omission.' I suggest that this is no less a requirement of all experiences of the word. In my example above, approximate understanding is given by the cue 'flowers' which alerts us to the ideal and objective form and sense of flowers; given with the same ideal cue are all historical and taxonomic instances of flowers; all 'not-flowers' and all other flowers than these ones here are simultaneously edited.

What, then, is the reference to? In Frye's terms, it is at once 'centrifugal and centripetal' (1957, p.73), it is a bridge between the ideal flower which I intend noetically and its eventual realisation in the object of my perception. When Roquentin broke through to the naked ideality of words (Sartre, 1965), he was left with existing things of extended substance which could not be individuated by words. He deduced that the existence of something, not being a requirement of its concept, was *de trop*, superfluous and absurd. Its concept may be recovered in words, but its existence, not being logically entailed, is not properly susceptible to words. So stated extremely, my description of these flowers could not, however detailed, distinguish them from the class of things which indifferently characterises them. Such a statement brings us to an immitigable chasm between words and things, and indeed between things and persons. Before describing how it is the world of experience, of the aesthetic and finally of faith which resolves this division, it is necessary to summarise this notion of the ideality of language.

When we say that language is ideal we mean firstly that, from the level of words up through sentences to texts, ideas at some point attach to these elements. (It is

important so to qualify this attachment because as we shall see in 4.5, there is little evidence of the full intellectual presence of these ideas at the moment of their utterance.) We mean next that, viewed from the vantage of the detached observer and not from the experience, words have an *idealised* though virtual sense; the extreme form of this is their appearance in a lexicon. Finally, language communicates because these ideas appear to be shared, and we can conclude therefore that a word has a *universal* value based on accretions of *identity* within a given language and, subject to the modulations of translation, in all natural languages. We qualify the foregoing with the observation that although such ideas cannot be made explicit, the rules for their use are somehow given with their actual use.

Richards (*op.cit.*) speaks of the diversity of word-sense, and we have yet to explain polysemy, that faculty of words for carrying variable meanings, within the thesis of identity. When communication takes place it depends on something being said which already means something to the listener; but although the ideal sense of the word guarantees communication, this unity cannot but be achieved through a personal experiencing of the word which is a deformation of this ideal sense, a 'synchronising change of my own existence' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.184).

The process is analogous with text-interpretation where

... both factors, identity and variability belong inseparably together and are linked to one another in the process of interpretation, whose very nature is to say the same thing in a different way and, precisely by virtue of saying it in a different way, to say the same thing.

(Ebeling in Gadamer, 1976, p.xxvi.)

Communication depends on this expressive act of speech finding the intentional (and therefore no less expressive) act of attending. Shared, ideal, objective meaning is the outcome of specific linguistic acts committed by intending beings, for although 'all discourse is understood

as meaning' it 'is effectuated as an event ... it has an instantaneous existence, it appears and disappears' (Ricoeur, 1978, p.136). We have said that in the word there is sense and reference, and we can now add Ricoeur's sub-division of 'a reality-reference and a self-reference, ... intentional and reflective, thing-bound and self-bound.' (*Ib.*, p.137.). Pace the linguist words are not, then, merely empty semes awaiting fulfilment, but rather what William Gass (1977) has called them, 'containers for consciousness'.

This observation brings us close to the problem which irritates the thesis as a whole: this is how language can be an object for science when its operation is actual though its elements are virtual. For the basic flaw in this examination of language at the level of words is the assumption that they can exist as it were in their own right. To be sure they exist for the dictionary and for other schemes which arrest experience; but the definitions which such arrests give to words are a paradoxical gloss on what is only the *possibility*, the outline of a word, for no such explicitness attends their actual use. Husserl comments :

Each attempt to transform the being of what is ideal into the possible being of what is real, must obviously suffer shipwreck on the fact that possibilities themselves are ideal objects. Possibilities can as little be found in the real world, as can numbers in general, or triangles in general.

(1970, Vol.1, p.345)

Speaking, we remember after Humboldt, is not product but production, and our interest is not elements combined indifferently in a state of system, but the global operation of that system. The system itself, because it is virtual, is atemporal, whilst speaking is manifestly a 'transitory, vanishing act' (Ricoeur, 1978, p114.).

The characterisation of ideality attempted earlier suddenly seems poignant against this accusation that words are not real, but rather move between, simultaneously linking and separating the two repositories

of the real, which are speaker and thing. In 4.1 we discovered the strictly semiotic value of word-sounds, and their expressive origin in the speaker; we said how these sounds are not verbal images or representations produced according to some imagined model, but that there is rather 'a motor presence of the word which is not the knowledge of the word.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) Following on in the third section we shall talk properly of the semantic value of words, that is their reference to shared intentional objects. It is only possible to do this at the level of the sentence within discourse, as we can now define words as individual elements having only ideal and transcendent sense, their reference depending on their contextual situation with other words;

Thus the word is, as it were, a trader between the system and the act, between the structure and the event: on the one hand it is then only a semantic virtuality; on the other it relates to the event in the fact that its semantic actuality is contemporaneous with the vanishing actuality of the enunciation.

But it is here also that the situation is reversed. The word ... is less than the sentence in that its actuality of meaning is subject to that of the sentence. But it is more than the sentence from another point of view. The sentence ... is an event; as such, its actuality is transitory, passing, vanishing. But the word survives the sentence. As a displaceable entity, it survives the transitory instance of discourse and holds itself available for new uses. Thus, heavy with a new use-value (*valeur d'emploi*) - as minute as this may be - it returns to the system, it gives it a history.

(Ricoeur, 1978, p.119.)

*

The evolutionary nature of the scheme of this chapter has so far required that we emphasise a primarily expressive individual coming to communicate. But for adult speech the rigid separation of language functions into the descriptive categories 'expressive' and 'communicative' is naive and fictive. Even to say that both functions are always present in an utterance is still

divisive of an eventual process which is manifestly whole. From here on, a deliberate attempt will be made to avoid emphasising one function over another. In order to do this I shall now develop the theme of style as the single ground of linguistic acts which reveal the values and orientation of the speaker.

4.3 *Style and the sentence*

The fact that one can never depart too far from the linguistic conventions is clearly basic to the life of language: he who speaks a private language understood by no one else does not speak at all. But on the other hand, he who only speaks a language in which conventionality has become total in the choice of words, syntax and in style forfeits the power of address and evocation which comes solely with the individualisation of a language's vocabulary and of its means of communication.

(Gadamer, 1976, p.85.)

Discussions of style revolve generally around the concepts of choice and deviation. While the broadest characterisation would include the equation of style with literary and historical periods or genres, and the designation of functions such as 'journalistic' or 'administrative', I shall begin with a minimal definition of linguistic and literary style advanced by Ducrot and Todorov. Here style is

the choice that every text necessarily makes among a certain number of possibilities included in the language ... the stylistic description of an utterance is nothing but the description of all its verbal properties.

(Ducrot and Todorov, 1979, p.300)

Ducrot and Todorov say that style might thus be examined at the level of utterance, in terms of its verbal, syntactic and semantic features; and at the level of enunciation (or discourse, I would suggest) where the relationship of the protagonists (speaker, listener, referent) is the ground of any distinction to be drawn. This latter emphasis is currently the dominant one in linguistics;

Halliday (1969) refers specifically to the relations between participants in a language activity, and he hence typifies such as the 'colloquial' or the 'formal' style. Crystal, too, (1976) speaks of the features of 'situationally distinctive uses of language', and sees *stylistics* as attempting to 'establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language.' Such a project is to be distinguished from the Cartesian venture of Chomsky's, which similarly seeks principles, but those which *allow* choice rather than explain it. Actually Chomsky - in rationalist style - rejects the strict Saussurean view of *langue* as all possible instances of a language, and suggests that language arises from an intrinsic tacit knowledge which he terms *competence*. It is in the generative nature of competence to promote an infinite vocabulary of possible acts of *performance*. The passage from competence to the realised performance is made on the strength of intuitions or judgments by the native speaker. If we were to represent the approaches to language of the structuralist and the generative grammars in terms of movement along a vertical axis, we could so see immediately the significant fundamental difference between the two: Chomsky's approach moves 'up' from the speaker towards an actual utterance, where the structural analysis moves 'down' from that utterance but has methodologically severed itself from the possibility of reaching its source. This is not to say that Chomsky's account is unilateral; on the contrary, there is little existential in the account beyond its recognition that language acts are unique and creative. The structuralist account, on the other hand, hypostatizes the language act in the interest of science, granting it an autonomy so that style, as we have seen, is a 'choice' made by the text.

If we graft onto Chomsky's account of competence the insight that the word occurs as an event, we shall be able to arrive at a view of the sentence, that is of any sentence, as the expression of a personal style; the term style itself then betokens no mere occurrence of form at the level of utterance, or of relation at that of enunciation, but as the global announcement of personal boundaries within the possibilities of existence. Ricoeur has started this process by rescuing the word from the indifference accorded it by Saussurean structuralism; in the last section we showed how the word has an ideal sense but that it requires location in the referential experience of the speaking subject for it to become properly a sign. Ricoeur emphasises that it is this eventual process which makes possible the second-order of virtues which structuralism describes as product. Ricoeur's argument can be taken further, and in this way : he acknowledges that through eventual occurrence words become 'heavy with a new use-value ' (1978, p.119), that is, the personal experience which generates the word gives it an increment of meaning by which it is 'returned to the universe'. Now if behind the occurrence of every sign lies this dynamic process, and if every sign returns to the system with this history, then beneath the arrested combination of signs - which, at the level of sentence or discourse structuralism calls style - must lie a flux and totality of signification which is, to echo Merleau-Ponty, the surplus of existence over natural being. We experience the mysterious and wonderful phenomenon of speech: *the hearing of a piece of human existence in the very process of hearing a human utterance.*

(Hofstadter, 1965, p.70.)

It is only in these terms that we can explain the phenomena of polysemy and metaphor, and indeed of the founding creativity of language as a whole.

Polysemy, the property of words of having more than one sense, must be understood as an indivisible operation of consciousness on the lexicon. It operates in fact between these two poles which are the parameters of discourse, and we can so explain the more obvious phenomenon of a homonym, as well as the more subtle disposition of meaning like so many hues around apparently unequivocal items - which equivocation is the justification of any interpretative process. Minimising ambiguity and fixing values is not the drive exclusively of scientific language, but the duty which most discourse aims to fulfil, but which has become a methodological requirement as well as an emblem of scientific enquiry. When we come to poetic discourse¹, however, polysemy (necessarily a property at the level of the word) is to be distinguished from ambiguity, which is an event at the higher unit of the sentence. Humboldt (1970) talks of language as the infinite use of finite means, and clearly it is the function of a polysemic language to accomplish this by providing an economy of code and by requiring contextual dependencies to fix a given message. In ordinary discourse, a given sentence combines units in such a way as to fix a recognisably univocal meaning, and ambiguity is then described in terms of a pathology of discourse. Poetic discourse, on the other hand, takes ambiguity as a very strategy for extending and - on particularly successful occasions - for exploding finite means.

¹ Ricoeur (1978, p.129) defines scientific language 'by the defensive measures it takes against ambiguity', having *argumentation* as its aim; ordinary language has *communication* as its theme and 'its field of application is reality as it is differently experienced by the individual members of the speech community'. Poetic language is not as such characterised here; I take him by impression to mean - rather after the manner of Heidegger - to mean any instance of language carefully directed at redefining reality, and its occurrence thus to be a necessary

Polysemy is given with the nature of words, and more or less ambiguity is the fate of particular combinations of those words at the level of the sentence. But in the case of poetry the functional traits of polysemy, which are contextual dependence and economy, are employed with deliberation to grace ambiguity with the existential structure of metaphor. This accords with Ricoeur's operational use of 'ambiguity' as the passive openness of discourse to a variety of interpretation (1978), and we can therefore reserve a specially ontological character for metaphor as an operation of conflicting intentionalities at the ideal level of the word. The solution of this conflict, which at this level generates semantic chaos, cannot be a synthesis, because there are not, after all, two intentions at the level of discourse; the solution is the creation on the part of the interpreter of the 'new' identity which yet pre-existed and which therefore generated the metaphor. The presence of individual words with their discrete, ideal senses appears to dissipate the single intention which lies behind the metaphor and which is fulfilled in the single act of intention which is the interpreter's understanding. Individual words are suddenly useless to us as their virtual senses fall away in the creation of an actual meaning.

We break here with the classical view of metaphor as concerned with nominal properties. Aristotle says that metaphor 'consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else' (*Poetics*/1457/b6-9), and this 'substitution theory' (as Richards has it) of metaphor as a trope assigns it an ornamental and ultimately enervating function based on deviation. The view persists through

element of so-called scientific and ordinary discourse and not exclusively one of self-conscious poesy. The filling out of this definition is largely the scheme of the remainder of this section.

such as Samuel Johnson's notion of "two ideas for one", and certainly it is a cliché of pedagogy to teach restitution of a missing term as the means of understanding metaphor. This is consistent with the principles of rhetoric of which metaphor is merely one *techné*. Rhetoric was for Aristotle the giving of truth in a language appropriate to an immediate audience. But where today it has become a rather pejorative term to indicate formal and often tired and meaningless devices of speech which are voluble rather than sincere, the Greek understanding was of *technai* finally irreducible to a purely argumentative or logical discipline, because the *technai* are directed to an actual hearer. This is to insist on the dialogical and intersubjective nature of speech; the Greek understanding saw as still within the competence of rhetoric the emotions and passions and beliefs of the speaker and his audience, though these operate in the service of argument. So although rhetoric appears to be susceptible to formulaic statement, properly understood it represents the action of language on the soul as it were. The distinct division between a truth and the manner of its articulation represents in Aristotle the gap between language and reality that post-Platonic philosophy assumes. Truth, we remember, consists in the Ideal Forms, but their representation in language is subject to idiosyncratic distortion. Aristotle distinguishes 'how ... these facts (are) set out in language' from 'the facts themselves' (*Ib.*, 1403/b18-20). This assumes that language is, in Heidegger's phrase, 'in a state of becoming', that it imperfectly realises essential truths. We are returned to the single intention which lies behind the metaphor. Could this be an 'essential truth', or is it a genuine novelty?

Metaphor has to be a disposition of the unusual in the recognisable. If it is a displacement, then that which

replaces must soon be accessible to the audience, whilst yet having a patina of newness. Is this a contradiction? We should recall Nietzsche's observation that genius consists in giving identity to what is already known; metaphor is not merely epiphoric, but demands that we hold in simultaneous perception two normally mutually-exclusive entities; that, certainly, we change something, but that we change it only to the extent that we can remember what it originally was. The process is analogous to trying against probability and skill to perceive both the Gestaltist's candlesticks and his faces. . . . Metaphor generally allows us to do this. But the fact remains at least phenomenally true that some semantic or ontological entity must pre-exist a syntactic combination of elements or else how could it have been 'seen' by the speaker, or apprehended by the hearer? For, again phenomenally, there is no such thing as a 'failed' metaphor, there is only nonsense. When we create or use a metaphor we effectively confuse the established bounds of meaning to recover an identity of meaning which has been obscured or outlawed by the ideal sense of those virtual characterisations.

We have said that similarity is a function of identity, and that, after Ebeling, we must see variability as conceptually dependent on a prior, unique orientation.

As Ricoeur has it,

to contemplate the similar or same . . . is to grasp the *genus*, but not yet as *genus*, to grasp the same in the difference, and not yet as above or beside the difference.

(1978, p.131.)

Metaphor permits us to *dwell* in this identity quite before it has any conceptual character; or where there is some limiting concept which inhibits our seeing to the truth, metaphor is required continually to fragment and reconstitute *noemata*. We shall only explain the fact that 'the same metaphor can carry both the logical moment of proportionality and the sensible moment of

figurativity' (Ricoeur, 1977, p.34) by recourse to a theory of intentionality. Sensibly there may be little or nothing to relate Solzhenitsyn and the bear, or the Prime Minister and the character of iron. But the metaphor more than any other form of speaking points up the appresentational nature of words, their limited surface values hiding the more generous intentions which make language possible. Again, what is phenomenally true of the metaphor is that it cannot be literally reduced without doing damage to the single intention which is its generator.

Ricoeur has developed this general line or argument to see metaphor as continuous in its dynamics with those of thought; it is the process by which 'we grasp kinship, break the distance between remote ideas, build similarities on dissimilarities' (1978, p.132.). He finally asks what is the function of metaphor, and concludes

that the strategy of discourse implied in metaphorical language is neither to improve communication nor to ensure univocity in argumentation, but to shatter and increase our sense of reality by shattering and increasing our language. The strategy of metaphor is heuristic fiction for the sake of redescribing reality. With metaphor we experience the metamorphosis of both language and reality.

(*Ib.*, p.133.)

At this point I shall summarise the argument of this section: polysemy describes how words may have variable values; the sentence witnesses the temporal and actual fixing of the value of words in relation to each other; the sentence is a unique and creative event which, unlike the word requires a speaker and a hearer, who thus have some access to each other's experience; in consequence it is the sentence as a whole which has meaning; metaphor stands as not an extreme but a prime case of this single intention realised in often contradictory collocations of words; finally we have glimpsed Ricoeur's suggestion that metaphor is the condition of thought itself as it addresses reality. Now if we continue the appeal to what is phenomenally true of

language we see straightaway that most language is manifestly poor in metaphor and, as far as the argument has yet been taken, we can only allow that self-conscious poetical discourse is thus metaphorical. It remains to show, then, that this metaphorical impulse is not the exclusive character of poesy, but is more or less present to all discourse.

There are at least two levels to this argument. Firstly, what may be called the 'weak' argument says that insofar as language 'stands for' something else, it satisfies the criterion of metaphor that the form of an original entity be changed. This really takes for granted what it seeks to explain, and, further, taken to an extreme would return metaphor to an ornamental function. The stronger argument, however, is based on the indivisibility of language from thought, so that to speak the metaphor is to think it, to think it directly and not think of it. If metaphor has this prime, existential character of ever going behind the back of language to root out the real which language only partly reveals, then all language is metaphorical to the extent that it is thoughtfully directed at reality. Thinking is properly the concern of 4.5, but we must introduce here the distinction between thinking and thought which accompanies the separation of the 'live' from the faded or 'dead' metaphor. In each case we must qualify the event in terms of its *authenticity*.

Authenticity for Heidegger (1962b) is the possibility open to man for realising himself in a world which he has not chosen to be in. The term must be understood as part of Heidegger's polarisation of the conditions of existence whereby, for example, *Angst* contrasts with mundane fear, true wonder with mere curiosity and, most importantly for our purposes, speech with idle talk. Speech is here understood as thought only contingently

vocalised, in the way that the poet and the thinker are involved in the identical process of describing the world; 'The nerve of poetry', says Heidegger, 'is the act of nomination' (1971b, p.123). Speech, that is *Rede*, is heuristic, characterised by a concern to make new, personal meaning out of the tired meanings which being in the world entails receiving indifferently. Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'authentic' similarly, distinguishing between

an authentic speech, which formulates for the first time, and second-order expression, speech about speech, which makes up the general run of empirical language. Only the first is identical with thought.

(1962, p.178.)

It follows that inauthentic language and thought - which Heidegger calls *Gerede* - are not reality-directed, but content to dwell in a *status quo* of ready-made meanings, of cliché and other sterile forms of social circularity. So the distinction adumbrated in the last paragraph between, firstly, thinking and live metaphor, and then thought and dead metaphor is based on the extent to which language and thought exercise the structures by which we know reality. Language and thought urged on by wonder and a sense of the secrecy of things to themselves is bound to set itself apart from that which achieves a sort of pseudo-communication, but precisely because of what Ricoeur calls the 'absence of the sign' to experience. Such speech appears to go ahead because abstract signs call to each other within the requirements of a shared linguistic and social code. But 'authenticity' cannot prove to be a diagnostic device, and anyway we want to avoid accusations of the sort which threaten Heidegger's work with labels like 'elitist' or even 'fascist'. But, beyond the calculus of structuralist analysis, how are we to evaluate language if it is not in terms of the questions it asks and the relentless care with which it keeps putting them ?

It is simply a truism that great writing seldom depends on a novel disposition of verbal or syntactical elements; literary experiments - even the great ones of Sterne or Joyce, say - remain special and rather freakish, and have led to no significant departure from a steady diachronic development of literature. It is equally truistic that what distinguishes great writers is finally the care with which they construct an 'objective correlative' (in Eliot's words) of the reality we all inhabit, and hence call upon as an instrument of validation. The word-counts of stylistic analysis offer a superficial dressing which overlooks the fact that the fundamental concerns which motivate texts barely change with the fashions of lexis and syntax. This is the simple explanation of the transcendent popularity, inexhaustibility and ready translation of these texts. For the reader, whoever, wherever and whenever

To locate the question of the text is not simply to leave it but to put it again, so that we, the questioners, are ourselves questioned by the subject matter of the text.

(Linge in Gadamer, 1976, p.xxi.)

Textual interpretation is an image of the wider process of authentic speaking; the wider text it addresses is just the reality which generates language, and which inexhaustible density speech addresses as a condition of meaning. *Ipsa facto*, speech which does not address reality - as, for example, in the extreme case of the schizophrenic - has no meaning. To cease putting questions from despair of ever understanding, or from certainty of having understood is either way to immerse oneself from the universe of meanings :

Reality does not happen "behind the back" of language; it happens rather behind the backs of those who live in the subjective opinion that they have understood the world (or can no longer understand it.)

(Gadamer, "1976, p.35.)

In respect of such a pathology of language, the view we are developing of linguistic style as a style of being is not at all new. Freud's therapeutic is essentially a linguistic one, based on the understanding of consciousness as symbolically constituted; the flight of the ego as much as the business of the dream world is carried out in language, and it is the task of the therapist to disclose to the analysand the structures of this symbolic world and, in a very literal way, to teach him the language of his own disorder. The more or less subtle disturbances of the subject's language are as important a part of the presenting texture of his suffering as is his own apparently more 'conscious' report on his condition. A basically similar view of language founds the phenomenological-existential approaches to psychiatry (Binswanger, 1945, etc.), although in the case of Laing (1960, etc.) for example, it is cast in an overtly political role, not merely determinative of consciousness from 'within' the subject, but itself the very means by which a particular existence may be socially sanctioned, or else have that sanction more or less obliquely withdrawn. Discussing the post-Freudian structuralist Lacan, Bowie summarises this idea of centrifugal and centripetal linguistic pressure, set between the poles of passivity and assertion :

(the) human subject, as he acquires speech, is inserting himself into a pre-existing symbolic order and thereby submitting his libido (*desir*) to the systemic pressures of that order: in adopting language he allows his free instinctual energies to be operated upon and organised. It is the peculiar privilege of man the language-user to remain oblivious while making things with words, of the extent to which words have made, and continue to make him.

(Bowie in Sturrock, 1979, p.126.)

This is like a restatement of the Heideggerian thesis of Facticity, and it brings us to the conclusion of this section." The point at which virtual words become actual sentences is the point at which an intentional expression seeks and finds its proper communicative

form, and is thus the point at which style is announced. This style is not to be had directly from an examination of words at the level of syntax. The demonstration that metaphor is not a syntactical operation but the existential and eventual direction of polysemy at reality - this is the chief case against the equation of style with lexis or syntax. We turn to the margins of linguistic health which psychiatry illuminates to demonstrate the linguistic nature of consciousness and so the way existence is to be found in language. But this is a paradigm and not an extreme case; it advances into more recognisably 'normal' experience with some work hinting at a classroom hermeneutic for understanding pupil talk, particularly that of disturbed or less able children (Stuart, 1972; Holbrook, 1965; Clough, 1980). The fact is that these marginal cases are only special in degree, and that the process of linguistic insertion in a world is the condition of *all* existence; it is contingently empirical, that contingency allowing us fitfully to see something of the source of expression.

Of course we shall not in the end be able to construct some diagnostic device for 'fixing' style, even if we wanted to. But we shall be able to return style to its source in experience. Gusdorf concludes:

Each of us ... is charged with finding the expression to fit his situation ... with realising himself in a language, a personal echo of the language of all which represents his contribution to the human world. The struggle for style is the struggle for consciousness (*la vie spirituelle*).

(Gusdorf, 1965, p.76.)

4.4 Discourse and the will

... the question is not what we do or what we should do, but what happens beyond our willing and doing.

(Gadamer, 1976, p.lvi.)

We have artificially built speech up through the constituting units of the phoneme, the word and the sentence, and have suggested that these elements are thematised by the concepts of experience, communication and style respectively. The artificiality of this analysis is pointed up by the late insight that every utterance is effectively a sentence proper to a linguistic context, and whilst we have claimed that it is expressive, and shown something of how it communicates, we have yet to draw the conditions of this context, and have provided no necessity for our rather idealised subject to speak; we have yet to relate any urge to meaning to the *status quo* of meaning conditions. For *Langue* is a disembodied system, a science of elements only; *Parole*, on the other hand, is an elective science of operations. This latest antinomy of involuntary and voluntary is resolved in the unity of our next level, discourse; in showing how discourse is organised around putting, and ever putting questions, we shall see that we are thus concerned with the will, and with its operation on established order. We can so illuminate the existential nature of discourse at large, by seeing its concern with sharing, that is with mutual affirmation and mutual objectification.

Discourse analysis is concerned with elucidating meanings as they were intersubjectively understood on a given occasion. In so attributing intentions to speakers, it is almost inevitable that we assume that they, too, were explicitly aware of these meanings, that some impulse announced itself in need of words which subsequently dressed it and carried it out into the shared world. There are two general implications of this: firstly, that language is practically distinct from thought, and is the issue of pre-meditating activity; this will be dealt with more fully in 4.5. Secondly, that utterances are therefore in some way finished products, that they stand as resolute and

calculable markers of the intentions they embodied and the context which called them forth. But even the briefest moment's reflection tells us this cannot be, for what is phenomenally true, at least of all spoken discourse, is that it moves with an incalculable rapidity and an often dogged circularity of occupation. If we identify discourse with these products we shall have only a poor notion of what is its essence. For even before it can be considered as a process, discourse must be seen as the *condition* of understanding. Hence it is not primarily a given conversation or piece of writing, but it is at the same time the question which motivates such enquiry and the understanding which only partly answers it. In this way the elucidation of an idea is not the product of discourse, but the requirement necessary for a language activity to be known as discourse. There is not firstly discourse and then the arrival of of understanding; understanding and discourse are of the same moment, discourse exceeding understanding only because it comprehends the questions which precede, and remain after the event and detail of understanding.

If discourse is thus broadened to comprehend all acts of understanding made explicit in language, it follows that we shall need to distinguish qualitatively between these acts. How, for example, should we describe a philosophical treatise in the same terms as a casual chat in the street? What distinguishes the two activities is precisely any excess of discourse over understanding; discourse is generated by enquiry, and can be said to be authentic or successful to the extent that it puts its speakers in the role of indefatigable interrogators, that it repeatedly questions reality, that it is Other-directed. In 4.3, metaphor was described as a fundamental strategy pitted against reality, and we can now explain the occurrence of

metaphor by a further-regressed structure in language. If metaphor is indeed an attempt to irritate established reality, then it does so because that reality does not satisfy the questions which are given with existence.

Heidegger's polarisation of the linguistic conditions of speech (*Rede* and *Gerede*) may be finally a theoretical extreme, but it provides the ground for the argument that language which is truly reality-directed is language which assaults that given reality. Man's facticity requires that he transform his indifferently-received world, and he does this in language which is vital and engaged. We recognise such language not necessarily because its surface is syntactically elegant, but because it has an inexhaustible referent which is somehow qualified by this evocation. Gadamer (1976) identifies three 'peculiarities' of language which are relevant here: the first is its 'essential self-forgetfulness', so that we innocently look beyond grammatical realisation as the

more language is a living operation, the less we are aware of it ... The real being of language is that into which we are taken up when we hear it - what is said

(1976, p.65.)

Secondly, he talks of the 'I-lessness' of language, so that firstly the 'We' of the participants and finally, in authentic dialogue, the subject or text dominates :

When one enters into dialogue with another person and then is carried along further by the dialogue, it is no longer the will of the individual person, holding itself back or exposing itself that is determinative. Rather, the law of the subject matter is at issue in the dialogue and elicits statement and counterstatement and in the end plays them into each other. Hence when a dialogue has succeeded, one is subsequently fulfilled by it.

(*Ib.*, p.66.)

Finally Gadamer identifies the 'universality of language'. By this he means firstly that there is nothing which can

be excluded from the realm of the sayable and hence that speech must 'keep pace untiringly with the universality of reason'. The important point is this :

.. ... every dialogue ... has an inner infinity and no end. One breaks it off, either because it seems that enough has been said or because there is no more to say. But every such break has an intrinsic relation to the resumption of the dialogue.

(*Ib.*, p.67.)

These are three terribly important points, telling us of the authority of the subject-matter which generates discourse, and of how 'what happens beyond our willing and doing' determines the shape of dialogue. There is thus a fundamental structure to dialogue which is not a matter of syntax or turn-taking; these are some of the methodological correlates to the ontological structure of the subject-matter itself. There is a 'deep structure' to discourse generated not consciously by the participants but inevitably by the character of this subject-matter. The ideas which participants interpose between consciousness and this text must ever approximate and never quite possess the reality which is their source, precisely because they are ideal attempts at re-characterisation.

But we can go further with Gadamer's three points: in saying that language is condemned to being aimed at a target it can never reach, and is, further, a process 'beyond our willing and doing', does this not describe a relativist and even behaviourist understanding? That is, if there are no firmly knowable referents, are we condemned to the specific closures of given linguistic communities? And within those communities are we simply operated on by an Order of language and linguistic process? The answer is implicitly given in Gadamer's later assertion that language fills out 'the realm of human being-together, the realm of common understanding, of ever-replenished common agreement' (*Ib.*, p.68). What Gadamer does not make explicit is

that, whilst the will of the individual is subordinated to its ludic assumption by discourse, that modesty itself is an act of the will, whose chief project is to share its objects. Language falls away, as Gadamer says, so that we see what is said. We do not see simply speech itself, nor naked objects nor pure consciousness, but a quality of engagement with those objects. It is the duty of the will, whilst submitting to the closure of reality which sharing language necessitates, yet to try and better understand it. But this will is not anarchic, otherwise it could not share its objects, and nobody would know what it was talking about. 'What happens beyond our willing and our doing' is an intersubjective creation, *Langue* perhaps, or the transcendent questions of the Bible; the will, on the other hand, has as its first project a commitment to objectivity. Gadamer's second 'peculiarity' of language, remember, is the 'I-lessness' of language; that, when we have found the right word it does not represent this object or that object for me, but rather presents it to another person. Gadamer invokes the metaphor of the game to describe linguistic activity, to point to a shared activity whose essence is not, finally, the goal or the score, and whose 'subjects' are not, finally, the players. The game, like the allographic work of art, consists in all its aspects and in all its presentations, and what Ricoeur has called the 'movement into "I"' is actually a paradoxical statement of this surrender to the larger, objectifying activity:

the very fascination of the game for the playing consciousness roots precisely in its being taken up into a movement that has its own dynamic. The game is underway when the individual player participates in full earnest, that is, when he no longer holds himself back as one who is merely playing, for whom it is not serious.

(Gadamer, *op.cit.*, p.66.)

Now Gusdorf (1965) sees in this sort of process the necessity of alternative forms of alienation; when he speaks, the language of the subject must either dilute and so alienate the purity of his experience, or else it must alienate him from the speech-community by reason of its idiosyncrasy. But except for marginal cases, this is wrong, there is no such either/or, and it is from such indulgence of the ego that the popular misunderstanding of subjectivity arises. Subjectivity is not the self's presence to itself; rather it is defined in terms of its *direction*, which is ever 'outward', and is evaluated in terms of its mode of presentation, which is always 'open'. In fact, all the simple, daily evidence we have of personal behaviour shows its urgency, one could say, almost to *cease on the goal of objectivity*. The phenomenal truth that speech requires a hearer must be rescued from a largely methodological concern with symmetry; long before this empirical event the speaker is actually constituting himself in a search for an Other which is only phenomenally and methodologically 'outside' him. Lacan (1977) profiles this Other rather gnomically :

What I seek in speech is the response of the other. What constitutes me as subject is my question. In order to be recognised by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him I call by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me.

It is from the Other that the subject receives even the message that he emits.

The Other is, therefore, the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks to him who hears, that which is said by the one being already the reply, the other deciding to hear it whether the one has or has not spoken.

(Lacan, 1977)

This will to contact the Other is finally a self-interested project since this Other, by virtue of its very Otherness, functions to keep the will which is aimed at it ever-unrealised. The Other 'guarantees the

indestructibility of desire by keeping the goals of desire in perpetual flight' (*Ibid*). This is the key to the other drive of the will.

To continue with Gadamer's metaphor, once begun engaged dialogue has the 'spirit of buoyancy, freedom and joy' of the game, which proceeds not by virtue of self-conscious following of the rules as the players try to work out the meaning of each other's moves, but by a manifest taking-for-granted of the larger as well as the material conditions of the game. So speakers manifestly understand each other. The margins of misunderstanding and apparent non-understanding illuminate this other function of the will, adumbrated in 4.3. That misunderstanding is only a minor excess of confusion over shared order is a consequence of the recognition by the participants that there is, indeed, some new gap between them. The attempt which discourse usually makes on these occasions to repair such 'breaches in intersubjectivity' (Linge, in Gadamer 1976) reminds us of the task discourse has to understand reality by asking questions of it. The steps discourse takes to create and recreate understanding must be seen - in the light of our analysis of its game-like spiritedness and verve - as a correlate rather than a consequence of the will to break silence and to know. If we do not always find palpable evidence of it in discourse, it is because the question is an existential rather than syntactical structure of discourse. When we speak

we try to follow up an intention which necessarily outstrips, modifies and ... stabilises the meanings of the words which translate it.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.389.).

This intention is the noematic correlate of a real object, which is why it can 'stabilise' our words and can guarantee their reality-directedness. Since our words must fall short of the object itself, it follows that the act of 'Saying the World' - as Heidegger has it-

is endless. The unfulfilled intention sensibly moves speech to make explicit some poorly-defined *noema*:

... the sense-giving intention which has set in motion ... speech is not an explicit thought, but a certain lack which is asking to be made good ..

(*Ib.*, p.183.)

The drive to contact the Other and to share an object with him is thus simultaneously a drive to answer the ontic question given with the positing of any object:

Speech does not seek to embody a significative intention which is only a certain gap simply in order to recreate the same lack or privation in others but also to know what there is a lack or privation of.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.90.)

When Gadamer observes that 'a dialogue has succeeded (when) one is fulfilled by it' (1976, p.66) he is celebrating the sharing of objects and not, we should note, of *noemata*; this being so, the object remains ever in excess of all noetic acts, and so the requirement to re-characterise it is perpetual. 'Fulfilment', then, cannot describe the exhaustion of objects, but is a temporal experience given to subjects, for whom the breaking-off of discourse in some satisfaction 'has an intrinsic relation to the resumption of the dialogue.' (*Ib.*)

The quantity of empirical evidence for this basic structure of the question is, as we have noted, small because it has an ontological rather than a methodological character. Guillaume (1973), however, has developed a theory of morphological systems, showing through his studies of verb tenses and of the article how discourse functions to place words in a sentence position. Particular parts of speech combine their functions to close down on polysemy; early in any utterance the grammatical inflections necessary to complete the thought are determined within only

paradigmatic parameters. In this way, 'what we are going to say' is determined in advance as much by the structure and character of language itself as by our signifying intentions. To say, then, that we launch into words not only innocent of how they are structurally guaranteed is also to admit that we often do not 'know' quite what we are going to say. The system would not work, we should be incoherent if the system of categories did not represent the real ('appresentationally', in Husserl's terms) so that our language is intentional and our signs are 'returned to the Universe' (Guillaume). Since the system 'makes infinite use of finite means' (Humboldt), sentences are hence themselves creative and finite and ephemeral events which seek to close down on the infinity which a world of objects entails. It follows that they must be continually made and remade.

Now structuralist theory would probably be satisfied with most of this account but would, of course, not comprehend the intentional role of the speaker. Structuralism generally recognises the transcendent and shared nature of symbols, but lacks what Bolton (1982) has identified as a necessary third term, namely the mode of being towards them which their use entails. So the structuralist analysis of morphology works only if we remember that discourse is this process of operations, and not a science of static entities. We have said that discourse does not reveal objects, and we should not now go to the other extreme of saying that it reveals 'pure' consciousness. What is revealed is something like a manner of attitude, or a way of having objects. So to Hofstadter's notion of language revealing 'a piece of human existence', we can now add that this existence is known and defined in terms of its commitment to its world. Bolton says:

It is the self's directedness towards its objects that is conveyed through language in human communication. When we talk with one another our attention is not normally focussed upon each other's experience, considered in abstraction from its objects, or upon objects abstracted from experience; what we reveal to one another in dialogue is the experiencing of the object, the commitment of each self to its object.

(Bolton, 1982, p.74)

We can find some evidence for this as we did in 4.3, in pathology. Language succeeds to the extent that the will of the subject is thing-directed, Other-directed, reality-directed, and it is the impairment of the will which can so be measured by the stylistic disturbances of language. Subjectivity can no longer properly be called by the name when it loses sight of the objects by which it is defined, and which unite it with other persons. The inflated will ('those who think they have understood the world', in Gadamer's words) is as unreal and privatised as the retreating will (those who 'have given up trying') which feels the threat of implosion before a world all-too-full of constituted objects; they are variously 'men who are unable to play' (Gadamer, 1976, p.66). The analysis of the will to share objects gives us a better understanding of the nature of communication, as, similarly, the will to question is the essence of expression. But it is the unity of the will, of the 'intentional arc' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.136) which is consciousness, that points to the absurdity of any analysis which could treat these functions separately. They fail to hang together only when the intentional arc 'goes limp' (*Ib.*), as when the will is broken; but on such occasions it is not the case that one function is elevated over the other. Rather both functions disappear as a consequence of what may seem to be a local defect of one of them.

In conclusion let us say that the will is co-structural with discourse; there is a dialectical relationship between them so that each is coherent only against the horizons of coherence that the other provides. This is the relation, too, of *Parole* and *Langue*, of finite realisation and infinite possibility, of said and sayable. 'Nothing that is said,' Gadamer comments, 'has its truth simply in itself, but refers instead backward and forward to what is unsaid.' (1976 p.67.) The said and the unsaid are the sum of all horizons which we call the World.

4.5 *Being and World*

... the life of consciousness - cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life - is subtended by an 'intentional arc' which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical idealogical and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility. And it is this which 'goes limp' in illness. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.136.)

Of course it is all wrong to try to establish a character of speech with increments like so many building-bricks; in the end, what is phenomenally true is not the 'motor presence' of the word, nor its 'use-value'; a 'style of being' is not apparent to discourse and the 'existential structure' of discourse itself cannot be discerned in the effects of communication. What is phenomenally true is that experience is such a unity that we are always and already in a whole world of meaning. Breaking discourse down gives the impression of a hierarchy of functions which echo the evolutionary growth of language for the individual. But such a structure has no more

reality than the formulae of the chemist, or the phonetic alphabet of the linguist. The regions of experience which we call the word, or discourse, or the sentence; the syntactic or semantic relations which hold these regions together; finally, this very *epoche* we must perform to see the relation of relations: all these

take for granted, without explicitly mentioning it, the other point of view, namely that of consciousness, through which from the outset a world forms itself round me and begins to exist for me.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.ix.)

Now our understanding is so riddled with polarity that one could question whether this is, indeed, an existential function in the way that the question is. Certainly, it characterises and finally invalidates almost all discussions of consciousness itself. Descartes attracts the most blame for this, but the tradition was inaugurated long before, and possibly the most regressed polarity is that which Descartes articulated so famously - the division of the subject and object which rests on the separateness of 'inner' and 'outer'. We have, as Merleau-Ponty says, 'jettisoned' the subject proper by making a secret of his soul and a material fact of his body (*Ib.*, p.198). So we oppose consciousness (or Being) to the World. But the experience as well as the fact of language give the lie to this antinomy, as they do finally to the artificial structure adopted in the first four sections of this chapter. What is missing from these accounts is the system of horizons of meaning against which the local functions can be perceived. Such a guarantee is not provided by an imperious subject alone, or by a totality of significations to be called World. As we saw in Chapter 3, the concept of Being-in-the-World dissolves inner and outer; but it is in language that we can actually see this process. Left to himself the subject may have the illusion of an 'in here' entertaining an 'out there', but the very movement into thought, let alone speech,

is a denial of such autonomy. The social nature of speech is not characterised by sociology, nor can psychology describe the 'I-lessness' of consciousness. In any event a description will not succeed in relating a subject to the objects of his society because in experience they have never been separated. It is not necessary, then, in this chapter to describe World and then to characterise Being; take one only, and its reconstruction will leave us without an 'other' to describe. I shall start, of course, with the area of the "I", of Being, of Self, for

whether it is a question of another's body or my own, I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which means taking up on my own account the drama which is being played out in it.

(*Ibid*, p.198.)

So what is this "I" ? What does it know ? How does it think ? One of the things that happens when we arrest speech is that we attribute conscious projects to individual words. This is most particularly the case with the "I", which after the event we call the boundary of a subject which - we further assume - 'knows' itself as it speaks. But to think about and talk about "I" is not to live it, or even to re-live it. The lexical "I" is more distinct than its existential counterpart, and so has more firmness than is actually achieved in the passage of dialogue, when "I" is functional more often than it is declamatory or illocutionary. But in denying the speaking subject a fully-reflexive consciousness we do not want to deliver him up to a stimulus-response scheme, so that he speaks 'just as the electric lamp can become incandescent' (*Ib.*, p.175). Of course the demonstration of the gestural character of speech (5.1) indicates the expressive, meaning-making activity of the subject but we could still suppose either that there is no intellectual activity, or else that such activity is private, 'inner'. The fiction of the merely-responding

"I" and the fiction of the discrete "I" depend equally on the separation of the act of expression into form and content of what is expressed. The empiricist stresses form, and content is then an account of the residue of speech, of what is 'done'; for the other version form is a contingent attempt to communicate a prior and private experience. Here the supposition that thinking is something an "I" does (because I can say "I think") leads us to believe in an authorial "I" which *is*, which can think and which can speak in three fairly distinct processes; expression thus intervenes between any two of these, realising a prior term. The task is to show that the three are really one.

Although the most recent theories see thinking as formally analogous to speech, it remains for them a process done largely *in foro interno*. It is this aspect which is generally emphasised, rather than its object-directedness. Of course there is no question that thought is 'private' in that I cannot see another's thought, or hear it unless he speaks. But it is only thought to the extent that it is open to the reality of shared objects. For Aristotle, thinking was an act of the intellect in which the essence of a thing actually *qualified* the intellect; this is to say that we do not work on things so much as with them, and it is thought's necessary operation in language which achieves this. The arguments involving language and thought are too familiar to need rehearsal here, but what is important, in view of the discussion of style in 5.3, and of the will in 5.4, is the extent to which certain forms and instances of speech can be said to create rather than report thought.

Lacey (1976) begins a discussion of thought by distinguishing datable occurrences of thought from the

content which may be common to all such events, which is a distinction of disparate action and consistent material. The implication of this - that these 'datable occurrences' must be characterised by their recasting of the common content - is not drawn by Lacey. It is found in Merleau-Ponty's analysis, (1962), which posits the event of thinking against the furniture of old thoughts. Thinking is not here an operation of intellect on empirical objects; thoughts which we can recall are finished products 'left in the wake' of reasoning and perception present together 'in one indivisible intention' (*op.cit.*, p.371). It is because we can refer to these sedimentations that we have 'the illusion of an inner life' (*ib.*, p.183). Following on from 5.4, thinking is more the action of the will in finding language for an experience which posits objects; the characters of this process are thus that thinking is embodied, it is creative, is reality-directed: this is precisely the character of authentic language. 'Pure' thought cannot be an extreme of intellectual activity, because it would so lose the objects by which it knows itself; on the contrary, 'pure' thought is just that 'certain lack', that 'certain gap', that 'kind of ignorance' (*op.cit.*) which we said motivates enquiry. 'Pure' thought is an urge to meaning which 'reduces itself to a certain void of consciousness, to a momentary desire' (*ib.*, p.183). The basis of the intervolvement of speech and thought, then, is not their absence from things, but their embodiment; the acoustic portion which spills into speech 'returns signs to the universe' (Guillaume). Of course, the thinking subject is not always a speaking one; how often can a speaker be said to be thinking ?

Thinking is an act of the will, but as Wittgenstein reminds us, such an act 'is not the cause of the action

but is the action itself' (1969, p.87). The will becomes identical with thought when it responds to a sort of cause suggested by an inchoateness of things, a failure of *noemata* to characterise objects. Then

Silent consciousness grasps itself ... as a generalised 'I think' in face of a confused world 'to be thought about'.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.403)

An apparently similar process must be distinguished:

... the most familiar thing appears indeterminate as long as we have not recalled its name ...

(*Ib.*, p.171)

But this recalling of names is only evidence of the indivisibility of thought and language as two sides of a paper. Such names belong to the category of 'mental' activity known by its sedimentations, and to the corresponding language form of the cliché. When we speak of thinking proper, we must represent the thinker as looking forward rather than behind himself, so that

the thinking subject himself is in a kind of ignorance of his thoughts so long as he has not formulated them for himself, or even spoken or written them ...

(*Ibid.*)

But this 'strange power' of thought of 'being ahead of itself' (*ib.*, p.371) raises in its turn the epistemological one of what I use to think *with*, so that my thinking both arises from and foreshadows what I can know, putting 'into things what it subsequently finds in them' (*ib.*). The status of knowledge is identical with that of language and of thinking; like *Langue* it pre-exists its empirical occurrence as its own possibility and as the possibility of coherence but it is the *process* of casting that possibility which describes knowing and which transcends the artefacts of knowledge, as *Parole* merely uses signs. And then there is what science 'knows', and what I

'know' of bits of information; such knowledge is the record of past events of knowing, and the empirical truth of its explicative character replaces the presence of the earlier moment of knowledge, which is understanding. It is the historical character of such knowledge together with the empirical portion of speech which gives us the impression that speaking necessarily *reports* or *translates* knowledge, as it often does. But another empirical truth of speech reveals another character of knowing; the way speech launches forth and the way thought similarly knows its way around 'new' ground is surely the way knowledge is created in the service of a local need. This knowing happens in the same moment as its need is divined. Thus the life of speaking illustrates that of knowing: we may be bound by more or less explicit 'rules', but these very rules are cast by events, and this very bondage is hence broken. We can say that *Langue* pre-exists *Parole* only as a *post hoc* rationalisation, and we must say that the act of knowing is not explained by the facts of knowledge which it organises. It remains to describe the constitution of these acts of speaking, of thinking and of knowing.

We can hardly be said to have *proved* the corporeal nature of speaking merely by emphasising the gestural character beneath its acoustic presence, or that of thinking by indicating the 'momentary desire' which motivates it; but the project is not to undo a supremacy of mind by replacing it with one of the body. Rather, the need is to go beyond such priorities, and the proofs they entail, to the *Fundierungen* which are anterior to our polarising concepts. Before the psychological reality of thinking, then, and before the physical fact of speech is *knowing* which, as their single condition, can 'have' neither feature empirically and yet as a process founds and organises the psychological and physiological possibilities of language

and thought. The identity which appears with thought and speech is dependent on the acts which realise it; but these acts are known by their process, movement and direction, and not by any empirical arrest. Polanyi (1958) describes how knowing is a movement *from* the proximal to the distal, the organisation and commitment of the tacitly-known so that it presents as a new cultural entity. It is only by nominating the *process* of their involvement that we can relate the popular thesis of phenomenal knowledge - that we learn new things from an 'outside' world - to its counter-truth - that we can only discover what we already 'know', since otherwise we should not be able to re-cognise it. Here the structure which knowing shares with speaking is most apparent, since, as Merleau-Ponty says

People can only speak to us a language which we already understand, each word of a difficult text awakens in us thoughts which were ours beforehand.

(1962, p.178.)

It is the will to create new order from the infinitely permutative possibility of the tacitly-known which casts novel structures;

Yet the problem being how, to all appearances, consciousness learns something, the solution cannot consist in saying that it knows everything in advance. The fact is that we have the power to understand over and above what we may have spontaneously thought.

(*Ibid.*)

The examination of language at the levels suggested by the sections of this chapter does not reveal another process than this organisation, from a more or less opaque resource; at the phonaesthetic level, 'It is the body which points out, and which speaks' (*Ib.*, p. 197); the word, similarly,

is not an object which I recognise through any identificatory synthesis, but a certain use made of my phonatory equipment, a certain modulation of my body as a being in the world. Its generality is not that of the idea, but that of a behavioural style 'understood' by my body in so far as the latter is a behaviour-producing power, in this

case a phoneme-producing one ... The word has never been inspected, analysed, known and constituted but caught and taken up by a power of speech and, in the last analysis, by a motor power given to me along with the first experience I have of my body and its perceptual and practical fields.

(*Ib.*, p.403.)

Such words only appear at the level of the sentence, of course, and it is in seeing how 'the speaking subject plunges into speech without imagining the words he is about to utter' (*Ib.*) that we see speech not translating but accomplishing thought as a form it can take. This launching into speech is the empirical trace of the questing will to make order, and so the sedimentations of available meanings may

sometimes combine to form new thought which recasts them all, and we are transported to the heart of the matter, we find the source.

(*Ib.*, p.178)

Now if it is this will to order which motivates discourse, it is its other character, the drive to sharing, which realises the moment of discourse. Again,

Merleau-Ponty says

available meanings suddenly link up in accordance with an unknown law, and once and for all a fresh cultural entity has taken on an existence.

(*Ib.*, p.183)

The 'fresh cultural entity' is the public character of expression, and public because it is a close, noetic correlate of the real, shared object, the 'source' newly dwelt in. Polanyi is surely in substantial agreement with this; he insists that knowledge is personal and embodied and yet to be called by the name it must be 'pursued with unwavering universal intent.' (1969, p.134.)

The 'unknown law' describes the operation of expression; it is not unknown because it is unfathomable, but because it is inexplicit for the speaking subject;

expression does not intervene as an instrument of his will, but is just that will itself made identical with thought or language, or both. So it is that we can say that speech can teach me the meaning of my thought, the quality of my knowing, and finally some reflexive sense of my will itself. For if explicit speech is the *cogito* made into discourse, then this tacit *cogito* which pre-exists speech is 'myself experienced by myself' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.403), the 'presence of oneself to oneself', made patent only 'as a generalised "I think" in face of a confused world'. A particular gap in coherence requires that the subject

bring into action powers which are a closed book to him and ... that he should become a speaking subject.

Hence

The tacit *cogito* is a *cogito* only when it has found expression for itself.

(*Ibid.*)

And Hofstadter says similarly,

Man becomes a self in knowledge, in the act of abandoning his self.

(1965, p.104.)

If the argument seems to be circulating round the same sort of evidence, it is largely because we are talking of different aspects of the same process; but we have finally arrived at its source. Knowing, thinking and speaking (distinct from knowledge, thoughts and the spoken) are ways of highlighting the same moment of expression according to how we wish to emphasise the multiple revelation it accomplishes. The simple idea of a *joint* revelation is not quite enough; certainly an act of expression carries the world to me as it announces something of my values and experience to that world. But more than this we must say that "I" am revealed to myself, and that the same enlargement

happens reflexively to the world. This is true as the outer/inner distinction fades; knowing is usually characterised as an 'inner' process, a way of absorbing something external; even Polanyi talks of 'ingestion' and 'expulsion' of material. Thinking, too, is done 'internally', and it is left to speech to be the phenomenal marker of private activity. This distinction rests on the assumption - almost impossible to shake off - of an "I" who "does" these things. If we can assume for a moment that the "I" is only continuous with knowing, speaking and thinking, and that these events we have seen to be, not merely 'turned outward', but in fact to be necessarily the correlates of objects, what can there be left 'inside' ? What is 'there' is the residue of previous acts of expression, old thoughts 'which we can silently recall to ourselves, and through which we acquire the illusion of an inner life' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.183). But in reality 'this supposed silence is alive with words' (*ib.*), which of course belong to the world, and their condition of silence is contingent; whilst in discourse an "I" does not lurk obscurely behind these words but, to the extent that it is healthy, is continuous with its objects. So Ricoeur can say :

The unity of the I think is no one; the "I" of the I think is not a person, a particular person: it is merely the form of the world, that is to say the projection of objectivity, insofar as it is a synthesis of the sayable and the perceptible. In short, the I of the I think is only the project of the object.

(1978, p.27.)

This is not to deliver the "I" up to the indifferent influences of a behaviouristic environment, for that, too, would depend on the continued distinction of an 'outer' acting on an 'inner'. Rather,

Nothing determines me from outside, not because nothing acts upon me, but, on the contrary, because I am from the start outside myself and open to the world.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.456.)

Two questions occur here in the light of this analysis. The first arises from the lived distinction of 'me' and 'world', since for all practical purposes I am bound at least within an area designated by linguistic markers of the personal, and there is an equal firmness to the boundary of the phenomenal world; what, then, is the relation of this 'me' and that 'world'? The second question is the inveterate occupation of philosophers: Does language, then, refer? This question in particular will not be answered here to any universal satisfaction, but it can at least be put again with a different emphasis. This emphasis is introduced by Ricoeur's renomination of Saussure's 'signified' as the 'intended' (*op.cit.*), and both questions will be put against the phenomenological understanding of the horizontal structure of the lived world.

In a discussion of the heuristic character of speech, Merleau-Ponty describes how the speaker 'does not express just for others, but also to know himself what he intends' (1964b, p.90). Thus the thematisation of the signified (or intended) cannot precede speech because 'it is the result of it'. He goes on:

Let us say that every expression is perfect to the extent that it is unequivocally understood, and admit as a fundamental fact of expression *a surpassing of the signifying by the signified which it is the very virtue of the signifying to make possible ...*

(*Ib.*)

This not only reaffirms the analysis of discourse as perpetually and inexhaustibly aimed at describing the real, but it says something of the way in which signifier and intended relate. The signifying can only mean against the certainty of a *bedeutung*, and equally the signified is itself characterised by its expression, which 'confers on what it expresses an existence in itself' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.183). This mutual necessity is described by a horizontal structure which

enables the relation of apparent polarities (or other mutually-distinct areas) not so much in terms of reference as of intention; hence the moment of relation is neither causal nor conscious by necessity, but has the mode of operation of a *Fundierung*. The structure also reduces the anomalous question of reference, for we can characterise language as *presenting noetically against* (that is, as intending) *the actual world*; we can also reverse the usual *Langue-Parole* distinction because what is said (*Parole*) is noetic, i.e., it is not 'the thing', though it is itself real; what gives it coherence is not a theoretical framework (like *Langue*) but the actual world. Language is intentional rather than referential because only such an understanding can explain the continual need for play between such terms as *Langue* and *Parole*; if a language act 'refers' only, we can assume that it is completed in advance by the object referred to, and that this object is perfectly characterised in this way; but objects are never fulfilled by an intention, and there is always a surplus of intended over signifying. Reference takes for granted that there is already something to refer to, takes for granted a whole world; therefore language ceases to have the job of creating this world, and loses its expressive function. Merleau-Ponty reminds us of this expressive superiority over any undoubted referential function :

The word and speech must somehow cease to be a way of designating things or thoughts, and become the presence of that thought in the phenomenal world and, moreover, not its clothing but its token or its body.

(1962, p.182)

Elsewhere, he writes that all thought of something is simultaneously self-consciousness, 'failing which it could have no object' (*ib.*, p.371.)

To our questions, then, we can say this: if language can be said to refer, it does so only as a secondary function of a basically expressive character. More than this, it follows from that expressive nature that any reference be understood as having a dual source, and a dual direction. The temporary arrest of discourse marks, as we have said, the source which the expressive process of speaking can sometimes reach as *noemata* appear to equate with objects proper; but at the same time it is the point of origination in the speaker's experience, 'failing which it could have no object(s)'. Reference can only be allowed if it comprehends *self*-reference. It follows from this that the relation of 'me' and the phenomenal world is entirely one of intention, described in terms of the horizons which consciousness interposes as facts of its embodiment. Recall the epigraph which opened this section :

... the life of consciousness - cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life - is subtended by an intentional arc which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.136.)

This is a particularly good metaphor because it shows the three-dimensional relations which hold between the subject and his world, and how 'the life of consciousness' has the shape, as it were, of a piece of that world. Merleau-Ponty continues : 'It is this (intentional arc) which goes limp in illness'. The collapse of the will is not a failure to maintain inner and outer - as the popular thesis has it - but actually creates them, and the subject finds himself alienated either from a consciousness which is now believed to be 'inside', or from objects which he can no longer hold 'outside'. When this unity is disturbed, it is not the

subject alone who is impaired, nor the subject and his language; the failure of the arc undoes a whole world. The natural attitude restricts this 'whole world' to the boundaries of a particular body, and so protects itself from threats to sanity because they are of an 'other'. But it is not a merely poetic exaggeration to say that the common store of words is their common life; the truth of Donne's 'Yet each man's death diminisheth me' is that while the real world persists, the totality of significations which is the phenomenal world is impoverished as those who signify, who 'translate silence into words' (Merleau-Ponty) fail to break that silence and share the objects it surrounds. For we live, Heidegger tells us
 by putting into words the totality-of-significations of intelligibility. To significations, words accrue.
 (1962)

This relationship of silence and words, of being and world has been explored by Heidegger, and I shall conclude this section with a summary reflection on the status of language necessary to his thesis.

Unlike the other philosophers who have been cited here, Heidegger sees no contiguity between linguistics and the real life of language; hence his is a very special definition of language which has no interest in actual utterances but is instead globally concerned with a whole man who can hardly be an empirical object. There is in Heidegger's work generally that fault which, of all the sections of this chapter, is most apparent in the present one: in resisting the focussing devices which a scientific method can provide, one is required to work with concepts of such size and openness that their discussion adds nothing to explanation (as such), even if it disturbs understanding; and when these concepts are such as Being and World, a refusal to be 'scientific' means that discussion remains within areas which, by foregoing the purchase of consciousness, only schemes like psychology or geography can transcend. But if this is my fault here

it is actually a virtue of Heidegger's philosophy, for his linguistic is not empirical but ontological, and his method self-consciously experiential. One cannot transcend the word, so he proposes to 'have an experience with language'. The exploration of language becomes a task for those who manifestly care about it - chiefly poets, and philosophers in the pre-Socratic traditions:

Language is the house of being. Man dwells in this house. Those who think and those who create poetry are the custodians of the dwelling.

(1962a, p.129)

Immediately, then, the question of how language refers - its communicative aspect which occupies much philosophical and linguistic activity - is subordinated to the prime question of how language can be, of how it carries experience with it. Certainly the relation of word to thing remains a central concern, but Heidegger must consider this relation not in terms of 'a connection between the thing that is on the one hand and the word that is on the other' (1971a, p.66); the word is itself

the relation which in each instance retains the thing within itself in such a manner that it "is" a thing.

(*Ib.*)

And again, it is

what holds, relates and keeps the thing as thing

(*ib.*, p.82)

It can do this because, itself, the word

falls back, withdraws, in favour of what is said in it.

(*ib.*, p.76)

In this sense, then, the word carries us to the thing, so we may never say of the word that it is, but rather that it gives.

(*ib.*, p.88)

In these four statements we find that the word is a thing, but that it also maintains the thing; that it presents the thing and yet finally has no existence. Such a compendium of essences and functions establishes language as the only

means to what can be, if not as all there can be. In his analysis of George's poem, 'The Word', Heidegger (1971b) affirms the conclusion of the poem that 'Where word breaks off no thing may be'. This is the opposite thesis to that which is provoked by Roquentin's epiphany (Sartre, 1965); for him, the distinctness of things and persons can never be wholly mitigated by language, and only an aesthetic act of imagination can go any way towards resolving them. A different attack on this exclusiveness of language is possible at the other end of the spectrum of consciousness; in an essay called 'The Retreat from the Word', Steiner (1958) - himself an apologist of Heidegger - points to the growing technicalisation of understanding, which is doing away with the imprecision of words. So mathematicians may 'talk' across linguistic barriers in a 'language' which makes the rest of us illiterate in a new way. For Heidegger this would be evidence of the impoverishment of experience, since it is words which index values; hence his etymologising to recover their diachronic life. But, further, his argument would be another of Roquentin's that, certainly, in 'another' world circles keep their shape and are known in a particular manner; but circles - and calculus - do not exist.

In any event if language is the *only* means to what can be, it must be as a process indistinguishable from what it realises. Speaking creates a world:

"To Say", related to the Old Norse *sagan* means to show: to make appear, set free, that is to offer and extend what we call World, lighting and concealing it.

(Heidegger, 1971a, p.93.) ¹

Named things, says Heidegger, 'collect in themselves heaven and earth, the mortal and the divine,' which he

¹ There is an echo of this in Ricoeur's hypostatization of the sign: it is 'not only that which is lacking to things, it is not simply absent from things and other than them; it is what wishes to be applied, in order to express, grasp, apprehend, and finally show, to make see'. (1978, p.118.)

calls the 'fourfold'. The word is 'the region that determines earth and sky to be world regions, as it makes earth and sky' (*ib.*, p.100). We have said that language is the 'relation of all relations' which, though it 'maintains, proffers and enriches' is, like all relations, itself subtle, 'in that it holds itself ... in reserve.' (*ib.*, p.107). It is because language is this immaterial guarantee of coherence, because it is the sole medium of such order and because it 'draws back in favour of what is said in it' that Heidegger concludes that what lies at the 'centre' of language must be an indivisible matrix which carries with it the shape of all possible worlds, and has the condition of silence. This is why interpretation is boundless, because 'Nothing that is said has its truth simply in itself, but refers instead backward and forward to what is unsaid' (Gadamer, 1976). Heidegger identifies this centre of language with the Johannine *logos*; in another, non-metaphysical context, Saussure has called it *Langue*.

But the rationale of language is not for Heidegger a human product, diachronically established by empirical language, but a primordial condition *discovered* in the same measure as language describes its projection, which is the world. Such a view reverses the roles we normally attribute to speaking and to man, and he becomes 'needful to language, that he may speak it' (Heidegger, 1971a p.90). Merleau-Ponty similarly describes babbling (and its phonaesthetic residue) as so many ways of singing the world (1962). Again, Ricoeur identifies the "I" as the 'project of the object', and then the thinking subject as 'merely a form of the world' (1978, p.27). Languages are translatable in the end not because they share their 'signified' - which is entirely linked to a 'signifier' whose virtue is precisely its place within a closed system - but because they share their *intended*, which is such another 'form of the world' given by the *logos*.

And yet languages remain local, never fully translatable because if there is something inevitable about the *logos*, it remains to individuals and to individual communities to characterise it, and there is nothing inevitable about creativity. We return to Being-in-the-World, and to 'facticity', and to the truth of Merleau-Ponty's dictum that 'We are in the world and the world is in us'. We mean by these ideas that we are bound by a double tension, to conform and to create. Expression, for Malraux, 'lends' a meaning to the world, and is valuable to the extent that 'it is a call for and not a consequence of a way of seeing' (Malraux, 1949, p.154). But this heuristic character is not common to the run of empirical language; in another echo of the mundane 'shape' to language, Heidegger says that much speech goes on 'in a mode of groundless floating' (1971a, p.87). If most speech is to be dismissed in this way, what is the practical consequence of luxuriating analyses like this? For again, the horizons of Being and World are never apparent to living discourse; 'The problem of the world,' says Merleau-Ponty, '... consists in the fact that *it is all there*' (1962, p.198), that one is innocently *in* such a world when involved in speech. But after the moment of discourse we are faced with a hermeneutic question, and need to ask 'What are the horizons of Being here? What are the horizons of *this world*?' For the concepts are the implicit methodological co-ordinates of any historical arrest of what is said, but mechanistic analyses of language do not see their devices participating in the act of expression, and 'interpretation' becomes a reductive procedure.

When Barnes says

Participants in conversation continuously attribute both referential meanings and purposes (social meanings) to the ongoing utterances ...

(Barnes 1976)

he is wrong because he understands by this a process of conscious interpretation, which is also what his method

of arrest and analysis is predicated on. But any interpretation in speech is precisely expression itself, just as the best of interpretative criticism is expressive. This is understood by the idea of the hermeneutic circle, through which text and interpreter are mutually enriched. In acts of interpretation of speaking, then, we need to try to discover a "hermeneutic I", by importing into our methodological devices and illuminating the eventual characters of Being and World necessarily present to speaking.

CHAPTER FIVE

A phenomenology of language: an observation on practice

In Chapter 3 I said that *Langue* referred to the ontology of language, while *Parole* belongs to methodology; in Chapter 4 I traced their connection in experience, and elucidated the existential possibilities of *Langue*. The elaboration of *Parole*, on the other hand, must be a practical task arising out of this earlier reflection, and we have to ask "What are the implications of these essences for a research methodology?" Chapter 4 prepared the justifications of this enquiry; following on, the present chapter has two aims: firstly, to report on the genesis of the study as a whole and secondly, in so telling that story to return the speculations of Chapter 4 to the practical context in which they arose. This is not a matter of trying the thesis against 'evidence', but simply of showing how a way of organising discourse around certain linguistic events emerged from the events themselves. Methods of language and discourse analysis generally re-characterise these specific, contingent events without recognising their eventual nature; they reduce the events to schemata. What I hope to have characterised, on the other hand, are some general truths which are given with language; to have illustrated, that is, some essential rather than contingent features of language.

If this chapter is not empirically-based, neither is it strictly theoretical. Certainly the 'theoretical' ideas feature in the presentation of the thesis (in Chapter 4) before their practical counterpart, but this order could have been otherwise, and I could have chosen to show how the theory arose from the data without misrepresenting the experience. For theory and data are not distinct in

experience, although the making of any piece of science requires that we separate them. Events like planning, investigating, writing-up - and so on - are seldom discrete in the creation of any research, and the final shape must always be more arbitrary than it is customary to acknowledge.

A note on 'Method'

Even so, there is, of course, a discipline to the study which could be described as methodological. The principles which underlie the enquiry are these:

- i Enquiry must self-consciously involve the values of the enquirer.
- ii A phenomenological understanding of subject-object relations is the pre-requisite to any philosophical enquiry into language; the meaning and status of *data* must be understood.
- iii The experience of language is distinct from the study of language. Language cannot be a proper object for science. Psychological, linguistic and sociological theory and method have little to say about the character and experience of language.

One of the aims of the study is to show how much more complex is the experience of language than most methods can allow for; I cannot, therefore, expect to offer a method which is simple and comprehensive and which could be replicated in any conventional sense. Although I am addressing what is essentially true of expressive language, the value and importance of the research exercise lies not in the predictive power of any 'findings', but in the process of my discovery of these essences, and this process must by definition be a unique affair. The study is therefore a personal account of a search for what it is in language which transcends the personal. These essences should, of course, - if they really are *that*, be universally recognisable.

The enquiry

The work which follows emerged out of a desire to demonstrate - to myself as much as to others - the connection between English teaching and phenomenology. I had spent some two years reading in the phenomenological corpus, and at the same time carrying out some part-time teaching and observation in various Sheffield schools. Beyond a general interest in small-group discussion, I had no pre-conceived designs and therefore no data beyond that provided by sundry tape-recordings. But to say even so little is already a misrepresentation; I had already a commitment to the phenomenologist's understanding of language, and a complementary hostility towards the schemes of linguistic analysis. I am sure that if I did not have some pre-explicated framework for approaching my studies at this time, then I should not have the findings I now present here.

One set of audio tape recordings particularly interested me; this recorded the efforts of three small groups of 6th formers at a local school to understand the same poem. Here - where the text they were addressing was the the same - was an opportunity to see what was common in their approaches, and what unique. One feature emerged strongly from my repeated listening to the tapes; the groups dealt with the poem in question according to the sections which the poet had given it, and in each case they talked until some point was reached where they obviously 'felt' they could pass on to the next section. But this point - of understanding, or whatever it was - was not the same in each group. Now one could adduce 'explanation' of this in terms of group dynamics, or of individual psychologies. But to justify any such explanation one would have to suppose a conscious intention on the part of the speakers which was manifestly not 'there' during the give-and-take of discourse.

'Intention' becomes a way of describing the presence and energy and engagement of a speaker in a manner which coheres with a historical overview. But any attempt to attribute *meaning* to individual utterances or even to stretches of speech must be so tentative if it is to respect the expressive processes of the event that it is unlikely to be scientific..

What we can talk about with some clarity and certainty is not the way that persons appear to think or to 'dress' their thoughts, but what is phenomenally true of *language*. So it is true, for example, that *language* carries on in a certain fashion. This is not to personify language, or to subject speakers to any behaviourist scheme. It depends on a view of *thinking and being as continuous with language*, and not its source or result; so we invest language with an existential status which science normally avoids. Statements about the nature of language thus become observations on the life of thought and on the quality of being.

The Theses

I have organised my reflections on these speech events around the following questions, questions which arose necessarily from my dissatisfaction with a scientific treatment of language :

What 'unit of experience' has been edited by the identification of the phoneme as the most basic unit of speech ?

In what sense is the word a satisfactory level of meaning, since it seems to disappear as a discrete unit on the least reflection ?

The sentence can be anatomised endlessly, but can such analyses ever capture the meaning of the particular 'combination of items' to the speaker ?

Why does language 'go ahead' ? Why does it 'break off' ?

Is language always thoughtful ?

These questions are discussed, in turn, in the remainder of this chapter. I begin each section with a Thesis, a proposition concerning the expressive nature of language. The theses are derived from reflection and from observation, and have important methodological implications for the study of language. A thesis does not 'explain' the material which illustrates it, nor do such illustrations say all there is to say about the thesis. The relationship of thesis to data is thus quite different from the more usual one of, say, conclusion to data, or category to instance. It can be characterised in this way : a thesis has a relationship with its illustrative data which is not categorical, but essential.

Thesis 1 : In examining language in terms of its symbols, we may lose sight of the fact that these symbols represent an event in experience.

The problem of the meaning and value of transcription of speech is endemic. Two discussions of this problem in different contexts are these :

i. Easley, (1981) is investigating children's scientific concepts, and is considering the evidence of another researcher (Driver, in *op.cit.*):

Looking at tapes of Driver's subjects - 12 year olds talking about physical systems - we noted that somebody might say, "This is really heavy !", but if you heard their intonation and felt their personal energy as you watched the motion of the person, you would begin to sense that 'heavy' is a process that takes place over a period of a few seconds and involves the whole body. As it functions in their thought, it is

not an abstract property of an object at all, nor is it a measurement procedure. It is an interaction. We ... ought not to think of such concepts in strictly logical terms if we want to represent the dynamic schemas by which they are experienced in these subjects.

(p.27.)

ii. Hull (1981) reflects on a datum he has recorded:

Retrospectively (the researcher) could trace (a particular interpretation) to what he had learned of the group prior to the interview through the casual observation of their behaviour in a variety of situations, to what teachers had said about them in off-the-record conversation, and to his own communicative competence as a member of a linguistic community - in short, his 'second record'. On the page before him for analysis was the 'first record'. Bald words alone endured translation, the situation pressed neatly flat by the typewriter like washing from a mangle.

(p.4.)

The problem may be the methodological one of trying to record speech in writing, but that relation itself represents the bond of existence and science. There is the thing, and then there is what we say about it. To the extent that language gives a symbolic representation of experience it is scientific, if by the term we understand the creation of knowledge to be shared. The balance between this communal character and the inevitability of personal constitution must be maintained. Transcription is hopelessly flawed because it elevates science over experience, *meaning over event, techne over poeta*. One of the confusions to our understanding the nature of speaking and of thought is that, having evolved to being able to record speech and represent thinking in writing, we have then reimported to speech the linear quality which characterises writing. It is this attribution which confounds much philosophy and which threatens the usefulness on many empirical studies of language. Writing is extended primarily in space, and speaking in time. Each can be said to 'go forward', but the processes are not identical, nor even analogous. Speech surely occupies a period of time, has a starting-point and is concluded, etc. ; but it is a function of our proneness to

metaphor that we conceive of this period as analogously extended in space. Now if we are measuring the length of a piece of noise - a symphony, say - we could correctly represent its measure in minutes; but since we are talking here of speech as *meaning*, and we believe that meaning extends before and beyond a single or serial utterance, then we cannot talk of the length or time of a meaning. Their proper extension, of course, is in experience. Writing represents a very deliberate and palpable extension of meaning, is devoted self-consciously to meaning, where for much speaking meaning exists vertically, as it were, across each note of a harmonising chord as well as in the melody.

What happens when we transcribe speech out of its context? In fact we write down what we can according to what we hear - and this is always an intentional function of what we are looking for; what we are looking for both in terms of any later categorisation we want to bring to bear, but even before that, in terms of our perception of discrete, ideal units. We organise clusters of meaning-bearing noise into orthographic units which themselves suppose some conceptual purity. What we do later is something else again: building on this primary idealisation, we make ideal attributions often to single words, or apparently discrete utterances. This is dealt with in another thesis; for the moment I want to concentrate on the passage of focus from the experience of the speakers to the meaning of that linguistic event for an outsider.

A concrete example of this can be found in my attempted transcription of the particular set of tapes on which this present study is based. One of the girls, Julie, makes the following statement:

3/23/J : I mean like that where it says Is it any wonder he puts on dark glasses ? we're seeing that from t'tourist point of view, puttin on dark glasses and also, from like that old man's point of view like ¹

Now between this and Vicky's

3/28/V : and that as well, that I have two legs (etc)

I hear at least four voices and at least the following discrete utterances :

3/24/V : er he's put the dark glasses on

3/25/S : blocking out things

3/26/J : blocking out things

3/27/D : (?) negative images

I suppose we could slow down the tape, and properly discretise these words and, using brackets and split-lines and other such devices we could somehow represent their sequential occurrence graphically. Even so, and even with the benefits of a narrow phonemic transcription, I am sure that we could not recover and record with any accuracy and character the full virtues of this exchange. We should have to characterise at least some of it as 'noise', and we should very likely pass over much of it as indecipherable, or otherwise untranscribable.

The meaning of this exchange does not consist in Vicky's interpretation of it, and consequent ability to go on from it (though this is important). The exchange is primarily meaningful simply because it occurs; it is not meaningful to writing because it cannot be arranged to satisfy the conventions of writing. The exchange and each of its composite utterances are meaningful because they are properly expressive; that is to say

¹ The observations made in this chapter are based on my interpretation of three tape-recordings. These record small groups of 6th formers discussing, unaided, the first stanza of Sylvia Plath's poem, *Berck-Plage*. Appendix B (p.233) contains the text of the poem, a transcription of these discussions, and details both of the participants and of the general circumstances of the exercise. The

that these utterances represent the intentions of the speakers directed at the context of the group. The exchange cannot be said to be fully *communicative*, however, and it is for this reason that it cannot properly be recorded in writing, where the communicability of ideal notions has a higher status.

This exchange is as meaningful as any other apparently discrete and coherent utterance to be found on the tapes; in fact, these other utterances are only meaningful in so far as this exchange is, for it represents the basic, if extreme case of *eventual* meaning. Why it is laboured here is that meaning lies in the noisy event of speech between persons, and is a different one to that we attach with historical intent to the discrete elements of that event as they appear in memory, or in written words. The meaning in the noise is not ideal.

My point, then, is not that transcriptions are inadequate records - and no user would want to claim otherwise - but that meaning in the flux of discourse is not the same as that which attends writing. Meaning as it is experienced is not 'in' words, but in people; when we slow it down, yes, then we can spy it. But at the evanescent point of rapid utterance, it is *eventual* and *virtual*. Our transcriptions suggest that it is *ideational*, and in this case we find meaning only where we can find *form*. In conclusion we can say that for the participants in a conversation, there are clusters of noise which are the observable portion of thought, and which therefore carry

references which head quotations from the tapes indicate which group is being quoted (1, 2 or 3), the serial number of the utterances in the transcribed exchange, and the initial of the speaker. Thus the above example, (3/23/J :), is the 23rd utterance on the 3rd tape, and spoken by Julie.

meaning. The world is primarily one of noise rather than of ideas; this noise is a prime reality which is yet recognisable in symbols which intentionally relate the experience of the speaker and the 'social' reality of his context. We tend, however, to attribute meaning only where we see ideal form. Certainly our orthography is a second-order reality, often used to create orders at a third remove, and beyond.

Thesis 2 : Words may have lexical sense, but personal interpretation gives them significance.

While this thesis emphasises the necessity of personal experience of a word, this should not be elevated over the shared, communicative value which that word has by virtue of its ideal character. In the first part of this account I shall show how the operation of meaning at the personal level may sometimes fail to achieve the sanction of shared meaning.

Pupils bring to a text the expectation that it should be meaningful simply because it is a text. They may believe that every word, every phrase has a meaning, and that their task is somehow to crack the codes which are withholding those meanings. Of course, one result of this is that they may develop a very literal, mechanistic approach to figurative language. On Tape 3, Sally quotes :

3/11/S : Electrifyingly-colored sherbets, scooped from the freeze

and Julie unhesitatingly renders this as

3/12/J : *that that's er ice-cream*

Well to be sure it is; but what matters to the life of the poem is quite *how* and quite *why* its image should be represented in quite these particular words. The assumption that the phrase 'has' a literal meaning here

operates against the effect the poet is trying to achieve. This determination to find elemental meanings in poetic language is inimical to metaphor, while it is yet public and lexical senses which structure the event. The relation of meaning, anomaly and metaphor is finally a contextual rather than logical one. Let us consider the problem posed by

This is the sea, then, this great abeyance (line 1);

An important aspect of the poem at large, this section in particular and of the discourse of the groups depends on the conflict between 'sea' and 'abeyance', and then the tensive information of the rest of the section by this area of meaning. 'The tide is out' could be a fair literal rendering of this opening line; but in fact it is no mere instance of metonymy - it is the whole sea (not merely the tide) which is an (rather than in) abeyance; this is not a physical possibility. The meaning of the metaphor and of the whole section depends on the choice we make between preserving the literal (and lexical) senses of both the subject and the predicate - in which case we have semantic chaos - and allowing a new sense to attach to either subject or modifier. The result is contradiction, to be sure; but it is significant contradiction which permits the stanza and the discourse to go on.

Group 1 realise this: Tony says

1/17/T : *you shouldn't, don't go away wi' t'idea that being by the seaside'll make you better, erm*

and Paul's

1/18/P : *I think there could be something in the fact that, y'know the people are by the sea but, y'know, they're cripples ...*

and

1/20/P : *it its not going to do anything to them
anyway*

draws Tony back to the text and calls from him

1/21/T : *its abeyance in'it, its but*

Group 2 spend a lot of time realising this special meaning which Kevin introduces too elliptically for them, to the extent of attributing a clearly 'wrong' meaning to a key concept-area in their attempt to realise ideal meaning:

2/10/M : *what's abeyance mean now*

2/11/S : *vastness*

2/12/K1: *oh is it I thought (?) confused*

2/13/K2: *yeh emptiness*

2/14/S : *it's just a vast empty sea and they're all
crippled aren't they so its really worthless to
them*

2/14/M : *this is a (etc)*

This is doubly interesting. Shane's equation of 'abeyance' with 'vastness' and 'emptiness' is 'wrong' in a literal sense, though he shows a loose, connotative sense of the context; what he hasn't got is the word's *presential value*. Now metaphor may appear to be an extreme case of the play between ideal/lexical and figurative/personal meanings, and so far the examination has been largely at the level of the text; but Shane's understanding of 'abeyance' is actually a good demonstration of the operation of metaphor at the *personal level* as it addresses the intentional object.

Talk of meaning must in any event comprehend *shared* meaning; a meaning which doesn't mean to more than one person could not be so called. It is absurd to talk of meaning outside of a public context, in quite the same same way that it is wrong to talk of 'private' languages.

But, in an entirely real way, absurdity is actually a tactic of poetry. Metaphor stands as the case of authentic language which strains at logic and resists absurdity only to the extent that it is directed towards the real. Now one of the functions and effects of discourse is to maintain the public currency of language, by checking and refining meanings against each other; we have said that 'ideal' meanings are something like templates from *Langue*, against which the working hypothesis of nascent meanings are tried and qualified. Shane's imperfect realisation of 'abeyance' - which clearly works for *his* experience of the poem - is in fact refined by the discourse, since he explicitly approves Kevin's second attempt at statement of his theme:

2/26/K1: ... I think they I definitely think that they that the sea's sort of seen as a, a sort of harbour of life ... whereas they

2/27/S : where they're separated

2/28/K1: whereas this place they're separated from it because there's something wrong with them

2/29/S : yeh I agree with that

The discrepancy between Shane's understanding and the lexical sense of 'abeyance' is no impediment to the work of the metaphor on this discourse. His experience of the word appears to vary between this 'proper' sense and a sense permitted by the discourse.¹

Words, then, have an actual meaning only in a context, in a sentence or utterance; lexical values are only the *beginning* of meaning. But it is equally true that personal significances are inchoate until and unless they accord with shared meaning. If we look again at the

¹ Hull (1981) cites an example with some similar features. He reports a girl's claim to be 'bored' in small group discussion, 'although her observed activities .. were rarely symptomatic of boredom.. Once she had used the word, however, it assumed a powerful and central position in the ensuing discussion .. The girls who were part of Katrina's friendship group .. borrowed her terminology and intonation and ... each offered a similar view, in two cases clearly

second tape-recording, it is clear that Kevin's original insight and observation need some re-modelling to arrive at an articulation which can satisfy at once the personal values of that intuition, the critical intelligence of the group and the meaning of the text. Meaning is realised as the group can so manifestly share in its articulation. (Note in the above example how Kevin incorporates Shane's observation that *'they're separated'* into his concluding *'whereas this place they're separated from it ..'*)

Communication ensures that language goes on and is not arrested at the level of personal significance. On Tape 1, Paul makes an observation which appears to be qualified most usefully (and, for Murray, unusually) by Murray, and his acknowledgement of this contribution is not merely a superficial feature of the circularity of discourse, nor of 'turn-taking' or whatever, but is an operation at an *ontological* level of communication which is realised in language. Again, Murray's observation permits discourse to go on.

1/25/P ; *getting to be old infirm y'know there no chance of carrying on life at all*

1/26/M : *in the normal sense*

1/27/P : *in the normal sense of the word yes good point*

This might seem like a top-heavy handling of a very innocent exchange, and indeed the point has been laboured a little. However, it is particularly interesting in the way it contrasts with an earlier exchange, where Paul again acknowledges a 'good point', but this time with some good-humoured irony which could (in his case)

contradicting what they had said only moments earlier. The fieldworker had sensed strongly at the time that the word itself was acting to move group consensus and that its 'song' was serving a social function that trailed its apparent lexical meaning.'

very easily have been contempt. What we have is actually an instance of failed communication, because Tony's observation has *significance* for him, but does not have the sanction of *meaning* dictated by the text and required by the group. This is the exchange:

1/12/P : *it begins with it begins with a description of the actual scene at Berck-Plage the seaside resort and as the poem progresses, er other ideas are introduced so on top of the sort of main theme (noise) and these extra themes carry on until the actual scene changes 'n*

1/13/T : *it seems that she puts ideas on to t'actual description but 'n then ideas get more and description gets less, and eventually its all ideas and actual description just fades away*

Beyond the obvious fact that ideas must accumulate necessarily as a poem lengthens and develops, this is not the case. But we must suppose that it has reality for Tony, for he delivers it with some authority and enthusiasm. My suggestion is that Paul's intelligence defers for reasons of friendliness to Tony's construing of the text. Murray (the only other member of this group) takes his cue from Paul so the communication is allowed to stand. It goes forward by Paul's somewhat tactful and efficient moving to a new topic:

1/14/P : *yes er I see what you mean yes good point*

1/15/M *yes yarse*

1/16/P *erm we have some erm sort of pointers here,¹ like erm What chara-characterises each section of the poem ? well if we take section 1 first of all ...*

A second example of *significance* which cannot aspire to the public *meaning* necessary for communication is to be heard in Martin's identification of 'Electrifyingly-colored sherbets' as

2/17/M : *I thought it could be er t'foam on t'sea*

2/18/K2: *no*

¹ Paul is referring to some guide-line questions issued to each group. See Appendix B

2/19/M : *sherbets yeh they all fizz up don't they like white, what's up wi' yer ?*

There are two points to be made here. Firstly, while it has evident meaning for him, Martin's explanation of the sherbet is not verifiable in the text, and, secondly, it hence cannot pass into the currency of meaning proper with which the group communicates.¹

The value of this thesis is limited because in practice words do not appear as isolable, discrete entities. They always have a context, and what Wheelwright (1968) says of metaphor is equally true of any utterance:

Metaphors escape literal reductions ... because they are events, and the context in which they happen is the indispensable element in determining their meaning.

The personal horizons of such events are explored in the third thesis.

Thesis 3 : In speech we re-create meanings in a personal style.

Is what we say bound up with what we are ? When we listen to tape-recordings, or look at transcriptions, we attend to the words differently from the way in which we involve with them when we talk with someone. When we talk, words somehow withdraw in favour of sharing meaning with another speaker. After the event, the record gives us only those words, and the meanings are matters for deduction. Is it possible at this stage to spy something of the meaning which

¹ Martin's equation of 'sherbet' is perhaps with Bassett's little yellow packages; presumably, Plath is using the word here as it occurs in American English, to refer to what we call a sorbet. What Martin fails to include in his characterisation is the intelligence of the predicate

... scooped from the freeze
By pale girls ...

which does make her meaning accessible to Anglo-Saxon understanding.

has generated the words ? I suggest here that this can be done - to a limited extent - by seeing how care and thought and energy address the objects of speech; a style of being lies in words which is not immediately evident in recordings.

If expression and communication are always present in speech, then style can be understood as the third dimension which describes the way in which something can have personal significance and common meaning. In the way that *Parole* must emerge as unique realisations of *Langue*, language itself requires that each utterance shall be novel; it is the internal consistency of a series of utterances through their variety which is commonly understood as style. The style of a person can be known in this way, as can that of a text; it is significant and consistent features which deform the purely communicative and resist the wholly expressive which allow us to point to style.

But there is more than this, though it is not usually allowed. One implication of separating language from thought is that style comes to represent a fairly deliberate dressing of prior thought to a particular end. When we dissolve the need to talk of logical priority, we can admit the further possibility that style can comprehend *being*, to the extent that experience is linguistic. This is to say that we can identify language as not only inseparable from thought but thereby declarative of being-in-the-world. This is not susceptible to measurement, but I think may be signalled by the quality and values of language. Subjectivity, understood as the response of the individual to an inevitable world, may be diminished so that language is formal, perhaps wholly cliché; or it may be exaggerated, as in the extreme case of the

schizophrenic, so that language becomes privatised and eludes our understanding. The following reflection sees language as the means of access to the real, and the text as an aspect of this real which must have its meaning re-created through signification by a personal style. An important question throughout is "Where is the text?"

3 cases of style-a tentative observation

The illustration of the expressive nature of speech is the most difficult to achieve for all sorts of reasons. Principally, it requires that we make an artificial separation of speech from the global event within which context expression has a meaning. Speech is the surface portion only of a gestural realisation of presence, so any assessment of this speech cannot be other than my own reflection on observable behaviour. If this is honestly admitted from the start, then a virtue can be made of offering a personal response to what appears to be expressive language. The question, then, is not 'What is happening for the speaker?', but 'What does this language tell me about the speaker?' Of course, objections to my observations can be made on several grounds, such as the fact that the children in these recorded instances were not used to working with a tape-recorder, or that these are anyway first attempts to understand a very difficult poem, etc. However, since I am concerned to say something *essential* about the character of speech, I am content that this cannot be a scientifically-exact affair.

I suggest that it is the way in which the text is re-created which is the measure of language function for each child. That is, it is not so much elegance of syntax or vocabulary, or authority of speaking-manner, for example, but the indication that the text has moved

from the page to the experience of the speaker. This indication is given, certainly, by syntactical and lexical markers, by tonal qualities and paralinguistic signs of assurance, but these actually inform personal style which is properly marked by the approach to the text, the negotiation of it and its final re-presentation with the increments of personal, expressive appreciation.

Julie does not achieve this (Tape 3); she is arrested at the level of cliché, synonym, paraphrase and hunt-the-meaning activity. She has enthusiasm, but it serves largely to betray the complexity of the text. The particular group she is in, and patterns of exchange it requires set her up as the chief speaker, but it is a role which she takes on willingly, and she is always 'up-front', always ready with an often gratuitous answer. She is prepared to have any meaning that is to hand, and therefore covers the text in a quite irresponsible way. For Julie, the text remains firmly on the page; it communicates to her, certainly, in as much as she can translate some of its details. But there is little sense in her speech of any proper dwelling in a work of art.

Kevin similarly finds himself at the centre of his group's discussion, but where Julie seems to field observations and queries rather frenetically, Kevin plods soberly through them. His dourness is actually attractive, and suggests some authority. Kevin is aware of the importance of the author's intentions, but his appreciation is not handicapped by them, and from the start he covers the text with ideal values and personal extrapolations. His approach seems to approximate the poem until it is realised for him and for the group. His final appraisal before the

group passes on to the next stanza (2/26/K) is quite a considered statement of the poem, and the manner of its delivery shows the concern of his thought.

It is difficult to say exactly why I have the impression that it is Paul (Tape 1) who somehow manages to re-create the text. Like Kevin, he starts with a logical approach, though is far more self-conscious and clearly aware of his performance. He had, of course, had some more time than the others to consider the poem (See Appendix B), and was therefore more familiar with it. I still doubt, though, that Julie (for example) could have achieved this poise of insight and expression. Again, the instance of Paul reminds us that these are, after all, group discussions, although each is dominated by one person; but there is something in the way in which Paul shares his significances with Murray and Tony which distinguishes him from Kevin and Julie (who also dominate their group's response). Perhaps I am merely seduced by Paul's tone and the importance of his point about 'contradiction', but I find this piece of summary speech far more evocative than Kevin's - which says substantially the same thing:

1/23/P : there's a sort of contradiction in the actual thing because there y'know the sea is sort of the place where all life came from in the first place a sort of life-giving force while y'know these people sort of, life-defying if you like cos their lives

2/26/K : ... she seems to be alternating in ea ea within each sort of section with positive and negative thoughts and also er just ideas and images and also actual, experiences like probably she's obviously been to this place, she has been to Berck-Plage, erm and she sees these mackerel-gatherers, that sort of shows a positive side of life er and then ideas contrast er between death and disease and er the sort of the land and the sea where these people are I think that they I definitely think that they that the sea's sort of seen as a a sort of, harbour of life ...

These are, of course, statements required by their particular contexts, and should not be too closely

compared. But I think the final point is not to be had from the superficial authority or grammar or vocabulary of Paul's speech, but that these are given with his recreation of the text, his 'saying the same thing differently'.

This argument suggests the following : Julie's experience of the poem is minimal; she barely recreates it and its significance for her is at the level of rather banal paraphrase.¹ Kevin demonstrates the poem's significance for him and clearly moves towards its meaning; that is, the poem lives in his treatment of it. The poem achieves meaning under Paul's handling as expression validates significance, and the text 'leaves the page'.

The most serious objection to these observations - and to the observations of the other theses - is actually their virtue: How do I know that Julie's or Paul's experience are as I have described? Of course, I cannot, but I allow for this when I say that a style of being is 'not immediately evident' in recordings. The mediation that is required is precisely that of my own values, and this is true of all interpretative actions. To the bald text of the transcription I add my own experience and understanding, my 'second record'; these existential criteria make coherent, in any event, the information which a linguistic account of 'style' provides.

1 Julie's work always brings to my mind Leavis' comment on certain forms of criticism: 'There is a clear tendency to frustrate the enormous labour expended by the poet in undercutting mere acceptance, inhibiting inert acquiescence, and circumventing, at every level, what may be called cliché; a tendency .. to abet the reader's desire to arrive without having travelled'. (1947)

Thesis 4 : Mostly dialogue is neither pre-meditated nor a finished product.

Textual interpretation is necessarily an act of 'filling-in'; it is given with the act of examination to minimise the opacity of a text. Or, alternatively, it is a 'filling-out', because what happens is that we amplify references to mine the full, polysemic values whose condensation is a virtue of poetic method. Much of this activity is based phenomenally on paraphrase and the finding of synonym. But perhaps the prime virtue of a poem is that it is not, finally, reducible to a literal explanation, that its meaning eludes even its author, and that it can, and must be returned to again and again.

On the level of the single idea, or phrase, this obviously happens repeatedly as the idea takes on meaning against the broader development of the text generally; as the general meaning of the poem accumulates, increments are added to particular interpretations, or other qualifications are made. This filling of the gap is the making patent of a latent, but felt idea. *But this idea, or area of ideas, is never fulfilled.* An idea is negotiated not with deliberation, but only so long as it is felt to be in need of filling-out. The idea works itself out, and is not the act, as such, of a participant. In retrospect we might see it like this, but in the event itself it is a requirement not a result of discourse.

A good example of this can be heard on Tape 2. I am fascinated by what happens to Kevin's idea of the sea as 'a creative centre'. There is no such explicit mention in the text of the poem. It is a notion given with the ideality of the word 'sea',

but is in fact overshadowed if not deliberately cancelled by its collocation with 'this great abeyance'. Kevin's notion is explicitly rejected by the group, and Kevin acquiesces. But in retrospect, and with the artificial intelligence of audio-tapes and transcriptions, we can see that the idea is the foundation and dynamic of the whole exchange. The idea is inevitable, and the language serves not to argue the point, but to make good the lack. The idea arrives at general approval not through any conscious efforts of Kevin's, but because it is contextually necessary to the discourse, which in turn is responsible to its own ostensible referent, the text.

This 'necessity' is apparent in the work of the other groups. Paul has no doubt about the function of the reference to the sea, as he observes with some succinctness and authority :

1/23/P : there's a sort of contradiction in the actual thing because there y'know the sea is sort of the place where all life came from in the first place a sort of life-giving force while y'know these people sort of life-defying if you like cos their lives

The poem says clearly

The sea, that crystallised these,
Creeps away, many-snaked, with a long hiss of distress.
(1.17-18).

And recognising the antinomy of the sea with the deformations on the beach, Sally observes on Tape 3:

3/44/S : it's an idea that the sea's sort of distressed with what it sees

So, we learn at the end of the stanza, the sea is an 'abeyance' at least partly because the tide is out ! It is then a symbol and an echo of the retreat from vitality to be found on the beach.

In the case of each group, there is something to say, and conversation goes forward, precisely because there is a lack which needs to be made good; a temporal distance between participants and text which must be negated. The lack in this instance is signalled by the opacity of the text; this obscurity somewhat diminished, the conversation is temporarily at an end. What I am trying to demonstrate is how language *approximates* until it reaches a *sufficient truth*. This sufficient truth is one which reflects the *necessary truth* of experience. Then the ostensible subject of discourse can change. But it is not given to the individuals in each group formally to argue a point or case, or to pursue with conscious intent a 'line'. Thought fills out the discourse until it has - in this instance - re-created the poem, or at least a sufficient characterisation of it. Each group comes to a point where it feels it can move to the next task - the second stanza of the poem - because this part of the text has been realised. Group 3 does not articulate its conclusions as such, but moves on after a fairly perfunctory covering of the text. Group 2, with the benefit of Kevin, who elects to lead the discussion, leaves this section with a characterisation which equates loosely with the feel of the verse. Group 1 concludes more neatly with a rather summary statement.

So the participants do not 'make' literary, or associative responses *as such*; rather the ideality of words - on which discourse as much as poetry depends - undergoes deformation as language is experienced; expression accomplishes the realisation of an ideal form by returning a necessary meaning to words. That the process is not wholly intellectual will be suggested by Thesis 5.

*Thesis 5 : Meaning - even to the speaker - often comes
with the act of talking*

We do not have to look far in everyday useage for examples of ungrammaticality in speech, for its false starts, its un-selfconsciousness, etc. These are shown up well enough in transcriptions. But I want to use some of these instances to supplement and develop Thesis 4, and therefore to point to the role of tacit knowledge in determining speech. In this last thesis I called attention to Kevin's recognition of the sea as 'a creative centre'. He is asked to account for this by two other members of the group, and he first of all seems to fail. But I have suggested that the idea is necessary to the exchange at large; the discourse does not collapse, though Kevin's 'argument' does. His problem - in the group at that time - is that he cannot articulate his 'case'.

Gadamer describes speech as 'forgetful' (1976). His emphasis is on the speaker's ignorance of the modulations of *Langue* which are realised in his *Parole*, and this is an obvious case of tacit knowing. We are unaware of the permutations of a grammar even while we are using it. We could add to Gadamer's hypostat-isation that language is also 'hopeful'; improbably, we complete with innocent ease spoken sentences requiring great dexterity in attention to concord, sometimes across many subordinate clauses and several seconds; sentences which would have taken far more time and effort to compose in writing. Of course, transcriptions bear witness to the fact that sensible and successful utterances may well not satisfy the grammatical conditions which indicate written correctness.

I should like to consider where and how *grammatical* coherence would appear on a continuum of explicitation.

On Tape 3, Dawn asks

3/40/D : *what's A sandy damper kills the vibrations ?*
and Julie replies

3/41/J : *we thought that that were y'know when you sit down on't beach y'know I don't know if you feel it when you sit down its like a right damp dumb thud y'know and it does, when yer lying on the beach yer can't*

The poverty of expression here is not to be found merely in the disjointed sentence-formation and the rather cheerless delivery. What Julie says is inappropriate in the context of the poem. But this poverty of expression is in contrast with the explicitness of the thought which it accomplishes. The crudeness of the thought - by which I mean its literal-mindedness, completeness, lack of subtlety - is a feature of Julie's style.

There is little *life* to it. I should want to characterise this utterance as the worst sort of slot-filling, as noisy 'maintenance work'. Julie provides another example of sedimented thought later in the exchange, when she offers the gratuitous observation:

3/58/J : *yeh yeh they do you give fish for protein*
The information is offered as an ideal response to the previous speaker's reference to fish; again, the looseness of Julie's expression is in contrast with the baldness of her proposition.

By contrast with Julie, Kevin (Tape 2) makes several relentless attempts to organise his thought. This is typical :

2/20/K : *there is holiday-type atmosphere isn't it, erm then description of the sea y'know like it its vastness it sort of describes a certain lack of human contact, that'd foll that'd follow through with these people they sort of they're away from everybody else, they're sort of away from society. aren't they, a separate er community on their own*

This does not occur in response to specific questions or pre-occupations of the group - that is, in response to any 'social' requirements - though it is directed at

the others while it is yet a personal exploration. The false starts, the incomplete thoughts are here markers of the urgency of Kevin's thought. Is this felicitous launching into words co-procedural with the growth of a thought for a speaker? Is there, rather, a pre-constituted thought which words more or less imperfectly realise? Do we struggle for words to address a coherent, existing thought? We launch into words certainly ignorant of the grammatical subtension of our words, and unable to say how that utterance will end precisely because we are giving shape and colour to an emerging thought, *not trying to describe it*. (This is one of the qualitative differences between Kevin's and Julie's typical utterances.) The thought is not a picture we present, but is our very action, and words are illocutionary features rather than ostensive instruments. Kevin launches into words which are no more than necessary to the realisation of his intuited sense of the poem. If the 'thought' was 'there' explicitly 'before' he spoke, there would be no problem, no need for this exploratory talk. That it is *not* 'there' is indicated by Kevin's signal failure early in the exchange to justify his notion of the sea as 'a creative centre'. The thought is manifestly 'not there' until language puts it on (in this case, public) display. His realisation *that*

*2/26/K : the sea's sort of seen as a, a sort of
harbour of life*

is the realisation of the thought.

To summarise thus far, most knowledge exists in a tacit form and requires the explicitation of language for its realisation. This means that generally we know far more than we can actually speak of, although self-conscious talk can bring this knowledge out. Language and thought we should see as moments of the same event, simultaneously constituted as 'our body lends itself to some new gesture' (Merleau-Ponty). This gesture is in greater demand when language addresses an audience (we seldom gesture to

ourselves), which is taken to include the paper we write on; a 'live' audience may require the sort of explicitness of a speaker which he might not otherwise realise. There is a sense in which, reduced to himself, man is much less than the possibilities which openness to others provides and requires.

Now these ideas are somewhere to be found in observations like that of Barnes (1969):

Language here has the function of *making explicit to themselves* - as much as to other people - the nature of an insight already partly intuited.

(p.68).

But Barnes fails to prosecute the full implications of his observation for epistemology. *Thought and language are moments of the same event*. The essential aspect of language is that it teaches me the meaning of my thought, which yet issues with it; the essential aspect of thought is that it can run ahead of itself. Language accomplishes thought; pre-existing thought has a different status, and - as in the case of Julie - a depressing effect on the life of language.

The real matter which discussion of the tapes demonstrates is this : 'thought' is not an 'internal' thing which exists independently of the world. It lives in words which *must* be public and accountable. To a very large extent the best of speaking is a thinking out loud. Already-constituted thoughts give us the illusion of an 'inner' linguistic life - and it is to these that we can attribute meaning most easily, for they are precisely areas of meaningful, sedimented experience. But thought itself is the making of meaning as a flow of words is set in motion. Finally, as thought should not be equated with grammatical coherence, so 'meaning' is not a function of phenomenal elegance; it is, in Leavis' phrase, something that happens 'in the criss-cross of utterance, between us' (1975), and the record

of that event is likely to be as opaque as the event was lively.

Conclusions

Comment on the theses falls into three parts; some evaluation from the point of view of methodology will be offered here. The implications of the work for English teaching are discussed in Chapter 6, and a general reflection on research methods is offered in the concluding Chapter 7.

In the introduction to this chapter I described the scope and terms of my enquiry. In the light of this, and of the tenor of the work as a whole, I feel that there is no need to try the enquiry against the normal tests of typicality, of validity and the like. It would be more proper to assess the theses in terms of the principles which I claimed guided them (p.123). In fact, objections to the work could be organised into the three areas suggested by these principles.

i. Though the theses themselves appear to be neutral, their operation involves speculation and the making of value-judgments. In Thesis 3 I suggest that what we say reveals something of the sort of person we are, that a 'style of being' affects the words we use; conversely, language may indicate the quality of care and thought behind it. In particular, in my comments on the pupils' discussion earlier in the chapter, I am critical of Julie's efforts, and I uphold Paul as one who thoughtfully and carefully recreates the text in speech. How are these conclusions justified ?

If we want to speak of the power of a work of art, there is no measure which does not reach back into

experience. It is the same with speech; one can quantify it only at the level of how it signifies, and then on pain of it ceasing to mean. Talk of meaning involves us with the values of the speaker, and how else do we know those values - and recognise meanings - except as they impinge on our own? How else can I *evaluate* speech? The question remains 'How do I know that Julie's speech is less thoughtful than Paul's?' I *know* only to the extent that I see speech as mostly continuous with thought, and I take my evidence of thoughtlessness from the meagre stimulation I find in Julie's talk as it addressess objects which I know and engage with. The indispensable element in the process is *me*.

ii. What exactly is the *datum* we are evaluating? Is it the special circumstance of these children talking about poetry? Is it the audio-tape, or its transcription? Is it the 'second record' of my own prejudices?

I suggested that Paul's speech was the more authentic because he recreated the concerns of the text; it would be no less the case if the subject were football or film. Tensive, engaged speech does not merely *signify*, as does the cliché or cypher; it intends something beyond the limits of reference, and it is that intention, and its mode of being towards its objects, which speaks to us. We seem a long way from realising that language does not *present* values; language simply *is* the continual evaluation of the objects which transcend it. My discussion of another's speech must be directed at the objects of that speech, and must reveal my own orientation towards them.

In this sense the datum is whatever interposes between me and the intentional objects I share with others. The role of the interpreter is to characterise that datum - tape, transcripts, or whatever - in a way which represents the objects intended by it. We wish to go beyond the limits which data establish, and see as contingent or incidental the 'facts' provided by audio-recording or orthography or linguistic register or group dynamic. "To the things themselves !"
 Standardising circumstances gives reliable data which hides the fact that all circumstances are special and all data particular; reliable data have no necessary connection with the truth of things. Rather the truth of things is to be had from dismantling data and engaging directly and personally with the objects it characterises. All, finally, is grist.

iii. I have objected to the systems which the disciplines of psychology, sociology and linguistics impose on language, but are the theses themselves not dangerously schematic? Their fixed number, for example, would suggest this.

The theses are concerned with describing the expressive process of speaking, not with quantifying its products. The theses cannot identify the contingent or occasional content of speech, but together present the conditions for speech to be meaningful; taken individually they have limited value. They have no diagnostic or critical use without the mediation of personal values. Their illustrative relation to any data confirms that any schematic form they appear to have does not limit the events they address to fixed values.

If, in the light of this, the 'essential' appears to be the obvious, then we have only to look to the models of language with which social science mostly operates

to see that it is an obviousness taken for granted. The theses emerge, then, with the dual function of revealing the essential and of pointing to its occlusion in other accounts of language.

Granted, then, that there must be a scheme of sorts to the theses, is there something essential about their actual number? There is nothing binding about this number, beyond its ability to organise my reflections on what is essential. Doubtless, this would be done differently by another enquirer. The fact is that what is essential is not revealed simply and unequivocally for all time, but must be continually discovered and re-presented. To argue that no one characteristic of language is transcendent is not to deny the existence of the essential; what is transcendent is the *attempt* to speak of the essential, and such attempts intend and share that essence. The five theses are a particular way of intuiting and representing that essence.

CHAPTER 6

Language, the arts and English teaching

In this chapter I want to offer some evaluation of all that has gone before. In particular, I want to return the speculative thread of the argument to the context of English teaching in which it was first noticed.

In Chapter 2 I sketched out in a broad way some of the ways in which language has been viewed in education; this was deduced from the explicit statements of philosophers and linguists as well as from the models implicit in the operations of sociologists and psychologists. It was suggested that although no single explicit theory or model attaches to English teaching in our schools, this practice goes on very much under the influence of characterisations of language provided by social science. These disciplines deal largely with those communicative functions of language which can be taxonomised and quantified; it is this pragmatic concern which is inscribed in so many textbooks, sedimented in so much pedagogy, and even legitimated in the Bullock Report (HMSO, 1975). The greater expressive world which language *is* has been contracted into this observable portion. More, an uncritically-accepted structuralism has allowed the severance of this communicative system from the very whole of aesthetics and ethics in which it draws its life-breath, and without which it is meaningless.

From a stance of naive enquiry one could wonder at this situation : are English teachers not concerned

with literature, with personal growth and with radical thinking? And are these not finally existential concerns? The answers are too obvious to be of use, for these questions occur at such an uncontroversial level of curriculum philosophy. Once put - however formally or tacitly - their answers lie mute in a large and practical curriculum design. But it is the minutiae of daily practice which reveal the value of those principles; the pragmatic concerns of situation dilute the aspiration to principle. English Studies *should* be subversive, for the school itself subverts the expressive impulse. This is a dialectical and not merely political case. But the view arises not from what I take to be in the character of society or of human behaviour, but what is essential in the nature of language, and what is systematically overlooked. Language has an identity beyond the phenomenal which cannot be wholly recognised in the uses we put it to, and which is therefore assumed to be at best subordinate to function. This identity is realised by expression.

This is not to elevate expression over communication. There seem to me to be two ways in which English teaching may be threatened by misunderstanding, and they arise from the same source - a confusion about the relation of expression and communication. The truth is that the communicative, functional understanding of language pervades our pedagogic theory, and this - however subtly - spoils our urge to expression in the classroom. The idea that language principally *refers* to something more or less material still inhibits English Studies, as it did the romantic reading of the novel, for example; the other heresy here - that words primarily *signify* - is equally ignorant of the intentional relationship of the speaker,

his words and the world where all happens.

The second point is a crucial corollary of this: expression and subjectivity are commonly taken to mean indulgence in the purely personal, whereas (to adapt MacMurray, 1935) the real value of expression consists in its *chastity*, that is, in the way a subjective voice aims itself at objective acceptance.

What is needed is a proper understanding of this relationship of the individual to his language. But not an *explanation*, in terms of phonemes and structures and dynamics: there have been enough of those. What is required is a pedagogic philosophy of language, a true science which respects the nature of its objects but which, even more importantly, understands that it is persons who initiate sciences.

But, one could ask, who requires such a science? What is most alarming about the Bullock Report is just that it was possible, that things could be in a state which would permit such comment to arise in the ground of English teaching, and allow such values to be urged on pedagogy. In a sense, then, one could say that English teaching got the report it deserved; it is a report which not only licenses a lot of bad practice, but which articulates as virtual principles the dross of that practice. A communicative model of language can be rigorous and accountable and structural, and it is all too easy in a disaffected classroom for a confused pedagogy to see such features as desirable and achievable ends in themselves.

One example will suffice to illustrate the tone of much contemporary work. Commenting on various contributions to the *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study*

of Education (Squire, 1977), Rouse (1980) finds a depressing uniformity in the writers:

For the most part they agree that English should be concerned mainly with the development of language skills for communication.

(p.150)

The view is endorsed by Britton in the same *Yearbook*. In a most explicit formulation of this view, Moffett (1968) transforms the events of discourse into functional systems; poetic fictions are useful

to heighten awareness of the informational and communicational processes operating in both real life and literature.

(p.154)

According to Moffett,

We ask ourselves unnecessarily complicated questions about what a story means .. when a simple glance at the communication structure of the work would answer many of these questions.

(p.150)

The effect is to identify 'language' with the processes which appear to realise it. (One wonders - to take but one obvious example - what Moffett would make of Kafka's story, 'Up in the Gallery' (Kafka, 1971).)

Of course we need not attend too seriously to such work in itself; few English teachers would find such explicit statements other than absurd. But my point is that the spirit of such work infects out teaching subtly, that this infection of positivo-structuralism was indeed already there for Bullock to determine. Although our primary allegiance as English teachers should be to the arts, and we would explicitly say so, we have all too often acted as if the categories of behaviour which linguistic science has elaborated have a better purchase on reality than have our sensible, feeling responses.

Science and linguistics have made a virtue of divorcing objects from individual experience so that they appear

to stand free of the entanglement of human values. But the whole scientific endeavour rests on the brave and particular object-sensible acts of 'wholly attending' which men have made and which must in some measure be recapitulated on every occasion when somebody presumes to understand them. Facts are objects without life, where for consciousness there is no such thing, where merely to entertain a fact is to recast it in the event of attending to an object. Scientists surely understand this well, if not better than anyone, but their dedication to what transcends individual experience seems to require that they take for granted the realm of consciousness. Since consciousness determines objects, what is discovered by such an attitude is categorical rather than transcendental.

If - though there is a case to the contrary - English Studies are concerned with literature, with personal growth and radical thinking, it is clear that they have little in common with the aims of science as normally conceived.

Setting out to reaffirm the heart of English Studies is no new venture; a minority of writers and a host of teachers who uphold with F.R. Leavis the 'living principle' of English Studies have kept a flame alight at all times, particularly during the bleakness of the last decade. Chief among the written works are Peel (1967), Hourd (1977), Leavis (1975), Whitehead (1966), Holbrook (1979); but the more diverse work of Heathcote (1980), Ross (1978), Witkin (1974), Abbs (1982), Poole (1972) and Harrison (1983) are moved by similar concerns and inspirations. Bibliographies almost invariably adduce Grene (1966), Polanyi (1969), Merleau-Ponty (1962); Lomas (1973), Guntrip (1968), Winnicott (1971); Leavis (1975), Sampson (1973) and Thompson (1978). What all

these works share in some measure - before any theoretical or methodological particularity - is an approach to epistemology which is existential; as the individual creates the stuff of his world so he finds himself more or less in the world of others; nothing is real before these events of creation. The categories of psychic life we normally talk of - reason, emotion, thought and so on - are conventional ways of prescribing a single impulse to meaning whose urgency is so profound that separate sciences of mind and body cannot picture it. A man is not separated from his world by processes like thinking, happening between an inner and an outer. And it is the same case with language; words do not exist except as places where consciousness briefly is, and to speak is not primarily to utter words, as it were from behind them. The upshot is that comment on thought must be itself a greater engagement than psychology can allow, and that to speak of language one must 'undergo an experience with language', as Heidegger says. What all these writers share, then, is the desire to engage with their objects in a way which keeps alive the irreducible human values which have created and which sustain those objects.

Inspired in this way, English Studies belong in the centre of the Arts tradition. I have spoken of the single impulse to meaning which science will not perceive; Abbs (1982) similarly describes art as an

enduring means for representing (for oneself and for others) those truths latent within our experience, those meanings which are, as it were, curled up inside the seeds of impulse.

(p. 56)

The expressive disciplines, he says, are concerned with the 'sensuous embodiment of representative meaning'. The description is a good one for it resolves the artificial separation of expressive and communicative functions; art is so expressive only as it finds a recognisable voice. The

same definition makes clear that we are not talking of art-products studied for art's sake, but that we are concerned with the search for form for the sake of meaning. Abbs has recently articulated the case for English Studies as a ground of the expressive arts in *English Within The Arts* (1982). This work is cognate with Holbrook's *English for Meaning* (1979), and both books celebrate the spirit of Leavis' *The Living Principle* (1975). The second part of this chapter is intended to contribute to work like this by showing how the phenomenology of Chapter 4 and the Theses of Chapter 5 reflect principles which art-making shares with English Studies method. In particular I want to say that speaking, as it is revealed in these chapters, is identical with the process and end of art-making, and this is why English Studies and the other expressive disciplines belong together, and are best described by phenomenological enquiry.

My method will be to recall some of the insights of Chapters 4 and 5, and to make explicit in each case the principle of art-making cognate with the essential character of language under discussion, and finally to show how this contiguity must not be avoided in the classroom.

i. 'Wholly attending'

To use language requires certain uses of intellect just as intellectual activity is rudimentary if not meaningless without the symbolic forms of language. In experience, however, language and intellect, thought and feeling, etc., are not interdependent functions as such; the terms are ways of highlighting human experience by arresting it at certain moments and having those moments

appear discrete. In experience language does not have such shape and firmness, but is a far more basic affair. Though it becomes a fact for science it is always first of all the embodied condition of finding oneself not in a world of ideas, but one of noise, of colour, of warmth and hunger. To speak is to speak of this condition, and no words are spoken which do not reach back into this well of experience. This is no less true of elegant and considered speech than of casual chatter or urgent infant noise, though sophisticated speech has made conventional the relationship between expressive impulses and particular gestures. For this is what words are: gestures in the full sense of bodying forth an intention that survives the sign which realises it and creates a meaning in the symbolic experience of others. This meaning is distinct from the sense which words leave behind in a dictionary as a purely abstract record of use, and which gives the illusion that words have an exact and proper character which actual use refers to. But words could not have even this limited power of nomination if they had not already excited the event of meaning which brings about understanding. When we speak or write or listen or read we involve ourselves in a world which cannot be conveyed by a simple concept of mind, because this world calls for a manner of attending to reality which moves alike out of impulse and symbol tacitly sustaining consciousness. In Lawrence's phrase, it is a matter of 'a man in his wholeness wholly attending' (1964). The truth that the word serves as a symbol is not the truth of fact, but the truth of experience. The intellectualist, however, removes the word from its sensuous context; at one stroke he thus elaborates the reasons for its purely communicative effectiveness, and severs it from the event of its having any meaning.

These are the features of experience we are talking of: experience is first of all sensuous, and not attached to symbols; the expressive impulse is always a gesture of the body; and meanings are enjoyed in the instance

of gestures meeting symbols.

It is clear that these are not exclusively linguistic features, but that they describe the very basic condition of experience in the world. The growth of symbolic life has this character whether it finds form in words, in paint or in music. What is crucial is this quality of attending to the world; it is this openness which is revealed in an expressive act, not the artist himself. In fact, what completes his act is our recognition not of the personal experience which founded it, but of the sensible world which a particular symbolic form points to. The very impulse of subjectivity is towards sharing aesthetic experience with others, and we can express the first principle of art-making like this :

Art expresses an impulse to give the sensible world a symbolic form.

All artists know the meaning of this 'standing for', and some have made it as much a thesis as a condition of their work. The twentieth century revolutions in form are attempts to pack more of the sensible world into symbolic representation, most often by fragmenting it and holding up its pieces as though they were innocent of scheme. If modernist experiment fails to persuade us of a sympathetic purchase on reality it is because, for all that its data-like texture points up the haste and involvement of life, it fails to see in such tragedy the crucially intentional character of consciousness. In this much-quoted passage from Virginia Woolf's writing, she is right to uphold the life of impression, the flux and tonality of things:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions - trivial fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness

of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old ... Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.

(Woolf, 1925, p.189)

But this is the fallacy of supposing that one can merely receive impressions, of overlooking how perception itself stylises things so that, indeed, life is a series of gig-lamps no less than it is a luminous halo. Things do not have meaning without we entertain them. A raw, unexamined world is not a *sensible* world at all; how ever could we know it was there? Bernard, in *The Waves* (Woolf, 1933) complains of the betrayal of what he sees as passive impression by narrative form :

Lying in a ditch on a stormy day, when it has been raining, then enormous clouds come marching over the sky, tattered clouds, wisps of cloud. What delights me then is the confusion, the height, the indifference and the fury. Great clouds always changing, and movement; something sulphurous and sinister, bowled up, helter-skelter; towering, trailing, broken off, lost, and I forgotten, minute, in a ditch. Of story, of design, I do not see a trace then.

(p.261)

But the very source of Bernard's passion is his own *giving of sensuous form* to the passions of the skies, so that his words can be irradiated by this ragged grandeur. It is simply not true that

When the storm crosses the marsh and sweeps over me where I lie in the ditch unregarded I need no words

(p.323)

Rather, as he realises elsewhere, he needs some expression more in accordance with those moments of humiliation and triumph that come now and then undeniably.

(p.261)

Words he wants which will themselves be cries of passion, urgent sounds of impulse close to the heart of movement and being:

I begin to long for some little language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words, like the shuffling of feet on the pavement ...

(*Ib.*)

or,

words of one syllable such as children speak when they come into the room and find their mother sewing and pick up some scrap of bright wool, a feather, or a shred of chintz ...

(p.323)

and, finally,

I need a howl; a cry ... a bark, a groan.

(p.323; 274)

What Bernard fails to realise properly is that all words have this sensuous urgency *immanently*, failing which the 'phrases laid like Roman roads across the tumult of our lives' (p.284) would have no meaning. Words do not only point to things and to experiences, but are *in themselves* vital, sensuous experiences.

The painter Cézanne recorded his gradual realisation that one cannot determine to paint, say, an expression of glee or of sadness - as Bernard cannot express pain with a groan; but that facial expression is in the life of the whole configuration of tones and lines:

If I paint in all the little blue and brown touches, I make him gaze as he does gaze ... Never mind if they suspect how, by bringing together a green of various shades and a red, we sadden a mouth or bring a smile to a cheek.

(Cezanne, in Gasquet, p.117)

So although Bernard feels that language cannot really evoke the thing itself -

What is the phrase for the moon? And the phrase for love? By what name are we to call death? I do not know.

(p.323) -

his words have an expressive, sound-sensuous life, and they have it by virtue of their independence of the thing. Such is the life of symbols.

It is the peculiar gift of the symbol at once to speak to phenomenal experience, and to represent that life in a manner charged with permanence. Bernard realises this.

He recalls visiting Susan in her father's home, and remarks that part of him which remained just 'outside' of the scene. He is moved by Susan's vital grief against the weird torpor, the remoteness and decay of her surroundings. But beyond his engagement in the close fabric of this sensible present, Bernard watches himself refine the meaning of it all:

Her father trailed from room to room and down flagged corridors in his flapping dressing-gown and worn slippers. On still nights a wall of water fell with a roar a mile off. The ancient dog could scarcely heave himself up on to his chair. And some witless servant could be heard laughing at the top of the house as she whirred the wheel of the sewing-machine round and round.

That I observed even in the midst of my anguish when, twisting her pocket-handkerchief, Susan cried, 'I love; I hate'. 'A worthless servant,' I observed, 'laughs upstairs in the attic,' and that little piece of dramatisation shows how incompletely we are merged in our own experiences. On the outskirts of every agony sits some observant fellow who points ... to that which is beyond and outside our predicament; to that which is symbolic, and thus perhaps permanent, if there is any permanence in our sleeping, eating, breathing so animal, so spiritual and tumultuous lives.

(p.271-2)

But the achievement of this passage is not Bernard's explicit statement about symbols, nor Woolf's visiting on him the genius and tentativeness of her own grasp on reality; it lies in the formal texture of the art so that - like Cézanne's expression - the meaning comes off the form sensuously, and the explicit statement only draws together these subtleties. The iambs which open the passage quoted,

Her father trailed from room to room and down
measure the even dullness of the house, the corridors
(do homes have corridors?) 'flagged' with slabs of
stone, but charged, too, with the other senses of
languor and fading involvement; the 'flapping dressing-
gown' (which picks up alliteratively from the flags) and

'worn slippers' (imagine them on the cold stone)
confirm this drift. 'On still nights' (were there
ever other ones ?)

a wall of water fell with
a very different energy, though realised in the same
metre; but its roar (the 'r' not easy after the repet-
ition of the 'w') is a mile off and here (still iambic)

The ancient dog could scarcely heave
another old body about. And then the odd, arresting
image of the servant, a Grace Poole figure tied to the
reasonable rhythm and non-human energy of the sewing-
machine. (And, again, the w-r opposition as she
whirred the wheel of the sewing machine round and
round.)

In this context her laughter can only echo through the
house as it punctures the texture of this passage -
eerily, not quite right, 'witless'; and what a sharp
word, whose simple sound is that of reproof or contempt.

In the second of the two paragraphs the energy of
contrast is drawn off the present moment, and the pain
is defused, as it were, by ironic poise. The vigour
of Susan's anguish and her cry 'I love; I hate' is
pointed up by the remote laughter; but Bernard's
attention to what is off-stage creates an emblem
which allows him and us to cull from present grief a
meaning beyond it; what is left is reasonable; even
'witless' has been transmuted to 'worthless', a less
excitable and abrasive word. Bernard's observation is
a note of excuse:

A worthless servant ... laughs upstairs in the attic
The 'observant fellow' is our constant attempt to wrest
that special excuse from the tenor of sense.

What Woolf says is not unique, since she is describing
some general property of words. Her achievement is to
put forward her view poetically and implicitly, through
the formal texture of the word as much as by direct

statement. And her work is a more humane and hopeful one than Sartre's, for example, who despairs (in *Nausea*) of the hold words have on things; Roquentin yields to a final separateness, but Woolf rather more hopefully points to the energy released by words when they are used; it is the making of effort to organise this energy which creates meaning, and which goes as far as we may towards evoking the thing itself. Eliot says something similar in *Four Quartets*: we are prey to the

...general mess of imprecision of feeling
Undisciplined squads of emotion

but what matters is that we go on to transmute it, 'by strength and submission'. So *The Waves* ends as Bernard resolves himself against the inarticulate, against chaos and the possibility of silence between thought and thing. It is the power of art - even of unsatisfactory little phrases - to dwell feelingly in these spaces which Bernard celebrates heroically. The last to go in a restaurant late at night, Bernard gives in to the bleakness of the moment:

I have done with phrases.

How much better is silence; the coffee-cup, the table. How much better to sit by myself like the solitary sea-bird that opens its wings on the stake. Let me sit here for ever with bare things ...

(p.323)

But, going out into the first tiny movements of dawn itself creates sufficient momentum to thrust him back into the life of things, and his language again takes on a sympathy with the event; another dawn begins,

And in me too the wave rises. It swells; it arches its back. I am aware once more of a new desire, something rising beneath me like the proud horse whose rider first spurs and then pulls him back. What enemy do we now perceive advancing against us, you whom I ride now, as we stand pawing this stretch of pavement? It is death. Death is the enemy. It is death against whom I ride with my spear couched and my hair flying back like a young man's, like Percival's when he galloped in India. I strike spurs into my

horse. Against you I will fling myself, un-
vanquished and unyielding, O Death !

(p.325)

*

We have now the technical problem of showing how these reflections on art bear on the practice of teaching. It is a technical problem because, as the close discussion of text has shown, art is a much more elusive and less precise affair than the rough practice of education, and education is not normally evaluated in such a circulating, discursive and inconclusive manner. But this is the precise fault, that the so-called masculinisation of education has covered over the aesthetic necessity in its concerns with the pragmatic. Although we readily acknowledge language as the medium of learning and thought, the principles which unite it with the processes of art are ignored.

I offer two records of children talking which impinge on the discussion so far. The first example, of group discussion, is a superb reminder that 'meaning' is itself a fuzzy area between the 'facts' which are hung about a work of art and the experience which an audience brings to that work: talking may be one of the ways to cross this middle ground. Too busy to attend to them properly, I gave a group of six lively ESN(M) fourteen year olds Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* to listen to, and asked them to record their reactions to it. The discussion as a whole was not much longer than what is reproduced here, the children having little to say and no guidance. Only four of them speak; they are David, Colin, Roy and Steve:

D : *I don't myself like it but I can see that its
good like*

C : *why's it good if*

R *why's it yeh why*

- D : *oh I don't have to like it if it's I mean for it's to be good y'know it's I don't know violins and it's good*
- S : *he means it's a sort of music I mean a particular and it's not what he likes but it has er qualities*
- D : *don't tell me what I mean*
(general laughter; long pause)
- S : *music doesn't have to mean anything does it I mean like*
- C : *a poem does like a poem does*
- S : *like a poem like a poem like a painting*
- C : *oh it does it's all this is Arabian nights it's all swirly*
- S : (Mr) *Bradley used to play records at our Juniors didn't he and he'd and we'd and he'd say now write what you've seen now write what if you felt this 'n if you felt that*

The meaning, the value of this exchange is of the same order as that of the music they were listening to - it is in the playing, the speaking, the event. This is why language analysis schedules are finally unsatisfactory, because they attribute meanings to the outer shape of words (the sounds or the printed letters) and know nothing of the sculptor of meaning who is working inside those words. Our practice as teachers must occupy the space between Steve's insight that *music doesn't have to mean anything*, and Mr Bradley's apparent over-enthusiasm for bringing experience to expression in a rather arbitrary way.

Being more practical, it remains that words are most of what we can know of other people's thought. As teachers committed to some particular content in a lesson, there are certain words and phrases we are cued to hear, and certain forms of behaviour we read as indicating learning; we may overlook the process by which meaning is emerging. It might lie, as in this next example, embedded in desultory chat. Twelve year olds Sean and Mick are working through some comprehension questions, unaware that they are being recorded. It is in fact the recording and transcript

which show up the value of their talk; the teacher was unaware of this and, immediately after this exchange, separated and silenced the boys:

M : *what's it say then Is there*

S : *Is there a reason for Poll's anger ?*

M : *s'obvious obvious what's next Why does Poll decide not to go to Lowestoft ?*

S : *our Eric worked in Lowestoft he worked there*

M : *Why does Poll not decide to go to Lowestoft too far for one thing I mean not enough time*

S : *buses Eric went on a bus oh buses yeh*

M : *they didn't have buses then or not buses anyway it doesn't say he decided it doesn't say he decided where is it*

(pause)

Poll looked at the picture and knew he would not go to Lowestoft

S : *because he had to be up for work for work in the morning*

M ; *right shall I put that*

S : *yes no he used that to sort of as a sort of excuse himself see to give himself an excuse*

M : *he didn't want to go like but he hid that he told himself he hadn't time like*

S : *that's good write it*

M : *you I wrote last one why's Pill sitting with Williams Pill Pill why you sitting with Willy*

Pill: *sir put me*

M : *Pilly and Willy right how we going to put this one one put-put*

(writing)

Poll didn't so much decide not to go it was

S : *inevitable*

M : *inevitable Pill what you put for number 3 no 4*

Pill: *Poll decided not to go because it was too late*

M : *typical*

S : *that's typical*

M : *Pill-Poll*

Listening to the tape it is easy to see why the teacher thought Mick and Sean should be separated: the good-

humoured collaboration on the shaping of an answer which would satisfy the text and their understanding is evident in the transcription, but sounds far more like disruptive noise and time-wasting on the tape itself.

From these two instances I draw these general conclusions about the processes of talk: Meaning in language as in other art-forms is not primarily intellectual, and in the case of speech is a noisy affair. Children respond to symbolic forms with their own symbolising acts, and these may well be ragged processes if they are really creative. But I am saying chiefly that if, indeed, expressive impulses must find words, it must be no less true that these chosen symbols thus carry with them something of the emotional charge which generated them. This is actually a condition of our being able to respond to them at all, since otherwise they could not touch on our own experience. Beneath the phenomenal elegance or ungainliness of symbolic expression lies a way of knowing which has the wholeness of the things provided around it. When we use symbols we participate in this wholeness to the extent that we are ourselves whole.

There are two general points to be made further. Firstly, we should not undervalue the purely sensuous portion of symbolic form. Both prose and verse should be spoken often and by all. The musical qualities of voice cannot be separated from the more reasonable communication of sense, but neither should they be viewed simply as their vehicles; the phonaesthetic shape of words is as much at the heart of their meaning as any referential or logical quality. Secondly, we should recognise and even encourage noise as a possible process of coming to know; again, not yet in the formal sense of exploratory talking

through of ideas, but at the much more primitive level of sound-sensuous meaning. Both these riders insist on the affective and insubstantial character of the symbol, which only lives in experience. And they are further consequences of the view of knowledge as an embodied and thoroughly human affair. They are therefore about the passage of meaning between impulse and realised form; implicit in them must be a resistance to a too formal examination of these meanings, since they are events in experience which are poorly sketched by literal reductions.

ii. 'the crust of shape'

There is a continual tension between a purely cultural world of language and the world of the individual whose impulses in their purity know nothing of such institutions. Again, it is the virtue of the symbol to carry both this regime of sense and the labile charge of meaning. The trouble with such an opposition is that it leads us to believe in the reality of a sort of a-linguistic individual who dips according to some explicit necessity into the separate store which is grammar. Rather, the truth of the matter is that institution and innovation are not to be distinguished in experience. Our analysis of the word has shown that we do not often reach for any legacy of sense it may have, but that our act of speaking itself originates meaning. The fact remains that language precedes us historically, a fact attested to by the possibility, and usefulness, of the dictionary. However, a word does not mean because it refers to a historically-given sense, but by virtue of its context both in syntax and in experience. That

occurrence is obviously always a unique event, to be set against any notion of fixed meaning.

Here, then, are two aspects of a process at work. One is the conservation of sense, the other the creation of meaning. These processes are generated by the characters of the symbol remarked in the previous section, that it is both permanent and felt. What resolves the otherwise separate processes and any apparent paradox is the intentional nature of the symbol. Symbols 'stand for', they intend or embody realities beyond themselves. Words or musical figures or painted graphs are forms of a greater form which they indicate. The inexhaustibility of reality demands that ever fresh attempts be made to say the same thing differently, to present and re-present the intentional source. To use any symbolic form is to attempt to speak of that larger reality not according to some imagined model given with a legacy of form, but precisely by transforming the symbolic *status quo* to the end of a greater realism. To state the obvious, art is not a celebration of form but a continuous attempt to de-form and re-form. Expression gathers up the historical sense which has stuck to a symbol and presents it anew as an urge to meaning. The life which an expression has is not bound to service of some sustaining content; rather it is the other way round, that content is a contemporary if not later moment of phenomenal form.

This is true of the simplest utterance as it is of the most self-conscious piece of art-making. In fact, as in the first section, we are not here talking of purely linguistic features, but of those aspects of experience which found all expression. The principle

of art-making we are talking of is this :

Art continually dislocates cultural forms

Such an understanding does not confine art-making to the apparent initiator of an art-work, or utterance, or other form, but emphasises the indispensable community in all events of creation. Speaking does not have form so much as it gives form to those who hear it and whom it speaks to. The critical response, therefore, is such a necessary participant of the work of art it addresses as to be itself founded in entirely the same urges to meaning - to say the same thing differently. Criticism is crucially creative or else it is nothing at all and art is merely a trick of form if criticism does not return it to the universe of discourse in which it began.

This area of ideas is probably nowhere so appropriately expressed as in Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1944). The Quartets are themselves divided into five sections, and the last section in each Quartet treats self-consciously of the experience of art-making, whilst clearly making art itself. One of the problems which Eliot addresses in the first Quartet, 'Burnt Norton', is the adequacy of words to hold meanings still, and the verse itself is crafted in a spirit of hesitancy and profound innuendo. In a sort of summary comment on the verse that has gone before, Eliot states the precise problem:

Words strain, 1.149
 Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
 Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
 Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
 Will not stay still.

But what remains from a reading of this first Quartet does not have such a pithy character; on the contrary, like the memory of the rose-garden Eliot has evoked,

it is hard to say what status it has in time or space, or in a world of ideas, but in experience it is surer than words. Harding (1974) has suggested that Eliot's achievement is to forge from the store of proven concepts and emotion a new area of experience which does not describe that experience but which *takes its place*. In exploring the 'possibilities of meaning that lurk in the interstices of familiar ideas', Eliot creates 'a new concept, with all the assimilation and communication of experience that that involves ...' (p.108-9). This, says Harding, is perhaps 'the greatest of linguistic achievements' (*ib.*).

In section V of 'East Coker', the second Quartet, Eliot humbly confronts the problem : words provide a legacy of form which will describe what already exists, but how shall we go beyond that to a newer form, a better ? Form binds us, as it is bound itself to the parsimony of the known, and it is only a terrible effort which can detach sense anew from such a *status quo*, and against the drift of emotional habit. But even then, that 'new' sense is no proper innovation; it is matter recalled and recast, only 'knowable' because it is somehow 'known'. 'So here I am,' Eliot says,

Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt(1.172)
 Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
 Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
 For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in
 which
 One is no longer disposed to say it. And so each
 venture
 Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
 With shabby equipment always deteriorating
 In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
 Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is
 to conquer
 By strength and submission, has already been discovered
 Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one
 cannot hope
 To emulate - but there is no competition -

There is no competition; what is important and vital is

beginning ...' In 'The Dry Salvages' he has reminded us that so often

We had the experience but missed the meaning, 1.93
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form ...

So now the task is to say and say again, and then again, ever urging new meanings from familiar experience, ever creating new experience from familiar meanings. And

We shall not cease from exploration L.G.1.239
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

The poem demonstrates how integral is experience. For Eliot style is clearly an ethical and personally urgent question, and one detaches separate moral or æsthetic functions at the cost of the coherence of the whole. So to call his tone or purpose 'religious' in any exclusive way - as he himself attempted - is at the same time to miss its artistic achievement. This achievement is a fusion of feeling and idea, art and morality in a poetic event which, by taking the place of rather than merely pointing to its bare referents creates reality anew. If things were revealed by report, we should have the merely technical problem of finding the right language; but, the poem demonstrates, things are rather constituted by our evocation of them, and that is a moral task. (It is of course for this same reason that the foregoing is a most unsatisfactory evocation of Eliot's work; its truth can only lie in a proper engagement with the issues and values which motivate it, and this calls for a sustained critical immersion.)

Similar ideas inspire a poem like Wallace Stevens' 'The Man with the Blue Guitar', (1953) at first sight a curious inversion of Eliotic values, and yet in so many stylistic (and therefore moral) ways the modern peer of a poem like 'The Waste Land'. The poem opens concretely, then a

Changing the 'crust of shape' is effortlessly the speaker's condition as much as it is the artist's deliberate project. As Butor has said of the novel, 'formal invention ... is the *sine qua non* of a greater realism'; speech, similarly, is not a technical representation of a prior way of seeing things, but the radical innovation of things, and a call for that way of seeing. 'Technical' problems are always solved in that act of seeing.

I have argued that language operates between the conservation of sense, and the innovation of meaning. We can add to this such equally bonded antinomies as knowledge and knowing, form and impulse, etc., and point to the mutually-sustaining relationship between institution and innovation. Now, all else being equal, the system will work. But school is manifestly an unequal place where the pole of communicative, conservative sense is elevated and the virtual processes of knowing depressed. This is not a political statement, but one of neutral, empirical simplicity. The drive of our education is towards externalising consciousness, towards a disembodied knowledge and a rationality independent of the child. Children are brought to exemplars of knowledge which they must internalise, and their own contributions are seldom really required. In the science subjects, they are often made to feel that their ideas are worthless or at least irrelevant before the grand truths of established scientists. In arts teaching the situation is generally believed to be better; arts teachers asked to identify their aims will normally talk of the development of individualism and self-expression. But the ideal outruns the practice; teachers of English, for example, themselves graduates within a particular form, still seek and reward perfected realisations of that form. They come to praise 'critic

talk' - as distinct from the concern implicit in true criticism - where a personal and feeling response is seen as badly-expressed, or not objectified or gauche. And although apparently inviting of the felt response, it is in fact often the objectified and sterilised version they really require. Witkin (1974) characterised the teacher who directs the pupils responses into 'an objective framework that defuses them'. He found no evidence in his limited enquiry that the English teacher is 'particularly keen to handle the 'live wire'' of emotion in his lesson. But if we insist on highly stylised language, or if we tactlessly inhibit felt responses which are not yet expressed according to the models we have come to see as exemplary, we shall overlook the value of language which may be on the point of teasing out and enhancing understanding. Allowing and encouraging children to speak obviously fosters communication skills; but it further requires them to give a personal account of themselves which they may not ordinarily be called upon to do; it requires them; that is, to express what they know and what they are coming to know, to *give form*, and not merely to echo it.

The following is perhaps an extreme example of a less than judicious imposition of realised form on an expressive voice, but examples are easily come by in the classroom. Julia, a thirteen year old West Indian is telling a second-year Remedial class about an experience - her first - in the snow, after the teacher has very vividly given an exposition on the theme of excitement:

J : *we was sliding er sliding right fast and going like anything and so and so fast that we was falling off and went like anything at the bottom we just laughed and laughed*

T : *how would you describe your feelings I mean at the bottom*

(silence)

T : *would you say you were exhilarated for example*

(silence)

mmm (?)

J : *yes*

On the tape-recording of this exchange can be heard how Julia's final yes marks the abortion of her enthusiasm.

It has been suggested that teachers directly control the sort and quality of knowing. One obvious way in which they do this is by having a virtual monopoly on the asking of key questions. Children certainly ask questions, but these are most often of a clerical nature ("Which page ...?"; "Where is ...?") or about vocabulary. Most of the time they are not required to pose searching questions which call for reflection; these questions are part of the way in which the teacher can direct the enquiry to his idea of its ends. In the following transcription, a group quoted in Chapter 5 is looking at another Sylvia Plath poem, but this time it is introduced by the teacher. She has a very clear idea of what she wants to elicit from the poem and from the students and her questions are directed efficiently towards filling in this pre-conceived picture of hers :

T : *why does she call it The Moon and the Yew Tree what's what's the significance for her what do you know about yew trees what do you know about Sylvia Plath and her erm identity with the moon*

P1: *there's some yew tree near her house isn't there*

T : *that's right I think it's the house in Devon isn't it which borders onto the graveyard and ... well what do you know about yew trees d'you know anything about them*

P2: *associated with death aren't they*

T : *yeh a-apparently they're usually planted in ... graveyards and you do yes usually associate them not necessarily with death I think but certainly with sorrow what about the idea of the moon what's the moon in this poem how does she see the moon*
(pause)

P1: *she says its her mother*

T : *its her mother right yeh that's an important thing I think to focus on ... erm right shall we start from the beginning*

In the event this was good teaching. But there is a sense in which the actual putting of questions can be as important as the finding of answers. Most simply this is because putting questions requires seeing and framing problems. Merely answering someone else's question may amount to mechanical slot-filling, where the necessity of those answers is not seen as a function of an important question, but rather as a requirement of a task externally-imposed. Asking children to spot the areas of difficulty - the areas of *their* difficulty, moreover - and to frame *their own* questions is asking them to share in the location of problems. Still with Sylvia Plath and the 6th form, the following transcription - quoted in Chapter 5 - shows a group working to interpret 'Berck-Plage'. Left by themselves with a tape-recorder, they appear to ask questions commensurate with their needs and the pace of the discussion rather than with the critical and strategic considerations of a teacher. Questions occurring like this are experienced as genuine enquiries rather than challenges, and they prompt the sharing of ideas rather than the closing down on one definitive response. The particular lines they are looking at are

the mackerel gatherers

Who wall up their backs against him.

They are handling the black and green lozenges like the parts of a body.

Vicky asks : :

3/46/V : *why are t'mackerel gatherers walling up their backs against him*

3/47/J : *we think that well I think anyway that mackerel gatherers fishermen they just turn their backs to these people they don't want to have nothing to do with them y'know they*

just turn away from them

3/48/V : *n that about lozenges*

3/49/S : *well they're t'fish*

3/50/J : *they're t'fish*

3/51/S : *They are handling the black and green lozenges
like the parts of a body*

3/52/J : *and if you notice though lozenges comes into it
a lot and er throughout poem*

3/53/V : *and she describes coffin*

3/54/J : *yeh and I think it's some reference to t'drugs
and pills*

3/55/S : *medication*

3/56/J : *medication they're on all t'way through*

There are several reasons why such a casual but fruitful exchange is unlikely to have taken place with the teacher present. Obviously the pupils view the teacher as an expert and one whose questions are somewhat artificial in that she knows the answers to them; again, there is an assumption that there is only one answer. A distinction is often made between 'closed' questions, which require just one specific response, and 'open' questions which invite individual reflection and expect a varied response. The closed question has the authority of the teacher, most often; had a teacher put Vicky's question, the response would have been very different. As it is, it is the same question which might have the same 'answer', but it serves here to prompt a more open consideration.

My general argument - that we must make more opportunities for pupils to *give form* - is a pedagogic one based on this expressive character of speaking: realised, concrete, authoritative form has no meaning unless it is firstly de-formed and then re-formed; teacher-sponsored form is almost worthless if it does not pass through the critically-deforming and richly re-creative experience of the child. The engagement with the intentional centre of the text - which is given with the best of literary exploration - must stand as the model of all learning.

That same model gives the lie to such exercises as formal comprehension which, because they do not call for essential involvement with the intentional object of the study, yield little of value beyond formal training. In the particular case of speaking this model calls for special redress against the depressing effect of institution on expression, and for increased opportunity for individual voices to find their form.

Two methodological principles suggest themselves. The first recommends a willingness to negotiate meaning, and again the example of textual exploration serves as the model; ideas, like words, have variable meanings according to their context and to our perspective. When we wrestle with the sense of a poem we try its values against our own until we have an understanding which relates both to the 'objective' ideas of the poem and to the 'subjective' truth of our experience. The group discussion represents this process made public; meanings are arrived at by sharing.

The second principle is that we should be prepared to spend as much time on pupils' ideas as on those we are trying to teach, because their experience is the *only* passage by which this material can be realised.

These are not novel points, but it is hoped that the manner of their argument represents them with their crucially *existential* justification.

iii. 'hallowing an interval'

'Black rook in rainy weather'

On the stiff twig up there
 Hunches a wet black rook
 Arranging and rearranging its feathers in the rain
 I do not expect miracles
 Or an accident

To set the sight on fire
 In my eye, nor seek
 Any more in the desultory weather some design,
 But let spotted leaves fall as they fall,
 Without ceremony, or portent.

Although, I admit, I desire,
 Occasionally, some backtalk
 From the mute sky, I can't honestly complain:
 A certain minor light may still
 Leap incandescent

Out of kitchen table or chair
 As if a celestial burning took
 Possession of the most obtuse objects now and then -
 Thus hallowing an interval
 Otherwise inconsequent

By bestowing largesse, honour,
 One might say love. At any rate, I now walk
 Wary (for it could happen
 Even in this dull, ruinous landscape); sceptical
 Yet politic; ignorant

Of whatever angel may choose to flare
 Suddenly at my elbow. I only know that a rook
 Ordering its black feathers can so shine
 As to seize my sense, haul
 My eyelids up, and grant

A brief respite from fear
 Of total neutrality. With luck
 Trekking stubborn through this season
 Of fatigue, I shall
 Patch together a content

Of sorts. Miracles occur,
 If you care to call those spasmodic
 Tricks of radiance miracles. The wait's begun again,
 The long wait for the angel,
 For that rare, random descent.

(Sylvia Plath, from *Ariel*, 1965)

I like this poem chiefly for the way it creates -
 from a ragbag of fairly ordinary language devices -
 an effect of radiance as ephemeral as the rook itself.
 In the poem, as in the landscape, the concrete presides;
 the weather is 'desultory', the sky 'mute', the country
 'dull and ruinous', and the poet's feet of clay are
 'Trekking stubborn through (a) season/Of fatigue'; weary
 but ironic conversational tags - 'I can't honestly com-
 plain', 'At any rate', 'If you care to call' - append
 any more brilliant suggestion, and the first intimation
 of relief -

A certain minor light may still
 Leap incandescent -

is dissipated in the bathetic

Out of kitchen table or chair.

The mood of resignation is both laconic -

But let spotted leaves fall as they fall -
 and faintly insouciant,

I desire,
 Occasionally, some backtalk
 From the mute sky

Even the energy which delivers the poet from her 'fear/
 Of total neutrality' has something of the brute character
 of the landscape, for indeed she is so an-aesthetised
 that her sense must be seized, her eyelids hauled; but
 it is a 'celestial burning' which makes, 'Suddenly at
 my elbow', an angel of a wet black rook.

What Plath mostly fears is the dull tract of experience
 between rook and angel, the 'total neutrality' of pass-
 ively attending. Indeed, the poem returns to 'The long
 wait', and in that torpor even the reality of the
 epiphany fades so that she doubts whether such 'miracles'
 are more than 'spasmodic/Tricks of radiance'. The final
 touch of a rather cynical despair is marked by 'random',

which limits the sense of 'rare':

The wait's begun again,
The long wait for the angel,
For that rare, random descent.

There is a shred of hope in the waiting.

Another such return, but from a far more auspicious bird, comes to mind. In the penultimate stanza of 'Ode to a Nightingale', Keats addresses the creature whose song is heard 'in faery lands forlorn', and straightway the final stanza opens:

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self !

Plath's poem is in many ways the modern analogue of Keats' apostrophe, if we accept in each case the brief fusion of a 'sole self' with a critically particular moment of nature. The texture of Plath's poem suggests that the colloquial dross of the general, of general sensibility keeps us from dwelling in the object itself; in Keats' poem it is something more like intellection which holds off from things as they are. 'thou among the leaves hast never known' the cares of human life on earth 'Where but to think is to be full of sorrow'. Keats almost dissolves consciousness altogether:

Away ! Away ! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards
But on the viewless wings of poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

But he rejects this possibility of retreat; for although the stanza which follows appears to be a celebration of the the lovely and the sensuous, its effect is crafted from mortal intelligence of names and seasons, of habitat and other botanical generality:

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows

contiguous: the poem means something to me to the extent that it gives shape to my experience, revealing in the same moment some new potential to my experience and some new life to the text.

These examples are of course artistic distillations of the heightened awareness of the particularity of things. The next example is no less an artefact, but it helps illuminate the event, or more precisely the dynamics of the moment of enhanced consciousness. It reveals to us, I believe, the bearing of such a moment on thought generally, and therefore on the whole character of expression; thus I shall eventually suggest the contiguity of such moments with the genesis of speech.

The final book of *To The Lighthouse* (Woolf, 1964) is called 'The Lighthouse', and it resolves two of the novel's purposes simultaneously. Mr Ramsay pays an overdue obeisance to the spirit of a dead wife as he sets foot on the little island where the lighthouse stands - a project which opened the drama many years previously. And, as he sets foot, Lily Briscoe puts the finishing touch to her painting - also conceived years before - and the novel ends. In these acts Mr Ramsay dissipates (or expiates) a career of bleak and dogged rationalism,

For if thought is like the keyboard of a piano, divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately.

(p.40)

whilst the slight Lily, who

faded ... became more inconspicuous than ever in her little grey dress with her little puckered face and her little Chinese eyes

(p.120)

closes the book in a triumph of decisive clarity and vision. For Ramsay's life is deemed

the refuge of a man afraid to own his own feelings,'
(p.53)

whilst Lily proves - what Mrs Ramsay discerns -

a thread of something; a flare of something; something of her own ...
(p.120)

and it is her achievement which gilds that of the novel.

The structure of the work anticipates this end. In the first book, 'The Window', life is held together by the presence of Mrs Ramsay, large with the power of her love. In an *interregnum*, 'Time Passes', this coherence dies with her, and the house - deserted in time of war - is managed by the heavy hand of a dull-witted house-keeper posted ironically against the charges of decay;

Only the Lighthouse beam entered the rooms for a moment, sent its sudden stare over bed and wall in the darkness of winter, looked with equanimity at the thistle and the swallow, the rat and the straw. Nothing now withstood them; nothing said no to them. Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage...

(p.157)

When those who have survived the war reassemble in 'The Lighthouse', Mr Ramsay's spirit of rigour and austerity has perished with his wife, two of his children, and with

the long rows of books, black as ravens once, now white stained, breeding pale mushrooms and secreting furtive spiders.

(p.159)

What remains to him is more a spirit of dessication. The balance of sympathy presumes against him, and though he takes up the project to visit the lighthouse, it is more a perverse achievement than the gift to his children which was intended.

Lily, too, takes up the project which had occupied her in her minor role during the first part of the book. But now Woolf's design becomes clearer, and the preoccupations of the whole scheme - the perspectival, insubstantial character of reality, the hopeless partiality of representation, the need to comprehend - these are not resolved but substantially cast as Lily resolves her canvas. The act is not grand like Bernard's affirmation at the end of *The Waves*; it is more mature and submissive and oddly realistic than this, for in her act Lily gives shape to a moment in experience, fully aware that it is no insurance against chaos. Lily's act creates the moment it describes; it does not articulate some experience which existed before it, but thematises the very moment, and like that moment cannot endure. Woolf's point is made by the simple, quick line with which Lily completes her picture; meaning happens here, and now, in an impulse which makes of the variety of possibility an intentional object.

From the start, Lily's problem has been that of all artists, of crafting an exalted new from a base familiar, 'Things as they are but changed'. Like Plath in the 'Rook' poem, she wants

to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy.

(p.229)

But her error in Book 1 is to see her problem as a technical one, as it were of translation; she is as bound to a formal notion of painting as Mr Ramsay is held lifelessly in the logical structures of his thought:

It was a question, she remembered, how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object...

(p.62)

When she attempts the composition again in the third book, she is vaguely aware that something more than her formal arrangement is wrong;

The disproportion there seemed to upset some harmony in her own mind. She felt an obscure distress. It was confirmed when she turned to her picture. She had been wasting her morning. For whatever reason she could not achieve that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces; Mr Ramsay and the picture; which was necessary. There was something perhaps wrong with the design? Was it, she wondered that the line of the wall wanted breaking, was it that the mass of the trees was too heavy?

(p.219)

Here she pauses,

She smiled ironically; for had she not thought, when she began, that she had solved her problem?

(*ib.*)

She comes to some inexplicit realisation that where technique occurs as the moment of translation of a ready-made vision, what emerges has merely the life of technique. Her work is flawed because she excludes from her competent management of neutral spaces the very particular intentional objects which mere attention to technique generalises.

What was the problem then? She must try to get hold of some thing that evaded her. It evaded her when she thought of Mrs Ramsay; it evaded her now when she thought of her picture. Phrases came. Visions came. Beautiful phrases. Beautiful pictures. But what she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything.

(*ib.*)

So when Lily completes her picture, it is a moment of direct engagement with her objects. The resolution of the picture is no longer simply an 'artistic' task, but the outcome of commitment to objects which arrives with the intuition of the whole intentional world which Lily inhabits. The moment of articulation is the moment of meaning for Lily; this is implicit in her recognition that her painting will not endure. But, then, neither

did the ideas of Ramsay, nor the schemes of Mrs Ramsay; what Lily achieves over these is a single moment of reflexive clarity, herself revealed in the meaning of things:

Quickly, as if she were recalled by something over there, she turned to her canvas. There it was - her picture. Yes, with all its green and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.

(p.237)

In the first section of this chapter I emphasised the principle that art is concerned to give a symbolic form to the sensible world; in the second section, this was extended to show how art seeks to re-make our perceptions of that world. Both these qualities of art-making are instanced in the passage we have been considering. What I wish to add to them is a third observation, namely that

Moments of art reveal us to ourselves quite as much as they reveal things to us.

By a 'moment of art' I certainly mean the moment of the artist's vision, and the moment of the viewer's or the reader's intuition of that. But such acts are the explicated form of a way of attending which is fundamental to consciousness, and which the practise of art maximises. The moment of art, then, is that unusual occasion of understanding when, in seeing to the heart of something, self-consciousness is somehow enlarged. Thus the idea that the artist must give form to the sensible world is extended so that we see how his coming to know this world by a particular name or shape or gesture must also be a

coming to know himself in that act. Artists have frequently reported this experience of joint epiphany, but it is familiar to anyone who finds himself looking for just the right word, or for some other formal expression. It is not that he seeks, in fully reflexive consciousness for the superficial dressing of a predicating thought: the absence of that expression betokens the absence of an intentional object discovered only on condition of self-discovery, which is to say, only when thought becomes continuous with its objects. Merleau-Ponty has written :

The whole life of consciousness is characterised by the tendency to posit objects, since it is consciousness, that is to say self-knowledge only in so far as it takes hold of itself and draws itself together in an identifiable object.

(1962, p.71)

For the world is no more 'out there' than it is 'in here', and is not to be opposed to the "I". When we speak, when we use this "I", it is the presence of the 'here and now', and its realisation in syntax which precisely marks the movement of this being-for-oneseelf into a being-for-others.

This is true for all speech, though we can differentiate qualitatively between acts of speech in quite the same way that we elevate consciously-achieved art-products over the manner of aesthetic attending which characterises all acts of consciousness. Much of daily speech is an effortless (and apparently thoughtless) sort of maintenance work which seems to exist just to keep things going rather than to innovate thought; the extreme form of this is cliché, sedimentations of thought which are substitutions for thinking. By contrast, those acts are thoughtful which, by the above account, are continuous with their objects.

Such acts are hard to describe empirically, because they lie somewhere between the Greek conception of rhetoric - as the operation of truth on the soul - and phenomena

like hesitation and repetition which suggest some energy and earnestness. In discourse we do not attend to words as such, but to what they point to, and if, as sometimes happens, this very direction itself is what is struggled for, then undoubtedly we are seeing someone create himself in the creation of his objects. Speech which locates those objects for us - however inelegantly - is speech which in a real sense brings to life a subject. Again, an example from art illustrates this. At the end of *Roots* (Wesker, 1964), Beatie becomes, as the author says in the stage-direction, 'articulate at last -'. This fluency is clearly not a stylistic elegance, but is a wholeness and clarity of being which excites the language as Beatie experiences for the first time the reality, the presence of previously static ideas. This is what is revealed to her, and what her words therefore point to for us.

Confronted by her family, Beatie at first tries to justify the revolutionary ideas she claims to share with her absent lover (*And you know what Ronnie say sometimes?*). But Ronnie has written to end the relationship, and it is only as Beatie explores the ideas for her family that she discovers them for herself:

Beatie : *Do you think we really count ? You don' wanna take any notice of what them ole papers say about the workers bein' all important these days - that's all squat ! 'Cos we aren't. Do you think when the really talented people in the country get to work they get to work for us ? Hell if they do ! Do you think they don't know we 'ont make the effort ? The writers don't write thinkin' we can understand, nor the painters don't paint expecting us to be interested - that they don't, nor don't the composers give out music thinking we can appreciate it. 'Blust', they say, 'the masses is too stupid for us to come down to them. Blust,' they say, 'if they don't make no effort why should we bother ?' So you know who come along ? The slop singers and the pop writers and the film makers and women's magazines and the Sunday papers and the picture strip love-stories - that's who come along, and you*

don't have to make no effort for them, it come easy. 'We know where the money lie, ' they say, 'hell we do ! The workers've got it so let's give them what they want. If they want slop songs and film idols we'll give 'em that then. If they want words of one syllable, we'll give 'em that then. If they want the third-rate, blust ! We'll give 'em that then. Anything's good enough for them 'cos they don't ask for no more !' The whole stinkin' commercial world insults us and we don't care a damn. Well, Ronnie's right - it's our own bloody fault. We want the third-rate - we got it ! We got it ! We ...

(Suddenly Beatie stops as if listening to herself. She pauses, turns with an ecstatic smile on her face -)

D'you hear that ? D'you hear it ? Did you listen to me ? I'm talking. Jenny, Frankie, Mother - I'm not quoting no more.

Mrs Bryant (getting up to sit at table) : Oh hell, I hed enough of her - let her talk a while she'll soon get fed up.

(The others join her at the table and proceed to eat and murmur.)

Beatie : Listen to me someone. (As though a vision were revealed to her) God in heaven, Ronnie ! It does work, it's happening to me, I can feel it's happened, I'm beginning, on my own two feet - I'm beginning ...

(The murmur of the family sitting down to eat grows as Beatie's last cry is heard. Whatever she will do they will continue to live as before. As Beatie stands alone, articulate at last -)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

Of course this is a theatrical exaggeration. Much nearer home, the example of Kevin's discovery of the text (Ch.5) goes some way to illustrating the point that speaking has this heuristic value. Another example is a later moment in one of the group discussions of 'Berck-Plage' cited in Chapter 5; Vicky suddenly interrupts

I just wanna say something I I don't know if anybody's noticed probably eveybody has noticed and it's just that I'm thick but I think I've noticed particularly that each section gets deeper and deeper into't sort of death scene, it goes deeper and deeper starts off as a scene setter it goes deeper and deeper towards hospital it does oh it does

It is not necessary to duplicate such examples; their shape is familiar to all teachers, and the point, too, has become a familiar one: more speaking can mean greater thought, if the circumstances require the sort of speech which is thoughtful. But although Barnes (1976) in particular has done much to commend talk as a vital tool of teaching and learning, the full meaning of such events seems either to be misunderstood or else taken for granted. Once again, the expressive character of language conflicts with the conservative, institutional nature of Knowledge, and of the secondary school. In primary schools it is axiomatic that children must talk to develop their thinking, their 'social skills', their general language abilities; even, it might be admitted, their personalities. But the language of the secondary school is a different matter; it rapidly becomes an instrument, and its existential or exploratory character is suppressed. Britton has written

Education consists in coming to live in the intellectual products of other people and so becoming persons who experience life in the general terms of that culture.

(1979)

If this is so then education runs contrary to the drive of language; all the evidence of our analysis shows that, on the contrary, life (and its abstraction, culture) is constructed in the highly-particular, object-sensible and originating acts of individual experience. But for schools to promote such a view might well be - as Chekhov remarked of the community which sponsors the artist - like a farmer breeding rats in his granary.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to elaborate ideas put forward earlier in the thesis - that the world of experience is minimised, sometimes spurned, both in the formal study of language and in the practice of English teaching. In objecting to this neglect, my basic point is simple: that speaking and art-making share a quality which is imperfectly described, indeed is distorted by focus on either the words (works of art) or the speaker (the art-maker). Such separation, such reduction pre-cludes any real appreciation of meaning; the event of the creation of meaning cannot be analysed, pulled apart or measured. Instead I have explored the relationship between speaking and art-making by outlining three principles which underlie the integrity of the event of meaning.

These truths are implicit in the best of classroom practice, but for this subtlety are easily and often supplanted by more realisable, more assessable concerns with evident product. They are implicit, and more explicit, in primary school method, where it is generally true that education addresses a more whole, less functional concept of the child. The task, then, is to make them explicit in a way which is practically useful but which does not simply make of them yet more instruments. Too much attention is paid to the mechanics of how and what we should teach, as though the prime question of why were answered by these inventories. We should state categorically that questions of method, of curriculum, which do not seek, in some measure, to answer philosophical problems are simply not important. Of course this is to take a particular view of philosophy as concerned with wholeness of being as with the nature of things, with epistemology as with ethics, with biology no less than with psychology. Questions of

method which do not arise from radical reflection and from radical astonishment are unlikely to promote actions of any value. What is it to be human? What is it to think? What is it to grasp a meaning? Who could possibly start to understand what is going on in a classroom, and, what's more, presume to say what *should* go on, without in some hesitant voice trying such questions against his own experience? Put like this, questions of method must in all senses involve statements of belief, commitments to a particular belief in what coming to know really means.

It should finally be emphasised that such a way of seeing knowledge, and sound, is more likely to promote an attitude to the curriculum than a curricular scheme. So conclusions from this work are not immediately practical; they amount rather to affirming and urging a particular way of looking at language, and it is this which suggests particular ways of using it. It is the intervolvement of language with knowing and with Being in an existential epistemology which the thesis as a whole points up, and it is this belief which thus has implications for the classroom.

CHAPTER SEVEN

*A framework for language research in education**i. The original bestowal of meaning*

... the task for which the philosopher is responsible is to understand how scientific understanding takes place within the comprehension of my existence in the world.

(Ricoeur, 1978)

Returning to the problem which opened the thesis - How can language be an object for enquiry? - this final chapter offers a reflection on the character of phenomenological research, and makes a tentative suggestion for the framing of research into language.

The experience of meaning and its historical or cultural senses are not continuous. It is the latter with which science has largely occupied itself; phenomenology, on the other hand, is concerned to illuminate the experience, and in so doing has found it necessary to dispute the creation of the very things (objects) which science takes for granted. If real things cannot be simply assumed, then what measures or instruments can be said to remain useful? Consciousness is, of course, the starting-point; but then, consciousness is nothing without objects, since self and objects are constituted in the same moment. Those moments of constitution are finally the ground of phenomenology, then, and the phenomenological method could be described as a systematic attempt to recapitulate the events of meaning. This means that a phenomenology can be defined by its revelation not only of particular objects - a man or honesty, or speaking - but of how those objects are so constituted. By definition, such a description of objects would reveal the engagement of its author. This characterisation needs expansion.

Consciousness provides objects

Phenomenology is complicated by its self-consciousness; the general project to describe the history of experience is achieved only by working through the functions of consciousness, so we must think in order to write a phenomenology of thought, use language to talk about speech, and so on. This could be described as the first inhibition of phenomenology as a science. The second is the difficulty it has in justifying the claim to speak of a commonality of experience. Because no quantifying schemes can be applied to the transcendental terms it has in place of independent instruments, measures of such as validity and reliability, for example, are not appropriate.

A phenomenology succeeds by being a virtue before these detractions. There are no instruments, no measures prior to the very function of consciousness, and all instruments and all measures depend for their very existence on the way they serve this function. Consciousness seeks objects, indeed is only known by the moment and way of its finding them. So if a consciousness or a phenomenology points out its objects to us, it is our recognition of those objects which recommends it, not the instruments of their discovery. We are not in the first instance led to affirm a view by some elegance of 'validation' but by its manifest - and manifestly taken for granted - ability to speak to our experience because it shares our objects. The 'controls' of a phenomenology are only those of consciousness, and are no more sophisticated; 'checks' are similarly constituted; does a particular account, Bolton asks, (echoing Hume)

contain any metaphor which reveals a reality deeper than common sense? No. Does it excite you to a moral involvement in the affairs with which it deals?

No. Commit it then to the flames, for it is nothing but information that will soon be superseded by more information.

(Bolton, 1981)

This is not to make a Luddite assault on instruments, but to remember that they are the products (and not the objects) of consciousness, and that consciousness first provided the circumstance of their ability to characterise reality. The 'crisis' of science which Husserl (1970) speaks of occurs when the foundational acts which abstract the object from pre-scientific experience are occluded, and Nature is identified with its already constituted and quantifiable objects. Again, this is not a peevish criticism of science which would do away with its products willy-nilly; the point is that scientific observations are born in particular events, and may not necessarily be transferable. In his discussion of Galilean mathematics, Husserl says

Actually the process whereby material mathematics is put into formal-logical form .. is perfectly legitimate, indeed necessary .. But all this can and must be a method which is understood and practised in a fully conscious way. It can be this, however, only if care is taken to avoid dangerous shifts of meaning by keeping in mind the original bestowal of meaning (*Sinnebung*) upon the method, through which it has the sense of achieving knowledge about the world.

(1970, p.47)

The particular and the general

It is the sense of a particular time which is missing from the scientific account as much as the print of the originator; what is scientifically true holds indifferently across contexts of situation. But events are unique by definition, and although identical in their phenomenal setting, their participants or their aims, it remains that consciousness is indispensably variable in its presence at the event, and no two events can share constitution. This is finally to say that events are defined as correlates of human intentions, and that their character is imperfectly revealed

by any process of history-making. In particular we should argue that a way of characterising an event should be suggested by the peculiarities of the event itself, and lose its justification as the event itself recedes in time.

What, then, of those features of events which show themselves so consistently across contexts that we feel we can extrapolate them as constant or transcendent elements and hence meet them with standard methods? Again, the force of Husserl's comment is not that we cannot have such features, but that we should remember how the power of such terms was achieved, and understand the nature of their purchase on the world. After Kant, we can say that a way of seeing becomes transcendent when it appears to organise discourse around a given domain of experience. But such ways of seeing are cultural products which may come to enjoy a cultural life out of sight of their human origination, hallowed by use rather than vision. The possibility of a distinction between use and value here is arguable. The evidence of the 'relativists' (Kuhn, 1970, etc) that we are educated into ways of seeing which condition our values is at least *practically* acceptable. It is similarly *effectively* true of science that it misunderstands the nature of its products. No scientist would want to claim that he deals with a naked reality, but this does not excuse science as a virtual community from operating as if what it worked on were real. Science begins, Oakeshott tells us, 'only when the world of 'things' opened to us by our sense and perceptions has been forgotten or set on one side'. (1933) The scientific way of seeing is identical with what it sees in its search for stability:

The method and the matter of scientific knowledge are not two parties .. they are inseparable aspects of a single whole .. And the notion of the categories of scientific knowledge or the instruments of scientific measurement interposing themselves between the scientist and his object is a notion utterly foreign

to the character of scientific experience. Without the categories and the method, there is no matter; without the instruments of measurement, nothing to measure.

And Oakeshott concludes that

'Nature' is the product not the datum of scientific thought.

(1933, p.191)

The datum becomes, then, not the consequence of a way of seeing even, but that act itself, and as such must be intentionally opposed to the thing in itself. In this opposition we discover the nature of the particular. For science attempts to conceive of the world 'under the category of quantity' (*op.cit.*), and its datum has the required stability only by virtue of the categorial set of which it is an indifferent member. There can, by this definition, be no such scientific experience as that of *the particular*. Again, Whitehead (1948) describes the aim of science to 'seek objects with the most permanent definite simplicity of character'.

Lived consciousness, on the other hand, dwells only in the particular, the general being what Oakeshott calls an *arrest of experience*. The category of quantity is nowhere of the essence of the thing which, because it always patently exceeds all the noetic acts which characterise it, remains to be experienced in its individual and materially distinct self.

The category of quantity can be said to reveal a kind of essence, but only of the kind which is indifferently shared by members of a set which is defined by the discipline of the enquiry. But if the 'essential essence' - as Heidegger calls it - is not characterised by a numerical account, it is equally true that words are not up to accomplishing its intuited aesthetic presence, either. In any event, the relation between

words and numbers is not one of mutual exclusion, and the opposition of the quantitative and the qualitative is expedient rather than real. If it is true that scientific instruments create matter, it is equally true of words that they reveal or accomplish something intentionally, but in co-operation with the real world. In emphasising the expressive character of words we are tacitly denying any sense of an instrumental or technological function. Any priority claimed for words is on the strength of their aesthetic foundation as actual responses to the physical world. Their inability to 'fix' reality is the condition of their being in the fluid field of embodied consciousness. Numbers are no less intentional, but their objects are *noemata*, and they qualify the cultural products which words create rather than share the same world from which words arise; numbers do not have real referents. But the result of this distinction should not be to elevate words - and the qualitative - over numbers - and the quantitative - for most practice proceeds unself-consciously without any such explicit methodological commitment. But it points to a way of validating enquiry which does not itself require validation. This is by asking whether and how an enquiry is *object-directed*.

"To the things themselves !"

Objects are defined as those real things which, by virtue of their independence of consciousness, require this consciousness to identify them. Acts and artefacts of identification (*noeses* and *noemata*) belong to consciousness as correlates of the object which, on pain of ceasing to exist must perpetually exceed the descriptions which are themselves properties of consciousness. By this definition objects are unchanging, flux being a condition of consciousness and not of things. So an object-directed

enquiry is not one which changes the object, but which somehow articulates the change of engagement of its author with his objects. Any report which 'changes' objects is a *legerdemain* which disguises the event of the enquirer's findings; all discovery, we could say (adapting Merleau-Ponty) is self-discovery, 'failing which it could have no objects' (1962, p.191). So research is *not* object-directed if, failing to declare the interests of consciousness, it assumes that its characterisations are real. For if *they* are, then the object is indifferently at the mercy of such characterisations to be whatever fashion or expediency require it to be. That being so, there is no longer any moral requirement of enquiry to describe the real as it is.

For morality itself is described by the manner in which consciousness entertains objects. This is not a special understanding of the word, but precisely what is implied, if not made explicit, in all its uses. MacMurray makes this point clearly: right and wrong have to do with seeing the object as it is in itself, and not as I would have it 'for me' (1935). This is no less true in the affective than in the material sphere of experience, and MacMurray distinguishes love of the other *as he really is* from 'love' for him *as I need him to be*. In any event morality is concerned with taking responsibility for one's attitude to an object, be it a person or a situation or a thing, and with therefore separating its attributes from one's (intentional) own. This is not schizoid finally because the will has precisely the project of ever approximating characterisations with their objects. Morality enables us to distinguish in human terms between different manners of being-towards objects. When MacMurray observes that 'Reason is primarily an affair of the emotions' (*op.cit.*) he does not mean that morality is finally arbitrary, or 'merely personal'; rather chastity ('emotional honesty')

derives from openness to the reality of objects sensibly held, and not merely intellectually abstracted, and sedimented.

The problem of evaluation

We are led from this consideration to ask about an enquiry, not "Is it qualitative or quantitative?", but "Is it moral?" There remains a problem of evaluation. For even if an enquiry is 'open to its objects', if it declares the values and unique method of its author how do we know that, and what yardstick can we possibly find which will qualitatively determine its morality? And anyway, if it deals in such a particular way with the particular, what can we compare it with and what relevance could it have for general experience? Is this not likely to be the very worst of 'subjectivity'?

By opposing subjectivity with objectivity we distinguish persons from objects in such a way that their relation cannot be described without recourse to extremes of mentalist or behaviourist philosophy. If, on the other hand, we understand the terms as continuously-related ways of having objects, then we take the vital step of involving persons with objects by necessity. Subjectivity is defined, then, not by the particular which it dwells in by virtue of its own uniqueness, but by the concern it shows to give that particular a general recognition. Such recognition completes the act, and the particular becomes an object constituted by sharing.

This process is not susceptible to validation. Because it has not explained subject-object relations for its schemes, the 'research attitude' - to which validation as a technique belongs - naively assumes this relation and is to be found acting in the firm reality of *noemata*.

Of course, this attitude is right when it speaks of demanding validation in terms of the object and not of the enquirer; it is right in supposing that the object is firm and, even if constituted, that it pre-exists characterisation. But the real meaning of its 'objectivity' is revealed when, in its provision of the validation it requires, it fails to distinguish between the object proper and the characterisations given by what are yet more *noemata*. Again, validation needs endless shoring up with ever-regressing devices because it is not object-directed.

We have said that a phenomenology can be known by its revelation of the author's engagement with his objects. But how precisely do we know that? This is still the question. And what is it which we recognise and affirm or dispute?

If we return to the genesis of the phenomenology, we observe that there is a researcher and there is a *situation of objects* which he must constitute. Now at this point there occurs a critical *moment of characterisation* which determines these objects for the researcher and for his audience. This is the moment normally referred to as methodological, and which as such is the correlate of the later process of validation; indeed, it is all that validation can reveal: is the *method* what it set out to be, what its author says it is? For validation is based, as we shall see, on a limited model of truth which either takes for granted, or else ignores, the earlier process of *verification* which guarantees its coherence.

Validation depends on further regressed devices in quite the way that truth of statement and truth of things - conceptual and pragmatic truths - depend on things being already what/as they are. We are only

able to proceed to their statement or demonstration because of some earlier moment of our knowing them. Things as they are must, on pain of ceasing to exist, be already partially revealed. This is what Heidegger means by *a-letheia* :

Not only must that in conformity with which a cognition orders itself be already in some way unconcealed. The entire *realm* in which this 'conformity to something' goes on must already occur as a whole in the unconcealed... With all our correct representations we would get nowhere, we could not even pre-suppose that there is already manifest something to which we can conform ourselves, unless the unconcealedness of beings had already exposed us to, placed us in, that lighted realm in which every being stands for us and from which it withdraws.

(1971b, p.52)

Verification stands in relation to validation as does understanding to explanation. Validation, then, is a gloss on verification; or, in Husserlian terms, it is the provision of other *noemata*, which abundance may yet avoid the thing itself. Attention to validation is in effect an attention to method at the expense of attending to the object which the method should reveal.

Now, returning to the moment of characterisation, we can see that if the enquirer stands in relation to his objects in the light of what Hofstadter (1965) has called 'truth of spirit', then our response to his work - to his objects, that is - is a *moment of verification*, defined now as *a-letheia*, or un-hiddenness. The instructive case is that of art. 'Truth of spirit' is the truth that a thing is in order that it can be that thing, and is declared by the work of art's own intentionalistic structure. The correlative structure of aesthetic appreciation reveals this, for it is our openness to the art-object which allows its accomplishment in our experience, not our projection of it as it ought to be. But, as was shown in the

analysis of Chapter 4, and developed in Chapter 6, aesthetic attending is not a special or marginal case peculiar to artists or audiences, but one which can be systematically developed by them because it is the very foundation of intelligence. This is to say no more than that we attend primarily to objects in this way as a condition of our being in the world. But in daily experience, truth of spirit is so unconsciously a mode in which we proceed that it is occluded by a concern with the more patent and accountable forms of truth given with intellectual or material schemes. This is still more the case with the research attitude which, predicated on scientific principles is methodologically opposed to art in its concern with explicitation. Verification cannot be a method in this way, failing which it becomes an instrument very much like validation. For although directed at objects, verification is reflexive in that it asks whether those objects are entertained in a fashion which is true to their nature, and it can only try this conclusion against its own experience of those objects. Verification so illuminates the moment of characterisation - the 'original bestowal of meaning' - that it returns the observer to the objects so constituted.

Thus the criterial questions which attend verification are :

Is the enquiry object-directed ?

Does it seek to know those objects better ?

What does it use to do this ?

Does it reveal the value which prompts and maintains it ?

And, chiefly,

How can I know the answers to these questions ?

Research is firstly the search for a form within which the answers to all these questions will be coherent.

But what medium can bear such a moral charge ?
 What follows is a sketch suggesting the ways in which
 educational research might better respect the
 expressive character of language.

ii. A model for language research in education

Hermeneutics concerns the conditions necessary to interpretation, and is based on the assumption that understanding is linguistic, since it holds the real to be linguistically constituted, and our involvement reflexive. In 'The New Hermeneutic', Murray (1978) develops Heidegger's concept of the 'hermeneutic circle'. There is always firstly an *interpreter*, for 'only in the context of the existing interpreter can the being of the work matter or make sense' (p.107). The social bonds which interpreter and text share in their common language are described by the *life-relation of the interpreter*. The *pre-understanding of the interpreter* describes how the reader's foreknowledge is brought to anticipation of the text. This meets the *essence of that which is interpreted* and is 'the particular kind of reality which is experienced in the act of interpretation', constitutive of the text. But

literary interpretation not only questions the work; the work also questions the one who understands. The circularity of the interpretative process lies in the movement of questioning and being questioned.

(p.107-8)

So, finally, the *truth of what is interpreted* is a dialogue with self. 'Each factor', says Murray 'emerges through making explicit what is involved in the preceding one ...', and the circle is joined when the truth of the work qualifies the experience of the interpreter.

Historically speaking, the science of hermeneutics belongs to the world of literary texts, and originally to biblical study. But it is clear that as a description of engagement with objects, the hermeneutic circle may describe the more general process of experience, as well as the more specific one of phenomenological research. Metaphorically, then, we could see any situation of objects as a text for interpretation by the researcher; his report will be hermeneutic if it tries to explicate his circular involvement with his objects. Our response to his work is similarly circular. So if verification can be said to describe the intuition of the object, we can see that it is properly a hermeneutic moment.

How does such a view of research differ from what is characteristic of the research attitude? In minimising the involvement of consciousness in the making of knowledge, science in one move suspends the operation of the hermeneutic circle, ignores the linguistic constitution of reality and so immures itself from its objects and from morality. This creates the antinomy of explanation and interpretation which Dilthey (1976) established as exclusive. But Ricoeur (1978) shows that they are in fact continuous moments of the same process of understanding, explanation being a refinement for the sake of communicability. Scientific facts are not moments in a different circle, but events which have been sanitised by a research technology so that the 'original bestowal of meaning' is no longer visible. Walker (1980) suggests that the literary tradition of research report which distills wisdom retrospectively belies the 'prospective' and oral process of actual discovery. He draws on the testimony of Medawar (1969) himself a biologist, who says that the scientific paper 'glosses and edits all you can actually need to know to replicate the process of discovery'. Not only is

this process not the methodologically clean one it is popularly supposed to be, but it uses linguistic rather than mathematical structures. Medawar tells of biologists in a particular experiment who ask repeatedly of their data "Does it tell a story?"

Narrative man

Freudian psychoanalysis is an exemplary hermeneutic whose aim is to discover with the patient the 'text' of his life, and so to teach him the language of his experience. It is the view of Kermode (1975) that Freud's research into dreams was so aimed at 'formulating principles applicable to the larger class that contains all narrative discourse'. This 'larger class' is surely described by the narrative form which the intentional structure of consciousness provides around itself. According to Sartre, man is always telling stories; it is narrative which gives coherence over time to the field which the intentional arc (of Merleau-Ponty) inhabits. Narrative is not, then, exclusively a property of fiction, but because consciousness shares this structure with it, fiction may have a similarly privileged access to the real. Butor (1970) recognises this relationship, and claims for the novel in particular a profoundly heuristic function; the novel, he says, is itself a search for form, and study of this form

allows us to rediscover beyond this fixed narrative everything it camouflages or passes over in silence: that fundamental narrative in which our whole life is steeped.

(1970)

We have said that all research is search for form; if the novel is similarly charged with describing reality, it is worth exploring what we can learn from its method.

Scholes and Kellogg (1966) have described two main and antithetical modes of narrative; the *empirical*, which has 'a primary allegiance to the real', is realised by the *historical* account, true to fact, or else by the *mimetic*, which is true to experience; the other mode, the *fictional*, has 'its allegiance to the ideal', and its forms are *romantic*, 'which cultivates beauty and aims to delight', and the *allegorical*, which 'cultivates goodness and aims to instruct.' It is immediately clear that the novel can have any of these forms, and has done so in keeping with developments in human knowledge. The realistic novel had an objective correlate which words hence pointed to; but developments in psychology, particularly, have led writers to a 'fictional' rather than 'empirical' mode whose referent is 'in' consciousness if it can be said to be anywhere at all. Lodge writes

The mimetic impulse towards the characterisation of the inner life dissolves inevitably into mythic and expressionistic patterns upon reaching the citadel of the psyche.

(1978, p.87)

Murdoch (1978) similarly reports one of the dominant twentieth century forms of the novel as 'crystalline', a small quasi-allegorical object portraying the human condition and not containing characters in the nineteenth century sense ...

(1978)

Reference, if it is allowed, is thus turned in on the lexical surface of the text, and the reader's attention is dominated not by referents or plot, say, but by some internally-rhythmic system of the composition. In the extreme Barthean account (1975), characters become collections of *semes* - such as honesty, wit, etc - which attach to names. Where writers once wrote to address a single, realistic, perceptual world, they now increasingly give up this 'reality' in the attempt to find the mythical, symbolic, archetypal structures behind individual experience.

But, paradoxically, these allegorical and fragmenting forms are attempts at a better, truer empirical form. These developments are not simply literary responses to a field opened up by psychology and linguistics and anthropology; they are, as Malraux says of style, 'a call for and not a consequence of a way of seeing.' What they innovate is reality itself. The novel is a search for the form which can carry the weight of its ever-unfolding insight, and the novelist's obligation is to make himself a stylistic and experiential citizen of a world that does not fully exist for him until he has done this; he has to invent the possibility of a book in a world he sees as not yet fully named.

(Bradbury, 1978)

But it is Butor (1970) more than anyone who insists on the moral and heuristic character of the novel, and through whose work we can begin to see its contiguity with research generally. In the following passage he might well be talking of the research-worker:

The novelist who refuses to accept this task (of 'unmasking, exploration, and adaptation'), never discarding old habits, never demanding any particular effort of his reader, never obliging him to confront himself, to question attitudes long since taken for granted ... becomes the accomplice of that profound uneasiness, that darkness, in which we are groping our way. He stiffens the reflexes of our consciousness even more, making any awakening more difficult; he contributes to its suffocation, so that even if his intentions are generous, his work is in the last analysis a poison.

(1970)

And one could similarly substitute 'research' for 'the novel' in his conclusion:

Formal invention in the novel, far from being opposed to realism as short-sighted critics often assume, is the *sine qua non* of a greater realism.

(*ib.*)

A call for a way of seeing

What persuades us that we have returned to talk of research is the sense of responsibility towards his matter which the researcher should share with the novelist, and the criterion of truth-to-things with which we appreciate a work. In the case of the novel as with the moral research, the 'original bestowal of meaning' arises from the ground of reality, and generates an intentional appraisal of those objects which liberates consciousness from its previous, less particular way of holding them. Conversely, the worst of research is just like the form of those novels which

give us an image of reality in flagrant contradiction to the reality which gave them birth and which they are concerned to pass over in silence. They are impostures which it is the duty of criticism to expose; for such works, for all their charm and merits, preserve and deepen the darkness, imprison consciousness in its contradictions, in its blindness, which risks leading it into the most fatal disorders.

(Butor, 1970)

But, pitched against the *status quo* of the novel - or of standardised research methods - the writer has the task of delivering his work from its 'original bestowal of meaning', whilst the objects of this bestowal remain our only test of its rightness. Lodge (1978) describes the dynamic of this essentially rhetorical problem:

In the novel personal experience must be explored and transmuted until it acquires an authenticity and persuasiveness independent of its actual origin; while the fictive imagination through which this exploration and transmutation is achieved is itself subject to an empirical standard of accuracy and plausibility.

(p.108)

The text becomes a witness of that dynamic for it 'lives' for the reader between the finite statements it presents lexically, and the infinite experience of the reader, which verifies them. But if texts are ever open to new

integrations, it is mistaken to suppose that they are merely 'like a picnic, to which the author brings the words and the reader the meaning' (Frye, 1957.)

The correlate of the author's responsibility is just that of the reader, and if the novelist creates his characters - as Thackeray said - by 'consulting' them, then the reader must do the same. We no longer identify the meaning of a text with its *mens auctoris* but, as B.S. Johnson (1978) points out, an author takes care with words because he has a precise job for them to do, which fails or is frustrated if they rather license for the reader something other than what the text - as the author's agent - requires and provides. But there remains an area of negotiation because the text is self-consciously distinct from 'the thing', and because appreciation must be coherent within personal experience. It is for reasons like this that Butor calls the novel 'the phenomenological realm *par excellence*, the best possible place to study how reality appears to us, or might appear ...'. And it is because there is such an intentional space between entropy and redundancy - a breach in intersubjectivity - that hermeneutics establishes itself as the science of involvement with a text.

The novel stands as all of a form, a metaphor and a model of research. As a form, its wholly linguistic character suggests its moral commitment to the reader's experience, without which its life is limited; as a metaphor for research it chiefly emphasises the urge to present veracious narrative; as a model it combines these virtues to show how the definition of reality is essentially a linguistic and therefore co-operative activity, directed at objects which it can never exhaust. But it is mainly as a form that it is valuable because given with its form is the obligation to search for form, failing which it can have nothing to say.

There is also, in the system of internal dependencies which constitutes the novel, part of its own hermeneutic, as it were. For this formal invention is the transparent display of the terms of its claims to characterise reality; the hermeneutic circle is closed if these terms satisfy the demands of the reader that his experience be intentionally coherent. If he cannot verify the text, it remains intentionally true that the text has failed. But since research makes a more explicit claim to characterise reality, it needs to surpass the novel in the articulation of its method. Where the novel carries the terms of its formal invention as a virtual function of the text, research should be explicit about what it is doing and why. A hermeneutic approach to research demands that the 'original bestowal of meaning' be evident. The notion of the hermeneutic circle further requires that data be negotiable with the personal and wider cultural and disciplinary values of the interpreter; by revealing how objects have been characterised as data - that is, how an event became a text - the hermeneutic research provides us with the particular clues necessary to its evaluation in experience.

From our exploration of subjectivity, we understand that truly phenomenological research must have an at least implicit recognition of the intentional relations of subject and object, and is not, therefore, merely 'personal'; the analogy of research with the novel points to the necessity of perpetual innovation to provide techniques special to the object of enquiry; by finally placing the whole within the frame of hermeneutics, we can now say that the moral enquiry describes its engagement with its objects, and justifies its claim to be talking about real objects by revealing its own orientation. What might such a piece of research actually look like ?

Conclusion : reaffirmation

What has been described - or prescribed - is of course hardly new, and there are now several examples of educational research which embody some if not all of these principles. One of the earliest was an enquiry carried out by Inglis (1969), who investigated the English curriculum in the Fourth year of thirteen schools in a (then) quite innovatory style. I quote at length from an inspired introduction to the work:

Such research has no utilitarian justification; it cannot provide incontrovertible data for prediction. It justifies itself more as a map on which many individuals may find their place. Like a novel, it gives readers (or participants in the dialogue) a chance to recognise themselves, and to do this it needs to realise that 'subtle interrelatedness' (in D.H.Lawrence's phrase) which marks creative fiction. It needs, therefore, to attempt a realisation of a total context, an intellectual and moral milieu, and any such attempt will only make sense as there is present in the writing without self-importance or self-consciousness the personality of the writer himself. In such a context in his own society, reflection upon the work and the relationships within the work is a natural and right thing to record; it is an essential part of truthfulness about the work ...

I, the writer of this book, am a part of the subtle interrelatedness which I write about. Often I cannot prove what I am saying. It is a matter of interpretation. I believe it, however, and I intend this kind of effort to reveal a certain significance about the social realities of education which are otherwise neglected. I hope to suggest the wild and peculiar regions of superstition, ideal fantasy and prejudice which move in the minds of children, however simple and straightforward commonsense needs must think of them as being. I want further to define the nature the imaginative status and the function as yet largely potential of the teacher in school and society, and in particular the English teacher. For the teacher, as we all half-know, is the source of a people's energy, of its powers of subversion and the

roots of its continuity. Yet we do not train him to feel this truth and very few teachers act on it. He is unsure of what he does know and how he can act - every union action, examination, or use of a cane witnesses this uncertainty. He does not know in what dialectic he is caught up, nor how to discover it. He does not know what the lives of the children among whom he stands are worth

(Inglis, 1969, p.15 & 16)

The reader must of course judge for himself the tenor of Inglis' work, and how successful he was in his attempt; that his aims are still more relevant and unfulfilled in the general practice of English teaching is not an indication of failure. But what chiefly interests me in this passage (and in the research as a whole) is the mark of its commitment and even outrage; there is clear, human point to it. Laid out before us is the whole story of an engagement, as far as that is possible, in its practical and ideological honesty.

None of this makes it 'phenomenological' or 'hermeneutic' by necessity, and of course it does not matter whether it is known in this way, although it is interesting that Holbrook has recently come to see his *English for the Rejected* (1964) as essentially a work of phenomenology.¹ He does so, I believe, because of the work's declared human values and its efforts to discover what is true in them. Such work as this, and Inglis', is not distinguished from other research by features like the syntactical presence of the author - the "I" which it shares with case-study methods, for example - but because it is both practical and engaged, the research itself subordinating 'empirical' observation, however benign, to passionate concern to improve practice *from within practice*. For what use is research which, like Wittgenstein's philosophising, 'leaves things as they are' ?

1 - in a personal communication with the author.

Perhaps I have merely given a description of the best of all educational research, a description which would fit many pieces of research never remotely conceived as phenomenological. The truth is that in making explicit the processes of meaning and truth, phenomenology deliberately maximises not only what is common to the best of enquiry, but what is in fact essential to all operations of consciousness, and hence to all research. Phenomenology 'merely' provides the opportunity for research to be honest about rather than take for granted the human conditions in which a work arises and comes to have meaning.

The benefits of such enquiry are not 'academic', but in the very best senses practical. It is a function of this thesis that contribution to knowledge is not a direct possibility. But the researcher - and most particularly the teacher-researcher - makes a different contribution: the result of radical reflection is inevitably improved practice, since heuristic thinking and thoughtful practice go hand in hand. This does not mean that research projects should become confessional, 'growth', therapeutic or other self-directed schemes, and this is not the necessary outcome of a programme of reflection; reflection on experience is only good if it seeks out the real objects which unify that experience, and which make the experience recognisable to others.

So the final recommendation is ingenuously simple. Perhaps more than at any other time, English Studies now needs, through the mediation of every single one of its teachers, to turn back on itself with radical questions: Why do I do this, or that? What ultimately for? How should I do it better? What is the value which is its measure? But to do this they do not

need the sedimented schemes and models of language which educational research has assumed; they need *on each occasion to create them anew* so the stories they tell will be of their own 'original bestowal of meaning'. We should expect no less of anyone who presumes to work in a truly expressive discipline.

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Appendix A : Summary scheme of the argument of Chapters 4 and 5

Chapter section	linguistic unit	intentional area	Chapter 4		Chapter 5
			characters of <i>langue</i>	characters of <i>parole</i>	Thesis for methodology
i	phoneme	Experience	The phenomenal form of speech	The aesthetic character of speech	<i>In examining language in terms of its symbols we may lose sight of the fact that these symbols represent an event in experience</i>
ii	word	Communication	The virtual nature of discourse	The eventual nature of discourse	<i>Words may have lexical senses but personal interpretation gives them significance</i>
iii	sentence	Style	The choice and combination of items	The existential basis of style	<i>In speech we re-create meanings in a personal style</i>
iv	discourse	The Will	The Organisation of Language	The existential structure of discourse	<i>Mostly, dialogue is neither pre-meditated nor a finished product</i>
iv	World	Being	The <i>Logos</i>	The heuristic character of speech	<i>Meaning - even to the speaker - comes with the act of talking</i>

Appendix B : Some further notes on the enquiry reported in Chapter 5.

i. The school and the students

The usual class teacher, Yve Shrewsbury, gave me these notes some months after I had finished working with this group:-

"Jagger School: Community School in name only. Built in 1954. S.P.S. In the middle of a large council estate on the edge of the city. Predominantly white working-class.

The students: Upper 6th: I only taught them for a year. They were passed on to me with very poor recommendations, badly-motivated, lazy but mostly disruptive. They turned out to be some of these things, but mostly very lively and very nice.

Murray: A drain-pipe in a grey mac. Very odd boy. Hardly ever did any work. Rarely turned up with books etc., only ever wanted to discuss sex, mostly mine.

Tony: A wonderful boy! outgoing. Verbally very good; real problems with written work. Lazy!

Paul: A clever boy who knew it. On his own was very nice. In class he constantly put down the others who were struggling and could cause a lot of aggro within the group.

Kevin: Salt of the earth! Not really up to English 'A' level. A plodder but worked very hard. Really did try his best. Constantly got at by Paul, who always tried to put him down.

Martin: Again a lovely boy. Hard working but found Plath difficult. Suffered from Paul's acid personality.

Shane: Quiet, unassuming. A clever boy who worked hard. I really liked him.

Luke: Very shy; a real worker but had lots of problems with English lit. Not really up to 'A' level.

Julie: Loud, confident, lazy tons of personality. She always thought she would get by on her own brilliance; unfortunately she didn't have it. (P.S. Did you know she's singing in a nightclub in Tenerife?! True!).

Gillian: Probably the mousiest, quietest girl I've ever met. Rarely did any work, and did not speak in lessons for the whole year.

Sally: A very bright hard-working girl with a quiet confidence in her own abilities, she was probably the most respected girl by the rest of the group who on the whole didn't like each other very much.

Dawn: Very bright, quiet, hard-working; she probably had the greatest insight into Plath's poetry.

Vicky: A lovely girl, a bit of a plodder, had great difficulties with Plath; her main problem was that she took everything literally and always wanted to talk about Ted Hughes and Plath and what their relationship was like."

I should record that in my opinion Yve was an exemplary teacher, who gave a great deal to each of the students. I, too, learned much from my time spent at the school. Chiefly, although the ideas in Chapter 5 are my own, their final shape owes much to Yve's collaboration and criticism; there remain, of course, areas of interpretative disagreement between us.

ii. The exercise

The class had not previously worked in this way. On this particular day, they met as a whole and spent some ten minutes considering the poem in pairs; Paul had previously been asked to prepare a short introduction to the poem which he presented, before the groups went off to separate rooms; they were given the following questions, largely to ensure that there would be some discussion:

What characterises each section of the poem?
 What do you think are the most important images?
 What links the sections?
 Compare this poem with 'Getting there', or 'Death and Co', or any others that we've done.

iii. The text

The groups obviously dealt with the whole of Berck-Plage, although Chapter 5 is based on their interpretation of the first stanza only. This is reproduced here; the remainder of this very long poem can be found in Ariel, (Plath, 1965).

Berck-Plage by Sylvia Plath

(I)

This is the sea, then, this great abeyance.
 How the sun's poultice draws on my inflammation.

Electrifyingly-colored sherbets, scooped from the freeze
 By pale girls, travel the air in scorched hands.

Why is it so quiet, what are they hiding?
 I have two legs, and I move smilingly.

A sandy damper kills the vibrations;
 It stretches for miles, the shrunk voices

Waving and crutchless, half their old size.
 The lines of the eye, scalded by these bald surfaces,

Boomerang like anchored elastics, hurting the owner,
Is it any wonder he puts on dark glasses?

Is it any wonder he affects a black cassock?
Here he comes now, among the mackerel gatherers

Who wall up their backs against him.
They are handling the black and green lozenges like
the parts of a body.

The sea, that crystallised these,
Creeps away, many-snaked, with a long hiss of distress.

iv. The transcriptions

1 : Murray, Paul, Tony :

- 1 M : right, Berck-Plage by Sylvia Plath
 2 P : OK, erm the poem
 3 T : set out in seven parts
 4 P : seven sections and beginning with a first very personal, view of a, French holiday resort for erm (?) people, it progresses through the seven sections to
 5 T : burial scene
 6 P : a burial scene
 7 T : seems to follow progression of a person who's died in this place and who's been took out
 8 M : I think a lot of people at Berck-Plage were, thingies, war, war injuries
 9 P : they might have been yeh
 10 M : they were actually I think, it (?)
 11 T : first
 12 P : it begins with a description of the actual scene at Berck-Plage the seaside resort, and as the poem progresses, er other ideas are introduced so, on top of the sort of main theme
 (noise)
 and these extra themes carry on until the actual scene changes 'n
 13 T : it seems that she puts ideas on to 't actual description but n then, ideas get more and description gets less, and eventually its all ideas and actual description just, fades away
 14 P : yes er I see what you mean, yes good point
 15 M : yes, yarse
 16 P : we have some erm sort of pointers here, like erm What characterises each section of the poem? well if we take section 1 first of all, it is, it is the sort, of description of the, the actual, seaside resort This is the sea, then, this great abeyance and this is the sun's poultice draws on How the sun's poultice draws on my inflammation
 17 T : yeh I think its supposed I think that, there's a bit of cynicism in that first er, How the sun's poultice draws on my inflammation, supposed to mean, you shouldn't, don't go away wi' t'idea that being by the seaside'll make you better, erm sun'll make you better and how, how is sun supposed to draw on yer inflammations?
 18 P : I think there could be something in the fact that, y'know the people are by the sea, but y'know, they're cripples
 19 T : useless yeh
 20 P : its its not going to do anything to them anyway
 21 T : its abeyance in'it, its but
 22 M : but useless
 23 P : there's a sort of contradiction in the actual thing because there y'know the sea is sort of the place where all life came from in the first (T : yeh) place a sort of life-giving force while y'know these people sort of, life-defying if you like, cos their lives (?)
 24 T/M : yeh
 25 P : getting to be old infirm y'know their no chance of carrying on life at all
 26 M : in the normal sense

- 27 P : in the normal sense of the word yes, good point
 28 T : second point just seems to be describe, most its, I don't know the description of one.

2 : Kevin, Shane, Martin, Luke :

- 1 K : I'll start reading what notes I've got then shall I, take it section by section... first one sort of, sets the scene it its obviously er showing yer that its its a place that she's actually been to this Berck-Plage, and er, ther're a lot of images in the first one sort of de denoting emptiness, illness, there's priests included er fishers, er the idea of the sea as a creative centre, er, is also included in that, n its one of t'most over-powering
 2 S : a creative centre a creative centre where d'you get that from
 3 M : a creative centre can I ask you where you get that from though
 4 K : yeh, erm well it comes from the er different things, the er, ... oh where is it... it does follow through then this This is the sea, then, this great abeyance, erm, you get the idea from it that it is a sort of creating, force, its its powerful, its great and its vastness they talk about, er
 5 S : yeh, now its emphasising the emptiness isn't it
 6 K : yeh, but
 7 S : cos it isn't creating anything
 8 K : well I don't know
 9 L : as though its useless worthless for them, there because
 10 M : What's abeyance mean now
 11 S ; vastness
 12 K : oh is it I thought (?) confused
 13 L : yeh emptiness
 14 S : its just a vast empty sea and they're all crippled aren't they so its really worthless to them
 15 M : this is a positive image the Electrifying-coloured sherbets what's that
 16 S : that's emphasising holiday atmospheres
 17 M : I thought it could be er t'foam on t'sea
 18 L : no
 19 M : sherbets, yeh they all fizz up don't they like white what's up wi' yer
 20 K : there is holiday-type atmosphere isn't it erm then description of the sea y'know like its vastness it sort of describes a certain lack of human contact, that'd foll that'd follow through with these people they sort of they're away from everybody else, they're sort of away from society aren't they a separate er community on their own erm ... then, it carries on in in Section 2 er, black boot that's that's
 21 S : no it jumps ahead a bit (?)
 22 L : it changes in Section 2 doesn't it
 23 K : yeh
 24 S : that that Section 2
 25 M : yeh tone of it tone of it changes
 26 K : if you go back to Section 1 then that black cassock association, it refers to death, doesn't it... that's that's a sort of negative thought er and then you get mackerel gatherers she

she seems to be alternating in ea ea within each sort of section with positive and negative thoughts and also er just ideas and images and also actual, experiences like probably she's obviously been to this place, she has been to Berck-Plage, erm and she sees these mackerel gatherers, that sort of shows a positive side of life er and then ideas contrast er between death and disease and er the sort of the land and the sea where these people are, I think they, I definitely think that they, that the sea's sort of seen as a, a sort of harbour of life... whereas they

- 27 S : where they're separated
 28 K : whereas this place they're separated from it, because there's something wrong with them
 29 S : yeh I agree with that
 30 M : what's this, explain what significance this black boot has then

3 : Julie, Sally, Dawn, Vicky, Gillian :

- 1 J : d'you want me to say what we've got
 (noise)
 2 S : right we started off and we said
 3 J : we just said its what section in general's just a scene-setter, its, sort of, saying its, scene-setter for
 4 S : y'know its describing
 5 J : Berck-Plage
 6 S : describing the holiday atmosphere, its also describing
 7 J : also bringing in hospital elements and
 8 S : bringing in (?)
 (noise)
 9 S : yeh the hospital and these convales, these people that are convalescing, not very nice y'know
 10 V : shown by what
 11 S : negative images well er, look Electrifying-colored sherbets, scooped from the freeze by pale girls
 12 J : that that's er ice-cream
 13 S : that's ice-cream and then also, erm, wait a minute where is it, Is it any wonder he puts on dark glasses?
 14 V : (?)
 15 J : no, thats scene-setter for t'holiday
 16 S : that's a tourist
 17 J : tourist(?)
 18 V : I thought that were t'priest because Is it any wonder he affects a black cassock?
 19 J : we can't that's the only sentence we don't understand properly
 20 S : but also we think it might
 21 J : we think it might
 22 S : but a lot of its got a double meaning y'know its the idea of tourism but also the idea of this, this, convalescent
 23 J : I mean like that where it says Is it any wonder he puts on dark glasses? we're seeing that from t'tourist point of view, puttin on dark glasses and also, from like that old man's point of view like ..
 24 V : er he's put the dark glasses on
 25 S : blocking out things
 26 J : blocking out things

- 27 D : (?) negative images
- 28 V : and that as well, that I have two legs she's makin a point of it like nobody else has got two legs
- 29 D : she's like
- 30 J : yeh its like .. I think there should be emphasis like I have two legs and I move smilingly like I've got em but nobody else has
- 31 V : yeh n I can smile because of it
- 32 J : yeh
- 33 S : she's free to move around but the others can't, they're in their wheelchairs cripples
- 34 V : like (?)
- 35 J : yeh
- 36 S : its just y'know, sort of a scene-setter
- 37 J : a scene-setter
- 38 S : bringing the ideas in her mind to the sort of
- 39 J : oh oh everything, y'know going there as a tourist
- 40 D : what's A sandy damper kills the vibrations
- 41 J : we thought that that were, y'know when you sit down on't beach, y'know I don't know if you feel it when you sit down its like a right, damp dumb thud, y'know and it does, when yer lying on the beach yer can't
- 42 S : I just thought it were the sand on the beach
- 43 J : yeh that last line The sea, that crystallised these/Creeps away y'know like tide creeping out y'know like it does, many-snaked, y'know when t'sea goes out it it leaves all them little like snaky lines on t'beach, with a long hiss of distress y'know
- 44 S : its an idea that the sea's sort of distressed with what it sees
- 45 J : what it sees and a hiss of distress literally as well, because it does hiss as it goes out
- 46 V : why are t'mackerel-gatherers walling up their backs against him
- 47 J : we think that well I think anyway that mackerel-gatherers fishermen they just turn their backs to these people, they don't want to have nothing to do with them, y'know they just turn away from them
- 48 V : n that about, lozenges
- 49 S : well they're t'fish
- 50 J : they're t'fish
- 51 S : They are handling the black and green lozenges like the parts of a body
- 52 J : and if you notice though lozenges comes into it a lot and er throughout poem
- 53 V : and she describes coffin
- 54 J : yeh and I think its some reference to t'drugs and pills
- 55 S : medication
- 56 J : medication they're on all t'way through
- 57 D : cos you ave fish when you're ill don't you
- 58 J : yeh yeh they do yeh you give fish for protein.