Laura (Riding) Jackson

&

Schuyler B. Jackson

RATIONAL MEANING

~

A New Foundation

for the

Definition of Words

—— and ——

Supplementary Essays

Edited by William Harmon ~ *Introduction by Charles Bernstein*

"The publication of *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words* brings to completion one of the most aesthetically and philosophically singular projects of twentieth-century American poetry. No North American or European poet of this century has created a body of work that reflects more deeply on the inherent conflicts between truth telling and the inevitable artifice of poetry than Laura (Riding) Jackson."

—Charles Bernstein, from the introduction

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Existing only in manuscript since the 1940s but enjoying an underground reputation among friends and advocates, this primary document by one of the most original and influential of American poets and thinkers is now being published as *Rational Meaning*, Laura (Riding) Jackson's testament of the necessity of living for truth. Begun as a dictionary and thesaurus in the 1930s, the work developed into a fundamental reevaluation of language itself. Riding, in close collaboration with her husband, continued this monumental project over the succeeding decades, completing it after his death in 1968. The work, which she regarded as a "Magna Carta of the human mind," has heretofore been seen by only a handful of people. Yet the recent resurgence of interest in Laura Riding (1901–1991) is nourishing the growth of scholarship and study, in which this culmination of a life's work will play its part as her true significance becomes more widely understood.

At the age of forty, having already produced a substantial and challenging body of poetry, stories, and criticism, Laura (Riding) Jackson renounced poetry and began to concentrate on the discovery of the principles that embed truth and meaning in words. She believed that, if words and meaning could be irrevocably fused, people would become "morally articulate" and thus could never lie. This inquiry, which reaches out to include literature, philosophy, linguistics, and lexicography, would

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RATIONAL MEANING

AND

SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAYS

RATIONAL MEANING

A New Foundation for the Definition of Words *and* Supplementary Essays

Laura (Riding) Jackson
and Schuyler B. Jackson

~

Edited by
WILLIAM HARMON

Introduction by
CHARLES BERNSTEIN

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INTRODUCTION

Charles Bernstein

That He another day woke to find himself speaking a strange language, in which everything was known and clear—as if all difficulties of the intelligence were difficulties of language alone: in this language He had but to speak to discover, as, for instance, the word for *horse* here not only stood for horse but also made plain the quality of horseliness, what it was.

Laura Riding, Anarchism Is Not Enough *(1928)*

The publication of *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words* brings to completion one of the most aesthetically and philosophically singular projects of twentieth-century American poetry. No North American or European poet of this century has created a body of work that reflects more deeply on the inherent conflicts between truth telling and the inevitable artifice of poetry than Laura (Riding) Jackson. This conflict ultimately led, in 1941, to Riding's renunciation of poetry; it is also the basis of this long *summa contra poetica,* which she wrote with her husband, Schuyler Jackson, over a near forty-year period starting around 1948.

No doubt *Rational Meaning* will be most appreciated by those who appreciate the body of work of its principal author. Although the book is co-authored by Schuyler Jackson, the distinctive style and preoccupations of Laura Riding (Jackson) are present throughout this book and the fate of the work is intimately tied to the fate of Riding's poetry.

I emphasize that this is a "poet's work" because the genre of the book is that of a treatise on the philosophy of language. At another level, however, the book is an *ars poetica*—a "creative" work rather than a work of linguistics, philosophy, or literary criticism as they are professionally practiced. Indeed, the authors intentionally reject, across the board, the major developments in all these professional fields. Nonetheless, *Rational Meaning* is hardly a defense

of poetry in poetic prose, even as it sits in an anxious historical line with treatises and prophetic books by a number of earlier poets, from Sidney to Blake to Coleridge to Shelley to Poe. For this book presents a "rational" approach to meaning that is *opposed* to poetic approaches to meaning; in this sense it is not an *ars poetica* but an anti-poetics.

Yet in its testing of our senses of meaning, in its insistence on "language as the ground of human intelligence,"[1] *Rational Meaning* is a pursuit of poetry's love for language by other means, because, for the authors, the means of poetry delude. In this sense, its company might uneasily include other, more contemporary, if stylistically dissimilar, works: Louis Zukofsky's *Bottom: On Shakespeare* (which in its utopian impulse it most closely resembles), Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* Walter Benjamin's "Doctrine of the Similar," Ezra Pound's *Guide to Kulchur* and *Jefferson and/or Mussolini,* William Carlos Williams's *The Embodiment of Knowledge,* Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots,* and Gertrude Stein's *How to Write.* In making these comparisons, so against the grain of a work that insists that its contribution is precisely its non-comparability, I realize I am aestheticizing and historicizing this work in ways rejected by the authors.

Laura (Riding) Jackson was born Laura Reichenthal in 1901 in New York City. Riding's father was a Jewish immigrant from Galicia (Austro-Poland) and an active socialist; her mother was the daughter of German Jewish immigrants. She grew up in the Yorkville section of Manhattan and in Brooklyn, where she went to Girls' High School. Her background is quite similar to those of her immediate contemporaries Louis Zukofsky and Charles Reznikoff. And like Zukofsky and Reznikoff, Stein and William Carlos Williams, she grew up in a household where English was not the only native tongue. Her earliest experiences of language were multiple and inflected, yet early on poetry may have seemed a way to a purer language "where the fear of speaking in strange ways could be left behind" and also "as a way of speaking differently from the untidy speaking of ordinary talk."[2] Some of her first poems appeared in the early 1920s, in publications associated with the Fugitives. From 1926 to 1939 she lived, mostly with Robert Graves, in England and Mallorca, Spain (and briefly in Egypt and Switzerland and France), where she published numerous books of poetry, essays, and fiction under the name Laura Riding. Her work from this period is among the greatest achievements of any American modernist.

In 1939 Riding returned to America, where she met, and in 1941 married, Schuyler Jackson. Schuyler Brinckerhoff Jackson II was born in 1900 in Bernardsville, New Jersey, to an affluent, socially well-positioned family. He attended Pomfret, a Connecticut prep school, and then Princeton. His first pub-

lished article was on Yeats, with whom he had a happy meeting; and he shared with Riding a special regard for the Victorian poet Charles M. Doughty, whose epic poem *The Dawn in Britain* (1906), with its archaic recasting of language modeled in part on Edmund Spenser's English, holds a singular place of honor in *Rational Meaning*. In the 1930s Jackson was, for a time, a follower of Georges Gurdjieff. An aspiring poet and editor, as well as farmer, Schuyler was also the poetry reviewer for *Time* magazine, for which he reviewed Riding's *Collected Poems* in 1938. In 1943 Riding and Jackson moved to Wabasso, Florida, where they lived, mostly without electricity or telephone, until his death in 1968 and her death in 1991.

After the publication of her *Collected Poems* in 1938 and two non-poetry books the following year, Riding published almost nothing for thirty years. In 1970 her *Selected Poems: In Five Sets* was published under the name Laura (Riding) Jackson. In the preface she explained her renunciation of poetry, saying that the craft of poetry distorted the natural properties of words and that the sensuosity of words blocked what she called, in her poem "Come, Words, Away," the soundless telling of truth that is in language itself. She puts it this way in "The Wind, The Clock, The We":

> At last we can make sense, you and I,
> You lone survivors on paper,
> The wind's boldness and the clock's care
> Become a voiceless language,
> And I the story hushed in it—
> Is more to say of me?
> Do I say more than self-choked falsity
> Can repeat word for word after me,
> The script not altered by a breath
> Of perhaps meaning otherwise?[3]

The thirty-year pause in this life of writing, at least as reflected through a cessation of publishing, echoes the gap between George Oppen's *Discrete Series* (1934) and *The Materials* (1962). Oppen, just seven years younger than Riding, perhaps had not found a way to reconcile his left political commitment with his practice of poetry. But he did return to poetry, and with an epigraph that he could share with Riding: "They fed their hearts on fantasies / And their hearts have become savage."[4] Riding, whose politics moved in the opposite direction from Oppen's, never returned to poetry, where meaning is always "otherwise" than intended, instead turning (for what poets do is turn) toward a way of meaning otherwise, that is not toward poetry but to a voiceless telling.[5] The long poetic lacuna of these two "non-Jewish Jews" implicitly acknowledges the question later stated most famously by Theodor Adorno: Can

lyric poetry be written after—much less during—the systematic extermination of the European Jews? As far as I know, Laura (Riding) Jackson does not explicitly address this issue, but what she does say of 1938 and 1939 is significant: "Human sense of the human stood at last poised at the edge of an unignorable question about the human."[6]

Within this historical context, perhaps Oppen's commitment to a clarity and honesty ("that truthfulness / that illumines speech"[7]) that is expressible only though a highly delimited diction can be linked to (Riding) Jackson's recurrent concern for "right use" and "good sense" and her frequent censure of what she experienced as linguistic violation. For the unnameable catastrophe of these years, with its rationalized but irrational logic of extermination, engendered a crisis of and for expression in which the abuse of language became inextricably identified with the abuse of the human.

Rational Meaning originated in a project of Riding's from the 1930s, first called *Dictionary of Exact Meanings* and later *Dictionary of Related Meanings,* which was to include "24,000 crucial words of the English language to be defined in such a way as to erase any ambiguity that might have accrued to them over years of improper usage." The Oxford University Press turned down the proposal as "too individual and personal" and as an attempt to put words "into straightjackets." In 1938, Little, Brown, agreed to publish the book, even after a dismissive readers' report by I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden, who subsequently became targets of Riding's wrath.[8] Riding and Jackson continued to work on the dictionary until at least 1948, when they turned their attention to *Rational Meaning,* which Laura Jackson continued to work on after Schuyler Jackson's death.

To claim that *Rational Meaning* can be understood primarily in the context of the poetic project of Laura Riding cuts against the heart of the Jacksons' thesis. For though I believe that the idealization of meaning demonstrated so passionately and so relentlessly in *Rational Meaning* is problematic, it is the longing for rootedness in language's intrinsic meanings that makes this work so resonant. For *Rational Meaning* charts, with thankless diligence, the radical antithesis of those deanimating views of meaning that have come to hold sway, in this century, in linguistics and philosophy and poetry.

Imagine theories of the meaning of words as occupying a vertical spectrum. The lower limit of this spectrum would be the theory that the meaning of words is extrinsic or conventional: that words' meanings are determined only by linguistic, social, or historical contexts or by means of their systematic differences from other words. The upper limit of the spectrum would be the theory that the meaning of each and every word is inherent in the word itself, nonrelative, self-complete. Much of the philosophy, linguistics, and poetics of the twentieth century, and especially in the postwar period, has moved toward

the lower limit. In sharp contrast, *Rational Meaning* makes the case for the upper limit. By making this otherwise largely unrepresented argument, the Jacksons bring into full view the spectrum of views on the relation of meaning to language.

This work aims to restore the truth of language. While language, in the view of the authors, is "itself the anatomy of truth" (46), in modern times we have lost our rapport with language, ceasing to think of meaning as inhering in words and imagining instead that words have primarily psychological or social or historical or conventional meaning. This development is traced by the authors to a decline in the faith in reason. Their quest is "to make words tell all that human thought can hold, . . . to make human thought bring forth its all, for telling" (55).

The key concept of this book, and also the most elusive, is that words have intrinsic meaning. The authors decisively reject a Saussurean notion of the meaning of words as relative or differential. As early as 1928, in the dream story in *Anarchism Is Not Enough* quoted in the epigraph on "horseliness" above, Riding was flipping Ferdinand de Saussure's 1916 *Cours de linguistique générale* on its head. For Saussure is commonly understood to argue that "the relationship between signifier and signified is 'unmotivated' or arbitrary; that is, it is based purely on social rather than natural necessity: there is nothing about a horse that demands it be called 'horse,' since the French call the same thing *un cheval.*"[9] For related reasons, the Jacksons explicitly reject the structuralist and taxonomical notions of the relation of language to meaning that they find in the work of Noam Chomsky, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, and others.

Rational Meaning also rejects analytic philosophy, finding that it is a "trimm[ing]-down" of the domain of human knowledge to the "scientifically observable"—a critique the authors share with a wide range of thinkers and one that makes it clear that the rationality of which they speak is anti-positivist (151). Logical positivism, like structuralism, separates logic from meaning and in so doing "dissociat[es] language from the concept of truth," where *truth* means a "possessed awareness" in and through language (152, 379). When the authors complain of the scientific bending of terms like *space, time, cause,* and *world,* the comments resemble the critique of ordinary language philosophers without subscribing to J. L. Austin's or Wittgenstein's sense of the meaning of words in their use.

The perspective in *Rational Meaning* might seem closer to the linguistics of Charles Sanders Peirce, with his theory of icons, indexes, and symbols (suggesting, respectively, resemblance, linking, and conventional association between a sign and its object). Indeed, the Jacksons might appear to view the structure of the sign as something like iconic. But Peirce's linguistics is founded on an idea of inadequacy in the relation of the sign and its object that

is inimicable to the thesis of *Rational Meaning*. Equally antipathetic to the Jacksons would be Peirce's emphasis on the social construction, and contestation, of meaning.

In arguing for rational and against relative meaning, *Rational Meaning* also makes a case against poetry and its reliance on metaphor and linguistic materiality (sound play, puns, and rhymes). This should not be surprising considering the terms by which Riding has renounced poetry's insufficiencies. Yet an argument for the intrinsic meaning of words would also be a defense of poetry if this argument interpreted the expressive quality of sound patterns as indicating an inherent relation of sound to meaning. But, for the Jacksons, if words are not Saussurean signs, with "arbitrary" relations of signifier to signified, neither are they the sound symbols of Roman Jakobson's linguistics. Words, in the authors' view, are meaning-entities, not sound-entities. If we think of words as sound-entities (as poets may tend to do), then we think of words as symbolizing rather than meaning. Word choice in poetry, the authors assert, is governed not by "linguistic rightness" but rather by the desire to induce "emotional states," as by word sounds and rhythmic manipulation. As a result, the "truth-object" is at the mercy of a "professional requirement that the words have a physically attractive delivery and emotionally forceful impact" (171).

Although dictionaries are, for the Jacksons, the "Bible" of language, and far preferable to literature and linguistics, they hold that traditional dictionaries are of only limited help, since they define words in terms of usage and in terms of one another rather than through the intrinsic meaning of words. The Jacksons reject the notion that words are primarily the product of change and that meaning fundamentally shifts with time: "Language does not change, in its fundamental make-up, and in its vocabularistic essentials" (462). In this respect, among the most remarkable parts of this work are the definitional illustrations, for example of *cat* and *dog* in chapter 15 and of *truth* in chapter 18.

In *Rational Meaning,* the Jacksons argue that our natural disposition to words, our innate trust in them, has been unlearned. Rules of an imposed and denatured "logic" of use ride roughshod over the "natural custom of the language" (88). For the authors, a key symptom of this alienation from language is the tendency to synonymize words, that is, to define words in terms of their likeness to one another rather than their distinctness. Their motto is "one meaning, one word" (257): each word has "a meaning that is its own, and no other word's" (187). Indeed, if one word-sound (what they call "vocable") has several distinct meanings, the Jacksons would say that the one sound is, in fact, several words. Crucially, the Jacksons emphasize the distinctions between apparently similar words, a thorough demonstration of the poetic (they would say rational and nonprofessional) pursuit of *le mot juste*. Their efforts to distin-

guish *alter* from *change* from *modify* from *vary* brings to mind Austin's desire to show how ordinary language reveals crucial distinctions that philosophers mistake by trying to deduce such distinctions from an external logic. But the Jacksons' efforts aim at individual words and away from what they call a "vocabularistic photograph of usage" (377). Their view is not that words have no meaning apart from use but that good usage elucidates true meaning and, moreover, that good diction has deteriorated because of literary indulgence, "linguistic libertarianism," and "vocabularistic promiscuity" (97, 461).

For the Jacksons, the belief that only context determines meaning is a kind of nihilism; they are at pains to decry instances of "ordinary" word use that is loose and thoughtless—most touchingly when they note the destructiveness of the routinized use, in letters, of "Dear" and "Yours" (chap. 5, n. 1). They maintain an even more negative view of novel or invented word uses, as by poets, which aim at "breaking-up and nullifying" the meaning configurations on which the rational use of words depends (127) and thus compromise language's expression of what (Riding) Jackson in *The Telling* calls truth's "One"-ness.[10] Regrettably, their blanket rejection of all types of linguistic divergence or difference as an affront to "human self-sameness" elides distinctions between "bad" grammar, "broken" English, new words, acronyms, advertising slogans, obscenities, vulgarities, dialects, vernaculars, and slangs; nor do they consider how corporate and government manipulation of language differs from nonstandard language practices rooted in social resistance to the very axiomatizing of language that they rightly condemn.[11]

Rational Meaning does not argue for a mystical or theological foundation for words: the Jacksons see the formation of English as a historic event. They defend their recourse to Spenser's English (and to Doughty's) not as an archaic romanticism (Spenser was already archaic) but as a lamentable consequence of the decline of English diction.[12] Equally problematic, they insist on the name-like character of language's most basic elements—a noun-centeredness that is the focus of critique both in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (specifically its opening sections) and in the poetics of Riding's one-time ally, Gertrude Stein.

At the same time, the Jacksons reject any external or transcendental vantage point from which language would acquire its truths. They return us, again and again, to language as an enactment, a telling. Truth, in this light, is never exterior to language (there is no extralinguistic, "independent" reality), just as different languages are not exterior, but rather interior, to each other.

Indeed, *Rational Meaning* is at its best when decrying structuralist and positivist taxonomies that picture language as a nonhuman system, as a corpse, rather than respond to language as an actual site of human being. Objectification of language "tear[s language] out of the contexts of . . . reason" (chap. 8,

n. 2), turning it into a dumb show of signs, so that words become mere codes, ciphers for a significance that is always elsewhere, as if meaning accompanies words rather than being revealed through them. Theorizing meaning in terms of codes, symbols, and systems undermines the actuality of language as a practice of immediacy by dislocating meaning from words and toward abstract and hypothetical logics; the result is an alienation of sense and a Taylorization of value. "The particulars of language and not, note, the 'depth structures' that 'underlie' 'all languages' require the attention of that which is neither incidentally nor accidentally related to the world."[13] "Words have a necessity of usefulness for truth impressed into their meanings. . . . they are made to tell, to tell thought well, and rightly" (353).

Yet the authors' aspirations can veer toward a neo-Platonic idealism: a "unitary personality of being" (443), in which language, "touching perfection,"[14] is emptied of social and historical tempering. According to the Jacksons, words have virtually immutable meanings, the only good language is clear and correct, and poems ought to be banished from the republic as the purveyors of the merely subjective or, worse, the willfully ambiguous. They never stop trying "To hurl life back into the thin teeth / Out of which first it whistled,"[15] insisting that "nothing can have intellectual durability that does not involve an attempt to see the universe as a rational unity" (156).

Yet the vitality of this work is not in its intellectual durability and universality but in its fragility and peculiarity; not in its rational unity but in its utopian, obsessive unreasonableness, even its "idiotic defiance." Though perhaps it is not so much Athens as Sparta that is evoked, for if words make a journey through the world, the Jacksons seem to say, Come back with your words intact, unvarnished, soundless; or use them as shields, warding off all that is destructive and disorienting and vulgar, all that permutes and decays, all that voices frets with chatter. "Come, words, away from mouths," as Laura Riding writes in a poem,

> . . . away to where
> The meaning is not thickened
> With the voice's fretting substance. . . .
> Come, words, away to miracle
> More natural than written art.
> You are surely somewhat devils,
> But I know a way to soothe
> The whirl of you when speech blasphemes
> Against the silent half of language. . . .
> Centering the utter telling
> In truth's first soundlessness[16]

Rational Meaning is, to use Riding's words in a different context, "a hoping cof."[17] Perhaps it is the ultimate modernist testament to what Pound, himself in search of linguistic perfection, called "the plain sense of the word"; then again, perhaps it is postmodern testimony to what I would call *the pained senselessness of the world.* For if Pound believed that he could stare at a Chinese ideogram and unbear its meaning, Laura and Schuyler Jackson believed such self-evidence to be present in language's silently lucid pronouncements. For these poets of the anti-poetic, the truth is not in an exterior Idea of Forms but indwelling in the telling of human being in and as language.

Rational Meaning is the book promised in *The Telling,* Laura (Riding) Jackson's great philosophical work on the limits of poetry and the possibility for truth telling. If *The Telling* is (Riding) Jackson's *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing, Rational Meaning* is her *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (to consider Kierkegaard in this context). *Rational Meaning* is far more cumbersome and argumentative, in its complex and exacting exposition, than *The Telling,* which is a masterpiece of anti-analytic, anti-"literary" diction; in this sense it more closely resembles Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* or Stein's *Lectures in America.* If *The Telling* is evocative and concise, *Rational Meaning*'s very length testifies to its commitment to thoroughness and argument; it eschews the evocativeness of *The Telling* as too poetic; its prose is determinately anti-aesthetic. The authors are at pains not to make their work into a modern *Zarathustra;* Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* is more their model. Yet *Rational Meaning*'s idea of rationality continually turns on the self-evidence of what the authors are telling about language. Thus the work tries to thwart the accumulative or positivistic aspects of much linguistics and philosophy. The Jacksons don't want to get anywhere with their prose; rather, they want to return readers to basic facts whose importance they have neglected to recognize. "Words themselves are the only actual means of rectifying what has happened to words in people's consciousness" (330).

As much as the authors are against "poeticizing," they also are against providing any explanatory paradigm or set of special terms that might be used as a formula or theory for understanding language. This is neither a theory nor a poetics of meaning but a "foundation" of meaning. They want nothing less than a complete turn from the ways that poets and philosophers, anthropologists and social scientists, have regarded—they would say disregarded—language. In the end, it might be best to say that *Rational Meaning* is neither theology nor linguistics nor literature: its work is ethical. It argues for an ecological approach to language; its call to return to language's "organic identity" echoes calls to respect the earth's natural inhabitations (418). This

"green" dimension of *Rational Meaning* may also be worthwhile to consider in connection with the gender of its principal author;[18] in any case, *Rational Meaning* is one of the few philosophical treatises on the nature of language and meaning to be authored, or co-authored, by a woman.

Rational Meaning is in many ways a frustrating work. It is so long, and so preoccupied with its own prophetic significance and panoptic dismissals, that few readers will avoid discouragement.[19] The book courts discouragement and irritation, offering strong and unflavored medicine to an ailing society. Palatability, of various contemporary kinds, is exactly what the authors see as a problem. Many prophetic works, especially by such self-styled prophets—*iconoclastic* is the nicer word we have for such artists—are destined to be resented by their "audience." The authors lecture us as if we were children gone astray. They wish to call us back to the only true path of "the one life-story" of the "One Being" of an "Original Whole" (in the words of *The Telling*). They reject so much philosophy and poetry—all of structuralism and poststructuralism, all of modernism and postmodernism!—that it is foolish, even silly, to take personal offense. Yes, there are similarities between what these authors and what some others have said; but they are less interested in these similarities than in how they differ. This is the ground of their discourse.

If I disagree with much of what the authors say, I have found reasons other than agreement to appreciate what I question, knowing that the important thing is not to be persuaded by their arguments but to respond to them. The Jacksons stake out a powerful, often eloquent, often deliciously barbed, often achingly arched argument against the relativism of the modern age—one that goes much further in its critique than such anti-modern modernists as T. S. Eliot (as the authors are careful to note). I suspect it is an argument that, ultimately, will take a place of honor in the history of human thought.

This book settles nothing for me; it leaves me with questions that echo in my mind and on my tongue. Poetry—can it be?—a striving not for truthfulness but for truth? And what if all we do as poets—our forms, our structures, our love of sounds and patterns—moves us yet further from this singular truth? What if, that is, words have unitary meanings, call them rational meanings, and what if our poetry, our philosophy, our linguists, our dictionaries, lead us away from this grounded rationality of words—toward some evasive play of relative worth?

Laura (Riding) and Schuyler Jackson call us back not to some truth external to ourselves but to a truth available to all, a truth that is in every word we use, a "truth [that] requires language for its making" (364). They call us back to our rootedness in language, which is our human house, our destined home.

NOTES

Epigraph: Laura Riding, *Anarchism Is Not Enough* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), 171. I am grateful to Lisa Samuels for suggesting this passage and to her and to Susan Bee for comments on the manuscript.

1. Laura (Riding) Jackson, Afterword to *Lives of Wives* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1995), 325.

2. Laura (Riding) Jackson, "Twentieth Century Change in the Idea of Poetry, and of the Poet, and of the Human Being," in *P[oetry] N[ation] Review* 14, no. 1 (1987, review suppl. no. 1): 77-78, quoted in Deborah Baker, *In Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding* (New York: Grove Press, 1993), 37. The biographical and bibliographical information in this essay is based on Baker, *In Extremis;* Joyce Piell Wexler, *Laura Riding's Pursuit of Truth* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979); idem, *Laura Riding: A Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1981); and Barbara Adams, *The Enemy Self: Poetry and Criticism of Laura Riding* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990). I am also indebted to Jerome McGann's "The Truth of Poetry: An Argument," in *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), part of which appears as "Laura (Riding) Jackson and the Literal Truth," in *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 3 (1992). Some of Baker's biographical information is disputed by Elizabeth Friedmann, who is writing an authorized biography of Laura Jackson (personal communication, 3 Sept. 1996). Friedmann believes that Laura Reichenthal's maternal grandfather was Dutch and not Jewish, in other words not a *Deutsch* Jew. She also feels it is important to state that Laura Reichenthal's father came from what was at the time Austria (now Poland).

3. Laura (Riding) Jackson, *Selected Poems: In Five Sets* (London: Faber, 1970; reprinted New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 66.

4. George Oppen, *The Collected Poems of George Oppen* (New York: New Directions, 1975), 16. The lines recast Yeats's "We had fed the heart on fantasies, / The heart's grown brutal from the fare" in "The Stare's Nest by My Window," part 6 of "Meditations in Time of Civil War," in *Selected Poems and Two Plays of William Butler Yeats* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 107. The first poem of *The Materials* begins with a stanza that is close to Riding: "The men talking / Near the room's center. They have said / More than they had intended" (17).

5. (Riding) Jackson did publish a poem or two after the *Collected Poems.* She discusses her renunciation of poetry in *Rational Meaning,* chap. 2, n. 2 on pp. 446–49.

6. (Riding) Jackson, *Lives of Wives,* 326. Riding's post-1938 renunciation of poetry and turn to "rational meaning" resembles, in many ways, the renun-

ciation of Communism and turn to "core values" that was not uncommon among intellectuals in this period: one true belief changing to another true belief. Striking in this respect is Riding's 1939 tract *The Left Heresy in Literature and Life,* co-authored by "ex-Communist" Harry Kemp. In terms of *Rational Meaning,* it is worth noting that "scientific socialism," like logical positivism and structuralism, has the same sort of extralinguistic logic that is the primary critical focus of the book. But so, for that matter, does capitalism, with its deterritorializing multinational logics that axiomatize meaning as decisively as any of the forms of scientism denounced in *Rational Meaning*. From this perspective, Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's critique of structuralism in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* makes a strange bedfellow for *Rational Meaning*.

In his 1949 essay "Cultural Criticism and Society" Adorno wrote, "Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today. Absolute reification, which presupposed intellectual progress as one of its elements, is now preparing to absorb the mind entirely" (Theodor Adorno, *Prisms,* trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981], 34).

7. George Oppen, "Of Being Numerous," in *Collected Poems,* 173.

8. Baker, *In Extremis,* 367-68, 406–7. Riding's original collaborators on this project were Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, and, earlier, according to Elizabeth Friedmann (personal communication, 3 Sept. 1996), Jacob Bronowski. Friedmann disputes Baker's facts, noting that the reader's report was not by Ogden and Richards but rather that they were cited in one of two anonymous reports; she notes that the reports were "respectful." Baker, citing Oxford University Press's reaction to the dictionary proposal, has "straight-jackets" but should it be "straitjackets" (both are "correct" in my dictionary), or, as Friedmann identifies the source, "strait jackets"? It is a telling question, as words, and the facts that adhere to them slip and slide, despite every attempt to get them straight, no chaser. Like a stick refracted in the water, it's gotta be bent to look strait.

9. I quote here from a dictionary definition of *sign* in Chris Baddick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 205.

10. See Laura (Riding) Jackson, *The Telling* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); the main part was originally published as an issue of *Chelsea* 20/21 in 1967.

11. Or, to put it another way, the Jacksons are themselves licentious in their moral censoriousness. I have argued for the value of a bewildering variety

of nonstandard language practices, including Riding's, in *Content's Dream: Essays, 1975-1984* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1986), *A Poetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), and, most recently, "Poetics of the Americas," in *"An Area of Act": Race and Readings in Twentieth Century American Poetry,* ed. Aldon Neilsen (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

12. Doughty's *The Dawn in Britain* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1906) thusly beginith: "I chant new day-spring, in the Muses' Isles, / Of Christ's eternal Kingdom. Men of the East, / Of hew and raiment strange, and uncouth speech, / Behold, in storm-beat ship, cast nigh our Land! / New Light is risen upon the World, from whence / The dawn doth rise."

13. I quote from my poem "Palukaville" in *Poetic Justice* (Baltimore: Pod Books, 1979), collected in *Republics of Reality: Poems, 1975-1995* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1997).

14. "The creed offering hope of a way of speaking beyond the ordinary, touching perfection, a complex perfection associable with nothing less complex than truth" (Laura [Riding] Jackson, preface to *Selected Poems,* 12).

15. From Riding's "The Wind, The Clock, The We," in ibid., 66. The poem continues: "An idiotic defiance of it knew not what."

16. "Come, Words, Away," in ibid., 59. The last two lines only appear in Laura (Riding) Jackson, *The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* (New York: Persea, 1980), 136.

17. Laura Riding, *Everybody's Letters* (London: Arthur Barker, 1933), 119, quoted in Baker, *In Extremis,* 34. Baker suggests that the words are from a letter Riding wrote when she was ten.

18. See Laura (Riding) Jackson, *The Word Woman and Other Related Writings,* ed. Elizabeth Friedmann and Alan J. Clark (New York: Persea, 1993).

19. Critics have responded in kind to (Riding) Jackson's juridical pronouncements, characterizing her approach as "fascinating, frustrating, infuriating, illuminating" (Robert Gorham Davis); "uncompromising, intractable, intransigent" (Martin Seymour-Smith); as well as "dogmatic," "hostile," and "haughty" (see Wexler, *Bibliography,* sec. H).

EDITORIAL NOTE

My part in the production of this book has consisted in editing a typescript produced and revised over several decades by two authors. Although much of the work has amounted to fairly simple transcription of a clear text, I have encountered a number of difficulties caused by the complexity of the ideas, the exactitudes of the style, and the idiosyncrasies of the authors' handwriting. With such a long book, I have been reluctant to make it longer by appending much in the way of textual apparatus. I have chosen, instead, to honor the spirit of the authors' enterprise by staying as close to the original typescript as possible. Changes have been made to this text only when I have thought them necessary to correct indubitable transcription errors; these corrections have been made silently. With problems not so easily solved, I have resorted to the use of brackets to indicate interpolations, doubtful readings, or questions. Since the Jacksons owned a copy of the 1933 *Oxford English Dictionary,* I have invested that work with authority in matters of spelling and usage. Finally, quotation marks have been standardized; all first-level single quotation marks have been changed to double quotation marks.

I want to acknowledge my debt to John Nolan and Alan J. Clark, whose acquaintance with this work is greater than my own. They have been of invaluable assistance. Elizabeth Friedmann helped in numberless ways as well.

I owe yet another debt, even greater: to my wife Anne, who carried out the job of typing a very long and very challenging work. She and I had the privilege of knowing Laura during the last ten years of her life, and, honored by association with one so brilliant, we hope that our labors help to make accessible the work that meant so much to her and her beloved husband.

William Harmon

RATIONAL MEANING

AND

SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAYS

RATIONAL MEANING

A New Foundation for the Definition of Words

~

Laura (Riding) Jackson
and Schuyler B. Jackson

In Memoriam

Alfred R. McIntyre, President of Messrs. Little, Brown and Company
In grateful remembrance of his enthusiasm for the rudimentary conception anteceding this book, and the faithful backing he gave us in the first years of our difficult search for the way to make this book a reality.

E. F. Bozman, of Messrs. Dent and Company
In grateful remembrance of his early interest and support, and recognition of his extended forbearance towards us in our authorial vicissitudes.

Epigraph

Suppose that words *do* have meanings, meanings of their own. (Which is the reality.) What would the consequences be, if words were words only in having meanings peculiarly, inseparably, necessarily, theirs? (Which is the presupposition of language.)

If one used words as possessed of their meanings so thoroughly that they had no existence except as meaning what they meant, one would have to—in the use of them—mean what they meant, have in mind to express what they expressed. Otherwise, one would be, while seemingly at one with the sense of one's words, perpetrating a pretence with them, or, at best, putting oneself through an exercise in self-frustration.

But, do we not all mean the meanings of our words in using them—the pretenders, and those who say what they do not mean from some morbid inhibitedness, excepted? Do we not, with these exceptions, and allowance—of course—for accidental ignorance or misknowledge in the case of a particular word here and there, *always* do this?

Do we not—on the whole, and almost always—mean our words? No, we do not. Our minds are only partly given over to our words. And the human world as we know it (disordered, distracted) is the result of our being, thus, only partly responsible occupants of it. What would that world be if we used words entirely as, by their meanings, they call on us to use them, is an unknown. The aim of this book is to suggest some of the differences, besides indicating ways of making the change.

S. B. J.

(1967)

FOREWORD

This Foreword stands apart from the prefaces I have successively written for our book, in a period of twelve years. Its composition may be described as accumulative, progressing from an early personal statement through certain enlargements historically appropriate to its being of a more private character than the prefatory statements. It may be regarded as corresponding generally with the temporal expanse covered in the prefaces. The final portion of the Foreword is of late 1986—no arrangement for the book's publication being definitely in view at that time.

In the early 'thirties I began to feel a practical sense of urgency about something that had long troubled me. This was, that the use of words was in a bad way. The factor of urgency in my feelings was a product of accumulating awareness of the direct cause of the general state of word-use: it became plainer and plainer to me that the use of words was in a bad way because the knowledge of words was in a bad way. I committed myself to trying to make a new opening into the area of word-knowledge—the knowledge, that is, of what words mean. There is no conception of word-knowledge as a unity of words-knowledges. The characteristic conception of word-knowledge is, what this or that word means; there is no conception of language-knowledge as knowledge of the meanings of the words of a language in their interrelation as such. In my pursuit of my commitment, I did not meet an intellectually and morally companionate mind as to the things of language until I met Schuyler Brinckerhoff Jackson.

To the final stage of preparation of this book for possible publication, I had assumed that the preface I had written for it, as the completer of it for my husband and myself after he died, would be amply sufficient. What might need to be said preliminarily from the various personally and thematically relevant points of view seemed to have been said; and, also, as much of fortifying extension of the main matter seemed to have been included, in notes and supplementary articles, as could be accommodated in the book without overreaching

the boundaries of the subject (and, I hoped, those of the patience of the fully interested and serious readers). And yet there *is* more to say!

There seems to me to be need of a special candor [from] myself, as presiding authorially over the publishing eventualities on my and my husband's behalf, as to my view of what is here offered in it. I think that what is offered is a charter of human rights to the dignity of a speech of unlimited truth, and a declaration of linguistic independence from ideas of language that enslave the mind to other laws than those of its natural relation with its words. There is also in my attitude to the occasion of preparatory steps-taking towards the transforming of the book into a public actuality a very broad awareness (formed in long authorial experience) of the suspicious indifference with which writing that does not fall into any classification of kind but its own can be treated, especially when, being of its own kind, it is this with *sobriety*. Not only is this book of its own kind, by which I mean not that it is personally eccentric in its authorship, but that it is not adjusted in its "positions" to any others—mean that it has grown from the inside of its authors' hearts and minds to the public outside, and not the other way round (a course of growth that can never produce authentic internalities of feeling and thought): it is at the disadvantage, by the current criteria of "good" publicity-appeal, of being, as a work concerned with language, specifically *not* of a kind to come under the heading "Linguistics," or any heading of "semantic" reference (as "semiotics," "semiology"). "Linguistics" has a sub-heading, in letters inscribed in a manner intended to be visible only to writers on the subject of language, that reads: "Those who are not of us are against us, and will be as Naught. For we are the Synagogical All of The Modern Linguistic Communion."

Yet, despite our perceiving that our book had no place where to lay its head in the "linguistics"-dominated public world, we have not made Davidian effort in it to storm the linguistical strongholds, enter into battle royal against the Linguistical Armies with our homely personal forces. Readers may find that our not infrequent pausing to criticize features and aspects of professional, standard linguistics belies our repeated assurance that our book is not a polemical treatise. I urge them to try to adopt generally in their reading the attitude that they are people addressed on language as a subject concerning *them* primarily, in this book, as one involving reference to professional linguistics only because this exists to distract contemporary minds from their natural human orientations to language. We do not deal with linguistics other than as a distraction; in dealing with it, we deal with it as having that character. A distraction of its proportions cannot be proved to distract from, rather than promote, good aim of attention by being ignored.

There are happier matters to which reference is appropriate, in my parting words spoken as I look forward to sending this book forth into the public

domain, than the conditions of language-interest obtaining in that domain; those conditions cannot be thought of as favorable to a hearty reception for the book—except as it might excite enough sensitivity to them to produce enough discomfort for an eventual tardy welcome.

I have had, in the years since my husband died, for protection in a solitude that includes dangers and deprivations, with its blessings, unfailingly adequate varieties of ministration from the neighbor-members of the citizenry of little Wabasso, and that of the environing county; this has remained constant, despite the gradually spreading conversion, since my husband and I came here to work, about thirty years ago, of the entire state of Florida into the site of a Fountain of Old Age, its waters of Easy-Life rising per ounce to out-of-sight cost—but those who flock here to drink tell themselves that the weather (poor, mere, mortality-reinforcing weather) comes free.

There are many, at varying distances, of precious name to me, to whom a path of devoted feeling stretches, broadened with gratitude for ready presence to me in the recent later years. I limit report of these to two. Both are of academic identity, but the identity of friend has reduced the other identity to an incidental fact for me, and for them also, in different measure and manner, according to differences of personal nature (the claims of academic identity being braved differently by different souls). The first of those that I name here is Robert S. Sproat, Professor of English at Boston University. He died on September 22, 1976. I came to understand through communication with him by letter and telephone (he "called" me about once a month, to keep us in closer than, just, written meeting) that Robert lived on three levels, moving from one to the other with no change in moral values, only changes in expectation of the kind of experience afforded at each. These were—as it seemed to me—the ordinary-life level, the intellectual-life level, and the level of the spiritually real. The last I think he visited as the place of most claim, but visited sparingly, as if to pay the respect to it of not making it a haunt of solitude. It seems to me that, when we talked by the grace of these telephone-calls, he put himself instantly at that level, as where we veritably met. I have felt given, ever, by him, the support of a fellow-believer in a best beyond qualifications. His was an extraordinary unity of values maintained across a division into different levels of value that he saw, sadly, as what "the world" did to one's life. But, while oppressed by the world's assumption of a right to have its way with one's life, he did not yield to it the right to nurse privately a hope of one's own. I am sad over his not having seen this book, which he wanted to see; I believe there is meeting between it and his hope. This is a reason to the fore, in my gladness in the book's becoming ready for public existence.

Of those who have been friend to me and to this book at far geographical distance, I shall name only one other (there are others, indeed). George S. Fraser, Professor of English at the University of Leicester, England, put an

enthusiasm of faith in the importance of the book's coming into practical existence that contributed much to the speeding of it on its way to completion. Neither Robert Sproat nor George Fraser and I had any sight of each other. Friendship in both cases had to give recognition to differences in attitudes to things literary that cannot but amount to, in some senses, human differences. A few such sprung at times into prominence between George Fraser and myself, but I trust to the human affection that grew between us to prove us at one in the articles of linguistic faith to which this book subscribes that are, equally, articles of human faith.

I am hard put to it, in choosing persons of local identity to whom to pay gratitude's respect of special reference—neighbors, friends of the townlet and the county, who have been givers to me of the succor of loyal presence to me in my solitary work-perseverances. I shall choose just one, and let all the others be embraced in the identity of a company of kindness. I choose to name personally only a Negro man who became a friend of my husband and myself in years past, when he did work for us related to our fruit-growing and fruit-shipping activity. He made himself in a new way my friend after my husband died, seeking to exercise a protective care for needs of mine to which he might minister. He has a dramatic sense of himself. He can hardly read; but he is a lay preacher, keeps a Bible close at hand, exerts himself to propound Biblical and other maxims concerning the importance of at least trying to be perfect, and, in the first place, *making good one's word* (this, according to him, one's most important possession). *He* is not perfect. And I have discovered, pointing this out to him at times, that I too am a preacher!

Thinking on this man, and his reverent sense of the value of *words*, I am moved to point out how it is written in the Bible, as to exactitude: "For it must be precept on precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little," (Isaiah), and how promise is given there of there being turned "to the people" a *pure language*. And it is said, further, that they will not "speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth," (Zephaniah). And, later said, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words condemned"—and "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." I have said to Tom Herring, in preacher-manner, something of the following sort: "Good done does not show, it loses itself in the deed; what is done shines, not the doing, the doer." To which could be added, as to words: "What is proclaimed to be truth is only what is proclaimed to be truth. Words rightly spoken are true, but not because of a purpose to speak truth, only because of a purpose to speak rightly."

A most important mention of direct connection with my ability to carry the work of this book forward towards completion was the happy fortune of my being awarded a Fellowship of a year's duration by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Through this support, physical and material

burdens were lightened to an extent that brought completion within live view, besides allowing me to spare time and forces for other calls. There is also to be told that, beyond this happy relief, I have enjoyed interest on the Foundation's part in the book's progress towards completion, and its course towards publication.

But who could be found in this home region of mine, modest in its intellectual resources, capable of assisting me responsibly in the typing requirements and other needs of mine in this work—of giving the requisite accurate attention to the sustained course of intricate textual care? An at first unpromising trail of inquiry brought me eventually to young Susan Morris. It could not have been just her two years at the local Community College or her work-experience at the County library that made her equal to the handling of my manual script (found "difficult" by many), complicated by much correction and interpolation, at the typewriter, and working with me in perfect unison at checking points in the text and maintaining uniform three copies of the book. And there could be added other competences of hers, generously contributed to the total accomplishment. I think that perhaps my and the book's needs, and her store of capabilities, were made, if not in heaven, for each other, at least in Florida—which secretes an earthly providential beneficence the hiding-places of which have not all been dismantled by the destroying angels of civilization.

Finally, there is to include, within the bounty of Floridian donation, the hospitality and help extended to me by the Libraries of the University of Florida, for which I have personally to thank Dr. G. A. Harrer, Director, Dr. Laura V. Monti, Chairman, Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, and Mr. Sherman L. Butler, Director of the Interlibrary-loans Department.

My relations with the University of Florida, of use of its library resources, became rather inactive as my work on our book moved towards completion, and my reading needs on its account were reduced. But even into these latest years I continue in friendly connection with its library quarters. The fact that I have for many years been a permanent resident of Florida has received some incidental attention in academic projects undertaken in the State for respect-paying to its affiliations with things literary. But what I have done of work of writing, and study for writing, in my Floridian home-place, has been done in a naturally discovered, naturally offered, freedom of privacy. What has been done here need make no trouble for anyone of concern with what to do about it as matter for report. It has been done as nobody's business except as it might be found to be everybody's business. My husband and I were let be—left alone to be, left alone to do—by the Floridian version of the nature of nature, which, I think, is, in its essential universality, to let be, and let do. I have clung to the protection of my acreage-portion of Floridian universality, keeping the

book in safe waiting, together with what I have been let do besides, for freedom for waiting long enough.

[An] end came to my having the support of Susan Morris in my labors. But the support I had from her is built into what it enabled me to achieve. A parting became necessary[:] in accepting it, I was left with the fact of the support, and the unalterable memory of it. The preacher-person has remained in helping-hand association with me. I suffer many shortages in help, but there is, to balance this, a varied consciousness of near and far concerned consciousness of my predicaments of need. I am at peace with my circumstances.

There is the death of George S. Fraser in 1980, to record. Our friendship had lasted and became a close bond.

Strangely, in these whiles of seeming peace between my time of life and the time of the world of human affairs, I have experienced assaults of literary and personal malice that have no match, I believe, in vaunting liberties-taking with innocent truth in our time. The touch of ill-will, even of betrayal, was not new to me. But in these recent years I have been engulfed in a continuous pandemonium of evil animadversions on my personal nature, my life, my work. I have held my ground in this wild confusion of evil circumstance. Is not hell, I have reflected, the swarm of everything indistinct that human beings make of their language-powers? And is not the distinct, only the distinct, in the shape of words brought out of thought into generous community of mind, the only Friend?

I have been caused weighty pain by the Enemy, the indistinct and its false lying shapes of distinctness, as it has sway in the world of intellectual (literary, scholarly) life. The weight of the pain of personal injury has kept dissolving itself in the pain of consciousness of wide-spread falsifications of the human state enveloping it in the lie of its being itself a pandemonium in which peace and pleasure can only be achieved by techniques of treating it as a painfully absurd state—in which peace and pleasure can be no more than contrived stupefactions. On what I count as saving surety, in my sense of spreading pandemonium, for the prevailing of an unfailing Distinct over a ruinous Indistinct (a continuous lexicon of novelties in meaninglessness), this book has a central position. It presents the scene of the human mind of now as a place of choice, still, between a hellish ease of speech-making thought as easy as no-thought and heaven-like difficulty of thought executed with an earthly ease of speech the mind can love.

1986

Wabasso, Florida

FIRST PREFACE

(1973)

1.

The first chapter of the first part of this book was its initial introduction, designed to be thus incorporated in it. The further movement of the book was slow, up to a point; then, though it was never fast, it was a steady visible advance. Then there came a forced stop: my collaborator's work ceased—he left me both our parts to do. We had gone far together, and I knew the way. But my going has been slow, with this labor doubled, and others continued, and some added. Therefore, between now and the time of our introductory writing is a separation of years. I would not change, there is no need for thinking of changing, our story of how this all began and what besides our thought on language comes into it, and what sense others should try to make of it. But I have felt a need of confirming and renewing the earlier presentation of ourselves, our themes, our hopeful ideas of the possible in the all-embracing matter of language. This will seem as to start all over again. I mean only to communicate the immediacy that our book has in my especial care: it *is* the book for which we wrote the "Introductory Explanations"—to my best in keeping faith with it for us.

~

Knowledge of the meaning of words is, basically, adequate knowledge of language: know the words (know what they mean), and all the grammatical and syntactical processes will be found deducible from the knowledge—the meanings of words direct the courses of their use, determine the how of their capability of interrelated use.

It can be seen, however, that the very idea of knowledge of words' meanings has undergone in the modern centuries a gradual dilution with scientific assumptions as to the nature of knowledge. Definitive knowledge has become suspect; the experimental, the qualified, the relative, are important features in

scientific theories of knowledge, spreading into non-scientific areas as proper dispossessors of antiquated intellectual objectives. Everywhere where such influence has spread outside of straight scientific fields, the new objectives not only replace the older ones: they distort the very identity of the influenced non-scientific area. This has been happening in the case of people's consciousness of themselves in relation to language. It has not been happening only because of science, scientific modes of thinking and knowledge-acquisition; there has been a long, slow weakening in people of linguistic consciousness.

The burden of intellectual responsibility for the determining of the forms of understanding required for rationally coherent existence has passed gradually into general hands, from particular seats of intellectual authority. But increasing educatedness, literateness, has not been accompanied by a general vigorous rising of a sense of intellectual responsibility, has not stirred a great sympathetic coursing from individual mind to individual mind of a sense of common participation in processes of the intelligence and their development into processes of knowledge. As language is the human mind's organizer of knowledge, the knowledge of *it* is the prerequisite of intellectually responsible existence. But instead of a modern condition of fresh human awakening to the need of new definitiveness in the knowledge of language, new enlargement of the sense of the responsibility of using human intelligence for definitive expression of its understandings, what we have had and have is a detaching of minds from language's fixities, the releasing of them from the assurance of rationality that language bestows, as if the modern height of intellectual development were in a dispensing with the need of assurance of rationality. (But how could there be any other kind of assurance of minds?)

This is the historical background of our work—the background against which it was entered into in the first place, and taken through its stages of change and growth through the years. The whole comprehension of the character of that background did not come with the work's first steps. These were steps of mine in the early 'thirties, when I became acutely activated with a sensitivity of long presence in me to there being something amiss in the general way with words—not just a carelessness in use but a carelessness towards ignorance of their meanings, a carelessness as to knowledge.

In the early 'thirties I began concerning myself with intensified interest in matters of word-use. There was not then a names-dropping-like practice in vogue, such as that which came into, and remains in, popularity, marked by frequent widely-aimed expostulations on the (bad) state of language, the "decline" or the "deterioration" of language. Nor had the development of a science of "linguistics" within and without the literary fold acquired the momentum it later did as a grand new activity, in which there were no recognized intellectually inherited laws to follow, least of all any as contained naturally in

language itself. This has proved to be a field for unlimited working-over of the subject of language with all the varied machinery of scientific analysis that can in some manner be made applicable to it; the subject has been more and more adapted to the application of such machinery as development has occurred in *it*—in the analytical facilities.

My particular preoccupation with words was with words as the internal content of language, each in its way a key to its nature. I saw words as language's apparatus of meaning, each having its individual function in the general working of the apparatus: my view of language and words was such that I took there to be no intrinsic linguistic difficulties. In my own writing, poetic and otherwise, and in the development of my general course of thought, and in a large activity of sharing with other writers my tenets as to the necessity, for personal and professional honorableness of composition, of attention to words as constituting the whole, the only, truth-standard for thinking, speaking, writing (in textual labor with them over *their* words), I located value in the use of words according to their meanings: the crux, in the good use of words, was responsible knowledge of their meanings.

I formed a plan, in the early 'thirties, for a new kind of defining of words, a defining of them in meaning-relation conjunctions. Far from having a purpose to deal with words as existing in synonymic groups, my intention was to dissipate the fiction that there were such things as synonyms, that any word was "like" another in meaning. Though my plan did not become sizably programmatic until the later 'thirties, my ideas on problems of language inclined more and more towards the solutions of knowledge of what words mean, combined with unreserved fidelity to this knowledge in their use. Even while my thoughts became organized in the direction of the defence of the integrity of language as inhering in the integrities of word-meaning, a great wave, a sea of scientific language-study in which word-meaning became increasingly viewed as of questionable reality, rose upon the bosom of human consciousness of language, gradually, as it gathered height, becoming solidified into a dead weight upon it. Contemporary humanity is expected to be grateful for this superimposition upon its linguistic constitution as—at last—protection from the oppression of traditionalist views of language. There have been some heavings of literary uneasiness under the weight of this scientific protection, from whispers of nostalgic loyalty to language to bold disregard both of *its* intellectual proprieties and of the scientific common-sense prescriptions of "linguistics," in barbaric verbal and stylistic innovations. My own disposition to language remained long in its essence a solitary one.

In the late 'thirties a sense of crisis entered into my view of language and words, and of the human linguistic condition, and I bent myself towards putting my plan for a book of definitions of the kind I have described into prac-

tical effect. Having succeeded in interesting publishers in my project, I set myself to work at developing a programme of definitional possibilities from the sample provisions that had moved the publishers to believe in the practicality of the project; and I chose helpers, who were to gather files of words, assist me in organizing words into groups for related definition, and bring critical scrutiny to bear on my proposed definitions. This phase of the project failed. It failed primarily because concurrently with the intensification of my concern in problems of language, and matters of word-meaning, in particular, there became very active in me an impulsion to review the principles and values animating my work in the whole, in the light of a growing understanding of the limitations of categorically *literary* performance. New perceptions of inconsistency between the broad implications of those principles and values and the existing boundaries of the world of literature inclined me towards a more demanding attitude to myself in my requirements of my work, and to my conception of the function of the projected dictionary-thesaurus.

I conceived of my writing in general and of the special lexicographical project as being work for truth's sake. But my vision of what could be done for truth's sake began, towards the close of the decade of the 'thirties, to enlarge in scope. I became impatient with literary horizons, and restive, also, in the simplification of the problems of word-meaning knowledge that this project in its inception-stage wrought. There entered secondarily into the circumstances under which the first phase of the project failed manifestations of differences in attitude to the project between the helpers I had chosen and myself. There was not in them such impassionedness towards matters and problems of language as there was in myself. They went about their first labors in it with a certain lightness of mood, and with more literary than linguistic sensitivity to the words they assembled. This eased the task, which had elements of drudgery in it, and created no immediate difficulties. But the differences were very strongly felt by me in conferences I asked over my first definitional ventures. There was no joint application to commonly perceived difficulties; my trial determinations met, all, with approval. I needed, for help, companionship in the work as of its nature difficult, besides solemnity of feeling about words.

The next phase of the project coincided with my beginning again to live in America after having spent thirteen years abroad in activities centered in writing. I married early in this next phase. My husband was my collaborator in the rebeginning of the lexicographical work. Necessities of alteration in the work's objectives confronted us. There was now envisaged a much larger coverage of the language's words—much larger than the initial estimate of thirty-thousand as an elementary sufficiency, a core round which a complete lexicographical coverage of the language might be eventually built. With this

material expansion there went an enlargement of undertaken responsibility of another kind. Not only did all the speakers of the language become in definite envisagement the public to be served by the work: a need came to be felt for deep penetration into language's internal conditions—for intellectual support discoverable in the language for this lexicographical endeavor. Such support could reinforce its moral inspiration, strengthen the character of moral endeavor implicit in it.

My husband had such an impassioned preoccupation with what concerned the meanings and uses of words as I had. He also brought to our task very valuable linguistic experience. He had acquired an intimate knowledge of the earlier English language in his study of the work of the English poet Charles M. Doughty, who had rejected the Victorian English of his time as a degenerate tongue and taught himself the earlier tongue for his writing's uses—revering it as the true English Mother-tongue. I myself, coming through my husband's knowledge of Doughty's linguistic experience into close acquaintance with it, drew refreshment from it for the fine laboring over words our work required, and the comfort of witnessing an interest in rightness of knowledge of words (and belief in the possibility of it) akin to our own. In the early part of our book we tell something of our individual stories, and of Doughty's story also. We present these stories, and the story of our joint endeavor to make a remedial offering to the contemporary human linguistic condition, in the setting of the historical story of the English language's course.

2.

The way was very long, for my husband and myself, in our pursuance of the work. We had economic difficulties which we could only meet outside the work, and meet in ways interruptive of it. But our severest difficulties were those that belonged to the work internally. Eventually, after trial on trial of definitional procedures, we put in first place the examination of the general actuality of language, the definition of linguistic principles, the formulation of linguistic values, the exploration of the nature of meaning itself. We had come to perceive that all must be distinct in our general view of language for our notions of proper definitional procedure to be distinct enough to have practical applicability. Such a view of language would not be as a looking in on language from a scientific observation-platform, which is the characteristic view of it of "linguistics," but a looking at language from the inside, as of one substance with human identity, possessed in a state of natural familiarity with it.

Against the great swarming in contemporary linguistic thought of academic theories alien to the spirit and letter of language, experimental tech-

nologies of linguistic analysis, we set the objective of discovering a technique of knowledge inhering in language itself. While we did not think of ourselves as being in controversial engagement with "linguistics," we saw that it was coming to have a quasi-permanent existence as a steadily growing presence in the human environment. We have therefore endeavored to show, in this book, in terms of our understanding of the nature of language and the relationship that exists between human beings and their language, the intellectual tendencies of the new linguistical science, in its various forms as academically propounded doctrine, and in its character as a widely diffused influence on the attitudes of contemporary speakers of languages, to themselves in their speaking of their language, and to the language they speak. We describe these tendencies in some of their earlier manifestations, and touch on some of the later ones, in which, generally, they have become hardened with professionalized dogmatism. We try to make it plain, as we proceed, that we are not opposing theories to theories: that our interest is centered in the beautiful, unformidable, all-providential fact of language itself. We have wanted to contribute to the understanding of the nature of language some saving help, something that might be helpful to people as beings whose reality of self depends on how much of the quality of truth they are able to get into their words. We relate the reality of human life to the reality of language, the reality of people to the reality of their words.

It will be found by readers that direct, specific, attention to questions of word-meaning evolves slowly, in our book, from our general considerations of things linguistic. But, as we persisted in these considerations and our conception of the nature of language took on substantiality and distinctness as a conception of principles, and we found that these were intelligibly formulatable as principles of meaning, the way opened for the perception of new possibilities in definitional procedure. When general questions are approached in a practical spirit of interest, the chances of practical benefit in their areas of particularity are favorable. In the course of our applying ourselves to the clarification of the human circumstances in which language was stranded, and to the identification of its principles with the help of a humane confidence in its being informed with principles, we arrived at a recognition of the existence of two general kinds of words, and an understanding of the necessity of the recognition for the treatment of problems of word-definition with new practical intuitions as to the problems of knowledge involved in the problems of definition. The generally existing assumption of people as to the knowledge of word-meaning is that a certain element of indefiniteness inheres in the meanings of words, rendering complete knowledge of them, a full definability of them, an impossibility, one to be accepted as reasonable, determined by the nature of language. Our own ideas of the nature of language prescribed a full definability of words, their having meanings completely knowable. But, with-

out this discovery of a fundamental distinction of kind to be drawn between the words of a language taken as a whole, no lexicographical labors of ours could have been in their sum more than partially successful. (And the road of failure is strewn with partial successes.)

Readers of this book will come upon investigations of particular definitional possibilities—possibilities in the case of particular words—that stem from an extensively pursued investigation of the general conditions under which words exist as components of a language. But for all but the last portions of the book, the dealing with particular questions of word-meaning, particular problems of definition, will be incidental to general questions and problems, will pertain illustratively rather than directly to our concern with the possibilities of developing a definitive lexicographical process. By the time readers reach the last portions of the book, the problem of definition will be found to have moved into the foreground of consideration. We knew, as the time of our laboring at this book lengthened, and general questions and problems claimed space increasingly, that the space devoted to lexicographical exhibition would be, relatively to the rest, a minor quantity. Our hope has been that what was exhibited would both fulfil the implications of the account given of language in what preceded it, by demonstrating how, in practical consideration of matters of word-meaning, the problems of language can be in their entirety condensed, and take the definitional exemplification of our findings sufficiently far to be a basis, a work-model, for later systematic lexicographical expansion by ourselves—or, if we, for one reason or another, did not succeed in continuing what we had begun, by others, with our help as it might be available, or by the force alone of their comprehension of the further possibilities.

My husband died on July 4, 1968. It took me somewhat more than a mere few years to learn how to proceed in my and our life-concerns with a just distribution of my work-power and devotion among them. As I write this preface it is close to five years since he died; and I have carried our book in this time from a point considerably beyond half-way in its final form, with a good deal on rough record, and more stored up in the experience and plans of our minds. I am dedicating myself at this time to an effort to complete the book in a year—an effort sponsored by the award of a Guggenheim Fellowship. (Previously, the Mark Rothko Foundation had helped me, with an award, to meet the strains of self-maintenance while prosecuting my general work-plans—the furtherance of this book a leading one among them; and from P.E.N., American Headquarters, I received also some practical assistance.) It seems appropriate to me that I prepare a preface at this time, looking ahead to the eventuality of conclusion, giving readers thus some sense of the forward view of the book that has so long been its authors'.

No indication will be found in this book of where I begin acting for both

its authors. This is consistent with the spirit of unity, in purpose and hope, that made the book come to be, in the first place, and kept it alive in a protracted succession of critical difficulties.

3.

Readers will find us presenting, in various contexts, in our book, the view of the relationship of people and language presented here in general prefatory description. We see people and language as inseparable, in the relationship—see language as organically necessary to human nature, coming into existence as a possession of human beings following from their nature. We consider language to have a universality of reference capable of functioning independently, as by laws of its own; and the human mind, with which it is connatural, we consider to function by a sympathetic rule of necessary self-dependence. This view of the human identity and functional character of language, stated in general terms, may seem a somewhat mystical one, or, at least, a sentimental one. It has been our hope that it would be found concretely and comprehensively substantiated in our diversified treatment of the subject. We try to depict the relationship between people and language in historical perspective. We examine the effects on the relationship of literary and philosophical and other specialized human attitudes that impinge on it. We did not lose sight, in our large-scale estimations of it, of the verbal practicalities, the detail of word-use in which all the difficulties and confusions attending the relationship seat themselves, and must have their solution.

Our sense of human beings in their endless involvement in things linguistic and of the endless involvement of language in things human, moves inward from the obvious, the loosely perceptible, to the area of the crucial questions in which the human and the linguistic are tightly bound together. Our book's title, describing an objective of providing a new foundation for the definition of words, might suggest a narrow technological concern, especially as the concept of the definability of words has fallen from respect, and there is no practical imagination of the general contemporary predicament of human beings in their feeling freed from antiquated restrictions in their use of words and yet at a loss for want of a coherent attitude to words. But readers ought to perceive, before they have gone very far, that the new foundation for the definition of words that we envisage is something that, if realized, would be a foundation for a humanly new, and humanly remedial, reapproach to language.

From studious acquaintance with language, not superstitious piety, we are trustful of it as of a naturally orderly constitution. We believe in the rationality of the processes of word-meaning, and have sought confirmation of the belief in the logical properties we take to inhere in language. It has come to be held

reasonable by modern standards of intellectual sophistication to regard language as a product of human word-customs constitutionally affected by environmental influence on them. ("The confusion of our language is a testimony to the confusion of our world," John Crowe Ransom asserted in *The New Criticism*.) We have opposed to such assumptions a conception of language as an instrument endowed with an intrinsic integrity. According to this conception, there is that in language which governs the conditions of word-meaning, and determines the conditions of the knowledge of words' meanings. Applying this conception to the existing disorder in people's knowledge of their words (their meanings) and in their use of them, we have distinguished between the system of meanings into which words form themselves, for the common needs of the human mind, and language seen as a continual human flow of verbal utterance, the historical actuality of people's treatment of their possession of language.

We have tried to establish that words have meanings only as they belong to language as an ordered unity, and that all that is intellectually capricious or indeterminate, rationally erratic, logically untenable, in verbal practice, and all theorizing based on it, pertains to the abnormal in human linguistic sensibility, and the anomalous in ideas of language. We hold that the profusion of vagaries of usage characteristic of people's linguistic activity of these times does not justify special analysis of language for the explanation of them (this, the motivating interest of linguistic science). We think all vagaries of usage become customary can be accounted for, whatever the period, and whatever the extent of their occurrence, by consideration of the relationship existing between the body of speakers in view and their language; weaknesses and failures in the relationship originating in the speakers should not be difficult to trace if one starts from the premise that a language is of its nature a construction not just of words but of principles governing their intelligent usability, the workability of the whole. Study of language itself, refreshment of knowledge of it, should prove the correction of confusion that has settled into its employment; and the relationship between the speaker and the language, where such correction has resulted, will have had its force renewed in it.

4.

For readers who, finding initially some of our thinking strange, difficult to associate with language as they know it, and human nature as they know themselves, classify this book as one dealing in abstruse philosophic concepts and scholarly theories requiring a special kind of public, we recommend patience with us. The ordinary public's fare of reading-matter has been literarily soaked in floods of new-order philosophic speculation and advanced theories

forcibly converted into proofs of their own correctness. It may take, with some readers, rather prolonged patience for getting rid of all suspicion of their being in an intellectually exclusive reading-area; but a fixed conclusion of this sort would be intellectual intolerance. The ideas from which our book has emanated are of the simplest in what pertains to linguistic principle, and to human principle as ultimately the generator of linguistic principle. What complexity they have is under the head of simplicity of principle. The main tenor of our thinking is not specialistic. That it is not, could in itself make it seem strange: as the simplicity of our book's underlying ideas is evident, readers may assume that where there is such seriousness as ours about matters of language, and word-meaning, an effect of simplicity in ideas cannot but conceal a reserved ultimately intricate pattern of thought. As our conception of the relationship of people to language is not cloudy with mystical belief or sentimental feeling, so are the ideas governing the course of work of which this book is the record free from any "higher" intellectual devices of conception or technique.

The authors of this book have no school of thought up their sleeve. They have done nothing other in their life's work, which has been in the working domain of words, [than] to endeavor to share their experience of human nature's meeting with itself mentally in language. What is here offered is not a philosophical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, or literary, apparatus of linguistical analysis, but a finding that truth for human beings is what their own words can be made to speak for them—and that to use their words for truth they must know them perfectly well. Much of what we present as to the knowledge of words in relation to the use of them to the full of their linguistic properties might be characterized as linguistic criticism; we describe in what such use consists according to our view of what language makes possible, and what the requisites for it are in principle, in linguistic principle. But, since linguistic principle is grounded for us in human principle, a general character of *human criticism* will be found in our book as a whole. This general critical character does not comprise, however, such loose bemoanings of "the state of language" as it has become intellectually fashionable to make, or Orwellian attributions to official centers of authority of responsibility for linguistic as well as political chaos, counsel to curb the use of words that seem to have lost their meanings from over-use and to consign the worn phrase to a place described (with the worn phrase) as "the dust-bin where it belongs," or, for that part of the public that "writes," to avoid "bad style."

The point of our criticism of the prevailing course of things linguistic is not to represent language as undergoing corruption and decay, and to accuse people of destructive indifference to the advance of these processes, with righteous will to frighten or shame them into doing better with their words. By our critical measure of things linguistic, "better," in the use of words, does not

lie in efforts of people to prevent their language from sliding from bad to worse, as a deteriorating entity. They are not, as they are, equipped to perform such a rescue, nor is rescue of the language the contemporary linguistic-human need. The deterioration to be attacked is not in the language, but in the people, the speakers of it. Better than "better" in the sense of *more* care with words is what is needed: a new beginning in knowing their language, a repossession by people of their language through the reorganization of their knowledge of it (become chaotic), is the linguistically and humanly real need of contemporary human beings, in their problems as users of words. To our understanding of these problems, responsible knowledge of language, knowledge of words in the practicable form of knowledge of their meanings, supersedes in necessariness—in what is critically to the point for a newly *good* human showing in the use of words—correction of general trends of bad usage in instances become jarringly evident to people having a sensibility in matters of word-use above the current ordinary.

Equally irrelevant to fundamental human-linguistic need with concern for usage-improvements in general speaking-style, and a higher standard in professional writing-style, we consider the compensation for general failing in linguistically meritorious quality in the use of words that the late Paul Goodman (teacher, poet, critic) proposed: this was the endeavor of a special few, a minority presumed initiate in the possibilities of linguistic excellence, to convert their use of words into "the speech of art," as something compelling one to be bold and free in the use of words—with a potential seen in poetry as involvement in a vitally irresistible process of "saying my say." All such dissociation from the common human linguistic state of affairs of a minority that conceives of itself as having problems as users of words of an importance personal and professional above that of problems of the ordinary linguistic run, we consider offensive to the dignity of human beings in their common possession of language, and the respectability of the general linguistic human need, and futile even in its own field of presumption of a privilege of experiment outside the general field of word-use. The very conception "the speech of art" is without any natural foundations; a speech of art would be a linguistic, and human, anomaly.

The claim of poetry, in its traditionally countenanced peculiarities of word-use, to linguistic validity does not rest on the argument that a need of art for speech-individualism establishes linguistic validity. Poetic peculiarities of word-use have had no other protective justification—nor are they entitled to any other—than the potentiality solemnly implied in the tradition of poetry of a speech more productive in eloquences of truth than speech in ordinary circumstances of human utterance appears capable of being. Where language is converted into the mere instrument of an art, it loses its virtue as the

expressive instrument of humanity. In so far as the characteristic virtue of language is preserved in speech into which the uses of art are introduced, such speech will to that extent transcend the linguistic deviation in it that is of the character of art. But questions of poetry and language, poetry and art, art and language, are of a difficult delicacy. Those who are concerned with full human seriousness about the low standing of language with the speakers of languages, the debased quality of general word-use practices, will not immure themselves finally in hope of finding relief in poetry from the endemic linguistic ineptitude in which the age has become historically arrested: the linguistic solutions of poetry, however much human sensitivity they exhibit to the virtue of language (as distinct from appreciation of the lendability of language to the uses of art), lie, finally, oblique to the great, the humanly comprehensive, problems of language.

W. H. Auden, who, by imposing on an inveterate propensity (become in time professionally indispensable) to transforming what he read into what he wrote a decorum of linguistic good-manners and taste, which he early began to fashion from close gleanings from my modes of word-use, got himself to be first man-of-letters of the English-speaking-and-reading world, pronounced his conception of the rôle of poet to be (intending to combine modesty with due deference to the great esteem in which he was held) that of naturally appointed guardian of the language against corruption. Such attribution of general public linguistic authority and responsibility to the poet-rôle would be unwisely presumptuous in any poet. Scientific linguistics offers people an elaborate invention of psychological common-sense for application to their problems of language that has no natural, personally direct relation to them. Poetic linguistics—poetic linguistic criticism—has not even been equal to the problems of conscience of poets, as they are faced with, and face, the division in poetry between its commitment to the linguistic spiritualities of truth and the craft-requirements of verbal-technique for the creating of sensory effects of truth. Poets' needful preoccupation is with an endeavor to cheat their readers as little as possible, in the promise of truth that poetry extends, by devices of sensory illusion for eking out deficiencies in the poetic linguistic reality, which the formally limited nature of poetry renders inevitable.

I come now, after my description of the linguistic and the human position (taken as a unity) from which this book has been written, and my review of existing attitudes to, accounts of, remedies for, the time's difficulties in the management of language, and in the very understanding of it, to my last words in my offering our book to readers.

I hope that I have made the character of our preoccupation with matters and problems of language sufficiently clear for my saying, in concluding this

preface, that truth has been the point of our preoccupation initially and throughout, and is so in the final reaches to which I have been able to take our book, not to seem facile repetition, rhetorical simplification—a resounding note on which to close. If readers will keep our point of truth somewhere at hand to themselves, it should prove serviceable as a guide to the book's course of movement, a continual direction-finder for them. We stress the importance of the knowledge of words. But this knowledge is only important if it has depth in the knowledge of the natural fitness of words—the words of one's language as a whole—to the end of truth, and the natural fitness of human beings to concern with that end. The matter of truth is the necessary point of all study of language, all investigation of linguistic problems, that is practically and unqualifiedly relevant to language, not occupied with it in a theoretical sense that is orientated to another interest—as, psychological or anthropological interest. What other point is the primary point of interest in language? I give this question of ours over to our readers.

L. (R.) J.

SECOND PREFACE

(1976)

I shall be writing here on some matters that project themselves into present expression, from what was set down in the Foreword and the First Preface. They are matters that belong integrally to the circumstances of the book's making, but in a special temporal sense to what may be called its career as a book. They have assumed prominence for me since the book's birth as something to offer to readers of words as speakers of words—since the book's definitive becoming a book. They are features of its taking on age, of its evincing its born nature in exposure to the tests of external existence (or, of time, or the world, to put it at the simplest). One of these matters is the emergence of the part that my husband Schuyler has had in the making of the book from the historical character in which it was cloaked in my having, unavoidably, to describe it as of the past, in relation to my part as a continuing, uninterrupted one. That cloak has fallen from it. His presence in the work has transcended the historical status of the collaborator who died. The actuality of his presence in the work, which was of a whole commitment of spirit, has increasingly kept company with me in my sense of the work in its external identity as a book.

I pause to point to the relation between the matter of the all-permeating presence of my husband in this book and the kind of labor that he and I made it our business to try to perform in our joint dedication to the making of the book. Our meaning, in addressing ourselves to the labor, was that what we did in the performance of it should be "for good." This phrase, in which something's being everlasting and its being good are compressed into the unembarrassed, bold simplicity of a colloquialism, suits our meaning perfectly; the thing done, in our labor, must be a thing that *went on,* it must be done well enough not to come to its end in our doing of it. Whatever the initial vicissitudes that the book might be destined to suffer, it would issue, from the trials of time (or external exposure, [to?] the world!), as something accomplished *for good:* it

could not be otherwise, because of our meaning. I know from my own internal presence in the book that what has been done in it is alive, does not cease to exist with my putting, for my husband and myself, a book-seal upon it. I know that what we did was done for truth's sake, to serve truth as the commanding necessity of life. The purpose that moved us was not that of a trial scrivening. Such energy as our purpose bred pays itself into life, justifying itself in justifying life: we began a labor for which life was waiting.

What we have done opens the way for all who live knowing they live, which gives words, to cleanse life of the stupefactions of ignorant speaking that encrust it. If the knowledge human beings have that they are, and the knowledge they have of their words, match, so that these knowledges are interchangeable, become one, the same, their speaking will be truth in letter and spirit. This is what life portends. But it is cheated of itself by those who part-speak, in speaking, let themselves but part-know their knowing themselves living beings. We set about to uncover the honesties of language, which, recognized, must make minds honest, and make speaking correspondingly true in all its issuance as the living embodiment of intelligence. The revealing of our thinking on things linguistic is not an informing of presupposed readers of our opinions of these things: we have revealed it in the forms of work in the field of the knowledge of words.

How we have worked has made for us all a beginning in knowing our words better. And it has made a book: my husband and I put this beginning into self-sustaining existence. His partnering with me in a hope I had long nursed solitarily was of such love of the hope that he gave it all the force of trust his soul possessed. And he once wrote down for cheering us a description of how this much, with my all, must annul the personal mechanics of differentiation. It is exact: what I have done he has done. And by this rule, which has human verity, what we have done is something done by the spirit that fills hope in all human souls with itself.

What, then, of our book as a book of hope at work in the field of the knowledge of words, at work at this work of all?

After the book was completed, there followed prolonged complications of treating with publisher-interest in it, English and American. This included an initial happy acceptance of it by an English publisher, later withdrawn for financial reasons, and the finding of it by the reader of another publisher "tonic, invigorating, invaluable," to no effect of acceptance; and a number of tributes to its "impressiveness" accompanying statements of regret at inability to accept it for publication. There was but one response suggestive of an unpleasant office-attitude; after over two months there came the severely simple word of "regret" (the publisher was English) that there was no place for the book "in our list at the moment." A central practical difficulty that the book presented

for publishers was its textual massiveness and consequent consideration as to whether a large enough readership could be anticipated to justify acceptance economically. The book was not only likely to be adjudged provocatively controversial with respect to the influential "linguistics" powers-that-be. It was so different in its approach to and dealing with matters of language from both traditional attitudes and methods and the radicalism of the "linguistic" schools that cheerful imagination of a necessarily existing right kind of readership of fair size for the book would require a uniquely sympathetic, faith-moved publisher.

In the period in which the book's public fate hung in obscurity, I concerned myself, besides with other work, with considering alterations in the make-up of the book that would not reduce the practical substance of its message and its recommendations, or the scope of the implications of the linguistic principles set forth in it, as affecting questions of human understanding generally. I studied the possibility of eliminating some of the essays that formed the book's supplement and publishing them apart; a few have already, indeed, been published as articles in magazines (with indication of their source). Further, I put myself to the task of pursuing a suggestion that I endeavor to integrate the material of at least some of these essays with the text proper of the book. With this, I undertook a total review of the text of the book, including a check of references, notes-provisions; and, as I proceeded in them, I assured the final technical probity of the text by having retyped every page that bore script-corrections capable of causing reading-confusions for printers, or others.

While I made the described close textual review of the book, there being in this time no publication-arrangements in sight, my confidence in its future as an available book was borne up by two supporting certainties. One was a resolution I had made before I entered upon the period of review that I would not again subject the book to the process of trial of its publishability by torture of the authorial party, in successions of months-long "consideration" in secret courts of undebatable opinion. I shall not pause here to give an account of the alternative on which I had resolved, but just record that I felt confident of its being one that, resorted to in the absence of a happily occurring publishing opportunity, would at least provide the book with a public life in which to make a beginning as a readable, knowable, findable, actuality. The companion certainty to my confident vision of a practical alternative to more rounds of beggar-traipsing with our book from one yet unknocked-at publisher-door to another is a fortified consciousness of the book as a ministration to the human world's ailing confidence in itself.

The void of the world's need to which the book was designed to minister grows larger, larger. The substance of human assurance in the possession of

language, as providing redemption from self-ignorance, has been more and more eaten away by a modern disloyalty to the self-evident human capability of self-knowledge. A structure of administered education, progressively synthesizing progressive experimentation in programmes under which knowledge is conceived to be a composite science in which self-knowledge is a category among categories, has left a *hollow* where human nature formerly enjoyed the freedom of access to the effort of truth, the prerogative of every human being contained in the possession of language. The modern educational substitutes for language's provision of self-education have filled the void they have created with adaptations of language to their processes, constituting an artificial, a composite, language-model. The more "educated" people have become, the more they have been busy at destroying their possession of language in uses of it that have separated them further and further from their capability of self-knowledge, the possession of which and the possession of language are constitutionally interrelated. I see our book as thrusting the fact of this interrelation into the general human view unignorably.

In finding myself confronted with our book, in my consciousness of the human world's speeding decline in linguistic health, as the only medicine in the human world's existing intellectual pharmacopoeia concerned with the everywhere-prevailing ailment of linguistic desensitization, I know, as one who, knowing, as a living inhabitant of the contemporary human world, how it turns faster and faster to change for a deathly sake of mere change, what the book advances of *different*. I know the antithesis of the constancy of meaning in words, and in human intention, that it opposes to the losses of changing sense and reason that are reducing modern human life to a self-consuming perpetuity of time. I feel the sickly force of the ailment, and know the healing power of the medicine in a union of consciousness, as one intimately present to the fact of the book and to the fact of the need of the world of the book. I cannot resist, as if I were an impartial observer of my experiences of consciousness, the perception that an arrow of destiny is pointing at the ailment and at the book as occupying an occasion of necessary reference to each other. I cannot not think that this book supplies a rescuing intervention in the mind-splitting procedures of modern educational science, which has divided language into the languages of many truths.

How could I reserve judgement of the book without betraying the faith that had been infused into work which it justified in becoming a book? The faith was a practising disbelief in the capability of human beings of wanting to win, and winning, wars against truth, language the weaponry—wars against the verities of their human nature. That words exist because there are verities implicit in human nature, as eloquent of a universal consistency, was presumed in the book's treatment of the problems of knowledge of the meanings of

words, and of mental competence in their use; and I hold that this presumption yielded solutions of new and extensive practicality, and of great general promise of what can newly be, linguistically. That is, I have been made, by the work of the book, a confirmed believer in the belief from which it took its start.

It is part of my undoubting acceptance of this book as meant to be, by that in happening's course which is ever striving to correct the unrightness of chance, to think that its reality as such, as something to be, in some form, helped to bring it about that I was eventually joined, for the making of it, by one who accepted the task in full earnest as what it was for me, a task "for all our sakes." The path we took in making it had to be hewn through high tangles of "positions" both traditional and historically new, all being fixed circuits of human emotions, or systems of ideas inhospitable to a purpose to go from a general disarray of linguistic sensibilities, reflected in a general disarray of human emotions, to an open ground of human self-possession in the possession of language. The travel can be estimated to have been a dangerously difficult one, never touching certainty at any point reached along the way if it is counted as the sum of particular distinct stages. But there was no stopping in it. It went on from stage to stage as a single course, one having a single destination. I am able to speak, in speaking of the book, from the place of revealed linguistic hope to which its making led. I have a contentment with it, for what is attained in it, that I regard as validating the trust for which the book calls.

The historical experience of my husband's dying before the book was finished has been absorbed, consumed, in the historical event perpetuated in the book. The event was our meeting each other, rather late in our travels in the world of years, and, amidst endless arguments of practical circumstance against our committing ourselves jointly to an immense objective, *proceeding*. The objective involved the treating of the technical features of word-meaning and the moral properties of words, inhering in their having meanings, as a unity. In this unity, the use of words and the use of words with truth are identical processes. That this should be upheld, in a book, as a necessary identity, from its beginning to its end, is a feat beyond the sphere of personal fortitude. I feel there to be vested in the feat an impetus of long, long, accumulated urgency risen up out of the entire human fact. As I write these latest prefatory words, the book emerges from its personal history and course of making, though in practical status still something in my guardian hands (pulsating with concerns of author and advocate), a work having in it the sanction of the inspiration with which human minds are unfailingly moved, in the laboring of thought to attain the authenticity of language.

L. (R.) J.

THIRD PREFACE

(1985)

In the nine years that have passed since I wrote a second preface for this book, after an interval of three years, I have not been without a sense of the book's being arrested in a failure in my capability of surmounting difficulties obstructing successful arrangement for its publication. But my discomfiture in the protracted non-existence of the book as a public actuality has been related more to a sense of a generally increasing inhospitality, in the world of immediate human consciousness, to the use of the faculties of the mind for the ends of thought—or, I could as well say, to engagement in processes of thought to perfect the quality of the mind's knowledge-substance. Uneasy sense of a widely prevailing indisposition to the intellectual scrupulosity in the use of words presented in the book as a moral necessity became an element of awareness of a sweeping development, in human sentiment, of aversion to conceptions of moral necessity. The urgency I felt, in relation to the book, as to the state of the immediate human disposition to the matter of language blended itself into a sense of all-encompassing crisis in human values-framing. I felt as much confronted with difficulties of bringing the whole import of the moral principle underlying the view of language presented in the book into public light as with those attending the practical course of the book's becoming materially accessible. It was no longer possible to separate the hostility to language as a vehicle in which intellectual and moral sensibility are united that sprang up in new sophistications of human consciousness in this century's advancing course from the pragmatical intolerance of thought as the essential activity of being human that took hold early in the century as a new intellectuality, a new sensibility. This change in standards and customs of mental performance and behavior has had the effect of reducing all problems confronting human intelligence to "scientific" problems: of making general assessments, seeing problems in a general length and breadth of perspective, seem exercises in outworn delusions as to the nature of human intelligence and the possibilities of knowl-

edge. In our time, to be called a "generalist" signifies to be a specialist of an extremely special kind!

And so it has happened with me, in this later period, to feel the burden of self-alienation imposed by human beings on themselves from the saving reassurances that language provides of their powers of understanding the universal setting of existence, and themselves in it, as almost incidental to the burden of self-alienation they have been imposing on themselves from the mind-reinforcing actuality of their being beings of extended consciousness—*thinking* beings. I have distributed my work-energies, amidst limits in functioning suffered from physical discomfort and incapacitation, and lacks experienced in needed practical assistance in my living and working course, between a number of concerns. None of them—the book on language least of all—has been at any point viewed by me as of incidental importance. All are active components of my painful awareness of the substitution in our times, in the human sense of the nature of living as human, of consciousness as private experience of existence for *thinking*. For the new intellectuality, thought is a by-product of configurations supplied by language to consciousness, and consciousness itself an extroversion of private activity of mind into theoretically objectively knowable particulars of experience, allowed the reality of plausible fictions. A science of thought defines human consciousness as, in biological verifiability, "the Unconscious." A science of philosophy undefines language. A science of literature dismantles its claims to being a register of human meaning: stripping it down to theoretically presumable responses to environmental stimuli presented as authorially indigenous events.

The summary I have made of the present state of human intellectuality gives no impression of the massive detail of its elaborate specializing of operations of thought into self-sufficient, self-propelling, self-justifying, mechanisms. But contemporary human life itself is imbued with this impression of its content as life of heightened intelligence, and immobilized in its standstill mobility as *thinking* life. I draw the picture in rough summarizing strokes to convey the intimate relation that the problems with which this book deals have for me with the problems of survival as thinking beings I see confronting human beings under the mechanistic revision of the intellectual processes that has been displacing the identity-sense of human beings of themselves as *minds*. While I have been much saddened by the prolonged delay in the book's publication, I believe it can have acquired, in the development of the intellectual crisis I have described, a force of self-evident necessitousness it might have lacked when the crisis had more the feel of yet unevaluatable change than of a finality of unignorable threatening emergency, as it must now—to all the guardian instincts of our minds.

As I write a further preface for this book, I have still not concluded the task of transferring from the "home" copy of the book to the formal copy, all of

the modifications and corrections that suggested themselves in my periodic renewing of the text. I perform this labor, and other labors of later-life writer-hood, amidst mounting difficulties. As the difficulties have multiplied, my sense of immurement in a personal emergency has lost much of its edge in my sense of the immurement of contemporary human life in a programmatic disestablishment of the will-to-think—an intellectuality of mechanistic, self-performing, theory pre-empting the rôle of mind. I have no specific cheer, as I have no specific hope. I have only the spur to cheer and hope of a belief in a general reserve in human consciousness of resistance to ultimate self-dissipation—a belief in an inherent potency in the human life-force of ultimate self-savability as mind.

I have continued, in these nine years, in solitary lodgement in the home that was my husband's and mine, in Wabasso, Florida (acquired over forty years ago). What has been done here has been done in a privately discovered freedom of privacy. It need make no trouble for anyone of concern with what to do about it as matter for report. It has been done as nobody's business except as it might be found to be everybody's business. Floridian nature has proved a partly stern, partly indulgent, shelter; and the human nature to which we neighbored ourselves has provided a healthy balance between the needs of neighborliness and those of privacy. We were not without pains of unhappy personal experience in other quarters, at varying distance. But in this place in which we trustfully, unstintingly, domesticated ourselves, we knew a peace of reasonable expectation fulfilled.

A goodly remainder of that peace overhangs my present days in this place. And friendships here and at distant points brace me supportively in my long-maintained watch on the extent of advance or decline in human resort to thought as the medium of the mind's realization of itself as personal intelligence. But within this latest stretch of years there have injected themselves into my private state and my life of public identity, assaults upon me (and on my husband relatedly) of personalized literary-world malice that, I believe, have no match in the rampant liberties-taking with fact and reportorial decency that have become habitual in all forms of publishing, and publicly channelled communication. The feel of slander, vindictive ill-will—slander, the rascality of betrayal—was not new to me. But in these recent years the quantities of it directed upon me have flooded in upon me like extrusions from an evil alien-world pandemonium—becoming immediately recognizable as the well-known world of literary setting and its attendant cultural features of human contemporaneity, predominant among them an antipathy to thinking and whoever treats it, old-fashionedly, as the central human function, not as ancillary cybernetics to the operations of the "unconscious." Yet I have tried to keep a firm stand on a ground of final patience. Is not hell, I have reflected, the swarm of everything that human beings let dissolve into the nothingness

of indistinctness in their minds? And is not the distinct, only the distinct, the fully encompassed in thought, issued into the livable in the shape of words, the only complete Friend—all-companioning truth?

Is not the Enemy the indistinct, dressed in the false lying shapes of distinctness, holding sway as it does in the immediate world of intellectual, literary, scholarly life, and in the daily universe of outright human behavior? My own sense of personal injury has been subdued by the pain of consciousness of widespread falsification of the nature of human nature, enveloping it in the lie of its being an epitome of a ruling universal indistinct—a state endurable only by contrived distractions from distinct understanding of it. Is the prevailing of an unfailing Distinct over a ruinous Indistinct (a continuous lexicon of novelties in meaninglessness) imaginable? I consider it not only imaginable but a chapter of the human story waiting to be written in the language of human life become distinctly known to itself. This book presents the scene of language as the scene, now, of humanly crucial choice: between a hellish ease of speech-making thought as easy as no thought and a heaven-like difficulty of thought yielding an earthly ease of speech the mind can love.

To confess, in closing here, that little effort has been made within the textual bounds of the book to maintain a running counterpart of argumentative presence to the marathonic news-deliveries of structuralist, post-structuralist, deconstructionist and general semiological triumphs of purgation of language and literature of all problems of meaning-perception, and sense-making. These are a modern-dress relic of a very old comedy of insolence towards the actuality of life and the universe of existence, as not warranting treatment as the necessarily difficult and undisregardable object of human understanding. All the difficult problems are seen as puzzles that have accidentally put themselves together, and can be reduced to a neatly manageable, intellectually convenient detail of parts. There is so much of game-talk and game-making of the process of existence, and of thought, in these exercises of comedy-spirited explanation, that not to quarrel with them massively can, surely, not be taken as insolence of inadequate inattention to them.

L. (R.) J.

PART ONE

General Background,

General Objectives

RATIONAL MEANING

A New Foundation for the Definition of Words

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PROSPECTUS

This is a large book, in its state of typescript existence. Because it probes the nature of language and the principles of word-relationship, as the principles by which words mean what they mean, and exemplifies, in practical demonstration, the possibilities of distinct knowledge of the meanings of words and of lexicographically accurate definition of them, there ought to be a strong welcome from the general literate public expectable for it: it ought to weigh with publishers as worth the initial risk of a sizable investment that production of it would necessitate. In the book's prefatory material, and throughout the prime text of the book itself, and in the back-of-the-book notes and supplementary articles, there is continuously plentiful argument backing the general account of language presented; and ample particular exhibition is made, in the parts of the book devoted to problems of definition, to the applicability of the principles of word-relationship and modes of meaning-determination advanced. Anyone desirous of forming a clear impression of the book's stand on things linguistic, and of the lexicographical procedures recommended in it, in the interest of summarizing what the book offers as an alternative to popular current jeremiads on the debased "state of the language," *and* to the mediaevalistic rigors of modern linguistic "science," could easily gather up a useful sample bundle of descriptive material.

I have thought that I might more usefully argue the book's importance by picturing the general contemporary human mental condition than by attempting to make a concentrated statement of what the book "is." Without a picture of that condition to which to relate the book's view of language as the human mind's organ of rationality, and implement of its function of ordering thought into the express forms we call truth, the initial sympathetic response

to the seriousness—the solemnity, indeed—with which language is taken in the book is quite likely to subside into a tolerant scepticism. The book's insistence is upon a necessity of an overall coherent and individually exact knowledge of the meanings of words. The initial response can easily yield to impatience with the assumption on which, it early becomes evident, the book rests—that is, that the interested reader's interest will keep pace with the book's growth in intensity of preoccupation with its subject.

Is there justification for *so much* seriousness about language, so laborious an exploration of the structure of meanings by which a language holds itself together for endlessly variable successfully expressive uses of its words? While sensitive attention to niceties of word-meaning and word-use *is* necessary for intelligent and effective communication, and criticism of neglect of this should be freely and boldly undertaken, do not the basic workings of language manage themselves, on the whole, automatically? Does this book not engage in a too-radical overhauling of established procedures of choosing and using words to serve the thinking and thought-expressing operations? It has been my experience in responses to the book in the quarter of publisher-consideration of it that its merit was quickly recognized ("valuable" alternated with "invaluable," as a finding). But there was obvious difficulty in relating the exhaustive examination made in the book of the need for and possibility of a general re-education in the linguistic faculties, by the development of a comprehensive new distinctness in the knowledge of word-meanings, to any such collapse in general linguistic intelligence as the programmatic scope of the book argued to have occurred. All the bewailing or bemoaning the "decline" or the "debasement" of language that strikes upon the public ear in tones of elegant distress amounts, as *linguistic criticism,* to no more than fastidious shuddering at particular usages.

No one is inclined to look *in the eye* the fact that, if the language is in decline or in a state of debasement, as it is pronounced to be with increasing frequency, and with increasing profusion of citings of instances of delinquency found in the prevailing speaking and writing practices, the villain is a deeply underlying ignorance of the general linguistic equipment, not the mere libertarian slackness of modern verbal informality partnered with a weakness for terms, forms of expression, innovations of usage, that acquire a stamp of intellectual fashionableness. The knowledge of language has been allowed to decline, the linguistic sensibilities have degenerated, in modern intellectual life: the villain is a neglect of the intellectual responsibilities that has reduced relations between minds and their language to straggling filaments of vaguely automatic memory-connection. The villain is an ignorance of the principles of language visited by human beings upon themselves in an endeavor to correct the thought-binding truth-formulations of the past with an intellectual doc-

trine dispensing with the objective of truth as itself a breeder of intellectual error—of untruth. That such is the story this book tells of what has been happening modernly to human beings as languaged beings, the lesson it continuously forwards, is the information-key to its character.

The book's substance is not just that of a story of deep-penetrating deterioration in the knowledge of language, and the linguistic sensibilities, of a lesson of demonstration of this. The dominant line of development followed in the book is an unfolding of the principles of language—language seen as of the character of a rational system of word-provision for rational word-choice—as principles of meaning. The course of this unfolding progresses, in the book, into actual demonstration of the feasibility of a new lexicography—of a provision of definitions of words to serve as an instrument of a new sort of, an intellectually supportive, knowledge of language.

The moral text behind this book, as practical preachment on language, an educative offering for the general improvement of human understanding of the potentialities of the use of language inherent in the possession of it, is, then, no narrow criticism of the spread of "bad" usage-habits—the *habits* identified with language, and *language,* so identified, pronounced to be in "decline." The moral criticism animating the book, the axiom of moral argument at the critical core of the book, is that there is need of a total refreshment of the knowledge of language, and this not just in the interest of verbal sophistication, cultural respectability in speaking and writing styles, but for the reinvigoration of the intellectual processes of modern consciousness.

Human intellectual force has been progressively dissipating itself in modern times in challenging standardized moral and spiritual dogma. The motivation, in this, has not been pure enough to take the challenging beyond the achievement of breaking the hold of the old dogma on minds to the quest for new principles of moral and spiritual judgement, a new coherence of intellectual evaluation, newly, radically, constructed thinking-foundations. For *this,* there is no help other than purposeful resort to the pervading intellectual sanity, the intrinsic rational integrity, of language: to the knowledge of language as the natural structure of intellectual discipline. Such is the knowledge of language that this book endeavors to bring within comprehending view. And such is the reason of the endeavor: that the survival of the essentialities of intellectually responsible human existence is at stake.

The case I present as to the general collapse of the sense of intellectual responsibility, the letting belligerent-spirited disaffection and disunity of thought and complacent, emptily peaceful-spirited, pluralistic doctrine serve as surrogate ideals of intellectual morality, needs no verificatory arguing. The scene of contemporary life as a life of minds needs no description: everyone is in it, has it for daily familiar personal environment in its exhibition of hu-

manity as a self-communicating and self-entertaining monster-world of diversity, through the conversion of the very instrumentalities of intellectual community into media of dispersal of human identity. There is, patently, not *meeting* of minds, but *scattering* of minds, in the contemporary flooding of the attention of human beings with an endless out-streaming common-intelligence fabricated from imitations and parodies of the unities of human nature.

Attack on the false show of human universality, community in a levelling of human variation in "culture," "taste," racial and personal mentality and emotionalism, to a banal, one-world uniformity, indeed oppressive of the development of consciousness of the nature of human identity, is itself a false position. The position does not spring from an inspiring conception of the essence of this identity as single, but from a vulgar synthesis of political, aesthetic, intellectual, biological, philosophies that attributes to human beings a higher, supra-animalistic favoredness with absolute individuality. Psychology's invention of a phenomenon of "identity-crisis" as the modern problem is medicine-man ministering to the utter dissipation of the source of common identity, in the modern spiritual consciousness, with a fiction of an "inner," spiritual, resource of absolute individual being-reality, as the common factor in human identity.

The predicament of modern humanity is the impossibility of its functioning as a humanity with a self-conscious coherence expressive of the principle of unity of being necessarily informing intelligent being while replacing intellectually arbitrary systems of unified human-mindedness with systems that break up the procedures of human intelligence into pluralized knowledges. Modern renovated human-mindedness, stripped of intuition of an indispensable principle of unity, knows no alternative or complement to standards of diversity in intellectual apprehension but a diversity of sentimentally adopted "truths."

The turbulences of the 'sixties, and beyond, of dissent, protest, rebellion against positions and institutions of thought come to be regarded as tyrannies, brought into the field of intellectual choice, as principles of order and harmony to counteract the confusions of intellectual heterogeneity, emotional faiths that could not bear up under the strain of what was asked of them as communal emblems of truth and spiritual reconstitution. The guitar-banjo-mandolin plain-human mysticism of musical innocence, the homespun lyricism of plain-feeling basics, the solemnities of balm-imbibing from oriental quasi-religious philosophic exercises of verbal ritual, the fervently worshipful propagandizing of political and psychological religiosities, the down-to-earth spirituality of mind-drugging nature-faiths: all this seems to have subsided as a purgative regression to innocently unruly simplicities of understanding and

feeling. The 'seventies decade had some appearance of an aftermath of second-thought sobriety, and rational stock-taking. But nothing has happened except the exhaustion of an emotionalism of infantile spiritual panic, a hew-and-cry raising over a sense of the draining away of *meaning* from human existence, with helter-skelter assignings of culpability and prescription of cures.

The passions of the 'sixties aged into repetition-habits. The incoherencies of the state of mind that fostered them are still contemporary historical human fact. A hard-headed realism of survival tactics has tempered but not replaced the abandon of the soft-headed radical romanticism. There are *more* incoherencies. Human existence seems more and more drained of meaning. The possibility of there rising up, in the scene of hope-consuming confusion in which the human intelligence is stranded, a saving conception of *help*—something to which minds can center themselves, a faith in the indestructibility of meaning by which to be held together—has come to seem almost unthinkable.

Those who regard themselves as thinking people, possessed of qualifications for the exhibiting of their minds' workings in publicly useful forms, stimulative of interest in questions suitable for general intelligent pondering, have been piling up evidence of consciousness of the existence of a general human plight of inability to think straight and whole on any matter or subject of contemporary concern. The exercises in blazing trails of meaning, in terms of fact, fiction, plain, learned, or poetic, opinion, for possible clues to ways out of the all-covering contemporary pattern of incoherence, are themselves but new lines of deviation. Deviation and fractionation (upon deviation and fractionation) are the maximum in contemporary intellectual ingenuity in inventing solutions for a presumed general insolubility of a presumed general human predicament of finding belief in human life as necessarily not senseless, a lost resource.

What there is to be discovered that might prompt new impulses of courage to place confidence in the human state as a reasonable one requires no ingenuity of construction of arguments to enable human minds to persuade themselves that good understanding of the human state lies in serene endurance of the impossibility of a verifiably correct understanding of it. Attainment to human sagacity is not by the route of conscientiousness of owning to the want of it. The contemporary human posture of enlightened know-nothingness as the modern beginning of wisdom is the posture of the living of a lie, to justify the neglect of truth—truth treated as a barbaric pretension that has to be refined out of human self-intelligence. The very living of this lie uses the provision that inheres in human life of the capability of making sense of itself to itself: it converts language into a dress of words to hide a pretended nakedness, an alleged incapability of human life of *meaning*.

Language is the link of meaning that human life has with the fact of exis-

tence. Human beings have been unlearning it with a terrible pride in evading its insistent claim upon them of being their title to the name "human." This book reveals the disastrous extent to which language has been unlearned, and how it may be learned again, in full. The example of language as newly learnable that it presents is the English language. But the principles of the knowledge of language set forth in it are universally applicable.

CHAPTER 1

Introductory Explanations

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1.

This book is the first formal presentation of a work that has been very long in coming to be. About twenty-five years ago its two authors joined forces in an endeavor to make an orderly dictionary, one in which words would be defined with special regard for the relations and distinctions of meaning existing between them. The origin of the idea of making such a dictionary is of an even earlier date; and the special linguistic interest and experience that each author brought to the work went back far into the individual life of each.

Our project drew us into a search for linguistic principles on which to base definitions: eventually, this search became a central preoccupation for us. There are no ready-formulated or immediately deducible principles of definition at the service of lexicographers. The dictionaries, by their authoritative air, and their general conformity with one another in procedure, seem to indicate the existence of a mature universal definitional method; the definitions with which they are filled show a hardy assurance, suggesting that they are the work of people who knew just what they were doing. Yet dictionary-definitions (as has come to be suspected by many, and can be clearly perceived where meanings ought to be unmistakably differentiable) do not quite define, do not quite work—are short of being definitions. They are based on lexicographical conventions that have become identified with definition, not on working principles. But a search for working principles, leading away as it must from the familiar ground of conventional definition, will for long seem to lead nowhere—if it is, truly, a search for *linguistic* principles, with makeshift, non-linguistic rivals to them (there are some available, presumed to have the virtue of being "scientific") barred out. Such, over and over, was our experi-

ence: our search brought us out of one blocked way into another—each escape from an impossibility was an entrance into a new impossibility.

Much of the twenty-five years during which we maintained our project alive was spent in outliving disappointments. The interval, each time, between becoming aware of being stopped and finding a place where a new beginning could be attempted, was long; there were periods when the project was alive only in our hearts. Certain others who had serious hopes of a successful outcome of our work were repeatedly disappointed in them, and this added a special weight of distress to the experiences of failure. Yet in many respects the work profited from failure. There were obstructions to its accomplishment that could not have been fully recognized and understood otherwise than through suffering them to the full.

The obstructions we encountered were a product, on the one hand, of the strength of the static traditional ideas that dominate people's thinking and practice in matters of word-meaning (the new pragmatic verbal theories have more psychological than linguistic impact) and, on the other hand, [of] the fragility of our personal intuitions of the internal working of linguistic principle in word-meaning. We had to generate a counter-strength in ourselves with which to immunize our intuitions from the prevailing linguistic attitudes and speaking-modes (which, in their sprawling disorder, invade all our minds), and develop them beyond the state of intuition. We never doubted the report of our linguistic sensitivity that what passed for linguistic knowledge in the dictionaries and in the domain of "good usage" (and in modernized linguistics as well) was in its basis an ignorance of principle on which minor processes of learning and sophistication were superimposed. But false equivalents of knowledge are effectively nullified only by knowledge itself: ultimately, we would have to *know*—know not "everything," but something fully and firmly, that would be true knowledge started.

In the years of waiting to know, our consciousness of the spiritual function of language expanded, and, apace with this, our appreciation of language's *technical infallibility.* We understood more and more the nature of the charge of truth that language carried, why it must be capable of being, in utterance, perfectly right in the whole and perfectly right in particulars, with the rightness of right judgement. We saw with increasing clarity that language was itself the anatomy of truth, a skeletal frame of elementary judgements, and that uttered words (and thoughts, first of all) had to be informed with the logic of this frame, to be true. Some of those who were privy to the character of our work viewed it, even at the beginning, as fated to frustration because its objective was complete definiteness in the determination of word-meanings; and they had the latest in linguistic theorizing ("linguology" would be an apt term for it) to support their view. But the total instructive effect of all the frustration and waiting we endured was perception that the original standards of definite-

ness conceived to be necessary for the work had been set too low, not too high. We could not have dedicated ourselves to a work of this sort, initially, had we not viewed language as fashioned upon a plane of finality. Relativism in dealing with language-matters is a surrender of the intellectual responsibility of going to the end, with them, as language goes to the end, in its vastly thorough anticipatory provisions for the needs and the possibilities of thought-expression. The germ of our dedication to our work was a dedication to language: loyalty to language has kept us loyal to the work.[1]

In all this time of our biding with our work, relativist conceptions of the nature of word-meaning and relativist attitudes to the use of words have been growing up so rankly between the speakers of words and the reality, language, that language's exactitudes and niceties have come to seem in more and more eyes a rather clumsy though ingenious mechanics of mental signalling. We two have stood alone in our disposition to language; and, in this isolation, we have purified what was identical in our individual dispositions, and brought what was different under its single discipline. We have differed only in approaching the work's problems from different personal backgrounds, never on what the problems were, what the work ought to be. We have been the guarantors of each other's motivations, and objects.

The personal background of each, in relation to the work, will be described in the next chapter. But we shall make no attempt to describe the individual contribution of each to this book. We have followed no formal plan of division of labor. Much of our work has been in the field of intangibles: we have had to learn how to conceive fundamental matters of language definitively, in order to know concretely in what the definition of words consists. These matters have now, largely, ceased to be intangibles for us. But there has been so much interaction of mutual criticism and mutual authentication that the resultant thinking does not yield to retrospective analysis: it is indivisible. In our treating of individual words, the trail of who was responsible for what would be impossible to pick out, for here, too, there has been intricate interaction. In the case of phases of definitional attempts that have been superseded by others, departing from them, the traces of entire periods of work have become invisible. We think that it would not advance the understanding of our work in its immediate totality to unearth the traces of these. Other people can learn far less from one's mistakes than one can learn oneself: we shall try to give readers the benefit of ours, but dispense with the history of them.

2.

The subject-matter of our book is of two kinds, which have been interwoven in its making: we treat of linguistic principles, and we treat of the actual meanings of words. The ideal fulfilment of our objective would be a dictionary in

which all the problems of linguistic principle raised by questions of meaning were exemplified (having been already resolved)—the structure of the dictionary being determined by considerations of linguistic principle, and the character of the definitions as well. It seemed to us for a long time that we might do the sufficient, in revising lexicography, within the relatively small compass of a dictionary-thesaurus, a word-book providing logically distinct and compatible definitions for the body of words traditionally called "synonyms." These words constitute, indeed, an intellectual core of language; and it ought to be specifically said, to point readers' minds to English words, with which we shall here be intricately concerned, that such words (the so-called synonyms) constitute the core of *the*—of our—language. In a word-book that presented impeccably co-ordinated—exact, non-conflicting, mutually supplementary—definitions of them, the essence of linguistic principle would be contained. But, to replace with such definitions the characteristically vague or ambiguous dictionary-definitions of these words, and the facile groupings and discriminations to which professional synonymists subject them, requires, we learned, a total reorganization of the linguistic intelligence, and a complete reacquaintance with the meaning-substance of language—of languages, of *the* language (this English language). The whole verbal field became our workground; and, with eyes on the whole, we ceased to think in terms of a serviceable epitome. What we present here has had no finish put to it, is no thing-in-itself, but the first instalments of an entire work—that others may advance further, if we do not. We present it because we think that there is an urgent need in speakers of the English language of a fresh orientation to their language, and that we show the way in what we have done to the attaining of it.

Something is happening between the language and its speakers, and at a rapid rate, producing changes that go beyond the historically familiar scope of linguistic change: its speakers are forgetting it. The case is not, as might be plausibly hypothesized, that the language is filling up with new words faster than people can absorb new words intelligently, and that people are less and less at home with their words generally. Nor is there any phenomenally gross action of what is called meaning-change in progress outstripping linguistic education. The language is glutted with terminological inventions in many vocabularistic areas, but people accept them unembarrassedly, understanding as much as they have use for or want to understand—access to the knowledge of special-subject words is far easier than in previous linguistic eras. Of meaning-change there is probably a good deal less than in other times; no strong tendency towards departure from established meanings is apparent. Indeed, the language, though taking on large side-loads of special-subject words, has for long been centrally, internally, static: it is a made language. Besides terminological accretions, the only new elements in the language are the many

illiterate usages and fashion-words that swell some dictionaries; and these are in the main ephemera, and do not to an appreciable extent displace the essential language for speakers of the language as a whole. The "forgetting" of the language that is going on has nothing to do with word-transformations, vocabularistic additions, altered usage-standards, such as can tear a language away from its native identity and turn it into a stranger to its old self. Today's English language is the same language as yesterday's, and yesterday's, as far back as the term "modern" applies—a matter of centuries; its modernity is integrally characteristic of it. What its speakers are forgetting is its operational equipment, its systematic nature as a provision of communicable meanings, the very spirit of the language—its inner rationality, its logical genius.

When the speakers of a language lose rapport with its rational spirit, they become crippled users of it. Their use of it becomes intellectually defective; and, though they be well-versed in it vocabularistically and put the words together with a fair degree of grammatical and syntactical decorum, their speaking is an inferior linguistic performance—even, a sub-linguistic performance. The English language is, indeed, still a *spoken* language. But it has been becoming less and less of a *thought* language. In employing it, its speakers employ mainly the physical portion of it: the words are to them little more than physical entities evocative of experience-"associations"—the reality of words as intellectual entities has become so pale in people's consciousness that, instead of knowing the meanings of their words, they know, rather, their habitual association-responses to the stimuli that the words in their physical actuality constitute. Instead of linguistic knowledge of words, knowledge of their rational function, there prevails (what might well be called) psychological knowledge of them, knowledge, necessarily varying from person to person, of the consciousness-sensations that words in their physical impact produce. Thus, people cease to think of meaning as something inhering in words, residing in the language: they think of it as something in themselves. And, of course, when it is that, it is something different in each of them. When such an inversion of the linguistic nature of things happens, people are left with only the empty husks of words in their minds' grasp. This is what we mean by forgetting a language.

We might say, instead of "forgetting" the language, "unlearning" the language; for the forgetting of it is the result of a general disintegration of the knowledge of it among its speakers. How does it happen that a language for several centuries continuously employed should suffer the indignity of being "unlearned" by its speakers—and they, the damage mental and, ultimately, spiritual, of having a language that is on the way to becoming a ghost of itself? (A physical ghost, that is, its words dissociated from the spiritual substance of the language, the rational stuff of meaning—from that part of their make-up

by reason of which they cohere as language.) The cause is not in any special political or social fate fallen upon the diverse communities, large and small, whose language it is. The cause is human, general: the weakening of intellectual grasp of the language is a manifestation of a decline in the faith in reason that has been long and pervasively active in the entire human world.

Reason has its home among human beings in language; and, if they take their language unto themselves and make it of one life with themselves, giving themselves to it, they know reason in themselves in knowing it. But no single linguistic community or body of linguistically homogeneous communities (not even in the case of speakers of the English language, for whom reason has been a more personal, more concretely linguistic, less abstractly philosophical, force than it has been for any other set of human beings) has ever attained thorough rational identity with the common language; no speakers of any language have yet succeeded in knowing their language through and through, in penetrating to the heart of its rational interior and interpenetrating their minds and their language with each other. The breakdown in the faith in reason that has been gradually turning people into linguistic cripples was inevitable, so long as reason, however popular as a concept it became, remained largely just a concept, something thought of, in the main, as existing in categorical separation from human nature—as merely a valuable addition to it, or complement of it. Reason is the form in which spiritual energy works in human nature. But human beings have taken it to be nigh everything but itself. Latterly they have mistaken it, in what has seemed to them a final access of maturity, for an intellectually childish forerunner of Science, which is but the concept of a giant synthetic common-sense presiding over all possible contingencies in human need. They have been letting go of reason, they have been letting go of language. They hold on to themselves, but all their ambition and hope have been cut to the size of self-interest. When human beings, hurrying along, leave their guardian angel, language, trailing behind, they lose virtue and grace that have been theirs, and the vision of what more there is to possess and be, happily.

Since the deterioration of sensitivity to the logical integrity of language that speakers of the English language have suffered is of general human origin, and the speakers of other languages suffer of the same ailment (unlearning their languages as their total education becomes spiritually modernized—or, better to say, scientificized), whatever contributes to a reawakening and expanding of the intellectual consciousness of language in speakers of the English language must serve eventually the speakers of other languages. The cure lies in the exposure of the patient to a new kind of knowledge of the language, one embodying an understanding of the internal principles by which words have meaning—the principles that are the law of every language. A complete

definitional re-evaluation of English words in which these principles were everywhere taken into account could make the English language into the truth-evoking language that its equipment of many-sourced words rationally domesticated to one another renders it pre-eminently capable of being. And every other language has a like destiny in potential reserve.

Such is the view we have of languages, and of their present state, in launching this book into the speaking world, and such our idea of what might in the broadest sense of effect issue from it.

CHAPTER 2

The Authors: The Personal Background

1.

It should be plain to readers that we consider things of large spiritual importance to be involved in the use of words—in how words are used. We shall try in this chapter to make plain the manner in which, and the extent to which, we think they are involved.

The question of people's spiritual disposition to their linguistic performances and experiences may well seem to lie outside the field of straight linguistic interests, and to belong to the field of philosophic sentiment. We take it to be directly related to their functioning as speaking beings; we regard the spiritual aspects of the use of words as coming properly within the immediate range of people's preoccupation with words—of that active attention to words that every user of them ought naturally to exert, in speaking them, listening to, or reading them, thinking by them, entertaining the knowledge of them.

We draw no line between ordinary and specialized attention to linguistic problems. We think that all people ought to have continual preoccupation with words in their use of them, and more than a petty degree of it, and that no one can be without any preoccupation whatever with words and use them with any effect of reasonableness. It is generally assumed that ordinary word-users have occasional preoccupation of a practical kind with words, pause occasionally to focus their attention on incidental, technical, verbal matters, or what seem to be such, merely. There is little expectation that ordinary word-users will go beyond this kind of preoccupation, to an interested and informed awareness of the general characteristics and workings of language that may be called intellectual preoccupation with words: this kind of preoccupation is usually associated with philological specialists, linguistic scholars. Beyond these two kinds, there is that of spiritual preoccupation, which may be defined as

consciousness of the existence of a correlation between human life-aims and the way in which words are used. There is hardly any recognition of there being such a distinct kind of preoccupation with words, although an aura of mystery, presumed insoluble, hovers in the minds of most round the subject of language. We regard these three kinds of preoccupation as the requisite ingredients of a natural general preoccupation—for any user of words whomsoever. We believe, moreover, that in the total attitude to words of the ordinary word-user these three kinds of preoccupation are present, though in confused relation and varying insufficiency everywhere. We count as the only fully satisfactory attitude to words one formed of preoccupation of the three kinds, present in sufficient extent for mature linguistic responsibleness, and brought into union.

It is the spiritual ingredient of preoccupation with words that we want especially to dwell on at this juncture. We shall be dealing ultimately in this book with concrete issues of word-meaning. But how we deal with those issues will have derived from our ideas on the spiritual aspects of word-use. These ideas themselves have been nurtured on long preoccupation of ours with words, extensive and intense. We propose to give an account of that preoccupation in this chapter, hoping that we can thus bring our ideas personally closer to readers and at the same time illuminate our conception of a spiritual part of linguistic activity that affects the actual use of words intimately, functionally. Because of our having been moved by a concern with the spiritual aspects of the use of words to occupy ourselves with verbal matters in fine practical detail, and with intellectual reference to general matters of language, we do not think of ourselves as professional linguistic specialists in the academic sense of professionalism, or specialization. Our preoccupation with words, large and long as it has been, is a personal one, without professional orientation, and having no other object than that of exploring the potentialities of preoccupation with words as a general human propensity and responsibility.

2.

With every purposive human activity, a union of practical and intellectual and spiritual preoccupation with it, bringing as it must the whole activity under attention and direction, is the means of achieving the comprehensive success in it that is happiness. With the use of words, there is a further happiness attending complete preoccupation: it yields happiness not only in their use but as a consequence of their use. So goes our thinking. The idea that happiness of a very important order (of the most important order, we tend to think) is achievable in and by the use of words has long been with us. It is not an

experimental idea, but the stable form our hope has taken in our preoccupation with words.

To conceive of words as importantly related to human happiness is no new thing. People can be moved to rapt joy by religious or poetic utterances, and can feel sharp delight in a telling phrase or a word that rings so right that it seems that nothing more need be said; and they can know a pleasure of the soul in momentarily recognizing, through words, the human genius of one another. But such experience is categorically out-of-the-ordinary. The happiness we have in mind is—would be, could only be—a constant condition of happy success in speaking. The idea of it comprises the idea of a common way of speaking, a way practicable for all, fulfilling every requisite from small to large of goodness of words. By people's present general expectations of one another (and themselves), such a way of speaking would belong to a world of fantasy in which all were endowed with literary genius or had tongues of angels in their mouths. But we envisage an expertness of words neither heavenly nor professional, attained to by people in the natural course of their applying themselves with whole seriousness to living the life of speaking beings.

We believe that there is a new kind of knowledge of words to be enjoyed, that meets the requirements of a single all-embracing preoccupation, sensitive to all aspects of the use of words. This new kind of knowledge may be described as one in which the understanding of the serviceability of words for truth is the object of knowledge. The relation between truth and happiness, in our thinking on the part of language in human life, is a primary one: we see the consciousness that one is speaking at every word with truth, and the companion consciousness of being so spoken to, as the assurance, and beginning, of human happiness—lasting and general happiness.

While entertaining such a far-pressing vision of the possible results of a better use of words, we have endeavored to identify what is requisite for a better use of them, keeping importantly before our minds elementary matters of word-meaning, of the kind with which dictionaries are supposed to deal. There are simple but basic difficulties in the determination of word-meaning that are never resolved in dictionaries, which constitute an initial universal handicap to a completely good use of words. We have already explained how our book looks towards an eventual setting-forth of the meaning-structure of the English language (with others, if not ourselves, completing what is done here). Even because the practical techniques and general scholarship of language, and the function we see language as having of being the safeguard of human integrity, make one subject for us, we are prepared to find verbal minutiae critically important, and would be slow to regard anything of a linguistic character as a trifle.

In our interest in the intricacies of meaning-difference, meaning-relation, meaning-diversity, meaning-coherence, we remain actively conscious of the human significance of language. Always, we see language not as an accidental accretion upon human life, a curiosity having features peculiar to itself alone, but as a thing that is perfectly correspondent with how human nature collects itself into one, in its sensitive openness to all nature. Words are never just themselves, narrowly; it will not be forgotten, here, even in considerations of definitional technique, that they are the abundant match to the abundant sensitivity of human nature to the nature of all things.

In looking into the verbal make-up of the English language and fixing special attention on particular words, we shall seek to determine what their fullest potentialities of meaning are, to go further in envisaging than the "near enough," superficially helpful definitions of the conventional dictionaries, and the manufactured correctness of the style-books—which substitute canons of linguistic good-taste or common-sense expediency for linguistic principles. Extending in all directions from considerations of word-meaning, towards the far corners of human thought-reach, there is the great matter of how to make words tell all that human thought can hold, and how to make human thought bring forth its all, for telling. We try to travel the necessary distances, in covering the small matters in language as parts, all, of that great matter.

3.

We have both been deeply concerned with poetry, which seems to offer bright possibilities of using words under conditions propitious to a humanly grand perfection of use. We have both, as have many others before us, seen poetry as the liberator of human beings to the destiny of complete vital articulateness that all involuntarily anticipate, even with the first words they speak. This view of poetry may seem in these times of levelled aspirations an out-of-date romanticism. But there could be no poetry (unless it were mock-poetry) written without at least the affectation of belief in poetry as a linguistic milieu in which the noblest forms of the human speaking-urgency had chances of coming into their own.

It was as a poet that the first of us conceived of a lexicographical task of drawing distinct meaning-lines between words. She did not conceive of the task from the viewpoint of a professional poetic preoccupation with words, but with a desire to put at the general linguistic service her peculiar sensitivity to matters of word-meaning, one naturally keen, and further sharpened in the poetic discipline that she imposed on herself—in which she sought to make what words meant matter never less in their use than what might be effected

with them in beauty of sound and rhythm. Her objective in poetry may be said to have gone beyond the poetic as a literary category, and reached over into the field of the general human ideal in speaking, of which perfect truth is always an adequate description. She tried to find in poetry the key to a way of speaking that would realize this spiritual ideal, apparently unrealizable in ordinary speaking-practice, looking to an eventual solution in poetry of the universal human problem of how to make words fulfil the human being and the human being fulfil words. Thus, there was an affinity of feeling and intellect between her lexicographical and her poetic preoccupation with words. The lexicographical preoccupation was propelled into existence, indeed, by the poetic preoccupation; for in that she concerned herself with the possibility of so using words that every word mattered, and to the exact full of its particular value in the concord of meanings (the entire language) in which it had its identity as a word. This mattering of each word was no mere desideratum of poetic art for her. She saw a spiritual law involved, the disregard of which must work confusion not only in what was said, but within the sayer. Persuasion of the large spiritual importance of taking loving-care with words in their use stretched arc-like over the entire range of their use, in her disposition to them—from the speaking-occasions of transient interest to those that ought to be of timeless quality.

To the first of us, then, poetry typified the possibility of a perfect speaking, in which all that is said is said for truth's sake. This envisaged perfect speaking amounted for her to a state of existence—"the good existence," she called it, in her preface to her *Collected Poems*. The virtue of poetry lay for her in a capability presumed in it of bringing human beings to that point of human purity at which they finally profess, as she put it in a poem, "We must keep faith now with what we say." Though poetry was the form of her vision of human fulfilment, language was the substance. She took language to be the central area of human functioning, that ought to provide the bearings for all human activity. Her hope of what might be, humanly, was centered in language; the orientation of the human right was, for her, in the linguistic right.

It was as a devotee of language generally, and a lover of the English language in particular, that the first of us interested herself in matters of word-meaning; she came to regard the English language as one exceptionally well-fitted for the uses of truth. But some of the merit of a language is wasted if there is not perfect knowledge of its words. In pressing herself, in using words, to keep to the linguistic identity of each word—in her poetic work, but not only in that—she became very actively aware of the discrepancy between the words of the language as they meant by their given particular logical function, and the peculiar identity they had in it by reason of this, and the words of common use, putatively the words of the language. And it became evident to

her that there were two kinds of knowledge of words, the knowledge of the real words of the language, and that of the make-shift words of indeterminate meaning fabricated by a loveless usage. Dictionaries as they are afford no more than the knowledge of the words of that usage. The material of the other kind of knowledge is *there:* it is in the language, in the words of the language as they in their diversity of meaning hold together in rational compatibility. But to formulate the meanings of words by this other kind of knowledge—to have the knowledge surely enough for the formulation of meanings by it—requires intensely purposeful efforts of concentration on the language itself, with steady avoidance of the formulations of what might be called "usage-knowledge"—which amount to an educated ignorance of the actual, the linguistic, meanings of words. Such was the task the first of us set herself, and such the task in which the second joined. The proportions of the task were long in revealing themselves, even to the two together; it became more rather than less easily manageable as it showed itself in its full size.

It has been axiomatic with us that a knowledge of words is worthless unless it is a knowledge of language. If words are known as language, there is awareness of them as prescriptions of meaning that the language they constitute—that they *are*—presents in them. Only when words are known as language can the use of them be the use of a language; only then can there be systematic observance of their meanings as those of a body of words rationally unified in their meanings. Such observance is the proper linguistic business of every human being; it is the discipline of truth under which every human being ought to operate, in the use of words. Anyone who feels a lack of opportunities for such observance in the ways of ordinary speech is susceptible to devotion to poetry as a use of words so beautifully careful as to seem to have all the excellences of truth implicit in it. For both authors of this book poetry has held the charm of an apparent invitation to use words with final rightness.

To the first of us poetry was for over twenty years a linguistic avenue to the capability of speaking perfectly, a single place in the world of speaking circumstances in which the linguistic right could be freely attempted. She nursed a hopeful answer all that while to the question, whether poetry could not be truth, as it seemed impossible for ordinary speaking to succeed in being. At last she came to understand that there is an irreducible ultimate impediment in poetry to its success as truth. This is the indispensable verbal artistry that makes it poetry, its characteristic mode of linguistic procedure, formed to the generic poetic necessity of sensuous appeal. So she turned away from that direction of hope, and started again with the single prime fact of language, in its goodly natural provision for natural speaking felicities, enlarging her conception of human success in truth to bounds far beyond those to which poetry could even in imagination stretch. It became radiantly clear to her that the

horizon of linguistic hope could not lie in one direction, but must ring human life in all directions.

The second of us brought to the common task a long experience of his own of concern with poetry and concern with language. He formed a love of poetry early in his life, seeing in the beauties of utterance at which it aims possible answers to spiritual aspirations that seemed to him to have no answers elsewhere. He schooled himself in the knowledge of the poetic corpus, and in the practice of poetry, and took opportunities that presented themselves of becoming personally familiar with some of the most able poets of the time. His poetic work, which found considerable favor, did not attain the unity of persistent production. His manner of poetic utterance was something between the lyrical and the epigrammatic, in reflection of the fact that he both bound himself to poetic conventionalities and tried to break through them with sharp-edged thrusts of truth. He was never satisfied with his own poetic efforts. But he had so much expectation of spiritual light from poets as a genus that he concerned himself very actively for a time with a project for the publishing of American writing under the exclusive direction of poets, chosen on a regional basis. (The project failed—for reasons that need not be related here.) Little by little, however, his concern with poetry lost buoyancy; and the cheer of soul it excited in him was replaced by a general restive perplexity, in which he sought answers outside of poetry, yet kept turning to it again and again as a place of familiar refuge.[1] At a low ebb of his spiritual enthusiasm, he came upon a work of an English poet, no longer living, in which he found so much resolute devotion to poetry as combining linguistic and spiritual ideals that his sense of the humanly possible was newly enlivened and expanded and exalted beyond all former extensions of it in or outside of poetry. The work was the masterwork of Charles M. Doughty (1843-1926), *The Dawn in Britain,* a long epic poem (Duckworth, 1906—six volumes).

Up to the point of his encountering *The Dawn in Britain,* the second of us had found no enduring satisfaction in the work of any living poet, American or English (or Irish). Doughty brought into view for him matters of language into which he had never looked closely before; in particular, he found in the work of Doughty an intensity of seriousness in the choice of words unprecedented in his (very extensive) reading experience. Doughty's manner of writing drove home to him the fact of language with such force that he put himself to school again (it was to be for eight years and more)—so to speak—in Doughty's linguistic schoolhouse, which was an immense versedness in the older, pre-Shakespearean English language, used by him in *The Dawn in Britain* in entire replacement of modern English. In his reasons for making this replacement, which were fundamentally linguistic, rather than literary, Doughty is in certain major ways very close in his thinking to the thinking

from which the initial project behind this book issued; and his thinking and his linguistic practice, both, have been a source of comfort to us in the long course we have travelled in bringing this book into being. We shall devote our next chapter to a comparative account of Doughty's linguistic position and our own; this should give readers a historical sense of our position, and considerably advance their understanding of it. We shall only say further at this point, in reference to C. M. Doughty, that the study of his experiment in language pursued by the second of us, involving intensive research in the meaning-detail of the older English, proved itself to have been, when the two of us applied ourselves to our joint studies, an invaluable preparation for them.

There remains to say, retrospectively, of the second of us, that during the latter years of his labors in the field of Doughty's word-use he exercised his general concern with poetry as poetry-editor of an American news-magazine, putting the material that came his way to critical tests in which word-use was an increasingly important factor. His rough, journalistic formulation of the poet's task in using words was "to make words make sense"; what he had at heart, in conceiving of the objective of "sense," was that same truth of word, or quality of truth in words, that was for the first of us poetry's necessary, self-justifying gift to the possibility of perfect speaking. It was while he was functioning in that editorial capacity that the second of us became acquainted with the poetic work, *in toto,* of the first of us. In it he perceived the essence of that which he had been undefinedly seeking, which can be described, in general terms, as the uniting of the spiritual objectives that teem confusedly in human nature into a single objective singly obtainable by means of the word-perfectness of truth. Personal encounter with each other, and the discovery of a like awareness in each other of there being a direct relationship between spiritual and linguistic values, and united application to the work represented by this book, followed a pattern of circumstances that shows in retrospect certain features of logical necessariness. The finding of the first of us that poetry must ever by its nature fail to fulfil the linguistic and spiritual ideals that were, in combination, its title to professional-functional virtue and dignity (of the highest) came as part of her individual career; it was an aftermath of the publication of her *Collected Poems.* In the early stages of our work on linguistic matters, there was no joint position taken on poetry. But, as our thinking on these and related matters proceeded in its joint course, the revised view of poetry of the first received increasing substantiation, and came eventually to be held by both.[2]

It is of relevance to say here that, while the second of us, American-born, was for a brief time active in English literary quarters and was for many years orientated in his ideas of language and poetic standards to the work of an English poet, and the first of us, also American-born, withdrew from the

American to the English poetic scene in the early part of her poetic career, we are both firmly established in the position of American speakers of the English language towards everything of which we treat in this book, general and particular. As Americans, we believe, both, that the fulfilment of the American vision of human happiness is not to be sought, in so far as the things of language are concerned, in any Americanization, or nationalization, of our linguistic inheritance, but only in the renewal of its time-worn excellence. The inheritance was not, even, a purely private possession for those from whom Americans have had it, to share as such: the English had it—the component material of it—from the world at large. As to the whole American vision, it will fail to attain maturity, we think, and show more and more the defects of immaturity (the constrictions of self-defensiveness, the confusions of fancifulness), until happiness is seen as intrinsically natural to human existence, and not as an improvement to be superimposed on it or as a by-product of success of personal venture. In the things of language, this means satisfaction experienced by people in a full and fully devoted common knowledge of words and of the logical scope and limits of their use, sustainedly exercised in reciprocities of perfect speaking between one and the other, to the end of attaining perfect mutuality of being. To pursue such happiness is a humanly universal predisposition—which Americans, by the good fortune of being burdened with fewer old commitments of aspiration than others, ought, of a certitude, to be among the first to discover in themselves.

CHAPTER 3

A Comparison of Objectives

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1.

Though in the long course of linguistic events there have always been periodic spurts of puristic activity, inspired by a desire to raise standards of word-use, and amounting in some instances to programmatic movements, the emphasis in such activity has been invariably upon matters of good form, grammatical and vocabularistic, and, mainly, stylistic. Our interest in the improvement of word-use has no affinity with conventional purism, for our objectives are centered in the fundamental linguistic matter of meaning, and the related fundamental human matter of truth. We have found nothing in the puristic field with which to compare the kind of concern with words we have. Our concern is not that of purists, but of advocates of language, merely: we want only that people do their language full justice in their use of words—so that their language may perform its all for them.

With no other worker at things of language besides Charles M. Doughty do we feel any major kinship of attitude. His and our attitudes touch in the kind of importance he attributed and we attribute to language and in the kind of care with words he deemed and we deem ordained by language. There are broad resemblances between his conception of the linguistic good and that which animates this book—and broad differences also. By telling of his conception, we will, we believe, make our own more easily placeable on the map of linguistic thinking. We cannot treat in detail here of Doughty's linguistic labors—which were vast. We must limit ourselves to evoking his presence in the scene of our subject as a prophetic force: he foresaw linguistic disaster with the eyes of a morally passionate poet, so that the poetic legacy he left has a value beyond its literary value, which is of the highest in itself.[1]

Doughty will be recognized by some of our readers as the author of *Travels in Arabia Deserta*—a work that has won the place of a classic in English travel-literature. This book preceded *The Dawn in Britain,* his first poetic work. Here he performed the extraordinary linguistic feat of breaking entirely with the English usage of his time as one incompatible with honorable linguistic objectives, basing his own usage on old models, the best examples of pre-Shakespearean English—a feat tantamount to exchanging one language for another. He began to attempt the change-over in the prose *Arabia Deserta;* in speaking of the cause of his writing it, and of his "dislike of the Victorian English," he wrote: "I wished to show, and thought I might be able to show, that there was something else." But to the "something else" that he fashioned in *Arabia Deserta* he gave its definitive dimensions in *The Dawn in Britain:* there he offered a perfected model of what he considered to be right English.

Doughty sought the elevation of English speech from the level at which he found it in his time. Since his time it has sunk to a still lower level; the complacent indifference of Victorian usage to what he called "the splendid choice of words" afforded by the English language has been replaced everywhere in the attitude of people to their words by an active divorcement of themselves from their language, a bold loosening of the bonds within them between humanity and language. Doughty read a simple story of deterioration in the course of the development of the language after it passed its early prime in the latter part of the 16th century. We see the language reaching peaks of excellence in the period of its pre-Shakespearean prime, then descending to flatlands of diffusion, and meandering over these in disorderly intricacy in the centuries of its coming of modern age. But we see no inevitability of deterioration in that outspreading enlargement; we see, indeed, a language taking better care of itself, through its internal rational safeguards, as it has moved on in time, than that which its speakers have taken of their use of it and of themselves in the use of it.

Doughty viewed the objective of the elevation of English speech through the eyes of a traditionalist: the method by which it was to be accomplished was, for him, the rehabilitation of the literature of his country, of its poetry particularly, seen by him as corrupted with individualistic professionalism. The solution of the problem of how human beings shall find and keep to a humanly worthy manner of speaking lies for ourselves directly between the speakers of the language and their language. For Doughty, the generality of speakers stood in indirect relation to the problem, with the poets coming between it and them as having the sacred charge of solving it—coming not as fortune-seekers "self-sprung," as Doughty characterized the poets of his days, but as upholders in a new time of noble old standards of purpose and practice in the employment of the common language. Thus Doughty saw his own rôle;

and to his ambition of initiating a revival of linguistic and literary virtue was joined a patriotic vision of a resultant new age of virtue for the English nation, which he viewed as affected with cynical complacencies in all its parts. Doughty's was not a narrow patriotism, for he thought of England as a focal point of human regeneration; within the confines of a pattern of patriotic renaissance he crowded a large humane ambition. According to our judgement, humanity will not be saved from its inferiority to itself by examples of superiority; nor the speech of people be raised from its supine state by the examples of a lofty speech, such as poetry is, that attains its remove in the first place by exploiting properties that words possess apart from their intrinsic linguistic value. But we consider that, in his perception of a primary relation between the practical operations of language and the labors of the human spirit to right itself, Doughty went beyond all past visionary thinking, coming within sight of the spiritual native land of all human beings, to which perfect truth of word is the only passport.

When the first of us came to examine Doughty's performance under the light that the researches of the second of us cast upon it, she felt a satisfaction that she had hardly ever before felt in viewing the capriciously variable landscape of poetic speaking. Here, for all the alien oddities of Doughty's poetic terrain, was one in many ways less of a stranger to her than had been poets who were her fellows in time and in the affiliations of presumed common interests. Here was dedication to the effort to realize in poetry linguistic ideals that had become tarnished both in the ordinary and the literary conception of the best speaking—the ideal of truth glimmering centrally among them; here was an aspiring exercise of linguistic scruple as the foundation of harmonious utterance kindred with her own disposition to words as a poet. Doughty was a poet in the most solemn, serene, lively, and professionally magnificent connotations of the word; for all his attachment to the antique English language, he is a poet of modern England, the only deeply serious poet it has produced since pre-Victorian times. But the crowning merits of Doughty's poetic achievements are not to be looked for in their character as poetry. (The heights which any poet ascends are lost in the clouds that the linguistic atmosphere of poetry breeds; the merits of poetry lie in mists.) The key to the value of Doughty's poetic work is in its linguistic aims, as evinced in the criteria of goodness of word that he strained to follow in it. Doughty was right about language, and one can see the movement, the tendency, of his rightness in the work. One cannot discern in it how far the old words, the old manners of word-use, could take human beings towards actual speaking happiness, what the worth of his experiment with classic English might prove to be if tried off the page, on the ground of the immediate comprehensive living need of a linguistic alternative to what Doughty called "the misery of today." But the

wise interior principles shine plainly through the poetic opacities and the temporal unreality of the antique idiom.

In the lessons of goodness of word that Doughty tried to teach, the necessity of a sure, a complete, knowledge of one's language came first; and, then, that of a loyal observance of the knowledge in the use of words. Further, he sternly placed the necessity in human obligation. He was morally, not pedantically, indignant at how his fellow-speakers disregarded the basic proprieties of the English language: his ultimate precept was that in such disregard they violated the bonds of human community—to him, resident in language. He defined the linguistic obligation which was at once the human obligation (in his terms, "the prerogative of every lover of his Country") thus: ". . . to keep that reverently clean and bright, which lies at the root of his mental life, and so, by extension, of the life of the Community: putting away all impotent and disloyal vility of speech, which is no uncertain token of a people's decadence." We two hold Doughty to have been a lone counsellor and prophet to his own and to future generations, pointing to where a beginning might be made in the saving of human life from an empty progress, in which its essence is ever diluted as the notion of the Good is broken up into countless counterfeit notions that vie for the bewildered love of the Good. "Look to your words!" was the gist of his exhortation. We would give a like counsel, with the difference that we consider the knowledge of the language to be no open book awaiting conning, but a work never yet performed upon the body of the language itself, from the inside out.

The linguistic knowledge of Doughty's desire is not in principle much different from the kind of knowledge that has long passed conventionally for linguistic knowledge: it is a knowledge in terms of "good usage," or the best usage—a knowledge of models. Doughty had, in the literature of his preferred linguistic period, far better models of linguistic scrupulosity than the literature of the later ages provided. But his ideal linguistic knowledge was, nevertheless, a derivative knowledge, a knowledge subservient to usage—as is the contemporary notion of linguistic knowledge. Our exhortation to the speakers of languages would be: "Look to your words as they exist in your language *for* use, letting nothing set the standards of use for you but the good reason inherent in the constitution of the language itself."

There is a correspondence between Doughty's offendedness with what he heard spoken around him—an ignoble speech, to his ears—and an unhappiness early felt by the first of us in the loosely-worded, and more loosely thought, outspreading, disappearing, shapeless talk of everyone-everywhere, too carelessly put together always to make truth. In his offendedness, Doughty turned away from the language in which he had been mentally nurtured and sought balm in an earlier self of it. She, in that unhappiness, had a vision of

possibilities of linguistic excellence to be achieved with the very language of her life and time. The two positions face differently, but are both positions of sensitivity to the fact of a fast-growing preponderance of lawlessness in the use of words, making for a fast-growing preponderance of truthlessness in what is said with them; and they are both positions, also, of faith in the remediability of the deteriorating general human linguistic condition.

The second of us had found that in Doughty's "something else" which answered to a love in him of words well-used as had nothing else before; he came to know Doughty's words and word-use with an exact familiarity, and to cleave to this as something on the side of truth, something sure, something more than mere literary matter. But it was difficult for him to go beyond knowing, and marvelling at, the verbal performance of this man who had retaught himself how to speak in a gigantic act of learning, for truth's sake. What could be done with the performance besides comprehending it in all its vigorous, stern, beautiful, delicate word-labor? To this question there was no answer until after the two of us had joined our linguistic interests and learned, together, how immense must be the knowledge of words, how new in kind that knowledge must be, if through their speaking human beings were to win their way through to living spiritual transformation. We saw that Doughty's expenditure of care in mastering his preferred English was on a scale of devotion and effort that would have to be matched in the labor towards new knowledge of the existing English for which our conception of linguistic revival called.

The practical usefulness of Doughty's performance is in the scope of its word-coverage. It brings a whole language vividly under the eyes—Doughty having had the whole of the earlier English language under his eyes in the use of its words—and shows the scope of right word-choice: it shows how, to know how to use one word well, one must know all well. Doughty touched in something he wrote in his notes on this matter of size, or linguistic quantity: "Language and more language," the need is, his meaning was, "as without words we cannot think, without a knowledge of words we cannot, save confusedly, express our hearts." This matter of size is no mere matter of number of words, of large vocabulary; it has to do with words in their unity as language. We claim Doughty as an ally in the endeavor to teach the lesson that language is much, much, much more than it is generally understood to be, to cultivate the idea that one is using one's whole language each time one uses a single word of it—must have the language vividly in mind, known as a whole, if one would faithfully and fully speak one's mind. Correspondingly, we feel ourselves allies of his in his upholding the cause of language.

The exhibition Doughty makes (most effectively—indeed, climactically—in his poem *The Dawn in Britain*) of what he called "my language of the best

times" is peculiarly valuable in that it affords a view of the English language as it was before it became enlarged with the rhetorical sophistications of the Shakespearean and ensuing speaking ages. Looking upon it across those ages, as brought to life by Doughty, one can see how an initial liveliness, sparkling in every individual word, was little by little dulled as the language spread out over an ever-widening world of speaking-contexts. Doughty exhibited not merely a language, but a discipline of use inspired by it, so that, properly understood, the exhibition yields antiquity's confirmation of the intrinsic reality and integrity of language, the sense of which has become deranged amidst the swirling uncertainties, the ceaseless vagueness and inconsistencies, that constitute modern usage. We ourselves are convinced of the intrinsic reality and integrity of language, and our conviction embraces, even first of all, the English language, and the English language even as the modern English language of anarchic contemporary speaking-custom. The language is to be presumed to be "there," behind the murky film of speaking-custom, as human beings are to be presumed to be "there," behind the murky film of their living-custom; if one looks hard enough, in either case, one can see through to the reality. But there is reinforcement of linguistic sight—and linguistic conscience—for any speaker of the English language in Doughty's presentation of the English mother-tongue. Practising (to use his own words) "the Patriotic art of English philology . . . which it takes a lifetime to learn," Doughty succeeded in revealing how a whole language works (*The Dawn in Britain,* the first of his poetic works, being, as we have indicated, the example *par excellence* of this). Through the transparency of his perfect mental acclimatization to the words and functional procedures of classic English, one can perceive the movement of the human linguistic impulsion in its natural largeness—a thing hardly to be witnessed in common contemporary experience, since its contemporary manifestations are for the most part feeble, and where they are not, are likely to be overlooked in the general inexpectation of anything of full-size linguistic proportions.

Of course, there are not in fact two languages, that English that Doughty loved, and the English we have: there is only the English we have. The older has been carried along in the later and transmuted into it, save for that of it which could go so far and no further, and fell by the way. Instead of looking back to the time of the older language as to a linguistic Golden Age, the speakers of the contemporary language need to make for themselves a hope, and a purpose, of a way of speaking that exceeds in cleanly and generous articulateness all that was or could have been done in the older language, by the stoutest arts of eloquence. A world-large human problem of speaking has been tumbled into the lap of the contemporary language, and to deal with that it must make the most and best of its character as a world language. But it is well

to remember that this great flexible apparatus, lending itself so easily—too easily, it sometimes seems—to the turns of free-flowing discourse, is of excellent linguistic ancestry, that it was a very good language in its early phases (Chaucerian to Spenserian). Missing infancy, it started with its two dominant root-elements, Anglo-Saxon and Latin, worked into a logical partnership with each other, through rational affinities found in difference, and extending their single strength of integrality over the vari-sourced whole. The language has retained its vigor of unity—of simplicity—in complexity. It has great powers of resistance, within it, to the demands of new reaches of expression: it can give way and hold firm at the same time. It needs saving by its speakers—from what they are doing and not doing with it. But it itself is the best means they have of saving it; the older English, revisited, gives cheerful assurance of this.

2.

In concluding this chapter, we shall present our thought on some general questions that seem to us to call for an immediate account of it. For instance, readers may wonder, in being confronted with commentary on matters falling within the particular field of lexicography and, at the same time, with matters that could be viewed as belonging variously to fields philosophical or ethical or religious, whether there is not a comprehensive name by which our subject may be specifically identified. There is our title, "Rational Meaning." But we have indeed brought up, and seriously so, a number of other subjects besides that of meaning. What general description would cover the varied character of our interest in Language? It could be fairly said that our subject is language, and that we stress matters of meaning in applying ourselves to the subject because we are interested in everything pertaining to it, and, therefore, to begin with and end with, in how words mean, and what they mean; for meaning is the substance of language's reality.

We conceive of ourselves, in making this book, as bringing into a relation of vital unity with the general subject "language" subjects customarily dealt with apart from it, or in only very loose connection with it. Our design also includes the task of presenting in logical relation with each other subjects of a practical linguistic character that are in general associated in only a superficial way. A subject known under many names, that of the possibility of attainment by human beings to a condition of complete spiritual articulateness, can serve as an example of the first kind of subject; there is another example in meaning as a standard philosophical or psychological theme—meaning understood broadly, as the purposive element of consciousness, and the mental background of language. Of the second kind of subject, key examples are, meaning as a department of the verbal technique of language, and usage, another such

department always coupled with it in conventional treatments of word-matters—whether they be that of dictionaries or of the new-minded linguistic schools (propagating a new linguistic conventionalism). We pause here briefly over this pair of subjects, which are concerned with the instrumental aspects of language, having already dwelt at considerable length on subjects of the other kind, concerned with the ends, with the general human aspects, of language. Meaning and usage (as they exist in instrumental contiguousness) need to be seen in their internal relation to each other; they cannot be coherently evaluated when seen from the external position of pragmatical linguistic thinking—the view from the outside that dictionaries and other specialistic seats of language-authority afford.

Properly, questions of the meanings of the actual words of a language and questions of actual procedure in the use of them should send the eyes first to the composition of the language as an integrated word-totality, and then to the ways in which the language functions as such a totality. Taken in this order, the two classes of questions conform to the natural order of linguistic organization, and are graspable through spontaneous perception of the rational principle, inherent in language, that the functional ways of a language necessarily follow from the character of its total composition. As customarily treated in conjunction with each other, these questions are presented to people in the reverse of their natural order, as if usage constituted a preliminary independent entity determining the composition of a language—its total content of words in their specific meaning-individuality. The apparent distinction made between meaning and usage in such presentations is in actuality a confusing of them. The confusion results from looking at language from the distance of categorical linguistic thinking, instead of from within its own ground: the vision of it is shrunken by the externalistic (so-called "objective") perspective, and the things of it are seen too small for clear understanding of their relationships. We mean to show the things of language at a close range of vision.

Before leaving this analysis of the subject-matter coming under the head of "language," we ought to single out for special mention, from the subjects of general relevance to language, one that, while bearing immediately on the question of the ends of language, never figures in the considerations of people professionally occupied with language-matters—or, if it does, only in tangential questions of logic in the abstract. This is the subject of Truth. The fact is remarkable. Like the subject Meaning, Truth has practical aspects of primary linguistic importance: the relationships between the moral requirements of truth and the working requirements of language are of the closest. One can go through all the curricula offered by contemporary schools of linguistic thought without finding truth brought into practical consideration at all; and, certainly, there has been no extensive or consistent attention paid in the lin-

guistic thinking of the past to the matter of truth as organically related to the problems of language. It is our persuasion that "truth" might well serve as the title-word of the total subject "language"; in writing this book we are moved in very large part by a desire to demonstrate that a relationship exists between the requirements of truth and the requirements of language, amounting to both a spiritual and a practical identity.

The matter of truth is for us the culminating concern of a progression of concerns with the aspects of the nature of language. There is first to consider, of these aspects, the nature of language as a vocabulary possessed by people in common. Then, there is the nature of language as a technique of co-operative uniformity in the processes of communication. And then there is its nature as the instrument of the rational functions of human consciousness. Last (first, it could be said, implicitly) is its nature as the very agent by which human beings bring their souls out of the darkness of remote mysterious origins into the light of their immediate being. In this aspect of its nature, language is for us of one nature with truth. Our notion of the nature of truth, manifestly, goes far beyond the conventional ideal of truth as a factual correspondence of words with the objects of thought. We understand it to be a fulfilment in the letter and the spirit of all the beneficent potentialities of language. And we think it to be, in the ultimate whole of its nature, an essentially personal performance—and experience: we think that language teaches the possibility of a spiritual unity of minds, and that truth is an express mutuality of human life in which the possibility is practically realized.

We have talked of "good" words and of "true" words. This variation of terms needs to be elucidated.

The idea of the good in words relates to their functional worth, and so, indeed, to truth: good words are those practically serviceable for the end of good speaking, which, in the sum of its component objectives, is truth. The question of the goodness of words involves an evaluation of human linguistic resources. To what extent are the words of a language fit for the execution of language's function—in the fullest, faithfullest conception of this? We think the very consideration of the functional worth of words must lead to knowing them in their linguistic goodness, and cleaning away from them encrustations of unappreciative use of them that obscure their worth, or actually damage them. It would be extremely difficult to estimate how many of the words that fall out of a language in its temporal course do so because ill-use has destroyed their serviceability as good words: or, how many, damaged, hang on with enfeebled capability of good performance. Our view of the quality of the words of the contemporary English language is that good words overwhelmingly preponderate in it over the use-mauled and the linguistically egregious ones. Indeed, we think that no language holds together unless its words are

inherently good, and that those that are not are ascertainably worthless hangers-on.

Charles M. Doughty, in his revulsion against the English of modern speaking, attacked both the language and the speakers. We make no charge against the language. We put the burden of fault on an increasing readiness of its speakers to rest in ignorance of the functional worth of its words: they do not know the goodness of their words, and therefore speak as people who do not have good words to use. This brings us to the matter of "true" words.

Knowledge of words in their goodness is not, simply, a product of what is called "learning to speak a language." There must be, first, before such knowledge can be acquired by people, desire in them to know the words of the language in their actual individual identity as meaning each exactly something different from what all the others mean. And there must also be an insistence in them on their speaking by these words—the very words of the language. Myriads speak in large part by substitutes for words that opportunistic usage creates, things sounding the same but meaning according to how the weathervanes of personal or mass talk-caprice turn. Most hardly speak the language they ostensibly speak, speak rather, mainly, an imitation-language formed of imitation-words: what we are pointing to is not just a propensity to fashion-change, but a total instability of the sense of meaning-value in the use of words. Under such conditions, the quest for good words, for the knowledge of words in their goodness, becomes a quest for true words, for a knowledge of words in their trueness to their individual meaning-identity in the language formed of them. An urgency is added to the quest by the danger to people's linguistic discretion that the existence of false words poses: to the extent to which people accept false words as language, they dull their appetite for the good in words, immobilize their sensitivity to the difference between good speaking and less, truth and confusion. One's wish is necessarily for true words, rather than for good words (though these are, in essence, the same), when one contemplates the words improvised upon good words—the specious meaning-versions of actual words—that stand between one's language and one's hope of self-fulfilment as human in perfectly articulate being. When what people have in their language is good, and what they have on their lips is false, they must learn the good as their ally against the false.

Finally: it seems appropriate to us to summarize our ideas of the importance of language, at this chapter's close, in the form of a declaration of personal faith. It is the nature of human beings to "believe in" something—something on which absolute reliance can be placed. Whatever they, diversely, call that in which they believe, and however diverse the objects of their belief actually are, what they believe in has for them the character of *law:* what they believe in they go by as *right,* as that which will lead or guide them always

aright. In this sense of believing—the putting of perfect trust in something as the guiding principle of one's thought, and so of the entire course of one's being—we believe in language. Believing in language may be impossible without believing in something else, that causes language to be as trustworthy as it is. But a profession of belief in language can be justified every step of the linguistic way; and that is far enough to go, in speaking here in terms of personal faith.

Language, certainly, externalizes something: a governing human Conscience, a universal force of reason. It functions, however, as itself, autonomously, and can be directly believed in, and relied upon, as what it of itself is. It is the means of human perfection, providing human beings with rational, self-consistent reference-points in all their contingencies of decision (be they in the field of thought or feeling or action), to the limit of what is asked of it. A language cannot be "wrong." Where a need shows itself of some improvement in its provisions, be it that of the addition of a new word or a new form of use of an existing word or the absolute elimination of a word, it will be found to allow of the modification within its law. No language is insufficient to its speakers. Every language carries a pattern of perfection in it to which its provisions conform according to their peculiar character, and to the varying circumstances and life-conditions of those it serves—is perfect in principle, and capable of perfect practice as far as it goes, as its speakers have gone.

To believe in language is, however, not personal eccentricity on our part. This is an old faith; languages have endured because of it. But there is a serpent of linguistic scepticism loose in these times, to whose dialectical wiles many have lent a friendly ear, especially those who account themselves literate; and defection from attitudes of respect towards words, some as old as language itself, generally pervades contemporary speaking. The proposition that words have an inherent fallibility, once a cliché of sentimental apology for not perfectly successful, "best," verbal efforts, has become basic principle in revised, post-traditional linguistic doctrine. Though we would not call ourselves traditionalists, we indeed consider words to be infallible—linguistically infallible: we consider them, that is, to be perfectly dependable, as what they are in their nature as components of a language. If words were not thus dependable, it would be a horror, we think, for people to use them, knowing they were not—a horror of treachery to themselves and one another. To the extent to which people use words as if they were by their nature fallible, they commit, we think, this horror.

PART TWO

The Use of Words:

The Apparatus of Guidance

Foreword to Part 2

In this second part of our book we shall be particularly concerned with examining the equipment people possess for their guidance in the use of words. First place must be given to the equipment they possess inwardly: every human being comes to the tasks of language *as* a human being—that is, with certain ready aptitude for them, not as a bewildered brute. We dwell on this equipment of natural human verbal sensitivity in the first chapter here, believing that it must come into new importance if there is to be a radical rectification of verbal practice—an end this book is meant to serve.

The external equipment people possess for their guidance in the use of words is much more difficult to characterize and evaluate than the internal, for all its being a visible one. The internal equipment is intrinsically good equipment: the only fault there can be in it is to be deficient in itself. The external equipment is a body of knowledge, some formalized in books, some acquired through direct instruction, some accreted in minds through mere exposure to prevailing habits of word-use. The elements of this knowledge exist in disorderly relation to one another; it would be impossible to organize the knowledge into a unity that would ensure excellence in the use of words. What is carried in the books mixes authoritativeness and uncertainty, the standards of correctness set up there being themselves of too indeterminate a character to constitute sure guidance for a linguistically right use of words; and what is given by direct instruction is (and increasingly so) similarly not reliable, fundamentally. The knowledge people acquire from one another's word-use habits leads them this way and that, almost without critical interference by them. These habits are a constantly varying mixture of observance of standards of correctness and following of speaking-custom, and yielding to trends of deviation from standards and custom; and the effect on people of exposure to them usually outweighs what they have formally learned, and what the books that are their official counsellors on right and wrong tell them. But, indeed,

the different elements of people's knowledge of word-matters tend to run together—and to affect their use of words in chaotically variable proportions.

With the second chapter of Part 2, we shall begin to look closely into the mottled background of acquired knowledge against which people use their words, and try to identify the basic faults of this equipment, and point the way to its reconstruction. Two general categories of knowledge can be distinguished in the entire diversified equipment. There is memory-fixed acquaintance with the meanings of words, reinforced by dictionary-records of historically stabilized interpretations of them. And there is awareness of what modes of expression do not break with the trends of speaking-custom regarded as the linguistic norm and what modes of expression do: this is the field of verbal values that is commonly called "usage." All that is faulty and weak in the practical hold that people have on their language through their knowledge of it can be divided between the inadequacy of their knowledge of word-meanings and the ineffectuality of their knowledge of usage as compensation for the inadequacy of the former. It will be seen, as we consider these two distinct knowledge-areas, that the latter is but an ever-temporary substitute for the former: the ultimate seat of linguistic knowledge, the ultimate control-point of linguistic perfection, is the knowledge of word-meanings.

In viewing the knowledge of word-meanings as the crucial factor in the knowledge of a language, and the achievement of fullness and exactness in it as the way to the solution of all major linguistic difficulties, we are not forgetting the part that grammar and syntax have in the use of words. The understanding of grammatical and syntactical principles is, unquestionably, indispensable to the right use of words. But those principles follow from the principles of word-meaning—are of one rational constitution with them.

CHAPTER 4

The Inner Guidance

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1.

We shall dwell in this chapter on a factor of the relationship people have to their words that is entirely overlooked in contemporary linguistic thinking, although it is one of weighty importance in the whole relationship. This is, the equipment for using words that people innately possess: within them is a recognition of the existence of a relationship between them and their words, and a comprehension of its being governed by certain principles—simple, fact-like principles. It is the given, the natural, language-wisdom with which people make their linguistic start in life. All other factors of the relationship existing between people and their words, good and otherwise, are either the product of purposeful procedure of their own with words or the effect of influences operating in their environment (their immediate temporal environment and their general spiritual environment) on their view of the part of language in the human career. We think that without paying respect to this wisdom within them, people cannot reconstitute their frayed ties with language (in which their humanness is intimately involved)—cannot relearn the language of their mental life in new awareness of it as humanly theirs, possessing the qualities and virtues universally characteristic of language.

Though this natural wisdom of language that we here attempt to describe is but one feature of the entire experience of human beings in the things of language, it is a sufficient resource for the use of words *up to a certain stage* in all speaking-experience—both in individual speaking-experience and in the general human speaking-experience of the communities languages serve. This is the stage in which the problems of language and those of comprehending the human fate begin to converge. Up to the point where dispositions to words develop in people in which their dispositions to their humanness begin

to take a determinative part, the wisdom-gift possessed by them through their human birth is the whole content of their relationship to words: initially, the relationship is a condition of innate aptitude for and responsiveness to language, formed of dispositions to it that, while not unconsciously entertained, are exercised without conscious effort. The gift belongs to the human make-up, and the person needs nothing else with which to meet language. In the first acquaintance with words—and ever after, whenever book-learning, and intellectual sophistication, fail the speaking moment—this wisdom, full of the strengthening fibres of a constitutional inheritance (from the human past) of intuitive linguistic understanding, is there to smooth the linguistic way.

Human beings come well-provided with equipment for the tasks of word-use, as beings fated to live by words. Contemporary linguistic doctrine offers to them a science of language as to beings who have no inborn linguistic equipment. They show, indeed, now, an enormous linguistic helplessness; but it is an acquired, not an inborn, helplessness. It is not from lack of ability to deal with their language-problems that they suffer, but from stupefactions that overwhelm their initial equipment for dealing with them. They have gradually let their human gift of word-wisdom run down, and with it their faculties of word-knowledge, and have increasingly employed for guidance in their general relationship to words, and in particular problems of word-use, an external mentorship that goes by the name of "usage." Ideally, usage consists of models of good use strengthening to the rational morale of people in their habits of word-use. But usage itself has run down as mentor, as the total linguistic morale of human beings has become enfeebled in a gradual dulling of their sense of identity as languaged beings. In this predicament there is offered to them as a restorative wisdom a psychology that justifies to them their demoralized word-habits. The predicament is not isolatedly linguistic, being of the same spiritual substance as their general human predicament. To right themselves linguistically, and humanly, they must first look within. The help they will find thus will reorientate them to language from a natural position, and contribute, with a directness and sureness that nothing else can match, to their ability to correct and enlarge their linguistic knowledge, and accomplish a rational cleansing of their word-habits. And in the resolving of their linguistic predicament they will find the way to open the gates of the human predicament behind which they dwell as if captive.

2.

People have three natural dispositions to words that, distinct yet interacting, form the basic pattern of their elementary—their intuitive, undeliberate—relationship to them. These dispositions constitute a threefold instinctive familiarity with the nature of language in relation to themselves, and the nature

of themselves in relation to language. The three familiarities, or dispositions, are the components of a comfortable attachment to words, a spontaneous devotion in which there is no consciousness of there being any formidable difficulty posed in their use: words are felt to be right things, for reasons beyond question. Such attachment is to be distinguished from learned, acquired, appreciation of the intricate expressive powers of words, and from fascination with language as laboratory-material for complex theorizing. It is the given sympathetic responsiveness of human beings to the fact of language. It has the simplicity of devotion; it has, also, the durability of wisdom.

The most easily identifiable of the three elementary dispositions to words is a disposition to put trust in words as being intrinsically what they are ostensibly. Ostensibly, words—as people find them, already existent, made, "there"—are embodiments of meaning. Linguistic theorizers of to-day solve the problem of explaining the nature of words mainly by calling them symbols. But they solve it thus only for themselves. It is, truly, impossible for anyone to know words as symbols in the actual use of them—to use them as symbols. Practically, they are known as individual units of utterance having, *possessing*, each a meaning particular to it; if the meaning is not thought of as being *in* the word, the word won't work. The word does not symbolize; it means. People trust words to contain meaning, to be substantial with meaning.

The disposition to trust words comes before purposeful faith in language, in which a broad assumption of virtue in it is made and an expectation of high good from it, experienceable through it, is actively entertained. This preliminary confidence in words is an acceptance of them as having practical efficacy, while the developed faith is an according to language of the guardianship of the human spiritual capabilities. No such faith in language could develop where there was not a substratal confidence in words.

There can also be identified, in the given human endowment of word-wisdom, an urgent readiness for words, a rudimentary consciousness of the need of words. And, as an initial confidence in words is a prerequisite of an active, working faith in language, so is this initial consciousness of the need of words a prerequisite of the desire for a right knowledge of them—without which there cannot be any decisive fulfilment of the faith in actual word-practice. There is a third identifiable element of given word-wisdom, describable as a sense of obligation to words; and without this the human bond with language would be continually at the mercy of human caprices, subject to a process of spasmodic breakage and repair. This sense ensures a continuity of devotedness to words. The entire endowment of word-wisdom (and we think everything comprised in it is subsumed in the three elements we have specified) is a precondition of full-scale human success in the realizing of the potentialities of language.

This wisdom of which we speak, this spontaneous devotedness to words,

has travelled along with human beings from language's earliest time. It has become overlaid with sophistications in which there is more knowledge of speaking-fashions than essential linguistic learning. There is that in human beings that makes them ever shrink back from going all the way in things of the intelligence, so that their progress has been a train of periods in which they come over and over, time on time, to a standstill. Yet there is also that in human beings that outlasts the failures of the periods in things of the intelligence; and, in the particular case of the things of language, the underlying devoted feeling of deep acquaintance with the actuality of words has persisted as part of human life itself, though it has gradually dwindled in strength.

Until recent linguistic time, a show of devotedness to words was the universal minimum. But now the general mood of word-use is predominantly undevoted, and overtly so. The natural attachment has given way to a general false freedom with words, in which their users become increasingly tolerant of and insensitive to irrationalities in their use. In the area of academic attitudes, this takes the form of a posture of detachment towards words; and out of this detachment a new word-wisdom is offered to the speaking-public, that makes a virtue of keeping words at skeptical distance, and discards all vesting of faith in language, and trust in words, and yielding of authority to them, as primitive linguistic animism. Thus, language more and more seems to people an adjunct to their general human equipment, though it is an integral part of it, that which makes the whole function as a whole—the co-ordinative organ of their life-system. We present the fact of the existence of a natural wise consciousness in human beings of the vital character of their relationship to language for recognition. The re-enlivenment of it cannot come all at once. But to think about it could make a beginning.

3.

Through the elementary and habitual disposition to accept words unchallengingly as they make their appearance in mental experience, an instantaneous rapport between the mind and the word is effected: the mind assumes that the word means, verily, something—knows it for a word. With such trust in words, human beings can practise great economies in their learning of words for use. They can put the words to use, and learn—begin to learn—as they speak, letting each word indoctrinate the mind in the particular thought-operation of which it—it alone of the words of the language to which it belongs—is the precise linguistic manifest. Where there is no such trust, the intellectual springs of human nature, which prompt language, are denied honesty; indeed, the instinctive confidence of human beings in language is the natural obverse of their instinctive confidence in themselves, and respect for

themselves as human. The growth of suspicion of words, in which they become discredited as intellectually substantial meaning-entities, cannot proceed without an accompanying swell of doubt of there being an intrinsic content of reality in humanness. The sense of human identity can be lost with the loss of trust in words.

Trust in words is indispensable for the most simple practical success in their use. Trusting words, people entrust their thought to them, try to think it into their meanings, so that they will speak for them. Not trusting words, people do not try to think their whole thought into their meanings: not expecting a full or faithful service of their words, they do not insist upon it. And failure of trust in words induces a making-free with them. The consequence of a freer and freer use of words, with an ever-hardening disposition to minimize their individual reliability (as meaning, each, verily, an individual something), is just what the speaking- and writing-ways of the contemporary world exhibit. It is a world seemingly rife with "communication." Certainly, it is rife with technically marvellous words-dispersing devices. But the proportion of communication to words put out in a day's, or month's or year's, span, must be the lowest in the entire record of human utterance. Words, now, are generally treated as if they were, in paradoxical actuality, impediments to communication without which human beings could not very well communicate: both consciously and unconsciously, people employ a strategy of using them as little as possible in using them.

It is an empty sagacity that finds words, of their nature, failing people in their need of them, betraying their expectations of them. Words are unequal to their communicative function only when they are not used for, and to, their entire meaning-capacity. They cannot be so used without full knowledge of their meanings; but such knowledge is within reach of people's intelligence if their instinctive recognition of words as real entities, with which they are bound in a natural relationship, has not been overborne by latter-day skepticism, which makes language, reason, human identity—the means and the actual fact of humanness, that is—a question-mark in a universe itself a question-mark.

There could be no initial response of trustful acceptance to words if they did not have an internal reality. The first acquaintance of a person with a word—of whatever age be the person—is not an automatic response, as to an automatic command, but a response of awareness. Something is perceived to be there—the word is real with something; and this is a something that renders the fact of its existence immediately comprehensible and acceptable where human faculties are functioning naturally. The internal reality of words of which we are speaking inheres in the general character of their making; it is by virtue of the character of their making that they have the capability of

possessing their meanings internally. Words convey, before their individual meanings, the human relevance of their existence. They are motivated, not fortuitous, creations, and, while each exists for a different reason, all exist for the same kind of reason. Words brim, in existing, with the internal rationality of their existence. Without a particular reason for existing, there can be no word. When the particular reason for which a word exists passes, the word ceases to exist. (It is a linguistic error to think of a word the meaning of which has changed as being still the same word.) It may be said that a word is real with a power—a power natural to all words—to fulfil the reason of its making. It is, it may be said, even, made out of this reason—it is pure rationality. True, there is the sound of a word, which, announcing its existence, must be considered to belong to it. But the sound of a word is like a dust, only, that, adhering to it, makes it physically noticeable. The mind blows the sound-dust away; it will come back in the briefest while, but in that while the word will be all the time there.

The nature of words can be very closely apprehended if the intention with which they are made is analysed. A word is occasioned by a particular individual thought-action, and is made to give the action distinct identity, so that it may be consciously performed, at will, and exactly repeated at will, by whosoever may wish to perform it, whensoever, for common witness. The word fixes the mental operation—which must be a humanly characteristic one, to constitute a circumstance favorable to word-making—for the mind's orderly working, resolving the operation into a single rational movement. It would be impossible to determine whether the merit of words lay, for people, in being instruments of rational thinking or in their being instruments of communication: the two functional aspects are not naturally separable, it being in the nature of a word, by how it is made, that its thought and communication functions are enacted simultaneously. The blending of personal and human usefulness achieved in the making of words is felt by people in the impact of words upon them; they accept words as things that other human beings have made to be there for common human adoption, for thinking with and speaking with, without prescriptive differentiation between the two activities. Words have credit with people as things that their very humanity has issued to them—things that, had others not made them for them, they would have made for themselves; the reality of the reasons for the making of words in the minds of their makers mirrors their own minds' readiness for them.

Trust in words, and the sense of obligation to them, and the sense of need of them—the three components of the spontaneous response that people have to words—belong to the encounters that occur between minds reaching for words to use and the existing supply ever close at hand by the foresighted magic of human community (the crucible of the cosmic validity of human

minds). These encounters, in which words are accepted for use, are taken as given, constitute what may be called a quasi-material relationship with words. In it, people "find themselves," humanly. The words are things with which they feel at home. They discover in themselves innate powers of habituation to them; and the habituation, quickly achieved, comes quickly to have an automatic character, almost that of a physically ingested lore. The *full* relationship with words, that in which they are known in their collective reality as language, and in which the practice of the unities of language acquires its due significance as the means by which human beings can fulfil the unity of being implicit in their nature, has to be earned; the wisdom peculiar to it is hard won, is no mere instinctive grasp of the nature of words, and language, but a working wisdom of words as language—which is to say, a wisdom of truth. But if the simpler wisdom is disprized, and discarded, there will come no other wisdom—the spiritual inheritance secreted in language will have been lost. This word-wisdom we speak of steadies the mind for the full relationship with words, puts the human being in human orientation to language, to begin with.

4.

We shall now look into that one of the three natural dispositions to words that we have distinguished which we have described as a sense of obligation felt, to them, of a duty to use them for what they are, for what they mean. It makes acknowledgement of the prior existence of the words, and of a dignity they possess of being themselves, the violation of which could not but carry some penalty. The instinct to pay respect to words is as strongly present in human beings as the instinct to put trust in them. Only a brute undeveloped sensibility would greet the fact of a word without interested trust or interested respect.

In the actual functioning of the sense of obligation to words, an emotional response of deference is mingled with an intellectual impulsion to discover what to do for right use, and to do it. This generates a readiness to follow the custom of the language (that is, the language that the typical community-provision of words forms). But here a difficulty confronts users of words dutifully disposed towards them. For the custom of a language can seem to be two things when general habits in the use of its words are not directly governed by an appreciation of its meanings, correlatively known, but governed, rather, by patterns of use that have acquired the status of being right use: there is the custom that is fixed by the meanings of the words in their systematic relation to one another as language and the custom that is fixed by authoritatively recommended standards of good expression. The indwelling custom of the language, and that version of linguistic custom which has the name of usage can be so far apart that speakers of the language must turn quite away

from the prime considerations of meaning that conformity with linguistic custom of the first order exacts, if they would conform themselves to that of the second. And thus can the sense of obligation to words be misdirected towards an unthinking conformity. In its natural condition, however, not made over into a mere subservience to usage, it is an attitude of intelligent obedience to what words require of their users by meaning what they mean.

There is nothing inherently stupid or foolish in the instinctive fear of violating the call to obedience to words to which human beings are universally susceptible. The consequences of linguistic disobedience are objectively evident, and they can be rationally evaluated: they are bad consequences, ones of confusion for both the speaker and the hearer of the words, or else of deception, according to whether the disobedience is childishly capricious, or calculated. Likewise, the merit of the disposition to respect words scrupulously is evident in the resultant quality of their use: a kind of equity prevails between the users and the words by which their being used according to what befits them makes them fittingly expressive of the user's thought.

When, as has extensively happened, trust in words has been shaken—when the inborn language-wisdom of people has begun to be dissipated by sophisticated doubts of the sufficiency of language to its given functions (reason, which has safe-keeping in language, having come to be known in it as a fossil of itself)—it is to the sense of obligation to words that the survival of some effect of coherence in their use is owed. The natural commitment of people to pay dutiful consideration to their words continues to be in effect in them despite their new knowingness about words, in which all notions of the presence in language of governing correctitudes and proprieties are drastically deemphasized. People remain conscious of the existence of words even while consciousness of the need of them grows dimmer and dimmer. Thus, words still have some reality for their users as words. Languages have not quite, yet, come to be thought of as mere codes by their speakers, as the new linguistic education recommends: they still see their languages—though amidst many lapses and aberrations—as made up of words rather than signals.

That people still hear words, read words, know words, when words present themselves through ears or eyes to their minds, are still speaking beings, still users of words, and still aware that it is words they are using, is to be credited in large part to a compelling disposition to deal dutifully with them. This disposition attests in its continuing force to the presence of some old virtue in the latter-day human attitude to words: the initial human innocence of speech is not altogether lost. In the natural course, this disposition has, as we have described, the company of a spontaneous confidence in words and of a generalized consciousness of the need of them—the three forming a rudimentary understanding of what it is to speak; but in the present linguistic pass, the

disposition of dutifulness towards words (which we also call the sense of obligation to them) operates solitarily, in the main, the other two being now hardly wakeful. However, there is enough honoring of words to save the human day, each day, from linguistic chaos. The weight of choice is still with linguistic conscience and sanity: minds still submit themselves to the moral and mental protection of words. A certain loosening of the mind from linguistic controls has become standard modernism in literary and poetic practice; and, in the pseudo-democratic free-for-all of contemporary parlance, there abound diverse cant modes of speech, of both social and professional origin, generally relished as affording legitimatized deviation from linguistic norms. But an instinct not to go to an extreme in disregarding the proprieties and congruities imposed by words is ever at work in people, and it contributes to their ability to resist the potent forces of disaffection towards language as a government of the mind that now permeate the speaking atmosphere of life. They may be very little conscious of the character words have as a property come to them by human birthright, but they surely cling to the use of them as if haunted by the fear of the unimaginable desolation of being without them.

5.

Ultimately, the crucial area of the simple, first wisdom of words of which we are here treating is the consciousness of the need of words: when the wisdom fails, this is the area in which revival will occur—if it occurs. The need in question is no crude appetite for words, or infantile reaching for what others have. Consciousness of the need is almost at once, after its engendering in a growing sense of humanness, in a human being, consciousness of particularized needs of the mind for words: the need has the human maturity, when it is first felt, of being a mentally diversified need, a need of words in their linguistic plurality.[1] It is through this consciousness that a language and its speakers as the employing agent become fitted to each other—made for each other, it might be said. The rational love of words is centered here, and the desire to prove the mind real by the union of thought and words—and to prove the words real in their testing the mind while serving it; here, that sympathetic mutuality that obtains (ought naturally to obtain) between a language and its speakers can find, ever, fresh motivation for self-renewal. The aliveness of human beings to their need of words is the beginning-ground of their participation in the drama of existence as actors having speaking parts.

Yet the sensitivity of people to words as things indispensable in their human functioning is the most obscure element of their attachment to words. It is repeatedly suspended in the incidental excitements of speaking; it is continually preyed upon by temptations to sink into lethargies of mind and spirit in

which the feeling of needing words is submerged, and a false ease of casualness in the use of them is enjoyed. It is not consistently manifest, or effective; it is so natural a condition that it can be a very difficult one to evoke by will. And neither the disposition to trust words nor the disposition to respect them, least of all attentiveness to the accredited proprieties of usage, can do substitute service for it.

In the ordinary course of using words, people do not see their linguistic problems from the vantage of their need of words. But when their words begin to dissolve in their grasp, the meanings of them becoming as amorphous vapor, and all that maintains them in their state as language, besides the remote-lurking consciousness of need of words, begins to break down, the hour has come for them to find out their need in its place in their nature. They have known it as a force acting upon them in mysterious distantness and sporadicness, rather than in continuous personal immediacy; they ought now to seek to know it in the close inner knowledge of themselves.

All probing of things linguistic that does not penetrate to the depths of human nature from which words take their necessity is a dealing with linguistic problems in disconnection from those who have the problems—that is, *human* beings (distinguished from human beings thought of as articulate animals categorically describable as human beings). There is much dealing of this kind, in our time, with linguistic problems, much professional linguistic exploration that is but a superficial meddling with linguistic problems, not touching their germinal bed in prime human need. Perhaps we can best clarify the importance we ascribe to the consciousness of the need of words, and to the humanly indigenous language-wisdom of which it is a radical component, by relating it to a momentary awareness that sometimes flits across the ken of the contemporary sophisticated attitude to words: this is, that words have an intrinsic preciousness. Hold that awareness beyond the sentimental moment of literary or religiose piety towards words, and you will know it more and more inwardly, and feel the reason of the preciousness of words in one sensation with consciousness of the need of words. And, in the need thus refelt, a new cleanliness in the natural dispositions to words will be inaugurated, and a new purity of speaking-motivation—and, also, a new capability of using words with an intimate apprehension of what kind of a thing a word is.

The first aid available to people for their liberation from the life-enveloping linguistic befuddlement in which they are entrapped is in what they have to learn from themselves. We recommend this before all other aids. We regard nothing that we adduce or expound or show in this book as of itself remedially instructive: we postulate for the usefulness of this book the working presence in its readers of their wisdom of words, their human genius of affinity with words. In so far as we can, in evoking their word-wisdom, evoke it, we have

the opportunity to serve it. Our whole notion of our relation to our readers is covered in this statement of what we envisage as possible for our book to accomplish. Another statement can be added to assure understanding—as follows. The good use of words with which we are concerned is that use of them in which the instinctive virtue informing the beginning linguistic wisdom of people is literately fulfilled: we hold the good in language to be a linguistically virtuous use of words towards which human beings naturally face in their earliest breathings of words.

CHAPTER 5

The Guardians

1.

We distinguished in the last chapter two kinds of linguistic custom, one determined directly by the internal composition of a language, the other based upon tendencies in the use of its words that, according to educated opinion, keep within the limits of linguistic decency. This second kind of custom is usually called "usage"; but it is also called "good usage." There is a "best usage," that tops "good usage"; the closest identification that can be made of it is that it is usage having the blessing of the best-educated opinion on what merits approval and what does not, in the field of word-use.

The differences between linguistic custom as represented by usage and by the natural custom of a language, which is ruled by *it* rather than by the ways in which its speakers use it, grow increasingly wide with an increasing dependence on arbiters of usage as guardians of the principles of good word-use. The widening of the differences can remain for a long time imperceptible, or almost imperceptible, where the speaking of a language is presided over by standards of usage that are consciously kept in sympathetic relation with the values of the linguistic right residing in the language itself; incorporated in its words there is, in any case, an automatic propensity in usage to hark back in as many things as possible to the natural custom of the language. The point where the dictates of usage begin to obscure the natural dictates of language usually comes where a language begins to be employed in literary activity greatly expanded beyond what has long been the quantitative norm. Looking to models becomes, for the professional users of words, more convenient than regarding the language itself; and linguistic education begins to be replaced, even with non-professional users of words, with literary education in word-use. Then, gradually, consciousness dims of the indebtedness of the models to

the language in which they are written for what worth they have as a basis of standards of usage. And models succeed models. And, gradually, the judgement of usage-arbiters replaces the authority with which models have been invested; the determination of what is good usage becomes, amidst the confusing variety of presumedly respectable uses of words, a process of liberal arbitrariness of decision. Gradually, too, the fact disappears from common view that all concern with questions of word-use relates, fundamentally, to *a language*—a cohering actuality.

Let readers not think that we lay all the misfortunes of word-use that have befallen languages at the door of usage. The causes of the transference of allegiance from the given actuality of linguistically integrated words to the circumstantial actuality of habitualized forms of word-use are not limited to a linguistic category of causes. The history of human behavior in the use of words is inseparable from the history of human dealing with the problem of right and wrong.

Human beings are so much inured to finding themselves in error that they can be as suspicious of what seems right as they are of what they think, for good reasons, may be wrong. Nothing found good by human beings has ever yet been taken all the way to the full of its significance and its effects. There has always been a shift from palpable good, some while after it has become palpable, to something different; and this something different, though it may not be wholly wrong, cannot be either better than or as good as what it replaces, immediately, or ever develop into something wholly good, since it starts in deviation from the line of good. A huge portion of the energy expended in the interest of human progress is directed at the improvement of things that are but alternatives to things of good promise that have been put to one side. The thing that is called good usage is the custom of word-use certified as good by authorities who adjudicate upon the *allowable* and the *non-allowable* rather than upon the right and the wrong: it is an alternative to the good custom which is an abiding by the internal indications provided by a language as to the kinds of use that naturally befit its words. Great is the outlay continually being made in intellectual labor, paper, book-production, to detail what speakers of the English language may say with a confident feeling of being on safe ground. But upon the actual detail of word-meaning as it is determined by the language itself, in its being a rational structure, necessarily self-congruous, no organized effort is exerted; there is no clear consciousness, in the word-books appearing in increasingly massive supply, of the difference between the allowable and the right.

What people has ever, in the long travel of civilization, not deviated from indications implicitly borne in its language, and in its intuitively possessed human lore, as to what is right and what is not? "Good usage" is an old institu-

tion. It is always inferior to the plain good use of words, which is nothing but an entirely good use of them, as good form in human conduct is always inferior to plain good conduct, which is nothing but an entirely good behavior-manifestation. But the superiority of good usage over bad usage, as of good form, in conduct, over bad form, is unquestionable—up to the point at which the difference between good and bad vanishes from distinguishability, as it must eventually, where the standards of goodness are not themselves formed from an over-all conception of the good as something to be fully realized.

In the use of words, the idea of the good is comprehended mostly in terms of formal imitations of the good. So it is also with the idea of the good in the whole reach of human behavior. That there is failure of devotion to the idea of the good in the field of word-use, as there is elsewhere, does not astonish us or excite in us special reprobation. Language goes where human beings go, and is subjected to their ways and conditions. Language has, however, the peculiarity of carrying within it, ready-made, the means of correcting the errors committed with it; and because of this, and because it permeates the conscious life of human beings, language is the grand instrument of human self-correction. It *is* remarkable, indeed, that, although deterioration of standards is proceeding in the linguistic field of human behavior, as in all others, at an ever-quickening rate, there has not yet occurred any corrective action to mark the least beginning of a break, in favor of a principled custom of word-use, with that good custom which simulates rather than exemplifies. Let no one think that there is any interest, in contemporary linguistic movements, in promoting *corrective* action in the use of words. There is, rather, interest in presenting language as an intrinsically faulty instrument, that yields the least troublesome results when treated as such.

(A question might be raised as to the justice of including the scientific fields of human behavior in the picture of a general deterioration of standards. Our view of human progress in science is that contemporary science has increasingly made of the world of human behavior an empiricist chaos. Modern science's contribution to this world has caused the good to be broken up, smaller and smaller, into contrived successful accidents, which, lacking any principle by which to cohere, attack—in working their anarchical beneficences—the self-coherence of human life itself.)

In some fields of human behavior, custom becomes so far separated from that on account of which it exists, and to pay respect to which it has been fashioned, that it is but the self-referent reason of itself. With language-custom, total emptiness of reference to the basis of custom is impossible, for the words themselves are not wholly separable from the language under the laws of which they have their meanings (and which they together *are*) without insanity. If words are not used with some regard to the linguistic reason of

their existence, which they carry in them, they will turn the tables on their users, and make babbling fools of them. For, with the use of words it is not as with other kinds of activity in which there is a following of custom. Words are always being used (used always in the mind, if not in the mouth), so that a use of them governed exclusively by formal canons could be no mere harmless ritual, aesthetically or emotionally satisfying though wanting in internal sense. One's sanity requires a truly good use of words at all times, is involved in every use of every word; every senseless verbal act deprives the mind of some of its integrity. The natural custom of the human mind is, indeed, identical in kind with that of language, being custom concerned with rational proprieties. To the extent that custom followed in the use of the words of a language is not formed to harmonize with the rational proprieties of the language, by so much are its speakers in danger of losing their rational sensitivity—and of destroying the language for themselves.

Reliance on the custom of language called usage increases as the use of a language enlarges and spreads, and the knowledge of it becomes, in the course of this, diffuse. With the freer use of a language, an inclination to follow what is being immediately done by others as the right dominates the natural instinct of linguistic right, which induces people to make direct resort to their knowledge of their language—to the authority of its principles, rather than to any external determination of the linguistic right. There is, thus, a greater likelihood of conformism in the use of words where people have freed themselves from strict attention to linguistic principle than where they obediently conform to it, in their use of words. Conformity with usage has become, largely, a conformity of the ear, a going by what is heard, as distinguished from a conformity of the mind, a going by known principle—the former fostering automatism in the use of words as the latter could not.

The guardianship of the good in the use of words that replaces the authority inherent in language itself—the principle of rational propriety to which the rational intuitions of the mind go naturally for guidance—is an intricate system, one that is ever enlarging itself, and becoming more and more unworkable as it does. First, in this system, comes a first line of literary users of words; this comes first historically, and first in linguistic eminence until new lines of literary users of words appear, to complicate standards of judgement as to what is good use and what is not with their new linguistic manners. Then come professional specializers in the determination of the good in usage, to share the field of guardianship with the straight literary practitioners; and from the bosom of their solicitude come the lexicographers, in part definers of words, in part advisers on usage—these being attended by a retinue of makers of handbooks of usage, to the number of which belong the books of synonyms. And all the while the literary users of words multiply—and the jour-

nalistic users of words, too, who have come to vie with them in the promotion of special vocabularistic and usage trends; and the users of words, all, more and more confound one another, using their words with an easy freedom, looking to this quarter or that as possibly a seat of authority for their use of them, but possibly not, utterly unhesitant, and utterly unsure. And "the people" have been gradually entering the drama, as authorities whom the authorities look to for signs of change; for change has come to seem a natural linguistic law as all guiding instincts become bewildered or impotent in the swirling flux of the general linguistic confusion, and all guiding principles, the rational landmarks, are submerged in the flood.

Finally, in the ranks of modern contemporary linguistic guardians, came the "semanticists," and, then, those who, deeming themselves not merely scientists (as the semanticists have deemed themselves) but philosophers in matters of language, think of themselves as sages in linguistics. All these guardians can be called linguistical psychiatrists. For the semanticists have not been veritably concerned, as the term "semantics" prescribes, with the science of meaning: the pivotal point of their interest in words has not been what words mean but the phenomenon of instability and variability of meaning (what words do not mean, it might be said!)—which they have blown up into a central characteristic of language. Nor are the others in these ranks veritably concerned with linguistic values. Their range of topics under the head of language is wide, but their general object is to devaluate language, to cultivate new conceptions of its nature in which all older sense of its structural thoroughness and functional exactitude is overthrown; they teach not language but a learned unseriousness towards it, a pragmatical irreverence. All these latter-day linguisticians have their minds on something other than language. Language is their ostensible interest. Their underlying interest is a race of word-users who are barely able to keep in rational touch with their words in using them, and whom they have made their clinical subjects. They minister to them as people needing not to be helped to revise the basis of their relationship to words, but to be helped to liberate themselves, as from the hold of superstition, from the ties of mind that bind them still to language's implicit rule of consistency.

There is a trend in the time towards infatuation with inconsistency, as the key to fullness of experience and wisdom; and prevailing notions of good usage accord with this trend. The older ideal of good usage had some recognizable resemblance to the plain ideal of fidelity to a language as a natural unity, in the use of its words; it had a margin of tolerance of laxity, but no admitted tolerance of transgression of the principle of necessary consistency (affecting the relationship of all the language's words, and their uses, with one another). But the pluralistic ideal of many, many kinds of good usage has been super-

imposed upon the older ideal, and good usage has become whatever is being done with words by enough people to justify the raising of a question as to whether it is good usage or not. Everything that has become noticeably habitual somewhere in the speaking-world is at once a candidate for and an incumbent of the dignity of being good usage.

People are saved from losing their linguistic wits under the system of guardianship of word-use now in general force by the very chaoticness of its values: what they are told as to what they may or may not do is so confused in its prescriptive policy, and so little related to their practical linguistic difficulties, which are of a fundamental order, that they are thrown a good deal on their own (deteriorated but not exhausted) resources. And so what is spoken by them is not exclusively what usage manufactures for them. A fair portion of it is linguistically their own: they contribute a skeletal nondescript of vocabulary and grammar and syntax, which has some guts of speaking-volition in it—it is upon this that the trappings of usage are decked. On the whole, leaving it to usage to carry the major burden of accuracy of expression, people function verbally, now, with only a hit-and-miss checking of their words; and, correspondingly, what they say is partly to their point, partly to no point, and partly to points beside their point. The healthiest thing that could happen to them would be to become aware that where, speaking usage's best *parler* of the day, they have been accustomed to thinking of themselves as at their linguistic best, they are at *the* linguistic worst. There can be few among the educated speakers of words who comprehend the nature of the rightness of the usage-standards to which they so readily defer—in every sentence, almost in every phrase. It would shame them out of the false sense of linguistic respectability they nurse to discover it to be a hybrid rightness from which all rational scrupling in the use of words has been bred out except for what is required to retain the flavor of rational meaning.

Since usage is generally assumed to be the proper basis of specification as to what is linguistically good management of words and, even, what words mean, and all definitive pronouncements on matters of meaning and use cite usage for authority as a matter of scholarly course, the idea that the lead of usage can be unfavorable to the good use of words cannot but be difficult to grasp with the practical imagination. Although we shall not be centrally preoccupied in this book, as we proceed, with the question of usage, we give it early place as one bordering immediately on our main matter. Whoever perceives the difference between usage and what a language provides as to the way its words must be used for a sustained and uniformly full goodness of utterance to be achieved will have made a road of their own towards the territory of word-meaning that we mean to explore.

It should never be forgotten that the guidance of usage for the use of a

word extends only as far as the use of the word that has been made by a certain someone, or certain someones. It does not take one to the word itself, in its place in the language where it has meaning. The use can excite a sense of the user's appreciation of the word; but, known only in the setting of the use, the word can only be known as the user's word, however much respect may have been paid to the word in that other's use. With usage as the teacher, honor goes to the use first. There is no direct access to the word; the virtue of a word taught by usage is known only through the filter of the use. For the word to be personally appreciated, independently known and respected, and intimately loved or valued, it must be found in its linguistic home. The whole language of which it is part must be appreciated, respected, intimately loved or valued, for its meaning to be well understood, and the principle of the right use of it learned. The weakness of usage as a teacher is in its inability to teach language: one can learn only from it a fragmentary and disorderly knowledge of words. Each lesson of usage is a separate case of the right. No internal, general linguistic principle of right and wrong is readable in usage's precepts—they have no necessary connection with each other.

It might be argued that usage is living word-use custom, and that the word-use custom that language itself can be said to provide is but abstract principle. This much could be granted, in response to such an argument: linguistic principle, as an intrinsic ingredient of language, has, indeed, come to seem largely an abstraction. But this is a consequence of people's having ceased to maintain close relationship with their words—it corresponds with the circumstances in which they dwell at present, linguistically, not with the nature of language. As people now speak their words, they are easily parted from them even in the speaking of them, and the reality of language keeps dissolving, for them, in the ever-receding stream of what they have just been saying. They have very little intimate sense of what they say, either as made up of individual words, or as formed from a language. They treat words as coming to them from nowhere: and that nowhere is language to them. And whether they think of the actualities of speech in terms of words or in terms of language, they are identified in their minds more with what others say than with what they themselves will be saying. Such is the content of usage: what others say. What is followed in usage is but a borrowed style, adopted styles of word-use—following usage, one has no style of one's own, no way of speaking of one's own. One might mislead oneself, thinking "Is not all linguistic learning, from the cradle-time, a learning by what others say?" The child does not learn to speak (by which we mean, to use words, not ejaculate sounds) by mimicry, but by finding the words it hears within itself—meeting them as factors of intelligence. (For that is the natural scene of language—the inner domain that all in their humanness inhabit.) There is likely to be far more of mimicry in the fluent speech of an adult—more usage—than in the halting utterances of a child.

2.

The distinction we have been insisting upon between what the language prescribes as to the use of words, and what usage prescribes, implies a distinction in the matter of guardianship: there is a guardianship exertible over the use of words according to what the language itself prescribes, and a guardianship exertible according to what usage prescribes. The distinction between the two kinds of standards is a difficult one on which to focus, for long failure to distinguish between them has run them together into an appearance of being virtually the same; and the distinction between the two kinds of guardianship is lost in this mergence. The recognized authorities on usage regard themselves as, and are regarded as, upholders of the language in being this. The confusion in their minds as to what they are doing is fed into the minds of those whom they guide.

The general picture of the setting and the observing of standards of word-use becomes so complicated when the historical dimension of change is injected into it (by the linguistic historians and theorists, or by one's own awareness that the language has a past) that one is hard put to it to find a viewing-point from which its elements show in intelligible perspective. If the element of change is overemphasized, everything in the picture becomes oversimplified, and blurs; all standards seem keyed to change from the language's beginnings. Even if one is predisposed to thinking of the language as having distinctive qualities of permanence, the long backward look at it can tumble one's perceptions into disorder: history seems to engulf one's subject.

Contemporary speakers of the language can make a useful start at viewing the present state of linguistic affairs against the background of all that has gone before by fixing attention on the fact that there was a beginning-point, a point at which there was, where there had not before been, an English language. It would come next, then, to consider whether there may not be, in the language as it initially was, some resources of guidance applicable to the ills of contemporary speaking: if this that now is and that which first was are the same language, ought not certain inherent, indispensable characteristics stand out helpfully in the initial scene?

The backward-looking view of the language can be greatly clarified by stripping the language as found in its earliest times of the attribution of incomplete development that automatically attaches to it in the impression of centuries later. If it is looked at as it was in the first phase of its existence, which may be placed within the boundaries of the fourteenth century, without presumption of its having been necessarily inferior as a language to what it now is, it can be seen to be distinctly identifiable as itself, and most worthily so. Well before the Elizabethan era, it was organized into what it is: then, as it is now, it was an instrument for combining freedom for great diversity of ex-

pression with fine exactitude of word and orderliness of utterance. It had issued from a medley of predecessors, and come late among languages; but its elements were themselves mature, and it profited from the linguistic experience with which it was packed. No contemporary speaker of the language ought to think of it in the early phases of its existence (up to the brink of full linguistic modernity) as a stranger, a young stranger. In the prose *Arabia Deserta,* and the poetic work, of Charles M. Doughty, of whom we have a good deal spoken, there is richly detailed evidence of its capability of being contemporarily used as English with mature dignity.

The English language in its first two centuries can indeed, without condescension or sentimentalization, be thought of as housing the ancestral guardian-spirit of the language; and it was so thought of by Doughty. But *that* language exists only in the historical imagination: it is now *this* language. Between then and now the language has passed through extensive vocabularistic change and enlargement, and intricate modification in grammatical form and syntactical procedure and idiomatical convention. These are processes to which a time-sensitive language—and the English language is that to a very high degree—naturally subjects itself, in a continual contemporizing of itself with the life of its speakers. But all the while there are determinative principles at work in the language, and these are ever maintaining the linguistic finalities amidst the experimental variations, binding all together in a self-continuing unity of identity. Old and new residues of use-experience must either lend themselves to integration with the language or suffer extinction: the language is not progressively made over into what is not itself. And so it is that, while the original English language—that is, the language in its earliest phases—is a source-book wherein can be traced its intrinsic nature, one can also find the language in its essentials in any age of itself—even up into the linguistically distraught present. Its well-tempered version of linguistic principle remains intact all through the time-journey. Ponderous pressures have been put upon it as a language of initially restricted horizons. But the early-attained stability, inhering in an exact partnering of flexibility with discipline, has held; its rational poise has been progressively confirmed, rather than weakened.

But one would have great difficulty in fixing the proportions in which usage and language supplied the standards of governing the language's speaking in any age—if one is aware of the distinction, and of the mixed nature of the standards governing speaking in age after age. How much of what was spoken was the use of usage and how much the use of language in a direct choice of words? There could be no measuring-out of it all word-by-word. Speaking can be made up of massive chunks of usage, and small fragments of usage, and a varying, irregular come-and-go of words and forms of expression deliberately taken from the verbal raw-material of the language—rather than from

the ready-made speaking matter of usage. Only in individual cases where scrupulosity in the use of words was consistently manifested would a definite determination be possible of the proportions in which usage and language ruled the word-use.

Some important aspects of this complex question of language-or-usage reveal themselves in Doughty's linguistic experiment, and so we shall touch on it again. Doughty, as we have told, experienced a revulsion against the English of his time—the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. The English he chose as a replacement was that in which Elizabethan linguistic libertarianism had not begun to show its broad effect. We have described his achievement as one that, for all its grand scrupulosity as a use of words, is limited to the field of usage. His knowledge of the language as it was at his preferred time of it, though philologically profound, came mainly from literary texts; his chief teachers were literary teachers—the excellence of word-use he found was a stylized excellence. His sources were necessarily limited, thus. But his linguistic taste, following a poetic and classicist bent, made him at home in the limitation.

In Spenser especially did Doughty find a kindred-soul in the matter of the linguistic good. For Spenser was conscious in *his* time of a falling-away from a pristine integrity in standards of word-use; and he braced his own standards with strong props borrowed from Chaucer, who was for him, as for Doughty, the custodian of the original language-treasure. Spenser's linguistic achievement, a major one within the limits of its literary-ness, was, too, an achievement in the field of usage. Over both Doughty's and Spenser's achievements there presided, forcefully, special standards of good usage—idealized as standards of language, but not the same thing. Even Chaucer, who emblematized for both the language in its early purity, whose English sparkled with a natural linguistic vitality and excellence, was a literary rather than a straight linguistic model; the very language he emblematized was the poet's English language. But the good usage and standards of good usage to be found in the work of Spenser, and in that of Doughty, are beyond derogation. Doughty succeeded in drawing impressive evidence of the language's natural goodness from its early literature, and in putting it upon the poetic page. Yet, for all his intensity of concern with linguistic good (and he went beyond Spenser in this), what he did made no difference in his time; it did not even make any literary difference. (Eventually, he consigned its usefulness "to a future generation.")

Spenser can be credited with some salutary linguistic influence, within literary bounds. Into the English Renaissance–time, chaotic with a profusion of adventure in the literary play of words, Spenser injected stabilizing standards of usage, in which some of the virtues of the essential language were reflected. But the very large element of literary motivation in Spenser's concern with

linguistic good was a barrier to the extension of his influence beyond literary bounds, and even to its potency as a force for the linguistic good on literary ground. In the long-term comparison of influences, Spenser's usage is inconspicuous beside Shakespeare's, which is a far less good one, linguistically, but has, though only a poetic manner of speaking itself, an irresistible attraction for literary and popular ears alike (throwing together the verbally magnificent, gaudy, homely, careful, careless, solemn, silly, delicate, crude, into a dazzlingly confusing performance, that excites in the most prosaic-minded the illusion of being poets, in the listening).

If one goes down the literary line from early to later times, one will find few, either of poets who were exclusively poets, or of prose-writers who were exclusively that, or of those in whom prose and poetic professions were joined, who in any marked degree felt a general linguistic responsibility, as distinct from being preoccupied with the stylistic aspects of word-use. The soil of literature may seem ground naturally favorable to the breeding of guardians of the language, or the linguistic good; but it mainly produces, at its best, skilful experimenters in the possibilities of making variations in established literary patterns of good usage. Occasionally usage-arbiters rise up on literary ground, to put up sign-posts where verbal routes have confusingly multiplied and criss-crossed, but word-problems there do not have a fully serious status as linguistic problems, and the solutions given them are likely to be literary rather than linguistic solutions. Contemporary literary modernism is rife with verbal experimentation that can seem to be directed against conventional usage, in linguistically healthy rebellion, but is directed, in actual spirit, against language itself—at linguistic discipline *in toto,* not merely at usage-decorum. On the whole, literary practitioners regard themselves as upholders of the linguistic dignities, and their work is generally treated as material for superior linguistic education. And, on the whole, they are not well-versed in matters of language, but in matters of usage only, rather—well-versed enough to feel competent to take liberties with usage-proprieties at the behest of literary need. All devout expression of concern for the good in language on their part should be carefully evaluated in relation to what their actual literary interests are.

We have spoken in emphatic particular here of Spenser at the early end and Doughty at the late end of the early English literary line because they are coincidentally remarkable in having gone back to the English language's first life-time, and not for the sake of the literary effects that might be wrought with the archaic words but for that of the linguistic nourishment to be derived; in choosing for his use a version of the English language close to the Spenserian, Doughty was agreeing with Spenser as to standards, not imitating him. In both, literary responsibleness was allied with linguistic responsibleness. In the pages of both an imagination-stirring contact can be made with the lan-

guage's old self, through the intermediation of poetic usage. Language-knowledge was important to both, and both put their store of it to work with vigor, and earnestness. Yet for Doughty there was something at nearer hand than the language's antique self to turn to as a knowledge-source. Behind the thickets of usage that constituted the Victorian English that Doughty hated there was a living English language, the language's immediate self. All that might be needed for the understanding of the principles of good custom in the use of words was immediately deducible from this usage-obscured language-presence. And for Spenser, far less removed from the classic original, there was also something at nearer hand: behind the usage, literary and non-literary, of *his* time was an immediate linguistic actuality—and in it, for the finding, all the good linguistic guidance to be desired. Nothing can make any radical difference in the direction of linguistic good, in any period of a language's speaking, that does not draw authority from what is immediately there, of language—of language, not usage.

Usage in its totality is an unorderable tangle of caprice and conformity, and sophistication and ignorance. People deceive themselves, in picking and choosing from out the content of usage, into regarding as good what satisfies their linguistic good-taste. The standards of good-taste are entirely relative standards: the taste-based use of a word is not according to what is determinable by a study of the word in the general word-setting of the language, but to what seems closest to what might be a right use among the varying kinds of use that have been made or are being made of it. To make word-choices by consulting the language rather than by consulting usage may seem an esoteric procedure, for this language lying behind usage is indeed to a large degree a mystery to its speakers: they know usage better than they know it. Usage in its tangledness is a misleading introduction to it. One cannot form an adequate notion of what the language *per se* is by thinking of it as just a body of words. One must begin, indeed, at the inside, and think of an internal system of word-values. The body of words undergoes changes, here, and there, and there, in the course of time, but internally there is no change. The working-system keeps the whole continuously accessible, and self-identical. And the whole is capable of being spelt out in any time with complete specificness—neither is it a mystery nor is it dappled with mystery-patches. We think this is demonstrable. We think it is ever being demonstrated in the linguistic sensitivity people display at least casually, in every other, or so, speaking-moment: they are behaving as people who know at least intuitively that a something is "there" which is the language in live and distinct reality, and is not the same thing as the great jumble of things said to which word-custom is attuned in and out of the linguistic hand-books.

No one can be sensitive to the reality of a language as it was in a former

time who has not acquired a "feel" of it as it immediately is. This sensitivity is of the same kind as that by which a speaker of one language can recognize the reality of another language, learn, understand, the other language; it can close in on the reality of a language with certitude of grasp, and reliability, as other sensitivities close in on things of other kinds, and prove them to be "there." (The danger to which speakers of the language are now exposed, in their relationship to it—the danger previously warned of here—is, precisely, the loss of this sensitivity.)

But one needs more than the feel of a language to be a competent judge in matters of verbal right and wrong, linguistic good and bad. First of all, besides the feel, one needs courage to detach one's *mind* from the convenient prompting of usage which is ever there, buzzing in through ears, penetrating from the read page. And immediately one is at a loss to decide what belongs to usage and what to the essential language. To comprehend the fact that there *is* an essential language, a constant that is, self-succeedingly, *the* language, does not exorcise the bogey-question of "change." One needs to be able to think of this essential language not merely as an abstraction, but as the actual entity of that time, or that, and this. Considerations such as whether or not the differences between it as it is in one time and as it is in another are all to be counted as differences in the field of usage, and, whether or not the course of usage through the ages has internal effects upon a language, will trouble the judgement of any who dim at knowing the language in its immediate concrete essentiality—but they ought to scare no one off. Such considerations become less and less formidable as the resolution to know the language in its essentials—to know it in distinction from knowing usage—is adhered to.

Present-day language-specialists are obsessed with the idea of "change"; they make it the life-principle of language. The doctrine that change inheres in the very nature of language has vastly simplified the task of the guardians of usage, the makers of the verbal guide-books, in the emergency of their having to deal with mounting thoughtlessness in the use of words, and spreading linguistic ignorance. The doctrine enables the authority to move with the apparently irreversible tide without seeming disloyal to the language. It can be easily seen that such procedures must gradually (and not slowly) reduce all standards of word-use to temporary standards, and that the use of words under such conditions is not compatible with the continuing existence of a language. The permanent, not the changing, in a language, is what supplies it with the energy of survival. Much of what now passes for respectable usage is, crazily, ignorant or perverse practice that seems to have become *unchangeable*.[1] Even standards of usage are breaking down as such; empty dicta more and more appear among the usage-judgements of the word-use professionals.

In *A History of the English Language* (Appleton-Century, 1957) Albert C.

Baugh writes thus on the subject of change. "When a language ceases to change, we call it a dead language. Classical Latin is a dead language because it has not changed for nearly two thousand years." This is an arbitrary attribution of meaning to "dead," made to fit a linguistical theory. "Classical" Latin underwent changes, degenerating in changing. It died not because of change or non-change, but because human events destroyed it as the language of a generality of speakers. The speakers of a "living" language can work destruction here and there in it, under cover of "change," and new tissue is in such cases grown—by virtue of the language's self-restorative power as a constant: its own coherence, not change, saves it. There are non-destructive developments in a language correspondent with changes in the environment of its use; but such developments are functional adaptations. Organically, a language does not change. By its rightful power of continuance, as something that was made to endure in future vicissitudes of use and that has kept adding to given capabilities of resisting disintegration as the boundaries (mental and physical) of its use have been extended, the language stands self-sure somewhere in the broad domain of its speaking.

In every speaking-age some love of linguistic good is scattered about, excited by the language as haphazardly known in everyday immediateness, across the interventions of usage's stylized good and bad use. All the speakers of it, in any particular age, whether conscious of the potentialities in it of good, or not, bear witness to its possessing an ageless validity in making it their contemporary own. They do not change it, but confirm it. In their speaking of it they may make discoveries of ways of putting it to further use, but the sum of all such discoveries is subsidiary to the constant features of the language; and there is not one that is genuinely linguistic—that is not a usage-intervention—which was not an implicit linguistic possibility.

Usage changes, certainly. But, largely, it passes—the change passes. The fundamental proprieties of the continuing language remain the fundamental ones. Moreover, at least until the present speaking-age, usage-proprieties have done much homage to the fundamental proprieties: the rule of usage has sponsored a surface linguistic good-behavior paved with vaguely good intentions. But there need be no ultimate difficulty in distinguishing between what is usage and what is language. The better one knows the language, the more will it help one to know the difference.

In the age of English speaking preceding the present one, the proponents of good usage lost much of the traditional concern of proponents of good usage with the maintenance of linguistically respectable procedure, and settled into the upholding of a convenient formality, and comfortable pretension to sufficiency in goodness. The consequences of centuries of failure on the part of all the language's speakers to employ it to the full of the good it made

feasible began now to show in the loss of interest in the possibility of anything other than what was, linguistically. This age was, humanly, the age of the hapless ascendancy of the best possible Good-enough. What now prevails in the use of words is the ugly aftermath of this Good-enough. But (as we have before argued) however bad the usage-circumstances in which a language is spoken, all is not lost so long as it is spoken. The worse the usage-circumstances, the more speakers there ought to be eventually who are affected with a sense of personal linguistic failure, and a consciousness of there being distance between themselves and the language which they need urgently to close. Speakers of a language can become responsible guardians of their own speaking in trying to close such distance.

CHAPTER 6

The Canons

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1.

Ultimately, the difference between usage and language as bases for determining right standards of word-use is a difference between *context* and *meaning* as the critical consideration in determining them. The canon of the context draws a line between what forms of expression are compatible with the meaning of a word and what forms of expression are not. But, where such a canon prevails for the use of a word, the eye of authority and the eye of the guidance-seeker are not on what the word means, specifically: rather, they are on the kinds of statement or set-of-words in which it can be proper to use it. The meaning itself of the word comes to be identified, thus, with a pattern of associations, a contextual area within which it is proper to use the word, and outside of which it is not. Those who are educated by such canons can know the "right" thing to say with words—right in the sense that they conform to the best usage-standards—without actually knowing the meanings of the words, without ever thinking in definite particular what the words themselves mean. Their manner of speaking is to use words in blocks rather than as individual entities; they can be sensitive to what contexts are comfortable contexts (that is, contexts that do not conflict with the contextual norms of the time) without having the capability of putting the word to proper use in a phrase or clause or sentence that is not one of the standard kinds of context for the word's use.

So long as the contextual canons of good word-use are formulated, and followed, with some educated perception of there being a relation between meaning as a linguistic property and the suitability of words to the context in which they are used (be the perception but a glancing one), speaking-custom is on the whole steered away from overtly bad or absurd word-use. English

speaking-custom was for long maintained in an appearance of fair good order by such canons, though a gradually growing slackness in linguistic education caused them to be followed with ever-decreasing sensitivity to their linguistic significance. Even in the early years of this century, it was possible to derive a notion of what was good speaking-form and what was not—what was linguistically tolerable, and what linguistically outrageous—from the reading-matter of the time, and from such books of use-canons, lexicographical or advisory, as were current. But in the general speeding twentieth-century course towards the simplification of all things difficult (as if simplification were in itself solution), inclusive of the simplification of all questions involving matters of authority and judgement, concern with problems of word-use has dwindled to a concern with them as trivialities. Those professionally concerned with them have (since the early decades of the century) reduced language itself, in their theory, to a structure of formalized accidents, and formalistic refinements, on a primitive base. There seem to be no canons to follow—because, generally, no one seems seriously interested either in following any, or presenting any to follow.

Speaking-custom now makes itself up as it goes, largely; it is here one thing, and there another—good form, bad form, no form. General intellectual impatience with the idea of sharp-edged distinction between right and wrong affects the way in which the language is studied; knowledge of the language seems far less important to people than it used to seem—it seems possible to get along on far less than was once assumed necessary. In the teaching of the language there is less and less *of* language taught, and more and more "about" language, and about it as something not to treat with solemnity, not to work too hard over—something rather freakish, even, to which a rather light touch is suitable.

Carefree-ness is the key-note of the contemporary linguistic mood. And yet—and despite having a very choppy acquaintance with the language—contemporary speakers of it regard themselves as, in the mass, not an illiterate populace. Indeed, an authority to create new canons of speech seems to have fallen into their laps. But what to do with the authority (should it be real) they do not know; nor does this much perturb them, since they do not actively feel that they need to do anything. In their carefree-ness, they have—or feel they have—the security of something that is not dependent on any authority that may reside in themselves. This something comes along with them from generation to generation no matter what their attitude to language is, or way of using words: it is tradition, in the form of the dictionaries—tradition not so much voluntarily valued and respected as drawn into the vacuum of their actual inability to guide themselves linguistically. They do not use the dictionaries to strengthen and enlarge their knowledge of the language, but to prop

it up where weak places chance to reveal themselves in it. Besides the dictionaries there are auxiliary verbal reference-books that specialize in ministering to certain subsidiary kinds of knowledge-inadequacies. But dictionaries are the main resort; in these edifices are housed canons of word-use for serving in the main kinds of linguistic emergencies—these being thought of by both dictionary-makers and dictionary-consulters as individual lapses in a generally adequate knowledge of the language as a whole.

When dictionaries are brought concretely into the discussion of things linguistic, the linguistic scene of things, in which they are indeed concretely present, becomes more distinctly visible, and the whole scene can be treated with greater particularity. For dictionaries have long been the centers of linguistic learning, the keepers of the archives, so to speak: in them are to be found the language in its vocabularistic entirety, word after word set down, and the meaning close beside—the very record (by intent, at least) of what the language *is*. One cannot examine the linguistic state of things without giving consideration to the dictionaries, as constituting a prime element of it.

To the notion that dictionaries are the leading quarter of linguistic knowledge it might be objected that the linguistic fundamentals have been ever taught in ordinary class-rooms, and that explorations of linguistic principles, and analyses of general attitudes to words, are now generally incorporated in the higher academic curriculum. But all such instruction fails to penetrate to the heart of the matter of language. The linguistic fundamentals that are now taught in the lower ranges are but shadow-fundamentals, concerned with procedures of self-protection from the more exacting requirements of language rather than with the characteristic procedures of language (that linguistic order of things which was once the mark of literateness, but has come to be regarded as psychological tyranny). Emphasis is now increasingly put, in general linguistic teaching, upon getting the actual linguistic problems inhering in the use of words (as distinct from the external variables that complicate it) out of the way as soon as possible, although they are unreasonable, fundamentally, without close knowledge of the language under attention—the language in its verbal substance. By the time the higher academic area is reached, students—with the encouragement of the teachers to whom they come—assume that they know their language well enough, and that their need now is to be trained in the science of *thinking about* language. This science is one that takes people, designedly, to a point of remove from their words at which they hardly look like words to them, but rather, as does whatever science eyes, like groups of data constituted of "events"—brain-events, physical, but of an abstruse physicality, different from that of plain sensory events. And there is nothing available besides the dictionaries to make up for the dearth of veritable linguistic instruction.

But, as we have pointed out, people go to the dictionaries not as seekers after knowledge of their language, but for the occasional clarification of a confusion, or filling in of a gap in their knowledge, or for an isolated enlargement of it: they do not go as general learners, but as, already, general knowers of it. Certainly, there is much amiss with dictionaries as the source-place for knowledge of the language. They are newly existent things, as compared with languages themselves, and, in their development from small things to great things, they have gone the way of a tendency—partly as followers of it, partly as cultivators—towards preoccupation with usage rather than with meaning as the guidance-principle of word-use, although they profess to be, and are thought of as being, the places where one finds the *meanings* of words. They are more teachers of right contexts than of the right meaning. In fact, the dictionary-definition is not, actually, a definition, but a description of the field of the word's usage, with the permissible use-possibilities specified in what seem like individual variant definitions, but are only indications of the approved varying kinds of use-context.

The meaning, in a dictionary-definition, is left to be deduced by generalization from the provided data. The consequence is that the best the dictionary-consulters can do, on that basis, is to form a notion that approximates loosely to the entirety of the "definition": they can put the word to use in the indicated contexts, but of what it means they have a vague notion, merely, one not much clearer than that with which they came to the dictionary, if they came with any at all. There is always something to be learned from a look into a dictionary, yet that something is always in some way defective. There are definitional hints, usage-guidelines, informational scraps, derivational details, the entries being, in some dictionaries, elaborate in their coverage. But no entry is what it ought to be: none is a member of a body of integrated reports on words' meanings reflecting the integratedness of words as the stuff of language. It is questionable whether, as they are, dictionaries are serviceable for anything more than the emergency occasion. But, as perpetuators of a tradition of provision for the knowledge of the language as the knowledge of its words as a whole, they are the best inheritance its speakers have, besides the language itself.

2.

Dictionaries came into being very late in the cultivation of languages—but recently, it might be said, by the measure of the age of languages. Before the existence of dictionaries, the speakers of a language—once they had learned their juvenile language-lessons—had to be in large part their own instructors in the knowledge of the meanings of words; attention to usage was undoubt-

edly a factor in linguistic self-education, but in a dictionaryless world the mind of the user of words was the place of first reference for checking on their meanings (for making the test of word-knowledge that all users of words are naturally moved to make, and continually make in one way or another in a wholesome speaking atmosphere).

A language must be presumed to have been subject, in pre-dictionary eras, to vicissitudes of development originating in such circumstances as the geographical separation of some sets of its speakers from others under conditions of restricted communication, the social separations of certain sets of them from one another, the confinement of literateness to a very small number, and a general scarcity of available reading-matter. There was much room, in those eras, for the play of ignorance and accident in the accommodations that occurred between people and their language (as accommodations must occur, under any circumstances). After the advent of the printed book, and the spread of literateness to a larger number, because of that, and also because of a general enlargement of the very concept of society, there came a spreading desire for co-ordinated knowledge of the common language and of the ways of using its words. Intensive concern with the proprieties of word-use was, however, long limited to an inner social circle of speakers of the common language; and, in this concern, considerations of conversational and literary style were merged confusedly with linguistic considerations touching fundamental matters of word-meaning. The early dictionaries and other word-books, formed to serve an élite of word-users, reflect this confusing of major verbal problems with inessential ones. By the time English dictionaries had attained their full stride as comprehensive lexicons of the language, usage had been established as the authoritative guide to the proprieties of word-use: no distinction remained in people's minds between matters of usage and matters of meaning.

When no dictionaries existed, there was the ever-present danger of erratic occurrences in a language's development, of discrepancies and irregularities that the language might be long in assimilating; and, after there came to be dictionaries, there was another kind of danger. The danger that dictionaries pose has much more serious potentialities of adverse effect on the linguistic state of things than the other sort of danger, since it extends to the language in its entirety, while the other involves particular features of it. Dictionaries inspire confidence in people; and, in truth, scholarly diligence and human devotion of great degree have been expended on their making. The danger they hold for their users is in their being far less trustworthy as instructors on matters of meaning than they are imagined to be. The burden of study of words that dictionary-makers assume—study of the total word-content of a language—has never yet been wholly shouldered by them; it has not been conceived of by them in the whole. The shortcomings of dictionaries are passed on to their

users—who (as we have pointed out) can think of themselves as linguistically literate while having no more than a spotty and superficial acquaintance with word-meanings. Dictionaries produce in people illusions of knowing what words mean, keeping their minds in a state of perpetual unrecognized uncertainty: the speakers of a language are greatly at the mercy of its dictionaries.

We have called into question the reliance of dictionary-makers on usage as a basis for the determination of words' meanings. In the institution of dictionary-making itself there has been a progressivist break with what is thought of as old-school insistence on arbitrary standards of precision, removed by academic distances from linguistic actuality, the newer school associating itself with the principle that it is the function of a dictionary to record usage, not to aim at an absolute correctness of definition. However, such liberal lexicographical practice constitutes no new departure in definitional policy: what it opposes itself to is the strict traditionalism of the older lexicographical practice in choosing the usage-basis of definitions. There is no difference in underlying definitional principle between the procedures of classical lexicography (such as those of the French Academy for instance) and the latest ventures in lexicographical latitude. From one extreme to the other, the canons are all usage-canons: contexts, not meanings, are in both quarters the key to the use of words. The difference between strict and liberal lexicography reduces, in effect, to a difference in the needs the dictionary-makers think of themselves as serving, which, in turn, reduces to a difference between one kind of public and another. In one case there is a public orientated towards refinements of style and verbal habit of the most conservative tradition of good usage, in the other a public orientated towards the amorphous diction of popular linguistic sophistication.

We hold that both the old and the new, the conservative and the progressivist, lexicography are makeshift methods of dealing with the matter of word-meaning. The two methods have it in common that they do not deal directly with word-meaning but with secondary linguistic material, and that they are shaped by the character of the material: they deal with *what is said* with the language rather than with *what the language is*—with the use made of the language's words rather than with the words themselves. Less and less is learned of the language through the dictionaries as the usage they record grows more and more free-wheeling and the canons they prescribe for words' use grow correspondingly more and more "liberal": more and more, usage becomes the law-maker, with the language itself coming to seem an abstraction to its speakers—and to its official guardians, especially so to the newest type of guardians, scientific-minded theoreticians. But even if the older lexicography, which survives, in varying degrees, in some dictionary-strongholds, could be brought into educational use, it could not redress the deterioration in the sense

of meaning that has been rapidly spreading among speakers of the language, with the blessings of the newer lexicography. The old dispensation does not afford, any more than does the new, open access to words as they mean according to their linguistic identity: it is concerned, as is the new, with questions of permissible usage. Its standards of permissibility are more decorous than those of the new, but they are not a product of purely linguistic considerations: the values of good-taste cannot accurately duplicate the intrinsic values by which a language functions, which reside in the meanings of its words. Nothing but a beginning at the beginning, in the lexicographical presentation of the language for knowing, could revitalize the sense of meaning. (An examination of contemporary progressivist lexicography will be found in our "Supplementary Essays, p. 473.")

3.

The fading of the language (we are thinking specifically of the English language) into unreality for its speakers that has attended the augmentation of emphasis on the ways of usage (as constituting linguistic law) has been sped by a contempt for the idea that there exists a real entity, "the language"—a contempt consciously injected into the linguistic ideology of the present time. This development of a realism denying intrinsic identity to what is called "the language" is the work of a new race of philosophic thinkers who, overborne by the apparently flawless reasonableness of science, dispensed with philosophic feelers of the old type, which are indeed capable of erring frequently as to the nature of what they try to grope out, and substituted scientific feelers for them, which cannot grope out or evaluate anything in the whole, though they can sensitively reconnoitre the minutest pieces of things. Taking up language as a subject of philosophic exploration along scientific lines, they contributed to the already advanced dimness of "the language" to people, bringing it into intellectual discredit as a thinkable entity.

The status of words themselves in the minds of people (and words are all that is left if "the language" disappears from view) has been affected by the attention they have received from the experts in realistic reduction of the things of language to their least real: they have crammed them into the category "symbols," scientifically stripping their entity-hood from them in order to make the classification plausible. In *The Meaning of Meaning* by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, first published over forty years ago, this barbaric development was gathered into the form of a practical system of sensible modernity, for a new understanding of the nature of language; it had immediate success in the English-speaking world as a long-missing, long-needed, psychology of language. With this, language seemed to have lost the battle to science: the

book came like a conqueror into the contemporary linguistic scene, and its spirit still struts there. Everything in the field of professional linguistic thinking since that time has been magnetized towards the scientific disaffection towards language that found proselytizing voice in this book. Here the idea that language is nothing in itself was first put before the English-speaking world in an academically stylish form.

The peculiar vulnerability of language to scientific mishandling proceeds, curiously, from the unsuitability of its material for scientific investigation. One cannot cut into a word with a scalpel, take out its meaning, and go to work on it with instruments of measurement and analysis. And so there was especially evolved for the alignment of language with other subjects of scientific investigation "a theory of signs," which eliminates the concept of "language" and confronts the mind with a queer new reality of words, each a non-entity, all together constituting a "linguistic apparatus" that is without any internal principle of rightness, the only guiding rule for its use being convenience. The case was succinctly put in *The Meaning of Meaning*. "Language if it is to be used must be a ready instrument. The handiness and ease of a phrase is always more important in deciding whether it will be extensively used than its accuracy." Those who view language thus can say without a qualm "Our linguistic apparatus is treacherous." What they make of language—the scientific simulacrum of language—is treacherous. The idea that there is any other principle of linguistic practicality than that of accuracy of expression serving exactitude of thought is a highway to the permanent insanity of human beings.

We mean by "language", here, a real entity, and one that has a destiny of fidelity to reality, and to the capability of human beings of functioning as articulate residents of reality. We believe that language has a real existence, and as something that reality and human beings have created between them. We are, therefore, committed to the view that a language is something knowable intrinsically, in the intimate form of the meanings of its words. We find fault with dictionaries, as instruments of linguistic instruction, and so do those who aim at a scientific conquest of language. But the ultimate in linguistic knowledge, for them, is definition that amounts to a measurement of the processes involved in the uses of words, according to a psychological procedure of classification. We conceive of the possibility of a dictionary-treatment of words that would accumulatively correct the superficial (though hard-working) treatment of the existing dictionaries in the direction of precise instruction in *the language*. The fault in conventional lexicography cannot, to our thinking, be compensated for by a scientific treatment of words. It is not an inevitability, arising from peculiarities in the nature of language, but a consequence of the following of superficial principles. We think that the fault is remediable, through a revision of principles.

If the makers of dictionaries had assiduously adhered to the objective of explaining the meanings of words to which dictionaries, from their narrow beginnings, have been committed, there would now be far less of that scientific processing of word-use data which presents itself in the guise of linguistic scholarship. All such activity rests on the denial of the existence of an entity "language." It would have been impossible to deny the existence of this entity—of which every language is an exemplar, as every people is an exemplar of humanity—if a broader, a fuller, concern with *meanings* had been prosecuted in dictionaries, through the centuries, instead of a broader, a fuller, concern with *usage*. Without language, there are no meanings: words mean only as members of an entity that is a language. When words are dealt with from the point of view, how they ought to be used, rather than from the point of view, what they mean, the way is made open for greater and greater resort to contextual precedent as the regulator of word-use—and for an eventual dehumanization of linguistic actualities under presumptuously self-confident auspices.

Dictionaries of the language rose to a position of high authoritativeness by paying closer and closer regard to standards of usage. But they rapidly moved towards the end of their effectiveness as monitors of linguistic integrity as the extension of the language's practical horizons to those of the world-at-large, and the democratic expansion of education (and attendant increase in the number of users of the language classifiable as literate), brought out the need for more substantial and thorough-going guidance in matters of word-use. The new pressure put on standards of usage as a basis of guidance for the good use of words has revealed how inadequate they were as such—they leave no alternative to contextual limitation of use but utter absence of limitations (i.e., confusion).

Onward from the point where standards of usage began to be relaxed in adaptation to the use of the language by an ever-enlarging body of speakers, incapable of being held within the propriety-limits of traditional usage-standards, only three things could happen, in the linguistic life of people—two of which did happen. The first began to happen immediately: all elements of the linguistic life of people—the use of the language, the knowledge of it, instruction in the language and the things of language (including that proffered by the dictionaries)—rolled into a single chaos, with comfortable gradualness at first, but making gradually an uncomfortable impression on everybody of the coming-to-be of something "new," that was not necessarily a source of ease and gratification. (Never before have people understood so little of what kind of activity they are engaged in in using words, as they now do—and the linguistically uneducated perhaps understand more than the others, being thrown more upon their intuitive resources.) Then came the invasion of the

field of linguistic guidance by the searchers for new areas of human activity in which to apply scientific methods of knowledge and management. The justification of this invasion, it could be argued, lay in the chaos we have described. But the chaos, was, is, no natural state of human beings, who are naturally languaged beings. Those who go scientifically to the rescue of human beings in this latter-day plight treat the chaos as trouble that human beings are bound to get into just because they are languaged beings; and they go to their rescue-work with a predisposition to extend scientific procedures of material measurement to everything possible, upon the profane assumption that all activity, all experience, all reality, is ultimately amenable to scientific handling. In short, where science sets foot on linguistic terrain, its good works will order chaos into a desert.

So there happened, after the collapse of traditional standards of usage-discipline, first, a general change from a policy of concern with the maintenance of a decent modicum of linguistic integrity to a general policy of linguistic *laissez-faire,* and, then, a taking-possession of the linguistic situation by scientific-minded philosophers, and philosophically and otherwise ambitious scientists, and an assortment of fringe recruits to science's ranks. The second happening has worsened the situation to beyond what the *laissez-faire* process could have brought it to. For it eliminates the human nature of language, fixing upon the residual mechanism as the linguistic actuality—which is meaningless without its links of spiritual affinity with human reason: science converts language from a humanly natural mental property to a physiological phenomenon, a cerebral eccentricity. Present-day speakers of the language are caught between the debility induced by their historically inherited *laissez-faire* linguistic circumstances and the effects of the new linguistic therapeutics, which neutralizes, designedly, whatever instinctive linguistic sensitivity may still remain keen—with allowance for some "emotive" word-use ("emotive" being scientific terminology for verbal wildness), to vary the scientifically approved verbal moods and keep the linguistic creature alive.

The third thing that could happen—but has not yet happened—after the traditional usage-standards declined in prestige, and questions of right word-use became more and more enveloped in general uncertainty and bewilderment (and, finally, indifference), would be an awakening to the need of a comprehensive provision for knowledge of the language as a real and coherent entity. This could be stirred by a mere common-sense awareness in people of the existence of a crisis in their functioning as languaged beings: they come very close to admitting seriously to themselves that they are not making sense with that which they have with which to make sense. How an awakening to such a need might be stirred is not the consideration of first importance. This is, *can* people—let the means be what they may—attain to a consciousness of

having, in their language, a rationale of their rôle of human beings? For the alternative is linguistic death—their language having become to them scarcely more than a collection of animated shadows that play upon the screen of the understanding in dramas of ever-evanescent meaning.

An orderly knowledge of the meanings of words, a knowledge of words as components of a language, is the only reliable assurance of linguistic integrity in their use. The assurance of a modicum of this, which dictionaries up to recent times were able to provide, has shown itself to be of no avail against the forces of distraction and destruction to which the linguistic good intentions of people have come to be exposed. (Indeed, how could a modicum of linguistic integrity suffice for any time?) Yet the lexicographical and general linguistic débâcle of this time can be the preliminary to general linguistic good fortune, for it makes the way clear for a complete re-approach by people to the task of learning their language well enough to speak it well—which is to say, of learning it thoroughly well. Dictionaries are the suitable point of beginning for people's linguistic re-education of themselves. But, to serve in such a process, a dictionary would have to be a veritable source-book of knowledge of the language. This, the dictionary of the existing type is not: it is designed to familiarize people with established ways of using words rather than to exhibit their meanings. Since much usage-data is presented in dictionaries in definitional form, this is not self-evident on the face of the dictionary-page.

In the absence of provision of veritable meaning-information in dictionaries—a weakness characteristic of past and present dictionaries equally—the coverage of words made in them with usage as the focus of consideration is, though a poor substitute, an indispensable one, serviceable as guidance of a sort. There is wide variation among the dictionaries available to people in the character and quantity of the usage-information they provide, some being relatively better than others, some so conspicuously superior as to acquire standing as "good" dictionaries; and, since nothing different is known, people feel that they know what a good dictionary is. The estimation of dictionaries is complicated by their being in many cases fattened out with vocabulary-entries providing information hardly entitled to be treated as linguistic information, but of indubitable general serviceableness: dictionary-users cannot be insensitive to such bounty, and regard themselves as being given, in dictionaries thus stocked, a lexicographical brimful leaving nothing to be desired. The peculiar linguistic serviceableness that dictionaries ought to have as instruments of knowledge of the meanings of words is not easily imaginable in the linguistic environment in which the dictionary of the accustomed mould is the *vade mecum* of literacy.

PART THREE

Language and Rationality

Foreword to Part 3

In this third part of our book, we shall fill out the picture of the contemporary linguistic state of things by dwelling on the main elements of its intellectual background; especially shall we be concerned with science and philosophy, painting in the detail and general features of their part in the whole more substantially than we have so far done. We summarize here the references already made to the intervention of modern science and philosophy into the domain of language, and at the same time endeavor to describe, in perspective view, the total impingement of their types of intellectualism on the linguistic course of things. We do this not with an aim of educating readers in contemporary intellectual history, but with a hope of freeing them from the (widely cultivated and sustained) persuasion that the intellectual environment of this time holds resources of new language-wisdom.

The first chapter, here, puts the primary linguistic question of word-meaning emphatically in the foreground of the picture of the contemporary linguistic state of things. This should help readers to steady their sense of what matters in language's regard against the distractions that assail it, falsely presented as gifts of linguistic enlightenment from the general sophistication of the time. In providing readers with a critical review of contemporary intellectual trends harmful to the linguistic sensibilities, we mean to enable them to form an idea of the depth and breadth and solidity that a solution of the question of meaning must have, for language to play its proper part in the general intellectual life—which is to resist and correct its faults and vices, not to accommodate itself to them.

When we have finished with Part 3, we shall have explored very many of the problems that surround the problem of definition and in their accumulative combination obscure the nature of that problem. Of what remains of these for understanding, much will have to wait upon the resolution of the problem of definition itself.

CHAPTER 7

The Nature of Meaning

1.

In order to comprehend what the definition of words involves—what it should involve—one must think, first, about meaning. But meaning is not easy to think about in these times, even to begin to think about. Words are now used almost universally without sustained consciousness of their meaning something, something in particular, each one: there is extraordinarily little natural relish taken in the fact of the meaning of the uttered word, very little direct awareness of its meaning in the act of uttering it—the savor of meaning has almost entirely gone out of words, for people. The cause of this lies, largely, in past developments in habits of word-use and attitudes to words that have blunted sensitivity to their meanings. But contemporary professional thinking on things linguistic has encouraged people to disregard what remains to them of verbal sensitivity. It is a central view of linguistic modernism that meaning has no intrinsic existence in a word, and the common feeling about words has thus been supplied with intellectual justification: the view has had its effects.

Standard modern-minded meaning-doctrine has drawn some of its potency from the philosophic doctrine of existentialism. "Concern yourself with words as concrete conveniences of communication, not with the will-o'-the-wisp things they mean": the "advanced" view of meaning might be formulated thus, even as the existentialist view of reality might be formulated as "Be concerned with yourself, leave reality to its own devices." There is useful point in identifying the view as a component of the present attitude of people to words; to the extent of its influence, it is an obstacle to their coming to recognize meaning as something they have to do with, or ought to be having to do with, most intimately, in every speaking, every thinking, moment of their lives.

The proponents of the categorically modern view of meaning do not believe in meaning, though they use the word "meaning" in their descriptions of how words, conceived of as symbols, mean. They conceive of meaning in a way fitted to their conception of the nature of words. The meaning of a word conceived of as a symbol is so different from the meaning of a word conceived of as a word that the word "meaning" is almost an embarrassment to them as a word for it; they confer a special sense of their own on the word. "The naïve theory that meaning is just meaning" (we are quoting Ogden and Richards, pioneer proponents of the view) has in their eyes been exploded: they see a task to do of clearing away a still remaining debris of misconception of the nature of meaning, and of reorganizing the entire disposition of people to words.

The word, according to linguistic theory based on the idea of the word as symbol, is but an incident in a process of reference, and meaning is but another incident in the process. The entire process, instead of being regarded as a single incident of expressive utterance, is analyzed into a loose occurrence in which uttered sound and some material of thought are associatively linked; and the analysis is bolstered by the argument—of potent practical appeal—that, while too much ought not to be expected of the process, it should render enough understandable, by reasonable expectations, to make the communicative attempt of some use. That such a view is in spirit anti-linguistic, contemptuous of words, is not apparent to people because they are not busily self-aware in their using of them, and unwittingly tolerate disrespect of them in themselves and in one another. Though this is a nihilistic, hopeless view of the human linguistic lot, it can pass for a sensible one where an over-easy, blundering way with words has come to be taken for a respectable norm; it seems to cover the linguistic facts in a learned manner, yet makes lighter rather than heavier demands on the users of words than older views of linguistic values. Actually, while allowing words a limited justification, it deprives them, and the linguistic process itself, of intrinsic respectability. It is similar, in this, to the existentialist appraisal of the human state: as the word is conceived of as having in itself no reality, in its linguistic environment, so is the human being conceived of as having none, internally, in its universal environment. Therefore, according to such thinking, to make something of the word, or to make something of the human being, is to work a *tour de force*—in communication, or in existence: only fugitive achievements are possible, nothing is assured, all values are eternally experimental.

The linguistic professionals have pressed very hard on their notion that meaning is but a part-clumsy, part-ingenious, invention by which words, symbols of meaning formed of meaningless sound, can be made to give an effect of communication while not actually—directly, specifically—meaning any-

thing in themselves. The notion has infiltrated so deeply into the professional thinking of the time on things linguistic that it has become standard academic practice to represent language as a sort of vocal algebra, denoting thought in sign-fashion rather than expressing it; and people, in their general speaking-practice, more and more substantiate the notion—not purposively, but in automatic response to the academic sanction the notion confers on their ever-advancing slackness with words (necessarily involving thought itself).

People do *not,* increasingly they do not, use their words as instruments for the direct expression of thought: increasingly, they use them, indeed, as signs, as if they did not have anything with which to *tell* their thought. Increasingly, they communicate in mutual isolation, as if words were the emergency communication-devices of beings lacking natural means of communication. The contemporary sense of personal isolation that has received commiserating attention under the psycho-philosophic term "alienation" has vital connection with the fact that people do not use their words as if the words had intrinsic meaning-content, in which minds could meet. To use words so, people must maintain a relationship between their thought and their words of utmost closeness—a virtual identity, indeed; and this they cannot do if meaning is to them something apart from words, not integrally bound up with them.

Meaning is a form of thought, word-meanings are individualized forms of thought. Surely, this is a recognizable actuality, *if* one makes an effort to catch oneself in the act of meaning—if one chooses a word and makes an effort to *mean,* to mean the word in speaking it. When meaning is treated as something distinct in identity from words, it has the false character of an extraneous mental phenomenon. The effect of this is to divide thought artificially into two categories: thought-in-the-mind and thought projected into separation from it—the latter being supposed to constitute the elements of thought that are communicatively suggestible, all the rest being regarded as the private, essentially incommunicable mental life of each. Words (words as symbols) are, then, by this count of things, as handles with which the mind, in the privacy of thought in which it is presumed to be generally locked, can make reference to special denotable items of thought. Our analysis of latter-day theorizing on meaning may seem grotesquely complex, but it is in fact a simplification of it: this theorizing is complex to the point of intellectual outlandishness. Many have been induced by its complexity to regard the subject as having been at last removed from the realm of the mysterious. But the subject acquired mysteriousness only as the attention paid by people to meaning, in their use of words, diminished towards near-total inattention.

Meaning belongs integrally to thought, is rationally concentrated thought; meanings are forms of thought produced by rational concentration. And meaning has to reside in a word for the word to be capable of being itself, in use: when a word is that, it is just so much *expressed thought,* a meaning-entity.

The sound-aspect of a word is but a manifestation of its individuality as a meaning-entity. It is important in every moment of speaking or hearing words to know them as meaning-entities rather than as sound-entities, things that symbolize rather than mean.

The existence of same-sounding words does not disprove the notion that the sound of a word is intimately bound up with its individual meaning-identity. For instance: at the hearing of "bear" in a spoken sentence the mind is not thrown into confusion just because there are a number of words of this sound-character. The sound "bear" confronts the hearer with the presence of a single meaning-entity, not a hodge-podge of meanings. The problem of identification of meaning is to choose rightly immediately from the number of possibilities, which are very few in proportion to the thousands and thousands of meanings of which the language is constructed: it is not a matter of trial and error. The words accompanying "bear" in the sentence simplify the problem, combinedly eliminating irrelevant speculation, and so swiftly that there is hardly time for even momentary error. If words were but symbolic sound-entities, with meanings somewhere at a remove from them, the processes of meaning-identification would be generally too slow to make the existence in the language of same-sounding words tolerable.

It is important in one's general life-procedures as a user of words to be aware that the relationship of one's thought and one's words begins in a fundamental relationship existing, properly, between one's entire intellectual apparatus and all the words one has for use in their unified entirety as a language, one's language. The mental instrument for the thinking of thought and the linguistic instrument for the expression of it are fitted to work together in functional singleness: articulateness of thought and articulateness of utterance are inseparable, as are the two instruments in the fulfilment of their functions.

What occurs in the using of a word cannot be completely understood unless the nature of words as components of a language is taken into account. By their linguistic character, words are forms of thought-action, self-sustaining acts of thought, distinct in identity from one another, capable of being performed in conjunction with one another without loss of distinctness; as language, words reduplicate human thought in all its proven capacity for expansiveness and particularity, and coherence and order, so that they are to it as another self. Language—words in their character as language—gathers thought together into its protection, nullifying the chances of disorder and waste to which human intelligence is prey: people have in it a model at ever-immediate mental hand for thought to act by. When thought acts (instead of diffusing itself in inexpression)—when, that is, thought is intelligent—it acts as language.[1]

The idea that, when thought acts, it acts in the form of words—that, in effect, when thought acts, it speaks—may seem to be disproved by the exis-

tence of thought-operations that are, apparently, of a non-verbal kind, such as the operations of mathematical thought. We believe that it could be demonstrated that an operation of mathematical thought could not attain to sufficient articulateness for formulation, be it but formulation by the crude, stripped-down terminology represented by mathematical signs, without undergoing verbalization. There is no mystical other-than-verbal means possessed by the mind by which thought may be activated into orderliness and articulateness: words have their natural place in the mind, and their presence there, and their general very close affinity with minds, ought not to be excluded from the analysis of any kind of intelligent thought-operation whatsoever. The intimateness of the thought-words relationship might be the more easily recognized if the fact that words are uttered *from* minds, and, being uttered, are received *into* minds (responded to *in* minds, with their selfsame presence there), were allowed its full weight of intellectual, and linguistic, and human significance. Likewise, the nature of meaning becomes comprehensible in terms of personal mental experience—as distinct from those of science-like linguistic theory—if one follows the meaning of an uttered word to its mental starting-point. What words mean is what minds think when they think purposively: in dealing with meaning one is dealing with the characteristic way in which responsible thought proceeds.

What we are describing here is within everyone's internal view. If—given that one is using words intelligently, neither as an automaton of usage-habits nor as a bewildered babbler—one slows down the movement of utterance and observes what is happening, one will find the starting-point of the words themselves to be in the mind: the whole word is there, and not on the tongue, not half in the mind, half on the tongue. How is the reality of the existence of the word "in the language" (of which we have spoken so much) to be reconciled with that of its presence in the mind? "The language" is the common treasure formed of the demonstrated potentialities of rational thinking, accumulatively discovered in the common continuity of human life; from it people learn the powers of their minds. Yet, to learn them, they have to take the language into their minds. Do we present a paradox, here? We think not. There can be no difficulty as to where the words "are," in so far as people's minds are languaged. For language makes minds one: the speakers of a language, as they speak it faithfully, are inhabitants of the same mental place.

2.

The belittling of words is a salient characteristic of modern linguistic ideology. Being in revolt against the ascription of intrinsic value to words, the ideology denies them the importance with which they have been endowed in all past ages as things in which meaning resides. According to its theories, the mean-

ings of words have a tenuous, scarcely identifiable, marginal existence, an existence not integral with words themselves, these being regarded as, in their actual nature, physical quantities.

The running-down of words is an old human proclivity; in complaining of their faultiness, people find relief from the strain of trying to fulfil the requirements of language, as their impulses of rationality urge. But there is a sharp difference between the new-style manifestations of the proclivity and those of the historically typical sort, a difference in degree of seriousness. The new-style running-down of words is conducted in dead-earnest. In the standard-style running-down of them there is invariably an admixture of affection, a tempering playfulness; much of it has taken the form of proverbial wiseacreing, and in general it resembles family-criticism in character, being never so severe as to be incompatible with loyalty to the object of attack (whether words, or language *in toto*). In the new sort of generalizations about words there is no underlying tenderness, and no relief of good humor. There are jokes, but rather harsh jokes, aimed at making old-style linguistic seriousness appear ridiculous. The new belittling is a professionalized, aggressive, efficient, critical assault on words, designed to rout out solemnity from people's sense of relationship with them, as sentimental. It presents a realistic programme of word-management, in which words undergo devaluation with an effect of increased ease of use. People are induced to be not painstakingly concerned with trying to use words rightly, by flattering suggestions of their being their words' superiors—as if their self-respect as speaking beings depended on their abandoning their innate respect for words.

With the cultivation of such a condescending view of words goes a certain tribute-paying to language that touches an inveterate, instinctive persuasion of people that they have something out of the ordinary—out of the human ordinary—in it. While urging people to lower their linguistic sights in the interest of sanity of attitude to words, and practical advantage in their use, the pedagogues who have taken language in their charge pump invitations to wonder over the fact of language into their argument; they reduce language to an oddity of human development, yet treat it with an easy-going awe, rather as scientists, with their reduced versions of Nature, like to think themselves as versed in its wondrousness.

The test of the worth of a language must be, as must that of the worth of any other adopted course of functioning, by standards of invariable reliability. Can a language's functional system, the values upon which the meaning-effectuality of its words depends, be trusted to hold good in actual use? Can the expressive and communicative objectives of people be confidently entrusted to the verbal determinations possible under the language's meaning-scheme? According to the new linguistic teaching, language is characteristically, generically, weak in the crucial matter of consistency: words cannot be

relied on to sustain the meanings they seem, on reasonable assumption, to have, from one occasion of use to another, even with the same speaker. Nevertheless, according to this teaching, language has a certain marvellousness: magic is ascribed to it, such a term as "miracle" applied to it, by the linguistic realists. Wherein the miracle, of what the magic, if the words themselves, in their functional essence, which is meaning, are things unsure, producing inevitable confusion, deception, self-deception, in communicative negotiation? This is a spurious homage: the new teaching, in conferring on language the honor of being magical or miraculous in its nature, is stealing glory for its shrunken version of the nature of language from the linguistic realities—the very things that it declares to be myths. There is ground for genuine surprise at the survival of the linguistic faculties, in the existing state of the human attitude to language; that they continue to function despite the disordering they have suffered during past processes of deterioration in speaking-habits, and from damage done to the basic linguistic sensibility by the new linguistic teaching, has some of the sobering impressiveness of a mystery.

Certainly, there is good reason for marvelling at the adequacy of language to every speaking-need of human beings; and people cannot but feel continual gratifications of surprise in finding that the resources of language are their internal human own, if they draw on them sensitively, deeply. These resources are the very meaning-activities that human beings pursue by their nature, spelt back to them out of the unity of their nature, for their common recognition. How could language not be thought a wondrous thing! One should not need stimulation by the new linguistic ideologists to feel excitement in the fact of, and in the use of, language. Moreover, language, in their presentation, can afford no more excitement than the taxidermist's reconstruction of the once-animate creature yields: they stuff the exterior with an inert batting of theory, to replace the live tissue of organic word-meaning.

One might best describe the experience of knowing language from the account given of it by latter-day language-experts as knowing it without assumption of there being anything considerable to know. These have made possible the existence of a new race of illiterates, people who can pass for literates because the knowledge of words, in the new curriculum of linguistic education, has ceased to require any substantial knowledge of meanings. A key article of doctrine of the new teaching is "the fundamental principle that language constantly changes." This formulation, presented in *The Miracle of Language* by Charlton Laird (World Publishing, 1953), in effect eliminates meaning as the central problem in the knowledge of words. There are, according to such teaching, no such things as words, if "word" be given the concrete sense of a thing of coherent identity, consistent existence; and, of course, even less so are there, then, meanings—meanings in the sense of what words that had

any enduring reality would possess. It is stated in the cited book that "each of us has his own word-hoard . . . and every word in that treasury is a little different from any word owned by anyone else, different in meaning, in pronunciation, and in the manner in which its owner uses it." Difference of pronunciation is a false lead: it does not affect the identity of a word where its identity is lodged in its meaning, as it can only sensibly be—a word being, essentially, a meaning-entity. Difference in the manner of use is another false lead: there is no difference in the manner of using a word that properly raises the question of difference of word-identity except a difference attending difference in meaning-conception. There is no serious consideration, in the quoted words, of the matter of word-identity; the argument challenges the integrity of meaning as a linguistic actuality.

Where the meanings of words are individually determined, people speaking their own private words rather than the words they possess in linguistic common, the emotionality involved in the use of the words is wholly self-centered. Using words so, people wield them as weapons, ply them as instruments by which to take advantage of others, or to stupefy them into passive acceptance of the uttered words as communicatively adequate though they are far from being that. This is not open linguistic anarchy, for those who use words so present themselves as speaking the common language, not a language of their own; one could reasonably describe them as speaking the common language badly, rather than as speaking a private language. There is, of course, a chronic disposition in people to make light of the responsibilities that language imposes. But this has assumed, in the contemporary era, a character of rebellion against language itself. And not only do people take a special pleasure in flouting language, and seeing it flouted: emotionally, they are flouting one another, in their linguistic rebelliousness, seeing vaguely personified in one another the authority of language they are defying. In the contemporary way with words, an aggressive temper predominates. People tend, rather than to address words to one another as words of the common language, to bombard one another with words, converting them into private communicative ammunition: they hold one another off, thus, to a distance at which the mutual responsibleness implicit in language becomes a remote, arbitrary, and, ultimately, antiquated conception. At its journalistic or literary liveliest, such bombardment can seem to be of high linguistic proficiency, but the intensity of the bombardment is always in inverse proportion to the concern with meaning. It cannot but do progressive injury to the linguistic sensibility of those who engage in it and those at whom it is directed; generally, it disrupts what remains of linguistic good custom.

The bombardment procedure of which we have been speaking takes many forms, manifests itself in many areas of current linguistic life. Much of it comes

in the guise of innovation, is aimed at attention-catching, and is designed to stun the reading or listening public into passive response—despite its seeming to be, in many instances, of bona fide literate quality. Verbal experimentation abounds in the varied fields of contemporary intellectual parlance (academic, "cultural"), being characterized by professional caprice rather than linguistic originality; and, as its products overflow onto the ground of ordinary parlance, it adds to the linguistic disorder of the time, rather than enlarging the range of articulateness. Group-cant flourishes in society at large in an unprecedented variety of kinds, breeding verbal novelties in an unprecedented quantity. People have become given to throwing themselves around verbally, enjoying in their doing so a false sense of linguistic liberation; and the sophisticates are in the lead in this.

The confusion wrought by all this verbal manoeuvring seems to establish the truth of the "fundamental principle" that language changes. Language may be said to be "changing" if the consequences of being extensively subjected to linguistically unprincipled handling are thought of as change. The present condition of language, let it be described in terms of change or otherwise, is all uncertainty. And its future prospects are obscured in the uncertainty of the entire human future: it dangles perilously ("miraculously," it might be said) from the worn thread of people's sense of the human point of their existence, which is one with the point of the existence of language.

It might seem that in the domain of literature there would persist some protective care for the intrinsic proprieties of language, and that effort would be exerted here to oppose the forces working away at the linguistic integrity of people. Where else, if not in this domain, would there be likely to survive awareness of the dependence of the meaning-functions of words on their linguistic relationship to one another—in the midst of the chaotic word-use practices of the time and the language-depreciating activities and influences of the new linguistic ideology? Literary and linguistic integrity of performance have long been bound in courtesies of partnership. Is there reason to think the partnership has been dissolved?

Literary commitment to linguistic integrity has never been complete, the cause being that, while linguistic integrity consists in adherence to a motive of truth, the motive of truth, in literary activity, is qualified by other motives. The divergence between linguistic integrity and literary integrity has widened as truth has come to be more and more loosely defined—with the very notion of truth seeming to approach dissolution; tension of effort to achieve proximity of alignment between literary motive and the truth-motive is more and more of a rarity in literary activity. People of the literary professions have reacted to the general obsolescence of the notion of truth with a ready will to liberalize their linguistic standards to new degrees of linguistic slackness—

which have become thus literarily legitimate. Even, there sprang up in the contemporary literary era a vigorous anti-linguistic literature, which is still active in many forms of survival, having as a professional objective the breaking-up and nullifying (often, even the mocking) of the meaning-congruities on which the rational use of words depends.

In one way or another, the linguistic lead provided by the literary practitioners of the contemporary era encourages inattention to the stabilities, the accuracies, the coherencies, in which the linguistic functionality of words inheres. Even where there has been no overt assault on linguistic values, there has been an implicit agreement with the new linguistic thesis as to the nature of meaning—which denies to words the intellectual respectability from which literature has drawn its dignity. Thus it was possible for T. S. Eliot, a littérateur who surely regarded himself as on the side of propriety and elegance in matters of language, to chide those who took it for granted that words have definite meanings for "overlooking the tendency of words to become indefinite emotions." We do not think it possible that in any other literary era a literary personage of the best credentials would have offered to the public anything as corrupt in linguistic principle, and as verbally crude in itself, as a statement to the effect that *words* tended to become (indefinite) *emotions*. Only in an atmosphere of far-advanced linguistic demoralization could such a statement be made with confidence as befitting one of literary prestige, and be accepted as literarily and linguistically worthy of consideration.

A looking-glass view of the decline in people of linguistic vigor is the idea that language itself is dying, having been outmoded by contemporary technological inventions as a medium of communication. The assumption is a product of a vulgar scientific-mindedness, yet it has had considerable snob-appeal in intellectual quarters. The literary-minded, especially, can experience a morbid thrill in thinking of language as being in its death-throes. Thus Mr. George Steiner, in *Language and Silence* (Atheneum, 1967), proclaims that the "syntheses of understanding which made common speech possible no longer work," and that extensive ranges of meaning can now be better served by non-verbal "languages." Such surrender to the circus-barking criers of linguistic doom comes too easily to be attributable to actual intellectual doubt of language's survival-capabilities, or actual experience of language's inadequateness to contemporary needs in the field of "meaning." The reason must be looked for in the private attitude of the person to his professional instrument. It cannot but be one of personal apathy towards language combined with a blasé confidence of sufficient mastery in it to allow of a broad dabbling with it in current intellectual sophistications, including those in which language itself becomes a subject of modern pluralistic dubiety.

Until a little historical while ago, the idea that a language is something

possessed in common by people was generally regarded as substantiated by self-evident fact. Now, it has the character of a worthy sentimental fiction. Language has been fast losing its reality for people, which depends on their sense of using *the same words,* in speaking the same language. Obviously, when words have lost definiteness of meaning for their users, and these are encouraged to think of them as the private verbal playthings of each, words have ceased to be words for people, and the word "word" itself to have a definite meaning: people's words are not words as words were words. As meanings have been increasingly seen as linguistically indefinite, and dependent in large degree on private interpretation, words have come to mean less and less to people. Language disintegrates for them into a phonetics made socially available for employment according to personal habit.

It could seem impossible that anything could stop the self-accelerating progress of people towards linguistic decrepitude and impotence. They are increasingly divided from one another in their use of words. They speak increasingly to suit themselves; communication is fast ceasing to be a cooperative performance, becoming, more and more, merely the sum of what is individually said. In and out of literature, the content of what is said grows flimsier; people have little that is of continuing, abiding common interest to say to one another because their linguistic genius is chained to themselves, does not enjoy the freedom of presence in the generous realm of the common language. And nothing can change this but a reversion by people, in their attitude to their language, to a sense of its reality as a language—with new desire to know it, to know it through its words, to know them well.

To know words well, one must know them unselfishly, as not one's own, but as the words of all. So known, words have, necessarily, definite meanings—each has a distinct, unvarying identity: they must be good enough, as words, to serve all, they must thoroughly mean what they mean. So known, words meet with that in people which is of the same make as themselves, the make called "human": people must bring this element of themselves, which is the touch of wholeness of being in them, to meet with words, to know them so. Thus it may be said that human fate is implicated in how the nature of meaning is interpreted, by what kind of meanings words are used.

CHAPTER 8

Language and Linguistics

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1.

The definition of words is expressive of, and is addressed to, the sense of intellectual responsibility. Concern with the meanings of words is the first in order of the requirements of the rational life; and dictionaries manifest the recognition of this. Yet dictionaries come late, in the general course of the rational life. And the rational poise needed to make dictionaries intellectually adequate could be thought to be hardly yet attainable; they have, so far, been less than that. Human rationality is in an unsettled state, still. The defects of dictionaries are in part a consequence of this, but they are also, in part, a cause of it; in so far as dictionaries fail to bring intellectual clarity into the knowledge of word-meanings (as they are traditionally designed, and relied on, to do), to that degree they leave human rationality to the mercy of its weaknesses.

The human intellectual condition has had new confusions added to the old by science's persistent, unabashed claim of superior rationality for its procedures. One could think, from the standards of rationality that now prevail, that science had won its case. Scientific rationalism is generally identified with perfectly disciplined rationality; its intellectual prestige is such that many of those who would like, if they dared, to fight this identification take refuge in a haughty defence of irrationality as a mode of mental functioning partaking of the nature of instinct and intuition, and mystically transcending the rational. What of the honorable place assigned to intuition in scientific thinking? Scientists themselves credit intuition with breaking through barriers that resist rational effort, solving the otherwise insoluble. Is not the achievement of some of science's most important discovery-steps by the magical-seeming intervention of intuition to be accounted for as the result of spontaneous rejection of the strain of adapting rational principles to the peculiarities of scientific think-

ing, in which even the subjects of generalization are special cases of perception? Is not the scientist's intuition-experience an involuntary seeking of the relief of a free, unrestricted perception-process?

If human beings had succeeded by now in fully comprehending the nature of rationality, they could not consider science the main fulfilment of it, as they now do. *Essentially, the nature of rationality is linguistic.* When human beings become intelligently conscious of this, as they eventually must, if they endure, dictionaries will be used with an intellectually livelier interest in the entire activity of definition—and the activity itself will be pursued with greater intellectual liveliness, in the lexicographical workshops. And science will cease to seem the way of intellectual salvation.

For a long time, now, lexicographic definition has been in a state of deterioration-in-standstill. The lexicographers have been perpetuating lexicography without improving it in any radical way, while progressively lowering their standards in the name of improvement. They find little more to do, now, than to follow the established patterns of definition (refurbishing the old definitions as the patterns allow), record new vocabularistic accretions and inventions, confer the status of good usage on forms of use to which it was previously denied (and on new-crop deviations from usage-norms)—and introduce new pronunciation-indications, and enlarge the provision of non-lexicographical matter with which dictionaries are already overloaded. Long in exclusive charge of matters of word-meaning, together with the philologists and other technical word-specialists, the lexicographers have gone about their business without attempting either to alter their procedures in any basic way, or justify them by pursuing them with new vigor to meet the criticisms that the new-style language-specialists make, from their scientific stance, of traditional ideas about language and words and the defining of them implicit in the procedures. However, that the lexicographers have not moved from the dead-end to which they have come cannot be attributed to purblind resistance to modern linguistics as a source of lexicographically useful ideas. From the results of anthropological research into primitive linguistic modes, offered as throwing light on civilized language-problems, through all the intricacies of the psychological, mathematical, and phonemical, laboring of scientific linguistics, no single sensible contribution to practical lexicography has issued. Nor could anything work to its improvement that did not begin in a fresh emphasis on the linguistic nature of human rationality, and a new attention to the rational aspect of word-meaning.

Scientific linguistics has provided only one example of lexicographical industry conforming to the principles of its criticism of traditional lexicography, traditional ideas of word-meaning and techniques of definition. *The General Basic English Dictionary* (1942), is described in its preface as using "only 850 words of Basic (which are naturally the key words for Dictionary purposes)

and the 50 international words which go with them," and giving "a knowledge of over 20,000 English words, covering at least 40,000 separate senses and special word-groups," and as enabling "anyone who has had some training in the structure of English, through Basic or any other system" to "make headway by himself with the English of Library, Radio, and Newspaper." It claimed consideration as something different in lexicography in that it offered itself as a general as well as a learner's dictionary; it invited special linguistic interest as a lexicographical experiment directed by C. K. Ogden, one of the authors of *The Meaning of Meaning,* in which the scientific treatment of language had been energetically propagandized. But it failed to take hold as a general lexicographical model because its "science" consisted of a drastic simplification of problems of definition, that put them at new removes from solutions: its scientific practicality merely reduced the complex ineptitudes of ordinary lexicography to simpler ineptitudes. Since this experiment, the new linguistics has avoided exhibiting its conceptions of meaning in the form of "straight" lexicography.[1]

Although respect for definition of the traditional lexicographical kind diminishes as the scientific type of rationality gains ascendancy over the linguistic, and respect for words themselves diminishes generally, a complacent disposition towards the dictionaries that are at hand is everywhere the rule. Not even the science-bred linguistic experts who decry the idea that words can be adequately defined suggest that dictionaries be dispensed with. Yet, while not making war on dictionaries, linguisticians have experimented in substitutes for linguistic definition, presenting these as rational counterweight to a presumed irrationality in language itself. Such counter-lexicographical activity can have a demoralizing effect on people who are sufficiently sensitive, linguistically, to be aware of the void that dictionary-meanings leave in the understanding of meanings: criticism of dictionary-definitions, appealing to their linguistic intelligence, can induce in them disbelief in the possibility of anything better, and a sceptical view of the intellectual integrity of meaning itself. The long-term propaganda of scientific linguistics, dwelling unremittingly on the notion that words have no distinct meaning-identity and are therefore incapable of being known with a precise knowledge, deepens the numbness to linguistic actualities with which people have become affected, from other causes. Few, surely, are those who *feel* that there exists a problem of definition.

Any attempt at extensive lexicographical reform of definition would be viewed with disfavor by those who conduct contemporary lexicography. But the strongest disapproval of such an attempt would come, undoubtedly, from the quarter of science-inspired linguistics, especially if the attempt was based upon a belief that a language is a rational structure—that the words of a language exhibit the structure of rationality. Science fosters the growth of an "opposition" to the linguistic methods of rationality, and to straight linguistic

dealing with language itself. As the total influence of science is to draw human beings away from preoccupation with their intrinsically human concerns (preoccupation which language supervises), so is its special influence in the field of linguistics to inculcate an externalistic view of the make-up of language: scientific linguistics does not take cognizance of the existence of anything intrinsically linguistic, even as science does not provide, in its modes of reckoning, for the existence of anything intrinsically human. As an intrinsic property of words, something internally resident in them, meaning cannot be measurable in the terms of science; and purely linguistic measures of meaning have no scientific validity. Scientific knowledge of words is an anomalous kind of knowledge of them, in which to know them is not to know them; it is presented as superior in rationality to knowledge of them on their own ground—as if it were *such* knowledge that was anomalous.

Of important interest in the story of scientific intrusion into affairs of language is, how there came to be set up, initially, under the auspices of science, a rationale of language that is in intellectual opposition to linguistic rationality. A very early manifestation of the essentially hostile modern scientific disposition towards language is to be found in the rebellious criticism made of philosophy by the philosophers who first felt the unsettling effects of the impact of science on philosophy: they quarreled with philosophy as perpetuating mistaken ideas about words and language, but their quarrel with it extended to language itself.

We have tried to avoid the rôle of historians of modern linguistics and also that of wagers of professional war against it. We are not partisans of a version of linguistic science of our own. Our concern is with the meanings of words, and with the problem of intensifying, ordering, enlarging, the knowledge of them. The scientific attitude to language that characterizes modern linguistics is only one of the many contributors to the total obstacle intervening between human beings and direct apprehension by them of what they have, in words, to know, and use. Most of the impediments to such apprehension antedate the development of science-biassed modern linguistics: the usage-approach to the determination of word-meaning, and of good linguistic standards generally is, as we have endeavored to show, a formidable deterrent to the development of a sensitive consciousness of words as components of language. But the promulgation of the scientific attitude to language from positions of intellectual authority has come to predominate over all the other impediments to direct, personal access to words, in obstructive force.

2.

The scientific attitude to language has two very prominent characteristics, the one a matter of internal, the other a matter of external, circumstance. It in-

duces a looking at mathematics as a fountainhead for ideas about language, and, also, as a potentially dependable source of methods for the practical study of language. Secondly: there attaches to this attitude a prestige, academic at its core but carrying influential force outside academic borders, distinguishing it as the enlightened, the intellectually correct, attitude.

Mathematicians themselves have felt a special connection to exist between their profession and the problems of language; some have concerned themselves actively with linguistic matters. *Number, The Language of Science* by Tobias Dantzig (Macmillan, Anchor, 1930, 1954), a work of large intelligence in its field, illustrates how thinking on mathematics and thinking on language can be joined in seeming naturalness in a categorically scientific intellectual atmosphere. The author touches on matters of language only in a general way, and only incidentally; there is no evidence of his feeling himself to be intruding into a subject outside his field of professional interest. His disposition towards language is more benevolent than the usual scientific disposition, but it is one of assumed authoritativeness, nevertheless; he passes judgement on things linguistic as if he felt himself to be peculiarly fitted by his professional mathematical training to do so. Commenting on the use of the letters of the alphabet in algebraic notation, he says that "without the literal notation any general statement would become a mere flow of verbiage, subject to all the ambiguities and misinterpretations of human speech." And, further: "the letter is free from the taboos which have attached to words from centuries of use." The letter is represented as having liberated algebra from "the slavery of the word." (Quotations are from 4th edition, Macmillan, 1954.) The premise implicit in the quoted remarks is that language has inherent intellectual weaknesses, promoting irrationality.

According to the author of this book, language has two distinct functions, a logical function, and another associated by him with intuition; it is in his evaluation of it in terms of these functions that his benevolent disposition towards it is manifested. While regarding language as being only to a certain extent "capable of precise statements," he describes it as to that extent "a rhetorical algebra *par excellence*." He does honor also to the non-logical function he distinguishes in it, that by which, as he sees it, a word has "a capacity to evoke an image" besides being what he calls "the symbol of a class." He rejects the severities of famed "symbolic logic" (associated with Bertrand Russell and other mathematicians) as a critical system designed to "banish intuition from the realm of human thought." In that system there was no benevolence towards language; but Tobias Dantzig, in defending intuition, in his book, does not do so *because* of a love of language. He is motivated by a desire to reconcile the logical discontinuities and deviosities of modern mathematics, and modern science generally, with a hoped-for achievement by science of more and more, rather than less and less, human relevance: the intellectual products of intensi-

fied scientific rationality must somehow be made to acquire a *human* appeal of reasonableness.

Intuition is the key! The book presents, at its close, a picture of modern science as having become liberal-minded to the point of making room in itself for a subjectivist element: "it has recognized that *man is the measure of all things, and that there is no other measure.*" Here is science become as science and language gathered into one and forming Superscience, science enriched with the latitudes of language, extensively and diversely capable of precise statements but sagaciously tolerating all the vague utterances and actions of intuitive sort of which man in his self-centeredness has need, to make peace between his intellect and his vanity.

If one crosses over from the professional mathematico-scientific side of the line to the professional linguistical side, one finds a difference in the professional axe that is ground, but considerable terminological and ideological resemblance. Thus, Ogden and Richards, in the book of theirs to which we have made reference, said, speaking generally of words: "terms are used as much for suasory and emotive effects as for their strictly symbolic value." The thinking on both sides of the line takes its inspiration, of course, from science, so that the resemblance is not remarkable. It is remarkable, however, that specialists in language should draw their inspiration from science, which is, basically, intellectually and emotionally alien to language—remarkable, too, that for a long time thinking on language has had no other inspiration, none, at any rate, so active, so potent.

Alfred Korzybski, a historically outstanding pioneer in the endeavor to domesticate language to science, crossed back and forth across the line dividing professional linguistics from professional science (his orientation in the latter being predominantly mathematical). He was a scientific idealist pressing for a complete scientific systematization of language; by the mere extent of his ambition for language, he was a most unconventional linguistician. He is looked upon by sophisticated linguisticians of the present as a lumbering antiquity, one whose touch was too clumsy for the ultimate niceties of scientific linguistics. His efforts towards founding a thoroughly scientific management of language were undeniably heavy-handed; but it is in his favor that he worked with a colossal sincerity on behalf of his objective—that of making language all-rational, by scientific standards of rationality. He set forth his doctrine in *Science and Sanity,* a lengthy work of elaborate systematicness in its outlining of a general programme of "non-Aristotelian systems" of intellectual procedure and evaluation, a revision of ideas of language, based on his anti-Aristotelian philosophy of science, having central emphasis and importance in it. (We have consulted the second edition of this work—published by The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Co., 1941.)

Korzybski's followers of later days shaved down his massive programme (which went by the name of General Semantics) to classroom proportions, fitting it stylishly into the general academic curriculum. Where he had planned a vast intellectual revolution in which the established linguistic principles would be entirely replaced by scientific principles, they confined their concern to the invention of tactics for evading the grip of linguistic fundamentalism—the intellectual fundamentalism in which they, along with Korzybski, saw language caught. The many who have drawn on Korzybski's vision of a new world-wide linguistic dispensation under the patronage of science are, by comparison, dilettanti, and compromisers. They have maintained a continual skirmish with the Enemy (language unredeemed by science), and trained their students, and urged their general audiences, to trust no word either in or out of sight; but they have not attempted any radical or large-scale change in actual linguistic procedure. No one after Korzybski, of any linguistical school, has envisaged so extensive a change-over in language from linguistic to scientific methodology as he did; indeed, he envisioned an era "scientific in all respects, not merely in a few exact sciences." Linguisticians have more and more shied away from attempting to resolve all the problems of language scientifically. For example, the branch of advanced linguistics called "structural" excludes from serious consideration all questions as to what is right, and what wrong, linguistically: language, by this doctrine, has no fixities on which to base standards of right and wrong, only endlessly variable peculiarities, for which linguistics must provide fixed formulas of characterization.

Korzybski approved of Ogden's and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning,* and of Ogden's separate activities as a linguistic psychologist; but neither this, nor whatever else had been that far done towards putting language under scientific controls, sufficed for him. Nor could he have approved of the activities of those who, as "semanticists," applied his notions to the realistic uses of an amorphous linguistical liberalism. As for the structuralist doctrine, it lies at an opposite extreme from Korzybski's idea of what science could do about language. Its adherents are distinguished in their own view from other types of linguisticians by a unique tough-mindedness in their attitude to language; they think of themselves as fulfilling with austere application the requirements of a science of linguistics, never before so fulfilled. Operating within a restricted field where others have sprawled out loosely in their commentaries, they have been able to use the scientific manner with successful persuasiveness.

The preoccupation of one school of structuralist linguisticians with language focused itself on the phonetic features and properties of words. These "structuralists" have turned up much to observe, discuss, pedagogically organize, within the exiguous limits of their science, which, dealing primarily with

verbal physicalities, either excludes matters of word-meaning from consideration, or, at best, displaces them from a position of frontal importance in the study of language. Their attitude to language matches contemporary infatuation with the material aspect of existence, and contemporary readiness to deal with problems of all sorts as resolvable by minute classification (a method that has yielded so much success in the investigation of physical phenomena). The dominant tendency in structural linguistics—in its various branches—has been towards simplification of the underlying nature of language, and a complex concern with matters of a technical order, in which superficial linguistic peculiarities are interpretatively endowed with huge, exaggerated significance.

3.

Korzybski seen in backward view from the later linguisticians—especially those committed to structuralist doctrines—stands out for his great groping effort to get all of language within scientific grasp. Between such effort and the structuralist effort to extract linguistic principle from the physical nature of words and patterns of usage-formalisms, language escapes essentially unknown, and generally uncomprehended and falsified. Korzybski deserves credit at least for not inflicting upon language the humiliations inflicted on it by those of the structuralist schools. In the very matter of structure he had something of far greater intellectual, and far greater human, importance in mind than they have had. He had meaning in mind. Structure in language inheres, in structuralist doctrines, in postulates based on deductions made from external features of the linguistic processes.

In *Linguistics and Your Language* by Robert A. Hall, Jr. one is informed in the early pages that "In Part II, we will try to get at least a summary idea of the facts about linguistic structure, about the way in which a language is built and 'what makes it tick,' as science has analysed it." Turning to Part II, "How Language is Built," one finds it consisting of three chapters: "Language Has System," "Language Has Sound," "Language Has Form." That "Language Has Meaning" comes into consideration in Part III—not as a subject comprised within the connotations of "structure." We find in the view of language presented in this book a conception of the nature of meaning as of little fixedness in language. (Korzybski offered as a basis for word-definition a principle of "non-identity"—that no word should be defined as if its meaning were a constant.) The author makes this conception the justification of his procedure. "Hence the linguistic scientist considers it better to study language first from the point of view of its *form* (sounds and combinations of sounds), and tries to avoid, as much as possible, basing his analysis on the shifting sands of meaning." (We have consulted the second, revised edition of this book, Anchor

Books, Doubleday & Co. (of 1960). It originally had the title "Leave Your Language Alone," which, we think, is aptly expressive of the policy of scientific linguistics, as concerned with language from the *outside*.)

The manner in which structure was related to meaning for Korzybski is illustrated in the following passage in *Science and Sanity*.

> Researches into the structure of language and the adjustment of this structure to the known structure of the world and ourselves, as given by science at each date, must lead to new languages, new doctrines, new institutions . . . we must study the structural characteristics of this world *first,* and, then only, build languages of similar structure, instead of ascribing to the world the primitive structure of our language.

The term "space-time" is an example of Korzybski's idea of the kind of improvement he thought could be made in the structure of language. Regarding the term as scientifically right, he welcomed it as a replacement of "time" and "space": "time" and "space" were for him by their meanings wrong words, words that imposed "a delusional verbal split" on language and made it accord thus with a primitively fictive world-structure.

The author of *Linguistics and Your Language* is not concerned with establishing correspondence between the meanings of words and scientifically satisfactory conceptions of the structure of the world. "Structure" for him is largely an ectomorphic synthesis of sound-patterns that language can be fitted into without reference to meaning, an invention for the pursuit of linguistics in scientific freedom from the internal properties of language, not the structure of language in any endomorphic sense—or the structure of the universe of matter, either. But all theorizing in terms of linguistic structure, of the modern era of linguistic analysis, is itself but a structure of concepts aggregated from categories of thought denying to language intellectual authority of its own.

> To define meaning completely and exactly, even that of the simplest linguistic form, we should have to have a complete knowledge of the structure of the universe, and also of everything going on inside the body and head of every speaker and every hearer. This is manifestly impossible. . . . Perhaps linguistic analysts will discover a way in which linguistic analysis can state meaning as precisely and concisely as they can do for form. . . .

We pass over the notion of language's being a mental reproduction of the physical universe, and one varying from mind to mind—hoping that the general characterization of language we make in this book is sufficient counterpoise to such thinking. We also pass over the presumption that the fate of the knowledge of word-meanings lies between "the analyst" and "the unreflecting speaker," as too self-evidently arrogant in its implication of an inherent capac-

ity in the "analyst," and its assumption of an inherent incapacity in the ordinary speaker, to warrant the pains of critical examination. We pause to contemplate the significance of the conception that something profitable can be learned about language by the study of words in separation from their meanings—with visionary allowance for the possibility that some day as neat, thorough and right a job will be done on meaning as that done in the structuralist manner on form. Those who operate under the reasoning of such a conception are not working in the field of language proper: they are merely studying externally observable aspects of linguistic actualities, a scientifically construed "behavior" of language.

The linguistic specialists of our time have been moving further and further away from the linguistic center of action from which words require to be used—and the nature of language requires to be felt and understood. This starting-point is located not in the verbal sound-apparatus or its acoustical world, or in a special area of the brain or the world of sensory experience as a whole, or in intellectual outposts set up for the detection of clues to the nature of language, at impersonal removes from it. A consciousness of language, to be trustworthy witness to its nature, must issue from a consciousness of it as of a realness exceeding the force of the physical and the potency of the intellectually arguable. Such consciousness is a most intimate work of the human mind—the word "mind" being allowed its spiritual full of meaning. The inspection of language should be performed as a spiritual duty on the ground of the mind's intelligence of what it owes language as the corroborator of *its* realness.

It is significant of there being a general weakness in practical linguistic sensibility, among the language-specialists of this time, that the term "structural," a key word in much of the doctrinal matter in intellectual circulation put out by them, itself displays the meaning-character attributed to all words in modern linguistics. This identification of purported and improved new trends of understanding of language has, as used by them, no fixed meaning—no linguistic identity. It is a jargon-word, a word of the class of words used more for their evocation of certain contexts of use with which they have become automatically associated than for their normal meaning-value. (All words, by the account of modern linguistics of the nature of words, are jargon-words: they are used for a rough utility of fixing attention, not for a linguistic service of meaning.) "Structural" makes associative reference to contexts extending from those of ultra-modernism in the linguistic field to contexts of general intellectual modernism, and has served, and still serves, as a flag round which holders of diverse positions on language and many other matters, or no definite position at all, may rally to establish themselves on the advanced intellectual side of things. Of the linguistic structuralists it may be said that they know language

as strangers to it, having made themselves strangers to it in the name of science: they are not veritable linguistic scholars. It is a rudimentarily necessary task for human beings to set themselves, the task of developing a concept of the structure of language. But, when concepts of linguistic structure are developed in which the key to a language's coherence as a language is sought in its functioning as a system of sounds or forms, and least of all as a system of meanings, there is a concept of structure without a *concept of language*.

In general, the reduction of the scope of language-study that has been effected in modern linguistics goes far beyond the ordinary human falling-off in the sense of linguistic responsibility. The rôle assigned to language by the linguisticians has itself been progressively diminished to that of a technical adjunct of social existence. The tendency of the later specialists in linguistics has been to let the gap between language and science widen to the point where language ceases to have for them its natural identity—their accounts of its nature declining rapidly in linguistic intelligibility, while gaining, from their own point of view, in scientific intelligibility. The degeneration of linguistic intelligence in the linguisticians deprives the ordinary users of words of authoritative stimulation to look to for the assurance of the rationality—the linguistic rationality—of their utterances. Further, the linguistical denial of the presence of an interior reality of meaning in words encourages philosophical denial of the presence of a rational sense, or "meaning," in human existence.[2]

With the narrowing of the subject of linguistics to an almost exclusive concern with external formalities, a new sort of anti-traditionalist linguistic propaganda succeeded the earlier, in which the attack was concentrated on attitudes to words viewed as psychologically immature, intellectually backward. An attack was made aimed at the entire traditional disposition towards language as governed by standards of linguistic right and wrong, those of the grammatical sort being aggrandized to bogey-size, and charged to the dogmaticness of grammarians (not to the actual nature of language, which they reflect). There is little room within the scope of contemporary linguistics for more to happen, although activity abounds in it. The abundance is a restive monotony. The language-knowledge associated with the activity is assembled in academic linguistical laboratories in the form of theory for investigative application to language; and nothing of new linguistic understanding accrues from it, only more theory accrues. Variant theories are launched in a field of diminishing returns of practical linguistic relevance ("practical" in the sense of contributory to the capability of using words well, wisely).

A linguistical philosophy that has acquired conspicuous academic prestige bears the brand-label "transformational." It is a development that very clearly reveals the futility of attempts to probe the processes of language within the confines of scientific investigation of them. The "transformational" position

rests upon a premise that allows for an innate endowment of linguistic ability in human beings, in polemical difference from the insistence of some of the structuralists on imitation as the originating factor in language. But it would be mistaken to assume that there is freedom here from scientific stricture, a humane sense of the nature of language. While not enslaved as are those of the categorically "structuralist" schools by notions of the importance of sound, and physical linguistic phenomena generally, or of the merely formalistic aspects of linguistic structure, those of the transformationalist school are otherwise enslaved, and their influence has been at least no less obstructive to the natural understanding of the matter of form and structure and the matter of meaning than has been that of other contemporary linguistical schools. They deal with grammar and syntax in terms of supposedly predictable sentence-patterns, following supposedly general human linguistic addictions. As must be the case where the theory is the intellectual object, there is no illuminating, here, of the rational impingement of words on one another that produces rational word-combinations, in phrase, the linked phrasing of sentences, linked sentences. Meaning is accounted for, with this school, in terms of a generalized, not terminologically hard-and-fast, below-the-surface sentence-level conception of linguistic principle, in which a basic substratum of sentence-meanings is assumed to lie. Where theory is the intellectual object, the place of honor cannot be assigned to *knowledge of the meanings of words,* which gives comprehension of the rational possibilities of the use of them—of how, in their linking, thought can move in orderly progress in the path of expression.

The transformationalists, in their divergences from the formalistically technical analysis-modes of structuralism, regard themselves as not mere specialists but as practical philosophers importantly concerned with the human mind itself. Yet it is part of the transformationalist position to philosophize that it may be beyond the limits of the human intelligence to understand how the human intelligence works. This is to walk in metaphysical slush, where the conventional structuralists walk, for instance, on phonemical asphalt. None of these language specialists walk on linguistic *terra firma.*

We pay more critical attention in this chapter to the general trend, in the attitudes to language, of the various analytical doctrines developed under the stimulation of the idea of a *science* of language than to the particularities of doctrine, and, in examining the later course of doctrinal developments, more to the particular theses and implications of "structuralism" than to those of the "transformational" account of the nature of language. We intend no minimizing of the prestige of the transformationalist school of linguistic thought in contemporary academic preoccupation with linguistical theory, or of its influence as a force of suasion in the general contemporary intellectual susceptibility to philosophic argument seeming reinforced by scientific technique and principle. We concede to the school of transformational linguistics, of which

Professor Noam Chomsky, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was the founding spirit, a lively success among the surviving forms of scientific modernism in linguistic theory. It, more than any other, while stocked in abundance with technical procedures of analysis and scientifically conventional modes of formulation (as, the algebraic), and, even, schematic patterns of *its* conception of "structure," and *its* interpretation of grammatical phenomena, rears its head up over the level of the *strictly* scientific treatment of language as a subject, and sets itself to surveying the scene of language as the scene of the human beings who speak it. The effect is of a generously liberal, humanly imaginative, type of scientific linguistics: its opinions, pronouncements, somewhat grandly unpretentious speculations, have made their way into the general intellectual views of the time. *This* kind of linguistics seems to possess a capability of shaking itself free of the curse of scientific objectivity that keeps the heads of the other kinds bent over language as a laboratory subject.

In a supplementary essay, "The New Grammar," we treat extensively of the revision of traditional conceptions of grammatical principle to which the later schools of scientific linguistics have dedicated themselves—of the "new grammar" of their devising for the reformation of education in language. We shall depict there the peculiar Chomskyan, transformationalist, conception of the grammatical element of language, and examine the endeavor Mr. Chomsky has made to humanize transformationalist linguistic theory for the broadening of its appeal to such quarters of non-scientific intellectualism as the literary. We shall add to what we have recorded here on the Chomsky attitude to language only a comment on its view of itself as philosophically—in a popular sense, culturally—superior to that of other schools of scientifically systematic linguistic thought, in its regarding the human mind as the key to the analytical understanding of its characteristic processes, the linguistic processes especially. As a scientific concept concerning the nature of language, and the nature of language [and] of the human mind as bound in deep interrelation, this is a romantic one, indeed: the mind, and the linguistic process, are elevated above interpretability according to the laws of and the procedures of science as concerned with the nature and the mechanism of physical actualities and processes. But the elevation does not, in intellectual fact, mount out of the range of the scientific scale of the evaluation of processes. It evades recognition of the peculiarly, the essentially, human character of the processes involved in the existence of language as a function of the human mind expressive of its intrinsic, its moral, independence of the mechanisms of physicality.

The romantically humanized, liberalized, theoretical system of language-interpretation that Noam Chomsky formed to supplant or supersede the forbiddingly, more austerely, "scientific," other linguistic-systems is found, on appraising inspection, to differ from the others in that it encases the language-

mind interrelation it posits in a scheme of mechanistical interpretation far more comprehensive than any other in its attribution of physical origins to the linguistic functions of human intelligence. The appearance of a romantic grandeur of view of the linguistic processes proves to derive from nothing other than a deeper-penetrating concept of language as a biological development than any entertained in the other seats of scientific language-analysis. Mr. Chomsky envisages, in his *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (M.I.T. Press, 1965), a background of evolutionary experience, for the "complex human achievement" of language, of "millions of years"—even of "principles of neural organization that may be even more deeply grounded in physical law. . . ." Transformationalist theory has undergone much modification and revision, and there has been considerable splitting of transformationalist doctrine into controversial sides. But the combination effected by Noam Chomsky of versatile procedures of technical analysis of things linguistic and generalities of principle stretching a fundamentally scientific view of language to the proportions of an intellectually dignified humanism has allowed this doctrine to have more the character of a cultural movement, in the intellectual life of the time, than that of a doctrine: it presents there a friendly intellectual face—such a one as is not easily readable in the doctrinal demeanor of other types of linguistics.

The transformationalist type of linguistics has had a special attraction for those of intellectual temperament, and interest or profession, whose habits of mind do not make them sympathetically responsive to scientific ideas on matters of language but who feel an obligation of intellectual conscience, as moderns, to pay respect to some form of contemporary scientific linguistic thinking. It is a form more flattering to the spiritual sensibilities than the thinking of the ritualistically scientific structuralist schools; the attraction might be compared to that which Jungian doctrine has had over psychoanalytical theories that held themselves in fealty to Freudian scientific lordship. Science, of course, holds no real choices for the mind or the soul or the tongue. In a field of choice of types of linguistics, the more rigidly systematic structuralists could win a qualified favoring over all present and past types for their vigorous expurgating of non-scientific palliatives from their scientifically severe doctrines, their sticking to linguistic externalities, not meddling with pseudo-linguistic internalities. (Readers will find the externalistic view of language peculiar to modern linguistics more closely examined in the supplementary essay devoted to the subject, p. 487.)

4.

In their attitude to traditional notions of linguistic right-and-wrong, the newer style linguisticians have softened the older anti-traditionalist view of

language, in which it is seen chained to a primitive or antiquated intellectuality, to a humanistic liberalism in which only the mildest of intelligence-tests are applied to language. They take satisfaction in seeing in the languages of large extent and human experience known as the civilized languages, and the little, ethnologically-islanded languages known as primitive, an equality in intellectual grade. All, in their view, have a fateful indeterminateness characteristic of language, the civilized ones being rated as, in their way, as primitive as the primitive ones, the primitive ones as, in their way, as civilized as the civilized ones. "Let us be objectively indulgent towards language, treat it with our best scientific bonhomie," they seem to say, "not bear down on it too hard intellectually—it offers, after all, a rich field for research in its quasi-physical, morphological aspects."

The question as to the tainting of languages with animistic notions held by their earliest speakers, or taken over from ancestor-languages from which they have derived (which was first raised in the burgeoning philosophic modernism of the last century) has not been entirely banished from the scene of contemporary linguistic considerations. It is, in truth, a haunting question. How much error and delusion is perpetuated, in the perpetuation in languages of vocabularistic, grammatical and syntactical make-up dating from times when many benighted notions passed as truths? This matter of the intellectual quality of languages of remote sources, and long continuance, is best dealt with as belonging to a comprehensive question concerning the extent to which the languages have or have not been functionally impaired—impaired in respect to their capability of being used with truth and logicality—by all the factually mistaken and irrational thinking in which their speakers of all times have engaged, in one way or another. But any answer to this over-all question based on scientific standards of intellectual competence will be, inevitably, worthless; scientific critical values are irrelevant to linguistic procedures.

Scientific criticism cannot make good linguistic criticism because science and language are orientated to different kinds of reality. Science is designed to interpret a reality that is an infinity of only partially definable particulars. Language bears witness to a reality that is an embracing totality, in which all is to be measured in terms of the whole. Scientific values are therefore themselves particularistic, and disjoined, while linguistic values are bound together in the principle of unity with which language is informed. Language's values are *in* language. This is why it has been able to survive the vicissitudes of varied employment to which it has been ceaselessly exposed: it has, because of how it is made, a fundamental self-dependence, though seeming utterly at the mercy of those who employ it.

Scientific criticism of language became so involved in linguistically useless speculation and analysis that, travelling the circle of confusion, it came round, unavoidably, as in "structural" linguistics, and co-ordinate developments, to a

relaxation of its quarrel with language as characterized by primitive and generally benighted mental addictions. In the ideological hodge-podge of contemporary linguistics, neutralism in regard to questions of right and wrong, good and bad, in matters of language, stands out as its most active ingredient. This neutralism issues from a moral indifference to the organic rectitudes of the constitution of language that set the patterns of functional rectitude for the use of words; it is, largely, for the general, literate word-using public of the time and the lexicographical and pedagogical modernists in language-interest, the essence of sophisticated linguistic common sense. It is the special contribution of linguistic science to the collective dogma of science, which affirms the necessity of flexibility in standards of truth and logicality.

We quote from a passage in *The Study of Language: A Survey of Linguistics and Related Disciplines in America* by John B. Carroll, a main propounder of structural linguistics, that shows the workings of neutralist attitudes in modern linguistic thinking. (The book is of the date 1953—Harvard U. Press.)

> Although language provides a mould in which statements are made by a speaker, it does not necessarily have any bearing on the truth of these statements, nor on the logical "correctness" of the speaker's thought processes. One world-view is as good as another, for all we know . . . different world-views . . . *can* be expressed in the same language. . . . English permits us to speak about the varying ways in which Hopi, Noetka, and other linguistic systems describe experience.

Language, according to this pronouncement, is not subject, functionally, to any requirements of, and is exempt from tests of, truth and logicality, even where—or, perhaps the case is, especially where—a matter so serious as that of a view of the nature of the world is concerned. The passage illustrates not only neutralist indifference to the rational quality and the content-character of linguistic formulations, but the wayward logic of which a linguistician is capable in his own linguistic formulations. To reason that there is a connection between the collective tenability of certain varying views held by the speakers of certain languages and the capability of those views of being commented on in the terms of still another language is comparable to holding that the individual conviction of one nation of superiority over all others and the competing convictions of two other self-proud nations are equally valid, all three, if they can be described, all together, in the language of a fourth nation. By the same rule, the fact that two different accounts of an occurrence could be presented in the same language would entitle both to intellectual tolerance though one was false; such a rule, bestowing equal status on discorrespondent descriptions of things cast in the words of a single language can, indeed, neutralize the lie out of existence.[3]

There is also to be found in *The Study of Language* a statement of attitude to word-meaning that expresses not only structuralist opinion but the opinion of meaning characteristic of modern linguistics as a whole. The statement describes the strict language-scientist as "stoutly" rejecting "any suggestion that words be identified by reference to the concepts they are said to represent—the word is not necessarily a counterpart of a single concept, as so many non-linguists seem to feel." ("Non-linguists" are here those professionally occupied with matters of language who do not follow a scientific line.) Further, the language-scientist, according to this language-scientist, should not be concerned "except in a rather indirect way" with the content of communication—concern with which necessarily involves a direct fixing of attention on word-meaning: for if he became concerned with it, "he would in effect be concerned with the totality of human knowledge." No one is conceived of by the author (John B. Carroll) as being concerned, in the scientific dispensation, with meaning, either—not, at least, in other than a rather indirect way.

A treatment of knowledge in the whole as something to be indefinitely deferred, or at any rate not given main stress, cannot but have interlocked with it a like attitude towards concern of an active and extensive kind with matters of meaning. There can be no effective organization of the intellectual faculties for comprehensive knowledge-operations without resolute concern with meaning—what, how, words mean. The meanings of words are the elementary forms of human knowledge; and the processes by which knowledge can be diversely acquired and coherently collected conform necessarily to the processes of language by which the meanings of words interact, and make sense. In its very playing down of concern with meaning, modern linguistics diminishes the possibility of concern with knowledge of a large-scale order.

Bringing into view again the span stretching from the earlier linguistics of the contemporary era, with Korzybski still memorable as a main prop of that, forward to the later linguisticians of the period, we mark for comparison Korzybski's consciousness of words as things that mean, in his crusading for a scientific take-over of language, and the indifference to meaning of the later ones. In his envisagement of scientifically better meanings, and scientifically better terms ("space-time," for instance, "semantic reaction" in place of "emotion" or "thought," and "concept" altogether eliminated), he maintained a moral concept of the nature of language, though a distorted one: he credited language with a goodness proper to it—seen as damaged but restorable through resort to science. At the other end of the span, language is in a country where it can only exist in a state of total denaturement. The feel of this place, the communication-world created by the later linguisticians, can be experienced from the description given by John B. Carroll (in *The Study of Language*) of the rôle of an executive functionary in it to whom he assigns the name "commu-

nications generalist"—the intellectual auspices are specialistically "structuralist," but the critical mood, and the jargon, are in the general spirit of latter-day linguistics.

The description referred to above is of a scientifically constructed Utopia, a world in which extensive social implementation is made of the findings of the scientists in their researches in language, and in other modes of human functioning it has become scientifically fashionable to describe as "languages."

> He would acquire a thorough knowledge of living structures, examine the matrix of behavior in which these structures exist, attempt to adduce . . . an integrated account of communicative behavior . . . giving attention not only to codes found in natural languages, but also to codes and communication systems which derive from languages . . . or which are several states removed from language, for example, signal systems, graphics, mathematical symbolisms. . . .

Language, here, is one among many elements of a vast pattern of "communication behavior." Perhaps there is secreted in this grand plan a provision for Korzybski's being ultimately gathered unto his own—as a "communications generalist." Earlier in the work from which we have been quoting he is picked up with gingerly justice from the linguistical discard-heap:

> Korzybski's *General Semantics* contains several attitudes and viewpoints which may have a place in linguistic theory, at least a place in a general theory of communication.

Persons assuming the responsibilities of communications generalist would not, it is evident, have any real authority over the language-scientists or any other body of scientific specialists, but be empowered merely to process and synthesize the data yielded by the various investigation-fields.

The language-scientist's vision of a well-functioning communication-world that we have presented can be reasonably accepted as a forecast of the fate of communication, and of human life itself, under all-scientific management. The subjects of knowledge, and the very content of human life, would become atomized into fractions having no attributable significance. The content of communication would become less and less cohesive: general sense would disappear. Phenomena of communication would become less and less worth investigating, and those of human life, also. Scientific interest would be more and more fixed upon the intellectual machineries of science. Intellectual activity would approach the scientific ideal of complete objectivity, and human life would culminate in the observation of observation; and human life would become an exemplifying, in vital repetition, of continuously perfected vital statistics.

The notions of Claude Lévi-Strauss, in which extensive application is made of linguistic structuralism, suggest just such an intellectually totalitarian vision of the future. His philosophic argument, fuelled with the axioms of structural linguistics (and an allied science that may be called structuralist anthropology), flared up bonfire-like on the contemporary intellectual scene. Here is the artistically fatuous, sociologically priggish, intellectually barbaric conception of "communication" as a comprehensive social process comprising music, art, literature, ritual, myth, cooking, and, among other things, speech (the essential *verbal* "language," in structuralist ideology), all these components of communication, so-called, being considered languages in which society "explicates" itself. ("Explicates" is a favored word—worked to the jargon-point—of advanced scientific, linguistic, philosophic speculation.) Here, too, is the conception of the human as a dim-minded, uncomprehending being-phenomenon that obeys "a code"—a code that no one has yet succeeded in breaking. In the Lévi-Strauss view of things, human formulations of the Sense-Of-It-All, from the self-protective primitive ideas of primitive folk to the experimental civilized ideas of the civilized, have the character of an involuntary interpretative behavior, external to the mystic, interior rationale of the Universe, the Non-Meaning that is, equally, Meaning. Scientific determinations as to this Something-Nothing are, by these assumptions, the closest approach to truth possible.

The code-obeyers of Lévi-Strauss' philosophic story have no onerous demands on either faith or intelligence to fear. Their prophet hardly expects them to be aware of his revelations. "I don't believe in God," he has averred, "but I don't believe in man, either." What code is *he* obeying? one might ask. One might also wonder whether Lacan (see note 2 to Chapter 8) and Lévi-Strauss do not refer to the same ulterior ineluctable rule of Non-entity over entity; for in all reductions of words to naught a universal unity of zero must surely inhere.

CHAPTER 9

Philosophy and Language

1.

We have so far treated of philosophy, in this book, in incidental references only. Our reason for dwelling on the subject to the extent of an entire chapter is a double one. First, we feel a need of concerning ourselves with philosophy as a component of the intellectual environment in which language exists. Being an activity of speculation engaged [in] in the interest of knowledge, philosophy both mirrors the intellectual countenance of a time and puts voice to it. Contemporary philosophy should, therefore, hold some useful clues to the lot of language in the contemporary intellectual life; it should reveal what care the collective mind of the time actually has for language. Secondly, behind this connection between contemporary philosophy and the contemporary status of language lies, historically, an intimate affiliation of philosophy with language. Originally and traditionally, philosophy valued language as professionally important to itself. A consideration of the long-term philosophic attitude to language affords a long-term view of the status of language in a sizeable area of human intellectual life.

Language can be seen to have suffered a great decline in prestige of intellectual importance in the long course of philosophy's patronage of it. Since language concentrates in itself, in the meaning-substance of words, the perennial dignities of the human intellectual nature, its loss of intellectual prestige on philosophical ground must be construed as indicating that there has occurred there a pervasive intellectual deterioration. An understanding of how and why it came about that this affiliation did not have a happy issue can, we think, advance readers in perception of what is required intellectually for effective concern with the meanings of words. In treating of philosophy and language according to the indications we have given, we shall not be claiming

a position of authority in the field of philosophical scholarship: we should not be viewed as venturing into that field. The setting of the story of philosophy is, in our telling of it here, the general human world, in which philosophy and language—all forms and modes of intellectual life, indeed—have their life.

One might, in attempting to form a long-term historical view of professional treatments of language and of the matter of word-meaning, put all recent professional attention to linguistic subjects into the category "philosophical," it being in great measure speculative; and one might then conclude that linguistic investigation had once again passed into the hands of philosophers, after having been the special pursuit of the lexicographical and philological researchers. The old philosophers, the earliest ones and the later and later, occupied themselves very seriously with questions of word-meaning, and the modern-linguistics specialists discourse on language with a liveliness and volubility unmatched by the word-book specialists and the conventional language-scholars. All contemporary linguisticians are at least part-time philosophers, and most contemporary philosophers put their fingers in the linguistical pie (some going in up to their elbows).

The story of philosophy and language becomes a very complicated one if one takes into account the peculiar intellectual temper of modern philosophy. With science at the center of the contemporary intellectual stage, philosophy has accepted, perforce, a secondary rôle, that of a supporting character, or withdrawn to an off-stage position and concerned itself, in quasi-literary eccentricity, with subjects more psychological than philosophical. However varied the forms that contemporary philosophy takes, they have all had large quantities—and some the totality—of the traditional subject matter of philosophy excised from them, and are, in one way or another, very much closer in spirit to science than to philosophy—as philosophy *was*. The name "philosopher" is attended by the aura of traditional philosophy, and it is to be presumed that in the teaching of philosophy some intellectual continuity is represented as existing between past and present philosophical developments; and among some philosophers, particularly those of the academic world, there seems to be enough philosophic *esprit de corps* to keep the cliché about philosophy's being a series of footnotes to Plato in circulation. But all philosophy of this time that is intellectually indigenous to the time is, in fact, orientated not to philosophy of the past, but to science. It is, consequently, impossible to judge of philosophy's part in the contemporary learned preoccupation with language without reference to the part science now has in philosophic thinking as a whole. Philosophy and language are both expected to conform to the new rule for all the humanities: they must be, besides themselves, "scientific," or congenially disposed towards science, regardless of whether they can be that and be at the same time themselves.

It is native to the character of philosophy to be concerned with general propositions and determinations. Language itself is a vast process of generalization in which the particulars of experience undergo critical proportioning—language is all evaluation. For philosophy, language is like stock-in-trade; though philosophers are, at their linguistic best, only dealers in language, living by it professionally rather than spiritually, their intellectual behavior is conditioned by its nature. In a practical sense, it can be said that there is a natural sympathy in philosophy with language. This sympathy begins to atrophy as philosophy begins to revise itself to meet scientific standards of intellectual sophistication. Since science is concerned with particularistic formulations, and with adaptations and combinations of these designed to remain, themselves, essentially particularistic, the attempted hybridization of philosophic and scientific intellectual standards results eventually in extensive confusion in the thought-habits of philosophers, and deprives their linguistic practice of its traditional professional distinction.

Philosophers of the new genre try to make philosophy absorb scientific terminology or, alternatively, they imitate the vocabularistic techniques of science. Their indulgence in particularistic verbalism obstructs resort to the generalistic discipline of language, which has been for philosophers the safeguard of intellectual self-possession. More violence has been done to the linguistic congruities in the philosophy of the contemporary era (in modern "modern philosophy") than has been done in the philosophy of any preceding era—and more than in any other quarter of contemporary intellectual activity where pretension is made to sanity of thought and coherence of utterance. Besides a continual intermingling of terminological verbal specialties of scientific sort with the words of the general language, there is maintained in contemporary philosophical parlance, a continual conversion of words of the general language into special philosophical terms. Philosophy has in the past helped itself freely to ordinary words for use as special philosophical terms, but it has done this with precision and restraint—with a controlled eccentricity. In the new-genre philosophy's raids on the ordinary language, the amount of appropriation of words for special philosophic use is abnormally large, and the adaptation of them to this use is capricious, unruly, words being slanted out of their normal meaning-direction without linguistic decisiveness, with little assumption of an intellectual responsibility of redefinition. Linguistic poise is dissipated, words are used with less sense of meaning-stability, and less appreciation of the rational reliability of language as a whole, than they are in ordinary, casual, floundering, slack-thoughted use: all is tentativeness and flux where, by historical expectation, the "best" thinking, the intellectually-soundest speaking, could be looked for. This condition of philosophy would be more noticeable if all linguistic practice did not now suffer to some degree of the same degradation.

Science is not the base-cause of the widespread decline of linguistic integrity. But there is everywhere evidence that scientific thought-habits have a disintegrative effect on the natural coherences of the human mind wherever they acquire status as intellectual law. Their influence is present in high concentration in the philosophy of the new order. The late Hans Reichenbach, an aggressive apologist of this philosophy, demonstrated, in one of his stressed dicta, the extent to which scientific thinking can overturn intellectual verities. "Generalization is the origin of science," it is declared in his *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (University of California Press, 1951): the older philosophy, it is charged there, used "pseudo-explanation," or, imagining rather than generalizing. This attribution to science of a primary function of generalization is spoken out of a dogma of delusion in which the purposes of science are identified with the purposes of philosophy. Scientists have ordained themselves philosophers on the mere ground of a widening of scientific interest; philosophers, feeling themselves in danger of extinction in a world in which the intellectual ideal of good thinking is collapsing into a pluralistic tumble, have looked to science for new philosophic inspiration and justification. The confusion attains its maximum of both absurdity and formidable presumption in the fallacy that the position of science is alone a true philosophic position.

The philosophers of the past can be assumed to have made errors, and some large ones, in their attempted determinations of the general sense of things, but they must be credited with having tried to perform a whole intellectual task; their objectives were more on the side of true generalization than are the trimmed-down objectives of modernized, science-attuned philosophy, which draws freely on the particularistic data of science for the content of its intellectual experience. The spacious reach of effort of the older philosophers was pinned at its center to a concern with meaning: the rectitudes of language mattered to them professionally. In contemporary philosophic activity, the sphere of human understanding has tended to shrink to the knowledge-field of the scientifically observable. Truth ceases, accordingly, for philosophy, to require the linguistic organization of awareness gathered in broad intellectual experience of the humanly experienceable: it relates, in the new philosophic conception of it, only to the "explanation" of authenticated particulars. The new realm of philosophic thought needs no room, and provides none, for a large-scale exercise of linguistic conscience.

Originally, philosophy's respect for language was of one piece with a concern with truth. In scientifically revised philosophy, language is a separate department of interest: words, there, are what they are for science—the husks round meanings, more real than the meanings. And the old philosophic concern with truth is replaced with a concern with what one might be justified in calling, because of its self-contradictory character, "reliable conjecture." This is but token-truth, scientific "prediction" pumped up into a lenient philo-

sophic concept. The disassociation of language from the concept of truth makes contemporary interest in language a much more "abstract" one than that of older time: the prominence, in contemporary philosophizing on language, of mathematics as a source of ideas for the formulation of principles of meaning, structure, logic, demonstrates this leaning to abstraction. Linguistic principles arrived at through direct attention to the general functional characteristics of words as language can be put to practical use in language as principles of truth. In their insensitivity to this language-truth relationship, the new philosophers know both language and truth mainly in the abstract.

The new linguistic theories that have been developed either co-ordinately or integrally with developments in modern philosophic thinking have had a soothing effect on the feeling of "insecurity"—to borrow from the terminology of the psychological confessional—experienced by people in the exercise of their linguistic faculties. People had come to feel themselves at a loss for knowledge of what they were doing, in using words, while coming to feel themselves at a loss, also, for knowledge of what they were doing in existing. If they had interpreted the new feelings as signs of there being something amiss with themselves, they could have had the alternative, to doing nothing, of setting about to learn anew the nature of language—and study anew the sense of existence. But they found only the course of doing nothing, and contemporary philosophy, through linguistics, and of itself, presented them with a way of doing it in easy conscience, comfortably. The philosophic temper of contemporary linguistics is such that it shifts the responsibility for people's unsureness with words from themselves to language, as contemporary philosophy itself shifts the responsibility for people's dubieties about existence from themselves to existence. This contemporary ideology of doubt is so comprehensive in its scepticism that it seems not just a refuge from emotional despair but a healthily practical, vigorously efficient, policy-basis for all intellectual activity; and the background of scientific knowledge out of which its propositions emerge can persuasively suggest that it is the ultimate in civilized intellectual definiteness and security.

The prevailing philosophic tendency, in both its general professional and popular forms, and in the special linguistic versions of it, is to regard the human state as a state of plight. It is a defensive position. The treatment of language made from this position is a defence against difficulties seen as created by language. The original, and traditional, philosophical position with regard to language is a position towards it as a main source of knowledge-equipment for intellectual coping with main problems of human existence. Much of traditional philosophy belongs on the intellectual discard-heap; and it would be difficult to sort out its virtues from its defects. But in so far as it made the knowledge of words the key to intellectual potency in facing the problems of

human existence, which it did to a substantial extent, it transcends its defects, and reduces the need of counting its virtues. Contemporary philosophy contains no such counterpoise to its defects. Though present-day historical appreciation of philosophy can be justly a much-qualified one, room should be left in it for paying credit to philosophy as having, in making the knowledge of words a cardinal philosophical duty, given language special recognition as the muniment of human rationality. In no other institutionalized activity of the human intelligence was this done so pointedly, or so early.

2.

In philosophy were made the first orderly efforts to establish what words mean—to define them; and they were made, as all such efforts require, properly, to be made, in direct relation to an intellectual concern with truth. Philosophers, in their concern with truth, left large tracts of territory of thought unexplored, converting them thus into an official *terra incognita*. But in the areas of thought in which they travelled they were acutely conscious of the importance of word-meaning to the matter of truth. They had an industrious curiosity about what words meant—some words, at least. Their intellectual labors could be said to be concerned in large part with problems of definition: they labored, as philosophers, with an awareness that much of the issue of their thought depended on what could be determined, distinctly, as to the meanings of the words centrally involved in it. The definitions the philosophers made of their terms were the rational fulcra of their arguments; informally, fragmentarily, without general method or plan, they were pioneer lexicographers. Or, it can be said of them more comprehensively, they initiated a process that ought to be integrally part of the functioning of every speaker of a language in the use of its words: they tried to use words exactly by the character, and exactly to the limit, of their meanings, acting as instructors to themselves on the meaning-properties of words.

The linguistic procedure of the philosophers was faulty in its very nature because their vigilance in regard to words was a selective one. It is the natural linguistic disposition of the intellectual conscience to take care in construing the meanings of all words. The philosophers made an artificial distinction between philosophic words and ordinary words—which has perpetuated itself in a general tendency of people to give some words of their language a more important, a more serious, status as words than others. Philosophic concern with language, being vocabularistically limited and resulting therefore in special emphasis on certain words, created a distorted impression of the shape of a language; and philosophic thought has correspondingly distorted the shape of reality itself. But in exerting conscientious effort to be linguistically right in

the use of their chosen words of special importance, philosophers gave recognition to the principle that there is a linguistic right and wrong. And recognition of this principle is the beginning of linguistic wisdom.

Though different in method, lexicographical definition and philosophical definition are of the same kind up to the point where, in philosophy, doctrine takes over from definition. There is no necessary essential difference, for instance, at the outset, between a lexicographical defining of the word "beauty" and a philosophical stating of what beauty is: in both cases the interest is in the subject of a word, and the purpose is to distinguish the subject precisely, as the subject of the word proposed, and no other. But philosophers wanted to do more than to distinguish precisely the subjects of the words they tried to define: they wanted to speak truth in areas of thought in which the words had acquired conspicuous and dominant rôles. Philosophic definitions have in them an inner drive moving towards enlargement upon meanings of words in relation to the matters they involve intellectually. The preoccupation with ideas comes to predominate over the preoccupation with meaning, and definition becomes less and less definition, more and more expository argument. Yet, notwithstanding this element of tendentiousness in philosophic definitions, there was for long more scrupling over word-meanings on philosophic ground than on any other ground in the speaking world.

It may be useful to look to see, at this point, what can be simply deduced as to the relation between the meanings of words and the philosophic ideas that are centered in them. The meanings of words are bound up with ideas; ideas are bound up with the meanings of words. The philosophic mistake was to treat ideas—ideas in the sense of complex mental constructions—as occupying a separate category of intellectual existence from that in which the meanings of words had their abode, with the meanings of words having the character of miniatures fashioned in the image of ideas: words were, for philosophy, though of considerable professional importance, of a less *real* order than ideas. This seems to inhere in the very nature of philosophy. Philosophy was ever split between its concern with truth and its ambition of intellectual effectiveness and prestige; and this caused it to magnify what is *thought,* as existing on a different plane from that on which what is *said* exists, one loftier than it. Obviously, what is said can hardly be inferior to what is thought if what is said is a true saying of it. But the philosophic sense of professional distinction requires the stressing of the idea, or the formulated concept developed from it, as the intellectual finality, something over and above words. The defect is a fatal one. It has brought philosophy to the ebb-extreme where no function is left to it but that of developing ideas in a shadow area existing complementarily to science, by its grace.

To stay a little with the subject of the relation between the meanings of words and ideas: they come very close together in the mind, and much of the ground they occupy is common ground. Meanings and ideas are like in so many ways that their resemblance makes it difficult to comprehend the nature of meaning, which has an intellectual purity uniquely characteristic of it, impossible to ideas, which have some non-intellectual content mingled with the intellectual and are therefore, though more familiar, "interesting," of a weaker intellectual nature. Meanings might be described as ideas, but the ideas thus identified with them would have to be described as ideas purified of all non-intellectual content. Ideas lie behind words and in front of them. Preliminary to language are ideas, perhaps better called notions, that are primal considerations constituting the background-intelligence out of which language issues. Then, there are ideas in the expanded sense of "idea," the ideas that steam up from words, mental narratives composed of many elements of consciousness besides the intellectual. Words, relating these idea-narratives, can, if rightly used, reveal them for what they are: they are composite formations in which the rational, emotional, imaginative, and other kinds of consciousness-processes are experimentally united. In philosophy, an attempt was made to deal with the meanings, ideas, with essential language-values, and intellectual fundamentals, and the supreme matter of truth itself, all in a spirit of disciplined impersonality. The attempt was marred from its beginnings by the very faults—the inevitable self-interestedness—of professionalism. But who—unless it be the adherents of scientifically revised philosophy, who feel forced by the intellectual trends of the time to offer an anti-philosophical commitment to science as a new, safe basis of professional philosophical authority—would want to visit scorn on the attempt?

(We should not be understood, in what we have said above on ideas, as subscribing to one or another of the conceptions that have been advanced by philosophers as to "innate ideas," or as approving the conception "innate ideas" itself, or as favoring any particular school of argument concerning the development of human intelligence, in relation to language. Generally, we venture into consideration of the mental procedures that may be conceived of as antedating and precipitating word-forms without sense of any necessity of scholarly courtesy-paying to progenitors or proponents of special theoretical thinking on those questions, such as Locke, or Chomsky, for a contemporary example. We follow a course of describing the circumstances of language as we find them directly readable in language. We do not go behind language's back with physiological or anthropological, or some other sort of technique of, "objective" analysis. We look at, and into, language, and report what we see. We make neither fact nor theory of what we imagine. We endeavor to

point the attention of readers to the actuality of language, which they are equipped to know at first-, at speaking-, hand, for their looking at and into it, with us, and judging of what we present, from our position of intimacy with it, from their own.)

3.

Aristotle has been a conspicuous object of hostile criticism in scientific-minded neo-philosophy. Korzybski singled him out in his linguistics-preoccupied philosophy as the prime culprit in language's failing to keep abreast of scientific development—a condition, for Korzybski, of linguistic progress. Aristotle had defects of intellectual rigidity and verbal dogmaticness; he substituted for the broad, direct philosophic view of problems of the intellect a narrow, oblique approach, that was concerned more with systemization than with truth, and more with terminological convenience than with meaning. But it is unjust to philosophy in general to use Aristotle as evidence against it, for he was more scientist than philosopher. His elaborate systematical machinery for dealing with problems of the intellect bespeaks a deficiency in natural intellectual inventiveness, such as characterizes the true-blue philosopher. The standardizing of Aristotle's philosophical formulations attracted to philosophy many minds of small philosophical talent, so that philosophy and the production of philosophical conceits and clichés became confounded with each other. But this did not close the philosophic ranks to minds having a naturally vigorous philosophic capability; there have been many who have functioned with genuine philosophic professionalism, and there has not been another Aristotle.

One can resent the dismissal by the new-order philosophers of the old-order philosophers as incompetent thinkers, poeticizers, childish-minded picturers, without being a partisan of traditional philosophy or an intellectual reactionary. Plato's concept of "ideas" verges too closely towards vision of a spiritually real universe, one permeated with an active principle of self-consistency, rational in quality, to be scoffed at as "imagination," as it has been by the new-order philosophers. Nothing can have intellectual durability that does not involve an attempt to see the universe as a rational unity; the universe invites minds to do this, and language is sensitive to the invitation. Platonic thinking is vastly incomplete; but, by the survival-evidence, it has a longer "half-life," a slower rate of disappearance, than any relic of scientifically revised philosophy is likely to have.

In the new philosophy's criticism of the old, two charges commonly made are that—the first—the old philosophers naïvely accepted unscientific modes of thought that were perpetuated in language, and that—the second—they

stayed fixed in an immature belief in the intellectual finality of Euclidean and other antique mathematical concepts. It can be said, as to the latter charge, that the difference between the old and the new philosophy, with regard to mathematics, lies in the fact that in the new philosophical dispensation mathematical concepts are of main importance, as shapers of philosophical concepts, while in the old philosophical dispensation, though they might supplement, decorate, stimulate philosophic thought, they did not shape it. The new-fashioned close relationship between mathematics and philosophy is an abnormal one: the direction in which mathematical thought has been developing (which is towards the replacement of reason and judgement with patterns of analysis and synthesis experimentally extracted from the detail of physical phenomenality) is opposite to the natural direction of philosophic thought, so that philosophy must invert itself to "advance" with mathematics. The linguistic criticism levelled by the new philosophy at the old itself springs from a distorted linguistic sense of things—which we take to be at least in part a consequence of a deferring by the new philosophy to the ascendancy of latter-day mathematical concepts as focal points for general intellectual orientations. (The supplementary essay "Mathematics As an Intellectual Master-Method" enlarges on this theme.)

Characteristic of the linguistic behavior of the new, science-dominated philosophy is the endowing of new scientific formulas interpretative of particular physical phenomena with comprehensive validity and significance: the formula acquires, thus, the status of a linguistic definition. The entire technical operation that a formula represents is subject, in this intellectual environment, to treatment as an aspect of reality—and as such as a basis of truth. For example, a mathematics-derived, empirical view of space becomes the ground for attributing an empirical character to space. Empirical concepts of space are substituted for the mental distinction for the making of which the word "space" exists—for the very meaning of the word. In engaging in this sort of terminological revolution, the philosophers who have given their allegiance to science must feel that they are justifying themselves to it—and feel at the same time that they are giving the world a modern version of philosophic integrity. What they are doing is, by implication, to equate scientific accuracy with linguistic rightness, and science's pursuit of empirical knowledge with the philosophic concern with truth.

The change of the object of philosophic concern has been so radical that the new philosophy cannot be credited with having a concern with truth. The new conception of the philosophic function reduces it to one of explaining existence by means of the knowledge-apparatus of science—which amounts to the weaving of metaphysical fairy-stories round the findings of science. A concern with truth involves an initial apprehension of the presence in exis-

tence of a principle of unity, through the natural intuitive testimony of human consciousness and the bringing to bear on this of the linguistic coherences, the rational apparatus with which human consciousness self-honoringly provides itself. To speak only of methods of the understanding of existence, without going into the question of philosophical failure or success in this: we are stressing here the virtue of philosophy in its having resorted so much to *the linguistic method* of human understanding, and stressing this because scientific methodology, together with general contemporary trifling with the credit of human consciousness with itself, has so much heaped discredit upon the linguistic method.

Much of the new philosophy stands in relation to human intellectual history somewhat as Marxian doctrine stands in relation to human social history: its historical analysis of what has gone before, intellectually, excludes from serious consideration, and respect, everything not centrally concerned with the understanding of the world of physical phenomena, even as Marxian analysis of what has gone before, socially, excludes from serious consideration, and respect, everything not encompassable within economic terms of description. The appearance that both these kinds of doctrine can have of forceful intellectual simplicity and superior rationality is illusory: both kinds of doctrine, resting each on an empirically delimited knowledge-base, are intellectually crabbed. They are both, also, crude, even potentially barbaric, on their spiritual side, because of their writing-off of so much of the inheritance from the human past—the one, of the intellectual, the other of the moral, inheritance.

4.

In what has happened to philosophy in consequence of science's outstripping it in intellectual prestige and authority, matters of language are intricately involved—as we have been endeavoring to show. Precincts of philosophical speculation once sacred, intellectually, are now, in very large part, abandoned real estate, and the traditional subjects of philosophic concern have been made intellectual outcasts; and, in so far as philosophy identified its domain with that of language, violences done to the nature of philosophy have had linguistic consequences inside and outside of philosophy. In ideal intention, though only partially in its actual procedures, philosophy made language's field of preoccupation, which is with the primary problems of human understanding, its own. In its revised state, philosophy became as indifferent to the fate of language (as a human possession, not a scientific property) as to that of philosophy (as philosophic, not scientific, philosophy). Where before it had assumed, as one of its functions, responsibility for corroborating the meaning-integrity of

many words, it came to tolerate, and even to give its professional approval to, scientific tampering with the meanings of words in numerous important instances.

We have cited the case of "space" as an example of how a word is taken over by science and adapted to science's special purposes, and how such an adaptation acquires an appearance of linguistic dignity through philosophic acceptance of it. Close beside this example stands the case of "time." The new "time" substitutes for a concept indispensable to reason such a formularistic pattern of suppositions as that there exists a causal process that constitutes the world and that the flow of time is identical with this. Thus, not only "time," but "cause" and "world" along with it, are torn from their linguistic lodgements. Such experimentation in word-use possibilities on the basis of the association of words with new scientific concepts sets intellectual fashions; the meaning-pinnings of many words become loosened in the minds of people, and language diminishes for them in reliability as the mental law-giver at a rapid rate.

Philosophy's inert abetting of scientific word-manipulation, in contravention of its traditional respect for the rationality of language's meaning-ordinances, forwards intellectual opportunism and contributes to the extension of linguistic lawlessness over a large area of the intellectual life of the present. A new philosophic arbitrariness confers on formulas devised for the scientific description of physical phenomena the status of reasonable, intellectually useful characterizations of the actual nature of things. The limitations of scientific observation are, thus, philosophically translated into limitations inhering in the world of things, and beings. The idea of equivalent descriptions, arising from the scientific possibility of different kinds of measurement, is philosophically inflated to signify that truth itself is a variable. Scientific uncertainty as to the totality of the factors involved in a natural process under scientific observation becomes transformed into a character of uncertainty in natural processes themselves. A condition of indeterminacy in which scientific understanding is arrested becomes transformed into an intrinsic quality of existence; scientific dubiety is equated with the very substance of the universe, which becomes philosophically suspect as being possibly of a dubious nature.

All the contemporary shortcuts in human understanding that have the status of philosophy belong in some way to the scientific explanation-complex, rather than to philosophy *per se*. Human beings have lost so much confidence in the validity of what they think, as human—of all they might think they know about their existence, in their humanness—that it is problematical whether they could be capable, as they are, of producing veritably philosophic conceptions (of being veritably philosophic "thinkers"!). The scientific explanation-complex seems the all-round intellectual solution, to those

who are trying to throw off the heavier responsibilities of reason, for problems of comprehensive evaluation and the linguistic problems that are bound up with them. The new scheme of knowledge and understanding is but a spider-web, intellectually tenuous, fragile, impermanent, made in the pattern of physical actuality; but it is an ingenious work of mathematical engineering, strung out from a tight center in philosophical-like ramifications, which draw language within the web's compass, so that the spun expanse can serve as a pattern of reality entire in epitome. Contemporary philosophy has an attractive appearance of being both intellectually efficient and spiritually revolutionary. The revolutionariness is, however, only that of retreat from final responsibility in thought and word; and the efficiency does not satisfy the sense of intellectual responsibility.

The only structural law that this scheme, this web of modern philosophic intellectualism, has to hold it together is the curious logic derived from mathematics on the premise that it, rather than language, is the intellectual seat of logic. The capability that the scheme has of serving for the re-education of the world hangs, thus, upon over-thin threads of logicality, which become thin to invisibility in the web's extensions. It would take no more than the challenge of minds moved by the logical forces of nature to disrupt the illusion that there are humanly important lessons about existence to learn from the ideological web that science has spun, with the help of philosophy (and of linguistics, as having now the identity of the one, now that of the other).

The contemporary prestige of mathematics, and the direct affiliation with it of many philosophers of the contemporary modern era, induce people who have little acquaintance with it in its higher forms, though an intimate familiarity with language, to treat the linking of mathematics and language as a well-enough to be left alone: the majority of those who do not participate in the linking, but are aware of it as one of the intellectual practices of the time, easily put the subject on the shelf of neutral feeling. There are serious reasons why the linking of mathematics and language should not be neutrally viewed. Among these is a consideration especially pertinent to the themes of this chapter, concerning the philosophical view of human nature that inheres in the mathematical view of language. If language, in which human nature is reflected, is subsidiary in logical potency to mathematics, in which material nature is reflected, then all previous calculations as to the extent of human potentialities in thought and word, and, therefore, in the very quality of being, must be very substantially reduced. An allied consideration concerns the attitude of the science-orientated authorities who constitute the contemporary philosophical faculty to the human generality. A reduced opinion of human nature, combined with infection with the fascination of power that science generates, intensifies the new philosophic skirting of the fundamental prob-

lems of thought, and forwards philosophic preoccupation with theories on the management of the human generality; in such theories, the functions of language are related to the control of thought, rather than to the expansion and perfecting of it in expanded and perfected expression.

Philosophy, then (with linguistics in support), becomes the means by which the intellectual despotism of science is endowed with the appearance of benevolent intellectual government, that arranges everything for the human generality—what people are to know, think, speak, what is sense and what is not; in actual effect, language is taken out of people's mouths, thinking out of their minds. The spirit of all this intellectual overlordship has no kinship with that of the government by philosophers envisaged in *The Republic*. The Socratic ideal was a community of virtue. The most conspicuous characteristic in contemporary philosophic "planning" is the zest for intellectual power.

If there is conspiracy in this latest state of human intellectual affairs, it is nothing so crude as conspiracy among intellectual authorities. People in general have been abetting the intellectual spirit of the time; they have approved in tacit voluntariness the new sophistication, in which advance in the civilized human condition is identified with skilful circumventing of the internal necessity driving human beings towards final maturity. Under the new dominion, human development is urged along in all directions except where the most difficult trials of the human intelligence lie: which is to encourage the intelligence to stop in inconclusiveness. Language is reinterpreted in a way that weakens it as an agency of intellectual stimulation. Philosophy no longer provides moral stimulation to the concern with truth. Standards of intellectual proficiency and linguistic probity are loosened rather than raised, as if they had been set, stupidly, too high in the past.

The intellectually official wisdom-of-the-time consists of eclectical handouts from the philosophical pot, a mess of science and the arts commingled, the main matter coming straight out of science, the arts supplying the trimmings and seasonings and the sauce. This wisdom-issue is defective in its coverage of human problems, edging out the great spiritual ones with a multiplicity of lesser ones of aggrandized importance (belonging to the psychological and sociological curriculum of problems). It is, further, since it is formed in an intellectual atmosphere in which linguistic sensibilities are little consulted, linguistic principles little invoked, defective in the intellectual merits that linguistic discipline confers; its verbal modes, tending towards formalization rather than towards articulate intensification of thought, constrict expression while fostering dogma—though the contemporary philosophical mentors are by pretension libertarian, antagonistic to everything chargeable, rightly or wrongly, with dogmatism. In all the utterances proffered under the banner of contemporary philosophical progressiveness, there is a shortage in

human, in intellectual, and in linguistic, worth that is incompatible with the name "philosophy." However, to judge the worth of the utterances, people need to have their linguistic sensibilities in good order—what is made up of words must be judged as words. And those sensibilities have been long in disorder, everywhere.

The general fact of the disintegration of philosophical intellectualism, marked by the special fact of the disintegration of the old philosophical concern with truth, and of the allied concern with language, dims in importance when seen beside the fact of declining human regard for the linguistic possession, and the linguistic faculties themselves. For, by natural propriety, the true operational center of the concern with truth is language, not philosophy; and, by the same rule, language—not philosophy—is also the true operational center of the concern of human beings with all the questions arising from the sense of human identity. As compared with language, philosophy is an additive component of human life, having an ultimate separate fate of its own, while the fate of language is altogether inseparable from the fate of human life itself. When philosophy takes linguistic principle into account, in constructing its intellectual principles, it is a safer source of wisdom-governance than when it does not. But the need for philosophy is a qualified one. The sounder the general linguistic education is, the greater will be the independent human capability of wisdom.

5.

What are these principles of language to which we so insistently refer? We have already indicated that they are in a practical sense the principles of meaning, and that as such they comprise, as a body comprises a spinal system, the principles of logic. But is it possible to abstract from language principles of general intellectual implication—by which we mean, the principles of rational thought? This we shall try to do, here, now, in order to make as plain as possible, before leaving the matter of philosophy-and-language, how philosophy, both present and past, appropriates as the special ground of a profession what is common ground—the ground, the sufficient ground, of intellectual principles that language of its own nature is.

We offer, as an informal abstract of linguistic principle, the following five generalizations.

1. Thought must begin in distinctness: all its subjects must be—without regard to any rating of importance—distinct from one another in being entertained in thought; otherwise, the thought-substance, and the thought-action itself, are doomed to be instantly dissipated. "Thought-

action" and "thought-substance" are, actually, one; this can be demonstrated in terms of word-meaning. The meaning of a word is both an act of thought and a subject of thought, the former in its character as a form of a thought-process, the latter in its character as a possibility of distinct thought-action provided for in the linguistic aggregation of possible distinct thought-actions: in the identification of a word as one of a linguistic totality of intellectually conjoinable words, its meaning is a subject of thought, while in the use of a word in intellectual combination with other words its meaning is an act of thought. Words are necessarily integral with, are the necessary characteristic of, thought that begins in distinctness; in beginning in words, thought begins in distinctness.

2. Between the distinct acts of thought into which words enable thought to form, there must be a consistency of intellectual circumstance. Language exacts inter-referential relationship between acts of thought brought into conjunction in the form of words: the linguistic circumstance is a collecting-out or selection of intellectually compatible thought-subjects from the linguistic word-totality, words performing on one another, in the constructing of the circumstance, an operation of association and dissociation, co-operating with one another in word-inclusion and word-exclusion. Every occasion of sustained congruous word-combination (every linguistic circumstance) is a collection of meanings bringing them into intellectual impingement on one another while preserving their distinctness. (We count all words—words of full logical, as differentiated from mere terminological, function—as equal in their status as components of a linguistic circumstance. Linguisticians, now, commonly segregate such words as "articles," conjunctions, relative pronouns, prepositions, into special categories, as functionally different from others. We consider such words to be forms of thought-action of first-class linguistic realness, and to be in their meanings as much part of the logical collecting-out of distinct subjects of thought as any other words of logical effect in their use.)
3. The rational instinct has force, in thought, as the linguistic impetus, and this manifests itself first in the process of distinction we have described, and then, almost simultaneously, in the process of collecting-out, selecting for collection. Our third generalization has to do with what we have called the "circumstance" of collecting-out. Since the linguistic impetus is reason working in thought, the linguistic circumstance of thought is a moving one, does not rest at a set amount of distinction-and-collection; it cannot terminate in suspension, but must continue freely, till reason is satisfied and makes a stop. There are no predeter-

mined limits to the linguistic circumstance, there are no necessary stopping-points in language. Indeed, ideally, all linguistic circumstances should lead towards junction with one another—constituting one humanly comprehensive and self-consistent linguistic circumstance.

4. The rational character of linguistically functioning thought manifests itself most plainly in the causal pattern assumed by words as they carry along the action of the thought. Words, in their continuous assemblage in the moving linguistic circumstance, express the why of their being together as part of the process of expressing their meanings; they justify their presence (their use) to their user, to their hearer, reader, to one another—the linguistic circumstance is at every point self-critical. The force of reason directing the course of an expression-process makes words mean their meanings for the joint expressiveness of all the words involved in the process. In the pattern of expression the words assume, they occur as causes of one another's presence in it. A linguistic circumstance is always (properly, by the linguistic force moving it) its own explanation.
5. The crowning principle of language is unity. Words exemplify this principle in their unity as components of a language: they are distinct from one another in meaning, but do not exist separately from one another—they imply one another. They also exemplify the principle in their readiness for not only combining with but uniting with one another. Every word is formed, in meaning, not only to have rational connection with others occurring with it in a linguistic circumstance, but to unite with them into a single activity of meaning: the words of a linguistic circumstance can make continuously, as they go, what is called "sense," so that understanding does not have to be deferred to the conclusion of the circumstance, is not a retrospective experience. The unity-character of words is, thus, of a double kind, inhering, first, in what they are, and, second, in how they function.

The words of a language possess a unity-character because they belong together to an intellectually all-inclusive framework of meaning: that is what the language—what a language—is. To constitute such a framework is the intrinsic purpose of words, to be such a framework is the intrinsic purpose of a language. Every language takes in the entire possible intellectual range of human consciousness, embraces the whole possible experience-expanse of human thought. What is thought in different languages has markedly different intellectual traits, defects, virtues, and one language may be viewed from the vantage of another or others as inhibitive of spiritually mature or rationally efficient or generally versatile intellectual performance; but the human potential of intellectual performance is drawn—by the very nature of human con-

sciousness—as large in one language as in another: there could not be a language where that potential was fixed at a ring of limitations barring human consciousness from experience of which it is innately capable. The differences between languages lie, essentially, in the distinctions their component words make (as acts of thought), or are (as subjects of thought). The distinctions of one can be much out of match with the distinctions of another, but the fields of consciousness, the intellectual frameworks within which the distinctions are made, do match—are identical as expressions of the universal scope of human intelligence. Were this not so, human minds could not move at fair ease, as they do, across language-barriers; the intellectual site, in all languages, the total possible intellectual reach of utterance, is the same.

When philosophy is considered in relation to the last of the principles of language we have described, the principle of unity as a basis of thought that is traditionally observed in philosophy can be seen to be an erratic version of the straight linguistic principle of unity. In thought that follows, simply, the method of language, the intelligence acts in tutored consciousness of the unity of all the distinguishable subjects of intellectual experience: while beginning in words, and thus in distinctness, it anticipates unity even because it begins in words—the principle of unity is already in the words. By the values of philosophy, unity is an imposed condition of thought: philosophic thought begins in ideas rather than in words, the rational discipline of language being applied to it to the extent the ideas allow of. In philosophy, that is, compromises are made, for the sake of *idea,* between the qualities of distinction in thought and those of the generalizing capability (the qualities of intellectual universality)—between which language itself requires no compromise, harmony between which language assures. The most ambitious of intellectual pursuits has thus, characteristically, been wanting in perfect distinctness of thought and in comprehensive coherentness: in all philosophic utterance there is an irreducible tentativeness, the consequence of the adaptation of linguistic principles to the precedence given in philosophic thought to the idea over the word. Compromise between the qualities of distinction and those of unity has pervaded all human intellectual practice; it is, loosely (variably, accidentally, without plan) the common thinking-speaking mode. The thinking-speaking modes of philosophy and literary and other professionalized forms of intellectual performance have diverged from the common mode with design to improve on it. But in none has the improvement broken through the bounds of compromise; the differences have been in refinements effected, by calculation, within these limits.

To speak of philosophy alone: it has perpetuated and ingrained in general intellectual habitude the tendency to avoid the strain between the purpose of

maintaining distinctness in thought and that of maintaining unity in it (a tension for which language provides solutions not involving compromise) by treating the tendency as a natural intellectual condition, capable of being overcome to serious degrees only in philosophically monitored intellectual activity. The high standard philosophy has set of the valid in words is qualified by an assumption, implicit in the philosophic notion of truth, that the perfectly valid in words is attainable only in restricted contexts of expression, guarded senses: its linguistic ideal is cautiously scaled to its intellectual avoidance of an all-governing ideal of truth.

In principle, language admits of no compromise: nothing in *it* countenances vagueness adulterating distinctness of thought, or confusion adulterating unity of thought. The distinctness of meaning possessed by every word of a language reinforces and is reinforced by the unity of meaning of which its words are capable in their whole variable potential of joined use. This potential is the linguistic counterpart of the full human potential of organized conscious presence to the world of intellectual experience: the one is the linguistic possibility of truth, the other is the human capability of it. Yet, if so much is available to human beings through language, why are they not intellectually better-functioning beings than they are? They have in language an adequate defence against the confusion of mind to which they are exposed by the play of the caprices of individual physiology and, generally, by the play of external physical influences, on their consciousness. They cling, however, to a liberty of confusion as if this were a sacred human right, though in exercising it they are subverting their language-assured intellectual virtue and competence.

The breakdown of the traditional philosophical discipline of ideas is one of the causes of the rampant disorder of contemporary intellectual life, in which the production of ideas in indiscriminate profusion passes for intellectual health and vitality; and another cause, related to this one, is the popularity of theories that interpret language's rôle in the career of the human mind as of less than absolute importance—the range descending to the view of it as near-superfluous. Contemporary nurturing of ideas in deliberately cultivated chaoses of consciousness has gone too far for intellectual rehabilitation to be achieved through any new discipline of philosophic principle, even if a new birth of philosophic principle were possible. The full resort of human beings to language as their minds' mainstay is now over-due, the last mark on the scale of mental danger having been reached: human beings need a warranty of their human identity that language alone can provide them with. Philosophy provided them with a sense of human identity that succeeded in being no more than an intellectual luxury. The substitutes for philosophy now using its name can do no better than devise wisdom-systems that are laws unto themselves, in which the natural human dedication to unity (to a sane coherence of consciousness sympathetic with the universal, real integrity of the world of

intellectual experience) is simulated in verbal acrobatics performed in intellectual-and-human vacuities.

So much authoritarian stress has been laid on things *said,* and so much reverential attention paid to the *dicta* of persons regarded as specialists in wisdom, that people are not prepared for seeing their language—its words being thoroughly known to them—as the sufficient common means of wisdom. If one considers concentratedly the second aspect of the unity-character of words, which relates to how they function, one cannot long view it as of merely technical significance: one sees the personal contribution to it of the users of words, how, in the achievement of an immediate effect of unity in the immediate linguistic circumstance, there is dependence of the words on them as well as dependence of them on the words. The relationship between human beings and language comprises the entire problem of intelligent existence—one might say that the relationship itself is of the nature of wisdom. In the relationship, language has an inherent intellectual sufficiency, matches in meaning-scope the scope of the human intellectual experience; and the individual human consciousness brings to the relationship aptitudes for the intricately varied distinction that a language anticipates in the meaning-diversity of its words. The collectability of words into utterances matches with the movement of rational thought in unities of intellectual circumstance. The fitness of the being to the language and of the language to the being in a particular linguistic circumstance, and in particular successions of linguistic circumstances, is of one mind with the mutual fitness of language and human beings in the comprehensive linguistic circumstance that the interpretation of existence by human beings as an intellectually experienceable unity constitutes. Such is the sufficiency of language to human beings, of human beings to language, such this mutual fitness, that every professionalized activity specializing in the interpretation of existence is actually interposing itself between human beings and language, hindering rather than furthering closeness of relationship between them and it.

Emphasis on language, on the principles of language, on the final principle, that of unity, as affirming the sufficiency and the fitness of the relationship between human beings and language, is emphasis on human beings over intellectual professionalism of every category. Human beings have all, at the insistence of their human nature, distinct thinking to do, true words to speak, intellectual action of widest meaning-sweep to perform. The responsibilities of wisdom are lodged in each, and language exists for the fulfilment of them, by virtue of the general human capability of fulfilling them—language being no more and no less than the explicit spelling-out of the capability.

Conclusion to Part 3

One word expresses what the standard of successful engagement in the linguistic process is in a practical linguistic sense, as distinguished from what it is in such broad terms of description as those of sufficiency, fitness, unity, truth: the word is "logic." Yet the concept of "logic," which has basis in niceties of intellectual functioning that are common features of the linguistic process, has played the part in intellectual tradition of a bogeyman frightening off the generality of speakers of languages from the assumption that rational excellence and the good use of words (which language prescribes—teaches—with itself) are intellectually one. The idea that logic is an abstruse department of intellectual activity, a field of higher studies and higher discipline of thought, beyond the normal range of rationality, has continually set back human intellectual development on both sides of the false line dividing the operations of language into higher and lower regions of reasoning.

The word "logic" evokes so sharp a consciousness of reason that it suggests a kind of reason that is functionally distinct from reason as familiarly identified. The word is one of philosophical sponsoring, and does indeed treat of reasoning as a procedure analytically separable from linguistic procedure—as an intellectual process categorically distinct from linguistic procedure. Even as the word *logos* has the meanings speaking and reasoning joined in it, so is there no natural splitting of these activities into separately viewable functions. The only way in which reasoning can be considered in any degree of separation from speaking is in the pre-speaking condition of the languaged mind, in which it is continually engaged in maintaining its knowledge of the meanings of words in instant readiness—in knowing them, reknowing them, stabilizing the knowledge, enlarging it, perfecting it. Definitional alertness to word-meaning, foreknowledge of the possibilities of distinct thought in speaking, is, that is, a characteristic condition of the languaged mind—the mind being alive with word-meanings whether the person of the mind is speaking or not; and the

exercise of this alertness is an operation that the word "logic" fits more truly than it does the philosophic operation named by the word.

Philosophers were justified in distinguishing, with the word "logic," a special form of reasoning in so far as they confined the distinction to the working knowledge of words (the critical appreciation of language). In this sense, logic is a recognition of the unity of language—and of languaged minds; it singles out the *rational attitude* to which words, with their rationally differentiated meanings, address themselves, and on account of which they exist.

To the extent to which logic, in philosophic considerations, is not made an exclusive philosophic concern but is centered in the study of meaning, of meanings, the ordering and perfecting of the knowledge of meanings that is the rational responsibility of all users of words, it has no necessary status as a professional specialty. The philosophic concern with truth stimulates preoccupation with meanings. But the concern with truth is not a professional philosophical property; it is the intellectual expression of the individual consciousness as that of a rational being—one's acceptance of all that has reality for one, including oneself, as of one reality. The point of departure is where the philosophic tendency to treat ideas rather than words as the beginning and end of wisdom affects the interest in, and the perception of, meanings, and the logic hardens into a system for checking idea-structures for verbal absurdity and rational implausibility. The use of logic became increasingly restricted to a making of philosophic ideas proof against professional philosophic criticism; it developed into an instrument external to language instead of maintaining identity with the rational system that the principles of language themselves form. And, so, logic moved further and further away from preoccupation with meaning. Eventually, there was left only a fascination with the verbal, not motivated by either straight linguistic or professional philosophic interest, but justifying itself as scientifically motivated: such is the logic of "linguistics."

Philosophic logic did not, in the long run, improve philosophy in its contributions to general human understanding; it did not gather the principles of being, of understanding itself, into an expressible living unity, but was an instrument in the competition of philosophers. It wandered from the problem of the knowledge of meanings. Philosophers followed their personal bents of mind, but under philosophical discipline, and the discipline was professionally orientated, and related only indirectly to general human intellectual needs. Gratitude is owed to philosophers for their having tried to establish intellectual customs, and for having advertised the concept of truth. But they have now so belabored language and themselves to make their experimental speculations come out "true" that they have accustomed the world to intellectual and linguistic complexity—to necessities of difficult patience where questions of truth are concerned. Philosophers have been of more use to philosophers in

the practice of philosophy than to people in general: what have those of the generality gained through the activities of the professional philosophers in understanding of themselves and of the reality they encounter in and through themselves?

The proficiency of philosophers in their complex intellectual and linguistic procedures is not equatable with enlargements and refinements in the general human intelligence—it is of a professionally limited practicality. Philosophy has considerably confused the general human intelligence in raising intellectual ambitions without providing a critically adequate background of linguistic principle. Even traditional philosophy is, thus, to a large extent responsible for the great intellectual disorder in which contemporary human beings (no particular group or body of them excepted) think and speak. The first cultivator of intellectual discipline, it confined it within limits that were never relaxed; indeed, they could not be, because it itself was a precinct marked off from the common ground of human confusion. For long, education reached across the fence, to pluck from it. Then, education grew more and more independent of philosophy; and at the same time philosophy itself began to lose vigor; and at the same time shallow-rooted substitutes for it sprouted indiscriminately on scientific ground, educational ground itself, literary and quasi-religious ground. People are exposed to and affected by the substitutes as they never were with the genuine philosophical output—which provides to them no protection from the suasions of these. In great degree, then, people are victims of the fate of philosophy. Separation from involvement in it lies within their own linguistic potential—the common human linguistic potential, in which is secreted the common human intellectual potential.

Religion bears comparison with philosophy as experimenting *in what can be said,* comformably with its special canons of truth. While philosophy, in its experimenting, has emphasized the rational in its canons of truth, and religion preoccupied itself with the spiritual integrity of the speaker of the pronouncements proffered for acceptance as true, or questions of the spiritual validity of the sources of inspiration, there has been much background attention paid in religious formulations to criteria of rationality: religion has sought to acquire philosophical depth, recognizing that, in order to hold its own on intellectual, scholarly, levels, it needed to give a rationally creditable account of itself. Intellectually and linguistically, philosophy and religion are far-removed from each other in their aims, philosophy concerning itself with the complex possibilities of expression that might qualify as truth, religion with the possibilities of reducing truth, ultimately, to utter, absolute, simplicities of expression. Both of these modes of approaching the problem of truth suffer of the limitations of professionally motivated concern with truth: the value of ideas exceeds the value of words in the one, the value of beliefs exceeds the value of

words in the other. Where truth is without reservation the object of concern, no other value has priority of importance over the value of words.

In any experimenting, under a general dedication to truth, in the possibilities of expression—whether simple or complex—words must matter extremely much, individually. For everything having linguistic form is brought to proof in the individual word, in each individual word of its make-up. It can seem that the best conditions for the most successful—successful in the sense of comprehensively truthful—use of words exist, if not in philosophy, or religion, in, then, poetry. In no other special activity the characteristic expression form of which is linguistic is so much importance attached to the individual word: *every* word is the subject of most studious choice for rightness. The poetic area of word-use might therefore seem to be one in which the sense of linguistic responsibility could have the highest degree of fulfilment. But word-choice in poetry is—has to be, by the prescribed, the born, nature of poetry—in very large part governed by considerations having nothing to do with linguistic rightness, which have no relation to the logical proprieties of meaning on which linguistic rightness depends. So much of the great care taken in poetic word-choice is taken in the interest of inducing gratifying emotional states (by attention to the impressions producible by word-sounds, and the peculiarly sensuous associations words can carry and be made to carry, and to the physical effects achievable through rhythmic manipulation of them in utterance-sequence) that wholly pure, entirely right, linguistically, actions of word-choice cannot be performed in poetry. What element of linguistic rightness of word there may be in it (in any employment of the poetic expression-mode) is impossible to identify precisely: strategies in the field of emotional influence intermingle themselves inseparably with efforts of linguistic responsibility.

Poets are helpless, in being poets, as to the degree of truth attainable in their poetic use of words; with the most serious, the truth-object is at the mercy of the professional requirement that the words have a physically attractive delivery and emotionally forceful impact. The only safe, unprejudiced ground for developing maximum attention to the individual word and to all words individually in their use—and thus to the meeting without qualification of the conditions that the object of truth imposes—is the open ground of general human speaking.

PART FOUR

The Principles of Definition

Foreword to Part 4

We now come into the area of our book in which definition is dealt with as the beginning of the solution of the crucially troublous state into which human beings have fallen as languaged beings. But definition itself is in a crucially troublous state. In conventional definition, the objective of affording definite knowledge of the meanings of words has given way to an objective of approving as much looseness in the construing of meaning, and in the practice of word-choice, as seems consistent with the treatment of language as an intelligent process and, therefore, a not disorderly one, basically—and, thus, with the continuing pursuit of lexicography as an intellectually serious function. The rational ground that contemporary lexicographers claim for their operations grows more and more constricted. They present a more and more disorderly picture of language. They are laboring in a lost cause if what they show *is* language!

In the new anti-traditional profession of linguistics, definition has come under severe assault; pseudo-logical sciences of meaning that reduce the human realities of word-meaning to subjectivist dust have confirmed lexicography in the low estate to which it has fallen by its own weaknesses and deficiencies. A reinvigorated lexicography is the only morally promising alternative to the present linguistic course of things, which is in the grip of an academic linguistic professionalism deadly to the natural linguistic sensibilities—putting in place of *words,* which are all one needs to know, to know what language is, jargons of analysis that, purporting to explain language, can do nothing but say themselves, exhibit themselves.[1]

Dictionaries have never taken their consulters to the core of questions of propriety in the use of words: they have never set linguistic propriety before them in its truth-governed aspect of *logical* propriety. Canons of usage—the canons of the established context, contexts—are presented in them as the working canons of language. Dictionaries, while ministering to the ever-

enlarging modern appetite for verbal sophistication, have contributed immensely to the decline of regard for the meanings of words as the essential canons of language. The view that word-meaning is largely a matter of contextual implication, which modern linguistics encourages, was engendered in the general atmosphere of conventional lexicographical thinking and practice. But the failure of dictionaries to be of more than trivial use to human beings in their linguistic difficulties does not result from any constitutional peculiarity possessed by them. The ambitiously extensive responsibility assumed in them breaks down into trivial preoccupations because it is not, and has never been, conceived in full and fully serious consciousness of what it is that is at stake, in definition: this being, truth.

No device of linguistic assistance is capable of giving so much good linguistic service as the dictionary. Especially is this so in a time of dissipated sensitivity to the individual reality of words. Human beings have travelled a linguistic road stretching on and on indeterminately between, on the one side, a high barrier of mystical exaltation of words, and, on the other, an abyss of realistic reduction of words to the commonplace status of being "mere" words. The new linguistics tries to bring the speakers of words down to the bottom of the abyss—leaving a little room for literary play on the heights. It attributes, with unrelenting stress, the character of "symbol" to words, renovating this antique ascription for scientific use; or, by another classificatory evasion of straight characterizing of them, they are "events." One does not hear, these days, of their being themselves. To dwell on words as words, meanings as meanings is, by the measure of the new linguistics, a mark of primitive stultification, or, alternatively, obsessive rationalism.

Ahead there seems to lie, between the part-religious, part-literary, heights and the scientific depths, only the drear prospect of a progressive penetration of (and disappearance into) mediocrity. The arising, in this scene, of new-spirited lexicographical devotion to words as words, concern with meanings as meanings, could transform linguistic—and human—history.

CHAPTER 10

The Feasibility of Definition

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1.

In the new science of linguistics that has claimed language for its own (so that, now, people are supposed to learn the principles of the science rather than those of the language), it is generally taken to be impossible to define words—veritably to define them—unless it be by some scientific means that may be found. Definitions of the accustomed sort are regarded by those versed in the new linguistic doctrines as on the whole logically unsound, though crudely useful. Mathematical devices have been experimentally applied to the formulation of meaning-concepts, on the assumption that, whatever their inadequacy, they will at least have exactness of a sort. In this book, no possibility of exact evaluation of word-meanings by other than linguistic devices is admitted; no way of defining words except with *words* is considered a serious mode of definition. Language is here held to be the essential instrument of logical accuracy, and, as such, the only reliable and suitable instrument with which to treat of matters of word-meaning. Where language failed, in this respect, nothing else could succeed better, we think. (Far from regarding mathematics as the model logical instrument, we see it, rather, as making experimental use of the logical techniques of language for the management of its configurations.)

Are words effectively definable—definition being understood as verbal rendering of word-meaning? From the idea of verbal rendering of word-meaning we exclude suggestion or implication—everything vague, not strictly definitional. We make this test of effective definition: it must afford *definite* knowledge of the meanings of words.

The conception that meaning varies in every use is an innovation of modern linguistic thinking of which its proponents are especially proud. They

view it as a healthy advance over traditional notions of meaning and definitional principle; that the meaning of a word *is* its use has become axiomatic with them. Dictionary definitions, as accounts of words' meanings, are judged by them to be arbitrary determinations, obstructive to the use of words with a sane and free command, if they are taken to be, literally, definitions. There is something amiss, indeed, with dictionary-definitions—with conventional definition. But the theory of variable meaning is not the key to what is amiss with it—neither this nor the idea that the meaning of a word is its use. It can be reasonably said that the meaning of a word belongs to the word as a thing of use: the meaning of a word is the expressive value that it is capable of having when used in logical combination with other words. Meaning and use fall, necessarily, under one rule, within one frame of reason. But they are not the same thing. The theory of variable meaning derives from unhappy linguistic conditions, not from the actual nature of words; it reflects a human predicament, not a linguistic fact.

Dictionary-definitions have a characteristic indefiniteness, which can seem to establish that word-meaning is in very large part without fixity. The cause of this indefiniteness is in the failure of people to commit themselves to define meanings, and in the failure of dictionary-makers to do their duty to the generality of word-users by doing their duty to language. Dictionary-makers perform more and more a function of mediating between words and their users as constituting two different sides of language-problems. But words and their users are of one intellectual nature, and constitute a spiritual unity; dictionaries ought to reinforce this relationship between words and their users, and not (as they have been increasingly doing) loosen its ligatures.

In all the different uses to which a word may be put, it must manifest a certain uniformity of meaning-character, to be usable. A word must have *a* meaning. Word-meaning is naturally constant, not variable. Word-use *is* variable; yet it is only variable in that words are used in ever-differing contexts. The phrase and sentence make-up of what people say varies from person to person, continually. But if word-meanings vary from person to person, and use to use, the language to which words belong has been subjected to violence: a language naturally coheres with itself from person to person, use to use—its words back it and themselves up as its words. Supporters of the theory of variable meaning judge the evidence of linguistic history to be on their side; and the idea that the meanings of words are always changing has come to be everywhere parroted as a plain fact that it took contemporary modern intelligence to discover. Of course, it is not so that the meanings of words are always changing: if it were so, language could not work. It *does* happen with words, in many, many instances, that, after a period of maintained constancy of meaning, a new meaning comes into being. But wherever this happens, there comes

into being *a new word*—which, in turn, endures as long as it remains constant in meaning.

The principle that a difference of meaning constitutes a difference of word is of major importance in this matter of definition: failure to make correct individual identification of words is sufficient of itself to muddle the definitional process. The principle applies to temporally concurrent as well as to temporally successive difference of meaning. Thus "air" in "The air is sweet with blossom-fragrance" and "air" in "She spoke with an air of assurance" are not the same word by two different meanings, but two quite different words; and people need to know, think of, them as such in order to use them sensibly. Dictionary-treatment of these and other "air" words as one word meaning now this, now that, blurs perception of them, denies them full word-individuality. The differing meanings, assembled under the head of one word, cannot truly be conceived of as constituting all together the meaning of one word, or, yet, actually be given the independent identity that all meanings require, those that are same-sounding in expression equally with those that are different-sounding. Such considerations as these impinge seriously on the question, whether words are or are not definable.

If one turns from words that have sound-sameness to words that seem to have meaning-sameness, the principle that every single meaning makes a single word can be applied in the inverse: a difference of word denotes a difference of meaning. One finds many assertions of meaning-sameness in dictionary-definitions. They are simple acts of neglect of due definitional responsibleness. With this particular defect of conventional lexicography, the defining of words presumed sufficiently the same in meaning to be defined in terms of each other, there goes a compunction of linguistic conscience expressing itself in attempts to indicate potential difference of meaning where sameness of meaning, supposedly, exists. In using such technique, lexicographers labor in a disorder they do not question.

2.

A very strong case against the feasibility of definition can be made on the technical ground that it is difficult—or, as some think, impossible—to say what a word means in other words without employing words that themselves could not be defined without employing the word being defined, or without there being a need of employing it at some further remove in a progressive defining of words used to define, or a need of re-employing some word that is a key-element of the already accumulated definitional structure. The means of definition seem insufficient to the end. However, we see this difficulty, this apparent impossibility, as arising from the character of conventional definition,

rather than from obstacles inhering either in definition or in the language itself.

In conventional definition, meanings are treated as disconnected rules of use, and words themselves as member-items of a great miscellany of utterable entities. There is no working recognition of them as component parts of a language-body. Therefore, though the individual word is not well-distinguished from other words in identity, in conventional dictionaries, it has a false independence in them. Every word is defined in them as the apex of a meaning-pyramid of its own. The meaning-pyramids comprised in a dictionary are supposed to merge, all, invisibly, into one another at their bases—to rest upon the common ground of the language extending solidly in all directions. But they do not. They float individually in mental mid-air, adrift from one another; meaning is nowhere definitionally—nowhere consciously—grounded into the language, related to the language as a whole.

No possibility of a different method of definition from the conventional—a word-employing method—is envisageable unless the view of words is changed: the view of them as static, separate-standing or loose-floating entities must yield to a view of them as internally active, functional entities having live, sympathetic connection with one another. This is how people know them in their practical experience of them. They do not, however, organizedly use what they know. In their actual management of words they are not far from being linguistic ignoramuses. They are aware that there is a system at work in language, as they are aware that there is a system at work in the physical universe: they take it all for granted without comprehending it. The linguistic system no more passes comprehension than does the physical. It is within such close range of comprehension as to be overlooked by people in the familiarity with it that they intuitively enjoy. The mind, knowing the linguistic process almost as itself, can act linguistically almost without attention to it—up to where the exercise of mature, total linguistic responsibility is needed.

Viewed as functional entities, things participating in the unity of a language, words can be seen to be particular acts of meaning performed within the system of meaning-action that, in its unity, a language is (meaning being understood as rationally motivated thought). The system provides for the performance of these acts in co-operative combination with one another; and the effectuality of any joint performance of them as a self-sufficient, intellectually coherent structure of meaning depends on the performance's being carried out in accordance with the provisions of the system. Or, to put it a little differently, the key to effectual word-use must be looked for not in the rules of historical chance of which usage consists, or in devices, external to language, formed on the assumption that rational discipline must be introduced into language from

without, but in words themselves, as possessed intrinsically of a logical capability—as being themselves, in their joint identity as language, the determinant of the rational conditions of their use. This view of words involves what may be called a linguistic as distinguished from a vocabularistic attitude to words: by it, words may be seen to mean as members of the union of rationally compatible choices that a language is—emerging all from the same intellectual fold, each reflecting the natural single-mindedness of language.

Further, by this view of words as organic entities, components of a live language, a distinction may be made between linguistic meanings and vocabularistic meanings. Linguistic meanings are the meanings words have when used for their rational effectiveness, used in rationally congruous combination with other words: they are the linguistically plotted meanings of the words. Vocabularistic meanings are meanings words have when known in intellectual disconnection from one another, as, all together, a loose assemblage by name a language. Such meanings are linguistically inert, and when words are used by such meanings they are of less than full word-value—they are logically defective. It becomes possible, if words are viewed as linguistic rather than vocabularistic entities, to see the problem of definition in distinct focus. If words are viewed as vocabularistic entities, the problem eludes identification (not to speak of solution): for, as such, words lack sufficient reality for people to suggest what, concretely, definition of them should attempt.

Definitions of words can be of no sure utility unless the process of definition is seen as necessarily reflective of the nature of language, and, as such, a systematic process, necessarily—not as a strung-out succession of separate definitional efforts, each executed in intellectual isolation from every other.

While theoretical linguistics has moved further and further away from concern with actual word-meaning, and has encouraged attitudes of detachment from words, conventional lexicography has moved further and further away from concern with the maintenance of proprieties of usage of which it itself has been the zealous patron. On the one hand, the general study of language has been simplified by a great reduction in the importance attached to word-meaning, and, on the other, the field of lexicographical discipline of word-use has been simplified by a great relaxation of standards of correctness. This management of things linguistic has a compound effect of linguistic flippancy and intellectual shallowness, which is obscured in what seems to be an intensified general articulateness. No improvement has occurred in how people are speaking: their speaking-procedure has worsened to the proportions of immorality—people are only saying *more*. The immorality of the general linguistic trend is naïve in comparison with that of linguistic trends in contemporary literature, the immorality here being marked by contrived indiscipline. Of the three agencies of contemporary linguistic influence, the literary, the academic,

the lexicographical, the latter is the least corrupting: it preserves the forms of conscientious attention to the meanings of words, and perpetuates the habit of the use of dictionaries, which are the bibles of language.

Faulty as the conventional dictionaries have been from their beginning as guides to the good use of words, they open the door at least a little into the interior of language. They testify that there is something "there," in attempting to provide definitions of words. Yet the definitions hardly constitute proof. As if in compensation for their weakness in lexicographical substance, dictionaries have plumped themselves out with etymological substance and phonetical data, and examples and histories of usage, and, besides, gradually taken on, to great increase in bulk, functions of providing information far outside the range of lexicographical concern—that is, concern with the meanings of words. Their varied usefulness as reference-books does much to obscure their ineffectuality in their proper functional field, this at the same time dimming their users' already considerably blurred sense of what is and is not definition; also, the mingling, in works nominally dedicated to lexicography, with the objective of defining words, that of supplying miscellaneous factual conveniences undoubtedly fosters new loosening of lexicographical discipline, which must affect the character of the definitions themselves. But for dictionaries to continue to exist is linguistic good fortune. For when people go to them they are taking their minds to school at the sign of word-knowledge. The mere survival of the tradition of lexicography allows appetite for knowledge of the meanings of words to seem natural.

The failure of the conventional definition is in its being, in character, even when it is not a provision of a "concise" dictionary, an abbreviation of the meaning of the word defined. It is not an abbreviation expandable into an entire meaning, but, rather a jotting: it is not functionally self-sufficient as a definition. The definition may be filled out from this abbreviation, according to the size of the dictionary, with tentative matter, more of the nature of commentary than definition. A quite long-seeming conventional definition will be found to reduce, on inspection, to a hint in the direction of a meaning. More accurately than as abbreviations, conventional definitions might be described as extracts of usage, having the savor of usage, no direct savor of meaning.

3.

When the question "What does it mean?" is posed, of a word, the answer is, first, properly, what may be called a free answer. The meaning of the word should be expressed in relation to its functional rôle in the language in which it has membership; the answer should be an identification of the peculiar logi-

cal unit of thought the word injects into a sentence when used in it. The free answer is one not conditioned by necessary fitness to a particular kind of context, a particular kind of circumstance of use; directed to a question about meaning, purely, it deals purely with meaning. But, is such an answer possible? Is it possible to express concentratedly the logical thought-substance of a word, to state what its *logical point* is? We think not only that this is possible, by evaluating the word as a member of a rational system of words (that is, a language), without resort to any other definitional procedure, but that no definitional procedure can produce linguistically responsible definitions that has not as its first object the discovery of the logical point of each considered word viewed in definitional perspective.

The make-up of the conventional definition is in part, as we have described, an abbreviation, more suggestive of usage than of meaning. In the rest of the definition there may be found effort made to enlarge upon this abbreviation with an effect of exactly reproducing, in abstract form, the type of linguistic circumstance in which the word reasonably occurs. Sometimes, the attempted paraphrase fits, loosely, a pattern of usage in which the word being defined commonly appears, but often usage-indication and actual use do not coincide. Moreover, the paraphrase, being not surely orientated to a logical conception of meaning, cannot be read into a particular context with logical thoroughness, and therefore produces diffusion in the consciousness of what is meant, not a tightening of it to specific understanding. Further, the satisfaction of weightiness that the paraphrastic definition affords is usually spoiled, where space-allowance is liberal, by the addition of variant statements of meaning, which break up any first substantial impression of meaning formed—synonym alternatives proffered as definition being very frequent among these. But there is an appeal of practicality in the paraphrastic definitional procedure, and rightly so. Language, imbued with human universality, is unlimitedly lendable to variation in forms of expression, so that whatever is sayable is reproducible in other words: what is said with any one word can be reproduced in other words, though not by a single other word. We shall consider what place there is for paraphrastic definitional procedure in rationally ordered definition after we have considered the primary aspect of definition, that concerned with the *logical point* of a word.

An objection to an insistence on the importance, in definition, of educing the logical point of a word will probably have suggested itself to readers: are there not many words the meanings of which have either no or no outstanding logical quality, in the meanings of which no or only a very limited potential of logical performance inheres? There is, yes, a distinction to be drawn among words in regard to this quality; there are many words in a language that make no direct logical impact on other words, in sentences, and are sustained there

mainly by *their* logical inter-operations. The definitional principle we advance as to the logical point of a word we see as pertaining unqualifiedly to words of first linguistic rank, the words that are the agents of the language's rationality, but to the remainder only in a certain incidental sense, these others being words that are, in general comparison with the words of distinctively rational potency, vocabularistic freight. What is definitionally possible with these two orders of words differs. There is justification in the nature of the words of the second order for thinking that it would be well if the lexicographical task, with them, could be characterized as something other than definition; for what there is to say of them involves more factual or quasi-factual specification than logical elucidation, is more descriptive than definitional.

There is a dividing-line between the words of a language, and failure to perceive this has retarded human linguistic maturity. We have reserved reference to, presentation and examination of, the existence of such a division in the verbal constitution of languages, in order not to distract from the main matters of linguistic principle we have wished to set before readers for their primary attention; only when these matters are comprehended can the actuality of a difference in word-character of the kind we here point to be viewed without disturbance to critical poise of consciousness of language as a functional unity. If the division of words by such character-difference is recognized and taken into account in incidental but practical relation to the recognition of language as in nature and principle indivisible, the problems of lexicography should lose much of their opaqueness.

The words to which we have referred as words of the second order are nameable as a kind: they are *terms*. We shall be speaking, in our further course, of this difference between two orders of words, words that belong integrally to a language, functioning as part of the rational meaning-system it is in a primary, determinative way, and words that are words in a secondary state of linguistic potency. These latter words supplement the central stock of logically telling entities of meaning with subjects of factual reference, the words of the first order bearing the main responsibility for the rational coherence of what in sum is said. In the rest of this chapter we shall have in mind, in speaking of words, words of the first order, words to which the conception "logical point" applies with entire aptness.

4.

We envisage, as we have indicated, two parts to definition, a functional part, and a second that may be called, in a limited sense, practical, or, perhaps better, contextual, definition. Functional definition, which is concerned with the determination of the logical point of a word, is definition according to the prin-

ciple upon which language itself functions. The second possibility corresponds to the idea of definition as paraphrase. In our envisagement of a dictionary that would break with the conventional techniques of definition and address itself to a revising of definitional procedure, we see the statement of a word's logical point as the fundamental provision. Paraphrase could be a useful auxiliary process in the new regimen. But preoccupation with the logical point of words is the indispensable.

The discipline of viewing words with attention concentrated upon the question of logical point will be helpful both to the makers and the users of dictionaries. They will be obliged to think exclusively about meaning, to consider the *word*—the word as a thing-in-itself, and not as the unreal, not definitely calculatable, sum of its uses. In the accustomed atmosphere of definitions-making and definitions-consulting, knowledge of the forms of usage into which words are fitted overshadows the matter of meaning, in importance; long habituation to thinking of words from the usage viewpoint closes out thought of meaning as an inherent property of words. Where comprehending the logical point of words is the leading preoccupation, it is of necessity a preoccupation with meaning: the meaning of a word is centered in its logical point (the word being one of the words of the language to which it belongs that exert the language's rational power). If a word's logical point is distinctly comprehended, the understanding of how it works in sentences—how its meaning is impartable to them for effective combination with the meanings of other words—must come swiftly, in consequence.

The logical point of a word is the rational objective of the act of thought registered in the word. It is the rational force of the meaning of the word, its functional meaning, in the sense that it determines what the word will do, rationally, in the sentences into which it is introduced. By virtue of the capability of a word of enforcing a logical point in its functioning in rational combination with other words, it is a measured step ready for the mind's taking. Sentences exist—are formable—because of this capability; a sentence is a process of rational expression the movement of which is the work of words in their character as logically demarcated thought-steps.

The logical point of a word is no full-blown grammaticized conception: it is the logical result of its meaning, that will not acquire grammatical explicitness until the word is incorporated in a sentence and makes its particular contribution to the rational whole. Because the logical point of a word is an elemental aspect of meaning, an essence, identification of it should be of an elemental simplicity. It will be found, we think, that noun-form will tend to serve best for the characterization of the logical point of a word, regardless of the particular grammatical use for which the word is designed. Noun-form is the least grammatically active of word-forms; nouns, in sentences, tend to

make other sorts of words do the bulk of the grammatical heavy-work, to be commanding presences round which the other words labor. The casting of the logical point in noun-form, with meaning reduced to its rational essence, should help to mark the difference between functional definition and paraphrastic definition; and it should open up possibilities of contextual fidelity in the paraphrastic rendering of meaning beyond what is realizable in conventional definition.

If, with the logical point of a word in mind, one examines a sentence in which a word is used (properly used), and wishes to understand the word's meaning *in* the sentence, how does one make the transition from definition as giving the word's logical point to paraphrastic, or practical, or—let us say, simply—contextual definition? For the discovery of what a word means in a particular sentence, its logical point—its functional meaning—must be grammaticized, and in syntactical co-ordination with the words with which it is involved in sense, within the sentence. While the statement of what the word means in the sentence must conform with its logical point, this must be adapted linguistically to the textual conditions of the sentence: the practical definition of the word translates the logical point into the particular contextual sense of the sentence. Words as components of a language have logical point (or at the least a potentiality of being brought into logical unity with other words); and the logical point of a word is always an invariable, and so must be the functional definition of a word. But the particularization of the logical point of a word to the contextual sense of a sentence in which it is used is necessarily a variable.

The logical point of a word remains the same from sentence to sentence. In the contextual definition, the word has to be represented according to how it fulfils its function in the sentence—makes its logical point count, as part of the sentence. How the meaning of a word in its elemental rational force lends itself to a sentence varies from sentence to sentence. The confused impressions of meaning derived from conventional definition are in large part traceable to the definition-maker's failure to comprehend the difference between definition as statement of the essential meaning-fact and definition as explanation of meaning as it participates in the general meaning-activity of a particular sentence. In the conventional definition there is only usage-diluted consciousness of logical point, and effort to obtain passable clarity by infusing the not clearly distinguished logical point into the paraphrasing of an abstractly conceived, not practically specific and complete, sentence. When lexicographical treatment of a word fails to start unequivocally in knowledge of it as having a language-based, as distinguished from a usage-based, meaning, there can result only fumbling attempts to reconstruct something of the logic of meaning from usage.

We shall now demonstrate definitional possibilities, that while departing

from conventional definitional procedure, are wholly linguistic in character. For this we choose the words "change" and "alter," which present linked definitional problems. There is an advantage in working with words such as these, that impinge sharply on each other in logical point. (They are commonly described as "synonyms," but our description comes far closer to the character of their relationship, we think.) How the meaning of a word matters logically reveals itself more quickly with such words than with words that seem to have their meanings in isolation. The definitions we shall suggest will illustrate our idea of the character of functional definitions: they will be verbal notations of the logical point of each word. These definitions or notations are to be regarded as presented tentatively, for the sake of this demonstration. The area of meaning to which "change" and "alter" belong is a great vicinity of diversified relations and distinctions. But we cannot confidently schedule a studious practical exploration of the entire area for this book. We aim immediately at a concentrated inspection of these two words of an introductory sort, with some attention to a few other words that suggest themselves associatedly. After the two statements of logical point, we shall provide complete sentences containing the words, as a basis for considering the potentialities of practical (as distinguished from functional) definition.

Definitions of "change" are usually filled out with associations of it with words regarded as synonyms of it; and this is a sign that it is not regarded as existing with a perfectly definable meaning, a meaning that is its own, and no other word's. We do not regard any word as the synonym of another. We consider "change" and "alter" to exist in the language in the same area of word-choice, but in utter independence of meaning and distinctness of word-identity, and to be, by relation to each other as alternatives of choice, especially well-endowed with the qualities of meaning-distinction. We hold it to be a fixed character of language that those words of a language that can be used by judgement's choice for meanings possessed by them in definitive distinguishability from those possessed by other words are, in potential force, its most expressive ones.

Dictionary-definitions of "change" are theoretically directed at providing an answer to the question "What does 'change' mean?" that will fit into any context of use. This promotes a generalness of definition that deprives the word of particularity of meaning in any context while failing to give the impress of the word's general quality of meaning. Latitude in the conception of meaning, fluid applicability to context, tentativeness of formulation, are established elements of the character of dictionary-definitions of words such as "change," which call for a decisiveness of definitional statement beyond anything within the synonymic procedure of tacking on fine points of meaning to hypothetical basic generalities.

We should like to be understood in our considerations of the problems of

definition and examinations of existing definitional procedures, and in our presentation of different procedural possibilities, as regarding the point of view of the definers of words and that of users of words as an ideal and proper unity. Exact knowledge of the meanings of words, the kind of knowledge that the definer ought to be bent on attaining for definitions, and the kind of knowledge that the user of words ought to be bent on acquiring from definitions for all immediate and future cases of use, cannot rightly differ: there is not one kind of knowledge appropriate and requisite for the definers of words, and, for the definition-consulters, another kind. Perhaps some of the faults and inadequacies of dictionary-definitions can be attributed to an assumption that the definition-maker is a specialist addressing non-specialists. Definitions ought to be made by specialists as for specialists: all the users of the words of a language ought to be conceived of as being this ideally *with respect to the language.*—Now to the investigation of "change."

We shall present a sentence in which "change" is used—used three times—to bring the word under attention as it is to be met with in the actualities of use. Its reality for people in the circumstances of use is no more familiar, no more *certain,* than its reality in the basic circumstance of its belonging to a language, by which it has coherence with itself whatever the conditions of use. But we think that observation of a word as a piece of a sentence—as if detached from the language that has generated and perpetuated it—may reveal how little definite sense of the intrinsic meaning-properties of the word is present in the consciousness of it that people have in the action and experience of using it, and how similarly little in consciousness-response to the word when they meet it in others' use of it. In this following sentence there is no possibility of imagining that the context holds clues to the full and exact meaning of the word.

Ideas that change one's view of the past will change one's attitude to the present, and change also one's expectations from the future.

Dependence on contextual clues to meaning is not linguistically normal. But the gradual growth of indefiniteness in conception of word-meaning, and acceptance of indefinite conception as functionally adequate, have affected usage to the point of establishing contextual hinting at meaning as a normal feature of speaking and writing style. In consequence, people have little awareness of their actual, continual incompetence in their dealing with word-meanings—in their mental and practical involvement in the linguistic processes. Contextual hints cannot directly produce in minds an effectively definite conception of the meaning of a word; they can only, in illuminating the sense-trend of the sentence in which it is employed, indirectly evoke the word's meaning. And the employment of the word in this spirit is more likely to conform to the

general indefiniteness (with inevitable variableness) of meaning-conception than to be faithfully based on meaning definitely conceived, according faithfully with the value of the word in the linguistic scheme of values by which it has meaning. The contextual evocation of word-meaning in sentences is no solution to the problem of the understanding of the meaning of words in and out of sentences, and that of competent use of them—and of competent definition of them.

To understand the sense of the sentence we have presented in its three parts and in the whole—to understand it "at all"—the meaning of "change" must be definitively known. The word occupies an important place in each of its three uses in the sentence; it is the key point in each of the parts. The sense of each part revolves around it, but the other words give no clue to its meaning. Nor is there fault of word-use in this. A further sentence, further sentences, might elaborate on the expressed thought, and retroactively supply some illumination of the sense of each part, and the accumulative sense-effect of the whole. But the gain would be more one of specific comprehension of the field of reference than of added definiteness of knowledge of the meaning of "change." The meaning of a word is not taught by its use, learned from mere gathering of it from occasions of use; it is learned—that is, exact knowledge of it is acquired—only by a process in which the word is taken into the embrace of one's knowledge of the language to which it belongs, and its meaning becomes illuminated there by the rational disposition of meaning-functions that prevails in the language as a whole. The resort for knowledge of a word's meaning as something irrespective of context—and it cannot mean in any context unless it has such a meaning—must be to one's integrated knowledge of one's language (or that of another's of it, as one's acquaintance with one's words as language fails one).

We could present "change" in another context, in another sentence, with a sense-content of more particularity, as: "The new proprietors of the house changed the color of it, to give it a new identity among the neighboring houses." What more do we know of the meaning of "change?" If we made the context the definer, we could issue with no better account of the meaning of "change" than "make different." It will not do. This meaning is too thin to substantiate the giving of "new identity." There's more than mere difference told with "change." The consequence of making the color of the house different could have been little more than the simple one of its being a different color among the colors of the neighbor-houses, now, from the color it had been among them; and this actuality is not of a distinctiveness matching the suggestion of distinctive import that "change" makes. "Change" would not be worth using if it meant merely "to make different"; it would not exist as a word, if it meant just that.

Something may be learned about the meaning of "change" from a consid-

eration of the first sentence we have presented, where the context is of a more general quality, both in statement and implication. What may be learned will be not something yielded by the context, but knowledge educed under the pressure of the necessity of consulting what one knows of one's language for illumination. The sharpest attention must be aimed at the word: what it means of itself is the meaning-key to this sentence in its parts, and in its whole. It is plain that the context has nothing to offer of explanation of the meaning of "change," and that it itself is unexplained without such explanation. If one limits the past in question to the past of personal experience, one has a fairly simple basis for specification on which to work. The view of this past may consist of the judgement that the happenings of the past, in their good or bad consequences for oneself, were largely shaped by forces of destiny, little by responsible action of one's own. In this case, there will be a general restraint of enthusiasm in one's attitude to the course of one's present life, and very considerable preparatory allowance for adverse happenings in one's expectations from the future. Next, there must be some imagining of the kind of ideas that might change the posited view of the past. Ideas may be supposed to have been acquired, by reflection or reconsideration, from influence, from new suggestions of experience, of the sense that human beings have much room for the exercise of powers of determination in the course of their lives: now, one does not look on past successes and failures as finalities, products of an alien and uncomprehended necessity. To say that these ideas have created a difference in one's view of the past would not cover the meaning-terrain occupied by "change." This one cannot but know if one gives the word a linguistic identity of its own in one's mind—which one does in the mere recognition that one does not know, has not distinctly apprehended, what it means.

The problem confronting the definer of "change," or the ordinary word-user desiring to be perfectly clear in mind as to its meaning, shows itself to be, in close consideration of the presented sentence, not one of gathering together knowledge of the meaning of "change" assumed to be loosely possessed (as is commonly the case with such a familiar, "well-known," word as this), but a problem of locating the area of ignorance of its meaning. But, to press on with consideration of the sentence. What of the changing, by ideas that change one's view of the past, of one's attitude to the present? Obviously, one sees the pattern of life not as a mortal constriction, now; something of a sense of eternal values has entered one's consciousness. One's attitude to the present may be imagined as now of a buoyant equanimity where before was a stoic impassiveness. And one's expectations from the future? The terms of expectation are no longer, one can assume, those of "success," "failure," or adversity and good-fortune: with one's wish allowed some validity of effectualness, the field of

possibility seems unlimited—expectation is not pre-conditioned by preconception, one reads the future as an infinite rather than as a finite. The full contextual ground of the sentence has now been covered. Knowledge of the meaning of "change" has *not* been gained. However, the consideration has made the word stand out in the mind in its distinctness of identity, and thus excited consciousness of a distinct "something" to know. It is this distinct something that we call the "logical point."

It can now be seen, perhaps, that whatever the sentence chosen as a basis for practical definition of a word, the success of such definition rests ultimately on the definer's isolating its logical point and rendering the paraphrase with that in mind. Anyone who would work at problems of word-definition according to the ideas and principles here advanced might, either deliberately or in the natural course of endeavor, focus attention on a word, employ a sentence containing it—either found or constructed for the purpose—for use in the probing of the possibilities of understanding and statement of meaning. But always, we are sure, not an example or examples of the word in use, but the bare word as existing first of all in a language-body, will be the shedder of light.

Although the meaning of "change" cannot be specifically rendered with such a formulation as "make different" as the main definitional substance, it and the meanings of many other words have, in their background, consciousness of a widely observable kind of manifestation distinguishable by the word *difference*. One may generalize as to this and say that there are words that have implicit in their meanings the production of difference; but words are for explicitness, and generalization cannot define them. Nor could "change," or "alter," or any other word associable by generalization with the idea of production of difference, be faithfully defined by a formula in which "make different" was the common basis, with a qualification in each case presenting an incidental peculiarity of individual meaning: such procedure would not yield *enough* individual meaning.

We propose for consideration a key to the meaning of "change" that will be received with some uneasiness, we imagine: where there is an action of change, an oppositeness in a characteristic feature is effected. To the response of protest that change involves no such necessary extreme of effect, we should say "Reflect!" With "change" the word of one's mind, spoken deliberately from the mind, not sped from the mouth with but slight weight of thought, is there not always a countertrend of feature in view, is not the effect placed in a category of opposition to an antecedent quality or condition of feature in the field of reference? Think well: is there any use of "change" with *point* that does not rest on the idea of an opposite direction in the range of the possibilities in condition or quality to which the characteristic feature of something is sub-

ject? Changed ideas are ideas in which an inversion has been effected in a characteristic feature of the ideation. A changed color of something is one in which a characteristic feature of the color acquires a quality opposite in some respect to an antecedent quality of it—that of darkness, for example, in relation to an antecedent lightness. Of this kind, we think, is the crux of meaning-individuality in the word "change": in this point of introduction of a factor of opposite quality or condition—a factor by which there is an opposition in something between what it was and what it is—resides the logical force of the word.

We believe that those who reflect on this matter with careful searching out of the states of consciousness in which they use the word "change" will find that they use it by two modes of consciousness. Very much, they use it with hardly any other stamp of thought in consciousness than an indiscriminate association with difference-producing or difference produced. But we venture a prediction that they will also find that, not at all infrequently, there flash, in their use of the word, sparks of sense sharply alight with the noting in consciousness of just such a factor (of actual or supposed presence in something), marked by an oppositeness, as that which we have described as the logical essence of the word's identity. However, we are presenting our thought on this word for trial reflection, not pressing it upon readers for acceptance by them. Our interest here, immediately, is in the problem, how to know the meanings of our words; we wish to show the nature of the problem as involving principles of meaning directly related to the principles of language. The solution of the problem cannot be in individual solutions, separate issuances of definitional pronouncement on this and that word: it must be in a general growth of comprehension of the problem as involving such principles, and in a development of perception of ways to apply them to the solution of it.

Since what we have found generally as to "change" applies to "alter"—since the considerations that we have pursued as to "change" and those which the case of "alter" evokes are of the same kind—we shall immediately fix upon a suggestion of a point of meaning for "alter" corresponding in kind to the specification that we suggested for "change." Without supplying any exploratory preliminaries, we propose that, where oppositeness is the logical nature of the distinction of thought embodied in "change," disconformity with respect to a condition or quality of a characteristic feature marks the effect of alterative action. To this we add a question as to whether alterative action may not be in effect eliminative action. But we shall not now put this question to a test. We shall confine ourselves to definitional speculation on the word in terms of the idea of disconformity, experimentally assuming the logical essence of its meaning to be in this.

The process of consideration through which we have taken readers is not

to be understood as a type of what is necessary for the forming of a definitional view of a word. The main trend of the process is one of *not* settling for the definitionally inadequate or irrelevant, for that determination of meaning in varying degrees of partial confusion—characteristic of much conventional definition—which is, rather than determination, approximation. Readers may have been able to perceive, from the exposition we have made, how the actual process of identifying the logical point of a word is a matter of finding one's way in the linguistic corpus of words of which the word under consideration is a component, and endeavoring to know it there, and not in part-detachment from, and part-association with, other words. As we think, then, the most important step towards the knowledge of the meanings of words is the conceiving of words as language, and of language as a natural self-regulating systematization of words on rational principles—principles inhering in the words themselves by how they mean, first of all, *because* they mean. Applied practically to the investigation of the make-up of language, this view of language allows of one's knowing words on a language-wide basis, and of detecting the lines of order and distribution that mark out the localities of meaning on a linguistic map.

We shall next attempt to show the nature of possibly useful paraphrastic definition, in further effort to illuminate the practical aspects of the view of definition we advance. We go from suggestions for the functional definition of "change" and "alter" to the examining of possibilities in paraphrastic definition. We envisage a different kind of operation from the paraphrastic defining of conventional lexicography, which constitutes its central definitional procedure. The difference between the kinds of operation we envisage and the usual paraphrastic operation of the dictionaries is, first, in where they begin, and second, in their aim. The beginning, for us, is with a distinct conception of the meaning of the word to be defined as a word of the language to which it belongs—with a logical knowledge of meaning. The dictionary-operation begins with a conception of meaning based on the guess-work of usage-interpretation—with no equipment of knowledge except such as is derivable from the fumbling and indecisive instruction of usage. What we envisage differs in the second place from conventional procedure in that it aims at real paraphrase, not a paraphrastic abstraction from an imaginary totality of uses—attempts to display how the word means in an actual sentence, not to produce an average of all the special meaning-effects the word is capable of working in sentences (self-defeating, divided against itself, could not but be the endeavor so to do).

We present a sentence containing the word *alter.* "Since he discovered that they were not whole-heartedly his friends, he has altered his behavior towards them, no longer discussing all his personal affairs with them as he used to do,

but, now, avoiding talk of the more serious ones." Next, we present a paraphrase of this sentence as far as "alter" is concerned, as an example of paraphrastic definition. "Since he discovered that they were not whole-heartedly his friends, he has abandoned his customary behavior towards them, no longer . . . ," etc. Or, instead, " . . . he has ceased to follow his old course of behavior towards them, no longer . . . ," etc. For such definition there can be no fixed formulation. The definition is valid only for the particular sentence. But, to be a valid definition of the word as used in the particular sentence, it must carry out what the logical point of the word provides: it must be consistent with the functional definition of the word. The adaptation of the logical point of the word to the sense-idiom of the sentence cannot involve dilution of the logical point, which is the core of the functional definition, and, as such, must be perfectly definitive; were it not perfectly definitive, but, as is the meaning substance of the conventional dictionary-definition, diffuse, itself paraphrastic, it would be unserviceable for the kind of paraphrastic definition we propose—which we call "practical definition." This kind of definition sustains, does not corrupt, linguistic principle; it reflects a decisive, functionally apt conception of meaning already arrived at. Though the paraphrastic definition of a word will vary according to the sentence-context in which it is used, the paraphrase is in every case a result of the application of the functional definition. It is possible to know, from a paraphrastic, practical, definition, what a word means as part of the meaning of one sentence.

We now present, again, a sentence containing the word "change." We shall use the sentence-pattern we used for "alter," with some modification, required because of the difference in logical point between "alter" and "change." "Since he discovered that they were not whole-heartedly his friends, he has changed his behavior towards them, no longer discussing his personal affairs with them as he used to do, but, now, suppressing all reference to them in his talk with them." A possible paraphrase, based on the functional definition we have proposed for "change," is: "Since he discovered that they were not whole-heartedly his friends, he has reversed his rule of behavior towards them, no longer . . . ," etc. Or, " . . . his friends, he has followed a course of behavior towards them opposite to the previous one, no longer, now, discussing his personal affairs with them, as he used to do." That is, if the very language of the functional definition can be usefully employed in the paraphrastic definition, it should be employed without hesitation; reasons for not employing it are related only to the need, in practical definition, of making a paraphrase that embodies the meaning of the word congruously within the sentence in which it occurs, so that the paraphrased sentence—the sentence paraphrased in regard to the word—reproduces the entire meaning of the given sentence. The virtue of a practical definition is in its character as a way

of saying what a word says in a particular sentence—if it is so used there that its meaning is typified in its use.

Paraphrastic (or practical or contextual) definition is to be associated with the historic intimate form of definition employed when children—or adults—inquire as to the meanings of words used in sentences spoken to them, or heard spoken by them, and the explainer translates the meaning into the contextual language of the particular sentence. A definition of this kind can be far more useful, if consciousness of the logical point of the word in question presides in the explainer's mind over the explanation, than an attempt to give the meaning of the word "by itself" without clear consciousness of its logical point. The ineffectualness of most ordinary paraphrastic definitions is in part caused by inadequate definiteness in the basic construing of meaning and in part by the absence of individual sentence-quality in the words of the definition, despite their being presented as if they were, as given, a potential portion of any sentence in which the word might be used, ready to fit into place. Commonly, they hang half-way between functional and practical definition, have no working connection either with an active functional conception of the word's meaning or with a real sentence; they are, logically, and paraphrastically, near worthless.

The relation between functional and practical definition is that between principle and practice. The functional definition is definition in principle. The practical, paraphrastic, definition is a putting to work of the knowledge of what a word means in principle—means as a word of the language in which it exists—to clarify what it means within the contextual frame of a particular sentence, means *with* the other words of the sentence, means in their company. The object in a practical definition of a word is to make it understandable in order to make the sentence understandable. The technique has a general educative usefulness because of its simplicity: it concentrates consciousness of the word on its actuality as a usable word. The technique of functional definition involves an expansion of consciousness of the word to the entire language harboring it, for perception of its individual linguistic reality, its identity as a component of the language. This also has educative usefulness, is also of a helpful simplicity; the simplicity in this area of technical concern with word-meaning is in the necessary breadth of linguistic view, both as to a word's being a word among words, and as to its potential of meaning the meaning it uniquely has, as itself and no other word of the language, in an unlimited number of (non-identical) occasions of use.

We have indicated our awareness of there being a likelihood of difficulty for readers in the idea we present of a factor of opposition between the temporal pair of *before* and *after* that "change" puts into view. We avoided using the word "contrast," in depicting the before-after relation, as too indetermi-

nate in implication for a description of the change-process. The two temporal identities—be they qualities or conditions or other elements of things of a kind involvable in a change-process—do, however, jointly considered, stand out against each other, display a conspicuous categorical removedness from each other; and this contrast in category loosely associable with "change" casts some light in the direction of "change" words other than the one we have dealt with—"change" as making, either subtly or broadly, a meaning-point of oppositeness. Separate viewing of these other "change" words may reduce the difficulty of associating the conception of opposition with "change" ordinary, or regular—the "change" we have had in mind.

All "change" words may have derived from an antique source-word of bartering connotation. However that may be, in "exchange" and the related "change," the subjects or objects of the exchanging or changing are, as in bartering, things at a categorical removedness from each other in which differences balance against each other. The "againstness" is not conceivable as oppositeness of nature, though it might be viewed as circumstantial opposition—one thing on the one hand or side, the other on the other. From the "change" concerned with transactions one may go to the "change" concerned with replacement, as, to change one's clothes: here, a factor of intrinsic as distinct from circumstantial opposition may be conceived to be implicit in the meaning, as for example, where soiled clothes are replaced with clean ones, wet with dry, etc. Intrinsic opposition is easily associable with "change into" versions of "change"; where one thing can be described as changed into another, the difference between the original thing and the changed thing is of an extremeness that has, in the context of comparison, a character of oppositeness—as, to change water into wine, lead into gold, man into beast. One could reasonably regard "change" in "change one's address" as not a true "change" but a rhetorical convenience for "adopt a different address"—though an old-new opposition between the before and after addresses might be argued to be implicit in the usage. To speak generally: usage-variations on the meanings of words frequently lose the meanings in idiom, and at the least can obscure the underlying logic by which the words have their meanings. It is therefore important, in the effort to define a word, to fix upon, for the testing of ideas of meaning, a use of it that stands firm and constant in the midst of variations marked by formalized peculiarities of use.

We may here enlarge usefully on what we have written on "alter," for which we have suggested, as the logical point of its meaning, the distinction of meaning determining its unique identity as a word, disconformity between the temporal pair of before and after—disconformity in a quality or condition of a characteristic feature of something. Our narrowing of specification, it may be helpful for us to record, to two alternatives of quality and condition, and

these in connection with a characteristic feature of something, is, as in the case of "change," a subordinate definitional element; it is not advanced with the degree of assurance with which "disconformity" is advanced: we allow freely for its improvability. With "disconformity" we feel not far from what principle indicates as to the logical character of the meaning of "alter." We chose it with a definite leaning of preference as very suitable to the implication of an emphatic *not* in "alter." With "alter" one tells of something's being *not* as it was; the "before" is stressed, and from an implied position of negation, and the "after" is presented in the shadow of its predecessor. But the rational force in the "not" calls for characterization: "disconformity" might be said to define the logical basis of the negatory function of "alter." Such exposition of the problem of determining a suitable expression of the logical point of a word may enable readers to appreciate more intimately the kind of thinking that must be undertaken in the mode of definition we are describing, developing, urging, in this book.

To round out a little more our description of the definitional mode that we have been presenting in fragmentary exemplifications, we shall touch on two other words that are linked with "change" and "alter" as words, question of the meanings of which seems to raise itself naturally when the meanings of these are considered. The other two are, "modify" and "vary." "Modify" incorporates a presumption that the object to be modified is in a fixed state of composition. The process or action of difference-production introduces something into that state that makes the object accord with circumstance or consideration subsequent to its coming into that state—accord to some extent. Modification is, then, of the nature of adaptation from an original state of composition to something brought into bearing on the object either in a course of circumstance or a course of purposive action. This is more like the definitional material of a term, a word pertaining to a certain field of reference, than material from which a logical point is to be educed. There is some reason for viewing it as a term, rather than as a true word, a word of straight logical character. Its scope of use is limited: use-tendency is to apply it to a small number of classes of objects—predominantly verbal classes of objects. But there is no necessary limitation of scope inherent in the material. One may speak congruously of modification where resultant difference is produced by natural occurrence as well as of modification where the difference is produced by documentary intervention in a completed written entity. One may regard "modify" as not yet altogether recovered from the transitional phase of its development from a word of antique usage connoting effects of moderation, with, also, a limited history of terminological use (mainly philosophical), into a word of modern identity and general usefulness. As a word of the existing language, it tends to be formal in stylistic quality; definite apprehension of its

logical point could increase its usefulness, enlarging the contextual range to which present usage tends to restrict it by intensifying imaginative sense of the possibilities of use of it. We shall not go further here in the endeavor to characterize its logical point than to say that innovative adaptation seems to be the central logical theme of its meaning.

Finally, in the pausing to demonstrate what kind of evaluation we consider appropriate and necessary, in the preliminaries of definition, we shall make a brief inspection of the case of "vary," which is commonly grouped with "change" and "alter" and "modify" in general associative thought of words, and in the word-view of the makers of dictionary-definitions and of the "discriminations" between meanings characteristic of the books of synonyms. "Vary" is to be found in conventional dictionary-treatment defined as divided between a *change-alter* category of meaning and a *differ* category, with division in the latter between suggestion of change or alteration as involved in the meaning, and, on the other hand, diversification as the implied or specific intent of meaning. It seems to us that "vary" is not two words, but one. We think that its meaning is, properly, to be dissociated from relation to "change" or any other word where the meaning-concern is with the *effect* of the production of difference; we judge its meaning to be concerned with the existence of difference without connection with effect—with the nature of the effect either of the existence or the production of it. One is, by this view, brought very close to the word "differ" itself, to a consideration of the assumptions implicit in the meaning of *that* word. In the background of "differ" is a consciousness of potentialities of total correspondence between things of separate identity, amidst potentialities of non-correspondence. In the actual meaning of "differ," consciousness of the potentialities of non-correspondence [is] in the foreground. With "vary" meaning is concerned with non-correspondence between things within a certain range of potential total correspondence. The range may be temporal, pertaining to things as instances of repetition or serial occurrence, or it may be categorical, within the potentialities of non-correspondence peculiar to the category to which the things in question belong by a common identity of kind.

We leave the question of "vary" at a first stage of inspection, having gone just far enough to suggest how it may be thought of—differently from the way in which it is ordinarily thought of, in common use or standard definitional evaluation—in relation to "change," "alter," "modify," *and* "differ." "Diversify" may here raise question of itself as standing close in meaning-relation to "vary": we incline to the idea that the verbal actuality here is not the verb "diversify," but the adjective "diverse," and that the verb is a derivative of it without direct relation to "vary." By this allocation, the natural interimpingement of meanings seems to us to be between "diverse" and "vari-

ous." But we take the matter no further, here. The kind of principle and course of meaning-investigation we propose may provide some orientation-points for readers' pondering, as we go further, on how, and in what patterns of relation, words mean.

5.

The review of the question of the feasibility of definition that we have made brings close the question of the future of dictionaries. As providers of information on *usage*—which is what dictionaries have increasingly become—they must, inevitably, decline as providers of information on meaning. There is provocation in dictionaries for the contempt in which they are held by many sensible persons; but the implications of the contempt are unjust if they comprise, as they usually do, the very process of definition—linguistic definition. We can summarize our thought on what the desideratum is, for dictionaries, by stating what kind of book we think a dictionary ought to be, as well as by explaining what kind of definition we think a dictionary ought to furnish.

A dictionary, we think, should have the character not of a verbal reference-book, but of a methodical lesson-book in the meanings of words—be such a book in its primary character. Its first concern should be with clarifying the logical quality, or linguistic value, of words—the kind of participation a word has in the meaning-system of the language to which it belongs. Whatever else a dictionary includes should stem from such clarification-procedure.

Those who have specialized in the criticism of dictionary-definitions have argued against them that conformity to usage is their operative principle. But the charge is not made with any thought of there being a more trustworthy standard to which to conform in the defining of words. Under attack is the very idea that there is sufficient consistency between the ways in which words are used to allow of generally applicable specific definitions of them. No distinction between usage and meaning is recognized; and, usage being seen as infinitely variable, the assumption that words have definitely statable meanings, which definitions should present, is seen as antiquated intellectual formalism—linguistic mediaevalism. Into the contemporary attitude to definition has infiltrated the contemporary intellectual suspicion of the fixed, the definitively prescribed, so that definition acquires the bad character of being authoritarian. Where infinite variation in meaning is assumed to be the natural linguistic condition, fear of definition that really defines can seem the enlightened position. Definition that attempts really to define has been accused of "prescriptiveness," as of a vice, the term implying that prescriptive definition tries to tell you what things "are"—to tell you what to think. Thus, the actuality that a word *means* becomes gradually invisible, obscured not only by

general increase in the neglect of linguistic actualities, but by the thinking, proffered as word-wisdom brought up to date, of the specialists in linguistic modernism.

Because of contemporary lexicographical liberalism, the boundaries of "good usage" are being over-extended, and the concept of "bad usage" has come to be associated with pedantic linguistic narrow-mindedness. The charge of tyrannical prescription brought against dictionary-makers applies less and less to them: as the dictionaries keep appearing in enlarged and revised forms, there is less and less of the starch of strict arbitership in the standards they set for word-knowledge and word-use. Correspondingly, there is less and less discomfiture felt in consciousness of uncertain word-knowledge and uncertain sense of the right and wrong in word-use. People speak with the flabby ease of legitimized uncertainty; their very dictionaries confirm the new linguistic thesis that certainty in things linguistic is false to the nature of language itself. (And the trend in popular, academic, literary and lexicographical views of words as incapable of certain meaning and exact use has conduced to invasion of linguistic ground by mathematical techniques as allowing of orderly analysis where—in language, that is—all is, by presumption, naturally vague. Mathematical techniques are credited with utility for classifying conformities and fixities objectively discernible in the over-all variableness attributed to linguistic values.)

In the play of thought about definition, in modern linguistical speculation, there has been distinguished, besides "prescriptive" definition, viewed as arbitrary, "nominal" definition, in which the meaning given is, merely, what the individual user of a word means by it (surely, a rival to the "prescriptive" in arbitrariness), and a kind called "stipulative," in which the field of definition is so restricted that what issues is not a meaning in the ordinary sense, but a meaning stripped of all meaning except what seems necessary for a particular use of a word, one involving no commitment to a stable definitiveness. This last kind, meeting contemporary standards of intellectual freedom, has sympathetic correspondence with the early Ogden-and-Richards insistence that the use of a word is naturally a pragmatic choice, made not because of the particular fitness of the word to the "referent" in mind but amidst isolated and independent conditions of mind. Meaning "the same thing" by words is, in the general modern-linguistics view, the linguistically abnormal; and definition—dictionary-definition—is, thus, according to it, guilty of imposing a determinativeness of meaning on words, agreement on their use as to what their "referents" are, at odds with human, and linguistic, nature. The criteria of judgement on which such attitudes rest are entirely historical: it is not the values of meaning inhering in words that have been, and are, governing linguistic criticism, linguistic investigation and academic programming for the

future, but the deteriorated relationship of people to their language, taken for a naturally evolved condition to which studious adjustments must be made.

That language has become an embarrassing commodity in lexicography and humane education, an instrument not to try to deal with [with] definitive touch, yet suited to be laboratory-material for scientific evaluation, could not have happened without a loss of faith extending beyond the area of special attitudes to language, special problems and difficulties centered in words. Contemporary linguistic scepticism indicates a far-gone enfeeblement in human beings of their belief in their reality as such; for language is, in the great common career of being human, the ultimate stronghold of their reason, and the general spiritual framework of their minds.

What are the chances, in the present total human, and general intellectual, environment, of a reorientation to the fact of words in which recovery can come from loss of faith in them and faith in human reliability in the use of them—in the inherited linguistic disciplines themselves? What can restore to authority the foundation-creed of dictionaries that conformity in the understanding of the meanings of words is requisite for the good—the intellectually responsible, the humanly respectable—use of them? Who are ready for the kind of reapproach to words that we have been delineating as a realizable possibility? A writer who has been held in high intellectual esteem (Georges Bernanos) expressed the prevalent contemporary view of words thus: "It is one of the most mysterious penalties of men that they should be forced to confide the most precious of their possessions to things so unstable and ever changing, alas, as words." If, as we think, such an attitude to language betokens not an advance in civilized sensibility but subjection to disorders of civilization weakening to human rationality in the whole, what ground can there be, then, for hope of a reversal of this trend? Where a strategy of intellectual neutralism is the chosen rule of the mind of the instructed, designed to avoid involvements in final, soul-straining problems of thought (problems of language, ultimately), how many can be expected to become partisans of the definitive in language? Who long for a change in the present disposition to language—and for a knowledge of how to work for it?

We judge the resolution of questions as to the linguistic future to lie not in the field of chance but of necessity. A change in the human linguistic condition will not come about, we think, through a numerical accident of there being enough people of a disposition to language healthily different from the linguistic norm of the age to force departure from it: human destiny is bound up with words. A literacy in which attention is turned away from words as determinate in meaning is irreconcilable with the very idea of human destiny. A linguistic change cannot but come—if anything is to come.

A change in the educative character of dictionaries is the indicated first

step towards an extensive change in human linguistic behavior. As they have been, and are, dictionaries supply no more than episodes in general education—the provision of these being generous enough for the purposes of literary education to be served by them as well. Dictionaries ought to be, need to be, what they attempt to be; and this is, the central apparatus of *linguistic* education. Such is *their* destiny, never yet fulfilled.

CHAPTER 11

The Knowledge of Meanings

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1.

The study of language has been concerned least of all with the study of meanings. This assertion may seem to contradict grossly the massive records of linguistic learning. But what has been learned of language in language-study developments has pertained mainly to the history of the spread of, and changes in, word-forms, the resemblances and differences between languages in vocabularistic and grammatical and phonetical structure, the phenomena of meaning-change in the spread of word-forms from one linguistic area to another, and in the course words take within single geographical, political, social or racial linguistic continuities. The latest phases of linguistic scholarship introduce concepts of the nature of language that make the matter of meaning the least important aspect of it. Meaning is now generally regarded in academically advanced dealing with things linguistic as an eccentric, ever-ephemeral, and obscure property of language, hardly identifiable as "real"—linguistically real.

The evidence of lexicographical industry is impressive. But its results are everywhere thin, so far as the actual definitional rendering of meanings is concerned: this is the least thorough part of lexicographical labor. No word of a language can be more than shallowly defined unless effort is exerted to show how it belongs to the language, how it fits into the rational scheme of meaning-distinctions (coherent with one another within this) that in principle the language is, because it is a language. The cause of this disparity between the energy expended in attention to words and the results in knowledge gained of their meanings is in the energy's being expended in concern with usage rather than with meaning, in endeavor to determine the kinds of context that stylistic custom establishes for words' use rather than what words mean in their

direct participation in the organized plan of meaning that gives them being as language. The weakness in lexicography, which we have repeatedly pointed to, transfers itself to the general view of people of their words, and strips language for all—the everyday speakers of words, the professional users of them, and the linguistic specialists—of its title to an identity based on intrinsic qualities of word-nature.

The marked increase, in the later modern phases of linguistic scholarly activity, of interest in the phonetical features of language is in large part a by-product of a decrease in it of interest in the meanings of words—accompanied by a growing disbelief in their rational substantiality and the distinct knowability of their meanings. Further, the new intensive preoccupation of linguistic professionals with languages classifiable as "primitive" is at least partly inspired by disaffection towards and impatience with languages of late human formation, the intellectual complexities of which (including those of their own) they have come to regard as reducible, in explanation, to the elementary formulas of a generally applicable scientific account of linguistic phenomena, irrespective of the relevance of historical interpretation. They view those who aim at thoroughness in knowledge of the words of their language as linguistically uneducated, in the modern sense of linguistic enlightenedness: no language is conceived of as being so surely developed, down to the meaning-character of the particular words, as to require, for its knowing, the pains of studying words in meaning-depth. Perhaps, since the knowledge of word-meanings takes the mind to the borders of truth, the shunning of the problems involved in the pursuit of such knowledge peculiar to contemporary linguistics can be attributed to a superstitious fear of truth secreted in the temerarious civilized consciousness. However obscure the reason why human beings have tended in all times, early and late, to fall behind the potentialities their languages hold in keeping for them, the present state of linguistic knowledge, and of the study of language, is clear. While linguistic scholarship is, supposedly, making radical advances in the understanding of the nature of language, what words mean becomes more and more the subject of psychological commentary, pedantic loose-talk. The knowledge of meanings is, nearly, an abandoned human project.

The "change" factor in word-meaning, in languages that have an easily readable history, is advanced as the major element of their nature, as if, becoming ever different from themselves, they had little continuity in terms of their actual words. On the other hand, the evidence afforded by the "primitive" languages of their arrestment in a static linguistic condition, by a prolonged arrestment of their speakers in the isolation of a static life-condition, is treated as more revelatory of the essential nature of language than that afforded by those that have undergone complex development. By the same rule, the

primitive human type could be treated as affording more clues to the essential nature of the human being than what history, and the immediate human beings existing in self-conscious aftermath to the developmental course recorded in it, can reveal as to humanity. Indeed, such a system of general evaluation obtains in modern anthropological-minded psychology as to what is naturally human. That is, in the forming of ideas on the nature of language, of ideas on human nature, scientific analysis has been replacing historical interpretation.

To "know a word" is a familiar expression. The experience of knowing a word differs from that of knowing a fact. The thing known, in the case of a word, exists—once known—as a component of one's working mental equipment, as something with which one thinks. A known word is one's own word. It is also a fixture of a common lore of rational distinctions of tried mental workability. The issue posed by the early linguisticians, that words are not things, was, in its new common-sense attractiveness, a factitious issue. There is no issue as to words and things, from the linguistic point of view, except in regard to knowledge: the knowledge of a word is differently constituted from that of the knowledge of a thing.

The material that forms the knowledge of things consists of identifications of subjects of human consciousness. The material that forms the knowledge of words is of the order of consciousness itself: not mere identifications are involved, applications of consciousness, but consciousness self-organized for its control of its functioning as responsible intelligence. Language is this medium of control, is the apparatus of human intelligence. Lexicographers have charge of acquainting the speakers of a language with the greatly varied, ever consistently sustainable exercise of their intelligence of which their language renders them capable. Their task may be described as one of making the word-resources of language reliably available to the intelligence—of preserving to the human mind the accumulated evidence of its capabilities of intelligent functioning stored in language.

Contrarily to the stress put on change in contemporary linguistics as a primary process in word-meaning, and, as such, a primary characteristic of language, it is the hold of permanence in the midst of change that most marks the general character of meaning in language, and the general processes of rational coherence by which a language stands in readiness to serve the intelligence. The knowing of words is a condition of multiple awareness governed by self-awareness; and the unity of the two awarenesses reflects the government of the variable by the invariable (which is, surely, the nature of ultimate law). Language is steeped in the fortitudes of permanence. It should be the purpose of lexicographers to make a direct linguistic approach to words; and they cannot do this as historians of change. To do this, they must penetrate

through the shifting to the persisting, and discover the features of rational order, the principles of relations, that make words into language and give a language its powers of endurance amidst the intricacies of vocabularistic amplification and variation attending linguistic growth.

There is no categorical difference between defining a word and knowing what it means. To know what a word means, one must have continuous presence in the field of diversified awareness covered by languages, and, with the help of this experience, locate (and keep located) the meaning of the word in it. Located, the meaning is an immediately recognizable and definitely describable distinction. The ordinary knowing of a word and the lexicographical defining of it employ equally the human ability to apprehend the nature of human experience and comprehend the distinctions manifesting the kind of experience it is. The dictionary is, ideally, the organon of common human knowledge. One that answered to the ideal would be a much more simple work, humanly, than the dictionary of the existent sort is, and, also, a much more complex one, intellectually. To know words is to know the meanings of words. To know the meanings of words is to know words as language. Knowing or defining a single word involves knowing the language of which it is a component. To know a language is to perceive the world as a human being. The knowledge of language domesticates the single mind to the world-sized, all-comprehensive human experience; it initiates the mind into a lore of rational distinctions of confirmed relevance to the experience of human beings in their relationship to one another as existing in common self-consciousness in the common field of existence called a world.

The belief that the knowledge of language is the central human knowledge might meet with wide, vague acquiescence without meeting with specific agreement. This conception itself was not advanced with specific belief by anyone until Charles M. Doughty (of whom we tell in the early part of this book) made his call for something better than what passed for adequate knowledge of language represented language as being. Holding words to be precious essences of human perception, each distinct in meaning and competent as an expressive utterance, he viewed language as a communal treasure to be loyally cared for, and used with a reverent sense of its worth. In his plan for the redemption of the English language from the debased state to which he, in his Victorian time, believed it to have sunk, this reverent sense of the worth of language was to be exercised by *knowledge*—the knowledge of words. He dedicated himself to revealing what he judged to be the real Mother-tongue, the early modern English language submerged in the later—to him a compound of ignorances of words. Language, as he phrased it, lay at the root of the mental life of human beings: the loyal member of a human community must be "a well-taught lover" of its language.[1]

The mode of common human knowledge varies from one site to another of human association formed round a sense of existence in a world: language varies—is, languages. Language is everywhere and in all times the general pattern of human knowledge, the way the human mind deals with experience as a whole. However much languages vary in internal composition, they conform in their constitutional character: in every language, the rational distinctions that make individual words mean, and also make everything said in a language mean, are all relevant to the experience-span of human consciousness on a scale of entirety. (The question of language-difference is treated of in the Supplement in the essay "The Universal Pattern of Languages.")

2.

The attitude of dictionary-makers to the educative function of dictionaries was formed under the influence of a desire to extend the literary knowledge of words to the generally educated social groups. With the democratic spread of education, dictionary standards of propriety in word-use became less and less reflective of standards of literary linguistic nicety, which have a limited practical application. But no enlargement of fundamental requisites of literateness has accompanied the expansion of lexicographical programmes to meet the interests of larger and larger publics. The ideal of literateness has been so much loosened, coarsened, roughened, that it could be described as vulgarized had it not become, in its diminished intellectual dignity, the standardized educational objective in all human quarters. Resort to the literary past for inspiration to literateness can sharpen and preserve the ambition of it, and the dictionary that binds the knowledge of words to traditional literary example can be medicine to linguistic morale, which the dictionary of the contemporary liberalized sort benumbs. But the need from lexicography is for something that will provide definite counter-influence to the laissez-faire course of linguistic practice that is untroubledly countenanced by contemporary dictionaries.

Contemporary dictionaries more and more serve, educate for, *worldliness,* a practicality of general convenience, in which standards are adapted to what are taken to be exigencies of circumstance of an authority superseding standards—until the sense of difference between a standard and a mode of performance (thought and utterance included) that has become compulsively habitual hardly functions. Dependence on these dictionaries as advisers as to what, by the measure of words, is intellectually legitimate, and not, hastens the dissipation of the natural human consciousness of existence-in-a-world. Dissipated consciousness of the world-dimensions of existence is characteristic of latter-day modern emotionality: a worldly (the world a mere scene of time) accustomedness to, readiness for, the variable, in all experience, usurps the

instinct of assurance of containment in a continually same world. People do not feel at home in their existence. Their words do not attest a Whole; they are the words of a broken-up consciousness of existence. They mean, as used, less than they would mean if they were used at their linguistic full; they reflect their users' view of themselves as having transient presence in successive environments of accidental, ever-changing circumstances. People could be helped by dictionaries in which language was given its entire intellectual due to acquaint themselves thoroughly with their powers of intelligence as languaged beings, and especially with their capabilities of apprehending, in one knowledge-process, the meanings of their words and—by the light of reason the words shed, their meanings known—the linked reality of the world and their own existence in it.

The filling of people's need of linguistic knowledge that will invigorate rationally their belief in the reality of words and, at the same time, in their own reality, cannot be by the exclusive grace of lexicography. The need must acquire such general urgency that the lexicographer and "people" are at one in it; it must be felt as, at once, a crucial linguistic need and a need of final human urgency. It is part of our purpose in making this book to show that such a need exists, and in a manner to suggest its comprehensiveness.

What we recommend may seem a revolution; in so far as it is that, it is a genuine linguistic revolution, one in which all speakers of the language would participate, and one that would affect the entire range of human activity. The linguistic revolution precipitated by the linguisticians was imposed from above, and is lacking in human breadth. It is a linguistic revolution only in the narrow sense of being designed to work destructively against already deteriorated linguistic traditions. It makes no attempt to restore language to its natural place in the minds of people as their humanity's keeper; rather, while presenting itself as their liberator from tyrannical prescription, it has tried to replace the intrinsic values of language, which conform to rationalities inhering in the meanings of words, with the values of systems constructed externalistically on (varying) non-linguistic bases.

3.

The knowledge of words has been here repeatedly identified with the knowledge of meanings. But words sound as well as mean: the fact of word-sound is not to be disregarded. The part of sound in a word harks back to its origin. The sound marks the event of a mental act of a new sort; the flash of mental effort, leaving its energy-trace in sound, is communicatively reproducible over and over by the evocative impress of the sound. The physical aspect of a word is a physical reflex of the mental exertion of meaning. But this account of the

part of sound in a word is applicable only to words of full linguistic status as such. The sound is only intimately identifiable with thought-content where the thought-content is incisive enough to constitute a meaning: the meaning, then, extends its energy into the sound. In the case of a mere name, the sound-element does not achieve such fusion of identity with the functional aspect of the name. We are speaking here of intellectually mature linguistic entities.

The source of a word is a rationally motivated effort of distinction. The physical manifestation of the effort survives, as we have described, as a component of the word's identity. The sound can be imagined to have had for the hearer, at the word's first utterance, a quality that suggested that an act of thought of new distinct sense was being performed. Hearer and utterer can be imagined as joined by the sound in a synchronizing of attention in which communication became possible: under the spell of sympathetic excitement generated by the peculiar quality of the sound, the hearer learned how to perform the newly-developed act of thought, came to know in the form of intentional experience the internal actuality of which the sound made report. We do not intend to perform a psychological probe of the processes involving sound in linguistic experience; we wish only to sketch the circumstances of sound's functioning in language, as background for further investigation of the matter of meaning.

Where word-sound changes without meaning-change, or word-pronunciation differs without meaning-difference, the conditions of word make-up and communication-potentiality are the same as those we have described: the sound-ingredient provides the occasion for the matching of internal thought-action between minds, the rapidity of mutual recognitions of meaning depending on the extent of the knowledge of one another existing between speakers and hearers through their general linguistic access to one another. For communication to be possible, word-sound and word-meaning must both settle into unvaryingness. Communication with new words and old words, and words in all states of alteredness from past states, depends on people's knowing in themselves what goes on in others' minds during the sounding of words. An inward sameness of thought-action must be the rule, in the use of words, and an unvaryingness in words in word-sound (with allowance for non-significant variation, recognizable as not indicative of word-difference) is the outer complement of this inward sameness.

The word "vocable," little used, could serve well for avoidance of the confusion produced by using the word "word" as signifying, basically, a sound-entity. The fallacious conception "words are symbols" could be purged from the curriculum of linguistic theory if "vocable" were used where sound was the word-property especially thought of. Such a declaration as "Vocables are symbols" would show the underlying inappropriateness of the association of

the idea of symbols with words. "Words are symbols" seems a reasonable utterance only as the meaning-function of words is not clearly comprehended, only where speculation on the nature of words is vague and disorderly—and knowledge of their meanings is also this, as it must under such conditions be. To mean cannot be the same as to be a symbol—to mean is not to symbolize. The conception cannot stand up as a reasonable one when "vocable" is substituted for "word" as fitting the view of word as a sound-entity on which the conception rests. The error in so using "word" is exposed; it becomes possible, the elements of the conception correctly identified, to compare the idea of a vocable's symbolizing with that of a word's meaning. One sees, on the one hand, the unlinguistic character of the first, with sound an actuality separate from a communicative function arbitrarily attached to it, and, on the other, unity of word and word-function. A word is, in all that it is, a linguistically natural fact. It embodies its function, is a meaning process in which sound and meaning are inseparably joined. There is no room for symbolization.

"Vocable" could be used with salutary effect where a single word is thought of as having plural meanings—which is, as we have explained, a linguistic impossibility. When the plural meanings customarily attributed to a word are examined and reduced to meanings between which there is substantial difference (all that is, rather than different meaning, merely idiomatic aberration or oddity of usage or figurative play on meaning being not counted), it can be seen that the case is one of different words, not of one word with different meanings: sound and meaning are in each instance joined under the identity of a different word. To think or speak of a word as having many meanings or more than one meaning, belies linguistic principle; but it would be linguistically reasonable to speak of the sound-ingredient of same-sounding and different-meaning words as, in a technical sense, a vocable, identical in each word-instance.

A sentence in S. I. Hayakawa's *Language in Action* (Harcourt, Brace, 1939) carries a sharp affirmation of the one-word, many-meanings, view. The sentence reads:

> It has been said in this chapter that to say that one word should have one meaning or that we can know the meaning of a word in advance of its utterance is nonsense.

But what is there called nonsense can be refuted by elementary linguistic fact. A word can have only one meaning if there is to be understanding between speaker and hearer. Only in knowing a word by a meaning uniquely its own can two people honorably claim to be in communication through the word. If they do not both, as speakers of the same language, know the meaning of the word at the moment of its utterance—the word having a certain meaning-

value the same for all speakers of the language—communication between the two, in so far as this particular word is concerned, is impossible: the meaning of a word *must* be known in advance for its communicative capability to be realized in its utterance.

The disbelief in meaning as inherently peculiar to a word, become an article of linguistic common-sense, is attributable to an insensitivity to the nature of words with which ordinary users of them and linguistical specialists alike are now affected. That words have their meanings in linguistic relation to one another, as components of a language, has been gradually obscured in the general dependence on canons of context, rather than on canons of meaning, for the regulation of word-use. This has come about through a general gradual weakening of application to the knowledge of words: educated guesswork took its place, orientated to usage, not to the basic material of word-knowledge—the words themselves as they linguistically, not contextually, mean. With the diminution of direct attention to the meanings of words, the sound-element of words acquired undue importance; and there is to record the anomaly, for an era of rapidly expanding sophistication, of words being thought of as little more than mere vocables. Yet, were the idea that words are little more than mere vocables explicitly advanced for general acceptance, the word "vocable," specifically, being used, it would surely meet with considerable incredulity where attitudes to words confirming this idea prevail. People do not comprehend in definite terms what they have done with their words, or done to themselves linguistically.

The case for the one-word, one-meaning, view of language may seem to dissolve utterly when the fact of such meaning-difference as that, for example, between "word" as signifying a single unit of utterance or, alternatively, an entire message, or, alternatively again, a pledge, is brought into argumentative evidence. But if the word "vocable" is introduced into the picture, there will be seen to be no case here against the one-word, one-meaning view: the use of the word "vocable" absorbs the notion that a word is essentially something of a sound, and that it is the word so used that means, not the word as something other than mere sound. If, in the sentence from *Language in Action* we have quoted, "vocable" is put in place of "word," which fits perfectly the conception inspiring the sentence, then there can be no shudder, as at a naked absurdity, at the proposition that a word has, properly, one, and only one, meaning, a meaning knowable, moreover, in advance. If "vocable" is applied to the three "word" variations we have cited, a vocable w-o-r-d can then be conceived of, and correctly so, as united in each with a distinctly different subject of meaning to form a *word:* the product, in each combination, is a different word, entirely dissociable from the other two. The three resultant words have separate identities as formed each of a certain *vocable*—the same

one, but not creating a sameness of word-identity—and a certain subject of meaning, a different one, with each. Each of these single utterance-units must be recognized as existing in the language independently of the other two, that is, as a word in its own right, possessing its meaning by, so to speak, linguistic prearrangement (possessing it in advance, in fact), for intelligent use and interpretation.

Other words having w-o-r-d for their sound-ingredient and meanings peculiarly their own could be added to the three we have cited; and all would be seen to have independent identity though associated with like physical circumstances of utterance. In *Language in Action* the proof of the nonsensicality of the one-word, one-meaning, view is argued by reference to a-i-r, an example of the sound-identicalities in which meaning-differences, and therefore distinctions of word-identity, are much more easily perceptible than with words having the vocable w-o-r-d for their sound-ingredient. The various "air"-s of the English language have so sharply differentiated word-identities that they make poor supports actually, for the one-word, multiple-meanings, view of language. (See comment on "air" p. 179.)

The implications of the word "vocabulary" can be appropriately considered in connection with the applicability of "vocable" to the sound-aspect of words. If a body of words is thought of as a vocabulary, there is thought of them as things of sound, first, and, second only, as things of meaning. Where words are presented as alphabetized vocabulary, meanings of same-sounding words are classed, automatically, under one vocable, as if it constituted a single word: the sound-feature plays the part of the word itself. A tendency has developed in people, strengthened by recent linguistic education, to think of themselves as employing a vocabulary rather than as speaking a language. They are employing a vocabulary, rather than speaking a language, as their words are for them—and people's words have come to be largely this for them—a conglomeration of sound-impressions to which have been given a casual verbal identity, carried by their minds as by fortuitous acquisition. Only where the fact of language is apprehended as an internal actuality of the mind connatural with the fact of mind, the meanings of words recognized as the forms into which the mind casts its intelligent experience, and the sound-aspect of words recognized as an external and incidental feature of their identity, are people's words in their use of them the stuff of language of first intimacy. Where language is not thus a familiar of people's minds, their words are vocables with an incidental meaning-capability, the stuff of a vocabularistic apparatus.

The sound-aspect of words has been endowed with a grotesquely large importance in some main branches of contemporary linguistics. Languages in these are revaluated as phonetical systems, devaluated as meaning-systems. Elaborate terminologies have been developed in which scientifically distin-

guishable aspects of the sound-aspects of words are treated as critically valuable data of language-knowledge. Methodical use of the word "vocable" to distinguish a physical identity of words would weaken the appearance that the phonetical analysis of language has presented in contemporary linguistics of affording clues to the nature of language—which is not inherently physical.

4.

Views of definition, conceptions of how words mean, what a word is, how meaning and sound stand in relation to each other, can be usefully simplified, as we have been demonstrating, by bringing the word "vocable" into practical use. The word "name" ought also to have a place in such areas of thought. The fact of names is inseparable from the fact of language; but, like "vocable," "name" concerns a linguistic peculiarity that calls for special understanding. When the nature of names is understood, the general nature of words is better understood. Like a "vocable," a name is a sequence of sounds (or, allowably, a single such sound) of the articulative kind; but, unlike a vocable, a name is something more than just a sound-entity. A name can be said to be like a word, its linguistic function being closely associated with its nature as sound. With a vocable, there is no direct suggestion of linguistic function: the word "vocable" points attention to sound. However, while "name" includes the conception of linguistic function, it lacks the internal character of a word. It can function as a companion to words, but does not itself *mean,* as a word does. A name serves a practical purpose of identification, or address. The use of a name is an act of memory-association, not, as is the use of a word, an intellectual act. Used with words, in a sentence, a name has the status of a word, or, at least, vocabularistic status, and the grammatical character of a noun.

It may seem predetermined that names should have a noun character, nouns being assumed to be, in linguistic nature, names. But "noun" signifies not name-character, but a quality of sustained individuality possessed by a subject of meaning, and denotes a class of words that contribute to sentences their fixed elements of structure, to which the other word-elements, singly, or in their varying combinations, relate. It can be supposed that before there were words—before there was language, to make, contain, words—there were utterances of a pre-word character, and that these were name-like in being indicators of particular objects of attention, having no rational, only associative, force, existing non-linguistically, disconnectedly.[2] To words in general, that is, in a reconstruction of their ancestry, a name-origin can be reasonably ascribed. An individual word, before becoming definitely incorporated in a language, has more the identity of a name than that of a word, belonging to the language not much more than would an actual, a capital-letter, name in linguistic use.

This developmental course is reflected in people's learning of words: words have a name-character for people when they first encounter them, before they learn their meanings well enough to respond to them as linguistic entities. With many words, and some kinds of words, traces of an initial name-character have disappeared; some words can be imagined to have come into being possessed of a functionally mature word-character. But the idea *name* hovers close to the idea *word* in people's speculation as to the verities of language; "name" has long been a favorite pedagogic description of a word.

For children, in their first approaches to language, words are name-like things. Something is pointed out to them while a certain sound or sequence of sounds is being enunciated, and the sound or sound-sequence comes to have a memory-relation for them to that thing—to be as its name; they do not begin to know a word as a word until they perceive that the sound of it does not have relation in the minds of their elders to one particular thing. A state of mind comparable to this can be imagined of human beings on the verge of speech. Abrupt utterances, not modulated by the influence of meaning, follow upon responses of memory to certain things, limited in number. Nothing more happens than the disconnected announcement of disconnected recognitions: the effect is not one of thought-communication but of crude identification, calling of attention—mere first exercise of the naming faculty. Then comes a change to a more extensive, active and coherent mental dealing with things, an advance from recognizing and indicating things to understanding, or trying to understand, what things are; instead of mental orientations of things to the self, there begins to be mental orientation of them to a common viewing-point. Some of the old utterances can be imagined as passing altogether, as the mentally more forceful words appear, and some can be imagined as becoming transformed into words; and, some, as surviving as more of the nature of names than of words.

The course of linguistic evolution—the graduation from *naming things* to *speaking words*—seems to be mirrored in the development in children of the linguistic sense from consciousness of the identity of certain things, which acquire names by which they are remembered as of a particular identity, to consciousness of an all-containing environment in which things are known as they exist in connection with one another. The change is from blank utterance, the utterances indicative of subjects of consciousness, but meaningless, *saying* nothing, to a collection of utterances for use in combination with one another according to consecutions of thought—a vocabulary. However limited the child's vocabulary, once the learned utterances are vocabulary, and not just isolated articulations, speaking has begun. The utterance of names, the making of isolated identifications, is not yet speaking. There is no speaking, language does not exist, until there is syntax, a law of congruity between ut-

terances that mean, issuing from them in their being *thought* utterances, and governing them as they are spoken utterances.

Children repeat, in their learning to speak, the course of the development of human intelligence from the receptive state, in which physical impression dominates, and determines the character of attention, to the active state, in which attention is directed by rational choice. At first, attention is compelled—things thrust themselves upon it; and the response is a name, a calling. And then comes, gradually, the voluntary distribution of attention over the field of the experienceable; increasingly, the responses are reasoned utterances, determinations of ordered thought, advances of mind to experience, rather than responses. Words are the order of the mind's day. They are "handed down." But the use of them is as "original" as children's speaking is not saying things by rote when they have arrived at the stage of syntactical understanding. The existence of words responds to children's human expectations of finding themselves in a human, a speaking, world.

Because of confusions resulting from the name-view of words, it is useful, in thinking about the special nature of names, to keep before one the capital-letter name as the exemplification of name-character: "name" as implying this name is the basic word "name." There is "name," of small-letter implication, and there is the linguistical term "name" to which we have referred (at the close of the second paragraph of this section); there is "name" as in the phrase "not worthy of the name of justice," or as in such a notion as that of the doing of something inconsistent with the name of friendship, which might be described as a rhetorical term attaching to a word a function of classification that it does not, of its natural meaning, possess. The vagueness of standing conceptions as to what a word is, and what a name, promotes vague-mindedness as to how the various words "name" differ from one another, and also as to the distinctions of meaning existing between words "name" and words of the same or close-by logical meaning-area—as, "appellation," "title," etc. "Name" is an ever-used word; the logical alternatives to it exist only obscurely for most people.

Dictionaries, including names freely, now, in their vocabularistic make-up, equating them in classification with words, give their users a false picture of the make-up of language. The (very broad) difference in the kind of knowledge required in the learning of names from that required in the learning of words is lost to view in dictionaries, in the vocabularistic miscellany they present as language. Against the dictionary-picture of language, which shows a haphazard accumulation of learnable items of utterance, a picture of language as a system of words in which reason works throughout, unifyingly, is difficult to make credible. The general impression of what a language is, passed on, dictionary-supported, from one generation of speakers to another, has become

more and more that of a loose mixture of accidents and rules—a partly-contrived miracle in which the left hand of chance and the right hand of convenience co-operate with each other without each knowing what the other is doing.

The increasing indiscriminateness of dictionaries in their encyclopaedical inclusion of names (a library can boast, to its community, among the justifications of its existence, that it has dictionaries that show how to spell Popocatepetl) has for counterpart a decline in the ability of dictionary-users to discriminate between the knowledge of the meanings of words and the knowledge of things identified by names. Contemporary dictionaries, because of their composition-policy and their definitional procedure (this not being based on a firm comprehension of what a word is, intrinsically), must be blamed for some of the intellectual disorder of contemporary time, some of which, at least, derives from the general neglect of the knowledge of meanings: people speak in growing ignorance of what a knowledge of meanings is, and dictionaries less and less teach what it is.

There is some illumination of elementary linguistic actualities to be had in a considering of the difference between the sound-quality of a name and that of a word, apart from the difference between them in their mental nature. In the sound of a name, the tension of involvement in an intellectual process is absent. The sound-feature, in a name, is merely a tag marking something for mental attention. However the relation between the sound and that which it identifies for attention may have originated, whether in spontaneous vocal reaction to a perceiving of it as having an identity or in deliberate employment of a sound, sounds, for attention-fixing, the recognition that a name implies and invites rests, exclusively, on a memory-relation. The sound of a name can have strong associative resonance, but cannot be vibrantly reflective of ratiocinative activity, as the sound of a word is, naturally.

Name-sound, characteristically, is blank sound; word-sound has, characteristically, the potential of expressiveness: meaning can resound in it. Pressure can be put upon name-sound to give it emotional potency, but such potency is an adulterant detracting from the identificatory potency of the name. It is because of this very blankness that it is characteristic of name-sounds that the same name can be used without a result of absurd chaos for many people, in limitless repetition—the inexpressiveness of "John," for example, makes it capable of taking on a large number of separate associations. Where a name contains an element or elements of word-like character, this can be reflected in an expressive quality of sound; but such a name is at a disadvantage, as a name.[3]

The crowding of names (of capital-letter or small-letter status) in unregulated quantity into the vocabularistic and lexicographical scope of the language

(the English language is the particular sense here, but all contemporarily active languages have undergone like treatment), along with the swelling of the verbal supplies with continual profuse adding of *terms,* which have a strong family-resemblance to names, has dulled sensitivity to the tonal values of utterance. Language has become to its users a mixed flow of utterances in which there is little consciousness of differences in sound-quality, and no more than little of differences in linguistic function. The size of the flow contributes to the weakening of the capability of differentiating between the various elements of its composition, and of keeping in grasp the central linguistic actuality: that is, that the essence of a language is in the nature of a *word,* and that it is the exclusive nature of a word to *mean.*

People have lost their linguistic bearings. "Vocable," "name," "term," "word," supply fixed points by reference to which they can recover them. Of a vocable, there is little to know: one does nothing with it except to sound it. With a name, one performs an act of memory, makes an identification. With a word, one thinks, makes a rational distinction. With a term, one does something that is closer to being a linguistic act than is the act of the use of a name, but this is, still, not a full rational performance. We shall be describing the nature of terms specifically in what is to come; of prior importance is the marking out of the line of difference between names and words. Only a word has meaning. A word has mental content. A name is the conventional sound-handle of a mental image. The mental activity performed in the use of a word is of a complex kind, involving knowledge both of the word and of the language of which it is a component. The mental activity performed in the use of a name is of the simplest; one activates a certain mental image with the sound of the name, and no other mental activity is involved, no other knowledge is involved than that of the single identification-function pertaining to the name.

The view that a word is a sound-entity having a symbolizing function is directly related to the name-view of words, in which the meaning of a word is conceived of as a "thing" indicated by the word-sound: word-meaning and the part the mental image has in the functioning of a name are, in fact, equated in this view. Such simplification, advanced as a new, scientifically sagacious linguistic realism, is a reduction of the natural complexity of language to a primitive, pre-linguistic state of human mentation. Curiously, the cautioning against a linguistically primitive attitude to words conducing to their being treated as if they were things, which has been a prominent feature of modernized, scientifically constructed linguistics, is itself a manifestation of a regressive intellectual—a linguistically anti-intellectual—course. The primitive attitude under attack is a fiction. All people, at times, some more frequently, persistently, than others, try to use words, or to respond to words, with intense

consciousness of their meanings, and become locked in an unfulfilled linguistic intensity because their knowledge of the meanings of words is defective; and such endeavor, leading nowhere intellectually, may seem an endeavor to grip words as if they were things.

So long as people's acquaintance with words is suspended in uncertainty, their linguistic behavior will be abnormal, and so long as the diagnosticians of their difficulties are themselves confused about the nature of words and have no standards to set for the knowledge of meanings except standards of allowable ignorance of them, the abnormal behavior, which has no more mysterious cause than ignorance, will continue.

We linger in consideration of what is to be learned from the development of sensitivity to the distinctive difference that exists between a word and a name. The difference can be most illuminatingly stated, perhaps, in terms of use—what, properly, the use of a word is and what, properly, the use of a name. It is not difficult to see that the use of a full-powered word is an act of rational precision—properly: the fitness of the word to its use must be rationally correct. And, with the distinction we have presented between mental content, where there is question of a word, and a mental image, where there is question of a name, the characterization of the use of a name as imagistic ought to excite recognition of a familiar process. The use of a name is merely an act of combining a particular sound-formation with a particular mental image, according to a fixed association: the fitness of a name to its use depends upon a history of association of sound and image, and involves no process of rational testing, as does the fitness of the use of a word. Very much is left, thus, outside the bounds of expression, in the use of a name, while in the use of a word, which is a complete rational utterance, a full and exact expression of a meaning is effectible. The consequence of confusion between name-character and word-character can be, therefore, the imagistic treatment of meaning in the use of a word, so that meaning seems a mental intangible—because the extremely limited capability of specificness, of names, taken for a character of words, precludes fulfilment of their peculiar capability of rational expression. Names, though usable only imagistically, are not necessarily irrational companions to words; but any imagistic element in the use of words, any patterning of their use on the linguistic function of names, introduces irrationality into the use of words.

It is a basic feature of the new linguistics, as we have already described, to bring words down to the level of names; and this uncritical simplification of the nature of words has contributed to the ease with which the linguisticians have argued the basic undefinability of words—the impossibility of knowing beforehand to their individual use what they mean. The mental image that is part of the name-process does indeed vary very much. For example, the image

that attends the use of the name "John" of a particular person of that name varies in the use of the name by different other persons. There may be much correspondence between the components of the mental image associated with "John" for the various persons who know John, but there can be no exact correspondence, since a name works by nothing more accurate, more definite, than a mental image. The case is absolutely different with a word. A word, as we have said, does not merely identify: it means. There must be exact correspondence between meanings in each instance of the use of a word for the use to be linguistically useful, since meaning is a rational distinction, the value of which is lost with variation of conception from one person to the other (such variation being a destruction, a denial, of the very reason of language). Cannot, it might be asked, "beauty" mean something different—that is, be a different "thing"—to different people? To think of "beauty" as having reference to a "thing" is characteristic of the name-view of words. "Beauty" is a rational distinction of infinite applicability, but the rational distinction (the meaning) *cannot* vary. There is a play of differing mental images in people's minds, with the "things" of which language treats, and these can overshadow the realities of meaning, to the point of assuming serious emotional importance. But a philosophy of meaning based on an assumption of the dependence of meaning on personally variable associative images—rather than on common human intellectual determinations—is a parody of an understanding of the nature of language.[4]

(A comparison is pertinent between the infinite applicability of the rational distinction that a word effects with its meaning and the infinite multiplication of bestowal, possession, of which a name is capable. One might consider the infinite multiplication of uses of "John" in comparison with the potential extent of the uses of the word "boy." But with "boy" one runs into a peculiarity of "boy" as a word! For "boy" is more a term than a "straight" word. It may be called justly a common term; as such it is so well-worn in linguistic service that it is entitled to mingle on a basis of equality in the company of words. Language's complexity is a *simple* complexity, the principles of which are plain if language is seen as composed of *words*. It is then perceptible that some units of speech pass as words that are so but formally [i.e., names], and some [i.e., terms] are words by practical inclusion in vocabulary as constants of reference.)

One of the ways in which the present demoralized state of linguistic sensitivity exhibits itself is in the propensity that now dominates verbal habit for substituting the use of fixed name-entities, made out of words, for the free formation of sentences by the direct choice of words from the common linguistic store. The use of such ready-made chunks of sentences (destroying words in converting them into name-material) is not confined to the bureaucratic identification of agencies, committees, programmes: it pervades aca-

demic verbal practice, literary and art criticism, political discussion, hangs like clouds of undissipatable impurities over the entire linguistic scene. Stock word-combinations serving to identify (roughly, as they can only) conceptions to which reference is repeatedly made without their being brought into specific expression more and more edge actual words out of sentences. This profuse use of made-up chunks of sentences tends to bar out even such originality as clichés have, in being, at least, repetitions of words put together in rational deliberateness, not automatically; sentences composed in this style are in large part collections of name-counters for the identification of thought-matter neglected in thought. The process gives impetus to the degeneration of nicety of name-use—a dulling of sensitivity to name-property accompanies the general demoralization of linguistic sensitivity. Given names tend increasingly to be—often illiterately so—capricious fabrications; names of serious functional quality are clipped, in an impatience with identificatory nicety—as strong an impatience as that which has come to be felt towards calls for special attention to word-meaning.[5]

Native human sensitivity to linguistic values needs for defense against the forces now speeding its stultification an instructed consciousness of how language is made up, of the nature of its primary verbal elements—words—and of what is, generously, embraced in language besides words that is but weakly, or more formally than actively (functionally), linguistic.

CHAPTER 12

The Scope of Definition

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1.

The function of a definition is to present in statement the meaning of a word. Whether it is believed or not that words are definable, the necessity of making attempts to state meaning is universally recognized: everyone is called on in one way or another to define words—everyone on occasion is obliged to try to say what a particular word means. How *much* is a meaning? Dictionaries seem to show that a meaning takes in very much; a meaning as presented in a dictionary-definition (not a pocket-size abbreviation of one) has, characteristically, the breadth of a notion.

According to what dictionary-definitions show—those dealing with "straight" words, not words that are, properly speaking, terms, linguistic conveniences formed more to specify than to mean—a meaning is a comprehensive thought-entity, spreading out towards loosely-drawn edges: it is notion-like. But one finds that these dictionary-meanings of the character of notions take in too much to serve well in the capacity of meanings. Any such meaning-notion, or notion-meaning, covers more than the meaning-ground of just one word, and fails to cover the ground of that exactly. It will envelop several words, cloud-like, and, in the cloudy presentation, the distinct meaning-boundaries of each will be difficult to discern. The words will seem to have what the books of synonyms have come to describe as a common meaning. But, by the nature of language, this is an impossibility. Where words are not defined as wholly distinct from one another in meaning, their meanings are but vaguely conceived. A single conception of meaning applied to several words, a notion blanketing them, indicates a condition of mind in which the linguistic sense is instable, not firm enough, not in good enough order, for the concentrated, particularized attention to meaning that each individual word

requires, as a particular achievement of articulateness. That condition bears a resemblance to the one we have speculatively described in an earlier chapter as the intellectual preliminary to linguistic articulateness; it is, at any rate, one suggestive of linguistic immaturity.

Much of the substance of dictionary-definitions is, indeed, less like definitional matter than the vague, tremulous stuff of diffuse understanding out of which the definitively individualized understanding-performances that words are can be imagined to have been precipitated. Extraordinarily, that is, conventional lexicographical practice veers away from direct resort to the matured linguistic sensibilities, and leans towards the indefinite, the inexact, the non-linguistic, in the process of conceiving the meanings of words for formulation. The meanings of words may be said to elude definition to the extent to which they do, in dictionaries, by lexicographical pre-arrangement. Synonymies, in which some emergency resort is made to the educated linguistic sensibilities, are of minor lexicographical status, and useful only as tentative supplements to dictionary-definitions.

The words *change, alter, vary, modify,* will be found defined in dictionaries by varying vague association with the notion of "difference," usually accompanied by some casual, incidental defining of them in terms of one another. In some dictionaries, there will be evidence of effort made, with this one and that of the words, to identify some peculiar individual feature of meaning, but this element of definition is sometimes absent, and, where it is present, is never more than lightly handled. The establishment of separate meaning-identities for words is regarded by lexicographers as a special refinement of the lexicographical task—as belonging to the special field of synonymy rather than to lexicography proper. Actually, where thought-distinction is very active, rationally, as it is with these words, meaning-differentiation calls for, rather than the delicate touch, the firm grasp; it is properly with all words a lexicographical responsibility. The notion-indicating part of the dictionary-definition of any one of these words, and the part consisting of indications of interchangeability with another or others of them, are both on the side of resting at the indefinite in definition; what there is of pursuit of the definite is too lightly undertaken to produce anything definitionally effectual.

And so the lessons given on the meanings of words in dictionaries produce confusion rather than clarity. The confusion is not usually attributed to the lessons, to the character of the definitions; it is assumed to belong to the quality of meaning—it is not even thought of as confusion. The lessons learned are not memorable; people remain, having consulted their dictionaries, largely untaught in their language—they only part-understand it, having only a sketchy understanding of the meanings of its words. Thus does an automatic imitation of usage come to take the place of intelligent concern with words'

meanings, while dictionaries grow in number and the pretension made in them to linguistic learnedness is heightened.

To make a notion of "difference" the dominant element of the definition of *change* or *alter* takes the word in the direction of the inarticulate. One does not mean the meaning of change just by thinking "difference." The meaning of the word *difference* is itself far more definite than is this notion of difference thrust into the definition of *change,* etc., as prime meaning-matter. The use of the word *difference* to point to a broad, over-all implication to be understood as a key to the meanings of these several words is too vague to have any definitional value—no definite contextual development is possible that starts in such a vague use of a word. *Differ, different, difference,* are drawn, in such definitional procedure, into the cloudy thought-area in which *change, alter, vary, modify,* are dealt with: confusion is spread, by such procedures, over all words employed in it. Exploration of the foreground of that unverbalized consciousness from which words single themselves out would, should it be possible, be useful for the breaking of the spell of confusion.

If the incipient stage of understanding from which a word issues could be imaginatively reproduced, there would be clearer perception of the kind of thought of which word-meaning consists—of the finalistic character of word-meanings. The necessity of a completely definitive conceiving of the meaning of a word for the reliable definition and intelligent use of it would be more apparent. Further, depiction of the notional antecedents of word-meaning—it being accomplishable with some imaginative specificness—could illuminate the difference between effort to pad out essentially inadequate definitions of what lies notionally behind words, and effort to construe the word-generating phases of consciousness from interest in the development of the intellectual processes in the human mind—the language-producing processes. That is, there is room for endeavor to discover, and describe as found discoverable, primal understandings—what have been philosophically described as "innate ideas"—hovering near the border-line between unverbalized and verbally ordered activity of mind.

Where the word *change* is used, a certain kind of experience of consciousness may be assumed to have been brought to the fore of the mind, in the following describable manner:

Things that exist may, in continuing to exist, retain a sameness to themselves as they have existed—or they may not.

There is, surely, a shape that consciousness takes to which these words correspond, one that forms part of a number of constant shapes that have gentle presence in the mind. Such an elementary observation may be thought of as

part of the permanent substance of intelligence. It can be properly termed a "notion," in the sense of "innate idea," if it is not viewed as having a determined *verbal* identity. What we have presented above is an experimental verbal construction designed to outline where definition begins, to demonstrate that it begins with the word in the area of its meaning, and not in any pre-verbal mental area. It can be seen from our reconstruction, we believe, that the notion of "difference" on which so much of the conventional definition of change is made to depend is not only not adequate to the definitional burden put upon it, but of no general usefulness as intellectual history of the word's meaning in which rational justification of its meaning might be perceived.

The notional statement we have presented is not intended to be understood as a philosophical conclusion, a description of active intellectual status, or to be understood scientifically, as something in the field of psycholinguistical analysis. We attempt to describe only an observation that becomes a disposition of consciousness towards possibility, but does not amount to a pattern of expectancy. Consciousness, here, contains no specific reference to these alternatives in possibility: we mean only to denote the content of a "notion" as the imaginatively presumable. To do this is to take words momentarily, and forcibly, outside the bounds of verbal expression. Our statement can be of no verbal consequence for definition, but it may succeed in "locating" the mental circumstances anteceding the meaning of *change,* and thus put the linguistic reality of the word into relief. The words of our statement are intended to represent the kind of mental locale from which a word emerges into linguistic existence—to afford a glimpse of how a word develops towards being intellectually necessary.

From the verbalized reconstruction we have made of the frame of consciousness in which the beginnings of the *raison d'être* of *change* are imaginable, a course of development towards meaning-formation can be followed up to the edge of the word, in which meaning is an actuality of articulateness. Between the notion we have phrased and this actuality, there comes the alternative implied in the notion: the very notion extrudes the possibility entertained in it, as a shape of consciousness, of the occurrence in the continuing existence of some things of a *break* in their retaining sameness to themselves as they have existed. Or, it may be said, this potentiality of the formation of a meaning is extracted from the notion by reason—extracted as a metal from the ore. The metal at this point—to continue the figure—has not yet been fused in the crucible of language and given the unique meaning-form of *change*.

It is not possible to know, by going behind *change* to its mental preliminaries, what *change* means. But the probing makes it plain that words—that is, words as entities of meaning, not grunts emitted in mental groping—are preceded by consciousness-processes, experience-corroborated, that are, however, not part of their meanings. The meanings of words are final results of

these processes, but are things-in-themselves, individually explicable as such, and not in terms of the processes. Language contains only the finished products of the consciousness-processes, the rational issue of them; the workings of reason become productively operative only in language. The notions in which language is anticipated may be clarified by the study of the meanings of words, but are not sources of knowledge of them.

It is to be noted that pre-linguistic processes of consciousness anteceding the thought that constitutes the meaning of *change* belong also to the notional history of certain other words. *Alter,* for example, can be referred to the same notion that we have read backwards from *change* and the alternative provision of our statement of the notion—for a break in the retaining by things of sameness to themselves as they have existed points up the potentiality of a development reaching to the meaning-edge of *alter.* And *modify* can also be evaluated as connected with these two words in notional history. But, though words may have a common notional history, this is left behind, cannot figure, in their meanings: each word is wholly filled with its particular different meaning. In words, consciousness attains determinateness; and in the definition of them there is no room for concern with the indeterminate in consciousness—which may foreshadow language, but is not itself the stuff of language.

2.

What we have had mainly in mind, in the preceding section, is the attempts made in dictionaries to capture meanings with the loose net of notions, and find particulars within the net to satisfy, in a not too strenuous, forbiddingly careful manner, the requirements of definiteness that dictionaries are supposed to satisfy. This characteristic weakness of dictionaries, which has increased in them rather than diminished, derives from a mistaken idea that dictionaries ought to make definitions as *simple* as possible—that their function is to reduce difficulty to simplicity. Word-meaning partakes of the natural complexity of language: the explanation of meanings is, rightly, an ordering of them for their better understanding, but not a simplification. Definitional simplification simplifies out of the linguistic body of meanings actual large quantities of meaning.

One may fairly describe the trend towards scientific dealing with the problems of meaning, and with linguistic problems generally, as motivated by the will to simplify them. In conventional dictionaries, the increased effort of simplification has been fostered by a desire to meet the presumed quality of the interest of a mass public, as more impatient in its literateness than educated classes of earlier times: the objective of efficient definition replaces older aiming at intellectually enlightening definition. The democratization of the lexicographical objective and science-orientated revolutionizing of the traditional

academic view of things linguistic have been loosely at one in a preoccupation with simplicity—simplicity, in the first instance, of definitional treatment, and, in the second, of linguistic theory. The labors of simplification have produced new and extensive confusion about things linguistic in the minds of people.

The modernizing, in the sense of simplifying, of lexicographical dealing with words has not only affected the professional attitude to the responsibilities of definition: it has also resulted in a lifting of the vocabularistic sluice-gate to admit into lexicographical consideration, without distinction as to word-quality, the great whole of the verbal speech-flow, the entire vocabularistic content of language at every next historical moment of lexicographical stock-taking. Thus, a want of mature development in lexicographical procedures, and an actual deterioration in intellectual seriousness in regard to matters of word-meaning, is combined with an undiscriminating amassment of word-stock, to a false effect of new linguistic learnedness and sophistication. Words of straight linguistic importance, as repositories of the essential meaning-values of the lexicographized language, are tumbled together, in vocabularistic free-masonry, with abundances of words that are factual memoranda rather than expressions of meaning, and with miscellaneous verbal items of idiomatic or colloquial status in profuse variety; and there is no order in this verbal conglomeration except that of its being alphabetized. The nature of definition—what it calls for properly from the definition-maker, to suit the proper interest of the definition-seeker—is obscured in the concept of the dictionary as an all-round verbal guide-book: the unit of interest in dictionaries has become standardized to fit the cursory look of the visitor to the dictionary-page rather than the intellectual curiosity of the searcher after knowledge of word-meaning.

Inspection of a dictionary will yield such experiences as that of finding, accompanying the word "truth" in egalitarian word-proximity, "tryma" . . . "trying plane" . . . "tryout." The space allotted to "truth" (putting aside that taken up by a little synonymy additionally provided for the word) is larger than that allotted to these other words, but that allotted to nearby "tub" (merely as a noun) is as large. The everything-in-the-verbal-line policy prohibits a fully serious exercise of the lexicographical functions; fullness of word-display has precedence over full dealing with definitional problems of a difficult sort, involving crucial problems of meaning—problems of a cruciality indistinguishably linguistic and human. In dwelling on this great weakness of dictionaries, as they have developed, in which huge coverage and simplification of objective and performance are combined, we are outlining again defects to which we have repeatedly pointed. The subject bears repetition. Dictionaries have become linguistic scripture for the ordinarily literate public. But, though continually thumbed in apparently unquestioning dependence,

they are used without faith in the content of the revelation. What is revealed is hardly recognizable as a language. It is like rumor put in the place of truth, where truth is given up as an impractical objective but it is felt necessary to have *something* to go by.

Dictionaries are not constructed from a consistently maintained intellectual position: the definers have only a sliding position, one that changes from word to word. Each definition is treated as a separate scholarly job; verbal pluralism gradually replaces the view, instinctively held in the mind, as informed with words, that language is a unified, a self-unifying, reality. The pluralistic attitude to words that has come to predominate in the linguistic life of people (from various causes—not merely from the decline in dictionaries of a consciousness of language presiding over the consciousness of words) scatters the reality of language among words, giving each a separate unsubstantial reality of its own. Meaning itself comes thus to seem to people ephemeral—barely knowable. They come to look for little more from dictionaries than an idea of what a word means. Actually, they are continually filling out, trying to fill out, the ignorance in which dictionaries leave them with what their linguistic instinct can tell them—and it helps them, indeed, and more than they know.

Linguistic instinct is no substitute for linguistic knowledge, although it can take the users of words a long way towards that knowledge, leading them along trails of linguistic coherence. It took them further before there were dictionaries, and scientific linguistics, than it can take them now because it was freer to move then, more active; it has been part-disordered, part-stilled, by the weighty superficialities of later linguistic education. Ideally, we ought to be our own dictionaries, our own linguistic teachers, mutually, as full-functioning human beings. But the linguistic aspect of our education is that in which we are the most backward; it has been left, largely, to the mercies of, first, rudimentary, and then, literary, and, supplementarily, scientific pedagogy. In dictionaries constructed from a position of intellectual sensitivity to the principle of the linguistic unity of words (to the all-over coherence of word-meaning values) lie the beginnings of corrective linguistic education—a sure new education, that could be self-administered, and carried on to higher degrees according to the individual love of language-learning, and of language.

3.

The early dictionaries specialized in words not of the common vocabularistic run. For example, the description of an early one—that of Edward Phillips, 1696—goes as follows: "The New World of Words—or, a Universal English Dictionary Containing the Proper Significations and Derivations of All Words

from other Languages, viz. Hebrew, Arabic, Syriach, Greek, Latin . . . & c, as now made use of in our English Tongue. Together with Definitions of all those Terms that conduce to the understanding of the Arts and Sciences. . . ." By the time Samuel Johnson set about making his dictionary, a lexicographical practice of general inclusiveness had developed, and to such a degree of proficiency that Johnson was able to draw considerably from existing dictionaries for definitional content. By his time, the object of lexicographical interest had moved from the learned words, and words of peculiar difficulty, to the entire educated vocabulary. Thus, the shift of lexicographical attention was, in a loose way, from *words* to the language. But in the earlier attitude there was more direct, concentrated concern with individual word-meaning than in the later lexicographical works of vocabularistically broader scope; and such concern with word-meaning is closer to the spirit of linguistic scholarship than is the liberalized lexicography into which it matured. While the whole language was brought into lexicographical view in the later development, the coherence of words as language by what they mean—the operation in words of the principles of linguistic integrity—was not brought into view. What was brought into view was, in main effect, rather than a whole language, a vocabularistic skeleton animated with linguistic vitality by the injection of standards of usage into it as a functional frame: linguistic coherence, correctitude, linguistic knowledge itself, became the creation of educated custom.

There is a large difference, in the seeking of guidance from usage to what words mean, and how they can best be used, between recourse to literary models displaying both literary and linguistic excellence, wrought with concern for the maintenance of the language's intrinsic proprieties (which was the general tendency in English literate verbal practice in earlier centuries of the language's existence), and the kind of consultation of usage that is characteristic of "good" verbal practice after the development of what is called "modern" English. The beginnings of modern English can be referred, roughly, to the Shakespearean style of word-use, which tends towards dilation of the range of tolerated liberties, exploitation of existing latitudes to the maximum, and a general shifting in the values of linguistic appreciation from the virtues of language itself to the ingenuity of literary employers of it in adapting it to their uses. Worldly values pre-empted extensively the place of linguistic values in the modern English linguistic era, without there having been any sensitivity to the force of this process strong enough to stimulate some general cautionary awareness of it. While standards in word-use came to be more and more adjusted to standards of usage fostered by literary expediency, there survived a subscription to the fictive idea that care for the language was being exercised in the mere observance of standards of usage. From the earliest English dictionaries to Johnson's dictionary, there was probably a decided conservative lean

in the lexicographical handling of words, with actual educated practice—and especially literary practice—further ahead in linguistic modernism than the dictionaries were. With Johnson's dictionary, lexicography caught up with modernized English usage.

Johnson's dictionary was well-described by Professor W. K. Wimsatt, Jr.[1] as "the first English dictionary that gives a lively reflection of the modern English language." It put the English language solidly under the guardianship of a high grade of common-sense standards. How right, how sagacious, must seem standards of usage aimed at uniting linguistic propriety, ordinary reasonableness, and literary privilege: Johnson's work won grateful acceptance as stabilizing the language in usage both disciplined and vigorous, civilized and natural, educated and simple. This youngest of the great languages had undergone an extraordinarily rapid development towards vocabularistic maturity; it had probably, also, become more "modern," and more extensively infected with the germs of linguistic realism, which attack the ideal of a correctness in the use of words inhering in language itself, than any of its coevals. Johnson's bringing of respectable literary examples to bear upon his definitions, which did not in themselves sharpen or enlarge the knowledge of word-meanings or contribute new impetus to the desire for it, undoubtedly retarded the corruptive processes. But it also furthered the perpetuation of the language in the condition of diffusion of its forces of distinction and clarity in which it already existed—its words pulled a good deal outside the limits of linguistic consistency, in the direction of disorder and irrationality in the management of matters of meaning.

Johnson's influence tended to keep the condition of the language static up to a certain point by the encouragement it gave to compromise between basic linguistic propriety and liberally conceived literary propriety: there was an unvoiced implication, in his textual illustrations to his definitions, gathered in a great reading-quest for examples, that intellectual vigor, mixed with enough linguistic decorum to ensure dignity of style, settled all problems of good usage. The point at which Johnson's lexicographical recipe for good usage failed was where these literary standards of good usage, because of their very modernity, their leaving so much in the management of matters of meaning to individual decision, came to meet competition from ordinary standards of good usage, which likewise reflected modernized notions of the linguistically allowable. The two sets of standards of good usage, literary and ordinary, could not but blend into one another; both were the products of a general, and progressive, weakening of linguistic self-confidence in the speaking of the language—a decline of that instinctive understanding in people of the linguistic workings of their language, accompanied by generous self-identification with others in the possession of it, that makes for a natural literateness.

There occurred gradually a replacement of language-knowledge, in both the literary and ordinary areas of word-use, with a loose verbal sophistication. The differences between knowledge and ignorance of the language became softened in all speaking quarters—the literary, the non-literary, the educated, the varied degrees of the educated and the uneducated, in matters of language. The end-result of all this is to be seen in the present-day lexicographical setting of usage-standards. While some allowance is made for a looking to literary practice, in word-use, the preponderant emphasis is on what "everybody" is doing, verbally. What everybody is doing is so vastly variable, is so collectively amorphous a performance, that not only is a language, as an identifiable reality, not perceptible in it: words themselves are hardly identifiable in it, as such. People are using linguistically characterless verbalisms, that do not, cannot hold more than insubstantial shreds of meaning. Hardly are the words issuing from their mouths as words; they are in very large part linguistic impostures. As people are speaking the English language (have been for long speaking it), they are hardly speaking a language—have hardly on their linguistic horizon a recognized object of knowledge about which to feel themselves ignorant.

4.

With the introduction of the citation of example of use in lexicography as part of the process of definition, concern with what words mean narrows rather than broadens; the very purpose of definition has narrowed. Conformism in use is the center of interest; fidelity to the language becomes identified with this. Conformism, by which we mean the observance of example as distinguished from the following of principle, opens the way to an unlimited variation in example: usage-examples cover a multitude of standards of what is right. Linguistically, this leads to the break-up of usage into conformisms that have ceased to comprise any reference to standards. Definitions direct the mind more and more to consideration of the circumstances of usage, less and less to consideration of *words*—words as linguistic actualities, not mere pawns of utterance-convention. The effects of the use of example as a lexicographical device, which, in its employment in Johnson's dictionary, stimulated new interest in matters of language and served as a facility of linguistic education, were, ultimately, to make example a part of definition; it is found now either explicitly incorporated in definition or serving as the implicit basis of the classification of the varying senses in which words are used.

The enumeration of the senses in which words are used has become, in later time, the scholarly mode of lexicography. This procedure grew out of Johnson's laborious reading-quest for examples to illustrate and illuminate his definitions. The scholarship of distinguishing between senses is no substitute

for definition proper, which is the statement of *meaning,* the specification of senses giving only the anatomy of a word's *usage*. But care to cover the field of usage with examples has produced records valuable as providing historical background for the study of meanings; lines of linguistic consistency can be traced in the patterns of usage that the specification of senses shows, and the linguistically legitimate old and the linguistically legitimate new in meaning can be sorted out from the intricate mingling in usage of linguistic conscience, and conformism, and literary privilege-taking, and the general exercise, by the ever-growing number of speakers of the language of literate status, of the right to participate in the making of usage.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is, of course, the great repository of modern learning in the history of English-language usage. It is the best of available dictionaries in its strict adherence to its principles, which were firmly fixed from the beginning to a historical concern with the courses English words took, from early times. That is, definitions, in this work, are, as a matter of clear policy, derived from usages. Its principles are consistently historical—fulfilling its announced characterization of being a dictionary formed upon historical principles. With other dictionaries, generally, past and present, there is claim made to a basis of lexicographical principles concerned centrally with the nature of words' meanings. Users of them are expected to assume that the definitions offered are definitions of words, not accounts of usages—which is what, practically, they are. No such confusion can exist in the case of the *Oxford English Dictionary* except through disregard by users of the openly displayed definitional method of specification of meaning within the limits of historical example.

The Oxford project was first proposed in 1857, being conceived as a dictionary including words not found in either Johnson's or Richardson's dictionary: Richardson, who followed Johnson, created the first dictionary in which the use of *historical* usage-illustration was made. Older words and older usage received full emphasis in the Oxford project, but the historical lines of usage will be found pursued in it into modern periods. The supply of illustrations, confined to sources of established literary credit, might be considered linguistically priggish, but it is the more valuable, linguistically, for its being so confined, in that by this restriction much of the ephemeral or illiterate or merely careless in usage is eliminated as data having bearing on considerations of word-use.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* presents the brighter side of the history of English usage. While the examples are profusely illustrative of sense-differentiation consisting of both ordinary meaning-adaptions and erratic meaning-departures, and the impression of linguistic workings conveyed by the elaborate detailing of these is a confused one, there is testimony findable

in the examples that confirms the reality of the English language as a *continuing language,* for those having a natural disposition to think of it as such. Evidence of its being a continuing language needs to be pinned to very early vocabularistic conditions, and to be made to show strongly enough through subsequent vocabularistic developments to counteract all the suasion now put into the argument that it is an ever-changing one. This is achieved in the *Oxford English Dictionary.* Though only the fringes of the latest change-phases are touched in it, they cannot be mistaken for historically familiar language-change: the impress of the collapse of linguistic sensitivity in the use of words is visible in the Dictionary's historical record of English usage. But in the main the record reveals a language retaining its identity, its sanities of principle, through the caprices and ruptures, confusions and convulsions, attendant on linguistic growth.

The prominence and importance accorded by the current general dictionaries to unruly verbal developments, in efforts to demonstrate their lexicographical modernity, reveal a readiness to approve the discontinuity existing between prevailing use-tendencies and the entire usage-experience of English-language speakers up to this period. What is approved is something that goes beyond the boundaries of deterioration. There have been many deteriorative processes at work in the past life of the English language since it attained to maturity, in its early centuries, but only in the immediate usage-period has it lost its historical identity for its speakers to an extent potentially catastrophic for their intellectual self-possession. In this period, when dissipated linguistic sensitivity has deprived most speakers of the language of the capability of appreciating its sheltering sanity, in which their minds can be at home, the view to be had in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of the survival of the language through its variations, innovations, vicissitudes, to which it has been fated in its use by changing speakers, can be seriously useful to contemporary speakers of it; it can suggest to them that they look for the language in the midst of *their* usages, and, as it is obscured by these, suspect themselves of speaking, to the degree that it is, what is meaningless.

The recording of mere obsoleteness, in the *Oxford English Dictionary,* is incidental to the recording of usages in which inward persistence of the language manifested itself. The predominant remarkable peculiarity of the exhibition made of these usages—particular senses of words characteristic of their use in certain times or circumstances—is not their short-livedness, but their long-livedness; and, wherever the examples of a particular sense of a word go back far and come well forward towards the present, we are brought close to the permanencies of meaning on which language's permanence depends. It is to be noted that words that became obsolete by 1150 were excluded from the Dictionary. The picture drawn of the language in it is, then, whatever the

curiosities portrayed, that of a "going concern." In the early centuries of the existence of English, up to the fifteenth, this going concern was a corpus of linguistically proficient English dialects, and the Dictionary reflects this in its examples of early usage; with examples of usage from this time forward, when the East Midland dialect took the linguistic lead, becoming *the* language, the Dictionary excludes words of dialect character, except in certain kinds of cases.

The scope of usage-reference in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is not just quantitatively, indiscriminately, immense; it is immense with a linguistic selectiveness. The immenseness comes not, as does the usage-coverage of the outsize contemporary dictionaries, from a sweeping-in of everything that is in common verbal fashion regardless of its linguistic quality, and everything that, vulgar in the gross sense, is flaunted by enough speakers to impress itself on the common attention if not on the common tongue: it comes from the range of the search for historical information on the usage-characteristics of the English language. The information pertains to characteristics of the English language, and to centuries of use of the language, and was drawn from the readings of very many devoted supporters of the project, equipped to serve so. (The American contribution to the collection of examples was large.) This is a dictionary that can be studied.[2] The new huge dictionaries, following closer and closer upon one another, specialize in the providing of information on new terms, and on new curiosities and banalities of usage, both popular and sophisticated, that feed the swollen flow of period-jargon; their serviceability as general dictionary-equipment for the study of English words is a declining factor in their public worth. Their main part in the linguistic life of present-day speakers of the English language is that of justifying the use of words with a loose-minded freedom as something that an influential "everybody" is doing.

5.

The extent to which definition has been given up as the realizable objective of lexicography is obscured in the amplification dictionaries have undergone in the increased provision of informative matter not of a linguistic order, and in the attention paid in them to novelties of usage-variation, and in their vocabularistic fattening with the new terms that scientific activities and thought-modes engender (added to the language without any linguistic sense of proportion). The specification of the reference-function of the new terms, and of the terms of scientific origin with which the language had been already expanded before the present period of exceedingly active terminological productivity, comes to seem a superior form of definition, in comparison with the definitional procedure followed with ordinary words, which has allowed

increasingly of a broad vagueness, to match presumed meaning-flexibility in these. The scientific term outranks the ordinary word, in contemporary linguistical opinion, as being the better, the linguistically sounder, word—as having an exact meaning. The weight of this theory, which is at odds with the nature of meaning, and involves a view of word-definition at odds with its proper character, has contributed to the passive disposition of lexicography towards its mounting ineffectuality. As less and less of decisive definitional performance is looked for in it, it has—lacking an internal morale of linguistic principle—required less and less of itself, definitionally. But there is no indication in the dictionaries of awareness that there has been a virtual surrender of the main lexicographical purposes, which concern accurate knowledge of the meanings of words—ordinary, regular, straight linguistic, non-terminological, words.

The laxity of dictionaries towards the responsibilities of definition extends itself outside them in the attitude to definition adopted in the books of synonyms, and in the word-listing, word-suggesting, books. These of the latter sort cut clear of definition as less relevant to the problem of choosing words for use than knowledge of alternative choices, these being presented in groups between the words of which linkages of meaning-association are assumed to exist, unquestionably. The group, the list, is conceived of as a composite statement of meaning: the words supposedly define one another, and thrust up from themselves the right word to meet the particular word-searcher's particular need. Concentration on the word-group rather than on the individual word can excite notions of there being patterns of meaning-relation into which words fall, by the nature of language, and stimulate, thus, the linguistic imagination. The scheme of arrangement in such books is not derived, however, from the study of meanings as language-governed properties of words, does not come from within the language, as the words come. It is an imposed arrangement-device by which words are put together according to chains of thought associations, to vanishing-points of associative connection. In the books of synonyms, where the words in the groups are brought together in what can seem to be logical conjunction, and quasi-definitional discriminations of meaning are made between them, the grouping has more in it of usage-expediency than of linguistic necessity: the words are together not because they are thought to respond to a general law of linguistic congruity that holds words in organized meaning-relationship, but because they are considered easily confusable—regarded as evincing the accident of similarity of meaning.

With the greatly enlarged use of words through the expansion of television and radio activity, the giant spread of verbal matter in advertising and packaging processes, and the supergiant magnitude to which publishing activity has

attained, and through the embracing of ever-larger portions of child and adult population in educational systems all characterized by addiction to vigorously standardized wordiness, words—all words, big ones, educated ones, learned ones, sophisticated ones, stylish ones, out-of-the-way ones, the mountingly numerous new terminological ones, besides those of the old reliable generality—have become cheap. Not only does the supply of them keep outstripping the gross demand, because of incessant overproduction: they rate lower and lower because they are hardly felt to be words, because there is hardly any appreciation current of what a word is. They have very little intellectual standing though put furiously to work in operations themselves claiming intellectual standing. This loss, in words, of character for their users is the climax of a process of degeneration in the linguistic consciousness of them to which speakers of the English language have long been subject. (We do not mean to imply that the speakers of other languages have not been exposed to like processes operating among them; the history of English speaking exemplifies a general human predicament.) A vocabularistic consciousness of words is now almost the only kind of consciousness with which they are mentally entertained. For those who are in this state of mind in using words, every word is a floater: the use of every word is in large degree, if not entirely, experimental, it being known in large degree, if not entirely, in rational disrelation from all other words.

So pervasive in English speaking-life of the immediate present has become the vocabularistic attitude to words, which bestows on them only a numerical reality, and so strong the experimental view of word-meaning, and, following from this, of word-propriety, that the sense of possessing words in linguistic stability has come to exist only in nervous shreds. The avidity with which neologisms worked up in scientific and relatedly learned vocabularistic churns, and those dispensed from journalistic style-manufactories, are seized upon by reading, writing, listening, discoursing, publics, tells of a mass-feeling of word-poverty, in speakers of the language. It is not general linguistic enterprisingness that has caused to be pressed into vocabularistic prominence such words as "meaningful," "dialogue," "ploy," "meticulous," "ambience," "relevance," "concerned," "compassionate," "ambivalent," detached from their historic or specialistic linguistic pinnings. It is a hunger for words: people lack a sure sense of possession, and, not knowing how much they actually have in linguistic store, will seize upon attention-catching usages without inspection of their linguistic merit, as if they were life-saving scraps of verbal nutriment.

Definitions, and the seeking to know meaning, can put things right elementarily, between people and their words. But, as we have tried to make understandable, language exists as an internally organized structure of words, words in their character of meaning-entities; and the knowledge of words as

such entities, the knowledge of meanings, cannot be effective unless it is an organized one—unless it is correspondent with the internal linguistic order from which the words derive their functionality. As we have also tried to make understandable, the late-modern academic modes of organizational interpretation of language are linguistically worthless: they impose systems of organization on the words of a language according to ideas of structure formed at points of externalistic observation (psychological, paralogical, phonetical or usage-orientated) from which no trustworthy sightings can be made of meanings. The full need is for definition performed from, and stimulative of, a sense of the inward organizedness of language. Such definition would present words in linguistic perspective. It can be said that this is linguistic rather than literary definition, the latter being exemplified by the grouped defining performed in books of synonyms, and by the little synonymies appended to definitions in some dictionaries.

With "literary" definition, meaning-differences between words are viewed not as basic features of meaning-difference but subtle distinctions capable of being suggested for the benefit of those who want to use words with exceptional nicety. Definition in which words are seen in linguistic perspective also stands in contrastive relation to the analytic viewing of words that makes their meanings circumstantial attributes—variable complements to word-sound, not intrinsically knowable, definitionally. The evaluating of words by placing them thus in scientific perspective has the attraction of seeming to make for intellectual honesty, and to compare favorably with the treating of words from the literary point of view, as tending to be intellectually superficial, and in practical effect, to top confusion with confusion.

The viewing of words with definitional focusing on their rational impingement on others within the framework of language as a structure of rationally integrated words has never before been envisaged, recommended, or attempted. In so far as this book is concerned with the practicalities of lexicography—and it is so specifically, besides being concerned with broad questions of linguistic principle, and of moral and spiritual principle as intimately involved in linguistic principle—its purpose is to advance, and make familiar, the idea that to view words as thus embraced in language, and held in rational relation with one another within its general scope of meaning-coverage, and, in particular ways, within particular areas of these, is a real alternative to the present word-evaluating courses with words, which increasingly corrupt the confidence of people in language, and in themselves.

There is a tragic aspect to the labors of the synonymists, which have been marked in many cases by notably earnest, devoted, studious efforts to teach how to avoid confusing words commonly confused in meaning—almost inevitably confused, the fine straining to achieve a *little* illumination of areas of

confusion seems to show. They cannot do that to which they commit themselves because what they do presupposes a meaning-likeness so great in the words they treat of that only delicate extensions of the limits of definition—momentary extensions, as it were, for glimpses of obscure possible distinctions of meaning—are conceivable as practicable: they labor, that is, in educated vain, they work upon an accepted basis of faintly qualifiable impossibility. The intensity of the intellectual effort exerted in this field exceeds that of the effort exerted in the straight lexicographical field, but the practical results are insignificant; every conscientious synonymist must at some point perceive that the synonymizing process cannot succeed even to the extent to which the ordinary lexicographical one does. The lexicographically instructed mind is left vaguely informed: the synonymics-taught mind is enriched with information of tentative precision, which dissipates in the effort to make use of it—is without residue, though perhaps of persuasive interest initially.

Dictionaries assume no burdens of classification of words in meaning-kinds, no burdens of definitional meaning-comparison. They excite in their public no expectation of an ordering of things verbal; every offering of definitional information is an independent item. As no responsibility of word-ordering, sorting-out, is assumed by the lexicographers, so no responsibility of concern with meaning-distinction is thrust upon the public by them. The little synonymies placed in some dictionaries after certain chosen definitional articles are as parenthetical insertations for the interest of the exceptionally careful word-user; and the cursory character of these expository additions marks them as complimentary asides, not of essential relevance to problems of word-meaning. Dictionaries throw back the book of language at the users of words without attempting any orderly presentation of them or suggesting that words that make a language are necessarily in a state of order; the alphabetical presentation of them is understood by everyone to be but a convenience of formal order. Books of synonyms throw the book of discrimination at the users of words. They propose by their groupings, the existence of patterns of interreference and distinction among words, but the words of their demarcated groups seem accidentally islanded together by collision, rather than to be words standing naturally together, by the operation of the principles of order of the linguistic system to which they belong.

A language needs a system. But, it not only needs one: it has one. And, a language not only has a system: it *is* one. The system of a language resides in it. The meanings of the words of a language *are* the language's system. Through their meanings the words are collected into a language, and organized according to their total functional compatibility—the rational potentialities of general relationship in their meaning-differences, and of individual difference in their meaning-relationships. Neither dictionaries nor books of synonyms re-

flect the systematic nature of the language they deal with in their different definitional approaches to it; and, in consequence, the scope of their definitional labors is—is with works of both sorts—something less than definitional, is not fully, properly, linguistic. What is it, then? Their scope could only be satisfactorily identified in terms that we have used and expounded repeatedly in this book: they both labor definitionally within the scope of usage.

Dictionaries concern themselves with describing the usage followed within a range representative of the proclivities, in matters of word-use, of the majority of literate speakers of the reported-on language. The prevailing standards of what constitutes literateness are social: that is linguistically respectable which meets reigning criteria of social respectability in the treatment of matters of word-meaning, by people, in their use of words. As democratization overtakes the verbal processes of social custom, the conception of the socially respectable in them broadens towards the gradual elimination of the aspect of class-status in the ways of managing words: the convention-line between what is "done" and what is "not done," verbally, grows fainter and fainter. Since the application of criteria of social respectability to lexicographical problems neither introduces order into the field of word-meaning nor reveals what order may naturally obtain there, the fading out of socially orientated notions of literateness makes no marked difference in the lexicographical scene—or in the scene of usage. Grumblings from here and there greet the new editions of dictionaries, or the new dictionaries, in which new relaxations from codes of usage-conduct are given the linguistic nod; but the long-existing, and fundamental, disorder in the view and understanding of the English language that its speakers and its authorities have of it has immunized them from comprehending how far they have gone in loss of linguistic self-possession. Judged by what has been English speaking-custom in the long present, and the familiar past, the immediate custom-manifestations continue, mainly, a monotony of general declining literateness, general growing linguistic incoherence.

With the books of synonyms, the definitional labors of which resemble those of the dictionaries in not being truly definitional, fully linguistic, but confined to the giving of accounts of usage, the standards of what constitutes literateness are by intention higher than those of the dictionaries: the usage of which they are patrons is presented as superior usage, "nice" as distinguished from the ordinary. The social aspect of this area of word-interest and word-custom is less obvious than is that of the area of which general lexicography takes charge, it being overcast with literary considerations and concerns.

The book of synonyms is ostensibly designed for an audience with a special literary sensitivity to meaning-distinctions between words about which ordinary literate word-users trouble themselves little, if at all. The difference between this audience and that of the dictionary is conceived in terms of literary

education, the former being thought of as above-normal in endowment with it. Any differentiation between the speakers of a language on the basis of difference in degree of literateness produces, in the general social atmosphere of modern speaking, an uncomfortable class-significance. The consulters of books of synonyms cannot escape having a somewhat upper-class status in the linguistic regions of social custom; and the efforts of the books of synonyms to serve propensities to superior finesse of usage in these regions, which become ever more thoroughly democratized, were doomed to fail to have minor effects even on literary usage. It will take a new conception of literateness, one dissociated from existing lexicographical conceptions of it and also from the conceptions on which the books of synonyms are based (all of which make the knowledge of language the knowledge of usage rather than the knowledge of words, and deal with words, thus, with more social than linguistic emphasis on considerations of verbal correctness), to open the English language to direct view.

The concluding word of this section, and of this chapter, is reserved for Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases,* which approaches the vocabularistic scope of a dictionary, though it provides no definitions, and presents its contents in arrangements of meaning-affinity patterns in which there is taken into spacious account the gross and intricate variety of possibilities of word-choice offered by the language. Those who use the book habitually, in easy familiarity with its titled meaning-divisions and meaning-subdivisions, ordered to philosophic notions of an association and opposition of ideas, can come to feel that it performs services more substantial, more broadly helpful, than any book of synonyms could. Though it is but an elaborate network of word-lists, it is widely thought of as an honorary book of synonyms; it supplies so much information about the language as composed centrally of such words that the absence of "discriminations" is hardly missed. The categorically organized presentation of so many words, the distribution of them, as they are used with differing idea-associations and by differing senses, to their places on the so carefully divided and sub-divided, nearly all-covering vocabularistic map, affords its users a feeling of having the language laid out before them as an open book. The like of this feeling has not been afforded to speakers of the language by any dictionary or book of synonyms, or other book of word-listings, in this, or in past, time.

Roget's *Thesaurus* is like an ordering imposed upon a great collection of things of all kinds, and great variety in their kinds, that have been tumbled from their proper places by an earthquake. The linguistic disarray with which it attempts to deal is not the consequence of a sudden upheaval, but, rather, of a slow falling-in upon itself of people's linguistic intelligence; but the disarray is a mental actuality, a something tremendous, and far-extended, that has hap-

pened. The *Thesaurus* intensifies the confusion people find themselves in, among their words, because its ordering of them is by a philosophic scheme devised for easy access to the bewilderingly numerous choice-possibilities: its elaborateness conceals how much people are left by it on their own, ultimately, and encourages vocabularistic recklessness by exciting a sense of knowledge of meaning-relationship and meaning-difference with mere page-on-page evidence that words exist in a state of intricate collectedness. Yet the recognition it conveys of there being much order implicit in language, and the suggestion that awareness of this is requisite for a fully intelligent use of words, have had the effect of tempering the increasing ignorance of them with a vague respect for them as existent in ready, at-hand, profusion. A certain mental pleasure taken in the profusion, the invitation it holds out to explore, explore, choose, choose, has been part of the attraction the book has exerted through the years.

There is reason for conjecturing that the *Thesaurus* has been gradually losing prestige as an indispensable word-book, and particularly in respect to the pleasure of wide word-choice associated with it, while continuing to be, automatically, of the number of word-books rated as standard linguistic equipment. The terminological vocabulary of people has greatly expanded, but their general, their main, vocabulary—and it is with this that the *Thesaurus* is in principle occupied—has dwindled to a word-supply symptomatic of verbal impoverishment. This is hidden in the false fluency promoted by the availability of a very large stock of word- and phrase-fads, and a continual turn-over in portions of it. The immediate effect is one of seemingly creditable verbal sufficiency and liveliness; but it is actually an ever-vanishing effect, the eventual effect being one of less than happy, natural, sufficient expressiveness.

PART FIVE

The Make-Up of Language

CHAPTER 13

Words and Terms

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1.

We have already pointed to the existence of a radical division in kind between the verbal entities that make up a language, all these entities being generally known as words, but a very large portion of them having a character distinctly different from that which is generally thought of as peculiar to words, these being, rather than "plain" words, "terms." The difference is so great that there would be reason for separating the kinds from each other in presenting them lexicographically, even to the making of a book-separation, on the ground that words are components of language of a first order, terms, components of language of a supplementary, second, order, and that the practice of mingling them as all of one order of words—followed in dictionaries—contributes heavily to people's confusion as to the nature of words and of word-meaning.

The peculiar character of a term is revealed in the extended use of "term" as a rhetorical identification. To speak "in terms of" this-and-that is to have this-and-that, in one's speaking, as the name of one's subject or subjects: one is speaking *about* this-and-that. To "define one's terms" is very different from defining one's words. One defines one's words by stating the meanings they have in the common language, for use by any and all speakers of it. In defining one's terms, one is stating what these words are intended to identify as one's subject, or subjects, of reference. One does not say, for instance, "'Liberty of thought' means . . ." and then take pains to define the words "liberty" and "thought" and illuminate their phraseological relation as so meaning: one says "I mean by 'liberty of thought' . . .": that is, one tells what one means to identify by the phrase, what "thing" one is naming with them.

Where "term" is peculiarly applicable to a single word, one is at some distance from the rhetorical sense of "term": one is at the heart of a principle of difference in how words mean. The difference between how terms mean, and how words mean, is such that terms ought not be described as "meaning," at all. A term specifies, presents something factual to the mind, or supposable or imaginable as such, rather than a distinction of thought, a determinant element of the rational process that speaking, in its logical assembling of words, is. If one started going through a language's total vocabulary with the object of differentiating between words and terms, according to the differences we have described, one would feel a mounting uneasiness at the evidence of the very large number of words in the language that seemed to fall into the category of terms. Could there be so many words in the language functionally more name-like than word-like, though established in one's consciousness, and in the courses of common use, as plain, regular, ordinary words? There are very many—even more, and many more, than straight words. A strict separation into the two categories would show the latter to amount to a small word-core surrounded by a large quantity of terminological pulp. The classical textbook definition of a noun, "a noun is the name of something," applies in strict linguistic actuality to those nouns which are terms rather than pure words; and there would have to be joined to them those adjectives that, name-like, categorize rather than qualify, add factual data of identification to the modified nouns rather than a distinction in thought—that provide reference-matter rather than meaning. Of all such words, and of all words that are, essentially, terms, it should be said that they signify rather than mean, have significations rather than meanings.[1]

To separate the words of a language according to a word-term differentiation of character would mystify and perturb dictionary-users, accustomed to a mass-presentation of verbal items—words, terms (the common and the special and the extra-special), *and* names—without any distinction of kind, in alphabetical ranks, and introduce into the task of dictionary-makers problems of word-ordering and word-definition—of linguistic evaluation generally—altogether new to lexicographical experience. Such innovations could not be usefully attempted unless they issued from new perceptions of the nature of language, new feeling of the reality of words as inhering in their meanings, new understanding of the make-up of language, new seriousness of concern with linguistic values. Moreover, for such innovations to succeed at least in exciting some general interest, there would have to be something else in the atmosphere of linguistic discussion besides the ideas peculiar to contemporary linguistics, which treat of language as a collection of phenomena of a certain kind, to be evaluated from without and not as an internally self-consistent unity. So long as there is no break in the predominance of those ideas, there

will be no public weather favorable to changes in lexicographical procedures based on ideas derived from principles discoverable in language itself: a new closeness to language must be somehow achieved, in which the new distances created by contemporary linguistics between language and its speakers are eliminated, along with long-intervening ones.

We mean, here, not just to argue for lexicographical changes, but to present a new view of lexicographical principle, and to inject into the general field of language-opinion something that may weaken the spell of what has come to prevail as enlightened linguistic thinking, and to open the way thus for a rebeginning, by the general users and the scholars of words together, in the knowledge of language. A change in the general linguistic mood might make possible a separation of the lexicographical task—except for admittedly superficial mass-coverage of word-meanings in encyclopaedic dictionaries like the standard dictionaries of the present, for the sake of *elementary* convenience—into a usefully distinct production of word-books, books that were true books of words, *word*-books, and term-books. A book of the former kind would have the justification of being of fundamental linguistic convenience to the users of words. It would be designed to deal in technicalities that were actually those of verbal definition, while the book of the other kind would be designed to deal in the technicalities of categorical description (the definition of things) proper to the linguistic character of terms. Both together would improve the sense of linguistic orientation—would help the users of words to orientate themselves *in* the language, instead of occupying the external positions towards it that, at varying degrees of remove from it, they now do. Perhaps only the substantial demonstration of the difference between the two orders of words that such a division in lexicographical treatment could provide would adequately impress on the users of words the implications of the differences as to the mentally right use of them; for the equating of the two orders of words dulls the mind's sensitivities to word-meaning values, and affects the very operations of thought, these partaking of the mind's weaknesses of understanding of the words with and into which it forms its thought.

The physical separation of words and terms might be satisfactorily achieved by dividing dictionaries into two parts, a leading linguistic section consisting of definitions of words, and a supplemental extension consisting of explanations of terms. Either into such a terms-section or into a separate terms-volume could be injected some of the reference-book sort of material with which dictionaries are greatly encumbered, both in their main body and in the little libraries of appendices that have become a routine dictionary service. Much of the convenience-information provided by dictionaries could be dispensed with as having no linguistic point, or only indirect linguistic point, and as making generally for disorder and distraction for the linguistic-intelligence.

But the problem of differentiation between words and terms will have to be faced on the ground of principle before it is faced practically. What the practical elaboration of such a treatment of words required could not be anticipated without a firm understanding of what the principle involved required, in attitude to the words of the two kinds as subjects of definition. In pursuing the indications of principle, we mean to go as far as there seems to be need of our doing to make the desirability of the plan evident, and, also, the possibility of its being realized. The renovation of English lexicography depends crucially, we consider, on the recognition of the division of the words of the language according to the difference in word-character we have described, and on apprehension of the importance of this recognition for intellectually sound definitional dealing with words.

2.

A comparison of the definitions provided for words—what we call words "proper"—and the definitions provided for terms reveals a difference that can appear to justify the view that, in general, word-meanings are not statable with the specificness possible with the definition of words of scientific, technical or categorically physical reference. (Let "change" be taken for an example of a word proper, or "honest," or "beauty," and "nitrify," or "scarious," or "carbon," be taken for an example of a term.) The difference in definition-character has become fixedly associated with the notion that the scientific term or word of "concrete" reference is the linguistic exception that proves the rule that specificness of definition, with words, is, generally, impossible, because the meanings of words are, generally, not definite enough for definitional accuracy of statement to be the objective in principle of lexicographical performance. The name-function of certain words, their having a main purpose of reference identification, yields a standard of specificness of definition and exactitude of use regarded as fundamentally alien to the nature of language: The words yielding this conception are themselves not full-fledged words, are at a level of linguistic development below the linguistically mature meaning-level: they more identify than mean—formally, they mean, but practically they *refer* (identify something for the needs of the context).

Confusion over the linguistic status of the words of a language that require the least discretion in their use, the words with which there can be no problem of choice because there is only a single possibility of correctitude with them, as there is with, for example, the names of persons ("John," "Mary," for instance, are the only right names of persons so called), becomes the ground of theory as to how much exactitude of expression, and, to begin with, definite knowledge of word-meaning, is or is not achievable in the use of words. The

mandatory components of speech are taken to be, ideally, better words than those that, requiring to be chosen, rather than dictating their use, are the most involved in the total function of language—that of serving intellectual determination. The words the use of which must be critically intelligent to be good use are considered capable of wavering approximations to the exact in expression, while the honors for precision are assigned to the words the use of which is a matter of prescription rather than of choice—that is, to the terms.

The difference between words proper and terms can be pointedly described in relation to the idea of "the right word." When a term is the right word, the use of any other word would be an error—it would be technically, factually, incorrect. When a word is the right word, the rightness is in the field of rationality. There is a finer scale of rightness in question, a gradation of alternatives from the perfect down through grades of the rationally possible to the rationally impossible: with true words, a rightness is achievable of a kind of correctness by the measure of which that kind which is characteristic of term-rightness is meagre, in comparison. So much of the potentiality of rational exactitude is thrown away, in the benumbed state into which the linguistic sensibilities have fallen, that very many true words lose their linguistic distinction for their users, and sink into terminological ruts; the use of them becomes almost automatic, little more than a reference-performance, with meaning dwindled to the features of association-identification.

To distinguish between words, terms, names, is not to make invidious distinctions! Perception of the term-character in words conduces to their nicer use, to a general more beautiful use of words. There is no question of a need to be on guard "against" terms. They go with the language, a language, they are for its service, and as they are put to good service partake of its virtues. A morality of terms is integral with a morality of language. All words of a language having some vocabularistic name-force being, by linguistic principle, *terms,* a morality of terms covers the use of such words, however strong that force in them. They are, linguistically, terms, not names—a language does not have names in its vocabulary. At their entrance into a language, terms usually have their significations already hardened into them, and are, thus, more difficult to incorporate in the general rationale of the language. They can be made responsive to the general rational discipline of the language, but they remain, so long as they remain terms, words serving the needs of reference rather than those of distinction of meaning; they are the language's rationally weaker components.

A test of difference in verbal character applied to the verbal content of language can reveal hitherto unperceived aspects of the nature of language, and unsuspected problems in the understanding of its nature, underlying those for which no solutions have been found except varying theories. The test

simplifies, considerably, the quantitative view of language, and in so doing makes it easier for attention to focus itself on essentialities. We shall try to demonstrate the kind of view of words that the application of the test affords by examining a few words in the light of the word-term principle of difference. We shall take for a start the common word "cat." We judge this word to be a term. But to think of this word as a term requires an alteration of attitude to the general vocabulary that cannot but, at first, seem to make for unnaturalness and disorder in one's relationship to words. Ease seems to pass: how does one say *cat,* thinking of it as a term? How shall one know what to do, in speaking, with this word seen as a term rather than as a word? What advantage could there be, of improvement in one's control of one's speaking and in its clarity for others, from such difference-making between words?

The dictionary-definition of "cat" will be seen to be a terminological explanation, not a statement of a meaning, not an account of an act of thought of logical value. It is to be discovered thus that there is much room for improvement in the definition of such words. The actual material of identification given for "cat," for instance, is short of adequate. There is a loose biological characterization, and a historical ascription of house-pet and rat-and-mouse catching functions that is no better than a broad hint for a good guess. It does not match an observant child's sense of the substance of cat-identity; nor would it serve to evoke verisimilar imagination of such a creature in the mind of someone who by chance had had no experience or previous knowledge of creatures of this kind. In making this criticism we do not have in mind as the lexicographically adequate a scientific article in miniature; we see possible improvement as a matter of specification improved by a more intellectually active general articulativeness. The definitions of terms suffer as do the definitions of words proper, in conventional lexicographical procedure, from the intellectual weakness in the exercise of the linguistic energies that characterizes the general use of words—inclusive of the literary use of them. The deficiency in the case of the lexicographical use of words contributes more to human failure in the activities of the mind that take linguistic form than the background rôle in verbal expression customarily assigned to dictionaries suggests. Dictionaries are where the standards of thought-coherence and expression-consistency that have gained acceptance in a society are put on record: speakers of a language get their clues from its dictionaries as to how much looseness in their use of words will count as normal in their general linguistic environment.

Intricate considerations lie in store for those who, conscious of the word-term division of words, and further, of the transformation processes by which words, true words, can emerge from a nominal or terminological status, are moved to scrutinize what seem to be terms, in main character, for evidence of

potential or actual *word*-character. What would there be to think of "cat" from this point of view? Could "cat" "mean," rather than just signify a subject of reference? A nebulous mass of ideas, attitudes, deductions from experience, is magnetized in people's minds around the known fact, cat. What could be the measure of the possibility of injecting some evaluative thought from this into the terminological substance of the word, that would infuse it with the qualities of a word? There would have to be an emphasis of rational, rather than of perceptual, awareness in the mental quality of the word: the word's subject would have to exist in a field of intellectual perspective, in some degree of logical relation to other subjects in the field, not in the narrow perspective of its isolated factuality. The definition of "cat" as a word would have to justify it as an expression of understanding rather than as a denotation of observation; it would take investigators of the word into the heart of an evaluation rather than, simply, redress factual ignorance. If it could reveal the word to be one existing in rational distinction from others, not in separation, the case of its entitlement to word, instead of term, rating would be settled: this is the ultimate test.

Could "cat" become a word of *choice?* The words that spring up associatively in mind concern, as it does, identification comprising no rational process of distinction. "Dog," "mouse," are merely *other* terms of identification, in relation to "cat," and "cat" is of the same order in their regard. No field of choice exists with "cat"—by evidence up to the present of a general intransmutability between the content of human apprehension of subjects of factual reference and that of subjects of reason, and by the immediate force of a particular rigidity of signification in the case of "cat" and its vocabularistic familiars within their factually determinate boundaries.

Since the principle that we have been outlining involves special attention to the rational values inhering in language, as constituting, so to speak, the machinery of linguistic government, its application to lexicography could foster a sense of need of new modes of treatment of terms, called for by their being participants in a rationally governed system of words. There would not only be to be considered the treatment of such terms as "cat," in a new lexicographical dispensation: there would be problems of definitional evaluation raised by words of a kind obviously strong in term-character that, yet, seemed to have a character, also, kindred to that of words proper—to be, though terms, words of choice at the same time. Examples of such words are "soil," "earth," "dirt." The emphasis here is on the function of factual or identificatory reference. But is there not an element of rational distinction in the significations of the words? And, if so, what lexicographical procedure would satisfy such a peculiarity of compound character? And, then, what of words—vocabularistic components called words—the character of which is predomi-

nantly that of *names?* "Petunia," "oak," "wren"—are these, even, terms? But not to deal with them lexicographically would be procedural tyranny. And to deal with them by isolating them in a separate lexicographical section, or vocabulary volume, for dealing with common names, would lay upon lexicography and the public responsibilities of scholarly perspective for which there is no present preparation. Furthermore, allowance must be made for the possibility of its being found that such words are best dealt with as features of the terminological portion of the language.

3.

As it has been seen, there extend, from the perception of the existence of an important division in the vocabularistic make-up of language, questions of important linguistic interest suggesting the existence of a network of problems centered in word-term differentiation. We have placed "cat" and "dog" on the term side of the vocabularistic dividing-line. But, are they to be further known as categorical names, each the name of a kind of animal? To what extent *is* a term a categorical name? One may anticipate such problems of word-evaluation at fairly easy-minded speculative pace until such a simple word as "boy" is thought of: can this be a mere term, a word of mere identificatory reference? Is this word concerning a form of a being of *human* nature only an item of a terminological list, with perhaps a categorical nominalness predominating in its character? Could its existence in a field of choice with "lad," "youth," suffice to allow it the status of a word proper, apart from the importance it has in respect to the humanness of its subject?

What of a possible meaning-character of "boy" as involving a rational distinction concerning individual sexual nature? But in this respect no field of choice exists: with the pair "boy," "girl," the use of one or the other is mandatory, by fact—there is no choice. What of the word "sex," which bears so much stress of use in these times? If it emerges from sound vocabularistic evaluation as a term, the intellectual, and emotional, consequences, as determined through the linguistic effects of the evaluation, would be very considerable. The case of "human" is a far more serious one—too serious to be merely a subject of speculation. The word "man" is a far less sensitive case as a subject of speculation. One ought to ask, indeed: is its vocabularistic character any different, fundamentally, from that of "boy?"

It seems linguistically axiomatic that "man" is a term of identificatory reference, having a function of reference, a signification—is not a word that means, a word requiring rational discretion for its right use. In some uses it is equated with "representative human being." But such representativeness is inconsistent with its terminological significance, in which, to our understand-

ing, is its main function; the factor of humanness figures in the word indirectly, in subordinate implication. In old English there were two words "man," one a term of sexual reference, the other a term signifying the possession of human identity, both words strongly physical in their connotations, the latter for a while a potent competitor to the former. Gradually the former took on supplementary sentimental connotations, which, however, never became literally part of the word, and the latter word died, *not to be replaced*. In modern English there is, veritably, only the single word "man," the term of sexual reference. It is impossible to use the word with total linguistic sincerity as a word free of special sexual reference, one generalizing humanness of identity, personifying human beings in the aggregate.

Appreciation of what is linguistically involved in the use of the word "man," and the matching terminological word "woman," and the word "sex," and an accompanying linguistic sensitivity to the problem raised by the important word "human" (does it merely signify a classification, or does it *mean?*), are the responsibilities of a lexicography of *human* proportions: all words, in a humanly adequate lexicography, would show their linguistic value, the extent of their linguistic potentialities and limitations. Such a lexicography would blow a cleansing air through the dusty vocabularistic corridors in which human beings, and dictionaries, keep words stacked: people could begin to know what they had in their words, and to appraise their own intellectual integrity or deficiency in the use of them. The considerations that would come pouring in upon the intelligence would, as we have suggested, be intricate, numerous, difficult to shape for practical attention. But language is intricate, vocabularies are copious, the use of words embraces large problems, serious difficulties. The use of words has for long not had its due of particularized attention; the particulars of contemporary linguistics belong to the intricacies of their systems of scientific analysis of language and its forms of order, not to ingenerate features of language itself. Much of the habitual imaginative dull-mindedness of people, in present speaking and writing practice, would be chased, much mentally harmful haphazardness be eliminated from thinking habits, if such new consideration as we have brought forward penetrated into the general mental scene of word-use, and attention to language. Some of the new considerations would be on matters of minor, some on matters of major, importance. For example, if "man" is a term, what of the words "male" and "masculine?" Do they not together provide a possibility of choice, present some distinction of meaning? And what of "manly" and "virile?" Is the problem of determining the verbal character of these words merely a minor one?

What of the word "sex?" The terminological characteristics are evident. But what of the great questions of natural and human importance related to, extending from, the factual basis of the word as a word of reference? Does the

word lie in, as it were, a terminological cocoon from which it has not yet emerged into linguistic maturity? Is there not more to understand about the factual basis of the word, which, if understood, would enlarge it into a word eloquent with meaning? (And is "human" a like case to this?) Factually, the word concerns two opposing tendencies in the development of physical individuality, which are, yet, in direct relation, as well as in opposition, to each other. These tendencies manifest themselves plainly as conditions of procreation, yet they make a breach in life, mysteriously, that divides it from and against itself. Is the dualism the word signifies mere process-accident, become regularized, or has it in it a purpose of repair of the very breach perpetuated in it? A confused emotionality, centered in happy assumptions and unhappy experiences, attends the fact that the word particularizes, which overflows into the area of perplexity environing the word "human," in *its* indeterminate linguistic condition (for instance, is this dualism transcended in the connotative scope of "human," or is it not?). But whether the particular considerations raised by the word-term vocabularistic test be on matters of minor or major consequence, it obligates the adoption of a view of words that extends the boundaries of the lexicographical function to those of prime intellectual need. The difference between lexicography as it has been, and is, practised and what we endeavor to expose as necessary and possible in it is not encompassable with annexations of areas of academic experiment to conventional lexicography. The adoption of this view would initiate, of itself, a total re-examination of the vocabularistic substance of language.

4.

We shall at this point recapitulate the principles that we have been presenting with discursive elaboration. Of first importance for definition, first intellectual importance, are the words proper, the words of long and strong standing as full-fledged words, those in which the intrinsic intention is to mean, rather than to specify, and on the meaning-force of which the logical potency of word-use depends in general. Special problems exist in the evaluation of words that, though terminological in actual character, have accompanying associations (connotations) of a rational quality, bringing them to the verge of true-word character; also requiring special evaluative attention are words that, while being terms, have their signification qualified by some minor rational distinction. There is, that is, an important work of review to be done with words of the identity of terms that either seem to invite the infusion of rational content or to possess a certain degree of logical force within the limits of their terminological function. Such work, which can be described as one of intellectual stock-taking, might or might not result in the eventual transformation

of some of the common terms of the language into common *words;* it would, at the least, reveal what the linguistic condition was of terms having some complexity of connotation or of actual character. But the first, the main, responsibility of the kind of lexicographical labor we conceive to be critically requisite would be that in which the common words of the language—as distinguished from its common terms—underwent intellectual rehabilitation, through subjection to examination aimed at eliciting the rational distinctions in which inhered the validity of their identity as words that *mean.*

The word "truth" may be cited as an example of a word in the case of which a new rational determination of its meaning would be in the category of tasks of major linguistic usefulness. The determination would involve such procedures as isolating the very word from the variant word of the phrase "the truth," in which the quality of truth that verbal utterances are capable of possessing is not the entire meaning but a distinguishing quality of the kind of verbal utterance that this variation of "truth" signifies. It would further involve the centrally important procedure of establishing the word in that meaning-location in which the rational distinction that is its meaning has its source. "Verity," "veridicality," suggest themselves: with simultaneous consideration of "truth" and these other two words, one can begin to fix the orientations of "truth" (and proceed similarly with the other words) in the language as a word the function of which is, as is that of all true words, to carry out its principles of logical utterance—utterance that has a sane coherence. It ought to be understood, from what we have said on the subject of synonyms, that we do not have in mind a search for "synonyms" of "truth," for words having with it a common meaning, with some incidental features of difference. We cite "verity" and "veridicality" as words of different meaning from "truth," with an assumption that the three will be found to exist in linguistic relation to one another while differing by differences of meaning constituting in each case an entire difference of identity—each the maker, the enforcer, by its whole meaning, of a single and unique rational distinction. The determination of the co-inhabitants, with a word, of a meaning-locale requires far more general seriousness of linguistic purpose and far more intellectual industry than the field of labors of the synonymists can hold.

It might seem to some that a convenient account of the word-term differentiation could be provided by describing the words proper of a language as "abstract" words, and the terminological element of its vocabularistic make-up as "concrete" words. The terms "abstract" and "concrete" have a very limited range of use, and the principle of their use is more a matter of rhetorical opposition than opposition in the things characterized, the subjects of reference. Conventions exist as to what may be sensibly described as "abstract" and what as "concrete," but both words lack a definite, general validity, even

as mere terms; they are vague terminological appurtenances of an intellectually circumscribed field of parlance in which they serve certain forms of style, not needs of specification. Their service in special contexts of association with matters of formal logic, and with those of linguistic theory, has not given them any edge of lively specificness. They figure much in philosophical deliberation, and in literary, stylistic, critical, discussion involving ascription of word-character. But the larger the burden of identification, classification, specification, put upon them, the more crudely impotent they reveal themselves to be as informative words. One might say that all words involve abstraction. One might also say that all words involve concretion. The use of such terms, of words, for a purpose of contra-distinction can only divide them arbitrarily against themselves.

Understanding of the difference between a word and a term requires that the difference be examined in definite regard to function: it is a practically real difference of function. Some words, as we have described, have a logical function, the complex function of meaning; these we hold to be words in the full sense of the word "word." Other words can be described as having an evocative function, the simple function of making something present to the mind, for note to be taken of it, not to advance the logical evolvement of thought; and these we consider to be terms, to have the essential character that marks a word as a term. Such is the canon of word-difference that, as we judge, language itself sets.

A term should never be made to bear the main logical burden in any phase of a rational thought-process. If a term is used as an intellectual orientation-point, the course of thought will be twisted, sense will be disordered. The term "communism," for instance, used as a key-word in discussion, will obstruct thinking and communication, whether it is used in sympathy with, or opposition to, the ideas to which it refers. Saying little in itself, it becomes, when treated as meaning something, as being more than a reference-convenience, swollen with assumptions that much is being said with it; a monster of voiced inarticulateness overloads the vehicle of utterance carrying it, crushingly. All the doctrinal "ism" words tempt such endowment of them with a function of expressiveness they cannot fulfil; much that is spoken in which they figure is damaged by the false importance attached to them as substantial articulations. Not one such word can be safely used without some verification of the reference, some confirmation of correctness of use and of communicative understanding. A watch should be kept for words assumed to be words of general word-status that are, actually, terms the terminological character of which is obscured in their triteness. Thus, "will-power," a moralistic psychological term, somewhat faded, now, but not extinct, has no meaning, evokes only an area of reference-signification, one less and less visited as

the word acquires a prestige of meaning-importance. The word "will" itself has been sucked into the terminological procedures of philosophy, and emerged to a large extent a commonplace of its real word-self. "Originality" is an instance of a term that, generalized to triteness, passes for a main word of the intelligence. It is a term limited in applicability to literary and other professional performance, flatly technical in its actual linguistic value, signifying nothing more than a peculiarity of not borrowing thoughts and procedures from others! But, elevated from its term-status, it acquires a false word-status as meaning a high quality of thought, of individual, independent, performance-merit: it does not *mean,* it is not definable, it is only identifiable as an instrument of reference. Thus, consciousness of the existence of the word-term difference in word-character can assist in the ridding of one's vocabulary of inexpressive tritenesses. To "originality" could be added the ineloquent "perceptive," a term differing from the ordinary word "perceptive," which has a meaning within the grammatical meaning-norm of "perceive."

The term "perceptive" is a word of praise, having a force of reference to exceptional intellectual sensibility associated with the faculty of perception. It serves in the field of the psychological evaluation of intellectual capacity; its use as such ranges from the pages of literary reviews to mere personal comment of a flattering order. Though a poor term, because its reference-objective is not specific, only vaguely suggestive, it acquires the status, in the general vocabulary, of an ordinary word of rather fine style. And to the adverse effect of this on word-use standards must be joined the damage done to the actual ordinary word "perceptive," which, with its plain non-laudatory meaning, confined to what is pertinent to "perceive," comes to exist in blurry union with the other, and to be little thought of, and little used, as an independent word. The term "perceptive" belongs to a race of terms abstracted from ordinary words and endowed with a stylishness of special reference that wears into cliché-character because the reference-value is, in actuality, weak. Many "ing" words are of this sort: "discerning," "interesting," "surprising," "fascinating," "shocking," for example, are all used as if there were signified in their use peculiar qualifications or intensifications of the plain, or "straight" meaning-value of the foundation-word. The foundation-meaning loses, rather than gains, particularity or special force in them.

Some terms consist of two or more words solidified into a linguistic unit: "bird of passage," "bird of prey," "vitreous humor," for example, are terms rather than ordinary word-combinations. The recognition of them as such—as stock conveniences of utterance, lacking in expressive force—should simplify for users of words the view of what they are doing as such, and increase their sensitivity to the general quality of their verbal utterances, by the measure of expressiveness. Among word-combinations that ought to be evaluated as

terms should be placed compound words the components of which lose their meanings to some stock-function of reference instead of reinforcing each other in meaning in their joined state. This is not necessarily the fate of compound words; but only with those of fresh making, or, generally, where the word-value of each component makes itself forcefully felt, can one be sure that the form is not a term, either in vocabularistic or historical fact.

Differentiation between words and terms illuminates the errors that lurk in the new theories concerning words and language that have become intellectually fashionable, and puts many peculiarities of the general linguistic thinking of the time in historical perspective. A philosophical-scientific view of language that for a time had much influence on the course of twentieth-century linguistic thinking, the "symbolic logic" that Bertrand Russell put into intellectual circulation, can be perceived by the light of the character-difference between words on which we have been dwelling to reduce all words, in effect, to terms—that is, to words that are logically inert—except those of a certain connective sort, endowed, in this theory, with the major logical functions.

There comes to be a general infatuation with terms, as words that, although presumed to be "hard" words because of their learned provenience, are yet—as they cannot but be by the kind of words they are—of a flat simplicity; their undemandingness, their raising no rational questions of meaning-distinction, relaxes sensitivity to verbal complexities calling for attentive exercise of the linguistic faculties. Many words that are words proper lose much of their reality as the kind of words they are, in contemporary uses of them, coming to be, under the influence of the linguistic practices of science, which are aimed at convenience first of all, almost as little expressive as terms. The word "truth," a word that appears in this book repeatedly as of a meaning in which the essence of linguistic purport is lodged, has acquired in the eyes of many, and especially in the eyes of those dedicated to intellectual modernity, a simple terminological look. Its meaning has been reshaped to fit the principles of scientific relativity: the contemporary pluralistic notion of truth has been converted into a term of modernized philosophy—as which it has usurped the identity of the standard word. The standard word "truth" seems an antiquity, a ruin not to be put together again.

Evaluation of words by the word-term measure can reveal the ineptitude of the offerings of linguistic science of cures for contemporary confusion in attitudes to language. The cures do not save language to human possession but put it to use as an instrument for redefinitions of the human intellectual nature, of which language itself is the definition. Linguistic science makes language the servant of diagnostic theories of the functioning of the human mind as something apart from language, to which the mechanisms of language can provide the clues. When language is treated so, words lose their force of in-

dividuality—the terms, the words proper, all: they are not effectually "there." But reacquaintance with the word-content of language is not just by a lexicographical system of vocabulary-composition analysis. A system by which one's words are recognized in their individual belonging to and in one's language must have in it the linguistic sense of one's own mind, the natural linguistic intelligence of the human mind.[2]

The word-term key to the composition of language is capable of clarifying the character of every component of a language with respect to its having or not having a full logical, which is to say a full linguistic, function; and the criteria it brings to bear on vocabularistic scrutiny are, thus, of critical importance for a practical approach to problems of meaning-determination. These criteria are inseparable, however, from other points of judgement and consideration that need to be kept in mind in an exploring of the verbal material of a language. All such points may be called—with understatement of the importance of the questions they involve—points of technical evaluation; but they reflect a presiding over the processes of word-meaning and word-use of the general principles of language—of which we have in a previous chapter given an account. One such point outside the vocabularistic feature of word-term difference, but relevant to it in that it takes both words and terms into its province of evaluation, is the implicit rule we have distinguished of *one meaning, one word.* We speak of it again here to indicate how it applies in this matter of words and terms, word or term.

No component of a language, of whichever kind its function, be it one of expressing a distinction or conveying the identity of a reference, can be used as a double-purpose or a plural-purpose word. There is an unalterable linguistic requisite of perfect individuality for every word of a language (word in its all-inclusive sense), ensuring a coherent comprehensive interfunctioning of all its words. The imposing of a further purpose on a word assimilates the vocable portion of it to the added purpose, separating this from that word and adding a further *word* to the language. The word "sex," which we have commented on as one that must be, as things linguistically are, counted as a term, for all the suggestions of *meaning* attending it, can be cited in connection with this point of meaning-exclusiveness. As a vocable "sex" serves more than one word—more than one term. One of these terms specifies the fact of an all-pervasive physiological difference. Another specifies the fact of an instinct-animated interrelation of corporeal entities on the basis of the difference.

A point of linguistic scruple with regard to terms as a distinct kind of words existing among the general kind (words proper, the true words) is that there exist among them *special* terms—special in relation to terms in their general character as such. The term-area of a language's vocabulary itself is divided between terms that are part of the vocabulary and those, the special terms, that belong to linguistic enclaves, the peculiar private needs of which entirely gov-

ern their signification and use. An example of a special term that does not bear the mark of being one in people's consciousnesses is the word "man" as denoting animal *genus*. This dispenses with the sentimental civilities that characterize the common term "man" in its uses as a personal collective term having (supposedly) no sexual connotation, and presents with a rough honesty a male human animal as the identificatory symbol of human beings zoologically generalized. Apprehension of such vocabularistic features can clarify word-use in their particular areas; and the benefit extends into the areas of general terminology, and into the total vocabulary. Whatever affects the sense of word-values touches the human values of which language is an embodiment.

The special term comes very much less under the general intellectual influence of the language to which it belongs than does the common term. Special terms always compel an adaptation of other words to themselves, whatever the cost in rational adequacy and propriety of expression. To outsiders the speech of a particular linguistic enclave, pinned to an obligatory use of special terms, may seem jargon merely because the terms are strange; yet it is likely to be closer to jargon than those inside the enclave who feel at home with the terms can suspect it of being. The weight of verbal preoccupations, where speaking is conditioned by dependence on special terms, is with correct specification from the special point of view that the terms serve, and not with general logicality of expression (for the observance of the criteria of which a wide watch must be kept on the meaning-principles animating the words proper).

In a separation of words and terms for lexicographical purposes, care would have to be taken to distinguish special terms from common terms, and, then, to estimate whether the special terms merit inclusion in a general lexicographical word-book of the language. Decision would involve considering whether the special term could be employed without employing in conjunction with it the special vocabulary to which it belonged, without speaking from the special point of view of the vocabularistic enclave in which it originated. Special terms have to prove themselves as common terms before there can be allowance to them of general linguistic capability. Many special terms remain unusable in the general speech of unlimited contexts without precipitating intellectual disorder where they are used. There is always a certain linguistic (and intellectual) savageness in the making of special terms, which they absorb, and do not easily outgrow. In the present-day appropriation by science (the sciences) of the entire domain of human existence as its (their) subject-field—with the public responding to the invasion either with a welcome of subservient diffidence or, where there is some intellectual vanity, with satisfaction in the sense of access to knowledge on a grand scale, the stuff of a universal almanac—special terms are tumbled into, are tumbled about in, the ordinary courses of speaking, and writing, in greater and greater numbers. Ordinary speakers are drawn into the arbitrary privilege-taking of the special-term ver-

bal atmosphere, in which accommodation is made to standards of verbal economy at the cost of lowered standards of linguistic effectuality.

The queer twistings to which ordinary words are subjected in specialistic use—special terms being continually improvised out of them by the specialistic-minded, in the mere course of their pursuing their professional habits of speech—become features of ordinary parlance, at first of the parlance of ordinary speakers ambitious of up-to-date vocabularistic sophistication. Such false enrichment of the ordinary vocabulary intensifies already existing confusion as to linguistic standards, and as to where authority lies in the determination of verbal correctness. For guidance towards correctness in the use of words there is needed a lexicography centered in a fresh apprehension of the nature of things linguistic, and a new perception of vocabularistic conditions of order. Even without the influx of scientific terms in the recent intellectual era onto the common speaking-ground, introducing vocabularistic novelties into the existing linguistic confusion that have worsened it, a new, salvaging work of lexicography would have been the order of the linguistic redemptive day. The linguistic damage wrought by science, in the helter-skelter enlargement of the ordinary vocabulary with scientific terms, has done no more than advance a chronic state of emergency to an extreme.

5.

We have been picturing the confusion attending the general use of words that results from the want of consciousness of there being a difference in kind dividing the words that constitute the working vocabulary of language. Some words have the peculiarity of being terms, and this peculiarity has effect in all word-use. But no notice of the fact is taken in the minds of the users of words; no practice exists of critical checking of the said or the written with respect to this difference. The failure in due attention to the fact is a defect in sensitivity to the inherent properties of language of no different order from the weakness of sense of word-meaning with which, generally, the users of words have become affected in the world of the modern intellectual era. Maintenance of an activity of knowledge of words within the activity of use of them would comprise perception of term-character in some of the words used and of the full character of word possessed by others: the difference would present itself in the form of a difference in kind of meaning, in meaning-function. But when the population of an intellectual era has fallen into habits of using words with assumption of knowing their meanings automatically, while using them actually in a state of unchecked ignorance, incomprehension of the need of a sense of vocabularistic word-status becomes a failing of the linguistic intelligence of a distinct, separate importance.

Knowledge of the meanings of the words of a language suffices as the mode

of achievement of intellectual success in their use. Nevertheless, where the speakers of a language have been engulfed in a state of linguistic ignorance as a state of ease, the vocabularistic fact that some words are words of full function as words, while others, describable as terms, are of limited linguistic function, is necessarily the substance of an elementary precept for a literate approach to a new state of linguistic knowledge. To the general educative utility of acquaintance with the basic rule of vocabulary make-up that assigns to a large number of words the qualified verbal identity of being *terms* must be added a special reason for concern with the fact of their existence as linguistically legitimate verbal forms. This is, the linguistically—and intellectually—disastrous consequences of the continual injection, into the contemporary vocabulary in general repute as the vehicle of contemporary intelligence, of terms of varied scientific origination, so numerous as to obliterate possibility of their retaining the marks of their peculiar character.

Those who wish to clarify their linguistic bearings amidst the complicated disorder of a vocabulary crowded with terms of varied special scientific contexts, to the obscuring of the fundamental meaning-value that endows words with language-identity, must become term-conscious, and with particular regard to science-bred terms playing the part of "straight" words—words belonging to the main intellectual areas of their language's vocabulary.

The word "time," on which we have commented as a word that had been affected by involvement in scientific theory and experimental scientific terminology, can serve to illustrate how much the very minds, and processes of understanding, of people can be affected by the manipulation of words to fit the highly specialized concepts of scientific theorizing. The feeding into the ordinary word "time" of the scientific uses made of the word has befuddled the natural mental response to the concept brought to distinction in the ordinary word with ideas mingling natural linguistic "time" associations and special scientific "time" associations, to intellectually bizarre results. These results, in which thought of and on time per the meaning of the ordinary word "time" is tossed about on a sea of vague sentimentalizations of the improvised time of scientific verbal expediency, reflect not only the susceptibility of journalistic and academic and general lay talking-habits to influence by scientific word-usage: literature has had a hand in this. Deliberate application of the new modes of experiment in the conceptual sense of time was made, in early phases of twentieth-century literature, to the uses of literary invention and literary style; a practice of literary manipulation of the time-sense developed into a literary philosophy in which philosophy, style, and the literary sensibility generally, were all mongrelized. Such play with the time-theme as the stream-of-consciousness representations of diction, and the device of abandoning the rationalities of time-sequence in all other forms of literary activity, have en-

grained into the contemporary mind, immobilized in twentieth-centuryism, the persuasion that disorder of the time-sense constitutes attainment to a new, albeit "tragic," degree of human intelligence.

The only tragic aspect of the contemporary mind's predicament of understanding and sentiment is the self-punishment that its constituent human beings inflict on themselves in the unlearning of the certitudes assured them in their language (their languages) for the learning of a general philosophic incertitude and allied linguistic incoherency. Philosophic incertitude is not a twentieth-century invention. In its modern career it has, for example, so austerely idealistic a proponent as the eighteenth-century philosopher Berkeley [Kant?]—who pronounced space and time but "forms of intuition." The pressures of science, of "knowing how things happen," had, however, even before his time, begun to have effect on philosophic thinking. Science's own inability to account for the physical universe—Einstein described "the present situation" of factual knowledge as characterized by "an uncertainty concerning the choice of the basic theoretical concepts"—and the renunciation, by enlightened philosophy, of Aristotelian pseudo-rational fancy as explanatory method have seemed to obliterate the authority of the human intelligence manifested in the existence of language. Enlightened philosophic deliberation on the dependence of the universe on the human consciousness for the witness of perception has become vaporized into a joint philosophic-scientific concept of the universe as a tentative construction of the consciousness: language and consciousness and the universe are made interlocking elements in a unified field in which each one is always refuting the other two wherever they seem to be confirming each other.

There has come to prevail an intellectual position productive of self-indulgence in the bottomless emotionalism of the tragic attitude. This attitude is not a real sense of fatality; it is the emotional attendant of a state of intellectual enervation, suggesting a not quite believed-in, not quite dismissed, possibility of its becoming a state of spiritual collapse. Need of rescue there is, of human beings, but rescue from the intellectual demoralization into which their linguistic vagaries lead them, not rescue from humanness itself, seen as a tragic plight. The means of the rescue is in the very words that they bend to these vagaries. That the straightening of themselves should be related to a lexicographical straightening of their words is treatable as a far-fetched notion only if the great moral responsibility resting on lexicography for providing instruction in the essentials of word-meaning is itself not recognized.

It might be thought that, before an adequately effective new lexicography can be developed, a measure ought to be taken of how far lapsing from integrity in linguistic procedure—and, as of one process, intellectual procedure—has gone. But the principles of correction of anything are not to be derived

from the degree of the wrongness manifested in it. One must define the right before one can know precisely the extent of the wrong; and, if one knows the right, one has principles enough—and does not need a separate set of principles of correction. One needs to know what to do, not what not to do: to know what not to do is not enough for doing the right. The path of avoidance of wrong, in linguistic conduct, leads to diminishing sensitivity to the nature of the right: and the use of words has come to its present condition by a long plodding of people along that path. In that path, less and less is held necessarily correctible, less and less is judged wrong, and what there seems to be to teach, as the right, shrinks to a counsel of fluidity of standards. The very idea of the right in language is subjected to dismissal in many quarters as not "relevant" to language. The stressed concern, among linguistical specialists, is not in knowledge of a language, the learning of it and its right, but the acquisition of a skill of superiority to its laws as capable of frustrating the will to expression. From this point of view, language is an agglomeration of external phenomena, and is not possessed of any intrinsic authoritativeness; and the conception of a requisite or even possible definite knowledge of it is suspect as a tyranny of artificial correctness.

There is no other way besides that of making a new lexicographical beginning to clarify with practical definiteness the nature of the linguistic right. This is because what and how words mean is the ultimate technical heart of the problems of language, the knowledge-court of final resort for their settlement, and because nothing less could be successfully opposed to the potent assaults on the definite, in linguistic as well as in other considerations, by the time's intellectual *avant-garde,* as intellectually reactionary. A lexicography that met such requirements would be, necessarily, a one-purpose operation, aimed at eventual completeness, concerned everywhere with definite identification of word-character, and definite evaluation of meaning, definite description of signification. There is little possibility of relief from the linguistic ills of this time—in which old, slow-gathering ills and new ones fast-coming and fast-multiplying are indistinguishably accreted upon language as if permanently embraced in its identity—in emergency suggestion, counsel, criticism, in execration, as to this or that morbid feature of linguistic practice, or, either, in general solemnities of deploration over the decline of general linguistic wholesomeness, with no illumination offered on what specifically makes for such wholesomeness—what *practically* constitutes linguistic good-health. The first restorative act is to look at the words, and know them. The part of lexicography in this is to help people *see* them.

The report we have made on the fact of and the nature of terms, our representation of them as a distinct class of language-material, ought to give body to the idea of lexicography, in the imagination of readers, as an activity of

methodical principle, concerned with the general characteristics of language, not merely with vocabularistic detail. The need of lexicographical system that we have been arguing is determined, first, by the natural complexity of the make-up of language. The need becomes critically acute, acquires an extremeness of human urgency, when there is heaped upon this natural complexity the vocabularistic product of adventures in scientific parlance conducted outside the range of linguistic discipline: the instinctive human capability of exercising rational discrimination between the major and the accessory components of a vocabulary is overpowered by the transformation of vocabulary-numbers into vocabulary-mass. The modernized vocabularies of languages have been thus rendered to very large degrees rationally unmanageable.

If language and vocabulary were identical actualities, one would be justified in saying that the profuse presence in the modern vocabulary of terminological transportations from the multiple terrain of scientific parlance had dehumanized language beyond repair. But there is something of happier sense that can be justifiably said. Lexicography is properly concerned with language, not vocabulary, and a lexicography of humane conscience should therefore be able to reconstruct, for speakers of the English language (as, in separate dedication, for the speakers of any other language), the obscured actuality, make exposition of its word-content as constituting a rational system of meaning. A corresponding postulate to this is the existence in speakers of the language of a disposition of humane conscience towards themselves as such, and towards it. Confidence in the possibility of the development of the kind of lexicography described is inseparable from presumption of there being still a live bond between speakers of the language and the language, of their humanity's not being rationally deracinated from connection with it.

The inspiring faith of this book is that it would not have been writable if the balance of the yet-possible were not in its favor as a work concerned with a yet-possible of saving proportions, with respect to the revitalization of human beings' consciousness of themselves as beings whose reality is not otherwise verified than in the reality of their words.

In final review, here at this chapter's close, in relation to the fact of terms, and the intensifying increase in general resort to terminological verbal modes that has in part conduced to, and in part taken impetus from, a disordered state of linguistic sensibility, we bring into consideration the spread of the use of acronyms in current linguistic practice. The acronym, a device by which a number of words employed as a unit of designation are reduced to an alphabetical unit consisting of their initial letters, is a peculiarly crass example of vocabularistic degradation. The device transmutes denominative phrases into skeletalized terms, and sets a style of free-making with such abbreviative pro-

cedure in which the short-hand reference-character of scientific terminology is carried to limits of convenience that nullify linguistic sense. These are terms that say nothing! They have little relation to such conventionally established abbreviations as *O.E.D.* or *A.D.* or *Ph.D.* in which identity of reference-signification is not lost. Their function is, rather than to represent the words or phrases of designation, to collapse the words and their meanings along with them, so that what is left, the letters-remnant, can be employed without thought of what is represented. The presence of acronyms in ordinary parlance resembles much that of the special terms that have taken hold in it: they are inventions of restricted communication-scope, precise only in the sense of being of extremely limited suggestive force, that have made their way into the general apparatus of linguistic practice through the combined failure of all the kinds of speakers the language has to be co-operatively responsible users of words.

Acronyms, other current forms of brevity of expression, the frequency of use of special terms that have become routine usages for economies of allusion, belong to a linguistic practice in which the to-be-expressed is curtailed in its very formation in the mind. The achieved expression in such practice is impressionistic rather than expressionistic; portions of what is to be communicatively conveyed are left unsaid, with the burden of the unsaid intended to be carried by the said to an adequate effect of comprehensibility. This characterization fits the linguistic practice of these times as a whole: it is generally a practice in which expressively defective chunks of utterances make up the delivered linguistic quantity. The fact of words is very dimly perceived, in the contemporary use of words; the terms of usage-custom, the brevities of expression, the phrases of set pattern, have more reality to speakers of the language as the substance of what is said. But, once again to strike the book's note of faith in an expectable change to a right course as the followed course becomes discernible as wrong in that it is not a course of movement but of progressive immobilization. We believe that, in the descriptions presented in our book of the general state of linguistic practice, the evidence of human arrestation in circumventions of the honest, the expressive full, in the use of words, serves also as substantiation of the possibility of the altogether different. The identification of immobility discovers to consciousness the directions, the map, of movement.

(A treatment of the themes of the concluding passages of this chapter is to be found extended in the Supplement of Essays under the title "The Language-Champions.")

CHAPTER 14

The Words Miscalled Synonyms

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1.

If the words that may be properly called terms are set to one side, so that there stands for viewing the body of words, the words that, as we have described, *mean* (mean rather than signify, make reference), it will be found that all but a minor portion of these seem to separate into pairs, trios, groups, by the existence of spontaneously occurrent phenomena of meaning-affinity. Prepositions, for example, do not readily give this appearance. They are, however, proper words, not terms. They are, for the most part, *short* words, and get jostled about among the others as if they were just little connective utility-items, of weak-meaning-force. But they are, actually, words of high linguistic potency, into the almost mechanical-looking, small or low-emphasis forms of which is condensed meaning-content of an extraordinary complexity, as burden of sense for a single word to discharge into a sentence. Some particular comment on prepositions in relation to the matter of synonyms will be found in the supplementary essay "The New Grammar," on its last pages. Here we shall try to probe the general actuality that is represented in the concept that languages have the peculiarity of containing many words that are synonymous with others.

If a general character of meaning-correlation is to be attributed to the language in its main, central, vocabularistic substance, then the concept of synonyms must be discarded. The concept is based on presumption of the existence of sameness or near-sameness of meaning between certain words and a view of them as having a capability of use with special meaning-finesse, such as other words do not possess; it comprises no recognition of a fundamental principle of structure, in language, manifested in principles of meaning-relation between words. The idea that there is an area in the field of word-use

in which a special delicacy, a nicety of distinction, can be exercised, which is the general sense of the synonym-concept, is unfaithful to the inherent character of language, which is such as to establish an intelligent combinedness of words in an all-over condition of compatibility of meanings, each of full distinction. The "synonym" view, taken to represent a high concern for the "best" usage, supported by continual reference to "best" authors for standards of use, actually cheapens the linguistic essential of distinction of meaning—which goes to the logical heart of language (or, to vary the figure, in which the pulse of language beats as that of an organically functioning structure)—into an additive feature, a stylistic refinement, a rhetorical elaboration.

All that is here brought forward we consider to be especially relevant to the English language. It can be viewed as a language peculiarly rich in "synonyms"; it can be taken to be so because the combining in it of differing linguistic strains resulted in there being often two, or more, words where, in languages predominantly homogeneous in their word-stock, such possibilities in word-choice would be much less numerous. But the English language, even because of its being formed of diverse linguistic strains, has an exceptionally strong binding organization. It is all one, it is all English—the purism that classifies English words of Latinate sources, for instance, as less English than English words of Anglo-Saxon sources, rests on a non-existent, arbitrarily presumed difference in verbal race. The English language is rich in words, but not because of provision with a foreign, in addition to a native, word-supply. All its sources could be called foreign. The linguistic strains of which it is composed have been blended in it to the point of its being indivisible: it has a homogeneity of its own, a unity of Englishness—more than any other possession, it has been the identity-center of the English people, much more the center of their functioning than their little homeland, either as a geographical or a political entity. With the diverse linguistic intake there has gone an ingesting of a large diversity of the experiences of the human intelligence; it exemplifies in its words a uniform English word-character, and supplies, in its total capability as an intellectual instrument, a distinctly English version of the human intelligence. There is a balance in it between its inward-facing and its outward-facing that conduces to its being stable in its linguistic individuality and responsive at the same time to the requirements of general sophistication—to the propriety of being, as a language in which many qualities and forms of human nature's linguistic variety meet, a language of broad human bearings. All this has connection with the question of "synonyms."

The just-drawn picture of the English language should remind of the high order of integratedness it has as a collection of words, and of the human sagacity of its standards of the articulate (a literalness towards experiment in expression contained within reasonable boundaries of linguistic discipline). For

such a language, the concept that supposes "synonyms" is an especially incongruous one. It is a language too complex in its organization, too intricate in its rationality, for so crude a simplicity of word-relationship as that which "synonym" defines to be a fitting account of as many of its words as the books of synonyms embrace in their lexicographical jurisdiction. Something is wrong with this system of explanation: it takes in too many words, it leaves out too many words. It does not adequately explain the phenomenon of identity-with-divergence-in-identity (of meaning) it undertakes to explain in lexicographical terms, nor does it succeed as a system—it is structureless itself, and makes no suggestion of structural features of the language in the background of its interpretations. And yet, though the synonym-concept is, thus, extraneous to linguistic principle, and without principle itself, it refers to *something*. That something is, as we have set forth, the integral characteristic of a language that its words exist with respect to one another; no word exists in it without respect to others, and that some seem to exist with special respect to one or more others is a natural consequence, a manifestation found throughout the language, of the workings of a necessity of an all-over logical compatibility of meanings. Every word of the main word-body of a language—its core of rationally determined words—exists with special respect to one or more others. The influence of this law of logical compatibility extends to the terms. Interreference exists between some, so that, word-like, they carry a sense of distinction. All perforce function—all that are terms of good linguistic behavior—with observance of the law as it is carried out in the true words of the language, attaching themselves to *their* functioning as integers of the language's meaning-configurations.

We have already spoken of the importance that Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* acquired among the word-books, pointing to the appeal it has (or has had) because of the largeness of its vocabularistic coverage and the intricacy of its indications of word-choice possibilities. It provides no service of lexicographical commentary, such as do the books of synonyms, yet it gives its users what seems intimate access to the language. Its attraction is not only in the extensiveness of its scope, the great display of words. The words are presented according to *system;* and this contributes to the users' feeling at home in the use of the book, as confirming an inward sense of the language's being not, just, an agglomeration of words, but words existing co-ordinately with one another. The books of synonyms are made up of little islands of words loosely identified with one another in meaning, and tentatively differentiated. In the *Thesaurus,* the words have a common unity in a system that takes them all into account. It is a system intellectually imposed on words from without, not a reproduction of their intrinsic organizedness as a language. It is a "classification of the ideas which are expressible by a language"; that is, it is

a philosophical framework of ideas into which words are fitted according to their associability with the ideas—it is an experimental, a thought-up system. But it excites satisfaction because it is on the side of orderliness, it touches the instinctive consciousness of language as something having order in it, of words as things not having their meanings in isolation from one another, or in little isolated meaning-groups. The implication of there being a general order of association and interpretation applicable to words is absent from the books of synonyms, as it is from the dictionaries—a stronger impression of chaoticness being actually conveyed in the former than that which is received from the dictionaries, by the treatment of word-relationships as chance co-incidences of meaning-resemblance.

Roget's *Thesaurus,* then, the work of a man of religion and science moved by an awareness of the confusion in which words were chosen for use, and believing, presumably, in the general reducibility of confusion to order, is a good example of effort for the full use of the verbal resources of language with a full competence of discretion in word-choice, and a poor example of a way of assisting people to achieve this. What is needed for a system to bring order into the modes of word-choice, and exhibit at the same time the varied possibilities of choice that a language makes vocabularistically available, is not *a* system but *the* system of the language itself, the meaning-system to which its words belong as functional components of it.

If the words presented in the *Thesaurus* were presented accurately defined, the associative principle (association of the words with certain ideas) on which they are ordered would show itself to involve acceptance of the very confusion it was supposed to remedy. The thought-areas distinguished for an organized presentation of words must be ones in which they belong generically, and not associatively; and the nature of these areas can only be determined by definitional focusing on meaning and the correlation of meanings. The books of synonyms do not attempt either organization or—to speak verily—definition. They give hints for the avoidance of confusion of certain words with one another, but they do not attempt to administer order to confusion on a language-wide scale. The *Thesaurus,* on the other hand, associating words on a grand scale of general connection with categorical ideas, encourages the synonymizing propensity to the point where discrimination is given hardly a moment's thought. And so the objective of initiating word-users into the riches of vocabularistic variation transforms itself, in the realization, into a consequence of provision for greatly multiplied possibilities of carelessness in word-choice. There is nothing to ensure that the consulter of the *Thesaurus* will find the exactly right word; there are only provided other words that might not have been thought of. Very many of the words provided are words not of customary use, words for the use of which the consulter has little or no background experience.

It should be of interest to our readers, in the light of our delineation of the division of the vocabularies of languages into words and terms, that a rough allowance for the existence of such a division was made in the plan of Roget's *Thesaurus*. Introductorily distinguished was a class of words described as "of a specific character . . . having no relation to general ideas," and notification was given of an intention of limiting the contents, in the main, to words seen as having such a relation. But, although what are conventionally called "technical terms" are to a large extent excluded from the book, it abounds in terms—by our measure of what constitutes a term. Every grouping under a (so-called) general idea is a vocabularistic hodge-podge. Thus, under the particular general-idea heading "Ornament," coming under the heading "Personal Affections" and the sub-heading "Discriminate Affections," are to be found (cross-references to other groupings we omit): "ornament -ation, -al art; ornat -ure, -eness; adornment, decoration, embellishment, architecture." The next paragraph-entity under "Ornament" goes thus: "garnish, polish, varnish, French polish, gilding, japanning, lacquer, ormolu, enamel." Etc., etc. It is obvious that such a grouping has no determinate thought-character, that the classification "Ornament," under "Discriminate Affections" under "Personal Affections," is bookish convenience of no significance in respect to thought-congruity, linguistic relationship in matters of word-meaning. But the laying-out of a very large part of the English vocabulary in a thoroughly patterned manner, the scheme of arrangement putting the great variety of words into view for service, each, usually, in a number of different classification-areas, presents the language to word-users not as the opaque word-mass of familiar acquaintances into which they reach, for their choices, with no sureness of aim, but as the language made visible in profuse vocabularistic detail. The categorical aids to vision employed conceal the real order of the language, but the words are indeed to be seen, in the arrays of largely forced, arbitrary combinations of which the *Thesaurus* consists.

2.

The words of a language call for ordering, in their presentation, because they exist in an ordered condition, by the nature of language. The need for an orderly presentation of words has been recognized in secondary word-books, that is, the books of synonyms and those named "word-finders" (a description that does injustice to the *Thesaurus,* joining it with books that perform their organizations with far less zeal for thoroughness in the exhibition of the scope and variety of the language's word-resources). In both of these kinds of word-books, however, the need to which service is offered is not, and is not viewed as, a basic need of word-users: the books are related to desires for special ver-

satility in word-choice, in the case of the word-finders, and, in the case of the books of synonyms, for special nicety in the use of certain words regarded as more or less the same in meaning but capable of use with refinements of discrimination above the ordinary levels of writing, or speaking, style. No word-ordering is trustworthy that is not founded on a recognition of a general need of word-users of intimate contact with their language in the internal orderedness of its composition as a provision of speakable meanings; and no thoroughness of word-exhibition or accuracy of information about word-meanings that would meet the requirements of such an ordering is achievable without a full application of the lexicographical processes. Lexicography itself is, properly, a word-ordering as well as a word-defining activity.

The ultimately responsible lexicographical treatment of a language, by our understanding of the make-up of a language, will involve differentiation between words and terms, and it will involve the presenting of both kinds of words in the language's naturally formed patterns of meaning-orientation. It must be immediately said that the conception of "meaning" applies only formally to the function of the terms, and that the principles applicable to the ordering of them in patterns of meaning-orientation are predominantly concerned with matters of fact rather than with logical considerations, as it is entirely in the case of words proper. It has been our intention to demonstrate in this book, extensively enough for readers' clear envisioning of such lexicography as we propose, processes of word-ordering concurrent with processes of word-defining, mainly with regard to *words*, but with sufficient attention to terms for the kind of lexicographical treatment we think appropriate to them to be perceptible. How far this book will go in such demonstration, it is impossible at this stage in its writing to foresee.

The difference in the kind of treatment words require from that which terms require, according to our ideas on language and lexicography, is between qualitative and quantitative appraisal, corresponding to a difference in the character of the thinking that is done with them. Words proper are not bound to reference-areas; but every term has a specific quantitative coverage, a quantitatively limited reference-area. The thinking done with words is not a thinking "of" (a thinking of something) but pure thinking, all-immediate, undivided. With the word, the word *is* the thinking: the meaning is in the word. With the term, the mental action is divided into movement in a thought-direction and a thought-object that must be imaginatively evoked to complete the movement. Because the true words exist in logical relationship-patterns responding to the kind of thought of which the words, in their meanings, are made up, while terms exist in patterns of factual or quasi-factual proximity into which the thought-objects, or indicated reference-points, fall, the former will be sparse in membership as compared with the

term-aggroupments. For the term-word, in the quantitativeness of its term-character, has only the single act-of-reference capability, can serve only a single purpose: for the kind of services terms are designed to perform, many and many terms are needed. Words proper, in their qualitativeness, with their thought-performance all inside them, wonderfully compact, wonderfully variable at the same time in their adaptability to service, do not have to exist in cumbersome numerousness. Word-aggroupments, in an ordered lexicography, will show the rational structure of the studied language. The words themselves will show the details of the structure. But this detail is very different from the detail that is evinced in terms: *that* is in the main linguistic furniture, varying in its usefulness, none of it structurally important.

3.

While we are not concerned, in our considerations of the conception that certain words are "synonyms," with making a detailed and systematic study and criticism of the practice of synonymy, as we have not been concerned with making an exhaustive examination of the practice of what is called "linguistics," but only, as in the latter case, with identifying the arbitrary nature and fundamentally unreliable results of the practice, we shall in this chapter be looking briefly into a few word-books, and sampling their offerings. We see a need of dwelling on the difference between the natural and the arbitrary in ideas of the structure of language: for it is from the view that language is arbitrarily what it is—a creation of circumstance rather than an expression, and embodiment, of principle—that arbitrary procedures explaining its intricate make-up derive.

There is danger in using the word "structure" in connection with language, for it has been stylized into a term of special connotations in various special departments of interest where idiosyncratic verbal habits are the ordinary rule of discourse. In contemporary linguistical theorizing itself, the word has been made a term of differing connotations by differing schools of linguistical thought; and it has considerable favor as a word of special reference—i.e., as a special term—in criticism concerned with the arts. We risk the danger of being understood to be speaking in one or another atmosphere of terminological sophistication. We lean on the support the language gives the use of the word as a "plain" word, a word that is an integral component of its structure. The meaning of "structure" in this use has no flavor of reference to ideas private to special areas of linguistical science, such as has the phonetically qualified structure of the "structuralists" or the psychologically qualified "structure" of the "transformationalists" relating to anthropologically defined sub-linguistic depths.[1]

In speaking of the structure of language we mean the composition of language as it is a self-sustaining entity. Anything has "structure" the composition of which holds it unified—that is unified in its composition. A language is composed of words; words compose language, are its composition, and the language has its unity by and in them. When the phenomenon of "synonyms" is considered in the light of this idea of linguistic structure, it can be seen to be an arbitrarily posited phenomenon, deduced from an arbitrarily arrived at idea of the constitution of language. Where a language is seen as pitted, as it were, with synonymic features, it itself is conceived of as something external to an amorphous inner or substrative actuality—as an actuality of the surface. Pockets of meaning-association are understood to lie scattered over the surface, remnant marks of quasi-physical accidents, with grammatical configurations making a sort of landscape-ordering, and usage-features standing out everywhere as way-guiding prominences. Yet this approach to language from the outside, the inside regarded as agglomerated meaning-stuff into which dictionaries can at best make experimental jabs, without any certainty of hitting the right spot, or from which the probes of linguistics can extract specimen material analysable into theoretical generalities about language, is the prevailing approach.

If a language is treated as an all-intelligible actuality, is not forcibly subjected to theoretical division between a visible and an invisible part, it will reveal itself as a unity of interlocking relationships existing between the component words. The speaker of a language who sees it as having such a structure is confronted, not with a general vocabulary in which certain words present delicate problems of meaning-distinction, but with the language as a union of areas of word-choice, its words impinging upon one another by principles of meaning-orientation governing the whole as a self-sustaining continuity.

It should be noted that, while attempts at definitional treatment of "synonyms" began to be made, in English, within the frame of dictionary-procedure, in the eighteenth century, and separate works of synonymy began then to be constructed, and these two strains of special lexicographical performance have been continued, with increased interest and industry, into the present time (a strain of word-finder producing adding itself to these), nothing has developed in the field of synonymic (and connected) activity of general lexicographical value. The later synonymists regard themselves as having brought synonymy to a point where it has graduated from linguistically dubious ideas, both constricted and loose, of the nature of synonyms into a fully enlightened state of understanding, and functioning, sustained by well-defined principle. But the more professionalized, the more linguistically ambitious, synonymy has become, the more islanded have its word-subjects become in the synonym-nature attributed to them, and the further removed from rele-

vance to the normal problems of definition are its solutions, which go by the name of "discriminations." The proud principle of the synonymists that their responsibility is to go beyond the definers of words has squeezed their operations into an ever-narrowing terrain of precision of statement supplementary to a presumed common area of meaning, regarded as not calling for special straining for precision of statement.

In the introduction to *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms* (first published in 1942), in which elaborate effort was made to bring the history of synonymy to a nice head of up-to-date doctrine, reflective of late-modern scholarly conscience and acuity, this work is described as committed to the concept that a synonym is "one or two or more words in the English language which have the same or very nearly the same essential meaning." Round this concept has been spun a scheme of word-association and meaning-commentary, with auxiliary extensions of word-association, admirable as an exemplar of zealous labor but, as linguistically habitable ground, a world lost in its creation—detaching itself from the natural language and declaring itself the special abode of precision. *Change, alter, vary, modify,* for instance, are presented there as synonyms, that is, as words having the same or very nearly the same *essential* meaning. This oddity of an "essential" meaning that is the same or very nearly the same for each of these words establishes them as existing for the most part in a state of imprecision of meaning (the very essence of their meaning imprecise!). "Make or become different" is their meaning, more or less, for more or less ordinary use, goes the report on these words; but, for lovers of exactitude of expression, each word has—per the synonymical implication—a potential particular meaning superseding mere essential meaning.

Change, Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms tells, "implies either an essential difference, or even a loss of identity, with substitution of one thing for another." The essential meaning of *change,* then, described as the same or nearly the same as that of *alter,* for instance, has to do with *essential* difference. This word "essential" is too easily made a convenience for the forceful indication of a primary quality of importantness; and here, as very frequently (and in the instance of it used in this work to define the word "synonym" itself), it is a mere token-expression doing duty as a representative of what has been found too difficult to express concretely. Consulters know only what they knew: that with "change" there is some emphasis put on the fact of difference. However, the difference produced in a case of "change" can be small or of minor consequence—the word is a clue neither to size nor importance of difference.

The Synonym-Dictionary's definition of "change" specifies, besides, essential difference, even a loss of identity, or the substitution of one thing for another. The loss-of-identity notion is intended presumably to correspond with such a use of "change" as "He changed his method": "essential differ-

ence" made in a method is to be construed as resulting in the method's being no longer its old self but become a new method-self. In the advancing of such notions there is an effort to succeed in metaphysical statement where meaning seems unencompassable in definitional statement. Such explanations go much further from the linguistic center of interest than do the straight lexicographical failures of the dictionary-makers. These, at least, put their inability to define satisfactorily—truly, to define—down on the page; the synonymists set down what are intended to be a two-in-one combination of definition and distinction, but leave the knowledge-seeker suspended between vague generalization and experimental specification that itself loosely interprets—that is, generalizes about—distinction, rather than identifies it. "Essential difference," practically applied to the understanding of the meaning of "change," proves to be a not substantially graspable generalization: something essentially different could, for instance, be comprised in the condition of something that had undergone alteration.

The alternative loss-of-identity clue to particularity of meaning, for "change," belongs to an analysis of effects of change that are not peculiar to certain change-processes but can be viewed as inhering in all processes that the word "change" typifies in its meaning. There is the same kind of difference between this kind of analysis (philosophically experimental) and a workable definition of "change" that there would be between an aesthetic proposition as to the nature of beauty and a workable definition of "beauty." As to the "substitution of one kind of thing for another" alternative clue to the particularity of "change": where substitution has, according to statement, actually occurred, as with "they have changed the seats and desks in the schoolroom," "change" crosses into the meaning-area of a different word—*is* a different word from "change" in such a statement as "They have changed their attitude to newcomers," or "They have changed the shape of the cups."

No use of the "change" that can be brought into comparison with "alter," "modify," "vary," properly comprises within the boundary of its meaning any rarefaction of sense involving question of identity. "Change" means something definite, and it means that, as every word means what it means, unobliquely, without the need of glosses to help its users get its meaning straight (somewhat straight!) in their minds. Were this not so, were it otherwise with words generally, there would not be language. Language is, besides human beings themselves, the most definite existing manifestation of the unifying principle affecting all that is. Language comes into being under the direct inspiration of this principle—directly expressing it, indeed; nothing is contrived, in it, nor does anything—any word—have part in it on a free-agent basis, determining its own rôle as a law unto itself, so that it collides with other words by the accident of freedom, and the mêlée has to be broken up by force

of "discrimination." Language is complex in that multiplicities of words are held in suspension in it; but they are so held in unfailing, all-over, unity, and the case of each word is *simple.* Words do not escape the suspension in individual use; but, each because it exists thus held, exercises its meaning with ready simplicity—has the autonomy of an assured correctness as what it is in the language.

One must not let one's linguistic head be turned this way and that by the propositions of the synonymists, which increase rather than reduce confusion regarding the words subjected to "discrimination." One must especially be wary of the "or" alternatives of their propositions. The case of "change," which is actually constituted of a number of words "change," requiring to be distinguished from one another not by a theorem of alternative meanings but, axiomatically, as different words having different meanings and different logical location in the language, is, as lexicographically represented in both dictionaries and books of synonyms (that is, definitionally or quasi-definitionally), a classic treatment of "ambiguity" as an inherent and normal property of language, and key to meaning-interpretation of words—and the basis of a presumed elastic multiplicity of potentialities of meaning-play in their literary use. (The degeneration of the sense of distinction of meaning in the general linguistic consciousness has manifested itself weirdly, in literary criticism, in the substitution, for criteria of special linguistic sensitivity, of a system in which the written poetic word is twisted into fabricated shapes of purport to fit fabricated principles of ambiguity that have no relation to linguistic realities.—An essay on ambiguity is presented in The Supplement, p. 510.)

"Alter," in the synonymic treatment of the *change,* etc., group in *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms,* differently from "change," which only "implies" difference (essential difference), "stresses" difference—but only difference "in some particular respect, as in form or detail" and without the implication of "loss of identity" described as a possibility with "change." We shall not pause to analyse the unworkability of these explanations in the cases of the supporting quoted examples of use from "best authors." The single example for "change" is inadequate to the needs of illustration, while the two for "alter" are themselves instances of use of the word without distinct sense of meaning, the second, in which "alter" and "change" both appear, showing no grasp of the meanings of the words as substantially differentiable. Indeed, the second quotation is followed by an assertion that seems made on purpose to rescue the author (Aldous Huxley) from the appearance of confusion as to their meanings. "The two words are, however, frequently interchangeable." Here, the end of the road of discrimination between the two words is reached! The article then preoccupies itself with "vary" and "modify" to a cumulative impression of distinctness of meaning and vagueness of meaning as qualities dis-

tributed at random among words, and bestowable upon them, in use, at will.

In the long-revered *Crabb's English Synonyms,* which first appeared in 1816, there is found a stricter dealing with "change" and "alter" as words different in meaning. There is no refuge-taking, after loosely-aimed efforts at definite statement of meaning-differences, in such an allegation as that the words are frequently interchangeable (not that they are used as if they were, but that they "are" frequently so). Crabb has difficulty as to "change," with the problem with which the Webster synonymic article deals by resort to "or" and "or even," but insists on offering something specific; he resorts to some metaphysical characterization of the peculiarity of the meaning of "change," but is scrupulously specific in *that.* And, to begin with, there is no balm offered, to perplexity, of assurance of "agreement" between the words in a generalized common meaning: the philologist's mind shows here, in the simple scholarly facing the words as different words, having different meanings. "We change a thing," according to Crabb, "by putting another in its place." This—without provision for such vague particularity as implication of "essential difference," or alternatives broadly different from this and from each other—is his pivotal lexicographical position; and he holds firmly to it in his metaphysical elaboration of his quasi-definitional statement, in which he compares "change" and "alter," saying of the latter, "We *alter* a thing by making it different from what it was before." Thus, his metaphysical last-word provides: "A thing is *changed* without altering its *kind;* it is altered without changing its *identity.* . . . We *change* our habitation; we *alter* our house, but it still remains the same house."

Crabb deals also in this article with "vary"—retention of *similarity* being noted as a feature of this—in an effort to arrive at nice points of ultimate, inherent, difference for the three words. The analysis of "change" and "alter" (to consider just these) is of no practical use: someone trying to make use of what is offered would experience no quickening of apprehension of the different meanings. But there would be a general salutary effect of apprehension of the fact itself of meaning-difference. The consulter of the Webster article would return to the generally prevailing conditions of uncertain knowledge of meanings with previous impressions of ultimate meaning-undifferentiableness strengthened—as to these "synonyms," and in all the "synonym" areas of the language.

In Soule's *Dictionary of English Synonyms* of 1871, the 1959 version of it, edited by Alfred Dwight Sheffield, the consulter has what is in actual effect a word-finder, despite the characterization "Dictionary," with the meaning or meanings of the title-word of each article (most of which are represented as being of more than one meaning) to be deduced as a general property possessed in loose common-ownership by that word and the words and expres-

sions following it, as constituting a chain or family of synonyms. "Change," transitive, is presented first as of one meaning-group with "vary," "modify," "make different," "make some change in." Then, secondly, it is presented as having joined with it, in another meaning of it, "shift," "remove for other," "replace by other." It is further presented as having as fellows, in a third meaning, "exchange," "barter," "commute," "give in exchange." All these words other than "change" are to be understood as alternative possibilities of choice to be determined largely by the play of feelings or stylistic inclinations of the word-user, rather than, as in the theory governing the Webster synonymies, according to a principle by which differences of meaning between certain words of like meaning can be attributed to them by special processes of discrimination.

"Alter," it will have been noticed, does not appear in the three Soule listings of synonyms of "change" we have reproduced. But it does appear as the first word in a fourth, and last, group, as the first-to-consider synonym of "change" as transitive! "Alter" has, also, been a subject of reference after the first listing: the consulter is told to see ALTER, which is the leading-word of a separate article. We reserved this direction which follows the first "change" listing to spare readers the distraction of the reference at that point—which, if pursued, would add the confusion of their finding "change," transitive, as the first-recorded synonym of "alter," transitive, but the second recorded synonym of "alter," intransitive, "vary" being the first.

What is the choice here between the Soule and the Webster assistances? There is in the former a Thesaurus-like liveliness of linguistic atmosphere. The listing of the words has at least the substantiality of the words themselves, where the illuminations of the definitional suggestions and authors'-uses of the other work dissolve under the mind's touch. In the former there is, in the allocation of "change" to different synonym meaning-classes, the gratification of the consulter of feeling that a purpose of rational orderliness pervades the treatment, where, in the other, all is rambling disquisition, that at the same time sets out to be, and avoids being, definite in formulation. But both, as do all books that deal with words as synonyms, thrust their users deeper into the linguistic ignorance for which they offer relief.

Whether expressly so or not, the book, or dictionary, of synonyms, runs—corrals—words into the imaginary enclosure of an assumed basic identity of meaning, within which they are to be seen as stomping, prancing, shuffling, variously moving about, with random effects of difference in meaning-behavior within the containing pen of general sameness. The articles in Soule's *Dictionary* do not provide definitional discourse, but the book has been brought up-to-date with an Editor's introduction, in which, with the help of

some linguistical theorizing of I. A. Richards, an elaborate mapping of meaning-territories is made, with the common or basic meaning of the believers in synonyms given the rather stylish name "core-sense."

Crabb remains in the background of the later exploits in synonymy, a heroic battler in the cause of distinction of meaning. It has been thought that his work was prevented from being a continuing classic by the attention paid in it to the moral implications of words' meanings. But the moral distinctions he made were derivative of straight philological and lexicographical evaluations—they could be taken or left. His synonymist's eyes were kept on the task of meaning-differentiation until he had done his moral utmost of distinguishing between words as necessarily distinct in meaning and different in meaning because distinct. But he battled under the banners of Synonymy, which commits the bravest minds to a view of language that arrests them in defeat qualified by unimportant gains. With such a view, language is not seen as having a necessary structure, as holding words both in a state of distinction and a state of relationship; it has the look of a loose word-mass within which, by the chances of meaning-resemblance, some words form into tight little word-masses, from which they require some prying-loose for use as things having some individual existence of their own. No one can see words in their natural individuality of meaning—see them in full linguistic perspective—by the light of the synonymic view of language. The synonymic treatment of words presents them as existing in confusion by the nature of language—so that clarification cannot go beyond the palliation of confusion.

The general weakness of synonymy is in the idea inspiring it that meaning and meaning-difference are two separate subjects of study. The supplementary character of the Book of Synonyms or the synonymies affixed to regular dictionary-articles of definition is incompatible with durable usefulness of meaning-analysis: the kind of knowledge given out remains extraneous to practical knowledge. The element of distinction in the meaning of a word is the central element of its actuality, the radical of its identity as a word; any treatment of this element as other than the major concern in the knowledge of the word's meaning diverts the mind from serious acquaintance with the word in its full meaning-strength. The implicit emphasis of interest in all synonymics is uncertainly distributed between the purpose to improve accuracy of knowledge of word-meanings and that of enlarging the vocabularistic fund of people. This division of purpose contributes considerably to the failure of synonymies as promoters of verbal literateness. Word-books that merely or mainly collect words for the vocabularistically ambitious are on the whole less obstructive to serious acquaintance with words than books or dictionaries in which outright synonymic instruction is offered. The confusion in which the users of the former are left by them is more of the nature of ignorance than of

superficial familiarity: they are more open to possibilities of definite understanding of how words mean, and differ in meaning.

Allen's *Synonyms and Antonyms* (by the original General Editor of *Webster's New International Dictionary*) exemplifies the Book of Synonyms settling for the function of modified Word-Finder, as with scholarly consciousness of the absurdity of attempting to deal usefully with the differences of meaning existing between the words called "synonyms" within the customary little frames of discrimination. The Allen treasury of words synonymically associated presents words in the form of vocabularistic displays, with certain words tagged with indications as to usage-peculiarities. Thus, "change," transitive, goes: "to exchange (*often spec.*—"spec." for "specific," to indicate that it is a synonym of "change" in a special sense in which "change" may be used), commute; *spec.* shift (one's garments); see EXCHANGE, MOVE, REMOVE." And, secondly: "alter, vary, qualify, variate (rare), modify, transform, mutate *(chiefly spec.),* convert, turn; *spec.* provect, transmute, moderate, diminish, increase, intensify, qualify, transform, shade, convert." The repetitions here, of "transmute," "qualify," "transform," "convert," are intended to be understood as indicating, in the second instancing of the word, a restricted rather than general synonymousness with "change." "Change" intransitive has for synonymic company the following assemblage: "alter, vary, variate (rare), shift (chiefly *spec.*), pass, resolve *(literary* or *spec.),* go *(colloq.* or *spec.),* mutate (chiefly *spec.*), turn (chiefly *spec.*); *spec.* shape (as in "things are shaping his way," *colloq.*), glide, sink, jump, break, range, graduate, grade." There are, besides, brief antonym indications, and listings, at the bottom of pages, of words not given synonymic status in the text, with indication of where they may be found, cross-reference to a main word of the page. The "chant" on a text-page is a noun. At the bottom of the page it is noted for cross-reference attention: "chant, *v.t.: sing, intone.*" There is providential mixture here of solicitude and fatalistic abstention from doing more than presenting all the possibilities of choice from certain focal idea-positions, in the spirit of a homiletic axiom "This word-book helps those who help themselves."

Fernald's *English Synonyms and Antonyms* was designed to serve as an all-round linguistic hand-book: text-book, exercise-book, word-finder, synonyms-simplifier, dictionary-in-little. It belongs to a more conventional, less intellectually ambitious tradition of synonymy than *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms;* and, where the latter used a sophisticated academic touch, with much citing of literary usage for rounding out the exposition of meaning-difference with finesse, here there is an old-fashioned pedagogical touch of *drill,* suggestion of a necessity of *learning* words—with usage-illustrations, sparsely present, varyingly Biblical, literary, or historical, intended to make plain appeal to rational perception of meaning-character. The lists at the head

of each article are presented alphabetically—in dictionary-order. The synonymical defining is firmly offered as definition, without suggestive flourishes—as enough; it is not enough, but it does not present itself as more than it is. "To *change* is distinctively to make a thing other than it has been, in some respect at least. . . . To *alter* is ordinarily to *change* partially, to make different in one or more particulars. . . . To vary is to change from time to time, often capriciously. . . . To turn is a popular word for change in any sense short of the meaning of exchange, being often equivalent to *alter, convert, transform, transmute,* etc. We *modify* or *qualify* a statement which might seem too strong; we modify it by some limitation, *qualify* it by some addition."

Little more can be gleaned from the Fernald work, sober with instructive intent, than that the differences indicated in the simple accounts are far less easy to understand than the accounts in their simplicity at first glance suggest. The difficulty of differentiation can be perceived as a naked fact of language, which reduces the effects of bewilderment, or stupefaction, that all synonymizing produces. Consistent with the sobriety of the technique of this word-book is the prefatorily described intention of it as directed at "poverty of language," where, in the more sophisticated synonymic atmosphere, the consulter is conceived of, flatteringly, as well-endowed in verbal equipment, needing but some counsel as to how to use it to best stylistic advantage.

The idea of education in vocabulary rather than in words, which underlies the "poverty of language" preoccupation of many a word-book, has the virtue of assuming correctly that the generality of word-users are incompletely educated in their language. This is less harmful than being treated, in a word-book, as of the upper, well-educated generality of word-users, interested in the finer points of word-meaning. Neither are there "fine," as distinguished from ordinary, points, nor should those for whom many thousands of main words of their language exist in a limbo of vague knowledge-of-meaning (so that they are subjects for prompting by synonymizers) be regarded as "essentially" well-educated, linguistically. Nor should the coming into possession of a diversified, extensive vocabulary be identified with linguistic education.

A language is not an arithmetical quantity, knowledge of which is to be numerically reckoned. Because the words of a language constitute a structure, a small vocabulary of words each of which is known in individual distinctness and firmness of meaning, and has thus the rational genius of language in it (brings this genius with it in its being so known), is of much greater educative value than a large one, many of the components of which are known with the tentative particular kind of knowledge that synonymies offer as fill for knowledge-lack. It is knowledge-tentativeness, mostly, not plain ignorance, that sends people to books of synonyms; and they have there, for the most part, an elaborate knowledge-tentativeness heaped upon their simpler own.

The books of synonyms, in their diversity of character, and in their continuing existence despite an ineffectualness common to all, bear witness to the large degree to which dictionaries are themselves ineffectual as instructors in the meanings of words. Nor, as dictionaries attempt to keep both up-to-date and functionally alive by recognition of chaotic increases in vocabulary as now respectable usage, do the books of synonyms strive to offset the confounded state of lexicography by improvements in their methods. Not only are they limited by their nature to an indirect, much qualified commitment to clarify meanings: their present shadowy utility as guides to distinctions of meaning must succumb to the spreading disappearance of distinction of meaning in and out of dictionaries either as a putative linguistic actuality or stylistic myth.

4.

If "synonym" had a signification corresponding with its etymological character, it would be a useful term by which to refer to words as existing, with other words in the language embodying them, in a certain area of choice. Without the individuality-crushing provisions of the term in its established signification—the attribution to words of "the same or nearly the same" general (or "essential") meaning—and with a signification-character according with its derivation, it could usefully denote a going-together of words by reason of some functional conjunction of their meanings. Its use would then point the mind to meaning-differences between words having a certain meaning-relationship; there would be absent from thought about words all that befuddling blending of them in meaning that the term represents as linguistic fact while implying near-indescribable potentialities of difference, *and* a term helpful to the envisionment of the structure of language would be gained. However, "synonym" has always denoted "sameness"—more or less—rather than relatedness of meaning. There seems to be ground for imagining that the word in early English use did not have the weight of a term referrible to a substantial practice of using words in the manner it now implies—and for envisaging its earliest use as concerning the choice of homologous words in translating from one language to another. Johnson [asked if he thought "there were any perfect synonomies in any language"] said: "Originally there were not; but by using words negligently, or in poetry, one word comes to be confounded with another." Before "synonym" could serve constructively, in the terminology of word-study, it would have to be that, eventually, synonyms there were not.

The importance of being conscious of the peculiarity possessed by words of being associable with others in relationships in which they stand out in meaning-difference needs stressing in argument for dispensing with the term "synonym." The notion of associability involved in the historical meaning of

"synonym" should not be lost in the abandonment of the word. Knowledge of a language ought to be a knowledge of its words as existing in distribution in it in structural logicalities of relationship—relationship as an impinging on each other in their differences, not in mere likeness of meaning. By such a view, words have interior location in language; they mean *from* various sites in its rational constitution, and *with* a potent individuality of meaning in which the language realizes continually a perfection of itself as equipment for the functions of rational utterance. This view takes far from that which makes of words that ought, by their especial conspicuousness as differing in meaning—differing with a peculiar force of distinction—to be regarded as standards of verbal exactitude, swap-words affording a luxurious elasticity of usage.

For the nature of the words miscalled "synonyms" to be grasped to the full, it is not enough to see them as words outstandingly active in particularity, words peculiarly marked by distinction of meaning. They must be seen as the type of the true word: all true words are peculiarly marked by distinction of meaning. The more involved in relationship with other words a word is, the stronger, in it, is the force of distinction of meaning—the more vivid an exemplar of *word* is it. Even words that are merely terms, words much limited in their capabilities of meaning, of a much-qualified linguistic reality, evolve, in established inclusion in a language, going-together propensities of meaning and of distinction-value.

CHAPTER 15

The Rationale of Terms

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1.

Although the words that are sub-linguistic, the terms, do not "mean," as words proper do, and exist marginally to the language as having its rational substance lodged in the latter, they are affected by the rational order that animates the language: for they belong to it, to its living operation.

When the definition of terms is called for—or when the question of knowledge of terms, which is the same thing, is faced—the linguistic success of the results depends on an awareness of the difference in the kind of knowledge required for their definition. If there is no such awareness, the results will be pieces of information with an authoritative touch, sounding like meanings—and, in the definitions of words, uncertain meaning-formulations given a seemingly firm character of informativeness. The prime necessity is an awareness of the difference in linguistic kind between words and terms; from this must follow a perception that with words the pertinent knowledge is of their logical effectuality—what we have called their logical point—while with terms it is of fact brought to mind in them and by them. With many terms, factual specification is the whole verbal function. But some terms have also a secondary logical function; and all terms perforce come under the language's laws of rational congruity—participate in the processes of language that maintain words *in connection*. Terms in use fill out the rational frame of utterance with factualities. But they cannot be mere additions. They have to have properties of correctibility: they have to have *linguistic* point. The knowledge of a term is something more than itemized acquaintance with a fact. A term has to be known in the character of a word. Even if it does no more than make factual report in a sentence, it does this by virtue of its having a linguistic identity, a potentiality of occasioning thought of a fact. The knowledge of a term is prop-

erly a knowledge of the kind of linguistic point it has. This is *factual* point—either exclusively or primarily. Factual description is not definition. But the knowledge of fact required in term-definition is a knowledge specialized in relation to linguistic values.

If the difference in the verbal character of words and terms were reflected in the definition of them, and became, generally, a feature of influence in the knowledge of words (as words and terms), and attitudes to them in their use, a radical advance in the rational management of articulative thought, and all attendant processes of linguistic action, would be a certain consequence. The processes of knowledge itself would undergo an ordering—what could be in a practical, non-sentimental, sense called a purification—by which the difference between "things," the factual subjects of terms, and the nature of "things," the logical subjects of words, became a new apprehension of mind. The intelligence could operate with the general and the particular apprehended in spacious intellectual unity, and perceived in harmonious intellectual proportion—operate, thus, naturally, without that arbitrary separation of general and particular, for purposes of intellectual systematization, characteristic of philosophy. (But contemporary philosophy, come now under scientific dominion, shifts the prime intellectual emphasis from the general to the particular, with a resultant swamping of intellectual life with *terms,* in stupefying linguistic excess.)

The difference between the task of learning the meanings of words and that of learning the meanings (properly speaking, the significations) of terms can perhaps be usefully described in the light of consideration of the nature of intelligence. It may reasonably be assumed that no objection would be raised to a description of it as a condition animated with an unqualified desire to know. Knowledge is not a stranger to the intelligence of beings; intelligence begins in their having *some* knowledge. The given knowledge of the intelligence is replete with recognition of distinctions in a general existence of which one—the human being—is part, and in which one is, and than which there is nothing other to know. Although this knowledge is initially, in the individual human, and the general human, linguistic course, an unexpressed background to the name-like utterances that are the first acts of speech, it is because those utterances are made against this background that they are not exclamatory gibberish. They derive a potential of reasonableness from an acceptance of them, by the background knowledge, as, of necessity, each, in some manner that will appear, incidental to it.

An original background knowledge is the initial seat of the intelligence's government, which will take the determinative form of language. Words will spring up, within the scope of the determinative processes, expressive of distinctions not deliberately devised but signalizing, each, the discovery—the

recognition—of a particular known. They will, by the growing strength of rational affinity with one another as language, extract, from the preliminarily linguistic name-like utterances, expressible distinctions, converting those into their likes—into, that is, words; or, they will reduce those utterances to that status of auxiliary presence with themselves, in a corporate entity of intelligent utterance-articulations (language), which is identifiable as term-character—in comparison with the character that a word has in being an integral component of the apparatus of logic that this entity is, in its intellectual anatomy.

What terms mean, or signify, can only be known by a course of external reference: it has to be learned in the memorizing sense of learning. It might be said that the signification of a term has to be continually relearned, that the self has to be reminded of it, in the repetitions of use, because the determination of what a term signifies is arbitrary, sympathetic with the naming-motive of identification. Greatly different is the linguistic atmosphere in which words acquire their meanings, and the manner in which their meanings are learned. Their meanings are to be learned by a course of internal reference, a consulting of that given knowledge of the intelligence we have tried to describe: "replete with recognitions of distinctions in a general existence of which one is part, of which one—the human being—is part." One makes reference, in pursuing the implicit development of language, word upon word, to the experience of existence one has in being human.

With bluff brevity, for the purposes of this explanation, we characterize "being human" as having unlimited—potentially unlimited—organic experience of existence, with intelligence the spontaneous nature of such experience. The principle we advance as to the knowledge of the meanings of words—the true words of a language—through consultation of the intelligence would be found borne out in the comparison of languages, in their vocabularistic make-up. If those of large spread, incorporating much developmental amplification, were compared with one another, and all such, as a kind, with the communally restricted ones (dialectal or "primitive"), the common human qualities of the intelligence would be seen manifested in all in the distinction-making words of the languages: philological investigation supports presumption of common *meaning* trends in the workings of human intelligence, in its different settings of place and time.

The underlying interest of a rationally disciplined lexicography must be in the understanding of what the knowledge of the meaning of words (words proper) ought to be, as a knowledge fixed upon subjects of an intellectual nature. The understanding of this will be the teacher of what the defining of words, for such a lexicography, ought to be; understanding as to the processes of knowledge and the procedures of definition fitting the case of terms will depend on the degree of clarity attained as to what *words* require of lexi-

cography. There will be functionally literate lexicography when dictionaries make the endeavor, as exacted by their responsibility, to present the meanings of words in rational perspective. This is to envisage, also, dictionary-consulters who bring with them a readiness for the logical awareness that such lexicography would be capable of stimulating; we assume such a potentiality of literate responsiveness to be anticipated in the intelligence of those to whom dictionaries are addressed—and to be presumed in the very conception of lexicography, in the first place.

The definition of terms requires a comprehending of the resemblance of a term to a name: in all terms, as we have emphasized, there inheres something of the character of a name. Factuality is either the entire or the major consideration, in the determining of what they signify. With them, factual knowledge must dominate the definitional scene; the subject of reference must be factually characterized, as, for a name's functioning, the subject of evocation must be identified. However, sheer "objective" or scientific statement does not fulfil the requirements of the definition of terms. As we have already indicated, the factual characterization must be made from the linguistic point of view, it must be a description *sub specie humanitatis*—that is, must be made in the light of human reason, of which language is the express organization. Where the definition of a term is purely identificatory—is but a scientific memorandum, a technical dictum, a piece of descriptive information—the term is made a mere name.

The confusion resulting from the absence in lexicography of a principle of differentiation between words and terms—of a sense of terms as constituting a distinct vocabularistic category—is enlarged with a failure to distinguish effectively between terms and names. Further, not only are words defined without the clear educing of a logical point, and terms defined without the extraction of their factual point from the data of knowledge on which definition may draw: the accounts given of names—names-of-things mingled vocabularistically with words and terms—tend to be inadequate. For names require a thoroughness of particularity in the identification of their subjects not compatible with the scope or extent of general lexicography—except as they might be dealt with in special name-supplements. The definitions of terms, when terms are treated as mere names in dictionaries, are likely to be defective as information, with respect to the function of terms, and, on the whole, inadequate linguistically.

It is of first importance for a systematic consciousness of the reality of words as language, and the reality of language as words, that words be known as rational entities; only if they are so known can they be used in logical relation to one another—used so that they are logically compatible, and have, together, by their meanings, *meaning*. The definition of a word must clarify the

logical point of it, to be a sufficient definition. The least important kind of linguistic knowledge is the knowledge of names. Indeed, this is not linguistic knowledge but factual knowledge, as the name is a simulation of a word, not a word at all. A name is a physical demonstrative, in a sentence; it points to *this* or *that* or *that,* or to *this one* or *that one* or *that one.* It makes a verbal space that the mind has to fill in imagistically—not intellectually; and so the proper "definition" of a name is that which supplies the mind with an image of the subject of the name, the factual object of which it is the indicator. Ideally speaking, names compromise the verbal purity of language. The more names figure in the use of words, the more likely is the consequent utterance to be short of being a linguistically complete expression.

Terms differ from names in that their subjects require some action of intellectual apprehension. The subject of a term, when known, is something factually understood, while the subject of a name, known, is merely something made factually present by it to the mind; only imagination operates in the linguistic employment of a name, but reason has part in the use of a term. Terms have a rational bond with words—it is on this account that they have the status of words. They are introduced into a language under its conditions, are intended to have a capability of being used as words for specifications subordinate to the distinctions of meaning that in their relations constitute the language as a rational structure, a logical system. They have great quantitative importance in a language, but secondary linguistic importance to words proper. They exist in the language in a state of dependency rather than in a state of relationship—although within their areas of subordinate functionality they are capable of developing qualities of distinction secondary to their function of factual reference. The danger that terms hold for a language is in the possibility of their acquiring a character of independency, from a spreading of disorder in the linguistic sensibilities of its speakers; when they come loose from their subordinate linguistic status they exist outside the language's system. Thus it is that the knowledge of terms calls for a special care of linguistic attention. Words have their place in a language, but terms must be put, and kept, in their place. And, in the definition of terms, special awareness of the systematic background of all word-value is indispensable for linguistic correctness of definition. Factual correctness, the conventional lexicographical standard with terms, is a standard for names only.

2.

Useful in the definitional problem presented by a term—the radical difference between a name and a word being comprehended, the difference between a word and a term being seen in a term's being like a word only relatively, not

in full intrinsicality of word-nature—should be an examination of the problem at its simplest. We shall consider the defining of a term of simplest character, one having, as so many terms have, much in it of the character of a name; "dog" should prove a convenient example. "Dog" will be found defined in dictionaries as a name of a biological family conceived of under the image of a type. The type is identified by a quantity of information, with a coverage of the subject, in an encyclopaedic manner, as extensive as space allows. Thus, *Webster's New International Dictionary* (Second Edition) provides: "A carnivorous mammal (*Canis familiaris*) of the family Canidae, kept in domestic state by man since prehistoric times; in a wide sense, any member of the family Canidae (which see). The dog is one of the most intelligent of beasts. The domestic dogs are undoubtedly modified descendants of some unknown wild species of the genus Canis, akin to the common wolf. The artificially produced breeds differ from each other far more than those of any other mammal, as in form, size, color, and length and character of coat." The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides: "A quadruped of the genus Canis, of which wild species or forms are found in various parts of the world, and numerous races and breeds, varying greatly in size, shape, and colour, occur in a domesticated or semi-domesticated state in almost all countries. These are referred by zoologists to a species *C. familiaris;* but whether they have a common origin is a disputed question." These informal little essays on the subject *dog,* historical and scientific in treatment of it, say much, but serve poorly even for "dog" as having merely the force of a name: they do not make efficient identification, they talk about what may be viewed as named entity-of-fact "dog," but they do not "fix" the factual subject for linguistically pertinent knowledge. What of "dog" viewed as a term?

The definitions we have quoted are generously informative, but idly so, from the linguistic point of view: in the case of a term, concern with information must be proportioned to its subordinateness in the rational scheme of the sentence in which it will function verbally. The form of the factual knowledge applicable in the use of a term must be such as to allow the matter of fact involved in its signification to come into prompt connection with the matters of meaning that will establish the rational setting of the sentences in which they will be used. If one conceives of a lexicon of names—common names, not proper names, and of these as being distinctly different in identity from terms—the difference between the account given in it of the name "dog" and that given of the term "dog" in a lexicon in which the difference between words proper and terms entered into the principles and procedures of definition, the treatment of "dog" in the first is to be imagined as part of a pattern of presentations in which animal identities are ordered according to an organization of the existing knowledge of them: the "definition" of the name

would be an item of disciplined information. The definition, where "dog" was treated as a term, categorically, would report a signification: a signification, not a factual matter in itself, would be the object of knowledge. The difference is a large one.

We shall attempt to illuminate the difference between the kind of treatment appropriate to terms and that appropriate to names by bringing into view the kind of treatment appropriate to *proper* names. The information called for, with a proper name, must be automatically delimiting: it in strict particularity, it only, is the subject of the name. With common names, this delimiting function is likewise the rule. The name "dog" exacts that nothing but *dog* be thought of. The term "dog," which makes its subject a subject of reference, accentuates the subject in making reference to it, rather than delimits it. A name is an inert element of a sentence; it is self-confined, exclusive in its implications. A term has a selective force—this is why it is word-like. It does not suggest distinction, but it does suggest aptness to a linguistic purpose. We have described the factor of recognition—rational recognition—in the learning of words, a preparedness in the (mind's) reason for apprehension of their logical point. And we have described the point of a term, the emphasis of its signification, as *factual.* But the information constituting the definition of a term is for the use of the perceptual faculties. The term belongs neither to a pattern of discrete, isolatable factual identifications nor to a pattern of rational distinctions, but to a pattern of factual differentiations; because a term is imbued with some qualities of linguistic functionality, it excites perceptual cognizance of the existence of differences, in the knowable. The languaged mind is prepared for the knowledge of terms—for the use of terms—in the preparation that it has in it by its general knowledge of a basic logicality in word-meaning; for this general knowledge is accompanied by a sensitivity to the possibility—to the necessary incidence, indeed—of specification of salient differences in the subjects of perceptual experience, under the rational conditions of language.

A term always stands out by its reference-making to something marked by salient difference in identity from other possible subjects of reference in an area of factual specification. A name marks something as being of this or that identity, flatly, without any selective specification. A word imparts for a sentence's construction a distinction of thought out of a pattern of logically connected word-meanings. The word contributes by its logical precision to the rational structure of the sentence, the term contributes to its factual orientatedness. Instead of the patterns of relation in logical connection in which words have membership in a language, terms have membership in a language—we speak, of course, as to how it should be as to the presence of words and terms in a language to their users' consciousness—in patterns of perceptual experi-

ence. Thus, a word's intellectual context is the whole language; on the one hand, there is no restriction as to its field of use, on the other, the choice of it is narrowed down from the language's entire stock of word-possibilities. A term springs into use in relation to a confined intellectual context, a particular context of perceptual differentiation: the action of choice begins and ends in the particular area of relevancy to which it belongs. The stunting effect on contemporary parlance of the free use of terms—the indiscriminate use of them as if they had the rational validity of words proper—proceeds from this inherent character of adaptation to a restricted intellectual context: when terms are used as words proper, they stunt the context in which they are used. The explanation of the dull thud in a sentence made by—for instance—"empathy," which has been put to service in recent parlance as if it bettered the expressive reach of "sympathy," is to be accounted for by the restrictive use-properties of terms: "empathy" has been lifted out of a terminological status, but it remains a term, and cannot serve in a general intellectual context—cannot be used with effect of distinction.

Between terms belonging to a particular area of relevancy, there is no necessity of impingement in signification except that imposed by the accidents of factual conjunction that perceptual experience embraces. But concern with the features of perceptual experience is part of the entire rational preoccupation of the languaged mind. That saliency that a term has as a verbal device of factual specification, the reference it makes to something as marked by peculiarities of difference from other specifiable subjects of reference in a same field of perceptual experience, is of a natural linguistic importance. It is only when terms get out of place, and assume an importance as of primary word-character, as they do in languaged minds in which the rational sensibilities have become confused by a stabilizing of disorderly verbal practices as normal, that they are impediments to intelligent linguistic practice.

Many questions can assemble to complicate the simple view of a language as comprised of words and subordinate verbal entities, terms, though it be grasped as a generally correct interpretation of the linguistic make-up. For example: does a term *always* differentiate, does a term not ever refer to an isolated subject, make a specification that is perceptually unique? Cannot a term exist by itself, without connection with any other apposite to the same kind of context? Indeed, is it not the nature of terms to deal with things as things singular? No, this is of the nature of names. There is, however, a character of disparateness in the subject of a term, a standing apart from other things exciting awareness in the same field of perceptual experience. Thus, what is termed "dog" has location in a field of perceptual experience in which a general form of awareness operates expressible in the word "animal" with varied possibilities of differentiation-areas of perception within the field, and

of specifiable subjects within these, according to the circumstances obtaining where the terminological development occurs. It is in this sense that the component terms of an area of verbal choice exist in accidental conjunction.

"Dog" might be appropriately locatable, in a diversified pattern of salient differences, with "horse," "cattle," "sheep," "pig," "cat," and other terms falling into conjunction as having subjects sharing the broad identity of being of familiar animal kind. There would be more lexicographical good-sense in defining, for example, "dog" and "cat" within some frame of general reference in which their factual "points" existed in a co-ordinate state than in the encyclopaedia-entry manner used in dictionaries with these terms. These two subjects of reference lie, for most users of a dictionary, in the same area of perceptual experience. They are accessible to most speakers of the English language, and to those of at least most of the languages of the speaking world, from a same vantage of perception. There would be very much human and linguistic justification for definitions of these terms, as being of a co-ordinate character, within the orientations of a certain field of acquaintance-with-animals, and with attention to salient peculiarities that spell *difference*.

The natural course of term-learning is by orientation to a field of perceptually co-ordinate subjects, and differentiation among them; and the course of definition should correspond to the human norms of perceptual experience of those being lexicographically served. Such a mode of understanding is suitable to the treatment of every term, from the point of view of those who have personal experience of the term-subject as well as from that of those who have had none. The object of a definition of a term should be to enable the consulter to use the term with literate linguistic touch, that is, with linguistic congruity, that is, with the reference-function of the term in good perceptual and intellectual focus. Neither of the two definitions of "dog" we have quoted would match an intelligent and observant child's perceptual sensitivity to the presence of dogs in the local environment, and mental grasp of animality as manifested in them. Nor would these definitions suffice to enable a person who had by chance never seen or had acquaintance with dogs, and lacked a verisimilar notion of what dogs are, to use the term "dog" with any clear sense of reference.

"Cat" is to be found defined in the two dictionaries from which we have quoted definitions of "dog" with similar effect of encyclopaedical irrelevancy to the nature of "cat" as a *word* (term). In the American Dictionary, thus: "A carnivorous animal *(Felis catus)* which has long been kept by man in a domestic state, as a pet and for catching rats and mice. It appears to have originated in Egypt or in the East, and is probably derived from one of the wild species of North Africa known as the *Caffre cat*. Most of the breeds, as the Maltese, the tortoise-shell, tabby, etc., differ from each other only in color or other char-

acters of slight importance, though Persian and Angora, or coon, cats, have long silky hair, and the Manx cat is nearly tailless." And thus, in the English dictionary: "A well-known carnivorous quadruped *(Felis domesticus)* which has long been domesticated, being kept to destroy mice, and as house pet." Such definitions diffuse attention rather than concentrate it. From the linguistic point of view, factuality is present in them in a form digressive from the character of "cat" as a word; what *the reference content* of the word is, in its *use,* receives no attention. So long as it is a *word*—a term—that is being dealt with, not a *name,* the prime object of definition must always be provision of knowledge relative to the good use of the word, not relative to the enlargement of the consulter's stock of information. What is needed, then, with terms, is, first, a factual simplification for treatment of them in association with other terms in the common perceptual contexts to which they are applicable, a treatment allowing of placement of a term, in the language of which it is a verbal member, according to the language's organized processes—to their participation in these. A definition, that is, should place the word or term with which it is concerned in its functional home in the language.

We do not mean to be presenting finalities of specification for "dog" and "cat," but to be only going so far as the recommendation of an attitude to the definition of terms that seems to us to be in harmony with good lexicographical principle (and, fundamentally, with natural linguistic principle). We tentatively propose "familiar animal" as a main characterization of the subjects of a number of terms having practical linguistic existence in a field of reference so-termed, for general word-users. We advance it not as an initial element of "our" definition of "dog," "cat," only as an indication of the direction in which we think the definers of terms should move. In the definitions of "cat" we have quoted, the rat-and-mice catching feature bears, with the indication of pet-status, the burden of particularization; all the rest is biological and historical data that is, linguistically, marginal data. For the definition of terms as words of a language, the requisite is data of a kind that will enable the consulter to fit the given signification to a percept already mentally possessed, with benefit of improvement (as there may be room for it) in clarity and coherence of the impressions, general and particular, forming it, and reinforcement of the differentiating potency of the percept. Or, should there be no experience-derived percept in the mind of the consulter, the data should stimulate the formation of a mentally useful idea of the term's subject—or, if an idea of it already exists in the mind, improve it in congruity and definiteness where imagination fails.

To think of "cat" or "dog" as words not well served by such definitions as we have quoted may seem even to those sensitive to the weakness of dictionary-definitions, and the prevailing disorder in linguistic knowledge, to make too much of small issues. But in discussion here is not the knowledge of

what dogs and cats "are," but how the words "dog" and "cat" exist in minds as terms to which the same principles of linguistic necessity apply as those that apply properly to all other terms of the language. Along with all other words of the language, terms or true words, these are remnants of neglected words so long as the standard of definition is as slack as it is—with what the words are in use matching what they are by lexicographical estimate. Such is the state of definition, and such is the state of word-consciousness, that, even with so presumably simple a matter of companioning of consciousness with words as "dog" and "cat" involve, there is no keen mutuality of definite articulation and definite consciousness in the utterance of these words—even such word-utterances are not clean-cut linguistic events, but leave trails of indecisive pronouncement, and meaning.

Much that people speak, taking the components to be words, falls short of succeeding in being words; much of it consists of facile acts of utterance that they have allowed to take the place of words without keeping count of their knowledge and ignorance of what they are uttering. People need to repossess themselves of their language's words. But they must have linguistic help from where it has seemed to come but has come mixed with their own ignorances and confusions: they are owed some re-initiation by the dictionaries into the realities of possession of a language.

We shall stay just a little longer with the dog-cat matter, which carries a miniature moral-linguistic lesson in it. We do not mean to offer lexicographical models for the definition of these words, only to indicate the kind of content that seems to us appropriate for the definition of terms. We have already proposed "familiar animal" as a possibly useful initial general characterization. Our next thought concerns the particularizing movement of the definition. After "familiar animal," the next incident of perception is, surely, the bodily character of the subject in its simplest difference from that of the human perceiver and describer of them. This is, naturally, a point of creature-size, as "animal" with its qualification is a point of creature-kind; and the measure will be naturally by comparison relative to the adult type of perceiver-describer envisaged in the definitional setting. That is, the signification of "dog" comprises experience-impressions of varying size, rarely equal to or exceeding the human; and such a characterization holds for the use of the term by children as well, who in the use of words are accepting human adultness as the linguistic measure of things. In the case of "cat," we think such a general size-characterization as "small-statured" would be adequate, as generally applicable, and give sufficient implication of a human standard of proportion. The next phase of definitional particularizing movement with "cat" we think could appropriately treat of cat-body, mainly, while in the case of "dog" more emphasis on behavior and nature is called for.

This rendering for "cat" we offer provisionally—in trial of the possibilities

of term-definition: "familiar animal, small-statured, sleek and supple of body, quiet in presence." In the same spirit we offer the following for "dog": "familiar animal, of varying size, generally smaller than the human, by nature animated, and intelligent to the extent of being capable of attaching itself to human beings companionably and protectively, and otherwise serviceably." Something further might be added for "cat," perhaps this, after "quiet in presence": "amenable to intimate domestication while retaining some predatory and other features of wildness."

With terms, as with words, the defining process ought to involve, include, *be,* an ordering according to the patterns of relation in which they exist in the language that has bred them. How dictionaries can be constructed to take into account the structure of the language as a system of patterned meanings and significations in the form of a great body of coherently employable words, is a difficult question, but more so formally than practically. Practically, as a working problem, a lexicographical, not a physical, problem, the question is resolvable by definitional method. If the definitions prepared for a dictionary are all reflective of a definitional method in which the structure of language in its rational cohesion sets the plan of procedure, a presentation of the words, and terms, in alphabetical order would make, for the consulters of it, a very different experience from that which the conventional, the existing, dictionaries provide: everywhere the consulters would meet with the structural linguistic actuality. Despite the incongruity of alphabetical order with the nature of language, the substance of the definitions would belie (and counteract) the appearance of verbal pluralism effected by such arrangement—which *is* congruous with the existing mode of definition; in the existing mode, words are defined each from a different angle of view, or, in the case of "synonyms," from a same angle that obscures their individuality while not revealing the coherencies of linguistic structure.

We pause here to stress the relative unimportance of lexicographical *format.* Where all the entries in a dictionary were alphabetized, those of straight word-kind and those of term-kind presented as a single alphabetized mass, but with definitions themselves maintaining throughout a rational coherence corresponding with the participancy of all the words and terms in the one language (a rational unity of words), the main benefit of the different, the non-conventional definitional practice would have been made available. The scheme of linguistic structure on which the definitional procedure had been based could be to useful effect reproduced in an appendix, with the indication at each alphabetical entry of where it (the word or term, words and terms being unseparately presented) could be seen in linguistic location. The complete vocabularistic content of the language could be embraced thus in a panoramic viewing.

But the immediate lexicographical presentation of all the component words and terms of the language under definition in their place in the structural system in which they and the language have their identity, the defining and the schematic explanation of them made one operation—this would enable consulters to gain in knowledge of the language in the act of gaining in the knowledge of individual words, by the opportunity given of meeting with the words they came to learn about, or learn more about, in their linguistic environment.

3.

We hope that it is now understood that, in our relegation of terms to a subsidiary verbal rank, we claim for them as a linguistic necessity the same degree of care with the knowledge of them as we claim for the words of primary rank—the words that are the enforcers of the principles of language, the words in charge. Terms call for a special sensitivity to the particular limitedness of their attributes of meaning and function, but also to their capabilities of comprising within their limits ramifications of their rôle that increase the intricacy of their usefulness, and establish certain sympathetic resemblances between them and words of full linguistic force. A poorly known term is as much of a linguistic failure in use as a poorly known straight word, for it leaves the sense of the comprehensive utterance it serves unentire. For terms and words, different sorts of knowledge are needed, but, in their presence in a sentence, they are equals under the sentence's imposing of one standard of exactitude of knowledge for the use of all the words of which it is formed. The only qualification of the principle of an equal importance of the knowledge-care with terms and words that need be made is in regard to the danger that terms constitute by the ease with which they, in their rather perfunctory verbal character, are created: they should not in their numerical preponderance be allowed to overwhelm the mind with requirements of knowledge. The knowledge of terms can become a tyranny so oppressive as to weaken concern with the knowledge of words—and be itself inadequate in its kind in consequence of a general carelessness in word-learning.

Terms in their new abundance overpopulate language; they suffocate it, they over-consume the linguistic air people breathe. The excess-population of terms should be severely reduced; it exists by an unarrested extension of vocabularistic latitudes, by progressive relaxation of language's rational discipline of coherent functionality. Riddance of the excess would forward the revitalization of the instincts of word-choice, and the very impulses of the mind that dispose it to give itself into language's keeping. But such an expurgation would have to be backed up by an ordering of the stock of rationally justifiable gen-

eral terms, and terms that serve special vocabularistic purposes, into harmonies of reasonable presence in language. There is no doing without terms. They are the linguistic counterpart of human memorabilia, and language would be an austerity, and utterance a rarefaction without them. In their belonging to language, by its connateness with human nature, they are owed some tenderness of appreciation of their part in it, mingled with a disciplining of them to its main necessities.

Perplexities will have been stirred in readers, undoubtedly, as to the propositions we have offered on the peculiarities of terms, and the lexicographical treatment of them; and many may still linger after we have concluded this chapter—and even after we have supplied, in the final part of our book, illustrations, of some vocabularistic solidity, of the rationale of terms. However, the very emphasis and re-emphasis we have been putting on this differentiation between words that are words and words that are terms may keep it from getting lost, for readers, in the general habitual idea of words as things of no definite substance or identity, making together a formless mass called language. Though our adhering repetitively to the words-terms division may seem to them pedantic insistence, and the novelty of it be succeeded by an unconvinced familiarity with our confidence in it as real, the idea of it will be found, we believe, not dismissible, and will ultimately, in practical application to the vocabularistic material of language, fall naturally into place as fitting it in reason.

4.

The characterization we have made of terms as concerned with specifications in which *difference* of factual import is the point of linguistic interest is one of the possible causes of perplexity for readers attempting to apply what we have said of terms to their personal experience and cognizance of things linguistic. The property of establishing and conveying *distinction* of meaning that we have attributed to words of prime word-nature will probably be more easily comprehended, if only because there are so many examples to spring to mind from the "synonym" word-stock of conventional aggregation, presented as an area of special vocabularistic wealth. People have, that is, at least vague apprehensions of a principle of distinction, governing very many words of their language, that they can at least vaguely apply to language generally. But there are immediate difficulties in the way of conceiving of terms as serving linguistic needs for particularizing "difference."

Perhaps the question as to whether there is always a feature of "difference" where a term is used may be usefully rephrased thus: "Is there always a feature of difference where a term is invented—or where a term is created out of an

existent name?" Special terms, such as those that are part of the linguistic paraphernalia of a science, provide some help of illumination as to this difference-feature, because where there are special terms there is usually an accompanying supply of names, comparison between them bringing out distinctive peculiarities. Names can be seen to identify things that are thought of as existent singly, without any necessary connection with other nameable things—or termable things. Many diseases, medically named diseases, are, thus, things known, thought of, as "by themselves," each by itself, without there being in the name-awarenesses of them any factor of necessary related awarenesses of difference among them. When such a factor enters into the experience and mental noting of them—or of a number of new disease-phenomena—this will be reflected in the verbal forms employed for the designation of them: the forms will be terms, they will imply a contextual area within which their subjects are characterizable in their differences. Distinguishing between names and terms in special vocabularistic areas can be difficult, because these are areas in which the usage-processes tend to move with a sluggish formalism, and much more is in a linguistically indeterminate state than one might expect. We do not pause to give examples of the close presence with each other of names and the special-term kind of words in special vocabularistic areas, these areas being too many and too full, and the diversity of composition too intricate for any quick sampling to demonstrate the curiosities of composition. But anyone may turn to such an area, linger in it, and discover such a complex vocabularistic mixture of things as we have described, and be able to do some sorting-out on the recommended names-terms basis of comparison.

The overlapping of "technical" terms into the usage quarters of the ordinary vocabulary—terms the reference-subjects of which belong to fields of special practice—is a distinct element of the difficulty of appraising the condition of a vocabulary with regard to the effects of terminological amplifications of it. "Sternum," for instance, is not removed from literate vocabularistic knowledge in its belonging to an anatomist's special, professionally private, terminological world. What place, if any, has it among the terms of ordinary usage, the reference-subjects of which are the *different* parts of the body? Is—at least—adjectival "sternal" associable with terms designating bodily regions as a term of ordinary status, or is it, with "sternum" itself, not domesticatable among terms of ordinary status? The same kind of question could be asked of "lumbar." Is one using technical or ordinary terminology if one speaks of the "lumbar" region? Such considerations could be carried to points of fine nagging preoccupation and multiplied to quantities of tedious hypothesizing. Yet problems of varying degrees of minor but not necessarily trivial importance *do* lie teeming under the surface of the great portion of a language's vocabulary describable as *terms*.

The mere revelation of the divisibility of the vocabulary into *words* and *terms* portions opens up, with the first general description of the terms portion, a seeming infinity of complex confusion. The problems are all real, and they could in their numerical mass seem to defy order; and effort to create it among them could be entrapped in ineffectual concern with trivialities. In treating of terms, one needs to keep a firm balance between consciousness of their relative unimportance in respect to words proper, and their importance in this unimportance. The resolution of all that pertains to the terms of a language, in so far as it enters into problems of good management of it, should not be looked for until the resolution of all that pertains to the true words has begun to come within view.

We have touched on the development, in terms, of elements of signification, additional to those that constitute their factual point, which bear some resemblance to the property of distinction of meaning that gives the true words their logical quality, is the substance of their logical point. Manifestations of this development will be found everywhere in irregular but profuse distribution, in the exploration of the term-content of the vocabulary of the English language. (We are, of course, in practical fact, thinking of this language before others, in this book.) The tendency to the development of a function of qualifying, distinction-like, force of expressiveness, accompanying the function of making reference to things as of independent difference, is a prevalent one in the ordinary terms of the language. In some of its manifestations it suggests an assimilation to the process to which all words proper are subject—mistakenly seen as confined to the words miscalled "synonyms"—of relation by reason of distinction. But no term that remains a term, no term not become a word, a true word, has a primary character of expressing a distinction of thought, is other than primarily concerned with the denotation of difference. Of the term "dog," for example, it might be thought that "hound" and "cur," existing in developmental connection with it, introduce distinction. But what they present, in linguistic actuality, is just two connotations that adhere specifically to their subjects, establishing the terms merely in a juxtaposition of difference of reference.

We might press beyond the simple case we have cited of terms making reference to different bodily regions, extending our example of "sternal," "lumbar," with others, as, "abdominal," "spinal," "thoracic," and ask, what of such a pair of terms as "breast" and "chest," terms dealing with a bodily part of thoracic location? Are there not here, suddenly appearing in this terminological environment, two words in a juxtaposition of related distinction-making? They are words concerned with different physical aspects of a certain part of the thoracic regions; the effect here of qualitative difference—the kind of difference that obtains where words express distinction of thought (where

they mean distinctions)—is largely stylistic, related to a certain rhetorical character "breast" has of identifying the bodily region in question as a region of the sentiments, contrasting with the always plain character of structural reference of "chest." If the term "bosom" is brought into consideration with these, then there is to be noted a remote relation in difference between "chest" and "bosom" and a rhetorical affinity between "breast" in its connoting a site of emotional action and "bosom" as connoting the private repository of the feelings with vaguer reference to bodily location than what "breast" in a rhetorical sense effects. That is, the potential of conveying distinction, which is generally weak with terms, and always, where actualized, secondary to their characteristic function of presenting a point of factuality, is in the case of these three words not actualized—or actualizable—beyond a superficial suggestion of distinctions, treated in the very suggestion as undefinable.

It is well, in the evaluating of the contribution of individual words to the expression of compound sense (i.e., in the sentence or a unit of the sentence), to have a standing awareness of the uniformity of words proper, in their possessing a prime and single quality of distinction-expressiveness, and of the great variability of terms in the possession of distinction-like connotations secondary to their factual import, and of the limited value of expressiveness with which such added connotations endow terms. Especially does such an awareness befit the lexicographer, and especially is the lexicographer in a position to have it, and exercise it. With terms, one is always under linguistic restraint. That which one cannot do with them is always a dominating feature in the use of them. They are of meagre expressiveness; they are hardly expressive at all: meaning with them is at the remove of reference.

Many terms fail to yield, even, their full potential of denoting "difference." Many a term exists by itself in an area of undeveloped, otherwise blank, perceptual experience. One finds terms in varying stages of development of difference-specification, sometimes in patterns packed with difference-elaborating terms, sometimes strewn in lone or very little accompanied presence in the vocabulary, terms somewhat, indecd, of the rudimentary nature of names. Another curiosity of the nature of terms, in which they contrast in nature with true words, belongs to that feature of them that we have called "factual point," in distinction from "logical point," as the characteristic feature of the true word. This curiosity is that the factual point of a term can be not verily, but only imitatively, factual. That to which the term refers can be fictive or actual, suppositious or verifiable; but, whatever it is, a term plants it in a sentence as of a factual character, even if the sentence contains a denial of its factuality—as with the term "elves" in "Elves are imaginary creatures, of an earthier sort than fairies are." Terms can be, thus, "untrue."

Words proper, which have in themselves linguistic canons of truth, and

introduce them into their functioning in sentences, are—or should be—always the controllers, in sentence-sense, of its truth-character. Without *these* words, there would be no differentiating between the factual and the unfactual, the real, the unreal, the true, the untrue. In considering the contra-factual potentiality of terms, one can better understand the rational potency of words proper. No word proper can itself be "untrue." The distinctions of thought that constitute the meanings of such words are true propositions of the mind, of minds, that have been found to be, within the universe of language, universally workable. When such words fall out of use, this is not because they have revealed themselves to be "untrue" or ceased to be "true," but because the need of them has for some reason of intellectual circumstance lapsed.

In connection with the element of allowable unfactuality in the attributed factuality of the reference-content of terms, there are rather serious questions to raise about philosophical terms, especially as to the application of what we have said on the origin of terms, as being in fields of perceptual experience rather than in those of intellectual experience (in which we place the start of words in their career as words proper). Should it not be presumed that philosophical terms originate in fields of intellectual experience? Indeed, has there not always been a substantial traffic of transference of philosophical terms to the ordinary linguistic word-supply, some becoming of key-importance among those words concerned with distinctions of meaning that are the language's custodians of intellectual responsibleness—of *truth?* Such questions take one into quarters of consideration that have been too little visited.

Words characterized as "philosophical terms" tend to be enveloped in an assumption that, by the special circumstances of their origin, they are words of superior intellectual force, exceeding in seriousness of meaning and content, and potency of distinction-making, words of the ordinary vocabulary. While many philosophical terms have become ordinary vocabularistic property, very few become truly ordinary words, losing entirely their terminological character. One example of such few is "idea," transmuted from a philosophical term into an ordinary word (it having been initially taken from the ordinary language and converted into a philosophical term—as which it retains a separate identity!); but one would soon be done, in citing others. Although philosophy is concerned, traditionally, with the intellectual processes, and with an intellectually disciplined use of words, philosophic thought is thought pursued within a professional thought-enclosure in which thinking is *about* thinking, and words matter as devices for investigating the possibilities and limits of thought rather than for the expressing of it.

All is *watch,* in philosophy; thought is measured against thought, word against word. This is a field (or was a field, for science has invaded and changed it) of perception of the forms thought can take. There is in it a commitment

to a harmonizing, to the utmost, of these intellectual forms. However, as these forms themselves are but "working hypotheses," the resulting intellectual harmonies—the systematization of the particular forms chosen as hypothetical bases of speculation (in brief, *the philosophy*)—can be no more than a construing as a hypothetically adequate intellectual experience (sufficiently truth-productive, hypothetically) the collective perceptual experience that the employed forms of thought afford when treated as a theoretical unity. That is, the philosophical linguistic area is one in which technicalities of thinking are on the whole of more consequence than the productive operation of thinking—effective thought. It is a terms-breeding area; preoccupation in it is more with matters of intellectual machinery than with the affairs of the intellect directly. Perhaps we have sufficiently pictured the nature of philosophical "language" for the idea of perceptual experience, along with that of patterns of difference as characterizing terminological vocabulary, to seem not altogether of incongruous and improbable applicability to philosophy's part in linguistic history.

A set of questions of some importance might be raised as to the relationship of terms to ordinary words where, between the reason-orientated meanings of the latter and the factuality-orientated significations of the former, there seems to be an affinity that runs the words together, overcoming their difference of linguistic character and function. What, for example, should be thought about—and lexicographically done about—the word "weld"? It is a term of technical reference by origin, and has been in wide use as such without any restrictive consciousness of it as belonging to a special vocabularistic field. In its status as a term of general property, it has acquired extra weight as such in extensive figurative use made of it, so that, in addition to the implication of the result of joining ensuing from the process to which the reference is made, there is an effect insinuatable, into the term's rôle, of directly meaning joining of a fast, unbreakable kind. Is the technical sense of the term so much transmuted by the general use of it as such, and the figurative use, which seems to take it almost altogether out of the terminological category, that it ought to be regarded and treated as having become a true word, having a force of meaning-distinction that puts it in rational relation to "join," and other words standing obviously in such relation to "join"? Or are there two words "weld," one a word proper, separated by literalization of the figurative sense from the rudimentary term of exclusive technical reference, and this term?

Is there a general measurement that can be applied to figurative use-development in the case of terms of technically definitive reference by which to draw lines of particular evaluation? What might be usefully thought and lexicographically done in the case of "weld," and what, similarly, or differently, in the case of "fuse," for example, a term kindred to "weld" in its technical aspect and its having a potential of development in figurative use?

The value of such questions as we have proposed is in their being practically relevant to evaluation of the verbal components of language: attempt to answer them would require effort to enter into the actual, internal, verbal content of language. One cannot even come to ask such questions, which are about language as it is in its substantive reality, unless one achieves closeness to it by treating it and its words as of one reality. Contemporary treatment of language as something authoritatively knowable only by scientific methods of description and analysis is from distant observation-points; or, it may be said, it is by observation, necessarily using distance, and necessarily having in view not language itself, purely, but various environments of its employment (its appearance in particular environments), and not by contact with language on its own ground, as real in its words.

The set of questions just considered here introduces the important subject of the relation between word-meaning and the figurative use of words—the general question, to what extent does figurative use affect meaning, to what extent does meaning control figurativeness (control it, in linguistic propriety)? The subject leads into consideration of the problem of metaphor, a question embracing large matters of linguistic history, and linguistic principle also: what is metaphor, linguistically? What metaphor is is obscured in descriptions of what it is literarily. A firm sense of verbal meaning-values is a prerequisite for the comprehension of the part the devices of metaphor have had in the forming and development of linguistic practices, and for good linguistic judgement as to what can be lost and what gained, in verbal expressiveness, when experimental devices for delivering meaning in ways outside the regular modes of expression are brought into play. The subject needs treatment from the point of view from which linguistic matters in the large are here considered. (We pay respect to its importance in a commentary on it in the supplementary pages, p. 506.)

5.

We have presented terms as words that, although there are traces in them of name-origin, have their linguistic force, or point, seated in factuality. We have tried to show that this factuality of terms makes the difference between terms and names, in its placing of the subject—the noted thing—in a linguistic setting. The "thing," in the case of a name, is plumped down in raw fact. It is imagined, not understood. The factual element of a term is encased in a generalization; its particularity, through this, stands within the language's real range of word-subjects, not outside of it, as it does with a name. The thing, with a term, is described by it, not merely identified. But the generalizing portion of the signification of a term (as, "familiar animal") is not integral with

it, as everything belonging to the meaning of a word belongs integrally to it. With a term, the feature of generalization is something of an excrescence upon the essential reference-content of the term, an accompanying note of classificatory import. It could well be dealt with in a dictionary in which the difference between words proper and terms was recognized by being presented with emphasis at the beginning of the signification-account of a term. Or, if terms were given separate placement in a dictionary, a single uniform generalization definitionally applicable to a particular collection of terms could be presented as a covering title.

The factual knowledge called for in the case of terms may be said to comprise awareness of a general context of reference besides that of a particular, specific ground of reference. The conventional treatment of the words called "synonyms" may seem to match our analysis of how terms require to be known. This question might be asked: Do not the distinctions of meaning that characterize the words "change," "alter," "vary," and others synonymically grouped as generally expressive of difference-making, exist in relation to a general context of meaning—is not their particularity presided over by a generalization, even as the case is with terms? The synonymic treatment, which wraps the words in a generalization concerning difference—*does* assign them to a general context of difference—makes terms of them!

It would be counter to the nature of the true words of a language, in any kind of lexicographical treatment of them, to construe meaning as being divided, with *any* of them, into two parts, a general meaning, possessed by all, and a particular sense, by which the words differed in meaning from those with which they agreed in general in meaning. True words have meanings that are unified in a single force of distinction. Distinction is not a minor feature of meaning, with them, a "fine" point, as the synonymists have it. With terms, the setting of the qualifying element of signification in a general context sharpens the particularizing effect. For example, the factual point of "dog" stands out against, rather than being overshadowed by, the generalizing element "familiar animal" with which knowledge of the signification needs to be substanced. The matter of difference-making, in the meanings of "change," "alter," etc., can figure properly only as an implicit element of the meanings absorbed in their distinct individual force, deducible as a consequence of the action meant or an implicit attendant peculiarity of the course of action, but not treatable as a titular lead under which the individual meanings of the words fall and offer themselves for "discrimination."

Though the problems to be dealt with in the general linguistic and special lexicographical consideration of terms and the problems of these kinds that words proper present come close, and the two orders of problems seem at points to overlap, the difference between them is a very large one, as large as

that between the two orders of words. It is also, besides a large difference, an intricate one; and this intricacy reflects the intricacies of the nature of language itself—of which terms have a goodly share. Intricacies in philological development and diversification, in and among languages, and in the conformities and variations of usage-patterns, within individual language-areas and over the general human range of languages, can be of useful interest for the historical understanding of language and a general critical sense of the effects of the responses of human beings to their circumstantial environments on their modes of word-use. But the essential linguistic intricacies, those without familiarity with which one's understanding of the nature of language, and one's knowledge of a particular language or particular languages, are limited to physical peculiarities of word-composition and formal peculiarities of sentence-composition, involve peculiarities of word-meaning (in the case of terms, word signification) to which the users of words need to be actively sensitive for their choices of individual words to be actively intelligent choices. The worth of a multi-worded utterance, measured for expressiveness, is according to how much energy of intelligent word-choice has been expended in it.

Some of the intricate potentialities of verbal choice that are packed into the terminological portion of the vocabulary generate round terms that may be described as "absolute" terms in respect to others that may be described as "relative" in respect to them. "Horse," for example, may be said to be an absolute term, with "pony," "colt," "mare," "stallion," classified as associated relative terms. The absolute-relative characterization dispels tentative notions of there being a process of *distinction* present, in such cases. One could speak of *comparison,* but not distinction: there is present a process of comparison, concerned with the expression of perceptible difference under a standard of common reference. Here, again, is appearance of resemblance of the vocabularistic variations that terms afford to the patterns of relationship in which the words called "synonyms" are depicted as existing, in books of synonyms.

We predict that terms will be found, when the processes of linguistic clarification projected in this book are taken beyond preliminary stages, to be orderable but not systematizable, and, in their ordering, comprehensible as accidental rather than as rationally determined developments. The ideas of them that we have been advancing as different in what they allow and invite, in treatment, from words proper, have proved so illuminative, progressively, of the character of both words and terms (as of distinguishable orders of words) in studies undertaken for, and pursued in, this book, that we cannot but anticipate expanding corroboration of them in any further application of them to general, and special, lexicographical concern with linguistic problems of *meaning*. With regard to the description "absolute" that we have suggested in

the preceding paragraph as applicable to some terms, we can point to the likely finding that the peculiarity of constituting an "absolute" reference-point, in signification, is generally predominant in the character of terms, as words having a primary function of simple, independent, reference-making. Where terms, instead of existing in isolated signification-state, become involved in associative relations of difference from others, tendencies towards the development, in such absolute-relative patterns of association, of a distinction-like element in the related significations are perceptible. But the primordial or absolute term keeps its quality of absolute referentiability in respect to the others as relative terms in respect to it. And no such "relative" term will prove to exist merely in associative or auxiliary relation to another: it is of the nature of a term to exist largely unto itself.

There is no imitative correspondence, in terms-development, with the propensity of words proper towards the multiplication of single words into two, and more, by the diversification of a single meaning with retention of the initial phonetic matrix for the new words created by the creation of the new meanings. With terms, it may be said, the multiple-meanings phenomenon exists in reverse; care needs to be taken, with them, to avoid the error of assuming meaning-diversification, the existence of another term, or more, in the single phonetic matrix. The dominant factuality of term-signification makes a rigid unity of the phonetic and signifying components of a term's identity—the latter sort, in their contextual limitedness, being almost physically bound to the former. Yet, some examples of the multiple-meanings phenomenon are to be found here and there among the terms, evidences of a random impulsion to distinction-making, derivative, surely, of the general linguistic impulsion to it. There is, for instance, a term "land," but there is not just one term "land." However, there are not so many term-words "land" as one's experience with straight words, in the field of word-multiplication through meaning-multiplication, might induce one to expect. There are some connotations of this or that term "land" that could tempt one to see in them individualized words "land," but they are too thin in signification-difference to be more than plays in meaning-idiom attending a term as rhetorical shadows.

In our commenting on peculiarities in the functional participation of terms in language and the peculiar general behavior of terms, and the peculiar behavior of language in its possession of terms and the peculiar linguistic behavior of the speakers of languages that terms provoke, we propose, for readers, a backward-looking view of the experience of human beings as speakers of languages. They have struggled much to make language's amalgam of rationality and factuality work. They have resorted to devices for compensating for failures in themselves to be adequately appreciative of the facilities of

thought-expression language provides, or for what seem, at least, to be deficiencies in language's provision of such facilities. Depending on figurative modes of expression, in which terms are extensively used, is among the forms of rhetorical custom that have marked the adaptation of people to their linguistic inheritance and the adaptation by them of *it* to their conditions of capability and difficulty in their employment of it.

All forms of linguistic custom—linguistic custom as distinct from what a language requires in practice by the nature of its structure as represented by the words that are its structural substance—are transcended in historical importance and essential linguistic value by what the speakers of a language practise in plain fidelity to their knowledge of the meanings of its words. The deciding factor in the human struggle to succeed as languaged beings is in the degree of success they have in achieving rational compatibility between word-use and word-meaning. The true record of this struggle is in the record of the concern with the knowledge of words. All the rest, all the resorting to supplementary rhetorical devices and stylistic procedures for the improvement of linguistic practice is a story of concern with makeshifts, embellishments, superficialities of verbal success resting at formal effects of complete expression that disguise actualities of incompletion. Perception of the peculiar place that terms have in the verbal make-up of a language is a necessary part of the experience of historical acquaintance with the vicissitudes human beings have suffered in their efforts to live up to their possession of language.

PART SIX

Studies in Meaning-Relation and Meaning-Distinction

CHAPTER 16

The Placing of Words: The Topography of Meanings

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1.

While this sixth Part of our book is directed to the exhibition of the practical aspects of word-definition according to the linguistic principles set forth in the preceding five Parts, it will be more than a display of word-groupings and word-definitions formed within the meaning-relation boundaries of the groupings: we shall deal in more than mere exemplification. What we present will not be as pieces of a proposed new kind of dictionary, ourselves, as it were, personally departed from the scene. We shall be in personal attendance in what we present in this Part. We shall speak in comment in the course of the presentation, pointing to what seems to us to need explanatory singling out. What follows should be regarded as blackboard demonstrations of the new lexicographical possibilities envisaged in the critical body of this book. We are at immediate hand; readers are not left alone with definitional examples that cannot but seem strange, difficult to relate to the practicalities of accustomed word-use, in the first stages of acquaintance.

In Chapter 14, in using the word "structure" in connection with language, speaking of the "structure" of language, we have stated that "we mean by this the composition of language as it is a self-sustaining entity." And we say: "Anything has 'structure' the composition of which holds it unified—that is unified in its composition." If this definitional concept is kept in mind, and other words are thought of that seem to stand in meaning-relation to "structure," one set of words likely to stand out as clearly individual in meaning despite having evident meaning-relation to one another is, "structure," "building," "edifice"—"structure" being here particularized (as, "a structure"). If just "structure" and "building" are considered in conjunction, the force of the distinction of meaning contained in the definitional concept we

have cited as pertinent to "structure" can be very quickly seen as marking off the meaning of "building" as itself constituting a forceful distinction. It will become apparent, further, that where distinction of meaning is in one case comprehended, comprehension of the meaning of another word, or other words, will extend from it. For no word—no true word—has its meaning in isolation.

Not only do words not exist in isolation in themselves by the distinct individuality of their meaning, but, rather, impinge one on another, under generally pervasive conditions of meaning-relation: there is no necessary point of beginning among the words of a language in a consideration of meanings, in their relatedness and differing. One may begin anywhere to trace the courses of meaning-relation and difference. But, to engage in such a tracing with productive results in the knowledge of a language, one must go prepared with consciousness of words ever ready to exert itself in consciousness of a single word—of single words in the fundamentally unconfusable identities they have by the logically sensitive manner in which word-meanings are distributed in language.

One does not "know" a language unless one knows its words as participant in an organized distribution of distinctions of meaning. Such consciousness comprises perception of the localized as well as of the general distributive operation of the principle of distinction of meaning among the language's words. It is developable to finely detailed perceptions of meaning-relations and meaning-differences everywhere within a language's structure. But the elementary possession of it comes as a matter of natural course through acquaintance with the words of a language extensive enough for expressive and communicative adequacy—the numerical quantity of "known" words constituting a readily enlargeable workable sufficiency. Knowledge of a language is an active intellectual condition.

At first, this Part of our book was tentatively given the title "Gateways into the Interior of Language." This was intended to cover the penetration that would be made into the concrete actualities of meaning-impingements, the rational orientations and distancings in the ways in which words are disposed in a language—in particular, in the English language—in accordance with properties intrinsically possessed by it for employment to logically coherent effect. However, that titular description had not only the defect of suggesting a process of casual exploratory approaches to the fundamentals of lexicographical procedure: it suggested a fading of the very serious general coverage of things linguistic of the preceding Parts in random exercises characterized more by sentimental conviction than by substantial exemplification of the lexicographical practicalness of what had been argued in the preceding Parts.

The title that replaces the initial experimental choice has a humble scholastic ring, which may count against expectation of actual beginnings in a new kind of lexicographical procedure. On the other hand, it promises, without adornments of intricate technical terminology, just what has been forecast: in this Part, the sense of our treatment of things linguistic is put to the test of practical usefulness—to lexicographical tests. It corresponds, moreover, with our conception of the proper nature of the work of dictionary-making: this should be work, by our way of thinking, in which studies in meaning-relations and meaning-distinction are the manufactory from which definition issues.

2.

The word "structure" brings into view words—besides such words as we have cited as existing with meaning-relation to it—having together with it meaning-functions in the field of conception and expression concerning things as made into what they are. The word "form" is frequently found a close neighbor to "structure" in certain areas of discussion, with implication of close relation in meaning; but there is no distinctly perceptible actuality of relation, as with "structure" and "building." Have "structure" and "form," it must be asked, a logically natural proximity of placement in the language? "Structure" and "form" do not assume, when jointly considered, a forcefully evident position towards each other of logically apposite meaning-relation and critically apposite meaning-distinction. Yet they are enfolded, in the consciousness of many, in a wrapping of ascribed close relatedness, though the wrapping is never removed for rational inspection of the ascribed relation. This is because both words have clinging to them meaning-associations peculiar to fields of special argument, in which they are used as words of special signification, as in the fields of philosophy or aesthetics. The danger of definition that, interpreting words as they are applied to special fields of use, offers speculation on their meanings colored with special, localized reference, is large, and grave, with very many words of simple general meaning-cogency. Those who use words with the special contextual associations they have acquired in special fields of use can seem to know, above others, what they "really" mean. The apparently exceptional order of insight into the words' meanings as requiring specialized sensitivities of comprehension subdues the ordinary users of them into feeling the diffidence of the untutored.

There is much vague-mindedness as to the meanings of such words as "structure" and "form." But the correction of this is not by definition of the words as words coming under the authority of some special field of knowledge. More labor would be required to demonstrate the distortion of their

general meaning-character that the words suffer in specialistic use of them than to remedy confusion or blankness of conception in the understanding of them as words of general meaning-status.

An example of specialistic opining on the meaning of words of general meaning-status in the language is presented in a lecture, one of a Memorial series delivered at Princeton in 1967 by Erich Kahler, the series having the title *The Disintegration of Form in the Arts* (published in book form in 1968 under this title). There is early advanced, in this lecture, the generalization "what happens to artistic form seriously affects the human form, the form of man." Here we have, to begin with, a special application of the general word "form" made the orientation-point for a view of form conceived of as a general property, which it is, sensitively intertwined with form as an artistic property, and to be so understood in the general field of life. Association of this kind puts the actualities in reverse order. The meaning of "form" requires to be linguistically determined without reference to ideas about form in the field of art: usages of the word in the field of art are pertinent to form as a general property of things only as such usages conform to the general meaning of "form" as a word of the general language.

Mr. Kahler, correctly characterizing as mistaken the use of "form" as equivalent in meaning to "shape," presents this notion of the meaning of "form," which seems at first look, whatever faults may be found in it from a general linguistic point of view, to be orientated towards that point of view. Form, he says, "*can be roughly defined as structure manifesting itself in shape.*" But he further says that only "in as much as shape constitutes the outer appearance of a structure, which means of an inner organization, an inner organizational coherence of a bounded entity, does it belong to form." Here is a conception of "inner" organization associated with "structure" and another of "outer" appearance of a structure as involved in the meaning of "shape," and another of an exclusive fitness of "shape" to identity with "form" where form is understood to be a manifestation of structure in shape understood to be the outer appearance of a structure. If the analysis of meanings stopped here, we should be left with a definitional conception of an apparently general order of form in which form is definable in terms of structure, with shape and form definable, with certain qualifications, in terms of each other. And such interlocking of meanings of "form," "shape," "structure," could be viewed as having no peculiarity other than that of being a more intellectually elegant treatment of the words than that found in standard general dictionaries, in which "form" is to be found defined as a general word, as for instance, "the shape and structure of anything": the refinement does not overturn the lexicographical legitimatization of the meaning-blur in which the words exist in the general use of them. But it soon becomes evident, in the lecture's course, that the concep-

tions of meaning presented relate to "the arts" centrally, and that the meanings attributed to these words as general words derive from a special, rather than a general, linguistic orientation of the definer's interest in them. The close care exercised in his specialistic definitional consideration of them provides a point of beginning for an alternative definitional consideration of them as general words—a demonstration of the kind of care required for the determining of the meanings of words within the framework of the language-at-large.

Specialistic consideration of words presented as of general pertinence for the use of them as such is pervasively characteristic of the analysis of word-meanings found in writings in the fields of literary criticism, aesthetics, and, indeed, all philosophical writing. Speculation on the meanings of words is an open privilege, and a much pursued one, formally and informally, with intellectual and verbal finesse and with intellectual crudity and linguistic amateurism. In examining the treatment given the words "shape," "form," "structure," by Erich Kahler as words of peculiar philosophical and aesthetical interest, we hope to clarify what is requisite for the determining of the meaning of words as words existing within the framework of the language-at-large—words to be known, studied, as having meanings possibly interconnected with others, but first of all as involved in a broad disposition of words in logically congruous placement within the all-embracing framework. Professor Kahler presented the following picture of the three words.

> A lake . . . has shape, but it has no structure, and it seems to me therefore not quite correct to speak of the form of a lake. But any organic body, any living creature, has form, indeed *is* form. And the human being, which extends far beyond physical existence into realms of psychic, intellectual and spiritual reflection, and thus through memory and awareness of identity, also into the dimension of time, that is, into history—the human being is up to this point the most highly structured being, the most advanced natural form of all. In this sense of a being . . . we can speak of *human form*. And . . . this applies as well to the *genus humanus* as a whole, as a specific organic form. . . .

It can be seen from what we have quoted how consideration of what particular words mean, entertained on a scale that is not the scale of concern with meaning relations and distinctions operating within the language-at-large, but that of a seemingly vaster spread of conceptions of a philosophic character, actually leaves the words behind, as meagre things not equal either to the needs of specialized thinking or those of ordinary intelligence-processes. The word "form," for instance, is superseded by an *idea* of form, of an implication seemingly grand, capacious in content: a word has been replaced with an idea of its meaning intended to purge it of linguistic commonplaceness. Into the idea is

crowded a complex speculation in which the meanings of many words are brought into complementary bearing on *its* meaning. The consequence of such procedure is the opposite of an enlargement with accompaniment of precision, in the conceiving of word-meaning. What is said is a verbal pseudo-structure: its components do not hold it unified, it collapses inward—and outward!—upon itself. No linguistically self-disciplined mind could offer this as enlightening either for aesthetical or philosophical good use of the word "form." No mind of fully rational verbal sensitivity would accept it as such. It is a very plain example of how words, instead of being used with respect for their worth of meaning as instruments of thought, are treated as fragmentary thought-material for collection into theories, judgements, educational fiats. Human education as a historical whole has been, and still is (perhaps more so now than ever before), a learning process presided over by teachers who are "thinkers" without being, verily, speakers, who offer the verbally indeterminate as a determinate.

Now, to follow this specialistic analysis of word-meaning from the introductory ideology we have quoted into its nature as a system of general intellectual legislation. Professor Kahler lays it down as "a preliminary distinction" that art is form created by a human intellectual act. "Form" is thus sucked away from its general linguistic existence into existence as a proprietary fixture of ideas about "art." But "art" is a word of the general language, along with "form." And we all know in our general non-specialistic identities that art is not verbally equatable with form. It is a kind of activity of production in which skill is employed to give the product value as an object appealing to the judgement of the senses. This is the nature of art, as the realities of language prescribe. When there is alteration of these realities for the purpose of *special* definition, the result is a divorcement of thinking from general principles of reason: one is in an area of *special* reasoning, which always has behind it a special purpose to which thinking is adapted.

The special reasoning in the special kind of defining we have been examining is the philosophical elevating of art into a ground of special wisdom for the knowledge of meanings. Such movement of words from their natural habitat into special worlds is movement from sanity towards devised insanity. All such movement—and it abounds in contemporary reasoning—is aimed at the aggrandizement of some one particular department of human activity over others, to exaggerated degrees of importance. Developments in modern rationales of art, literature, sociology, anthropology, psychology, have torn intellectual life from its natural rational pinnings in the realities of language—the realities it verbally distinguishes—and resettled it in worlds in which words as they mean by their general meanings confound each other without any possibility of clarification. The confusion, aggravated by the attribution to

special-language developments of superior expressiveness, makes *the* language seem unequal to the highest human potentialities in word-use—intellectually inept, out-of-date.

A simple final illustration of how special definition designed to have general linguistic authority moves towards linguistic insanity is provided in a brief account, by the philosopher of art, Erich Kahler, whom we have been quoting, of the "classical standard of artistic form" (which he regards as universally applicable). He quotes Socrates' requirement of discourse in *Phaedrus* as a defining of what a work of art is: a unit "like a living creature." "It is, we may conclude, a *living thing, created by a human, intellectual act.*" (The italics are his.) The conversion of "like a living creature" into "a living thing," the "like" dispensed with and a special act of "human, intellectual" creation bestowing on the "thing" an absolute identity with a "creature," is linguistic insanity in full unhesitant progress.

We shall attempt to exhibit the place that the words "form" and "structure" and "shape" occupy in the dispositions of meaning that the general language makes among its member words.

3.

We revert now to the definitional concept we have proposed as suitable to the word "structure." With "structure," a structure, there are component parts, and these are unified; and it is the unified entirety of the parts that constitutes the structure. Therefore, the logical point of "structure" may be rendered thus: assemblage, the component parts of which exist in consolidated unity. This is "the thing"—*a* structure. What of the character of a consolidation of assembled parts, referred to as *its* "structure?" Is this not logically identifiable as a state of consolidated unity in which the component parts of an assemblage exist? But what if "structure" is used of a material or non-material composition (in the latter case, of, for instance, a drama) with attribution to it of *weak* structure? Can one properly speak of the structure of something as "weak" if the qualities of consolidatedness and unity are implicit in the meaning of the word? We think the answer would have to be that, for "structure" to be apt, there must be a general condition, of consolidatedness of parts, of the nature of unity; but that neither immediate effectiveness nor ultimate durability of the condition is prescribed as a factor of implication prerequisite for correct use of the word. Another pertinently raisable question is as to the *purpose*. Purpose seems integrally present in the meaning-implications the word carries in many of its uses—structure resulting from purpose to "create" structure. But one may speak of the structure of natural aggregates as well as of the structure of things of human fashioning. However, it would be rhetorically false to

use the word in such a case as if it carried an implication of an initial purposiveness. One can see that the meaning of "structure" is distinctly exclusive of such an implication in both classes of cases. The logical point of the word, as we have presented it, covers both classes of cases, with limitation of its meaning to the distinguishing of a condition of consolidatedness: no necessary reference to the nature of the cause of the condition is comprised in the word's meaning.

Complete adequacy for all instances of use, in the account of word-meaning, with an inherent limitation of meaning invariably suitable to all, is the ideal of definition. The logical point offered in functional definition must lean hard towards that ideal; and, the harder it leans, the more reliable it will be as a determinant of the allowance of implication within the boundaries of a word's explicit expressiveness. This particular exploration we have made of the logical problems involved in definitional consideration of the word "structure" should be useful for the understanding of the necessarily determinate character of the meaning of a word, whatever the varying peculiarities of the individual contexts in which it may chance to be used. The potentiality of varied use does not introduce elements of chance into word-meaning. Language is decisive, or it is nothing; definition that does not reflect this is less than definition.

And what of "building," and "edifice," which come into view as close neighbors in meaning to "structure?" With "structure" in the particularized sense, "pile" also comes into view. But this group of words has somewhat the character of a miscellany; the words do not impinge in meaning on one another in marked closeness of distinction. There is, moreover, a special relationship between "building" and "structure" which repeats the relationship between the verbs "build" and "construct." We shall try investigation of the verbs, the nouns being disparate forms. With "construct," one has an assembling of parts in an operation designed to make them exist in a state of consolidated unity; with "build," one has an assembling of parts in an operation designed to make them stand in durable connectedness upon a supporting base-area. To these two, one may add "erect": with erect, one has an assembling of parts in an operation designed to make them rise as a single mass to a height. The word "rear" comes, then, into view. But its meaning-orientation is towards simple "raise": it should be defined conjunctively with *that* word.

The verb-al force of "structure," as noun-parallel to "construct," thrusts consideration of meaning-relations and meaning-distinctions in the linguistic environment of both words into a depth or distance of linguistic exploration not easily anticipatable in first coupling thought of the two. But, fast, then, in a spate of complexities, numbers of words, pressing into view from many meaning-quarters, flood one's attention: the entire language seems, indeed, crowding close. Not only is there "build," in the company of "construct," and

then "erect," with a side-concern there as to the putting-*up* implication of its meaning (is it, perhaps, not of their company?—but is there not a kindred implication in "build," though perhaps this is not distinctly present in "construct"?): what of words that "construct," in particular, invites into view, words concerned generally with the mere fact of effecting the existence of individual, self-sustaining entities, as, "make," "produce," "create"? And, then, what of "construction"?

4.

We have distinguished two words, "structure": "structure," and "a structure." "Construction" and "structure" raise question of meaning-connection only as between "*a* structure" and "*a* construction." "Construction" is, otherwise, a direct noun-derivative of the verb "construct." Its meaning as a noun-form of the verb has the meaning of the verb actively present in it: the word is to be defined by direct reference to the verb. More than one such verb-centered "construction" can be distinguished: as, "the construction of the factory was rapidly effected," and "its construction is faulty," and "problems of design and problems of construction must be kept in interrelation." These are three different-meaning words, having a different definition, each; but the definitional patterns in each case would be a type of possible noun-form variation of the verb's meaning that served as a standard for a certain kind of noun-extension of verb-meaning found throughout the language.

It is pertinent to considerations of lexicographical make-up to note that dictionaries could reduce their present clutter of miscellaneous provisions at individual entries by eliminating all definitional particularization of the meanings of such noun-forms, and printing in their preliminary pages the types of noun-form variations of verbs' meanings that are possible through the addition of certain suffixes to verbs. Existing dictionaries list prefixes and suffixes in the vocabularistic body, with indications of their meaning-value, but the indications are abbreviated generalizations. An explicit rendering of the differing transformations of meaning effectible by particular suffix-additions would present dictionary-users with means of awareness of the distinct individual meaning of such noun-forms as "construction" in their identity as individual words, distinctly differing noun-variants of a verb employing the verb's meaning as their meaning-root.

We have still to consider the character of meaning-relation existing between individualized "structure" and individualized "construction." It is to be perceived that "a construction," said as one would say "a structure" of something in view or mind that had been, or was thought of as, in prospect, constructed, is a practical linguistic possibility but a not commonly actualized one.

Also to be noted is that, while there exists another word "structure," as in the statement "it is weak in structure," there is no relation of logical distinction between this "structure" and the "construction" of the statement "it is poor in construction." Structure, in the first instance, concerns a *state;* construction, in the second instance, makes retrospective reference to *action.* There is also to consider where this structure implying *state* stands, in logical relation to other words. But first to look to the placement of "a structure" and "a construction." We have cited "building," and "edifice," and, then, "pile," as candidates for relation to "structure." We have set "construct" and "build" into relation. There seems to be a clear reasonableness in the noun grouping.

structure
building
construction

—but what of "edifice," and "pile"? And there comes into view "frame," and "fabric." "Frame" and "fabric" have a corresponding generalness of meaning-character with those three, but "edifice" and "pile" have a peculiarity of character. "Frame" and "fabric" have only the peculiarity of rather inactive use. "Edifice" leans in implication to a qualified form of structure, and "pile" is also thus peculiar.

It will be recalled that, in our initial envisagement, in this chapter, of the kind of logical specification that might suit for the defining of "structure," the word "composition" has important part. In the somewhat similar treatment of "construct" and "build," the words "assemble" and "consolidate" have important part in the first, with "unity" also important in the first; "assemble" has importance also in the second, with "connectedness" and the matter of "supporting base-area" figuring also importantly. Amidst the general awareness of a varied, complex, converging on or branching out from a probing consideration of "structure," with question of "form" and "shape" springing up alongside, and a heading into question of "build" and "construct," with "erect" seeming to call for immediate placement with these, "composition" singles itself out from the perplexing spread of words (we have cited, as teasing judgement as to their placement, "make," "produce," "create") and presents, recognizably, problems of allocation and definition closely relevant to those presented by "structure," "build," "construct," etc. It requires, of course, to be considered in its basic verb-form "compose." Determination of where *this* belongs is necessary for the determining with full linguistic orientatedness of the placement of "build" and "construct," and "structure," even, in its character as meaning a *state.* Further, thinking on "compose," one is confronted with "constitute": is this logically kindred? And what of the verb "frame"—

does this, and "fashion" along with it, bear logically immediate meaning-relation to "compose"?

More words single themselves out, from the concourse of words that gather from outlying verbal quarters, suggesting special proximities of relationship to these various words that have been one by one taking stand in the field of attention. If "frame" and "fashion" call for consideration, in these contexts of meaning, what, then, of the verb "form"? And what, then, of the noun "form," which suggests itself in connection with "structure"? What of the noun "frame," not the individual "frame" we have cited as, with "fabric," of possibly the same placement as "building," "structure," "edifice," but "frame" as relative to the containing entirety of an upstanding object? (Of course, "frame" noun and "frame" verb as relative to a containing outer encompassment serving something as a border or providing something with such a border, are words at a definitive remove of meaning-location from the other words "frame" we have cited.) Of other words suggesting consideration as, possibly, having direct or collateral meaning-relation to those in immediate view, "fabricate" has a reasonable appearance of belonging somewhere in a pattern of meaning-relations extending not very far out in logical diversification from those. "Fabricate" is, at least, a fairly close logical neighbor to "fashion." But, if "fabricate" has such belonging, what of "manufacture," on the one hand, and "devise," on the other, both suggesting some degree of rational meaning-affiliation with "fabricate," yet patently falling outside of each other's reach of direct logical meaning-impingement?

5.

In reviewing the words agglomerated in the course of reflections having the word "structure" as their starting-point, we find that the center of problems of word-placement according to broadly verifiable correlations of word-meaning shifts quite sharply from the meaning-quarter of "structure," "construct," "build," etc., in the direction of words of the quarter in which "make" is a dominant landmark. However surely some of the words we have noted may seem to fall into close conjunctions of relation and distinction of meaning, no key to a general definitive disposition of all those words among themselves sprang to mind. "Make" soon establishes itself in the scene of our exploration of meaning-ground embracing words all having some loose proximity to one another, and certain ones an obviously close proximity, as a word seated in a position in which it figures as a standard of meaning-distinction and a reference-point for testing coherence of meaning-relation in its immediate word-environment. Consideration of the meaning-nature of this word should clarify some of the problems of word-placement that fanned out from the

consideration of "structure": perceptibly, one has, in the word "make," not a common drudge, a word-of-all-work, as it is generally assumed to be, but a word of very sure distinction of meaning. This is why—special attention to it suggests—it is so serviceable a word (not because it is loose and variable in its meaning).

We have said that one may start anywhere in the language—in a language—in working to discover the patterns of meaning-logic in which its words are ordered into linguistic unity. This principle does not imply that at any starting-point the clues to the general and particular character of the words of the region of it are immediately there, as ready to sight as street-names and road-signs. Avenues of discovery will, however, be very soon distinguishable. An avenue seeming to lead us in the direction of the word "form" began to take outline, as we proceeded here, but soon lost outline. We think that "form" will acquire distinctness in the consideration of "make," as standing not far from it in the meaning-scene into which we have entered.

"Make," on first examining, seems not to be in direct meaning-alliance with any other word—to be isolated in an absolute simplicity of meaning. However simple "make" seems—so simple as to be all-versatile—it has at least one companion in its meaning-vicinity, which is overshadowed by it, in its appearance of massive singleness. This is the word "create." Some of the shadowy state of "create" is to be attributed to tendencies to use it in contexts in which the nature of the action is by implication obscure or mysterious or otherwise not succinctly describable. It has, in being used as a companion-word to "make" of a more vague meaning-character than it, gradually degenerated into a word that turns the statement in which it is used into a sentimentalism. Whether this development is traceable to the theological representation of Divinity as causing heaven and earth to be where there had been nothing, and the long attachment of the word to this concept (something out of nothing), or to an inherent peculiarity of meaning, inducing association of the word with out-of-the-ordinary circumstances, what matters linguistically, or, technically speaking, lexicographically, is, only, the determination of what its meaning is, in sure distinguishability (what it means—must mean—as a word of rationally sound existence). This determination having been accomplished, there can be no problems related to histories of usage; the way is clear to immediate all-practical, and unsentimentalized, use of the word. But no such thing is accomplishable without close regarding of the two words "make" and "create" as impinging on each other in meaning, and with necessarily decisive effects on each of meaning-distinction, in their meaning-relation. (A general commentary on "create" in modern usage is provided in the Supplement, p. 514.)

In Webster's *Dictionary of Synonyms*, "create" is to be found in second place

in a group headed by "invent," the other member being "discover." "Make," there, heads a group including, in succession, "form," "shape," "fashion," "fabricate," "manufacture," "forge," all the words of the group being described as "synonyms in so far as they mean to cause something to come into being or existence." Further comment, there, characterizes this meaning as "the underlying meaning of *make,* the most general and the most widely applicable of all these terms." We shall look only into Crabb's *English Synonyms,* among other synonymical treatments of these words. One finds here greater intellectual sobriety. "Create" is placed in a little group "cause," "occasion," "create," and again in a group "make," "form," "produce," "create." "Create" in the first grouping is linked with the idea of existence "arbitrarily" bestowed on something. The "create" of the second group is stated to be concerned with "the act of *making* by a simple effort of power without the use of materials, and without any process." We ourselves recognize but a single word "create," a single meaning belonging to a single word. All uses that seem to suggest other meanings, other "create" words, we regard as metaphorical extension of meaning, or rhetorical exaggeration, or rhetorical or idiomatic play with syntactical form become hardened into conventional usage, as with "they created him King," similar to "they made him Governor," in which certain action results in the new actuality that a person in question is the King, or that a person in question has the distinctive status or identity or character of Governor. In very early use of this "create," the expression "create and call" is found, which spells out the stylistic compression that the use of it was intended to achieve. The purity of action implied in this use is illusory: the usage is a rhetorical "creation."

Three or four problems of placement immediately present themselves, beside the conjunction of "make" and "create" on which we have settled. That of "form" becomes insistent. "Produce" is questioningly in view. The idea of "invent" as marking an area of meaning inhabited also by "create," along with "discover," ought to be looked into, to keep the particular region of complex word-affiliation possibilities that is here being surveyed as clear as possible, at this stage, of questions of place, order, relation, distinction, indecision as to which seems capable of obstructing progress in main lines of word-placement.

Immediately, we shall definitely assign "produce" to placement with "make" and "create" in direct meaning-relation; but we identify it as a "produce" of different word-identity from two other words "produce," standing in meaning-relation to "present," as, to "produce evidence" or "produce a witness," the other having the character of a special term, of theatrical reference, as "to produce a play." A possibility suggests itself of there being still another "produce," separately distinguishable from that which we place with "make" and "create," these two words "produce" thus distinguished being

seen as dividing action that has issue in things newly existent by its means into action the issue of which is something that has incipient existence as part of the agent, and action the issue of which is something the existence of which is initially independent of that of the agent.

The idea of a division of "produce" into two words can seem to be supported by such a difference as that between a tree's production of fruit or a creature's production of offspring and the production of a certain impression by an experience or the production of a work of art or literature by a person. But the idea reveals its linguistic tenuousness in its placing the burden of meaning-difference on the nature of the object of the verb. No light is thrown by it on the meaning of "produce," as possibly two words, or, possibly an indivisible one; and, when one endeavors to explore the difference between the posited two kinds of objects corresponding to the posited two kinds of "produce" verbs, one finds oneself drawn into speculation that is linguistically frivolous, as to whether in the production of a work of art or literature the work may not be considered to have incipient existence as part of the artist or author. This kind of speculation has the weakness of all thought on what words mean that veers from concern with the meaning of the individual word itself—that fails to occupy itself with that, and that alone. Definition that follows such lines of thought is definition by context, the definition of verbs in terms of their objects as necessarily of a certain kind is definition by context. The definitions of "structure," "shape," "form," presented in the ideas of the meanings of these words advanced in the analysis of concepts presumed to underlie them, from which we have quoted in a previous section of this chapter, are definitions by context: the contexts are concepts peculiar to a philosophy of art.

In connection with the matter of the proper defining of verbs, question may be raised with forceful point as to such verbs as "change," "alter": must not their meanings be looked for in the kind of objects they have? The object of "change" or "alter" is something affected by the action its meaning distinguishes, but indication of the nature of the affecting, a key to the kind of action it is, is not to be found in anything typically peculiar to the object. Change produces a certain kind of difference in something, but the kind of difference that this is inheres in the action, the action characterized by "change," not in the thing affected. Knowledge of the nature of an action—or of anything else—characterized by a word must be sought within the boundaries of the word's meaning—in its place in its language. Such pausing as we have been doing in the mere course of "placing" of "produce" has an immediate, but, we hope, only passing character of digression. We are, in what relates actively to lexicography, in this book, continually under the necessity of referring problems arising in practical considerations to the court of general linguistic principle.

There are still some outstanding problems related to the consideration of "produce"—what it calls for, in linguistic evaluation, topographical demarcation, lexicographical identification. Is there not a word "bear" that seems quite close, in meaning-location, to "produce," as with a fruit-producing tree and a fruit-bearing tree? This "bear" we identify as a horticultural term, not a word of general status, relatable to "produce" in a pattern of meaning-distinctions. It might be placed in a subsidiary, footnote-like position relative to the "make," "create," "produce," set of words. Whatever disposition might be made of it, it ought to be presented with a biologically associated term "bear," as in "they do not bear young until the age of———." This latter "bear" differs appreciably in signification from the horticultural "bear"; the two require separate definition. And "bear" signifying in its passive form the occurrence to an animal creature or child of separation from the mother-body is still another term—it might be called a parturitive term. "Bear" is to be found in the dictionaries and books of synonyms and other word-books in loose or close synonymic conjunction with "yield," and the both with "produce." But "yield" used in contexts in which the horticultural "bear" might be used, or in such a sentence as "the mine yielded less and less gold," is a word that stands in direct meaning-relation to "give," and has, as it has, an established serviceability in figurative use natural to common imagination.

We have established ourselves in the vicinity of "make," "create," "produce," with some sense of where we are, and we ought to be able to focus on "form" more steadily than we did in our first vague sight of it, when "make" loomed up with attention-holding definiteness of outline. But we shall first have to offer a conception of the kind of "logical point" we think "make," "create," and "produce" may each be presumed to have. Within that definite outline of "make" is *meaning;* and, having committed ourselves to the proposition that "make" exists in relation of distinction of meaning to "create" and to "produce," with "create" and "produce" existing in such relation to each other, we must take our proposition inside the outline of "make," and inside the outlines of "create" and "produce," which have been delineating themselves as words of a definite proximity to "make." We shall say at once that, in our looking into the meaning make-up of these words, we have found them to be, indeed, definitionally related. And there is immediately next to say that when we had arrived at a substantial conception of the distinctive meaning-character of "make," in respect to "create" and "produce," we found "form," and certain words that became distinctly conceivable as standing in direct meaning-relation to it, to have the conception of "making" fixedly comprised within their meanings: the word "make" presents itself as a necessary component of the definition of "form," and of those of the other words.

To "make," "create," "produce," we join "fabricate." "Manufacture" we classify as a term. It may be defined only in subordinate connection with these other words: it has no connection with them in primary meaning-differentiation, no direct logical relation. We shall not pause here to attempt to define it, being concerned with logical particulars of meaning, not with the circumstantial or factual particulars that attach to terms and give them linguistic value as instruments of reference (where words proper have linguistic value as instruments of meaning). Another term that could be defined in subordinate connection with these words is "forge." And there can arise question as to the horticultural "bear" and the parturitive "bear" that we have dissociated from direct connection with "produce": these might be defined in special subordinate connection with "produce." (But all terms might be presented lexicographically, as we have indicated, in indiscriminate alphabetical placement: the linguistic principle of meaning-distinction does not apply to them. Yet they can be presented in subordinate connection with logically relatable words, for an orderly convenience of practical knowledge; and, as we have also indicated, some terms acquire a secondary character of connection with another or others imitative of logical distinction of meaning, and are capable thus of being ordered into patterns of term-variation.)

For isolation of the logical point of "make" and the other three words we have fixed on as rightly groupable with it, we first decide upon a general conception implicit in the meanings of all these words. There is action implicit in all, together with an issue from it that is not an effect but a something that has issued into existence. The logical point of each word is concentrated, then, in qualities pertaining to the action, the *force* of the action. We propose that the scheme of distinction be marked out as follows:

make	—	action by the concentrated force of which something issues into existence
create	—	. . . by the independent force of which . . .
produce	—	. . . by the progressive force of which . . .
fabricate	—	. . . by the artful force of which . . .

6.

Now, to turn to "form." We have, as it will have been noted, determined upon the treatment of "form" in its verbal character. This is because it distinguishes itself as a word of definite meaning quite readily in the company of other verbs, while, where considered as a noun, it does not present itself as a word of distinct meaning-identity in relation to other nouns that come associatively to

mind. We have seen it treated in conjunction with "structure" and "shape": the conjunction yielded no definitive distinction of meaning between it and either of the other words. For comprehension of the peculiarities of the meaning of the noun "form" one must go to the verb "form" first: its meaning holds the clues to the noun-meaning. We think our procedure will confirm this judgement.

The verb-group in which we place "form" is: "form," "frame," and "fashion." As we have indicated, we find the conception of "making" functionally necessary for the definition of them—it is in their meanings, these words exist in close reference-proximity to "make." The conception of "making" is basic in the logical point of these words in that the point in each concerns a particular kind of end-result as the notable feature in the making of something. We present the following as a workable definitional pattern in this lexicographical ground-work:

form — making in which something is brought into a state of completion
frame — . . . is brought to a fullness of content
fashion — . . . is brought to its designed character

Whether or not the definitions, or statements of logical point, which we have set down would prove to require no modification in later stages of such probing into definitional possibilities as we are here pursuing, we believe that we have fixed upon certain actualities, in the definition of "form," that are intrinsic determinants of the meaning-character of the noun "form." When the logical point of verbal "form" is brought into relation to the noun, the meaning of the noun acquires identifiable substance, and distinctness, in one's linguistic imagination. In such a sentence as "Much attention was paid to form in the planning of the work," it can be immediately recognized that the attention paid concerns the individuality of the object of the making in view as a completed entity. The form of something is the completing limit of it, the compass of it in its completed state. In the noun, the conception of limitedness is joined to the conception of completedness: and that conception (the former) seems to inhere in the meaning of the Latin noun *forma,* which may be presumed to be the progenitor-word, with the Latin verb *formare* following from it. The conceptions of making and completedness appear to be definitively joined in *formare,* and its derivatives in other languages, as in the English verb "form." In the English noun "form" there can be observed a tendency, in use-development, to division between a version in which the completedness conception, strong in the verb-meaning, remains quite strong in the noun-

meaning, and versions, having a term-like character in relation to this noun "form," in which the conception of definitive limitedness predominates over, rather than blends into, that of completedness.

Standing quite apart from "form" as used to distinguish an attribute of something in its made state, there is a noun "form" that always implies variant *kinds* of possible so-to-speak "makes" of something, as in "it is a form of insanity": this different noun "form" might be treated, reasonably, as having place, in a word-group, with "type." There is also the different noun "form" found in uses concerning the observance of "forms" of one sort or another, concerning a standard to be observed—itself termed "form"; and in this latter connection the word "formality" comes into view, with identical implications (which brings thought of the word "conform" also). To be further noted as of the number of different words into which "form" in the noun state has become multiplied are the "form" that signifies a document drawn up in a prescribed manner, with spaces left for required specifications, and the "form" that signifies something serving as the basis of imitation for the making of things of prescribed character—perhaps, as a term, well-placeable with "mould." And not to be forgotten is the "form" that concerns the functional state or performance-condition of person or a creature. Most of the "form" nouns other than the one that is the direct noun-cognate of the verb "form" fall into the category of terms. We rest at this identification of them, and go to the question of the lexicographical treatment of the regular noun "form."

It ought to be evident by now that a pairing of the noun "form" with the noun "shape" as two words in a close relation of distinction is logically out-of-order: they do not "go together" as words resident in the same vicinity of meaning. It ought to be perceptible also, by now, that "form" and "structure" are not definable in terms of distinction one from the other within a pattern of close meaning-relations. What is to be done, then, with "form?" With what other nouns is it to be defined? We think, so far as we can see, that the safest procedure would be to define it in supplementary presence in the verb group "form," "frame," "fashion," with a noun "frame" as a companion-noun in supplementary presence to the verbs of this group. If we do not spell out their meanings within the pages of this book, readers may try themselves at defining "form" according to the suggestions of our definitions of the verbs of this group, and our comment on the peculiarity of the added emphasis on limitedness in the meaning of the noun. As to the noun "frame": we think that the data of meaning-distinction provided by us in the definition of the verb should serve for at least a preliminary definition of the noun, with pondering of such uses of the two words as "a person's bodily form" and "a person's bodily frame" for a possible more effectual specification of the meaning of both words. Of other noun-words "frame," we cite that which refers to a containing boundary

fixed upon something—this, likely, a term, a common term; certainly to be viewed as a term is "frame" as referring to an extended apparatus on which one performs work. There is also the "frame" that we have cited as a possible member of a group of related words of which "building" is [the] standard of inclusion.

We leave unexplored here the question of possibilities of definite allocation of these other "frame" nouns, and stop to consider to where we should next move. "Shape" presses itself upon us as a word (we mean the noun) arguing itself to be at little remove from (the noun) "form." We think it should be considered as very likely existing in conjunction with the word "figure." But we have left behind, quite far behind, the word "structure": our attention was sharply trained upon it in the first part of this chapter. And "building," also. And the other words that came upon the stage. We have left behind, except for a little handful of words, the entire language! We have, however, demonstrated how the circuits of meaning-relations lie outspread in a language, seeming now to lead here, now there, both to cross and to evade each other unpredictably, teasing the sense of direction and location, and how, then, the verbal landscape can in one area and another grow clear, and fixed actualities of meaning-distribution become, thus, reassuringly perceptible.

We have been especially concerned, in this chapter, with establishing the reasonableness of our thesis that it is possible to know where to go to find the meanings of words, where to go to look for them—where to find words in their particular meaning-ground. All that we have written in this book is to the point that in having a language one knows more about it, about its words, what and how they mean, than prevailing speaking-custom and linguistic philosophy teach one that one knows. It will take much lexicographical re-surveying of the expanses of meaning that the language keeps accessible to its speakers to enable them to know all there is to know about it. But once they discover the natural potentiality of their knowing *more* than they know, the mood in which they use their words should change. They should become *interested* in them, in each one as a concrete individuality of meaning, instead of viewing them, as they do, as accidentally present in their minds, a horde of intruders of faint individual identity, put to use because they are there—obscure little presences, partly, at least, in the way of their thinking, and speaking. Words explain language. The nature of language is meaning, and this is also the nature of the mind. To know words is to know one's mind.

It should be understood that what we offer in these explorations of regions and vicinities of meaning, investigations of words in their linguistic localities, and in the definitional determinations arrived at in this course, we intend to be received as examples of the possibilities in ordered lexicographical activity. We are putting to practical test our belief that the principles of relation and

distinction, of local and language-wide consistency, that govern the distribution of meanings must have reflection in principles of definition. However, we should not be understood as proceeding merely experimentally at this stage. In our plotting of word-relations and specifying of meaning-distinctions we are opening the meaning-interior of the language to view as a visitable actuality. We are treading on the ground of language as ground with which to be intellectually familiar, as a matter of natural expectation. We think, we hope, with belief that the experience is one that the speakers of languages have been unnaturally denied, and have unnaturally denied themselves, not only that we are accompaniable with comprehending interest, but that there will single themselves out from those who accompany us some who find in themselves a will, of the nature of a sense of responsibility, to stay with the task, continue the reconnoitering and trails-making that we have begun. Though the task bear the dry name of "lexicography," it is one concerned with the living stuff of language. Tremendously extensive and involuted operations of linguistic analysis mark the intellectual scene of this era. But this is the work of an "inter-disciplinary" giant that, taking all the humanities into scientific charge, preoccupies itself with language as a giant fossil-subject, dead ancestry of surviving habits of mind in linguistically bemused living beings.

CHAPTER 17

From Words to Words: The Continuum

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1.

Are there too many words for an accurate definitional coverage of each, co-ordinate with a thorough ordering of all? Is the limitation in meaning characteristic of words indicative of their meaning what they mean with exactitude, or of their being by their nature each an incomplete and indefinite little quantity of meaning and, all together, a mixture of individual things that, found possible to say, yet leaving, each, much unsaid, answer in a rather haphazard way to the calls of the articulate human intelligence? Is that intelligence itself rather haphazard, congenitally so, in its efforts directed towards expression of its activity? Is its activity not naturally of such an orderliness that language, the expressive means responding to it, would be informed with an orderliness, principles of order in the general provision of words, and an automatically pervasive insistence on exactitude of expressive potency, extending into each word? Is the relation existing between language and human intelligence such that one looks to the other to make order for it—neither having orderly foundations? What does the tumble of word-additions to the language (all modernized languages) signify, if not hunger for an improved and larger responsiveness in language to an improved and larger intelligence in human nature, and attendant developments in human life and performance generally?

We pose all these questions only to set them aside, as for the time being, knowing they must come forward repeatedly to readers, in their being confronted with a prospect of intricate ordering of words and detailing of word-meanings—pictured by us as a linguistically and humanly implicit happy ending to past and present vicissitudes in the course of language's and humanity's relations. We see no lastingly effective way of answering the questions except that of demonstrating in immediate small steps—step-on-step—the kind of

action that we conceive to be possible towards orderly and accurate knowledge of the language one speaks (because we conceive language and the articulate human intelligence to be predestinedly in partnership for the achievement of truth—which presumes qualities of order and exactitude in the structure of the one and in the faculties of the other). We shall pause to comment briefly here on what we have described as "the tumble of word-additions to the language."

There is much, in intent, scholarly, and much, in intent, popularistic writing on the postulated phenomena of continual linguistic change and on contemporary linguistic circumstances as outstandingly marked by meaning-change and huge vocabularistic enlargement. There is theoretical accounting for elementary characteristics of language as resting on primitive human biological antiquity and pre-linguistic dispositions of the human mind; and such scientific identification of the nature of language has the accompaniment of the views of modern psychological investigators of the attitude of modern users of words to language. But the contemporary rushing for more words to use, and outstanding instability in conception of word-meaning, and the tracing of linguistic history to and from speculatively pictured pre-history, with picturing of rigid basic patterns of word-use persisting into this linguistically chaotic present, and all this together with the psychological diagnosing of general contemporary linguistic behavior, is the material of one story. It is a story of enfeeblement of the sense of the reality of language as *words,* and of the appreciation of the reality of words as *language.*

The pace of evanescence of words, in people's consciousness, as respectable entities, definitely existent by the reality of meaning itself (meaning no thing of myth, but of the very spirit of intelligent life), has been outspeeding the powers of human reason to correct or counterbalance the vagaries to which minds lend themselves. Contemporary pondering on biological antiquity and scientific reconstruction of human linguistic experience, in search of clues to human linguistic practices, and psychological philosophizing on disorders attending the uses of words, can yield no remedy for contemporary linguistic confusion. Words themselves are the only actual means of rectifying what has happened to words in people's consciousness. This idea is the heart of our endeavor to open to view new possibilities of acquaintance with them.

2.

It may be of interest and use to readers for us to record at this point some notations we made, as we proceeded in the last chapter, of word-relationships not calling for immediate study in our considerations of the chapter, but proper material for attention *sometime.* These words will be seen to have been

resolved mainly into pairs—seven pairs, and two groups of three words, each. That most of these words are presented in pairs should not be taken to indicate that we regard pairing in meaning-relationship, or that it should be regarded, as the predominant tendency in how a language orders its words—or, we might say better, orders itself—into patterns of relation and distinction. Some of these paired words may be found, upon finer study of the meaning-regions they inhabit, to be of a larger group. Before presenting the little accumulation of words for the files of future study, we reproduce the grouping to be found at *model* in Webster's *Dictionary of Synonyms.* This runs together, in a grouping of nine words, five words that we, in their coming to view to us, straightway paired, simply, one with a mate for which we went in search (which is not included in the Webster grouping)—without then attempting to locate the pairs in an embracing vicinity, or vicinities, of meaning.

The words of the synonym-dictionary's grouping are: *model, example, pattern, exemplar, paradigm, ideal, beau ideal, standard, mirror.* The last four members of this group we do not associate as having meaning-connection of any sort with those of the first five. "Mirror" we consider an irrelevancy of pedantic rhetoric: it has nothing to do with lexicography. We have the same view of *beau ideal. Standard* has no logical direct relation of meaning to any of the first five. The word "standard" pertains to measures, ideas or prescriptions referred to for the testing or judging of things. To call something "a standard," bestowing upon it attributively a character of worthiness or suitability for the testing or judging of other things by comparison with it, is but very loose talk; the placing of "standard" should be with "criterion," and nowhere else. *Ideal* we find (alas!—but truth requires that it be found so) to be a philosophical term that has not lost its terminological character in its status as a general word of the language. It is a common *term,* a word of reference to a certain conception, not in itself a meaning, a conception of the utter best or the perfect or the most-to-be sought or known for its perfectness as what it is or the incontrovertible rightness of its being; by the nature of the conception, any matching of it in actuality is something at far remove. Besides signifying the conception, the word connotes by usage a general idea of aspiration or admiration, serving this as an unspecific spokesman. It has no mate or mates in the logical scheme of the language, it is rationally unalive, as is the case with all terms. What rational life it may have, in use, must be created for it by fire of connotative suggestion—none is in it from meaning.

And now to present the first six of our little word-collection made for the lexicographical files:

model	example	pattern
exemplar	paradigm	design

We anticipate that this arrangement of the words on a basis of meaning-alliance will be met with contesting comment, or uneasy questioning, at the least. We think it likely that we have, with the first two pairs, made a useful, a clarifying, reorientation of the words; the rule of separation used, the principle of logically real meaning-relation and meaning-distinction applied, seem to us to discover a coherent and workable scheme of meaning-knowledge for these words. But each case of arrangement must be regarded as an open one until the trial of definition is made.

"Pattern" paired with "design" will trouble some minds because of its earliest character as a word evoking the idea of someone or something serving by its merit or excellence as an emblem of the admirable—as which it existed, with decreasing frequency of use, and decreasing stylistic naturalness, into the nineteenth century. If we considered treating this word as of forceful enough modern viability for inclusion in the structure of the modern English language, we should want to place it as a word separate from the "pattern" we pair with "design," and try placing it with "example" and "paradigm," rather than with "model" and "exemplar." Our rationale in this would be that this other "pattern," of distinct other meaning, would cast too strong an implication of emblematic worthiness on the meanings of "model" and "exemplar," which have no such necessary implication, though they are capable of reasonable trial as a placement group for this "pattern." We think it possible that we have, in this word, an instance of a word of floater character, one losing, in long weakening of usefulness, its functional reality as part of the language's rational word-order, and acquiring somewhat the character of a term; we might call it, as such, a rhetorical or stylistic term, in recognition of its reference to a conception (as of emblematic venerableness or admirableness, emotionally influential) no longer representative of a common emotional disposition. As such it could be appended as a term, to the "example," "paradigm," pair.

(The appearance of the word "instance" in our reviewing of the problem of the two words "pattern" may have stirred a passing wonder as to why this word did not appear as a member of the pair-group "example," "paradigm." In a conventional synonymic grouping one would find it linked with, among other words, "example"—and, in the dictionaries, one finds "example" used as a synonymic definition of it. We see this word as requiring a much more distinct perception of its logical point, for proper placement, than such association represents. In Webster's *Dictionary of Synonyms* it is linked with "case," which is reasonable, but also with, besides "example," "illustration," "sample," "specimen." "Sample" and "specimen" are reasonable linkages, here, just to each other; but "illustration" we pronounce an outright logical misfit, an irrational importation.)

The remaining words of our incidental collection are, in arrangements we think may prove permanently useful:

purpose plan
design scheme
plot

~

give deliver
yield surrender

~

manner mode
way style
fashion

We shall not comment on the composition of these six groupings in extensive detail. That we judge that there are two words "design" will be obvious. Of the placement of the second "design" we shall only say that we think it very likely that rationally pursued definitional processes will confirm this removal of it from direct relation to "scheme," etc., and "aim," "intention," and other words with which it is found in conglomerate association in the various kinds of verbal reference-books. We have left the grammatical form of these five words unspecified: they are, of course, nouns. Of the sixth and seventh groups ("give," "yield"—"deliver," "surrender") we shall only say that they are, in our view, skeletal certainties, but that we think it not unlikely that they will not prove logically enlargeable; and that we see reason, with these four words, to forewarn of peculiar syntactical and numerous terminological and idiomatic developments attached to them in usage, capable of confounding sense of their basic meaning-identity.

As to the eighth group, we must record, of course, awareness of the existence of more than one other word "way," and one other word "manner," at least. It may be helpful to readers' apprehension of the kind of processes of allocation employed in such groupings as we are presenting to record that, while we should place "habit" and another word "way" together as having a logical meaning-relationship, we should not place "custom" with these. "Habit" and "way" can share place with "mannerism," we think, but "manners" lives elsewhere. It is, actually, two words, and both are terms. One has attachment of some sort to a meaning-area concerned with proprieties of behavior, the other suggests itself as a word to be weighed when the placement of "custom" in group-company is determined—as a possible terminological affiliate of that group. We are not, at this point, going to amplify forecastings

of possible placements of other words with these immediately under eye, except to bring "habitude" into mention. We have not overlooked it. But we wish not to pause here to consider the meaning-nature of "habit" and that of "habitude," beside each other; the kind of difference there is between them is one to be studied with the help of some definitional clarification of the meaning of "habit."

As to the last group of these nine, and the last three of these twenty words, there is, outstandingly, the matter of "fashion." That the corresponding verb is at a meaning-distance from the noun, the noun from it, may at first thought seem absurd. Words, however, can undergo much meaning-revision in their adaptation to the kinds of uses, the areas of use, into which grammatical modification of function introduces them. Moreover, in the case of "fashion" as a member-word of this group, the identity of the word as a "fashion" that is not the only word "fashion" must be firmly held before the mind. Such a necessity also applies to the other two words. There are modes of prosecuting certain kinds of activity; there are styles of performing certain kinds of tasks or actions; people have fashions of doing the things they set themselves to do. The element of "designed character" which we specified as determinate in the meaning of the verb "fashion" can be seen to have recognizable reflection in the meaning of this noun-word "fashion"; though there is no direct matching here in meaning between the verb and the noun, there is a derivative emphasis on a quality of performance as present by deliberate, personal, will.

We shall not look into the meaning-peculiarities of "mode" and "style," at this point. But it is immediately pertinent to comment on the identical circumstance, in the case of each word, of the existence of a repeater-word of terminological sort. With this other "mode," "style," "fashion" group, the meanings of the words are all converted to signification of reference to a standardized aspect of their meaning-subject in some field of special use of the word. All three words are, for instance, in this convention of special adaptation, terms having a connotation of a general preference in matters of dress; but all are also, as terms, movable to other fields of special use. "Mode," as term of dress-connotation, is now much-weakened in currency, or, perhaps, extinct. "Style," it should be noted, has strongly established currency in two quite dissimilar fields of terminological use, as a term of dress-connotation, and as a term of literary connotation. As the latter, reference is to a general character of word-use distinctive of a single person's writing, or of the writing of a period or particular classification of writers.

The "style" of literary connotation is paralleled in a terminological "style" of varied art-activity connotation. But the literary term has a unique force of signifying something of importance of a general very high order. If it were generally comprehended that this word is but a term, and as such of a pecu-

liarly restricted meaning-content, the inflated critical considerations that are centered to the term would have to be abandoned, and be superseded by direct linguistic considerations, the question of "how" a writer writes being dealt with as a matter of judging of the writer's diction. *No* term can bear honestly the kind of heavy-weight burden of meaning-freight that the "style" of literary connotation is supposed by convention of critical terminology to carry. Here is an example of how terms are subjected to overloading, from, and to, general confusion in the comprehension of linguistic values (and, therefore, of all conceptions of value). We should add that speaking of a writer's *style of writing* is not an employment of the term "style," but of the plain word "style."

A dispensing with specifications, with words themselves endowed with automatically implied reference-specification, is functionally characteristic of terms. When such a term as "style," necessarily of rather light-weight meaning-properties, has a heavy-weight specification added to it to make an "important" terminological phrase, a trend of linguistic silliness disorientating to serious linguistic, and intellectual, appreciations, and those of general human sensibility and feeling, is the consequence. A glaring instance of this is the current term "life-style." To mention of it should be joined the somewhat different case of "soul," which, though uncomplicated by a specificatory accompaniment, has spread rather forcefully, as has "life-style," from a particular "stylish" employment in certain usage quarters (these being in the case of "soul" ones of negro speech-habitudes) into general circulation.

At a time when the general spiritual apprehensions of people have lost very much of their intimate reality in the loosening of the definitions—philosophical and religious—by which they have been taught to identify them, the ordinary "soul" becoming drained of its meaning-force as spiritual self-confidence has diminished, in people, the *term* "soul," which belongs to an idiom of emotional accentuations, becomes attractive to those outside the human region of that idiom as a vitalizer of the "soul" that has been debilitated in its evocative power. The evocative power of the special term "soul" is altogether different in respect to the associated subjects of evocation: the vitalization it reflects upon the word "soul" flouts its essential expressive potency. Conversely, the term "soul" becomes, by this associative swapping of attributes of identity, tainted with braggartish claim of connoting more real spiritual propositions than the ordinary "soul" means.

While we are now concentratedly concerned with the processes of meaning-relation and meaning-distinction by which words exist as language, and with the processes of determining the meanings of words as necessarily themselves determined by those processes, reference to such use-practices and terminological developments as we have just been making are not mere digressions of comment on curiosities of usage. There is to be dealt with, from

both the lexicographical point of view and that of the common understanding of people of what they are doing with their words as they use them, and of what had been done by foregoing speaking generations with their words before they became theirs, a fact of general progressive enfeeblement of sense of the internal rationality of the language. This has gradually settled fixedly into the entire custom of word-use, obscuring extensively the internal lines of order by which words have meaning and by which their meanings are to be known. In endeavoring to trace these lines, we cannot avoid coming upon, crossing, lines of disorder that have established themselves in people's minds as linguistically normal, and revealing them to be what they are.

3.

We have not forgotten that the word "structure," consideration of which pointed our attention in these many word-directions, has been left in a state of incomplete definition, with consideration of impinging or environing problems of placement and definition suspended also. We found it well, after looking quite hard at it in isolation from words that may be described as rhetorically associated with it ("form," "shape"), to examine word-areas in which it might have logical place or word-areas to which it has at least logical orientation. There proved to be complexities in these examinations[,] endeavor to resolve which would, we judged, make a slow, laborious introduction for readers to the nature of the tasks of lexicographical function that we are recommending as remedy for the linguistic confusion that critically afflicts contemporary life, thought, speaking. Having now provided what we believe to be a fairly comprehensive entry into the course of lexicographical exploration of the language's meaning-system that we envisage, we return to the word-areas, question of which was immediately raised in our initial efforts to get "structure" placed in proper linguistic perspective for definition.

We found, in our weighing of the definitional problems which had to be dealt with conjunctively with that of "structure" itself, need of treating definitionally of a group of words that we saw as elementarily important for the placement of "structure" and other words come into view along with it—besides those we soon recognized as being allied in a first-degree logical relationship.

construct build erect

"Construct" we take to be the most generalized of the three in its applicability. With each there *has been* an assembling of chosen materials and there *is* a joining together of these. With "construct," the materials are joined to one another in unified relation to effect the making of something. With "build," the

materials are joined to one another in upright relation to effect the making of something. "Erect" exists somewhat apart in the group. The condition that determines particular distinction of meaning of this word is that the joining of materials to one another be in an upward direction.

Joining materials to one another to an effect of making something would be, by this definitional treatment of "construct," "build," "erect," the basis of the relation of meaning existing between the three words, and at once the principle of their being necessarily altogether distinct in meaning. A general meaning is but part of a meaning. A *general* description of meaning does not constitute a definition. As with the above italicized words, it is the basis of the distinction that is the effective meaning of a word. One may say with practical accuracy that the "general" part of the meaning is part of the distinction of meaning that makes a vocable a word; the distinction is no tail-end of the generalization, no minor part. The "general" part is not, indeed, truly general; it is, as meaning, critically incomplete—to know it is not to know a word's meaning. But to know the distinction is to know the meaning, for the distinction embraces, includes in itself, the "general" or categorical identity of the word. This analysis that we present of the composition of a word-meaning should make apparent how greatly less than definition is the synonymical type of definition, which is widespread, not only in lexicographically specialistic definitional procedure, and in ordinary, lay, explaining or discussion of words' meanings, but in the treating of words' meanings in the learned areas of discourse.

Partial knowledge, partial consideration of words' meanings, partial definition entertained in people's minds as entire definition—this produces equatings of meanings that are very seriously obstructive to rationality of thought. For instance, one can find, in academic discussion of questions of the proper intellectual raising by those who determine the course and spirit of higher education, the word "truth" used as having blank equivalence in meaning with "knowledge"—"truth" or "knowledge," one will find said; and incomprehension will greet one's pointing out that these are words altogether different in meaning. Definition as generalization has so much enfeebled the perception of meaning-relation and meaning-distinction that words not even directly related in meaning are run together in the mind. A key phrase of the synonymics of Webster's *Dictionary of Synonyms* has synonyms as words that "compare with" one another in meaning. But the generalizing, pseudo-definitional process (which synonymists attempt to systematize) makes havoc among the principles of comparability of word-meanings. What the word *truth* and the word *knowledge* are to be "compared with" has no reality in such a quarter as a linguistic proposition—no intellectual discipline is involved in the idea of comparison. A generalization is attached to each word in the mind, as its

"meaning" allows, by its incompletion, its very definitional insufficiency, of a springing of these two words into each other's arms as vocabularistic, intellectual, *and* spiritual mates. We shall be looking at this word "truth" before long. But the continuum of our considerations has us still bound to the area of "construct," "build," "erect," and to what may follow usefully, from there.

It can be quickly perceived that the meaning-values involved in "construct," "build," "erect," according to our definitional plotting of their meanings, hinge upon distinctions concerning the way in which materials used in the making of something are dealt with in the making of it. It is upon a particular way of dealing with them that the meaning of each of the words is focused. The joining of materials to one another for the making [of] something is part of the operation of construction, and also of building, and also of erecting. There is not construction unless the materials assembled for the making of something are brought into unified relation to one another in being joined to one another. The same rule applies to "build." That which has been built issues from a making-process in which assembled materials are joined to one another; but the crux of the actuality of building is in the bringing into upright relation of the materials assembled for the making-process, in joining them to one another.

"Erect" is somewhat an odd number in this group, with an implicit meaning-factor of elevation accompanying the meaning-factor of making qualifyingly, so that one does not think of that which is erected as, simply, something *made,* but as made, and elevated in the making of it; and the qualification limits the objects of erecting action. One might erect a tower or an edifice—always the object is something of marked height. The crux of the actuality of erecting, however, is not in elevation, nor is it in the making-process as one of elevation. The crux is in the maintaining of an upward direction of the joining to one another of the materials used for the making. "Erect" and "build" impinge on each other in meaning, by the character of the distinction of meaning that gives them word-individuality, more closely than do "erect" and "construct." Even, they can confound each other, in use, as in a statement in which reference is made to the "erecting" of a certain "building"—the two distinctions of meaning merge. But some individuality of meaning is preserved even in such a use of "erect" and "build" by an implication of upward direction imposed on "building" by the meaning of "erect"; "building" is in such a use invariably understood to represent "high building."

We move on into some neighboring areas of meaning—or ones outlying—to which the words over which we pause direct inquiring attention. What of "elevate?" We think it is to be paired with "lift" and to be defined in

respect to an action of transporting something to a level appreciably higher than that which it has occupied. But in much of the use of the word the factor of exertion of effort to effect the change of level has diminished presence in its meaning. Figurative elevation has become so common, indeed, that straight use of the word has become uncommon. And topographical use of the word has created a term "elevation" signifying merely planetary height comparatively measured. Nearby to this pair is "raise" and "rear." We are not pausing to probe "lift" and "elevate" definitionally to the full. But some peculiarities of meaning-implication and of use-development marking these words, and "raise" and "rear" also, can be touched on here, we think with some profit of general light thrown on how irregularities of use wend their way amidst the basic regularities of the language without any necessary confusion of its topographical realities. For instance, "lift" has possible implications of force applied from below, and also implications of a reverse sense. Whatever they be, whether of standardized variation according to types of objects of lifting or of individual variation according to peculiarity of circumstance or a personal view of the action, they are not significant of *meaning*. With "elevate" there is no such problem—the technique of the transporting from one level to another does not come into imaginative question at all.

We are aware that readers may find the separation of "elevate" and "raise"—the placing of them in different groups—arbitrary, and may besides wonder if "rear" and "lift" are not in closer logical relation than "lift" and "elevate," and if, indeed, all four words ought not to be treated as constituting properly a single group. The basis of our allocations is, with "lift" and "elevate," the judgement that there is, in both, emphasis on an action of transporting from one level to another not present with the other two words. The characteristic emphasis with these is on the mere fact of change of level, the element of distinction concerning circumstances relating to the object of the level-change. This with "raise" undergoing level-change as a single mass, with "rear," in respect to its full extent. "Rear," "raise," and "lift," it is to be noted, have all the peculiarity of being not infrequently combined with the adverb "up," though they spell upward direction of movement automatically, and exclusively, by their meanings. This addition is, then, a rhetorical intensive, suggestive of either an unusual degree of physical force employed in the action, or of a remarkable difference in level-change effected, peculiar to the contextual circumstances. "Rear" and "up" are in almost idiomatic affinity; "rear" also has the peculiarity of special subjectness to use in reflexive form. Before leaving this field of verbs the meanings of which concern level-change, we must note that "hoist" and "heave" have not been forgotten by us. We wish what we have written on words of this field to be regarded as a prelimi-

nary survey, of some value for progression in general experience of the varying lay of the great ground of word-meaning, but of no particular conclusiveness.

4.

From "construct," definitionally considered, we can now review with some orderly practicality the case of "structure." Treating of "structure" by what we might call spontaneous definition, we presented as anticipatorily serviceable the following *possible* accounts of its meaning:

composition of something as it is a self-sustaining entity;
composition of something that is such as to hold it unified;
unified state of something effected in its composition.

We did not proceed, however, to test these accounts of meaning, but went immediately to enlarging the word-scene in which "structure" was to be found. We stopped at "structure," "building," "edifice." At that point our concern was to impress the fact of the existence of words in scenes of meaning—of their existing not just unto themselves, or, as the synonym-books have it, in special isolations of word-clusters; and we also at this same time endeavored, as we have kept endeavoring throughout the book, to impress the fact of the existence of words in the entire scene of the language, the continuous scene of the entire language.

With some scenery gathered, then, for the consideration of "structure" we turned to an association made between "structure" and "form" in contexts of aesthetics, with the word "shape" joined to the association; and we found that such special viewing was *linguistically* unproductive. Then, we returned to further *linguistic* consideration of "structure." We had, that far, a definitional view of the word, a partly resolved definitional view, and an indubitable, it seemed, logical connection of "a structure" with "a building"—with "edifice" seeming unquestionably "also present." We then attempted to focus better definitionally on "structure" in its individualized meaning. The word "assemblage" came forward: "assemblage, the component parts of which exist in consolidated unity." This "consolidate" takes over the implication, in the first of three tentative definitional accounts we made of "structure," of "self-sustaining entity." And we found, in the two other trials, that expression of the concept of unity disposed of the need of the rather figurative "consolidate." (We can say at this point that the word "consolidate" itself should present no difficulty of placement and definition: it is a grammatical variation upon, or perhaps could be said to be a quasi-terminological attachment of, adjectival "solid": it is not a word for which to seek logical affiliates.)

It is to be noted, also, that the implication of the word "composition," appearing in all three of those trial definitions, has been subsumed in the conception "component parts." Later, it is to be seen, "composition," "component," "parts," all passed out of usefulness in the case of "construct," which we came to perceive to be the basic word-site for a sure definitional understanding of "structure." "Materials," in the definition of "construct" (and of "build," and of "erect," which we have treated as standing in close logical meaning-relation to it), and the conception of "joining" to an effect of *making,* with the conception of "assemblage" possibly also present, possibly not, and with the conception of unity importantly present, seem reliable meaning-substance for "structure."

We have already touched on the question of what implication of solidity, or stability, or durability, there may be in the meaning of "structure," and dismissed these as intrusions. The question of "purpose," also touched on, seemed, in the examinations we were then making, to be one residing entirely in context, not inherently present in the meaning of "construct," and therefore not so in the meaning of "structure." Indeed, all the conceptions we have found associable with "structure" and "construct"—those belonging to "compose," "assemble," "consolidate," "unify"—may or may not, in linguistic force, involve deliberate directed action. As to "construct" and the other words of the group in which we have placed it: natural objects may be examined for how they are "constructed," or, even, how "built," but "erect" does not share in this generalizable character of the other two words. Whatever view as to this question may be taken, the noun "structure" can be with certitude understood as free of any purpose-implications that may be attributable to "construct."

In passing on from attention to the words "component," and "composition," we pause to give a view of these words as words of the general linguistic scene. "Composition" will have to be known first through "compose," and this, we think, in meaning-relation to "constitute." In connection with the latter, a legal or formalistic term "constitute" would have to be considered. There would also call for consideration the broader range of kinds of use that "constitute" has, as compared with "compose," which adheres in the main to a fairly literal use-pattern: "constitute" in many uses hurries past the conception of the kind of action it inherently means to that of a consequence which can be thought of as issuing from a condition in which certain things exist combinedly, the condition imagined as performing the function of action. The word "component" pairs with the word "constituent," but it is not a grammatical variation of "compose." As an adjective it has no other mate than "constituent"; but with the pairing of them as nouns, question comes of the possibility of other nouns, as groupable with them.

One will find in the dictionaries, and the word-grouping books, "ingredients," and even "element," proposed as words of a same pattern of meaning-relation. We leave the problems requiring to be brought to orderly definitional determination for a full linguistic view of these words to future lexicographical occasions (in this book, or elsewhere). Readers will have been observing that we are increasingly endeavoring to balance or at least broaden out progress in a particular verbal direction with extensions of attention here and there in lateral directions; and we hope they will have begun to comprehend the necessity we have felt for this mode of procedure, and the benefit envisaged, as one affording acquaintance with the language and the problem of knowledge of the meanings of its words in concentrated progressive part, and at the same time in accompanying diversified consciousness of the indivisible, everywhere particular and general linguistic whole.

There should be added to the preliminary noting of peculiarities of "compose" and "constitute" that "compose" has a simple figurative use that has become a rhetorical commonplace, a stylistic idiom. One meets this in the reflexive form, as, to "compose oneself," and in the adjectivalized form "composed," as, "her behavior was more composed," and the noun form "composure." The "straight" meaning of the word, as in "the advisory board was composed of the heads of the various administrative agencies," is adapted to the conception of a person as being emotionally intact or having the emotions in disorder: "composedness," "composure," report a condition in which the person is as a product of an ordered integration of his, her, emotions. Dictionaries will be found to treat this kind of use of the word, in its variant grammatical forms, as the use of it by a different kind of meaning. But it would contribute to the general coherence of linguistic knowledge if the use were lexicographically treated not as the use of the word by a different meaning—if this "compose," etc., were treated not as a different word, that is—but as a stylistic peculiarity in which the basic meaning of the word could be imaginatively present in such rhetorical use to the advantage of its descriptive quality for the user and its expressive impact.

"Compose" as used in the area of printers' operations could be argued to be a printers' term. We think it is, rather, a grammatical idiom in which the plain meaning of "compose" is strongly present, with the object—as, "compose a line of printing type," etc.—suppressed. This is a usage of professional convenience, but it is short of being terminological—it involves no departure to a new-formed signification. There is a kindred "compose," similarly of professional or technical application: this is, the "compose" concerning production the material of which is either verbal or musical. This "compose" could be split into two terms, a "compose" pertaining to literary or generally

to written (or spoken) products, with a "composition" partaking of its terminological nature, and a strictly musical "compose" with *its* associated "composition" and the exclusively musical "composer." Not to be forgotten, in these considerations, is the "composition" and "compositor" of printers' parlance; also to be considered here is the "composition" of the terminology of painting and drawing art, referring to technicalities of treatment of the visual material, in a production of one or the other kind. But we favor a mode of dealing definitionally with all these "compose" words of somewhat terminological eccentricity, in their use-peculiarities, that would maintain apparent for users their essential meaning-identity with ordinary, central, main "compose," and illuminate them as implicitly expressive use-adaptations.

We shall consider but lightly the question of the meaning-character of "compose" and "constitute," definitionally construed; our course of development, for readers, of a sense of the experience of language as an acquaintance with words in their distribution in it has other considerations immediately waiting for us. But it may be of incidental useful interest for us to record that it has seemed to us that with these two words there would be relation in respect to an action of integrative accumulation, with diversified substance the nature of what is accumulated, in the case of "compose," and, in the case of "constitute," differentiated parts. This suggestion is intended to remind of an ultimate necessity of logical placement of all words, and the knowing of them in their distinction of meaning, for general intellectual and moral security in their use, rather than to supply preliminary definitional sketches of these words.

There remains, from previous considerations, a completion, or a sufficiency for the time-being, of attention to words come into special notice in our exploration of the case of "structure." The reasonable procedure of grouping "construct" with "build" and "erect" supports the grouping "structure," "building," but "edifice" no longer seems appropriately present here as a fellow-word of the group, and "pile" still less so; and "frame" and "fabric," which we cited for related consideration, stand out the more as vocabularistic oddities. Indeed, it now seems appropriate to treat "structure" and "building" in attachment to the verb group as noun co-ordinates with special developments of variant noun-words noted. This is not to say that (a) "structure" and (a) "building" would be left altogether undefined: there are features of meaning, in both, almost terminological in their character, and the two are in a certain disrelation by reason of the more generalized implications of "structure." "Construction," as in *the* or *a* "construction" pertaining to a *something* constructed, has also generalized implications, but in its particularized implications it has no link with the very particular "building," as "structure" has.

Its general pertinence is so loose as to limit particular application to the aspect of a something-constructed as pure result of constructive action, without regard to kind or class of result; thus, the word has served as an art-term for a type of art-production roughly classifiable as sculptural in which individual items are united to form something to be viewed as an object of art without necessary attribution to it of representational, symbolic, or other specific class of aesthetic function. (In the field of pictorial art, *a* "composition" has a similar use as denoting a thing composed to be viewed as a pictorial object of art without necessary attributions of conventional picture-identity. This "composition" is, of course, distinct from the terminological "composition" that denotes technique of spatial treatment of the painted or sketched—or otherwise presented—subject-matter.)

Finally, before leaving this review of the case of "structure" and of words coming connectedly into view, we point to a useful differentiation for the mind's sense of the difference in meaning-substance between "structure" and "construction" as referring to the constructedness of something. In speaking of something's "structure," one is referring, properly, to its state, as something constructed, after it has been constructed. In speaking of the "construction" of something, one is referring to the nature of the action of the constructing of it, the "how" of this, or some other character of the action entering into the result of constructedness: there is retrospective reference in the word not present in the corresponding "structure." The "construction" that is merely the noun version of "construct" does not impinge at all on the "construction" in which the action is retrospectively in mind: this noun means the action, has no peculiarity of meaning differentiating its implications (other than grammatically) from those of the verb. We have also still to put aside with due care of commentary the question of the ultimate disposition of "edifice," and the other words that presented themselves as perhaps having logical connection with "building" and "structure" in group-conjunction.

It seems to us that "edifice," though it tempts placement in full equal status with "structure" and "building," must take place as a subordinate variant of "building" with a special connotation of grandeur. "Pile" seems not otherwise placeable with its special connotation being that of ponderous size. "Frame" and "fabric" as words having also meaning in the "structure"-"building" area might be considered subordinate variants of "structure"—if they are recognized as having sufficient use-incidence, or likelihood of some use, to be rated variants of it. All four, as variant-words, suggest the identity of *term*. But their reference-value is too vague for terminological character. Their quality is rhetorical: they could be called rhetorical variants of, respectively, "building," and "structure." We shall not attempt to provide ideas of what might be distinguished as key definitional features for "frame" and "fabric" as words of this

area. How to treat them would be a very late consideration in the development of a full lexicographical coverage of English words.[1]

5.

We now, at long last, turn to the (not forgotten) word "shape," which is subject to so much association-in-confusion with "form," as if the two words occupied the same meaning-ground, and rose from that in strained difference, into a state of continual endangerment of each other's individuality. We are here, now, out of sight of "form," which as a noun we have placed in the definitional province of the verb "form." We shall offer here a definitional conception of "shape" that will at the least give it meaning-ground at a distance from that of "form" at which neither could encroach upon the other. And yet we think that, if the meanings we have ascribed to them as words of different linguistic situation are closely regarded, the reason of the confusion will be perceptible.

When, as the case is with "shape" and "form," neglect of knowledge of word-meaning affects two (or more) words of different placement in the language but of close enough proximity for frequent functioning in contexts of similar kind, the ignored individual features of meaning would, held in mental view, illuminate not just the differences between the words, but the something of convergent direction in their meanings that made them functional associates. We recommend to readers that, after they have dwelt a little on what we suggest for a logical definitional account of "shape," they look back to what we have presented as to the verb "form" and, then, as to the primary noun "form," of cognate meaning, and then as to noun-versions at some remove in meaning from the verb. We think that not only the nature of the factor of difference in the meanings of "form" and "shape" may become apparent but that it may be perceived how what we have described as convergent direction of meanings is exemplified in "shape" and "form." This factor operates in meaning where there is proximity in words' meanings but not relation: there is not close enough impingement of word on word, in meaning, to make their meanings have distinction in respect to each other. What we set forth here are not abstruse complexities of "theoretical interpretation": they are quite simple and elemental conditions in which words exist linguistically with one another.

Our treatment of the problem of meaning-determination presented by "shape" is first, necessarily (as will be understood from our explained and exhibited ideas of the order of requirements with such problems) a finding of the word or words with which it has a relation of such logical closeness of meaning that it *means* by the distinction of meaning it has in this logical placement. (We remind readers here, incidentally, that this is the pattern of our understanding

of how words mean—the words that we have called the true words: language itself is a pattern of meanings.) We have found but one word that seems to us to stand in direct logical relation to "shape"; and this is the word "figure." This conjunction of the two words may not meet with easy acceptance. But it should be considered that at the least there is here a conjunction that removes "shape" from unworkable relation to "form," with which it exists in the patterns of usage in an associatively hardened conjunction that has no justification but that seemingly undissipatable confusion. The conjunction "shape," "figure," is worth a trial, we think, as perhaps difficult to accept merely because it is, at first encounter, an unaccustomed one. Generally, these are all movable proposals that we make. The only fixity we propose is the principle of rational disposition: that the language be re-approached as the distributive scheme by which its words, of which it is the embodiment, function—are capable of functioning—expressively without confusion one with the other, each having its assured position of meaning in this great spatialized dynamics of reason.

shape — external totality of a bounded mass
figure — external totality of an individualized mass

We leave these determinations to their fate in the broadening definitional developments that this book anticipates as a necessity of the linguistic future (of the survival of language, and all that it guards). Other words "figure" must, of course, be given their places—other nouns; and there are verbs "figure." Thought of "figure" brings thought of the word "image": very important for many serious areas of thought and understanding is the linguistically just determination of the meaning of this. What denotable proximities or distances lie between "figure" and "image," the one stemming from notions of representation, the other from notions of imitation? And would not "idea," even, have to "figure" in these considerations, with its connection with notions of visualization?

We shall round out our concern here with "shape" and "figure" with just some detail of immediately attendant word-considerations. It is to be noted that we made "shape," the noun, the basis of definition, the verb to have its place under the head of that. Neither noun nor verb has other company: the meanings seem to be so full of themselves in their simplicity as to leave no room for variants. With "figure," "configuration" should be noted, as a related term. With "configuration," question of "lay" rises—as in "the lay of the land." But, instead of being linked with configuration as a term co-ordinate in usage with it, it might better be kept within the precinct of "lie," as an idiomatic development not severed from it by large loss of the source-meaning. Certainly, what "lay" comprises in its particular meaning or

reference-substance has not the specific identifiability that the sense of "configuration" has: the addition to, the qualification of, the source-meaning, is vague—the *lying* of the land in the meaning of "lay" remains the more specific element of the meaning. "Configuration" will, perhaps, bring thought of the existence of "conformation." But these two words could not be linked under one head without confusion-making. "Conformation" should have place under the head of the verb "form"—as should "formation." The peculiarity of "formation" is only grammatical; that of "conformation" may be found, in close weighing, to be terminological. Finally, there suggests itself at this point the grouping "outline" and "contour." Those two words easily slip into associative placement with "shape" and "form," in *their* confused associative proximity. The logical disposition of the words "form," "shape," "outline," "figure," "contour," is, we think, on its way to realization in the kind of placement we have determined on as a reasonable basis for further exploration in these meaning-areas. In connection with "outline" and "contour" the word "silhouette" calls for some thought. We think it might be sensibly disposed of as a term within the purlieu of those two.

CHAPTER 18

Truth

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1.

We have referred to such attributed word-equivalence (meaning-equivalence) as "truth, or knowledge"—a phrase to be found in contemporary academic diction of a serious intellectual grade, and moral motivation. And in a note we have marked out the confusion existing within the "truth" area-of-usage itself: how "truth," a word distinguishing a certain quality of utterance and "truth," a word denoting something said possessing this quality—as in "a truth," "truths"—have become as identical in common linguistic knowledge, with the consequence that, in saying "truth" or speaking about truth, people do not know just what they are saying—or what they are talking about. Quite extensively occurrent on a respected plane of discussion are pronouncements of moral temper on the necessity in these times for scientists to not merely seek "the truth" but to feel responsibility for the effects on human life of "discovering the truth" (as, "the truth" about the beginning of the physical universe)—for the management of the uses of new knowledge, or, as the expression goes, "truth."

We have dwelt much on the deterioration, in the use of the English language by its speakers, of the consciousness of what it is that they are using—that is, a language, and, as languages go, an intrinsically very good language, formed of words very well put together to be a language. The matter of truth we have demonstrated to be situated within language's functionality. In relation to this fact, apart from the value the word has, with every other word, as a *word,* "truth" has a special importance of its own. The misuse of the word "truth"—of the words "truth," it would be better said!—is peculiarly damaging to the right functioning of language, to the functioning of the intelligence itself.

That "truth" has figured importantly as a word in human consciousness is everywhere evident. It has had central place in moral, philosophic and religious thought, and writing; it has from early times in languaged human life been perpetually a word of frequent utterance, in the common course of speech. But probably it has had its most active career, as a word of important human subject-interest, in literature, and especially, in this, in poetic literature. A comment of Coleridge's, in *Biographia Literaria,* can illuminate how poetic employment alone (apart from other employment) of the word "truth," amidst diffuse emotionality of resort to the idea of truth, characteristic of the general deterioration in care for the linguistic integrities and particular literary indulgence in free-making with words, must have contributed to the present disordered state of minds with regard to the word—to the prevailing confusion as to the actuality mentally recognized in its meaning (in so far as recognition of it as a real percept survives at all). Coleridge wrote:

> In the days of Chaucer and Gower our language might (with due allowance for the imperfections of a simile) be compared to a wilderness of vocal reeds from which the favourites only of Pan or Apollo could construct even the rude Syrinx; and from this the constructors alone could elicit strains of music. But now, partly by the labours of successive poets and in part by the more artificial state of society and social intercourse, language, mechanized as it were into a barrel-organ, supplies at once both instrument and tune. . . . Sometimes . . . I have attempted to illustrate the present state of our language in its relation to literature by a press-room of larger and smaller stereotype pieces which, in the present Anglo-Gallican fashion of unconnected epigrammatic periods, it requires but an ordinary portion of ingenuity to vary indefinitely and yet still produce something which, if not sense, will be so like it to do as well. Perhaps better: for it spares the reader the trouble of thinking. . . . Hence of all trades literature at present demands least talent or information; and of all modes of literature, the manufacturing of poems.

In connection with this passage, the editor of the Everyman's Library [1956] edition of the book [George Watson] quotes a little passage from Coleridge's *Notebooks* that has pertinence to our point as to the loss of force of meaning-definiteness that the word "truth" has suffered not only in the debilitation of meaning-force that all words have suffered, in their general use, but in the vague grandiose or sententious evocations of a deteriorated poetic rhetoric and diction. Coleridge commented there on "the harm that bad poets do in stealing and making unnovel beautiful images."

The extent to which the word "truth" has become a cloudy suspension of indeterminate meaning-substance, having now this appearance, now that, is

manifested in the extent to which it is synonymized with other words. It is very little thought of in relation to the one other word of the language of which it might, conventionally speaking, be thought to be a "synonym": this is, the word "verity." But it is well-supplied with alternative expressions, in the prevailing linguistic modes—and in prevailing modes of thought. Besides such an alternative as "knowledge," there is "fact," or "facts": "to be concerned only with truth, or fact," or "to seek truth, or the facts," each a likely contemporary phrasing, is not just rhetorical informality—these would be used as intellectually reasonable equivalents. "Truth" and "reality" are found in close companionship, treated as meaning each what the other means, with difference, if any, a matter of verbal style, "truth" conceived of as the more personal or practical in implication, or religious in a practical sense, and "reality" as the more philosophical or "abstract." And "actuality" is a not unlikely alternative, in the synonymizing of "truth" with other words, to the alternative "reality": "actuality" would fall between "fact" and "reality" in the choices of synonymic definers of "truth" for lending quasi-definitional support to uses of it in which it is so formless in meaning as to be itself not effectively definable.

A further reference here to writing of Coleridge's on matters of words, in a further passage of *Biographia Literaria,* is prompted by consideration of this seeking of synonyms for "truth" as reinforcement for meaning of it too vaguely conceived for ease in the single use of it where there is desire to use it with, and to inspire with it, in the use, confidence. He reflects in this passage on how the Greek *phantasia* was translated into the Latin *imaginatio,* and the two words were thus run into one, and two meanings into one. And then—lo!—after long while, by the growth of a linguistic world, that is, of language meeting language, there comes about what Coleridge calls "a certain collective unconscious good sense working progressively to desynonymize" such words of two-in-one meaning. With his own favorite differentiation "fancy" and "imagination" at the back of his mind (not very far back!), he treats with his usual sympathetic and fond sensitivity to the realities of language's nature the subject of the necessary and natural development of diversity of words issuing from the necessary and natural development of diversity of meanings. That he describes the end-product of an individual desynonymizing process—the existence of two words where there was originally but one word the meaning of which was a compound conception—as the creation of a "synonym," or the borrowing of a word to serve as that, must be forgiven, for he means by "desynonymize" to make be two words where the treating of two words as having the same meaning had made one word of them, or where a single word for other cause embraced too much of meaning. *Distinction* of meaning, that is, is the subject of his observations. When he comes to identify

the products of desynonymization, "synonym" is unfortunately at hand by its developing meaning of meaning-resemblances to another word of the same language; but for Coleridge, whose mind was all-alive with linguistic sensibility, "synonym" could not have been weighted with the stultifying concept of sameness or approximateness of meaning that gradually hardened in it.

But what, of all this, has application to the case of the word "truth," the usage that has become the general style not only of use of it, but the mould of thought on truth and problems of truth?

The case of "truth" has some likeness to the case of "imagination" and "fancy," "fantasy." (As to the latter two words: there came to be distinction of meaning in English, here, developing with differentiation in pronunciation and spelling-forms of the basic importation into the language from Old French.) "Truth" (as, likewise, "true") has Anglo-Saxon origination, as a word of the language. The "desynonymizing" of what the word comprehended of more than one conception, lodged in its Germanic-Scandinavian history, was effected with the importation into the English language from Old French of the Romance-languages' nativizing of the Latin *veritas*. With very many words incorporated into the established English language of the first days, the intellectual vigor of the dominant linguistic and literary forces at work in the forming of the dialectal and imported material into a self-cohering and self-supporting system of words was such that there was a remarkable absence of confusion between words of different sources (the older dialectal provenien-cies and the importations of, comparatively viewed, much later time, having meanings not distinguishable in their first conjunction as words of the same language). Many such words probably conformed, in their source-settings, to Coleridge's conception of the single word as comprising, as identical meanings, a composite of meanings: what was in ideal linguistic actuality the stuff of two (or more!) meanings would become practically so, thus, on the word's being "desynonymized."

But let us modify our attribution of this remarkable quality of characteristic distinctiveness of meaning, possessed by English words standing in quite close meaning-relation to each other, to a special archenational and national vigor of mind and literary genius acting upon the language to this effect. *Fortune* has played an equal, or it might be even a larger, part in this development. On the little Isle there chanced to come about, in concentration, a confluence of languages, and this under human auspices of adventurous enterprise of movement that, within a short time, as historical time-lengths go, brought into conjunction, besides language-material, diverse strains of human material, which there grew together in compact integration. Among the strongest of the strains were those of the aggressive and acquisitive (the warrior and conqueror propensities) and the domestic propensities, the subtler passions, of ap-

petite for orderly settledness (which the very smallness of the Isle stimulated). These special circumstances of human character, and the richness of the English linguistic acquisition, and the forces of logical order that gather generally in language itself, from an inward affinity of words with forces of human instinct generally directing consciousness towards the definitive, the *expressed,* must be included in a total accounting for the extraordinary strength of the language as *language.* Its verbal resources were matched by customs affording freedom for diversity of expression; and extensive opportunity was provided for energetic exercise of rationality of expression by the thorough organizedness of the language's words into language-identity—independent, complete, equipment with all the functional essentials of language. The sum of all the linguistically and generally favorable circumstances and conditions affecting it is in the crowning category of excellence, in the estimate of language: it is a language in which a peculiarly full achievement of using words with truth is possible.

2.

But what of verity? The Latin *veritas* gives no clue to a distinction of meaning resident in "verity" as a word different in meaning from "truth." And if one examines such evidence of sixteenth-century English translation practice as found in Cooper's Latin-English *Thesaurus* of Latin words, phrases, lines, one finds *veritas* rendered as "truth" as a matter of natural assumption. "Verity" is of separate English identity; and it was very early in existence, two centuries at least before the time of that book, as an English word. It is possible to feel, in considering the Latin use of *veritas* in varying forms and contexts of expression, and the conventional lexicographical renderings of this, which cover a range of difference including "reality" and "sincerity," that *veritas*—even allowing for the propensity in conventional lexicography for erratic stretching of the reaches of synonymousness—was a word of expansive connotation as compared with English "truth." The present state of "truth" usage might suggest that it is a word of even more expansive connotation than even *veritas* may have been. But in the sixteenth-century English of Cooper's *Thesaurus,* at any rate, "truth" as a rendering of *veritas* rings out in every instance with close and clear evocation of eloquent utterances spoken or inscribed. We shall return to the matter of "verity" after we have explored that of "truth" further.

The factor of eloquence in speaking, or writing, is one that has been, unfortunately, isolated from the idea of general linguistic functioning—from relation to "ordinary" activities of word-use—and made the peculiarity of two (by prescription) superior regions of linguistic functioning. One is that of rhetoric, or concern with linguistic effectiveness in general literary (or quasi-

literary, oratorical) performance. The other is a region of linguistic performance that is distinguished in its objective of eloquence from the general literary genre, as dedicated to a *perfect* eloquence: this is poetry, aimed at a rightness of expression that will have an effect of finality—as of all's being said that there is to say. But eloquence is a natural property of linguistic functioning in any course of utterance in which sagacious care is exercised for effectiveness of expression; and sagacity in the management of verbal expression is presumed in language, as a capability corresponding to its intricate nature. When such sagacity is backed by an identification of effectiveness of expression with unfailing rightness of expression, in what is uttered, this is the setting of *truth*. The capability of using words with so comprehensive an effectiveness is not in excess of the anticipation implicit in language of intelligent discretion in general procedure, and rightness of word sustained in this, as the human linguistic norm.

"Truth," then, as inseparable in meaning from connection with the utterance of words, comprises in its meaning a certain quality of utterance, a quality of linguistic intelligence. It also comprises in its meaning a power of expression that must be associated with the gift of linguistic knowledge and competence: this is an enlivenment with moral purpose to utter words that will be a right expression of something for one's expression of which occasion exists—either by external prompting or inward prompting of one's own, or the two coinciding. With these elements in the meaning of "truth" must be considered the part of words themselves in the achievement of truth in their utterance—in the design of language as the instrument of intelligent, purposive utterance, the functional provision for truth directing the verbal construction of language. Who could say otherwise than that the principle upon which words are inducted into a language is that they shall be "good for" truth, each within the expression-range of its meaning?

Language is formed to meet the requirements of truth as the reason of its being; and words have a necessity of usefulness for truth impressed into their meanings. They are not made to be "signs," as the current linguistic ideology has it: they are made to tell, to tell thought well, and rightly. Such is the truth-motivation of language, responding to the human will to make thought distinct, and put it out into the open reality of *witness*. Speaking is no dumb-show, the meaning needing to be reconstructed by supposition from the understanding of words as "signs." The words, if they are used for their meanings, make immediate, instantaneous, delivery: they speak, indeed. By their nature they have secreted in them a natural eloquence of truth: *if* they are used as, by the inmost will of human nature, they are made to be used.

"Truth" is but a word of the language, a word that has, as any other word of it, a particular meaning; and the problems that may be practically raised as

to its use are such as it would be appropriate to raise in the case of any other word—problems concerning its meaning as a word among others. But the meaning of "truth" lies within a cloud of moral, philosophical, religious, *and* scientific cogitative discussion and pronouncement that has struck uncertainty into the general confidence in it as a word for responsible use: ideas of what truth "is" have multiplied into a vaporous mass of variously conflicting thought on the subject that intervenes between users of the word and the word in its linguistic reality as a bona fide word of the language. The word makes no special problem of definition. It is no more difficult to define in rational linguistic perspective than any other word of the language; its meaning is logically identifiable, is not peculiarly, mysteriously, elusive. But the progressive wearing-away, in modern thought-developments, of its intellectual credit has damaged its linguistic credit.

Even though effort be exerted for undeviatingly serious consideration, with problems centered in the matter of truth, the use of the word "truth" will be, generally, less than fully serious, linguistically—as the case is with any word that cannot be used with assurance because its meaning is not known with assurance. In treating of the word "truth," one is, therefore, at a very "sensitive" point in the abnormality of the human linguistic condition. To reach the word as an object of simple, linguistically practised lexicographical discussion, one must cut a path through a confusion of attitudes to the matter of truth, personal and intellectually professional, enveloping its modern, especially its contemporary, use. It exists so much as a moot word, because the matter of truth has become so much a moot matter, that plainly serious, linguistically practical use of it does not come about as the natural; even in serious use, just because of the seriousness, it is a word of embarrassed utterance. For us to ignore this fact would be to let all we adduced as to the meaning of "truth" fall into the environment of confusion in which it exists, in which *the word* loses its linguistic identity to the moot identity of *the matter.*

3.

The matter of "truth" has been caught in the battle between philosophical externalism and philosophical internalism, the former having a formidable ally, become commander, in science, the latter shrinking in ground to a minor number of academic strongholds of intellectually prudent, cautiously qualified idealism. One might describe the development of the externalistic view of the activities of thought and their concentration and ordering in the activity of linguistic expression as a trend towards the creation of a psychological physiology, or physiologies, of general human intellectual performance. The most

aggressive manifestation of this trend is a subsuming of all forms of expression under the name "language."

"Linguistics" is an attempt at the creation of a physiology of language. Aiming at a systematic diagnosis of the nature of language by external study (that is, study of usage-behavior, not of the internal substance of language, meanings), it enlarged itself with the inclusion, under the name "language," of non-linguistic forms of expression, which could not but be the expression of other than intellectually motivated and controlled activity of the personal organism—as, that of emotional impulse, the movement in the organism of passions, appetites, even of the blind or unconscious involuntary agitations of ignorance itself. Such extension of the pattern of a physiology of language, which acquired the name of "semiotics," from Locke's identification of language as a process of signs (Locke being a pioneer in the physiological interpretation of the non-physical), has progressed to where the term "semiology" has arisen to cover the expansion.

The entire grandly learnéd physiological embrace—appropriative embrace—of the actuality of human consciousness and its ordering in thought, and the determination of thought into the final purifications of linguistic expression, has begun to include liberalisms whereby the physiological approach itself to the non-physical element of human existence and activity, and to the performance-area of language, in particular, is chided for its propensity towards the narrow scientific modes of mechanistic determinism as interpretation-clues to things human. The alternatives to the straight-and-narrow procedures of this physiology of (non-physical) things human are themselves pinched by strictures of special interpretation, such as conceptions of the usefulness of language-analysis for the purposes of social psychology, as revealing (supposedly) basic conventions in human conduct (conceptions having *their* critics, and attended by counter or variant conceptions). There even exist self-consciously broad-minded rebels, within the great modern physiological tradition of language-study, against too narrow pursuit of the theory of signs in application to the literary employment of language. These fight for "a science of discourses" alongside "a science of language," where the view would be in what they call "rhetorical perspective"—liberalizing the linguistical theory of signs, as accounting for language with "the old catalogue of tropes" (Benveniste's characterization, that is, a theory embracing such phenomena as "metaphor, metonymy, antiphrasis," according to Tzvetan Todorov, *TLS,* October 5, 1973), in a "semiotics of discourses" *(ibid.)*.

All these developments that we lightly sketch look both forward to a broader and broader scope of scientific diversification of the physiology of interpretation of the non-physical, and backward to semiotical beginnings.

For instance, there is particular concern with the American contributions of C. S. Peirce (who with William James took over so much of Chauncey Wright's much more intellectually vigorous thinking on language); and there is resurrected from this branch of the tree of semiotical lineage, for contemporary respectability, a "triadic schema" of Peirce's in which the sign is related by "an interpretant," or rationale of interpretation, to an object. And consideration is intricately pursued as to the relation of this schema to the conception of the sign as something adjudicating between the "signifier" and the "signified" (this terminological device of the physiology of language having acquired, a while ago, the status of an indispensable laboratory tool, its use, as with many other such, not become stabilized, however, so that, as with many other such, it has mainly a reference-to-itself utility). And a very solemn new-old thinking is engaged in as to the nature of meaning in these contexts, the distinction between the objects of experience and meaning, and the question of when and when not meaning-concepts are associable with objects, and whether the case is not, as Peirce endeavored to picture, that the meaning of a sign is a thing indefinite, a thing of process, not completely knowable, but a developmental phenomenon. In such considerations, with special notions of development and interpretants, and a certain concept of *différance* (emanating from Jacques Derrida), in a world of academic intellectuality built from scientific possession-taking of the subject of language, a wholly new entity is opposed to language as human beings inwardly possess it, in its internal reality as the apparatus, inhering in its words' meanings, of their minds' functioning as non-physical organs of meaning.

At first experimentally physiological in its approach to the subject, under the professional name of authority of "semantics," this world of language-learning gradually converted its governing technique, named revisedly "linguistics," into a more solidly physiological method, making language itself into a body of materially describable anatomy—presumed autonomous in behavior. Language, studied thus, altogether disconnected from its internal residence in human beings, is studied as a "something there," as other objects of scientific interest are. That language has close connection with human beings is not denied. But human beings are, in this epistemological world, also "something there": language is known as external to them, and they as external to language. As linguistics in its expansions developed itself perforce into a science having to take note of active connection between these two somethings-there, it introduced into its bare physiological premises more and more premissing of interaction between the two, conceived of as proximate bodies, with human beings, as a collective bodily actuality, drawn increasingly into the scope of the physiology of language. "Semiotics," then (with "semi-

ology," as desirable or not for more sweeping implications), began to edge, is edging, its way into official claim and recognition as the superlative of "linguistics." Scholarly activity intensifies frenetically under these banners. Nothing seems capable of escaping from the reaches of a science of language encompassing all as a science of science.

The matter of truth has been absorbed to virtual extinction in the philosophic-scientific externalization of language. The problem of truth, as a practical problem of language in the sense of being a problem of using words with truth, and, thus, in essence, of knowing what the word "truth" means, has been expunged from the record of intellectually respectable concerns. Interdisciplinary hierarchies offer scientific methodologies of values-determination as both antidote to the very conception of a truth-standard of judgement and as a new ideal of truth, the conception of a constantly modified synthesis of experimentally arrived at and experimentally accepted particular "truths." One may discern, in the shifting of values-determination from the traditional scene of intellectual dedication to an ideal unity of values (a trustable coherence of meanings) to the scene of science-fostered intellectual pluralism, the intellectual machinery that has been put to work to convert language, for the purposes of the new thinking, into an entity of external existence, adaptable by the inventive ingenuity of science to the scientific alternative to truth. (The reader is reminded of the essay to be found in the Supplement to which reference has been already made: "The Externalistic View of Language.")

All the thoughtful specialists in fields of intellectual concern outside of those of open scientific identity (in which must be included the various fields of linguistics, as inclusive of semiotical speculation and research) are now of a nervous conscience in expressing themselves upon, discussing the matter of, truth, even in using in any way the word "truth," of homely effect in its monosyllabic utterance-quantity, productive, also, of some haltingness by its pronunciative and enunciative peculiarities, not conducing to the tones of contemporary science-regardful intellectualism. They feel the presence of science everywhere at hand, its critical ears listening for logical fallacy (as measured by scientific conceptions of the nature of logic—which is, by nature, a linguistic character of thought).

Science has made truth, in modern times, its peculiar problem, and induced the members of the class of professional administrators of knowledge, which fills the part of an intellectual priesthood to the congregation of the intelligent, to wait for fresh conclusions, as to appropriate canons of truth for these times, on the next and next discovery of the scientifically reasonable. There is so little natural linguistic self-confidence left in that class of speakers of language, the language, languages—perhaps even less than in the great un-

classified generality that speaks, largely, by trusting to a non-linguistic providence of communication-luck—that scientific dubiety becomes for it the course of intellectual sensibleness, is accepted as pragmatically close enough to certainty for emergencies in which truth must be treated at least as an intellectually useful concept, giving exercise momentarily to the functions of belief.

Scientific interest in truth is limited to a queer notion of truth as a tentative property of theories, which can only be statements advanced as *possibly* true, and are therefore incapable of being true as stated, the true statement requiring the eloquence of conscious sagacious rightness of expression. The imagination of truth accompanying the use of the word "truth" in intellectual quarters intimidated by the status of the word in scientific ideology is of instances of confirmation of theoretical statement or of progressions of confirmations of theories accumulated into a body of hypothetically established fact. Gradually, but with a pervasive thoroughness, the matter of truth became itself, not only in intellectual life as a category inclusive of professional scientific, philosophical, and all generally academic, activity, and the activities of literature and the arts as well, but also as participated in by the intelligent consciousness of private humanity, an extraneous proposition, one that existed, in relation to the standard intellectual considerations, outside the boundaries proper of the subjects of intellectual concern. The matter of truth came to lie even outside the field of philosophical concern, for traditional philosophical concern with truth in metaphysical and ethical terms lost its distinct force to the ascendancy of scientific terminology. Truth is now only of what might be called tangential critical relevance to intellectual considerations, by the prevailing measures of intellectual importance. One might, in the spirit of this view of it, which is that of historical criticism, assert that truth as a proposition has a value of myth: it supplies a reference that, purely rhetorical, has a utility as belonging to the "discipline" of semiotic symbolics.

As to the word "truth" itself, it also has acquired a character of extraneity; it exists, even as a word of the scientifically objectified language, in external relation to that, as a little verbal body held by gravitational force within the large linguistic body's circuit of existence in the Space-World of Observation. Even for intelligences not directly or consciously affected by the conscious and deliberate extrusion of "truth" from a place in the working, practical vocabulary, the word now stands outside the familiar, vocabularistic range. It has become, in ordinary usage, as a word of a defunct moral terminology, the use of it surviving as idiomatic habit, automatic expression; no word of the language having the formal status of a common word of a meaning of a serious order is used in the common courses of expression with less *feeling*, and less stir of mind with consciousness of *meaning*. In the area of sophisticated use, the word

serves for reference to the idea of truth, the attitude to truth, current in the particular quarter of its use. In the general linguistic area in which the educated and the popular mingle democratically, the word is a dummy-word without any other function or significance than a sentimental one; and that which falls into the value-range of the sentimental, in which distinctions of value get lost, becomes subject to treatment indiscriminately good-bad. To weep over the word "truth" as one that has been orphaned by what has happened to the language as a whole would be to sentimentalize its importance, and make an opening for sentimentality in the reapproach to it—as if it were less than a live word of a live language: this is not the mood of what has been here said on the condition of its use.

The way to recovery of the word "truth" from the conditions under which it is used lies in principles applicable to all the words of the language. The case is not one of damagedness to the extent of its having become a word that has outlived its reason of meaning. Whatever the conditions of use of the words of a language, and however these, and circumstances of time, affect its verbal make-up, its identity as a language requires that it comprise in this a word, or words, having for reason of presence in it such a reason of meaning as the word, or words, "truth" have in the English language. The existence of a word "truth," as having a linguistically inarguable rational meaning, must be taken for granted, even as the existence of language must be taken for granted, as having an intellectually inarguable total rationality.

Contemporary professional thinking on language robs it of the internal realities of its existence; and the word "truth," reflecting these in its meaning, is robbed, in consequence, of its very right of membership in the language as an implicitly necessary word. We have explored the case of truth as a contemporarily modern moot subject, and that of the word "truth" as it has acquired the status of a word of moot meaning, and uncertain viability, in order to account for our treating it not as a special case, a word about which there is a meaning-problem, but as a word of naturally lively internal meaning-force to be distinctly ascertained by natural means of language-knowledge. "What does 'truth' mean?" is not the question raised by current use of the word. It is "Why has there come to be so much reference to, discussion of, a problem of truth?"

The idea that a problem of truth exists derives from ideas about language that produce distortions in ideas about words and what and how they mean, the word "truth" included. Since the meaning of "truth" involves consciousness of the nature of language itself, a special consideration of language's nature with the word "truth" in immediate mind should go a goodly part of the way of approach to a linguistically practical understanding of the word—attended

by a transforming of the matter of truth (the "problem" of truth) from a subject of wandering intellectual debate and spasmodic moralistic commentary into one fixedly orientated to the word's meaning as the standard of linguistic responsibility.

4.

It should be comprehended, from what has been presented throughout this book, that in speaking of eloquence in connection with truth, and of the reality of words as residing in their internal substance, that is, in their meanings, we have in mind nothing in excess of the specifically identifiable. Our stand against externalistic conceptions of the nature of language, and ideas of truth associated with a word "truth" voided of all mental color, and our stress put upon the importance of words for the fulfilment of the powers of the human mind and the realizing of the value and function of human life itself, is matched in insistence in our stand against all treatment of the actuality of language, the character and qualities of words, and the haunting matter of truth, that employs mystical concepts, of religious, philosophical, or psychological origin, as devices of description and explanation. Words are especially subject to explanatory characterization in terms which are terms of mystery or obscurity, such as the declaration (found in a book-review magazine) "Words are magic, a magic which is at one level political since the power to name things or people implies independence and control." It is not by any "magic" of words that people poor in material and social properties (this is the context of the cited "magic") have a speech rich in expressive terms, and bestow names with lively imaginativeness: language, in its words and general provisions for expressive use of them, can be entirely accounted for with itself. The internality of language is an open internality.

But another internality besides that of language must be identified, to account for the use of the resources of language with successful expressiveness. Language does not exist by itself; it is a partnering presence, in human life, to the human mind, and its internality has the same qualities of coherence with itself that the internality of the human mind has. The internality of the mind is encased in personal actuality. Thought occurs in the mind, moving there towards *express* existence. It becomes express in the mind, but does not transcend the enclosure of personal actuality except in language, which is a thought-field of the mind where it is free from the private bodily location and can function with expressive immediacy as supra-personal in identity, of one nature and actuality with mind present within other enclosures of personal actuality. The internality of language is the internality of the human mind as

disembodied from its private, compressed state, its individual physical orientation, and assuming the expanded proportions and functioning capacities of mind as the spiritual actuality identical in its attendance upon human beings in their peculiar physical susceptibility of entertaining mind as an integral function of the individual organism. (It is by this integral character of mind in the human physical organism that it is a personal organism—a person.)

The physical aspect of words—of which so much, increasingly much, has been made by the scientific research-workers in things linguistic—has its essential origin in the transcendence of thought in express state from the personal enclosure of the mind to the open mind-field of language; it is the mere event of travel, transposition, of express thought from the physical bounds of personal internality of mind into the community of minds to which language teaches their spiritual identity and unity as mind. The physical characteristics of words can be described as the means by which the internality of the personal mind can verify its processes by self-identification with the internality of language. If these propositions smack, for readers, of mystification, we make petition for patience with them, and consideration of how *slight,* in actual quantity, is the presence of the sound-complement of a word in relation to its quantity, for speaker, user, or hearer, as meaning. Word-sound disappears even in its appearance.

This matter of word-sound must be left for a future task of exploration. But it has sufficient bearing on what is being immediately explored here, and on the case of the word "truth" and question of what truth "is," for comment on the intensive preoccupation of scientists of language with the external, physical features of language (the seat of observation of these treated by them as a seat of frontal view of language) to be relevant, here. A vast and terminologically intricate analysis of changes and variations in the utterance and spelling features of languages, penetrating into grammatical areas of physical word-change, becomes identified with the development of language itself as of an internality—in so far as internality is ascribed to it at all—derived from, and even at the mercy of, the incidental and accidental features of physical development.

It is not by virtue of the external properties of words that language works. These are but the stuff of a sympathetic medium by which the meanings of the personal mind and those of the general mind of minds establish their correlations of identicality. The truth of the express thought of the personal mind depends on the exactitude of those correlations—for meanings of the personal mind must not be of an idiosyncratic, merely private, internality. The physical aspect of words belongs exclusively to the area of the occasions of correlation, has no internal significance, no part in the correlation of *meanings* that the

personal mind seeks in, and exacts of, language, and that the mind of language exacts of, and seeks in, minds. (An essay in the Supplement treats at some length of "The Physical Aspects of Words.")

5.

The method advanced by Descartes for the testing by the individual mind of the trustworthiness of its thought is described by him in terms of truth, and it embraces a preliminary conviction of the mind's capability of knowing something, one thing at least, explicitly entertained by it in thought, to be true. While Descartes' entire, developed, argument on the mental processes is of a Jesuitical nicety of rational prudence, the very meagre, strictly restrained, faith professed by him in the credit of the human mind has value in its recognizability as a definition of the mind's attitude to itself corresponding to what human beings generally feel and assume about their minds. They know it as having, first, a function of truth for *themselves*—as an organ of trust of themselves *as* mind.

Etymology can be a misleading guide to the inherent meaning-character of a word. But it is at least not going much off a sensible historical path of deduction to connect the meaning of "truth" with the etymological account of it as "going back" to an Anglo-Saxon original of a Teutonic-Scandinavian background of words of the meaning-area *believe, trust, be certain*. Descartes took as evidence of a natural capacity of the mind to think true what he regarded as an elementary proposition: "I think, therefore I am." This is, actually, in the utter unemotionality and mechanicality of its positing, a very thin-strained intellectual exercise, designed to prove little but taking in too much for the little it would prove, or test. What of thinking? In such intended finesse of proposition-making, does not the "I think" itself require corroborative testing? Is not the simplicity of Descartes' proposition conditioned, complexly qualified, by a reserved interest in the proposition "God is"? But the general rule behind Descartes' exploration of the conditions of truth, the anterior motivating principle of his exploration in terms of the thinking-being proposition, is intellectually and emotionally a substantial testament of faith in the credit of the human mind. "All things which we very clearly and distinctly conceive are true"—except that "there is some difficulty in rightly determining the objects which we distinctly conceive." He describes this principle as a *conclusion*. But it is manifestly behind the assumption of the truth of the thinking-being proposition.

Let it be noted that in this colloquy of Descartes with himself he has in mind *words*. What he "knew to be true" he formulated as words—the words "I-think-therefore-I-am": it is in "assurance of their truth" that he takes stand

as one trusting his own mind as that which the words in which its thought issues must satisfy. We mean, in citing Descartes in deliberative inspection, not to argue a modern utility in his philosophical concepts and positions: we are concerned only with the human courage and the personal forthrightness exhibited in his facing and answering the question of the reliability of the human mind's determinations, and thus of the very possibility of *truth*. Although his declaration of faith in the validity of the internal workings of the mind in clear and distinct thought-operations, by pronouncement and implication those that attain the state of verbal expression in their clarity and distinctness, is made under the auspices of a jealous philosophical and ecclesiastical rule, it achieves, in its care to limit its claim to a sure minimum, a self-corroborating force of personal authoritativeness of confidence in the human mind, as possessed of an intrinsic integrity.

The mind is assumed to be by every speaker of a language, is trusted to be, capable of judging of the truth of its determinations of thought by the testimony of the words that express them to their rational justifiability. The words bring together the internal commitment of the individual mind to the objective of truth and the internal principles of language, the principles by which words mean, which are in effect, acted on in words' use, the principles of truth: in words the individual mind has the general laws of mind as guide for its principles of trust of itself, judgement of the truth, or want of or deficiency in truth, of its affirmations.

But against the natural conviction of the human mind of its ultimate responsibility, in the crux of its own holding itself to support itself only in that part of its thought which is "clearly and distinctly" resolved in words, is set the challenge of self-doubt. Against the instinctive belief of the human mind in its sanity and competence to know is set consciousness of limitations upon access to the material of knowledge. The process that has been historically dubbed the "enlightenment" broke down the rigid walls of theological belief that put fear into minds of dire consequences of the effort to *know*—to know the utmost. But a new kind of fear succeeded. The liberated will to know became more and more involved in scientific knowledge-pursuits, in the new enthusiasm for knowing exactly; and the necessary limitedness of the objects of scientific knowledge, the physicality of their nature requiring procedure by detail, with correctness ever in terms of detail, bred a *fear of error.* And the objects of knowledge generally became reduced—that is, restricted; the field of knowledge-quest, instead of becoming broader, because of the Enlightenment, shrank in its proportions. Concern with the generalities of existence, the internalities of experience, began to take diminishing place in the intellectual imagination.

Concern with the particularities of existence, the externalities of experi-

ence, has been crowding the internal preoccupations of the human mind, the very movement of the intellectual imagination itself, into smaller and smaller quarters of life-urgency. And so it came about that the era of modern intellectual courage, in which the human mind has been expected by philosophic prescription to come into its free and unsuperstitious own, has been gradually turned into an era of intellectual timidity towards the major concerns of knowledge, and of failure of spiritual confidence in the trustworthiness of the human mind as an agent of truth.

The nature of the mind itself has become scientifically interpreted, with grim progressive disbelief in its having any actual internality of nature, into a physiological entity of obscure location, a ghost of the brain resident partly within physical space and partly in an unmappable nowhere, after the manner of ghosts. Every scientific explanation of mind—in which we include psychological explanations—*explains it away.* We believe that human beings can *explain it back* to themselves by relearning the internality of their minds, the actuality of their possessing in them a self-responsible spiritual organ, through a relearning of their minds' linguistic instrument. Their language, known in its internality, through care to know how its words *are* language, can teach them how to speak with truth; and, when they do that, they are thinking with a distinctness and clarity that is their minds' internal own. Truth, that is, requires language for its making; but language requires devotees for the making of it into truth. The definition of the word "truth" must stem from this fact.[1]

6.

We have already indicated a necessary conjunction of "truth" and "verity," for definitional treatment. We have also advanced our conception of the meaning of "truth" as comprising two essential elements; and we shall in a while endeavor to suggest a likely "logical point," constituted of these, as a working basis for the further definitional exploration of this area of meanings (which this book will leave for the future). Before proceeding to view "truth" and "verity" in a lexicographical light, we shall scout the environment of words that spring to mind as associative company to these words, and attempt some ordering of them into logical placement on the linguistic map of meanings. This should have, besides some usefulness for sense of the particular placement of "truth" and "verity," a general usefulness for the expanding of readers' imaginative picturing of the distribution of words in the meaning-terrain of language.

The adjective "true" has tended, concurrently with weakening apprehension of the meaning of "truth" as a real, functional, distinction of thought, to exist in usage in meaning-detachment from "truth," with a meaning formed

of a mixture of ideas of correctness of statement, rightness of judgement, absence of deliberate misrepresentation or unintentional error. It cannot be restored to clarity of meaning without a reconceiving of the meaning of "truth" as of strong distinction-force. With "true" there must be the accompaniment of "veracious." But "veracious" takes its meaning not directly from "verity," as "true" from "truth," but from "veracity," which is a companion-word to "truthfulness." There is also the word "veridical" calling for placement among these words, or characterization from the point of view of their logical placement. Before making a topographical sketch of these placements, we need to record that assumption must be made of there being at least two other words "true" besides "true" as the adjectival match to "truth."[2]

While "truthful" and "veracious" are an adjectival pair sympathetically correspondent with "truth" and "verity," "veritable" must be counted out of logical connection with any of these words, having early fallen away from direct relation to the idea of truth or verity. This we shall presently describe. What of the noun "veracity"? A noun pair "truthfulness" and "veraciousness" must be allowed for, with "veracity" as third member, and with another "veracious" paired with "true," *and* "veridical," the application here being directly to the verbal thing characterized, with the personal factor implicit rather than to the fore. A statement may be characterized as truthful, but the emphasis would be upon the personal factor still; and the case would be similar with "veracious," as a companion word to "truthful." There might be said to be an intermediate "veracious," resembling the second possible "truthful," between the all-personal "veracious" and the "veracious" that is entirely concerned with the characterization of what is said or written. But there could be no *third* "truthful" accompanying the "veracious" of exclusive verbal sense, and "true" and "veridical" besides. "True" and "truthful" do not "go together." Possible noun-matches to "true," "veracious," "veridical," are, "trueness," "veraciousness," and "veridicality." Another "veracity" is also a possibility; but "veracity" tends to be strongly evocative of the personal factor in the statement in question.

(The difference between noun-ending "ness" and noun-ending "y," as in "veracity," "veraciousness," has been generally regarded as lying in the field of usage preference. We think "ness" has a distinguishable appropriateness where the noun is intended to denote the nominalized adjective as a possessed quality of something, while terminal "y" or "ity" tends to nominalize the adjective into a factually identifiable instance or circumstance of the attribution that the adjective effects. This is a rudimentary suggestion: we mean in making it mainly to point to a likelihood of there being much more precision of sense implicit in noun-endings, much more regularity of sense-differentiation inherent in their employment, than is generally allowed for. It is language's

nature to seek to digest all variant word-forms into its jurisdiction of meaning-logicalities; assumptions of reflection of accidental form-variation in accidental meaning-peculiarity are more likely to be mistaken than assumptions of developments of rational co-ordination in meaning-practice, where form-variation has produced large vocabularistic increase.)

Before proceeding to take note of other words that seem to have connection with or bearing on the problems of meaning-appreciation presented by "truth" and words in its immediate company, we shall pause over the case of "veritable." Something of what we have said as to the mixture of meanings that tends to serve as the meaning of "truth" is relevant here. The idea of genuineness is associated with "veritable" as the idea of reality is associated with "truth." The meaning of "verity" is much less burdened with ideas not concerned with matters linguistic than "truth" is; but both words have, additionally to a history of declining distinction of meaning related to a general human decline in linguistic sensibility, an old relation to philosophic and religious conceptions that cast a somewhat mystical veil over truth, and verity, putting their significance of association with utterance, utterances, of words at distances removing them from plain identity. Although "veritable" in very early periods of modern English served as two words, the one orientated in meaning towards character of statement, the other towards nature of make-up (of a thing—as correspondent with appearance or representation), the word fell out of use by both meanings in the seventeenth century. Then, in the nineteenth century, it came back into use, but only as a word of the second meaning. As such, it is more properly describable as attributive of exact conformity, in actuality, with a specified identity of kind, than in terms of genuineness or "realness." It is an oddity: it is marked by a strongly lingering connection with the verbal, yet is not overtly suggestive of the verbal.

"Veritable" would not be nicely accommodated in a group "real," "actual," or in a group "genuine," "authentic"; with "genuine," for instance, there is definite implication of absence of misrepresentation that is not at all kindred with the sense of "veritable." Nor is there any logical relation of meaning between "veritable" and any of the distinguishable adjectives "true"—though it is to be found synonymized with "true," as with "genuine," in the word-books, definitional and other. Characterization of someone as a *veritable* hero carries suggestion of the verbal that "a true hero" does not; "true" is here concerned exclusively with the nature of the heroism, as fully, purely, perfectly, heroism—the case would be the same with "it was true love." We shall not here attempt to find the location of this "true" on the linguistic map; but we propose that it would have a more rationally just placement with "pure" or "perfect," or these two joined as words both of a certain implication of fullness of nature, in what they characterized. "Veritable"

would, we think, be correctly and usefully treated if identified as a rhetorical idiom or term of confused sub-relation to "verity" itself; it is a floating word, a sort of verbal extra.

Question comes here, associatedly, of the adjective "very"—as in "the *very* one," "the *very* house," etc. This has a much cleaner meaning-character, though it is also a word considerably detached from its philological home-ground. Identicality with that which is a subject of reference is the pivotal point of its meaning. Though there is no overt suggestion of the verbal, in it, it has, more so than has "veritable," a distinct verbal background; it could be sensibly placed also in sub-relation to "verity" as a rhetorical idiom. But it is more stylistically—or rhetorically, it might be said—respectable than "veritable," its connection with "verity" being less submerged in the function of rhetorical emphasis.

When one turns to consider the adverbs "verily" and "truly," one finds that the meaning-thrust of the words is directly back to, or forward from, "verity" and "truth" without any of the diffusion of connection with these words that is peculiar to "very," or "true," as in "a true hero," or the confused degree of this peculiar to "veritable." But "verily" and "truly," in their adverbial character, preserve this directness of connection with the base-words by functioning in sentences as words of interjectional force; they keep a value of relation to an implicit verb, an implied statement of the sort "I say."

In the defining of "truth" and "verity" themselves, there must be reference to the general actuality of linguistic expression, or statement. How words are used is the critical element in what constitutes truth; and the same holds for "verity." Since an effective rightness of words delivered in an utterance is a requisite for their having a quality of truth, it is proper to consider to what extent the differentiation that has been made in this book between words and terms should be taken into account in the matter of truth—the meaning of the word "truth." Has not a term, in right use, a different kind of rightness from that which a word has in right use? And what of names? Must there not be rightness of use of *them,* for truth—and has not a name, in right use, a different kind of rightness from that which a word has, and, even, from that which a term has?

Since everything that may be said is capable of having a quality of truth, all the vocables constituting the standing vocabulary of a language, and all other vocables that, as entities of oral sound identifiably relatable to linguistically treatable subjects, can have free utterance as names along with those having linguistically provided-for utterance as words or terms, must be included in the instrumentality of truth. The words (what we have called the "true" words as distinct units of intelligent thought of a distinct expressibility and recognizability) are the main sustenance of a communication or declaration marked by

truth—as they are of any determinate linguistic structure. But terms are also words, vocables that have physical belonging to the language, and intellectual belonging as units of particularized perception individually denotable, and intelligibly so. Terms supply the circumstantial bearings of the true words—which supply the tenor of sense in a determinate linguistic structure. And names introduce into the structures economies of description, simplifying identification, functioning as a phonetical shorthand. Such, then, is the bodily substance of that which "is" or "is not" "truth"—or has or has not the quality "truth" that distinguishes the perfected, the perfect, the fully, or purely, right, the true (true as in "true hero" or "true love"), linguistic structure; any linguistic structure invites the test of truth that is of the determinate type, one advanced, whether as a sentence, or sentences, or but part of a sentence, as an expression of a determination of the mind.

To the commentary concerning the "true" used descriptively in the passage immediately above should be added mention of another possible companion-word: this is, "proper," as in the alternative "words proper" to "true words," used frequently in this book. But this mention looks towards future tasks, as does so much of our commentary on individual problems of word-placement, meaning-orientation and meaning-relations, made in incidental connection with words chosen for special consideration. The words dwelt upon concentratedly are words sense of the linguistic location of which can, we judge, strengthen sense of there inhering in language a reality of rational arrangement. We should like our procedure in these later parts to be understood as a sharing of a progressive experience. Our procedure has been of this spirit from the beginning. But it may be easier to perceive what we generally intend, with our book, in this later intensified reaching, in details of exploration and speculation, into the field of future practicalities.

We have indicated a likely course of disposition of various words of rather close meaning-proximity to "truth," and done some plotting of the grouping-complexities and probing of the intricacies of meaning-variation that can be anticipated at a remove from the actual tasks of defining them. "Truth" and "verity" we shall consider with direct definitional interest; and future definitional evaluation of the neighboring words should draw some assistance from this.

Since truth has circumstantial association in people's minds, unfortunately, with lying, the two conceived of as opposites, some moral comment should have pertinence here to the meaning-implications of the word "truth." The moral quality of truth does not inhere in an opposition to false statement. Where the objective in statement is truth, the concern is not with the production of an idea, impression, belief, in the person or persons addressed; there is not a will to produce a right, as against a wrong idea, impression, etc. With

truth, the concern is with the rightness of the words uttered as an expression of what is entertained in the mind of the communicator; the dominating interest is, thus, to reveal one's mind, in some phase of its articulate, its purposive, intellectual processes. What virtue there is in truth inheres in the interaction between the mind's meaning, that is, the understanding of its experience at which it arrives in its thinking, and the demarcated particulars of meaning that are language's register of individualized modes of common understanding, in which incidents of common mental experience or experienceability are corroborated as of common intellectual validity. But this is still not to identify exactly what makes the difference between truth and general competent and honorable engagement in the mechanics of linguistic expression.

Consideration of the difference between the quality "truth" and the quality "truthfulness" may assist in the identification of the difference between truth and forms of linguistic expression distinguished by a quality of reliability, in verbal utterances, as composed intelligently, and with good intent. Truth, in this pattern of consideration, stands between the linguistically respectable and the linguistically honorable. We have already attributed to truth an ingredient of peculiar eloquence. It follows from what we have just posited that, while utterances characterized by truth are as a matter of natural linguistic course linguistically competent, verbally and structurally decent, utterances, and as such could not possibly comprise anything linguistically and therefore personally dishonorable, they do not possess the quality of truth by reason of a special influence of obligation or commitment. "Truthfulness" concerns special-occasion truth, and "veracity" is also pertinent to special-occasion conditions.

The motivation in truthfulness belongs to a morality of personal conduct. The motivation in truth belongs to a morality of intellectual responsibility to reveal the mind's experience, the responsibility being of the mind to itself to manifest and justify itself as the function of self-credible witness to the universality of the human experience of existence. The functioning of such witness is through the general appreciations of the human mind's capability of diversity of apprehension, coincident with that of intelligent coherence-maintaining of the apprehended; the witness-bearing depends on human beings' recognition of the capability as the *general* character of the mind, manifestable in the *general*—the commonly employable—form of words.

The presence, then, of a quality of truth in spoken or written utterances takes its start in the mind's innocent acceptance of its nature: it knows within itself a mandate to bear witness to experience from a vantage above that of the individual organism of being, the vantage of the limited concern. In this acceptance there are no reservations: in so far as it is *personal,* has location of

identity in the individual organism of being, all the forces of that organism are natural servants of the mandate, for the mind is the natural commander of the human being—this, the nature of being human. So it is that there is secreted in words an eloquence of truth. They exist in perfect readiness, in their meanings, for innocent, spontaneous devotion in use to the mind's—to minds'—purpose of general witness-bearing to the human experience of existence as one of general reality (not in terms of private relevance, or of selfish individual *curiosity*). The linguistic purpose involved in truth is one having, where the purpose is faithfully pursued, *priority* over every other purpose to which the mind is susceptible in its uniting itself with the intellectual expression-facilities of language.

There would not be language if the purpose we have just described as the inherent purpose in the matter of truth were not the basic, underlying purpose in the development of language, the formation of languages. The *human* instincts, in the earliest manifestations of a human entity of *knowing* existent in existence, achieve organization as *intelligence*. We say that this thing truth, which has, in the course of the civilizing of the human intelligence, been elevated in conception to the level of something so much over and above the natural norm of intelligent-intelligible utterance as to be conceived of not only as an ideal achievement, exceptional in its realization, but a supernality better imaginable as existing as a divine thing-in-itself in metalinguistic heavens of abstraction where reality exists unto itself—we say that what the word "truth" distinguishes is an actuality the actualness of which is implicit in the existence of language: it is humbly native in language, has its birth in language. Language itself originates in instinctive motivations of honesty of mind, and is fashioned from its beginnings for performances of both simple communicative practicality and comprehensive scope of expression. A spirit of intellectual rectitude pervades the principles of meaning by which words have a constant and consistent character of expressiveness; and this spirit emanates directly from the mind-acknowledged function of mind to manifest itself as an agent of responsive knowledge of existence.

What distinction can be made in kinds of linguistic rightness, to identify the quality of *truth* in the use of words?—with this quality understood to be, though historically not counted as an intrinsic quality in language despite the existence of standards of right word-use for common observance, one necessarily present if the standards comport with the fundamental concern of human intelligence in entrusting the explanation of its operations to words? Is the quality of ordinary speaking and of writing performance as a whole of a kind below the level of linguistic rightness that would justify the characterization of "truth"? Yes! What kind of linguistic rightness is it that succeeds in meeting ordinary standards of good linguistic performance? It is a rightness in

adherence to a rule of preponderant rightness. This is the ingrown immorality that has been occupying more and more of the structure of linguistic custom.

New modern developments of *the facile* in literary style and in popular diction-idiom, interacting on each other without design but also by the force of a new general "cultural" identification of linguistic nicety and scrupling with freedom-curbing, anti-natural conventionality, have distracted human minds from their natural innocent preoccupation with what we have described as their witness-bearing function. The rule of preponderant rightness that is everywhere invoked as a useful source of standards of linguistic competence and respectability could not but, however conscientious its observance, induce everywhere a diminishing sensitivity to proportions of rightness: standards that are not absolute in their character of standards must become decreasingly weak in that character. We have dwelt much in this book on the difference between *usage* and the principles of language themselves in their practical aspect as principles of meaning. The difference is, precisely, between the rule of preponderant rightness, which is incapable of definite formulation, and the rightness-requirements of truth, which are, in terms of linguistic practicalities, total.

But what, then, of the possibility of the achievement of truth in the form of certain kinds of truth, of certain orders of utterance that can be isolated from the general human conditions of linguistic expression, which are under the indeterminate moral protection of usage? There are advanced, as kinds of truth that may be distinguished with scientific, quasi-philosophic justification, a truth of reason and a truth of fact. There has also been proposed, a "truth of poetry." In a book of recent years of that very title, by the provision of a critically self-indulgent romanticism, an almost critically indiscriminate allowance of a special truth-property is made to poetic productions on the basis of their being poetry: poetry is credited with having necessarily peculiar to it some *kind* of truth because it would not be morally or spiritually—or literarily—respectable if it did not. But the turning of truth into a kudos of metaphysical distinction bestowable at intellectual random is no more unseemlily erratic in respect to poetry than in respect to "reason" and to "fact." What are these, to be extracted from the texture of linguistic expression as belonging to distinct, separable areas of word-procedure? What truth is left for the great mass of human utterance to have if what is of the nature of "reason" is extracted as fully capable of truth only as a special linguistic department of its own, and what is of the nature of factual utterance, similarly, and, equally so, the verbal area called poetry that is in any case set aside as categorically distinct from the ordinary? (Poetry, of course, is set aside not uncommonly for the pursuit of a traditionally enjoyed formal eloquence of utterance dependent greatly on tonal and rhythmic and other enhancements of arts of the sensuous,

rather than in the name of a truth of categorically literary definition for the practice of a special kind of lying rated as poetic magic and proffered as a poetic superior to truth—as by the poet Yeats.)

And, then, not to be forgotten, is "scientific truth," which further depletes in content the common human production-potential in truth regarded as actually attainable. The concept of knowledge that dominates philosophical ideas about truth in this intellectual age is sharply science-orientated. The organ of knowledge of the functioning of which, with the self-disciplining help of language, truth is the possible product is denatured, in modern professional intellectualism, of its identity of initiator of the action of knowing, and director and ultimate judge of the validity of possible articulations of its functioning as rightly offerable witness-bearing. The doctrinal concept of this intellectualism has, with an intense scrupulosity as of intellectual conscience, dissociated knowledge, in relation to truth, from the knowing function of the human mind as individually possessed in the independent volition and honest courage of authority of individual being. Knowledge is made the professional precinct of a composite intellectuality of theory; and there [are] only, for truth-product of this knowledge which is limited to being theoretical, that is, *not* an issue of individual experience, experimentally postulatable and restrictedly credible varieties of truth.

To the draining of ordinary linguistic performance, by specialized claims of concern with truth, of its claim to intellectually respectable, humanly valuable content of truth (to no gain for anyone from the experimentally postulated truths, all at academic or literary removes, in sense of fulfilment of the humanly inborn, personal longing for intimate participation in actualities of truth), must be added the diffident proposals of liberal-minded philosophers of religion. Averse to arguing with the scientific-truth experts in "dialogue" (i.e., word-war under a flag of peace), they favor a reciprocating tolerance between many kinds of truth towards one another, as belonging each to its "language." Fortunately, such linguistic and intellectual and spiritual anarchy has limits in the weakness of the competitors' concern with truth, truth in its literal sense of rightness of word achieved at the instance of intellectually impassioned purpose to achieve it, and with knowledge of words equal to the purpose. Rather than with truth, all the professional specialists in truth-possibilities are concerned with strategies of knowledge that will protect them from "being wrong." Those concerned to speak their mind's experience rightly, as honestly known by them, do not pay regard to the possibility of being found wrong by others. Such ones are concerned to satisfy themselves, and are not afraid of being found wrong by themselves, for this fortifies knowledge in its honesty. And such is truth, a natural property of the mind's honest

manifesting of its experience in right and full linguistic publication: it has no special place but the special place that is language.

How without place truth can be in contemporary intellectual areas where it is solemnly treated as a necessary though embarrassingly unsettled subject, one as to which there is a conscientious interest in the possibility of effecting a reconciliation between the divergent schools-of-thought-about-truth, can be understood from a reconciling formula offered in a book (by Nicholas Rescher, *The Coherence Theory of Truth,* Oxford U. Press, 1973) as providing a meeting-ground on which the theories of knowledge and of truth of the modern Idealist schools involving reference to reality as an independent reality and those of the diversely opposing schools, pragmatistic and other, may come to terms of unity (in theory!). The point of view from which the formula's solution of the truth-problem is advanced is one that should engage the sympathies of contemporary philosophers. It seems to have the appeal of having "something for everyone," everyone, at least, who is concerned with truth not as the immediate business of every human mind that accepts its intrinsically possessed functions as an actuality of intellectual responsibility, but as the special, exclusive business of a class of minds that takes upon itself the creation of systems of intellectual machinery that will do humanity's important thinking. This formula removes all the burdens of truth from the mental shoulders of human beings and gives them over to the pragmatically ideal machinery of a scientifically revised philosophic system of intellectual systems.[3] Who until now could have thought up a scientifically real truth the concept of which made unlimited philosophic allowance for its being fundamentally unreal? It goes thus:

truth without true foundations

7.

Instead of, in the closing portion of this chapter, bringing into specific expression definitional indications of the meaning-distinctions comprised in the words "truth" and "verity," an objective towards which the chapter has been heading, to clear the linguistic and intellectual air of morbid confusion about "truth" and truth to the extent possible in a book that cannot be more than an *introduction* to a new linguistic and intellectual morality, we defer that task to our book's next, and final, part. This will have the title "The Future Tasks."

We think that suggestion at the very beginning of Part 7 of the logical meaning-point of the word "truth," and that of "verity" along with it, should serve as a light to beam round and over the scene of future exploration of the meaning-ground of the English language, for the adverting of minds (real,

individual minds, not theoretical mind-systems) to a prospect of competence for a good use of words that will be at once, in its goodness, truth. The glimpses of this prospect that have been so far offered to readers have been chosen examples of what there can be perceived on the kind of ground on which words are to be looked for as meaning-existences. That ground is nothing other than language. If it is viewed as all-continuous with itself, as we hope it will be seen with some final assurance to be viewable in the additional outlines of word-affinities and enumerations of problems of meaning-distinction and signification-difference that we shall be presenting, we shall have left readers with a substantial hope to contemplate, an expectation of success as languaged beings that contemporary scientific linguistics has obliterated or assumed to be obliterated in the emotionality of the speakers of languages. Shown what they have, to know better, but, even poorly known, have, those ought to feel themselves more alively, really, themselves—we mean, shown *words*, their words, the rational substance of language, "real" language.

PART SEVEN

The Future Tasks

Foreword to Part 7

We are moved to emphasize, at this late time in the course of our outlining of a lexicographical point of view and procedure that we think can redeem lexicography from the collapse it has been undergoing into a vocabularistic photograph of usage, what we have throughout tried to make plain as to the limits of what we present in this book as potentially useful towards such procedure. Let our book's title remind of our consciousness of these limits: we have intended what we present to serve as a *foundation,* a foundation of new principles of lexicographical method, not a prescription of a method, one to be uprooted from our pages and planted in others. We have, for instance, avoided attempting to stabilize the forms of definitional specification of meaning for the different parts of speech; the "logical points" we have proposed have been skeletally suggestive, verbally, rather than of definitive verbal pattern. Further, we have restricted our allocation of space, time, powers of labor, to practical lexicographical coverage of words, and favored the educing and defining of the principles of language, and the explaining, in terms of practical demonstration, how the principles of language are the principles of meaning, and the principles of meaning are the principles of lexicography. We have intentionally sacrificed concern with the practicalities of definition to the practicalities of comprehension, investigation, and testing of principle.

From the earliest inception-stages of this work, its destiny was, in assumption, to be a dictionary. First, a limited number of words, a central provision, was the aim. Then, even as we increased in awareness of the massive complexity of a revision of the existing haphazard lexicographical procedures and the necessity of a fundamental ordering of linguistic understanding that would be also a simplification of conceptions, our aim expanded to the inclusion of the entire language, as the destined ultimate: as the delving into the substrata of principle progressed, we perceived that nothing less than an eventual coverage of all the words could be a responsible match to the radical discoveries

we made in the areas of principle. It should be recorded here that this is still the work's aim. It became an aim to share. The case is not only that the tasks ensuing from our general labor of identifying the missing what-has-not-been-done, as to language and the knowledge of words, exceed our proper reach of effort: they are the tasks that others various besides ourselves need to take upon themselves, to prove the comprehensive scholarship of words we have recommended to be a distributable, a distributed capability, no peculiarity of persons.

Yet, though this book stop at mere beginnings, there is reserved in it, besides the hope that others may find tasks of theirs cut out in it, a readiness to renew its mission some time again, and yield up matter of new reasonable acquaintances with meanings of words that was put away at the striking of the hour that seemed to say "The next belongs to the future."

CHAPTER 19

The Moral Aspects of Meaning

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1.

Truth—animation of words with purpose of mind to make manifest possessed awareness, productive of complete rightness of expression.

Verity—animation of words with purpose of mind to make available possessed knowledge, productive of total accuracy of exposition.

We present the characterization and the distinguishing of the meanings of these two words with a certain looseness of definitional formulation, in order to open out the internal content of the meanings, as we understand them, to the appreciable fullest. With many words, much of the internal content of meaning can be presumed to identify itself as logically present along with a simply identified logical point: much background intelligence of meaning exists in sensitive readiness in languaged minds to fill out newly distinct perception of the main meaning-character of words. But with "truth," and "verity," general sensitivity in verbal intelligence is very low; minds are numb, as to these words. We offer, therefore, what are more depictions of meaning than essays at definition.

People's numbness of mind in encounter with these words, in their own use of them or in the address of them to them in speech or writing, inertness in consciousness of them as *meaning,* is in considerable part attributable to their being words that have a moral accent in their meanings. The moral accent is an impediment to comfortable presence in the active vocabulary of language, for contemporary speakers of it, with all words dependent for their functional realness in use on the realness of the moral values having credit in their meanings. A general unsureness of what words mean pervades the mental atmosphere in which words are used, in these times; it is itself an atmosphere of

intellectual unsureness. A particular unsureness in moral thinking is embraced in this. In the case of the words of moral force of meaning, there is added, thus, to the prevailing weakness in knowledge of words, a weakness of faith in the reality of moral considerations themselves. When such a word touches, in meaning, as does "truth," on moral values treated in it as inhering in the very relationship between a language and its speakers, it is, linguistically, an anomaly among the ordinarily anomalous other words of moral force of meaning. It challenges the weakness of faith that makes of them, and itself, words questionable as to their existing at all, validly. The meaning of "truth" is an embarrassment in its implications as to the moral character of the relationship between a language and its speakers: it puts it up to speakers of the language in which it is a word, to their embarrassment, that language is to them, in very much, an embarrassment.

We are going to leave specific consideration of the account we have given of the meaning of "truth" and of that of "verity" for readers to conduct in the privacy of their particular problems of understanding and judgement in this area of meaning-determination. We have tried, in outlining the area, to show it to be a linguistic locality of definite existence, with its ground occupied by rationally substantial and humanly credible meaning-matter. The proof need not be pressed beyond this, we think; we regard the area as in its essential constitution a very healthy one, intellectually—and morally.

2.

The use of the word "rightness" that we have made in our account-giving of the components of the meaning of "truth" is in relation to the moral aspects of the meaning of "truth." What of the moral aspects of the meaning of "right" itself? The contemporary unsureness as to moral determinations of value to which we have referred, as of a piece with the prevailing unsureness as to linguistic determinations of meaning, is exhibited in the linguistic and moral status of "right." There has been a general falling off of use of the word as a term of moral characterization, co-incident with an extensive onset of disaffection towards the very idea of there being a distinctly definable difference between "Right" and "Wrong" as concrete reference-points for moral judgements. Principles of scientific relativism have invaded the fields of meaning, and morality, reducing the possibility of certitude to that of qualified incertitude: incertitude is made the norm of characterization, with definition to be cast within the limits of that norm. Definition itself, under these intellectual conditions, becomes a form of indefinition, certitude that stops in itself, yielding no meaning, only self-description. Such a system of evaluation, generally intellectual or categorically moral, can, it should be evident, dissipate the coherencies of language for people, as errors of impossible principles of certitude.

But the actual certitudes of meaning that maintain language in its seat of intellectual, *and* moral, rule—the seat in which the mind establishes it, and from which it cannot be unseated without the mind's abjuring itself—*do not disappear.*

The meaning of "right" springs from a perception of the existence of a character of undeviating continuity, in "things" greatly various: they are, or they keep, "straight." The noun "rectitude," applicable to exclusively moral contexts of "rightness," presents a very "straight," strict conception of morally good practice. It has no application to error outside the moral field of performance. But what of "right" itself? Are there two words "right," a "right" of general characterization, and a "right" of moral characterization—a moral term "right," as it were? If there *is* a "right" of separate moral meaning-color, it is a word of narrow moral sense, even as is "rectitude"—and the ordinary "right" is a word, then, the meaning of which concerns non-deviation from what is requisite as something *good,* but with "good" implying satisfaction of a standard of the desirable very slack in its conception. Stripped of moral bearings, the word "right" would be of generally meagre meaning-force. This is, indeed, what has been happening to the word in contemporary use; which gives occasion for considering whether the slackness in the general conduct of practical operations, the general loosening of scruple in workmanship and in the fidelities of practical attention in areas of personal responsibility, is not of the same order of human confusion as the loss of suggestion in the word "right," for contemporary users of it, of a distinct, a keenly felt, moral accent.

It should be easier to think about the word "right" if it is brought into conjunction with the word with which it shares linguistic place by relation of the logical character of its meaning. This is, the word "correct." We shall not dwell on these words definitionally beyond indicating wherein, in their meanings, the logical center of distinction of meaning is to be found. This feature in the meaning of "correct" can seem at first sight more forceful, even, it might be, more forceful in moral accent, than that of "right": it is the matter of *accuracy.* With "right" the central point of meaning-force is the matter of *requisiteness.* While the degeneration of the conception of rightness reduces "right" to a loose terming of correctness, "right," used of an answer, is properly more eloquent of merit than is correct. For "right" expresses the attribution to the answer of the merit of meeting the standard of requisiteness. The meeting of the standard of accuracy confines the merit to skill in a mental practice. The meeting of the standard of requisiteness embraces in the merit a reason having some merit in itself.—But we present these comments as a matter for reflection, thinking that this is an area in which readers can engage in some self-examination to the increase of their sense of linguistic values as implicitly, in general, and in very many cases actively so, moral values.

The word "good" itself is attended by a crowd of potentialities of use-

variations that have converted it vocabularistically into a synonym of numerous other words lacking a meaning-identity of its own. That is good which is desirable, but desirability must answer to many kinds of judgement. This can be seen as dissolving all moral point, in the word's meaning. But if there is moral compromise within the word's meaning reconciling the varied contexts of evaluation in which the word is put to use, then it is generally meaningless, and counts for something only in widely varying special senses, the moral potential of its meaning split up into morally neutral fragments incapable of quarrelling with each other. What word is companion to it in logical propriety, by relationship in distinction of meaning? Webster's *Dictionary of Synonyms* supplies a portrait of "good" and "right" by the light of usage-demoralized views of both words as meaning so roughly what they mean (even with the "right" placed in association with "good" made distinct from one associated there with "correct") that comparison between them flounders in uncertainty not only of the meaning of each but as to there being comparability or contrastability in the uncertainly conceived meanings. We propose that there is no logical relationship in distinction of meaning between the two words. We further propose that "good" has no rationally congruous companion in the language other than the word "fair"—one of the words "fair"—with "goodly" in associated attendance. Generally, we think, the variant words "good" are adjectival offspring of a meaning essentially resident in the noun "good," or "goodness," of an essential moral force, but conceptually unstable, destined to become progressively attenuated in the dispersions of adjectival application. We rest here at pointing to a want of intellectual decisiveness as to what "good" or "the good" or "goodness" is that the rational constitution of language reveals to be a moral defect in human intellectual will, and not a defect of language. We believe that a like indecisiveness in the meaning-values is assigned to words of other languages of cognate sense: that a general human problem of eroded responsibilities is involved here, waiting to be resolved linguistically.

3.

In pointing to the weakening sense of moral values that has settled into the use of words, along with confusion in the sense of linguistic values, we cannot refer readers to examples of English word-use as models of linguistic sensitivity, moral sensitivity included, within easy historical reach. An examination of the English of Charles M. Doughty, of whom we have written in this book, would reveal a sturdy moral temper, in its linguistic temper. But this would be an exercise for the active devotee of what Doughty called "something else" in the English use of words, in English words themselves—meaning something

better than the demoralized Victorian usage of his time. While early modern English—and we mean, in terms of contemporaneous literary examples, the Spenserian rather than the loosened-up Shakespearean—can teach much as to the necessity of a discipline in linguistic values, and especially in Doughty's employment of it, the primary immediate need for contemporary speakers of the English language is of a general awakening to their being in trouble, in their knowledge of their language, their habitudes in speaking-practice, their ideas of the linguistically adequate. To recognize the good in the use of words, they must first recognize the confusion existing in their linguistic sense in what directly involves, in it, moral considerations through problems raised by words of specific moral meaning-force, *and* the confusion existing in their total condition as moral beings because their very having this character is by and in their functioning as languaged beings.

The standards, linguistic and moral, to be looked for, in this time, according to our view of the present state of human speaking, and self-management, are those of new definition of the relevant values, based on conceptions of the good inspired by new vision of the nature of language, and in the circumstance, for speakers of the English language, of having the language they have, in all its disarray of linguistically, and humanly, immoral use. Let it not be understood, from anything written in this book, that we think that the perfect fulfilment of the linguistic potential exists in the literary and other documentary records of the past, to be pointed to as a model: it is not "there" any more than the like, in the personal potential, is "there," in the historical records of human conduct and performance.

But what kind of word do we have, in "moral?" It seems an appendage-word, a tag. It concerns, as an adjective, the way "you" do things, your very humanness, or your conformity to standards of the humanly fitting. It has acquired a heavy staleness in its associations with standards that are socially regulatory, and not alive with ever-active sense of what is the humanly best, or, rather, the minimum best, the least that is proper to human beings in relation to the capability peculiar to them, in their presence of mind to their own existence and consciousness of themselves as human, of valuing the intrinsic characteristics of their identity, and maintaining, defending, preserving and purifying it, in their individual possession of it. We place the burden of moral meaning, so to speak, in the meaning of "moral," on the human quality of the existence of human beings as a self-defining value: the key-element in the definition of "moral" is not "good," "virtuous," "right," or "righteous," but human. In saying this, however, we mean "human" by a meaning that is not an ambiguity of contradictory characteristics held in more or less civilized solution. We mean in literal definiteness something of the order of permanent and universally important value that people mean in sincere looseness when

they use the adjective "human" with fervent effort to be understood as implying a self-revering dignity of status.

Although "moral" has become orientated to standards of social determination and reference rather than to standards of spiritual reference involving individual character and behavior directly, and "ethical" has the standing of reference to the finer considerations of conscience, this word is the stronger in actual connection with regulatory standards; it has close association with the idea of governing collective or community conscience. The "spiritual" word, by right of linguistic rationality—by what is linguistically reasonable for it to be understood to mean, not by what usage makes mandatory, as if there were no alternatives to its hardened confusions and curiosities—is *moral.* For, despite the specialized direction given it towards concern with human behavior in the social gross, its basic function in the language is one of concern with something *larger* than the social *gross:* this is, concern with human behavior in its universal entirety, its generality as individually manifested.

Having probed into the meaning-locale of "moral" itself, we shall record what we think these considerations of the moral aspects of meaning, and of words of outright moral point themselves, bring into useful distinct perceptibility. There is a form of exercise of the sense of values that unites linguistic values, and moral values showing themselves among, and even in, linguistic values, into values of uniform character. We have been here pursuing a trail of inquiry that has gathered the linguistic and the moral aspects of word-meaning into a narrowing path; and, coming to the place in the path where the fundamental sameness of character of the two orders of values predominates in evidentness over their difference, we offer a description of them applicable to their common character.

Nowhere so much as in the consideration of things linguistic as necessarily centered in the evaluation of the meanings of words are the faculties of judgement engaged in the essentialities of value-determination. For words are themselves, as language, that which brings the distinguishable elements of experience into relation to one another as existing in one frame of experience, held in the embrace of the kind of consciousness peculiar to human beings—the unifying extensions of consciousness that are *mind.* The proper character of serious concern with words is concern that takes into account their central function of adjudicating, by what and how they mean, between the mind's components of experience, so that there can issue a well-founded sense of the experiences of consciousness as parts of a whole (a whole experienced as such even in the course of the distinct, individual experience). And this area of evaluation, or this action of adjudication, is the *critical* center of consciousness. This is where *no* division can come about between the "straight" linguistic and the moral aspects of word-meaning, where there are not two orders of

values, fundamentally or ultimately, or at any time, from a natural human point of judgement.

When linguistic values are fully relevant to the nature of language, they are at once moral values also; and this comprehensiveness in the judgement-quality of values is the manifestation of the critical sense of values. In proposing this, we have no special categorical name in mind, we are not implying a special kind of criticism. We mean what we have before indicated in this book as to the kind of linguistic criticism we endeavor to apply to the problems of human beings in their possession of language, and in their position as living, through the use of words, a mental life that *is* their life as a life of values—of human values in their humanly mature aspect as of universal reference, general to experience known, in its unlimited variety, as a unity. Pure linguistic criticism, criticism unslanted away from the central, properly linguistic considerations, which are those of *meaning,* is human criticism of the most general kind. The two are undifferentiably moral criticism, in the functioning of judgement in them by human values of meaning of intellectual purity.

We shall next present for consideration some words that, having moral bearings, we think can be seen to be adequately dealt with, from the moral and the linguistic point of view, if judgement functions with all-round critical attention to the values involved in the meanings of the considered words. Let it be understood that there has not been introduced, in this chapter, any conception of linguistic values that departs from what has gone before in conception of their nature. We are here only demonstrating the linguistic principles upon which we have developed our book to be critical principles which are moral principles, by a perceptible relation between the right in things linguistic and the right in things human. "Critical" properly implies judgement not from a special point of view, but the view of the subjects of judgement in which they are beheld in the largest scene of evaluative vision in which they have reasonable belonging. One could point to the lack of critical sense of word-meaning as that which most marks lexicography, in its failures to clarify the meaning-processes of language: the intellectual imagination has failed there, as the moral imagination has failed in people's letting their words, in their use, drop to sub-human levels of consciousness of meaning (the linguistic counterpart of a drop in their address to their life-experience to sub-spiritual levels of appreciation of their soul-potential).

4.

How critical standards for the evaluation of word-meanings can be both humanly and linguistically apt if they are truly critical, comprehensively critical, can be seen in a consideration of words that carry some suggestion of moral

judgement, but without being themselves terms of moral judgement exclusively. "Lazy" and "indolent," for instance, can be given moral orientation; but in a broad view of topographical meaning-location, a critically spacious view, they can be seen to have place, first, in relation to human behavior and disposition where activity is a focus of attention or the circumstantial context. Before viewing activity in exclusive association with human behavior and disposition one must see it in its generalized meaning, in which there are no necessary implications of *personal* activity. "Inert" is impersonal, as are "active" and "inactive." "Idle" seems to have had initial rather strong implications of moral evaluation, but inactiveness as having a character of unproductiveness is the limit of the developed implications—and the word can be applied to things mechanical without carry-over of any moralistic touch in its figurative personalizing of the context. It would be a critical error to locate "idle" with a word of this human-activity area having an element of moral criticism in its meaning, such as "lazy." With "idle," any force of moral criticism would have to be rhetorically injected by utterance-emphasis.

One finds, in the dictionaries and other word-books, as to "idle," direct and indirect meaning-connection indicated with "inert," on the one hand, and "lazy" and other words of actual or presumed meaning-force of moral judgement—"indolent" and "slothful," "sluggish" and "torpid," come into view, and "slack" and "listless," too. And "languid," and "dull" also are of this environment of associations. And even "sloven" has rights of membership in such a mixed company. What moral aspects of meaning are noteworthy, with any, is obscured to vagueness in a disorder of associations that dislodges the words from their logical linguistic places.

"Sloth" is of wholly moral meaning-force, and sharply moral in rhetorical accent. It is also not otherwise than conspicuously antique in verbal character. Its placement is in the linguistic area of meaning concerned with distinguishings of the morally wrong, and characterizations of things as morally wrong, and might well have proper location in a list of words denominating vices by tradition very dark in moral color. "Sloth" has an affinity with "accidie," not only in close relation by logical congruity of meaning, but by close bearing on each other in distinction of meaning; and in the defining of them some reflection of a religious quality, a piety of abhorrence of what is denominated, ought to be provided.

Note should be taken of the passing out of usability with stylistic naturalness of such words of strong categorical moral emphasis as "infamy" and "ignominy," both of which did a double duty of denunciative implication, the fact of being an object of public abhorrence being equated with the actuality of abhorrent conduct. In so far as these words have surviving serviceability, their meanings are now concentrated upon the matter of wrong-doing, with the aspect of public judgement shaded into subordinate relation to it, or its

presence in the conception of wrong-doing typified in the meaning but a footnote of etymological pedantry to which no practical attention is paid in the use of the words by anyone.

"Scandalous" has some logical connection with "infamy" and "ignominy," vaguely so, at a remove, but with "scandal" hardly the breath of one. Whether "scandalous" and "disgraceful" have not a logically immediate meaning-relationship is a reasonable consideration. But these words exist in an area of meanings where much confusion has been wrought by a loose holding of words in synonymic suspension. "Scandalous" may be best treated as adjectivally marginal to "scandal," with "scandal" itself evaluated as a word that has never settled into clear rational placement in the language, though of very old belonging to it—one might think of "scandal" as a perpetual nonce word in the varying successive environments of its use. One might almost view it as a term—originating in disapprobatory characterization of something as bringing discredit upon religion—making reference to an action exciting public attention, to which a discreditable character is publicly ascribed. Two variant terms "scandal" could be distinguished, one having the action in question as the focal point of signification, the other the disapprobatory public attention excited by the action; and two variant adjectival terms "scandalous" could be deduced, as marginally connected with these. Neither noun would necessarily imply moral judgement. But the "scandalous" associated with action-denoting "scandal" would have a likeness to the "scandalous" of current use in being strongly suggestive of moral judgement. However, the recognition of two nouns and two correspondent adjectives would effect a definitive differentiation between the adjectives that brought the moral implications in the current "scandalous" into explicit state: an actual impossibility, the word being weak, with force so much limited to the rhetorical.

Such questions of meaning as those on which we are touching exemplify the need for lexicography—and for the understanding in the human large of what words are, and require for use as what they are—of a practice and tradition of linguistic criticism concerned with thinking *into* the meaning-precincts of language: thinking *into* words, not *about* words, acquainting oneself with language as a structure of meaning-values, not as either a historical agglomeration or a structure of patterns of linguistic behavior prefiguring language as words. Only such a criticism can make room for moral considerations, concern with the moral factors in meaning, and in the very working principles of language.

5.

Perhaps question of the moral aspects of the meanings of "lazy" and "indolent" can now be submerged in the critical approach to their meanings with

no unclarity left as to how the moral element in meaning comes naturally and obligatorily within the bounds of critical linguistic consideration. Another way of presenting this principle is to say that linguistic criticism that is entirely adequate as such covers everything, evaluatively, that language covers in its logical compass, by a law of functional all-inclusiveness. As the linguistic law of comprehensiveness applies not only to vocabularistic adequacy but to meaning-values in respect to their adequacy as the rational basis of the processes of human judgement, moral criticism is implicit in linguistic criticism wherever meaning comprises distinctions of a moral character, and to the extent that it does so. In all critically sensitive use of words—use of them with a knowledge of their meanings both broad in scope and definite in the particulars, and consistency in the application of it—and in lexicography that fulfils its responsibility as the home-ground of linguistic criticism, all moral significances of meaning are embraced in the general evaluation of meaning, as internally present in meaning-content, requiring no separate, super-linguistic critical attention. By the entire interior logical coherence of language—one might say, by its interior explicitness—meanings are capable of speaking themselves.

How shall one know the meaning of "lazy?" How, indeed, to do "lazy" justice with a critically even hand, neither de-accentuating nor over-accentuating the element of moral characterization in its meaning? In both "lazy" and "indolent" there is indisposition to activity, and the reason in neither case lies outside the will, in such a circumstance as illness, or excitation of unhappy feeling: it is a free indisposition. Nor is the part of the will in the indisposition purposefully productive of the bad consequences of indulgence of it, for the "lazy" or the "indolent" person, or for others. There is, thus, with both traits, an initial innocence. However, with indolence is to be noted a desire to avoid exactions of activity. The matter of responsibility for bad consequences, failure to do, is rather less one of conjecture than in the case of laziness. With laziness, there is, rather than a definite consciousness of possible calls to activity, absence of motivating resolve to meet the exactions of activity, calls to it arising. The difference between the emotional condition, in indolence and laziness, could, thus, allow of an inner overcoming of the indisposition in the indolent person, from specially arising desire, while with the lazy person the break in the laziness is very likely to result from some external prompting.

It can be seen that the words "lazy" and "indolent" are imbued with a critical spirit, the critical spirit of language, that makes them morally explicit in so far as moral evaluation is pertinent to the content of their meanings. The study of language, language treated as centrally constituted of the study of words for definitive knowledge of their meanings in their united existence as

language, should yield all the terms of evaluation requisite for a linguistically coherent and humanly full knowledge of them—that is, for a humane linguistic criticism (which language has hardly so far had from its humanity).

If the words of distinctive moral emphasis, in meaning, seem peculiarly difficult as subjects of definition, and there is consciousness of the difficulty's being related to a radical change in contemporary attitudes to subjects of moral reference (or, perhaps it should be said, to subjects that are not any longer identified as such in the common understanding, as a matter of natural linguistic course), there should be no attempt, within the framework of definition itself, to take these attitudes into account. The revised attitudes are not merely a-moral: they are to a large extent anti-moral—to such an extent that certain words have fallen into nearly total desuetude—"rectitude," "probity," for example—as aliens in the modern vocabulary by the undivided force of moral reference in their meanings. The attitudes are not ones of mere indifference to moral considerations: moral considerations in matters of meaning have been made historical outlaws by contemporary canons of the intellectually correct in meaning-evaluation. Lexicographers ignore the intellectual immorality—antagonism to concepts and traditions recognizant of the existence, reflected in language, for human beings, of *moral* necessities—that has been eating into linguistic usage with an effect, besides others, of excising from it, as part of the contemporarily normal vocabulary, words in the meanings of which the reasonableness of moral principles of evaluation is implicit. The dominating personal position in lexicography should be that of a humane linguistic criticism, a position personal only in being one of devotion to the actuality of language as embodying instrumentally the intellectual integrities of the human mind in *its* position of devotion to the personal objective of trustworthy thinking, trustworthily articulated.

In these times of marked disaffection towards moral discriminations, the developed fashion of sprinkling about, as salt of vocabularistic sophistication, the verb "fault," always hitherto a vocabularistic oddity, and quite late in English linguistic history viewed as a rhetorical barbarism (by Mrs. Trollope as an "Americanism"), exemplifies the indurated anti-moral disposition of the average literate intelligence of the times, as it is found articulated in critical writing, and the general literature of intellectual evaluation. So-and-so is presented as to be "faulted" or "not faulted" for such-and-such, in a book, or other publicly exposed procedure or performance; and the conception of "fault" is of so limited a nature, restricted to a special view involving not standards but current sophisticated predilections, that the word, in its verb-character, is very suggestive of a modern sensibility altogether lacking in moral sensitivity. What functions here, in this critical atmosphere, is an extremely light-weight system of values, incapable of application to subjects of criticism to any effect of hu-

manly *reliable* judgement. Lacking the bracing of a discipline of subscription to linguistic coherence, the system has the psychological characteristic so precious to the neurotically uneasy contemporary sensibility of being a "relaxed" one. It has no fixed points; the moving critical spirit "cares" about very little, and nothing definitely, in particular. The moral condition of this "faulting" sensibility is, with a certain aggressive consciousness to itself of being so, nil. But to accuse it of being immoral would not take judgement far enough.

We have already looked into the question of the meaning of "right," with "correct" in close view, and indicated to what standard of moral estimation we thought the word to be orientated, in its meaning. We have considered the words "rectitude," and "probity"; and uncovered some of the problem we see lying in wait for definitional consideration of the word "good"; and touched on the word "perfect" adjacently. "Perfect" must be free of moral or other implication of value-judgement, as comprised in its meaning; it informs, rather than characterizes. Its logical affiliate or affiliates will be difficult to identify with certainty. But it is no *term*. It does not refer: it means. Inspection of the linguistic ground of words that suggest themselves as at least of neighbor-location, if not of the same placement, as "perfect," such as "absolute," "complete," "pure," "true," "proper," is likely to leave the problem undiminished in difficultness: there seems to be no grouping that is not forced, not lacking in perfect logical appropriateness. The word "perfect" might well prove to have something in logical common with the word "right," sufficient for definitive placement of it in lexicographical conjunction with "right." The phrase "just right" might be regarded as attesting to a vague, synonymic, sense of the existence of a logical meaning-relationship between "right" and "perfect."

"Honest," perhaps through its having been singled out as descriptive of a moral trait that might be sought in others without question of complex moral expectations, seems a pathetically isolated word—a "poor relation" to the "honor" words. Pride in the voluntary observance of obligations reigns in the "honor" area. But honesty seems of the status of humble obedience to moral prohibitions. And how are these two words to be viewed, not only with respect to each other, but with respect—separately or together—to other words that wear, so to speak, a moral uniform (of antiquated appearance, even in the case of "honest," the least stylized, moralistically): what are the likelihoods in logical meaning-correspondences among "honor," "honorableness," "probity," "uprightness," "rectitude," "honesty"? The distinctions of meaning, here, are hidden under dust and film of inattention, psychological sophistication excusing the neglect. Contemporary usage does not make rubbish of the words, clear the house of language of them: there is no daring to throw them away. But where does the daring to do some linguistic house-cleaning in this area start?

A difficulty peculiar to the words of the language that have a noticeably moral vocabularistic tone is the scattered state in which they exist in the language. How to go about discovering words of undivided moral reference, for lexicographical mapping, ordering, studying? And how to deal with the fact of their being of this character without falling into moral criticism? How is the moralistic touch to be avoided, the pure, humane touch of linguistic criticism to be achieved, if these words are sought out, collected, grouped, according to how they impinge on one another in logical relation and distinction of meaning? It will surely be found that if the quest is governed by the principles of meaning and definition that have been advanced in this book, even where there are very strongly moral aspects of meaning, the words will not derange the critical attitude. The moral emphasis in the meaning will be incidental to the dominating actuality that the considerations of word-placement, and, then, of meaning-distinction, are linguistically, not moralistically, evaluative: the moral emphasis is linguistic fact.

6.

Certain words of the class of which we have been speaking will puzzle the effort of placement, and of particular determination of meaning, then, to an exceptional degree of difficulty. "Righteous" we have already mentioned; and "good." "Righteous" has been tarnished with derogating insinuations by its figuring in the compound "self-righteous," and by single use with ironic accent. "Pious" is in the same condition of standing: the one as spoken from the unmoral point of view, the other from the unreligious point of view. We advance the principle that, where a word is converted to a usage of ironic opinion, there should be no lexicographical notice taken of the usage: definition is for specification of the meanings of words, not of potentialities of ironic uses of them.

"Virtue" and "virtuous" are little found as instruments of irony, mockery, but they are nevertheless clouded from view as practical words, in the contemporary unmoral linguistic atmosphere, by the distinctively moral point they make, with their meanings. Such a condition makes the placement of words especially difficult: the question of their belonging to the language, to what extent, and with what kind of human propriety, is complicated by the question "Where?": where do they fit in logically, if they ought to be treated as integrally, actively, of the language? A word "quality" used to have distinct standing in the language as a word of a moral force of meaning: this "quality" is of the order of "virtue" in *its* difference from a word "virtue" of no moral force of characterization. But the other "quality" differs from the other "virtue" in that, while this implies favorable regard, the "quality" of something can be what is not well-regarded. Is one "virtue" to be linguistically linked

with one "quality?" What of the other "virtue"? Where does *it* live, in the language? And where, the other "quality?"

If "virtue" and "quality" are seen to stand in logical meaning-relation to each other, with close bearing on each other of the distinction of their meanings ("a person having those virtues . . . "; "a person having those qualities . . . "), the word "merit" must be seen as not standing in logical relation to "virtue"—there is no such link of point-of-view of evaluation between them as exists between "virtue" and "quality." Generalized "virtue" and generalized "merit" may seem to be in the same frame of judgement in hasty inspection; but the coupling could not withstand prolonged examination. Generalized "virtue" *does* present a problem that generalized "merit" also presents: they are both rhetorical compressions—the one, for "possession of virtues" (or, "of a virtue"), the other, for "possession of merits" (or, "of a merit"). "Merit" is a rather eccentric word. It does not mate logically with "worth" or "value," which are logically linked. These two words by their meanings do no more than raise the matter of measure: there is no inhering connotation of good degree of worth, or of value. There is, however, a practice of rhetorical compression, with both: to say that something *has* worth or that something *has* value involves the compression of the idea of "a good degree of worth" or "a good degree of value" into "worth" or "value," as by intention evocative of the idea.

"Merit" has inhering in its meaning a connotation of entitledness to credit for some character of goodness possessed. But what other word, what other words, are linkable with it, as logically akin to it in meaning-structure? In the world of synonymizing lexicography "merit" is grouped with "due" and "desert": but the prevailing habits of association of these words, of words with one another, variously, are customs of confusion. There is no question, in the case of "due" or of "desert," of a necessary connotation of just entitledness by someone to a benefit of recognition of a possessed goodness. The giving of either "due" or "desert" can be action expressive of judgement of features of character or behavior as to be either well or ill regarded, and of the propriety of treatment of them based upon the judgement: both require specification indicative of the sense of the judgement. "Merit" requires no such specification—it incorporates approbative judgement in its meaning. Both "due" and "desert" can be raised out of neutralness by rhetorical management of their use, made evocative of an idea of their comprising implication of the propriety of a certain kind of treatment of someone, or something: in the case of "due," the implication is of terms of evaluation according to certain standards of good or right, based on requirements of reason; in the case of "desert," the standards of good or right are based, in the implication, on requirements of justice.

And yet, even such care as we here plot for the extrication of these words

from the confusions of lexicography and usage in which they are entrapped may leave them seriously encumbered with traces of the entrapment—pieces of confusion still adhering to the presumed better understanding of them—as to placement, grouping, logical relations of meaning and difference in point of distinction of meaning. What if the very linking of "due" and "desert," which has seemed to us here a logical grouping, constitutes a compromise between existing modes of word-linkage and the modes that we have presented here, educed from the principles we found underlying language as knowable at first, humanly live, hand?

Is the linking of "due" and "desert" one of forced reasonableness? Is not "due" a word of a main adjectival identity, placeable as such with "owing," in a minor group of subsidiary relation to—but, to what? The attempt to find the linguistic base for this adjectival pair brings about the discovery of a curiosity involving not only these two words but others sharing with them a certain categorical character of function. There is "owe," for a word of a group having "owing" and "due" as subsidiary attachments—with the noun "due" another attachment. But "owe" exists without companion-words, logical affiliates. And "owing" as companion-word to "due" is, as adjective, a convenience-derivative, and both it and "due," with the addition of "to," are convenience-prepositions. The curiosity, here, is not in a freakishness peculiar to "owe" and the three other words ("owing," "due," and the noun "due"), but in the unpreparedness of investigators of linguistic circumstances of meaning for finding "owe" to be a word of a certain categorically delimited class of words.

If one moves out from "owe" to a neighboring area of meaning-association, one comes to "debt"; and "debt" is found to exist isolatedly. The like is found with "borrow." And with "lend"! One is here among terms. They are all common terms of a foundation-sense concerning matters monetary or negotiatory, words that have come into free and extensive use without developing any expansion of sense that would bring them into the language's patterns of meaning-distribution and meaning-interrelation. They are of such intimate status as words of general use and so clear, seemingly, of necessary special reference to practical transactions, that the very large element of figurativeness in their use, where the subjects of reference are intangibles, obscures the terminological nature of the words. "Worth" and "value" are words of intensive use in connection with matters monetary or negotiatory, but these are true words, words of general meaning-function, applicable to such matters as to all others to which their meanings can be pertinent. No character of applicability to any particular kinds of context adheres to them.

What can be foreseen as to an ultimate treatment of "merit?" The verb "merit" is the suitable meaning-key: the noun stands apart in a meaning that

corresponds neither with the verb nor with any other noun, while "merit" and "deserve" stand to each other in a relation of matching meanings. With "merit" and "deserve"—or "deserve" and "merit"—constituting a logically determinate group, both words employable where judgement is either approbatory or disapprobatory, the noun "merit" has connection with the verb "merit" as a derivative but also a departure, for it is applicable only where question is raised of entitlement to credit for some order of goodness. "Desert," then, with the verb "deserve" and "merit" in joint placement, calls for placement as a non-idiosyncratic derivative of "deserve," employable in contexts of opposing orders of judgement. The peculiarity of the noun "merit" as a word exclusively favorable in its judgement-implications prompts consideration as to whether it may not be a terminological development, or deviation. If "deserve" is viewed as bringing to bear the measure of justice in questions of entitlement, the verb "merit" may be viewed as bringing to bear the measure of moral quality, in such questions. When in the noun this measure is made restrictedly one of moral *superiority,* there is ground for posing the question "Is this, then, a moral term?"

The noun "merit" is applicable to instances of performance in fields of scholastic activity or art and others in which a measure of *moral* superiority seems not relevant to the scene and the subject of judgement. But, if one looks hard at uses of the noun "merit," one finds present in the word's central concern with the commendable a strong insinuation of moral distinction as properly identified with the distinction of an exceeding, in performance or achievement, of the ordinary, the commonplace. Moral measure is present in the meaning-conditions of the verb, but not in a manner to make it a moral term: it is a factual element of the meaning, not a moral position or attitude that the use of the word brings into the context of consideration. In the case of the verb, the moral element of the meaning is integrally present, but not insistently so, is not a dominant, as it were self-assertive, feature of the meaning, as it seems to be, from the course of the examination, in the case of the noun. Such a character as that which we have perceived to attach, likely, to the noun, is distinctively that of a term.

Of such an order as that which we have been examining in some of its forms, and in connection with problems of definition, is the matter of the moral aspects of meaning.

We think we have gone far enough in demonstrating the kinds of difficulties that lurk in areas of meaning that have hitherto been treated lexicographically, and generally, as, varyingly, of vague moral interest or emphatic moral interest, or of extinct moral interest, according to variations of fashion in philosophic theory, social attitudes, trends of intellectual sophistication. We have shown

the nature of these difficulties as seen from a linguistically critical point of view, and indicated how, when they are so viewed, questions of special moral emphasis or incidental moral reference within the meaning-confines of words, and of externally attendant opinion, anti-moral, pro-moral, morally indifferent or insensitive, affecting the ways in which the instanced words are used, can be lifted from the shoulders of lexicography and put in the hands of general human intellectual concern.

In the status in which words exist as exuding and trailing undissipatable difficulties to be tolerated with an urbane resignation, the difficulties are laid to the account of language itself, as a giant collection of giant problems that, eluding solution, the speakers of languages cannot, yet, afford to dismiss because of the utility of language. Against lugubrious acceptance of a huge burden of difficulty as to be necessarily associated with language, we project a course of reduction of the problems that words present. This is a treatment of them as presenting problems natural to them as individual functional executants of the natural rationality of language; and a treatment of the difficulty of each and all as a normal difficulty, a difficulty of knowledge where knowledge *is* available. That which must be learned is, happily, within reach of the intelligence, itself the general executant of language's rationality—which language borrows from it, and purifies for its repossession.

CHAPTER 20

Words and Things

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1.

The word "things" denotes a multitude of things, illimitable in number, for there is nothing that cannot be called a thing, including nothing. But there are things, and things. There is an order of things comprising differentiable material entities, specifically identifiable physical bodies, units of material substance or of physical individuality of character of a classifiable kind: the words by which these things are known are scattered over the linguistic map in colonies that, though of a certain sprawling unity in themselves as classes of things, are very loosely present in the system of rational government by which the words of the language *are* the language. The lines of variety in these things for which there are words thread about, for speakers of the language, from and into all sorts of quarters and corners. There are living "things," differentiable organisms and creatures; and, the things of the identity of vegetation; and all the objects of utility and convenience, the furnishing and equipment of houses, and of cities; and, of course, of primary background-status, the things of "nature" of that earthly nature that is the content of the material and physical environment in which the generic development and personal, mental, individualization of human life has had, and has, being.

The last-identified class of things will occupy the scene of this chapter. We shall attempt to picture the terminological diversity of this vocabularistic area, in order to suggest the lexicographical controllability of terms, as subjects of definition. For the words "for" things, things that *are* things, properly denominated as such, are *terms*. We have chosen to show something of the make-up of this class of terms, rather than any other of the myriad choice-possibilities, because much of what it concerns, while being strongly particular, requires no magnification of its particularity for recognition of its thing-

ish character, and of the terminological character of the words by which the "thingish" subjects are linguistically differentiated. The things signified by the terms that we shall bring into view—lexicographical view—are long-established familiars of common experience.

As to the things that are things only by a certain manner of speaking: it is relevant here to identify that manner of speaking. These are subjects of words that are denominated "things" in figurative simplification of them for a rhetorical advantage of speedy reference to them. The words that will be fixed upon in this chapter for consideration as examples of sets of words of a kind requiring a special technique of lexicographical treatment are all *terms*. Their subjects are things that, made present to thought by them, seem to be their meanings, and to constitute them words, in the full sense of "word." All subjects of words, words proper, can be called "things," to lend a quality of concretion to what is meant, in the use of them. To say, "I thought it an odd thing," instead of, "I thought it an odd manifestation" or " . . . occurrence" or " . . . statement," etc., etc., sacrifices the definitiveness of express meaning to a presumed gain of vivid physical impression made.

We have tried throughout this book to clarify the importance of understanding just what one is doing in how one uses words, in relation to what kind of use of them is linguistically appropriate to the kind of words they are, the kind of meanings they have. With this, we have tried to make it clear that linguistic intelligence is not a matter of following a system of interpretation of the nature of language, but of knowing the meanings of words as words of a language, formative of it in their being formed by it. Thus, to understand how it is as to the words by which specificatory reference is made to the things of human environmental life-placement, their terminological status in the language, the function they have of differentiating among these entities as of distinct individual material or physical identity, is to understand also something of how words, words of a non-terminological order, can seem, in a certain manner of speaking, to *mean* "things"—though words mean distinctions of thought, are not signifiers of particular individual identityhood. By such knowledge as what the actual linguistic circumstance is in the calling "things" what are not things, as one means the word "thing" in linguistic regularity, one can acquire a wisdom of the safety that the language has with itself and with its speakers by its infinite and infinitely knowable complexity.

It should be noted, in the considering of the account we present here of words-and-things, things-and-words, terms-and-things, things-and-things, that much of the reference-substance of terms will be found to be with difficulty (for the imagination) callable "things." Many terms refer to processes, or to analytical differentiations, or to other individualized identities not easily associable with classes of things of simply denominatable, ordinarily "thingish"

identity. We shall restrict comment to this matter here to a statement of speculative anticipation. We think that, as acquaintance with the nature of terms is developed in lexicographical exploration, it is likely to be found that there generally inheres in the subjects of reference of terms, in that which terms signify even where there is no individual substantiality of entityhood readily comparable to material or physical thingishness, a character or type of identity peculiar to subjects of reference materially or physically differentiable. The mode of mental operation that produces terms (deriving as a kind of word from an elementary name-assigning operation) proceeds characteristically upon patterns of such identity.

The attitude of mind in which terms are produced, and employed, is one in which the subjects of attention are individual subjects-in-themselves, fixed upon as of isolated identity. Terms dominate in the vocabulary of the physical sciences, which must proceed by preoccupation with particulars: the knowledge sought is that of things, the world studied is a world of things. In the sciences in which the terminological subjects are in large part of non-material identity, such as psychology, sociology, political science, and the new linguistical and philosophical sciences, and in the general intellectual mood of contemporary science as the inclusive "discipline" of "disciplines," there prevails a predisposition to the conceiving of the content of experience and the scheme of reality, and therefore, of the subject-matter of language, as fundamentally pluralistic in nature. This corresponds to the intellectual ascendancy of the concept by which the universe is known as a pluralistic continuity of material and physical units of identity. Where great propensity to terms-making and terms-using exists, the movements of human understanding cannot but be heavily weighted with thing-mindedness. However, in what follows here, now, the things signified by the terms we shall be citing have a natural, non-figurative, non-theoretical, right to be endowed with thingish identity. There should be no difficulty in accepting them as of this identity; they are term-subjects of the primally simplest sort, viewable as among the oldest humanly-known things.

2.

The place where human beings *are,* the place in which they find themselves, and that they come to think of themselves as "inhabiting" (though there is a suggestion in this word's meaning of variety in choices or possibilities of dwelling-places), is named "Earth." And if this name is de-capitalized, "lowered" in case, as the figure goes, the resultant "earth" is still a name. The form "the Earth" is not an impossibility (any more than is the combination "the" and some other names of places, as, one may say "the Congo"); and "earth" in the form "the earth" is no less a name than when it is not attended by an

article. If other "earths" are speculatively conceived of, envisioned in imaginative construing of universal possibilities, this is no purging of the name of its name-character, any more than to say—for instance—that Napoleons are products not makers of history purges the name "Napoleon" of its name-character.

The name "Earth" or "earth" ought not to appear in any dictionary as one of the "meanings" of the word "earth" but only as a name, the name of the place of human life. If "earth" were firmly characterized as a name in lexicographical reference-books, one of the intellectual advantages would be a clearer consciousness in human beings of the distinctness of their identity as human, from having a clearer consciousness of the distinctness of the identity of the place where they are. Free-ranging speculation engendered by the pronouncements of scientific cogitators on the possibility of "life" elsewhere in the universe, and the fanciful play made with the idea of the possibility by non-scientific cogitators on all sorts of possibilities, would dwindle to a staid readiness for scientific information of a staid, decently progressive degree of newness, such as characterizes all scientifically respectable scientific discoveries. There would be no craning of curiosity, divorcing of consciousness of human identity and location from the bearings of belonging to Earth (or earth), this place-with-a-name that is at once the cradle and the world of human life. Suggestions of possibilities of the existence, somewhere in the great universal where, of "other" life "besides" the life of Earth, earth, would not excite that secretly felt mixture of nauseas physical and intellectual, hidden within a bland expression of equanimity in the face of whatever science may present of unthinkables to be thought of, that they do for—is it not very many? Very many do not know their place of life by the sure, inarguable identification of a name, know it only by the confused and confusing implications of a "word of more than one meaning."

Thought of "other life," comparable to the human placement, and as of some comparability in life-nature with human life-nature, is a product of scientific ignorance defining itself in terms of qualified knowledge. Such speculation beds itself down in the general linguistic indeterminateness of the earth-life of human beings. Language, in scientific and non-scientific use, has been recklessly stripped of its fixities by the scientific and non-scientific mentality of an era priding itself, in the persons of its intellectual leadership, in a religiose philosophy in which allowance for uncertainties as elements of factual precision and general determination is effectuated by a relativistic value-technique making all knowledge-material capable of being, indeterminately, correct or incorrect.

What, then, in that way of speaking in which nothing is spoken with entire persuasion of its capability of being true, of having real import, can the factual validity of the thing named "Earth" or "earth" amount to in minds that think

according to that way of speaking? Or what can the uttered name, issuing from the mouths of such minds, suggest to attending like-thinking minds? The word "life" is used with no more regard shown for it as having a distinctive meaning-function than that shown for the name "earth" as having a specific identification-function. And "human," identifying creatures knowing themselves as the characteristic beings of the place in which they found themselves, has become varyingly a term theological, biological, historical, yet one ever verging upon the status of a *word*. But as a word it acquires a meaning so eloquent with happy self-knowledge as to make the creatures shy back, uncomfortably, as from ridiculous claiming themselves creatures of Heaven, and quickly gather the word's various terminological significations into *a* meaning downright with morally comfortable self-depreciatory attributions of every grade under perfection downward in waxing particularity towards the specifics of moral worthlessness that constitute Hell.

And what of the other words, and terms, or names, that rise in minds, from mouths, in considerations of universal possibilities from the vantage of a sense of earth-location, superficially sophisticated in its intellectual expression, linguistically slipshod, inwardly all a stodgy, sluggish bewilderment? Universe? Heaven? Hell? The Sky, skies? The Moon, moons? The Ocean, oceans? The Horizon, horizons? And what of the religious implications of "earthly" as in "earthly life," "earthly nature," with contrastive "heavenly" at hand?

And the matter of time, and that of space, inject themselves into far-flung efforts to calculate or to imagine possibilities "out there" from "here." Time and space are disposed in various unimaginable combinations, in these efforts, to which the Einsteinian time-space dimensional conception provides no relief, linguistically or otherwise. In the unimaginable earthly-heavenly pattern of locations, there is the linguistic relief of some rational differentiation between the locations: in the spiritual interiority of place of "in heaven" as against the spatially concrete "on earth." The tribute of plain, concrete, substantialness of character, freedom from abstruse or pretentious refinements of behavior and way of mind conveyed in the phrase "down to earth" or the adjective "earthy" has an individual potential of implication as to leanings towards heavenly self-placement, at least so far as the soul goes. But the phrase may be reasonably regarded as assaulting only predilection for the graces of etherealness, without reference to removed after-life location of existence, this judged incongruous with the humble ordinariness of human existence as having the address "Earth." Earth is, in modern sentiment, solidly commonplace, assumed, in its serving as continuous floor to human existence, to be "there," rather than seen, apprehended, in quantitative grandeur, a mass of thing-ish unity.

The discovery of its roundness, the scientific depicting of its forms, posi-

tion in space, have added little, if anything, to feeling for Earth as a distinct subject of admiration. Love or admiration is directed at things of earth, not the Big Thing earth; instead of "Earth," the observances are paid to "Nature," as the collective appellation scooping in all the bounties, wonders, dangers, conditions of time and place, within the content of the single identity-unit *earth,* or *Earth.* "Mother Earth," or goddess figures of earth-association, symbolize valued or revered processes peculiar to the course of life on the earth or the existence of the things of earth. But there is no personality-match "earthly Mother" to "heavenly Father." "Mother" is a rhetorical handle, bestowing a sentimental reality of generosity of nature on the aggregative conception, earth, as a many-thinged source of means of human sustenance.[1]

Earth has had the honor, in ancient religious stories, of housing, in underworld areas of it, the dead in their after-life. Ignorance and incomprehension of the physical character and setting of earth's existence do not wholly account for this: despite them, there was a factual sense of the bigness of the Thing, feeling for it as a commodious facility of residence for all human purposes. Hell, of the later religious underworld stories, a nether place of punishment for misdoings in life, in being imagined as of earthly location or as a region at any rate orientated to earth, with earth itself imagined as at awful spiritual distance from the heavenly regions, belongs to the tradition of a down-graded earth, earth as a place not profaned by the nether adjacency of the region of the damned.

To what conclusion does this review of human conceptions of, attitudes to, the birth-place and material home of human existence—what linguistic conclusion—point? We have meant to advance with it that, for the dismantling of the conventional lexicographical entry for "earth" as a composite of meanings for a single word, the singling out of "earth" as the name of the human place is a good beginning.

3.

Having now distinguished, in a manner that we hope will be not only acceptable, but useful to the reasonable understanding of readers, "earth" or "Earth" as a *name,* a linguistic convenience of identification by which human beings who are speakers of the English language know the physical site of their existence, we turn consideration to the other word or words "earth" the language holds. We speak of this name "earth" as a word, although a name is no integral part of a language, does not "mean" or even "signify," because languages *do* of practical necessity include a certain number of names as having a courtesy-status of words, the identified subjects of which have become constants of designation. For all the speakers of a language, what such names designate is of

instantaneous recognizability, whether the individual subject is a particular thing or a formal entity. Names of things, places, entities, common recognition of which would be confined to restricted portions of the speakers of a language, do not warrant the courtesy of "being part of" the language. But where what they designate are "things" of common recognizability, they are to be found treated, and not necessarily unreasonably so, as "belonging to the language"; they have educational value as naming "things" of common knowledge, bound to present themselves here and there in the general linguistic experience of the language's speakers.

The name "earth," or "Earth," the name of that great Thing that is the home-ground or immediate background of human existence, has honorable rightful place in the dictionaries. But let it not be overlooked that this "earth" is of a character all its own, that it is not "one of the meanings" of "earth." The subject of this "earth" is not resident in the mind in the form of a meaning, as it is with words generally, or in the form of a memorandum of reference to things of a certain differentiable kind, as it is with words that are terms. An image is mentally evoked by the name, but the image is not continuously part of the mind's linguistic equipment; the "thing" designated is not a mental resident. The image of it evoked may be called a momentary visitor to the mind in the evocation. But what "Earth" or "earth" names is something not reducible to a standardized specification, as the case is with terms. There are two sides to the mental experience of this thing, at its name's occurrence, as an "image." The image is a momentary visitor, we have said. But the call has to be instantly repaid: the mind must make immediately a return-visit. The perception of the name-character of "earth," the designator of the place "Earth," ought to introduce into the speaking consciousness of people an accentuation of the sense of their knowledge of their living as placed beings, of having that extraordinarily natural-seeming peculiarity of physical condition of being *on earth*.

With the entry of a name "Earth" or "earth" resolved on for a lexicographical listing, we turn, then, to consider the other entry or entries requisite in such a listing. Whether there are two differentiable words "earth," one a term referring to the thing that stands in the human consciousness as the material most characteristic of the place "earth," the other a term by which this material is apprehended in its character of extendedness and wide distribution of presence as a "top" layer of the Thing named "earth" constituting large portions of its surface, we shall not here attempt to resolve decisively. Nor shall we consider the linguistic legitimacy (according to our conceptions of lexicographical values) of other words "earth" found entered into dictionaries as "meanings" of a single word "earth." We shall look into the possibilities of definitional specification of the meaning of the word "earth"—that is, of the

signification of the term "earth"—in its propinquity to other terms of reference to Earth-materials of common human acquaintance, in their widely distributed surface-presence. Such placement of the term "earth" in the language should clarify the title to lexicographical recognition of any other "earth" of which there may be question. It should also, and even more importantly, clarify the connections between "earth" and other terms concerned with surface Earth-materials—the kind of differences existing between them in factual point, and what peculiarities of logical nicety of distinction may attach to the basic factual individuality of signification, where the terms exist in common fields of reference.

There might be thought to be reason for considering a word "earth," distinct from the term concerned with the thing that is a material, having a proximity of signification to "land." But we think it can be easily perceived, on review of typical employments of "land," that its references have no proximity to those of "earth" of rationally linked, lexicographically relatable identity. The signification evoked by pronouncement of "earth" seems always to be that either of *place* or of *material;* and the material seems never to be far, in the imaginative identification of the reference, from that image of a crumbly amalgam of weathered rock-particles, humus, and other substances figuring in the process of amalgamation of substances of Earth having surface-location upon it, which "everyone" takes for granted as very properly called what it is called—as being typical material of "Earth." Although "land" seems to have a number of, or at least two, kinds of image-signification implicit in its evocatory value and effect, they are removed from both imagistic and rational association and from any evocatory value or effect that the "earth" has in any linguistically normal employment. Before entering into the terminological region of *materials* within which the material signified by a term "earth" resides on the map of the language, drawn according to a lexicographical logic of linguistic cartography, we shall give "land" some consideration. This, we think, may be helpful for a clearer demarcating of the separate regions of signification to which "earth" and "land" belong. Indiscriminate usage, in exuberances of rhetorical expansion of signification, or in mere succumbing to temptations to simplify the already simple, can furnish support for a view that earth and land have merged as closely impinging identities in some of their aspects. We view this differently, but, as we have indicated, leave the argument open.

The factual peculiarities of the general term "land" are of a goodly number; land is a thing that looms large in the scene and experience of human life, human existence on Earth. It is preponderantly solid, compact: it has continuity of mass and it has exteriority of position on Earth in this continuity. The term "land" that has this thing for subject of reference is so broad in its signi-

fication as to serve in the differentiation between the portions of the earth's extent that are water-covered and those that are compactly substantial. Yet the character of compact substantialness of earth-surface is both sufficiently general and sufficiently strict in conception to allow of the application of the term to such mass in continuity as is to be found underlying the watery portions of the earth's surface, these being regarded, in relation to the underlying mass conceived of as *land,* as watery coverage of earth-surface. There is then to be distinguished a term "land" the reference-subject of which is of the same physical content as that of the other, but which has a particular character, in its entire content of reference, of being possessible by, or accessible to, human beings, or at least of ascertainable existence: whether humanly usable or not, or used or not, the thing signified by this term "land" is a *quantity,* and a quantity considered in relation to human needs and interests, including those of knowledge.

The term "land" as focused in its signification upon *quantity,* and quantity not as generalized mass but mass of a particular formation and localized extent, and of a particular identity in special human frames of reference, is subject to conversion by the addition of a modifier into special-term uses—as, "marshland," "badlands," "tableland," "highlands," "meadowland," etc.—while, alternatively, and generally, it carries, simply in the form "land," a special connotation according to an "understood" frame of reference. In "good land," for instance, agricultural utility is the recognizable terminological point of view. Or, "land" spoken in a certain environment of commercial reference has automatically the identity of "real estate." "A piece of land" signifies a piece of real estate, or a piece of land considered in variable connections of property or utility interest. But where "land" is used in geographical specification, as, body of "land," this "land" is the word that is focused, in its signification, upon the solid mass, the general undifferentiated compact constituent of Earth-surface.

There is a "land" close in linguistic location to "country"—the word "country" that makes reference to a recognized unit of human habitation, of primary political rank. We shall not pause here over the peculiarities of difference in signification between this "country" and a distinguishable third "land"; or over the peculiarities of signification-difference between a word (term) "country" of some closeness in linguistic location to the second "land" here pondered on. Of stronger pertinence to the necessarily limited range of considerations of "things" coming under this chapter's head of Things-of-Earth, is the word "ground"—found treated in dictionaries and other word-books in synonymic or near-synonymic connection with "land" (but, though associated with "land" definitionally in Webster dictionaries, given no identity of thing-of-Earth reference in the Webster Book of Synonyms—in which,

also, there is utter absence of any separate "land" entry). We shall try to put the word "ground," as a term distinctively comprising Earth-reference in its signification, into lexicographical perspective, in special relation to the second "land" here cited.

"Ground"—the particular term "ground" that is being here considered—seems to have, in its Teutonic origination, and further Anglo-Saxon career, the peculiarity of being a two-words-in-one linguistic entity of the order noted by Coleridge (see our Chapter 18) as subject in general linguistic developments to what he called "desynonymization." That is, the ancestral "ground" ("ground" in its ancestral linguistic forms) combined reference to a general "that-which-is-under" and reference to a vaguely particularized thing "that-which-is-supportively-under-us-in-our-being-on-Earth." The word indeed became desynonymized to a certain extent. A word distinctively concerned with the character "bottomness" or "underneathness" emerged without reference to Earth-things, or human Earth-circumstance. And there emerged a not quite distinctively individual word "ground" of some force of Earth-reference lying indeterminately between that of our second "land" and that of "earth" (the term "for" the material), with some force also, of reference to, or emphasis on, the matter of bottomness, underneathness, etc. A nautical term "ground" exists of unambiguous reference to undersea *land*. There is no term "ground," however, of logical associability with "land" as a general term.

The force of Earth-reference in "ground," the "ground" other than that of mere underneathness-reference, is identifiable only as concerned with an expanse of surface-of-Earth material of identified locality, considered in its character of being underfoot to human presence in its locality or otherwise subject to human presence upon it as in underneath position to it. Since the subject of reference of this "ground" is something much more particularized than that of "land"—is, indeed, of markedly localized placement—there is caught within the signification a reference to the make-up of the expanse: it is an expanse under close-up conditions of identification. Therefore, there is an evocation of possible or actual earth, the material, earth, as within the content of the term's signification—because of the intimate quality of the reference, as compared with that of the reference of "land." But one might call the suggestion of earth-material that this "ground" makes, or can make, a hypothesis of sentiment or mental habit, because of the stress of importance, practical and emotional, commonly put upon the fact of earth, the material, as the humanly critical component of the solid compact surface-extent of the Earth. Where, then, does one "place" this "ground" on the linguistic map? There would be no reasonable placement for it except as a term of a subordinate standing to and indirect connection with the second "land" here distinguished were it not for the existence of the word "terrain," which is concerned also with solid

Earth-surface areas of limited expanse and with the localized aspects of the character of such areas. The terminological viewpoint of "terrain" is quite different from that of "ground," but both terms in their viewpoint are in close-up position to the subject of reference.

Before leaving this term "ground," on which we have dwelt beyond our anticipations, a peculiarity in the use of the term ought to be recorded—since we have gone this far into the case of it. This is its adaptation, occasioned by the element of indeterminateness in its signification, to uses in which the subject of reference is of non-Earthly location, as, in description of, or commentary on, the setting of feet on surface-areas of the Moon. Oddity of vocabularistic transference would be more acute in the use of "terrain" with subjects of reference of Moon-location. But all analogical language is to some extent dislocated language.

There are many terms in the linguistic areas into which we have been looking exploratively that we must leave unevaluated here as to their "place" in the general region of things-of-the-Earth, and the particular connections of each with, or disconnections of each from, others of some proximity of placement. But indications of our view of the kind of problems these would raise in the kind of lexicographical treatment we recommend, and of possible linguistically logical modes of dealing with them, may have future usefulness, and be of immediate useful interest to readers. There is, for instance, a group of numerous geographical terms generally orientated to the general term "land" which properly stands to it as comprising varied reference to land-formations the character of which is in relation to their *adjacency* to waters of the Earth-surface.

We are moved to interpolate here, homiletically, that, as with the words proper of the language, the knowledge of them, with lexicographical assistance, as existing in an orderly state of distribution, according to linguistically natural principles of logical relation and distinction of function, is the strongest assurance of intelligently successful, happy, use of them, so, in the case of terms, and especially in that of such ones as those on which we are here commenting, the knowing of them, the *learning* of them as they have their place in the language's total distributive order, has an importance in linguistic knowledge and education of high intellectual degree. Terms, in their adjunctive relation to words proper, bring values of *factual point* into the general scope of language, where *logical point* is the ubiquitous guardian of rationality. Terms, recognized as such in their use (as indeed they have been intuitively, in their general use, until recent times, when there began to be aggrandizement of them into false importance, as vehicles of *meaning*), place all the diverse factualities of human experience under the rational discipline of linguistic scrutiny; under such scrutiny, the very claim of terms to factual validity undergoes

judgement, their part in the language is duly evaluated—authenticated or perceived to be weak, irregular or factitious, according to the uses for which they are individually designed.

To look a little, now, into some cases of geographical terms orientated to the term "land," terms, as we have said, of varied reference to land-formations the identified character of which is in relation to their adjacency to waters of the Earth.

4.

There will be found little possibility of tidy assortment of the "land"-orientated terms into terminological neighborhoods. They tend to disparateness, in having for subjects things that are the accidental consequences of natural processes, and in generally not occurring in variations of form notable as differences of kind. "Continent," the largest geographical land-particularization, stands alone. "Mainland" is a name, indicating always a *certain* great land-mass across water from one or more smaller land-masses of sufficient proximity to it to constitute with it and the intervening and environing waters a distinct geographical unit—of which it is the major land-feature. One can roam vocabularistically, at this point, in at least several directions.

"Coast" singles itself out as the sea-facing edge of all land-bodies touched by open sea. "Littoral" takes its place here as both a noun and adjective form, its terminological emphasis being upon sea-bordering land as a *region*. The adjective "coastal" tends towards emphasis on the fact of land-water contiguity. There are the coastal features "headland" and "promontory." These are not to be treated as a pair of words existing in a relation of distinction of meaning to each other: "headland" is a large projection from a stretch of coast, dominating the scene of it; "promontory" is an elevated and outjutting corner of land in a coastline. Somewhere, in the consideration of words that are vocabularistic fixtures in the terminological area of which "coast" is the key fixture, determinations as to the linguistic function of "shore" and "beach" and "strand," relative to that of "coast," are in order. We shall here limit our comment to a pointing out that the thing-subject of "shore" is a portion of the edge of a water-facing stretch of land marginal to the water; also, that the stretch of land may or may not be coastal (*sea*-facing), and that the extent denoted is of localized reference (thus, where it is desired to denote continuous extent, the plural "shores" is employed). "Beach" particularizes a condition of the hem of a length of shore produced by water-action, the characteristic beach-surface being that of shelving sand, or shingle or other detritus-formations. "Strand" has had a long and substantial career of refer-

ence to the water-washed rim of land bordering on water. But it is now little used, and, where used, is used hardly with force of distinct signification; it became transformed in later usage into a term of indefinitely picturesque suggestiveness.

In the company of things that belong peculiarly to the nature of coasts, there are recurrent shapes of a certain type that variations in the development of coastal outlines produce. "Cape" and "peninsula" are terms making reference to two examples of such coastal peculiarities, these found in sufficient number in the geographical world, and with sufficient conformity in shape-character, to be suitable term-subjects. The terms are not linked in any relationship of interreference of difference in signification; they are linked, simply, in their falling within the vocabularistic sub-regions occupied by terms concerned with things coastal as belonging to the general area of things of *land* pertinence. To "cape" and "peninsula," as referring to protrusive shapes of differing types found on coasts, would have to be added "isthmus," the subject of which, however, is of a type differing from both. An isthmus-protrusion does not verge upon water, and it is only viewable as a protrusion when viewed from either one of the two constituents that it links; viewed as in itself a land-entity, rather than as a coastal peculiarity, its thing-identity is of the type of a connective. "Neck," which is a companion-term to "isthmus," is definitively suggestive of protrusion, with the connective aspect of minor stress, a neck being characteristically of narrower breadth than an isthmus—"neck," indeed, is capable of special use as denoting the tapering end of a peninsula that "is" viewable as a connective to a land-body distinct from that of which the peninsula is a protrusive part. "Strait," which in both its singular and plural form has vocabularistic identity as a term denoting a small but elongated stretch of water between two land-bodies, acting as a connective between two water-bodies, has a separate identity as a term denoting a narrow land-connective spanning the distance between two large bodies of land existing in proximity to each other. (But use of the latter is rare.)

A term of both land and water reference, that is, a term split into two terms, one of land, one of water, reference, in its land-denotation vocabularistically associable with "cape" and "peninsula," is the rare word "bight." Its subject is a type of encounterable coastline-peculiarity marked by a bend-like shape. In the "bight" of water reference, the bent shape is inverted: it denotes a *water* shape. This "bight," also rare, is of the same terminological area as "bay." The utility of this "bight" as a differentiation from "bay" is in the implication it carries of shallowness—the indentation made by a bight having no depth-producing sharpness. (The term can have, thus, serviceability as denoting an indentation in the shore of a bay.) "Bay," of course, has for subject an extension of open water into a wide-mouthed coastal recess.

A glance into the vocabularistic area of terms concerned with water-filled land-recesses brings a miscellaneous several into sight. "Cove" has for subject a water-filled recess marked by smallness, out-of-the-way-ness, a nice protectedness of situation. "Inlet" denotes exterior water penetration into inland water. "Creek" makes reference to a mere channelling of exterior waters inland. The inversion of shape-characterization from land-view to water-view may perhaps be thought of as coming to a stop with the term "estuary," which deals with the peculiarity of outward-coursing inland (river) water meeting with penetrating exterior (tidal) water. "Harbor," "port," "haven," insist themselves as having a composite land-water reference. But the actuality probably is that these are not, properly speaking, geographical terms, but nautical terms, denoting places serving by their combined land and water features the needs of ships, with "port" perhaps better describable as a maritime term, the place of reference being one providing departure and terminal facilities for ship-traffic. Where these belong on the linguistic map need not be treated as a problem requiring strict decisiveness. They are colored with human practices and uses, are not of the simple white-and-black of geographical identity that characterizes things of Earth of coastal locality or other land-and-water situation: they are, in relation to the general geographical terms, special terms, and, so long as they are recognized as such, the question of their vocabularistic position is of no linguistic urgency.

It should be noted that while the term "continent" (the same holding for the name "mainland") comes directly under the head of "land," it itself heads or leads into no area of cognate terms. "Island" is no terminological relative of it, for instance, but itself just (as is "continent") a term of independent so-to-speak regional location in the things-of-land area (land as the subject of the particular term "land" here being made a theme of vocabularistic exploration). "Island" has some company of attendant variants, historical and geographical; but none of these involves a case of difference of signification calling for a special knowledge of it in relation to "island," for accurate use of that term (or of itself). All, with "island," have for subject an area of land that, bounded entirely by water, constitutes a physically distinct land-unit; and all besides "island" are definable as of island identity, with an incidental qualification related to an idiosyncratic characteristic—one not qualifying the island-identity itself. Thus, "isle" confines the island-reference to an island having some marked feature or features of strangeness, in relation to the common character, of islands, of ordinary attribution. The case may be one of strangeness merely in an island's being designated as an isle because of having historical identity as such by antique terminology. Or, the strangeness implied in the use of "isle" might be that of rare beauty of scenic nature, the term having a special rhetorical force; or, where the term is used with a special rhetorical force, the

strangeness implied might be that of mysterious happenings associated with the island of reference, or of mysterious nature presumed from report or a mere fact of unbroached remoteness. The diminutive "islet" is somewhat a rhetorical convention. Such curiosities as "ait" or "eyot" and "key" are, of course, regional vocabularistic peculiarities, and, as is likely to be the case with special regional terms signifying "island," smallness is no feature of the signification, the regional island-type being necessarily of variedly minor size.

5.

Perhaps enough has been suggested as to the broad field of subjects of reference that come under the head of the term "land" to endow the name "Earth" here with associations of widespread areas of firm surface. Water shares with land the character of constituting Earth-surface. But it is "land" that voices sense of being "on Earth"—or "on earth": "water" voices, more, where it is occupied as earth-surface, a sense, just, of being "on water."

We have now established, here, a vocabularistic milieu in which the terms having for subject the kinds of material varyingly characteristic of land as the characteristic form of Earth-surface substance can be factually differentiated in general linguistic perspective. First, of course, comes the constituent-material found upon the exposed layer of Earth's land-surface that is most intimately associated with the all-environing fact of Earth: this is the material termed "earth." The material earth can be reasonably thought of as representing to human beings the portion of Earth-substance in which is concentrated Earth's most precious provision for their surviving existence. But what "is" *earth*—the material termed "earth"? It is a composite of weathered land-material, such as rock-particles, and detritus of live growth; and, as the detritus of growth builds into material increasingly supportive of vegetal growth, "earth" denotes stages in the process of the material's becoming full-bodiedly itself. To an extent, thus, earth is a component of earth—earth is, to an extent, self-producing. The definitional problem posed by the variable character, the reference to phases of development of substances into the material earth, should be fairly easily resolvable by the identification of the material in relation to land, then by the characterization of it in terms of its physical state (as, for instance, crumbly, loose-textured but compactible), and then, by indication of this material's being termable "earth" at progressive stages of its amalgamation into a distinctly differentiable material, stages in which its composition in respect to its vegetation-supporting properties varies greatly.

In "soil," the vocabularistic list of Things of the Earth has a term supplementary to "earth" that particularizes earth of a mellowed state, suitably measurable therefore as to its composition as a vegetation-producing medium, and

also as to the degree of its fertility. "Humus" has supplementary connection with either earth or soil, but a more terminologically correct connection with the latter, as a substance consisting of decayed vegetable or other "organic" matter permeating *soil;* there is no linguistic bar, however, to thought of humus as present in *earth.* The term "mould," which had antique employability as generalizing *earth* as substance of *ground,* is in signification a variant of "humus," but with some of its antique denotation of undifferentiated earthy-material lingering in it. That is, its subject is definitively a kind of soil, not just a component of soil: soil termed "mould" is a spongy kind of soil, composed largely of, or chiefly of, decayed matter.

It should be understood that the area of the linguistic map in which such terms as these have place is, the wide geographical distribution of their subjects notwithstanding, not a linguistically spacious area: spread of vocabularistic space, on the linguistic map, is found where numbers of words are congregated in rational associations and interassociations of meaning with each other and one another, in varying degrees, immediate and somewhat distant, of logical impingement of meaning on meaning. With these words that have for subjects *things*—that, for all the factual interassociability of them, do not exist in any rational order of thinkability, as do the subjects of words that mean rather than *make reference,* but only in a state of factual (or, as with some kinds of terms, mentally accidental or coincidental) propinquity—one has a concentration of them in one vocabularistic area without intellectual interaction between them. This might be called a vocabularistically reasonable conjunction of words, as distinct from a linguistically rational one.

From consideration of terms detailing the character of earth or soil material, one passes easily to terms of a broader categorical force. There is, for instance, "clay," the subject of which is a type of earthy material of a special practical importance among the types of this found generally distributed upon Earth's land-surface, the specifiable distinguishing feature of which is a textural peculiarity: it is a natural earthy product that, softened by water, has massed and hardened into a dense, smooth, adhesive, plastically manipulatable substance. "Loam" is an intermixture of clay, sand and humus that has developed into a fine, rich soil. (Antiquely, "loam" signified just mere earth in moist, clayey mass or, crudely, earth in massed condition; and there were pre-modern terms "loam" of technical signification, referring to materials of special composition, of earth in part, the rest variable, the whole workable, for certain uses.) "Loess" has place in this vocabularistic area as a special term subordinately supplementary to "loam": it makes reference to the geological origin of loam recognizable as having a history reaching back into a former age, as having become deposited by a prolonged action of wind or water.

Somewhere in this area—placed in no position of formal linguistic con-

nection with any other terms having vocabularistic location in it, but as "there" by the area's pattern of vocabularistic differentiation between substances and materials of accidentally developed differences in physical identity—"sand" is to be looked for, of course: which, having for subject a land-material consisting of fine particles of worn rocks and other hard substances of natural origin, raises question, incidentally, of the placement of "rock" and "stone," and associable terms (as, such special terms as "marble," "granite," and terms referring to individualized things, as *a* rock, *a* stone, a boulder, a cobble, a pebble). "Rock," certainly, is rather easily identifiable as referring to a thing that, besides being marked by a hardness and solidity that is with difficulty differentiable from the physical constitution of the thing *stone,* exists in masses that penetrate to varying depths, some very far down, below Earth-surface. We shall not, cannot, here, experimentally anticipate many of the multifarious ramifications of the Things-Of-Earth region of the language. As with all occupants of terminological spaces on the linguistic map, terms of that region occupy their special areas in concentration, in some instances in very high concentration; generally, they are not disposed in the spatial spread characteristic of word-occupancy of place on the linguistic map—they exist linguistically in such quasi-accidental proximity of association that many, in some areas, are to be comprehended as cupboarded stocks of the general terminological stock of the area of their placement.

Beyond what might be called mathematical problems of terms-placement (where all is crowded, as in dealing with things numerical), there are problems of terms-placement, seeming to emanate from them, in which linguistic questions of logicality in placement raise their heads. For instance, what is the proper linguistic abode of terms that differentiate the "precious" and "semi-precious" *stone* substances? Are these locked within the Things-Of-Earth status? What bridges or roads from the terminological quarter of "stone" does language provide—if any—for the knowledge, the vocabularistic ordering, of these particular derivatives of stone-material as materials of *gems,* under a linguistic allocation of them to a region in which they might have natural rational residence within a "jewel" order-of-things within a larger order-of-things prized for attributed value? A question as to allocation in connection with the terminology of adornment-detail comes into view, beyond these others. And, in pursuing these trails of vocabularistic ordering, one will have come to mind necessarily such considerations as: "Are or are not the words 'gem' and 'jewel,' which can seem in one light straight words between which a logical distinction, rather than factual difference, exists, themselves terms?"

We turn from prospective consideration of the kind lurking in the problems we have sketched as leading on from some of those that we have been immediately examining to consideration of two words we have here been us-

ing in quite close conjunction, that exemplify this insinuation of problems of word-identification outside a vocabularistic area under exploration, calling for some special consideration from one by reason of their special part in the considerations of central interest of the moment. Perhaps readers have themselves felt the insistence of a question about the words "material" and "substance," repeatedly used here, in our treating of various things-of-Earth terms?

We interrupt our investigation of the areas occupied by things-of-Earth terms to explain our idea of the course of lexicographical progress in the learning of the meanings of the words of the language, where the knowledge-process is viewed—as we view it—as a necessarily unified process, everywhere coherent with itself. What, then, with such a conception of the possibilities of exact linguistic knowledge, of the apparently inevitable incidental inexactitude in the knowledge at least of some words (of the meanings of some words, the signification of some terms), as the lexicographical labors of our envisagement go their slow way towards ultimate complete definitional correctness, involving every word of the language? As to "material" and "substance": had we established to our confidence in our use of these words that we were using them with fair correctness, choosing them, now one, now the other, according to logically justified anticipations of what they would be found to mean in a completed, perfected, lexicography?

To speak generally: we believe that a lexicography that follows such principles as we have enunciated will never cease in the effort of provision for exact knowledge of words. It is an irremediable defect of lexicography as we have it that it aims at a modicum of definitional accuracy for the lexicographer, and of exactitude of word-knowledge for the dictionary-user—at a provision of pieces of word-knowledge: it *stops* everywhere at the level of the modicum. And so there is, and there has been, not increase in exact knowledge of words from the services of lexicography, but *decrease*. Where an aim of full definitional accuracy enters into lexicographical endeavor, and is a permanent element of its practice (so that the practice is a continuously sustained combination of progress and review on the basis of the progress), preoccupation with the meanings of words will not be fastened to an objective of reaching a determination of meanings at which to *stop*. The minds of lexicographers and those of dictionary-users have the same basic human need of complete knowledge of words.

To speak particularly: we have used "material" and "substance" here without having performed a special labor of definitional speculation on their meanings, preceded by an operation of linguistic placement of them; we have only proceeded, with them, as speakers of a language do at all points, if they are moved to use its words to the best of their knowledge of them, trusting to the mind's instincts of judgement in the immediate case, in which perfection must

be treated as lying ahead. Is there not a lesson connectible with such cases as to the matter of perfectionism? One hears this person or that described as "a perfectionist." The characterization tends to fall, and not improperly so, between admiration and criticism of the person: dedication to the *practice* of perfection can narrow the purpose to a fixed formulation of the content of perfection. Those who believe in the *possibility* of perfection may be said to practise a "policy" of perfection: this leaves the way open for unlimited opportunities of attainment of the perfect. In our uses of "material" and "substance" (as in all our uses of words in this book), we regard ourselves as, and mean to be understood as, attempting no more than to practise a "policy" of—or a belief in the possibility of—perfection (of knowledge of words, for the perfection of the use of them).

Although, in our use of "material" and "substance," as with most of the words we use in the composition of this book, we have proceeded without benefit of special pains-taking to know these words as they might be known under the light of intensive lexicographical examination, we have not been careless with the burdens we have put upon them in our use of them in our probing the possibilities of exactitude in the knowledge of certain other words. Consciousness of the burdens that have fallen upon words in our advancing the general premises of our argument has been at least as strong an element of our sense of intellectual responsibility as awareness of the scrupulosities of prudence called for in our subjecting of chosen words to limited lexicographical clarification. As people learn their language with continued increase in knowledge of it as their general human seriousness increases, know its problems of right use the more they speak it in attentive application to what they are doing, so, in our maturing in this book to the lessons in language contained in language, we have been teachers to ourselves, along the way, in many things linguistic.

We have not used the words "material" and "substance" in unwittingness of ever-imminent possibilities of linguistic error, and potentialities of correctness beyond the impromptu ease of casual use. Without consulting the linguistic map, in thought of travelling to an area in which "matter," "substance," "material," "stuff," exist with some logical interconnection (and identifying different words "matter" and different words "material," and "stuff"), we took some bearings for rationally congruous use of "material" and "substance" in homologous contexts. "Substance" we construed as expressing a distinction in which was concerned something viewable as elementarily constituting itself. We did not spell out such a distinction to ourselves in articulate definitional style, only looked in the direction of a distinction; we left ourselves to the mercy of a process of self-instructive sensitivity—a process such as all speakers of a language ought to trust to in their states of varyingly

incomplete linguistic instructedness. "Material" we construed, in a like spirit of informal redressing of indefinitive knowledge, as expressing a distinction in which was concerned something viewable as of a self-cohering composition.

In our construing of "material," we were aware of the problem of close relationship between "material" and "matter," with the adjective "material" being, even, the adjectival function of "matter"; and of a certain difference of meaning-value in "material" from "matter" by which the meaning of the former is centered to consideration of the particular character of an entity as being of a self-cohering composition and the meaning of the latter to consideration of its particular character as an entity as being of a self-perpetuating or self-sustaining constitution. Our speculations in the direction of definitiveness of knowledge of these meanings indicated to us that "matter" and "substance" stood in a closer relation of distinction than "material" and "substance." But our bearings-getting for our use of "material" and "substance" was only a little short of the hastily experimental. We paused to check privately upon our employment of our verbal material at that point just long enough to steady ourselves, in the particular expression-circumstance, in our course of study of the possibilities of general linguistic correctness.

Perhaps some mathematical terminology can be usefully applied to the predicaments of emergency-attention to problems of decision as to what words mean in which all users of words of honorable linguistic attention find themselves, in varying frequency and in varying degrees of urgency felt. There figures, in modern mathematical theory, question of "probability," speculation as to the "distribution of error," calculations as to the extent of reliance possible on presumable limitations of error in mathematical plottings of probability, emblematized in a "curve of error" of various types. The principles of language differ from the principles of mathematical reasoning in that the reasonable mode of plotting linguistic determinations, in the midst of incomplete certainty as to the finalities in any area of report or judgement, would be describable as a curve of correctness; and the field of variations between certainty and uncertainty in determination-possibilities would be, for linguistic evaluation, more truly describable in terms of distribution of correctnesses than in those of distribution of errors.

Actually, the mathematical and the linguistic problems of exactitude are not metaphorically or technically comparable. There is no unity in the field of effort of exactitude, in mathematics; it is a field limited to partial exactitude, perpetually incomplete correctness, a field of delimited fields which do not, cannot, "add up," because the very basis of evaluation in it is a division of it as a field of indeterminacy into limited fields of possibilities of exactitude. Linguistic problems of exactitude are referrible to unitarian principles of evaluation: language presumes a whole, a field of implicit and ultimately complete

explicit evaluative determinacy. At any moment within this field as inhabited in the very employment of language, the users of words must hold themselves to be where correctness is the model of what language makes anticipatable.

6.

How far has our interruption of the chapter's travel among English terms concerned with things of the Earth strayed from their verbal domain on the linguistic map? Where, after the turning to consider the words "material" and "substance," incidentally used in our lexicographical visiting of things-of-the-Earth term-areas, and, then, a moving about at large in consideration of the question of the degree of exactitude of knowledge with which words can be used in settings of linguistic knowledge and practice in which much of the underlying linguistic objective of final exactitude must be left in unfinal resolution, is the location-point of this chapter's thematic interest now? In such examination as we made of "material" and "substance," one is not intellectually or practically far from anywhere on the linguistic map. While words have their domiciliary quarters in spatial, quantitative, distribution on the linguistic map, their distinctive individual linguistic nativity, each, they are to be thought of in their membership in the language that is the world of their functional life as acting their parts anywhere, everywhere, in it, according to the calls of need of them. One can hardly talk of a certain number of words of the language without talking of many. And one can hardly talk of words at all without talking of, considering, the general nature of language, with which every word must be in some manner affected.

The attention given to "material," "substance," and "matter," "stuff," cannot but extend itself to question of the verbal character of these, of such, words. They appear here as words proper, as true words, in the midst of an examination of words that are, according to our principle of classification of words, *terms*—verbal forms of other than prime linguistic character that are incorporated into a language and subjected to its functional conditions, but remain, in their essential linguistic character, extraneities, contributing to the factual content of complete utterances but not to their logical sufficiency. It should strengthen readers' grasp of the diversity of problems that come within the scope of the total problem of knowledge of words, and, thus, grasp of the requirements of such knowledge, to look off from the little world of terms concerning the things of Earth to a word-area to which other than terminological considerations seem to be pertinent.

To the utility of this digression might be added that of a consideration of whether there may be a word, or words, of terminological character among those which we have been treating as of word-proper character. We are not

going to prolong the digression by probing into this possibility, but the raising of it should yield some illumination. The linguistic panorama of words holds more to be perceived than has been perceived in the light of the linguistic interest and knowledge that it has been customary to regard as intellectually adequate. (That light has become dingier and dingier: what is it but the light of common linguistic intelligence blotched with lexicographical and literary opacities, and dulled in itself with indifference, of various causes in general human vagaries of "development?" And the perceptions as to the nature of things linguistic by the light employed in the explorations conducted under the auspices of the sciences of linguistics are creations of an x-ray-like penetration: the things-linguistic "perceived" are anatomical conformations of portions of the linguistic body from which diagnoses are "read" for the construction of ideas of the whole body, and the whole in functional liveness. What can such ideas be but products of scientific fantasy?)

If one turns landward-inward from the great water-bodies, one is confronted with unit after unit of terminology, each, likely, thick with words that note points, places, forms, of land. Things of water figure among the things of land, things of water lying inland, which can be counted geographically, if not physically, as things of the land-surface of Earth. Mere stretches of land, large and small, have their terms of calling. These make no tidy pattern of detail. "Area," "region," "tract," are very loosely associated, as terms denoting land-space; "lot" and "plot" probably need to be treated as special terms in connection with "area." Some specifications of difference will be more definitive than others; the variety of terms, here (and this is common to terms), will manifest variety in the character of their significations as between lesser and greater particularizing force possessed. "Patch" and "expanse" require attached particularizing. "Field" wavers between the status of a vocabularistically self-sufficient term and that of a term requiring the addition of a qualification, or contextual implication of one.

"Belt," "bog," "bottom," are recognized special terms supplementary to "tract," all of vivid evocative specificness—the tract of homogeneous land very favorable agriculturally in its conditions, the tract of sunken land choked with sodden humus; the tract of alluvial land in a river-basin. And "barren," with its special indication of sparse, stunted vegetation, should be added to these. "Plain," "prairie," "plateau," "table-land," take one from concern with tracts to concern with expanses. And then there are the terminologies of the elevations and the declivities: mountains, hills, hillocks, knolls, banks, all subjects of special calling. (There are several "bank" terms, one pertaining to land shelving up in waters near a coast, perhaps making company with "reef" and "bar.") And "butte"?—a form of regional use, pertaining to steep, starkly outlined land-forms rising in a single mass from the environing terrain: this surely

should be gathered to "mountain," "hill," etc. But "bank," it is likely, should be gathered to "cliff" and "bluff," rather than to "mountain," "hill," etc. As to declivities, and Earth-surface rifts: "valley," and older "vale," refer to depressions of gentle outline. With "gully," terms that concern declivity, fall in land surface, begin to move into significations of sharp outline, as, "gorge," and the regional "canyon," and "ravine"—to the awesome suggestions of "chasm," with its denotation of gaping cavity penetrating deeply into the *earth*, and to the awful implications of "abyss," which takes imagination towards fearful, unearthly, depths.

It should have become plain to readers, in this chapter, how, in the terminological regions of a language, the language, one can go on and on, to very large accumulations of words, with no expansion in the total meaning-content of the language. All is, in these regions, particularization upon particularization. Even the main terms of a language, that is, the terms that are heads of categorical particularization, are themselves specificatory detail within the entire linguistic frame of meanings. Even the main terms, that generalize some particular area of the features of the great diversity of the material of experience that is rationally embraced within the meaning-orderings of language, do not frequently justify themselves as words that develop the *logical* sufficiency of language to the material of experience-content towards which language acts as the mind's instrument (for the intellectual control of it). People have been so much exposed in these times to talk of "new" words, and the "change" factor in linguistic development, that the truth of the thesis (which inheres in the argument of this book) that language is no collection of words but has an organic identity—that each individual language is born with the functional (i.e., rational) potentialities requisite for logical sufficiency—will be for many, presumably, difficult to incorporate in the perspective of their customary view of language.

Two possible contradictory deductions may be made from consideration of such an agglomeration of terms as that to which those concerning the things of Earth belong. One is: How could the language dispense with these words? The other is: But if these words, and all of terminological sort, are words that do not mean, only bring certain *things* into the field of intellectual attention, is not the employment of the language, with speakers of it availing themselves of such words in free exercise of their sense of vocabularistic need, extensively affected by the integration of these "meaningless" words into the logical formulations of speech, and writing—and in the first place, in thought itself? The deducible possibility of such contradiction is resolved, we think, in the strength of language's fidelity to, discipline of, itself, in all the occasions of its employment. The term takes language-space, *is* part of the linguistic expression. But the space, its part, if there is fidelity to the employed language and

discipline of mind maintained in its employment, will be no usurper of the meaning-force of the expression, but, in the particular use, supportively strengthen it. The linguistic validity of a word, a word proper, is a constant, is in its meaning. The linguistic validity of a term is always dependent on the manner of its use in the particular occasion of it: it must be fitted into the immediate expression in such a manner that it does no more than contribute to the particularity of the meaning of the context, does not determine it, influence its sense-course.

7.

For conclusion of this chapter, we shall look to two terms that suggest themselves in connection with "earth" (the familiar material of the Earth's land-surface), but that, by the lowly status of their subjects as things, hardly seem worthy of the vocabularistic rating of "things of the Earth." But, is it not well to close this inspection of a single general terminological section of the English vocabulary, one providing a complex illustration of the character of the words that pertain to things, to entities that are of no meaning themselves in the catalogue of realities, with words pertaining to things of lowly, indeed lowliest, status among the things of Earth? For Earth, which is reverenceable as the human place of being, is also, as the site of the physical engendering of human beings, a materiality out of which they have had to extract themselves: the humble fact of this is a sobering element of the dignity of being human. The dust of Earthly createdness clings to, still falls from the beautiful reality of human identity. Sense of the dirt of the formless human condition, the being something that is yet nothing, no one, of no reality of self, weighs still in the scales of human appetency, as fear's preference of body to soul, should life constitute a choice between them.

"Dirt" and "dust" have so much variety of reference-use in the entire contextual scope of language, and are so much verbal commonplaces of utterance, that the identification of them as mere terms must seem at first against reason and against the nature of the words' subjects as things, against, even, the nature of things. Are not dirt and dust of such a general character as to be, along with many other things that our rule of differentiation between words and terms would make subjects of terms, entitled to be thought of as, almost, universals? Do not the words "dirt," "dust," rise towards the level of main propositions of human consciousness? How much of human aesthetic and moral, besides hygienic, discrimination the word "dirt" comprises within its connotative frame! And is there not represented in "dirt" also an aspect of the material "earth" as viewed from the position of a superiority of human nature presumed to inhere in a spiritual separation of human beings, in identity, from

the gross victual of their mortality? Is not "dirt" a word having meaning in various scales of value, even in its most concrete character, as a version of "earth," infused with a conception of life-on-Earth as concentrating, in the human form of the earthly generation of beings, a paradox of extremes? The dark-colored, free-lying, common, characteristic material of Earth, exposed to the wet and wear of weather, lost to care, the essence of the least in worth: *dirt?* And the essence of the most in worth, that is of no content and yet is, so integrate as to be perfectly pure, itself only, being and life the same, in it: *spirit?*

And the word "dust"? Does not the subject of it, debris of earth reduced to extremely fine dispersible particles, or, do not the subjects of another "dust," aggregated inert material, similarly reduced, impinge on a question of the nature of existence itself? Has not "dust" as a term specifically evocative of earth in a reduced state, or as a term of reference to a generalized state of reducedness of something from substantiality, been one of the most solemn, and mournful, of figures of depiction of the impermanence of life? If it is but a word that has no *meaning,* only a *signification,* what is to be said of the *significance* that the thing dust has in human meditation on the mortality of the bodily form of life, in which the meditating mind speaks its supra-mortal sense of the meaning of life through the meanings of words? What can the word that merely signifies contribute to the distillation of meaning from meanings? What of the things that words merely signify, do not mean, according to the argument of this book: do they exist only in an outer circle of unimportances, things of circumstance, known as individual items of experience, actual or imagined, things that the words by which they are counted in a language's vocabularistic number designate for the mind's attention, in the course of the main processes of linguistic expression? Are such things not real things, not linguistically real? Are the *meant* things, that are entities of reasoned thought, individualized for the uses of thought-expression, alone the essential realities for language, and for human life, which functions by language?

Is the world of language a world of abstraction, are its realities of an inner circle in which nothing but "meaning" dwells? What of the reality of the things that are just *things,* tangibles or objectively identifiable designatables: is all that is classifiable as "concrete," by a gigantic division of all things into two kinds, a linguistic fiction? The classification "abstract" and "concrete" is a gigantic mockery of the nature of reality, and of language itself. The case is, precisely, that "things" have a false look of being either "concrete" or "abstract" when words are treated as being all of one kind—as having, all, "meanings": this results in a differentiation between meanings as of the two kinds—abstract and concrete—with the so-called "abstract" words viewed as constituting an outer circle inhabited by things only formally real, metaphysicalities, and the "concrete" words as constituting an inner circle inhabited by

inarguably real, physically describable or corroboratable things. The meaning-range of a language, which is distributed among its words proper, has no verbal outer ring of verbalized space: the very words that we describe as signifying, *not* meaning, and pronounce to be of a verbal sub-class, *terms,* have their location within the language's meaning-range. They take vocabularistic space, but do not take meaning-space. No matter how great the accumulation of them, in the verbal content of a language, it undergoes no enlargement in its meaning-range, no increase in meanings, through them.

The things that are subjects of terms have the common attribute of quantity, but this is not translatable into the common attribute of the things that are the subjects of words proper, which is meaning. The things that are the subject of words *are* the words' meanings: this is their value. But the things signified by terms are of no value in themselves, are by reason's measure nothing, whatever they amount to quantitatively; what value they may have is derived from connection with the operations of reason performed with words proper. Language is the mind's evaluative system, and what is not evaluatable by reason's measure is nevertheless brought within the scope of human understanding. The things that stand, for the mind, outside that scope, by their character of accidental existence, of circumstantial, quantitative, reality only, are nevertheless recognized as existing because they exist in some manner within that scope: language must somehow digest the *fact* of them. And so the facts, or factual postulates, that are the subjects of terms *do* take, *are* given, place of a certain kind in the language-world of meaning, which is the world of human understanding, or the world as inhabited *with* human understanding. But what kind of place *is* this? *Where, for instance, do the things of Earth, which are treated as mere subjects of terms, "come in,"* in such a *linguistic* order of things? They come in under the control of the judgement-values of language, which are values of meaning. Whatever the "size" or factual weight of such things, they are not self-explanatory, self-identifying: what they "are," are in reality, what they "mean," is to be known only through the processes of understanding that function by the valuations of the true words, by *their* meanings.

One might say that the so greatly valuable, materially, the so important, physically, things of the Earth are at the bottom level of the list of the things that typify the problems of human understanding. Indeed, the understanding of them follows from the resolution of those problems: they themselves create no, typify no, special problems of human understanding. This is the linguistic key to the nature of *terms,* and it is at once, also, the human key, the intellectual key, to the nature of *things*—the raw, unmentalized things of bodily cognition. Science, treating of such things as first in the order of the problems of human understanding, cannot but turn the order of human understanding upside down: *they* are made the clues to the nature of reality itself—and *that* path of

knowledge, of the definition of the realities, has no end; it ends even at its beginning points.

What of the attachment of *significance* to, the reading of it into, a thing signified by a word not of the kind that "means"?—the viewing of the thing as possessed of an ulterior signification, as signifying, beyond itself, a "something"? Such "significance" readings are but a verbal ritual compensating for failure, in understanding, of full understanding. The value of the "sense" of the ritual is ephemeral: it will last only so long as the ritual can be performed with some emotional sincerity—and such sincerity must increasingly need the challenge of intellectual sincerity, for minds not to sink into a lethargy in which all the problems of understanding are given over into the controls of verbal ritual. Those who in these times would resurrect the devices of myth as solvers of problems of human understanding seek to replace the intellectual regimen of sincerity with an emotional sincerity artificially induced by intellectual inventions of verbal ritual: this is a sorry episode in the course of human understanding, which has in so much followed the linguistic guide-posts that reason has provided for its development.

Recognition of the difference between words and terms, of language's being constituted of both, and, with this, of a difference between the things that are verbally meant, the things of intellectual experience, and the things that are verbally signified, the things of sensory acquaintance and identity, could contribute much to the dispelling of the philosophy of linguistic knownothingism that has engulfed twentieth-century literateness. Scientific investigators of language invert the linguistic order of values, beginning from a bottom of physical, anthropological, variously terminological, realism that yields no ascent to realities of meaning. From an exploration of the area of linguistic knowledge in which familiarity is established with words the subjects of which are things of the Earth, with these words as recognized terms, there can result not only an elevation of human understanding from the values-debasing confusion of things meant by words, things that are themselves, virtually, meanings, with things that present themselves as incidents of perception, seemingly knowable without being understood: the things of perceptual experience can be encountered in a new freshness of acquaintance with them as their mere actual selves, their identities not obfuscated by emotionally arbitrary and intellectually unsound interpretations.

We have tried, in our exploring of the terminological area in which the things of the earth have linguistic residence, to accord them their full value as things, expressible by indication of the extent to which they are. Given their full value as such, their place in language's story of meaning, which is the rendering of the mind's understanding of its values of knowledge as values of meaning, they will not press the understanding to pronounce as to what they

"are" beyond what they are—not trouble it with problems of determining what they "mean."

If earth is in one aspect of it boldly called "dirt" (initially a term reserved to excrement), and if fleshly matter, in its subjectness to dissolution, is called in pious submissiveness a manufacture of *dust,* these curiosities, and all others attached to the things thingish that, in their kinds, language holds within the scope of thinking consciousness, language will resolve to the illumination of the meaning of human existence and the authentication of the factual integrity of the earthly condition. But the values of meaning that animate language must be allowed to do their work. Language makes Earth the place of truth. And the things-of-earth are things of that place.

CHAPTER 21

*The Grand Difficulty**

1.

There lies ahead of this book, where it is well received—especially, indeed, where it is well received, and even apart from the difficulty of carrying the sense of the book forward in lexicographical tasks, where some, their linguistic imagination having been enliveningly affected by it, feel in themselves a competence for such tasks—a quandary of hope. It will be centered in a hopeful will to act *immediately,* in direct relation to the general practical environment of speaking, and linguistically conducted life in the whole, upon what has been here revealed as to the verbal confusions inveterately settled into acceptance as natural, and the mental confusions closely attendant upon them. What can one do, what can be done extensively—by many, and in many a way, immediately? For instance, could not what is here presented as to the matter of truth be usefully ingested by those in seats of governmental power and responsibility? But alas, there are no short-cuts of persuasion as to the lessons preached in this book, from reading to practical action.

The kind of action that could follow from acquaintance with the book's account of things linguistic is that of a process beginning, everywhere, in steps of difficult, that is, patient and sure, apprehension in the individual mind; then, there must come an indoctrination of the feelings with what the mind newly knows—the steps in which would be, varyingly, mixedly, quick, sometimes hasty, followed by self-retracing to a new point of advance. Then, after such progress of the *person* in a re-acquaintance with language, freshening to sense of the realness of words, as entities of meaning, and to sense of the realness of

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the person, in this activation of the linguistic springs of one's humanity, comes the re-address of oneself to the world of one's human environment. One feels one's thinking and speaking faculties close to acquiring new potencies of application to special areas, forms, or trends of activity, in that world, that one has identified in one's catalogue of judgements as wrong, either in the sense of direct nefariousness or in that of reprehensible intellectual error, before experiencing the surges of new understanding of what words are, and are "for," stirred in one by the reading of this book. But when one has taken the steps and corrected the mis-steps of the private stages of the process of action animated by the new view of the nature of language, and the new kind of acquaintance with self that accompanies it, one has but completed one's introduction of oneself to the difficulty that lies ahead.

When one knows that one wants to do differently, linguistically, to do differently in everything that takes the linguistic form of expression, the desire to relate one's new conception of the linguistic right and wrong to places of life outside oneself will be irresistible. The places that suggest themselves will be varied in kind, localized and general, for some but one field of application, for some several, for some a broad range of categories of human functioning. Very likely, much of the vision of potentialities of application of the newly-perceived language-values to human life at large in its social, political, or other categorically distinguishable public manifestations of itself, will be in the form of wish, and impatient wish, with the moral force of the sense of the possibility of, and the desire for, *doing* drawn a good deal from passions of condemnatory judgement. And it is likely that the transformation of the new perceptions into action—of private understanding into outer good effects—will be seen as an effect to be produced along a straight line of transmission from the private, personal area of understanding to the public quarter viewed as in need of the newly-perceived language-values for clarifying revision of *its* values, whether the persons who envisage the beneficial *doing* envisage themselves as doers, or others as such, in individual or banded action.

None who feel themselves on the brink of possibilities of large-scale practical application of the new linguistic findings, whether as impatient visionaries or candidates of themselves, in their feeling, for attempt to *do*, will envisage the doing as other than *difficult*. But in order to conceive of the quality of the difficulty of the moving out, the transmission, of the new-found illuminations on matters of language from the "private sector" to the public circle of human life, the advocates of action must take great care not to expunge themselves from the total area of conceived-of difficulty. There is no real demarcation between private and public areas in these matters! The difficulty lies within the grand circle of human life as comprising in extent the full extent of each individual human being.

2.

No person whose mind and feelings and hopes have been touched by what has been presented in this book can responsibly leave the scene of himself or herself with attention fixed upon outer areas as capable of reform in faulty parts by visitations of this new, privately experienced linguistic understanding. Neither is this new understanding convertible into a programmatically administratable doctrine, nor is the person whose general understanding has been illuminated by the expository and exemplificatory matter of this book *finished* with the task of inner reform. There are no actual possible steps from inner to outer, no steps of action in *that* sense. Each true forward step of the person will be a step upon personal ground; and the only effect "outside" the person of practically beneficial kind will be in the sensitivity of another person to what is happening on that personal ground as something that might well happen on his or her own personal ground—as a desirable something. There is no way by which the worldly content of human life can be transformed into an all-extensive and all-encircling unity of commitment to truth other than by an *intensification* of personal consciousness and intelligence, within the scope of truth-motivated linguistic action possible to the single human being. Such action is necessarily limited to the ground of individual personal life, but its scope is illimitable in potential effect. There are no stops in the pursuit of a commitment to truth; the intensification, the sustained continuity of the forward steps in this course, will find its "outer" fulfilment in mutual corroborations, in the touching of individual truth-commitments as self-recognizing common ground.

The difficulty in question, then, as to the cleansing of their being by human beings through a cleansing of their linguistic procedures, is that of a reinforcing of one another in a comprehensive purifying of identity of dedication through action performed within the limits of personal scrupulosity. How can such a general attainment of identity of purpose and doing come about without anyone's moving from his, her, personal ground? Only by faithful care of the personal ground will its nature as of common ground be known: the whole human inheritance is nowhere but in each. Only by love of the same thing by all from the place of mind of each, and from the outspread situation of the feelings of each under the mind's watch, only by total verification, reinforcement entire, by itself, of a unity of single dedications, unreduced by contractions of individual ground into scattered sections of human life, can the difficulty of human explicit division and diversity teeming within an implicit necessary fated (and, to intractable self-separation, fatal) ultimate oneness of life-sense, be explicitly overpassed. Only when the same thing is truth to all understanding can the difficulty be forever or ever and ever overpassed. (For,

if it is not that, if it is varyingly something else, or something else called that, there can be only a human shifting from one objective, ideal or dedication to another. For truth alone encompasses containingly all happily conceived human aspiration.)

Is it within the anticipations of this book's view of the future tasks of rectification of human linguistic circumstances that the course of change will be long, protractedly difficult? And what of the part of new lexicographical labors in the interest of such rectification? Are *these*—there being tasks undertaken in continuation of what has been here set forth in an initiative manner—foreseen as of a necessary slow rate of performance, a prolonged, piece-meal accomplishment, in sum more a project of inquiry as to what can be done than a work, however slow the proceeding in it, of progressively self-coherent production?

And is the lexicographical aspect of the future possibilities here envisaged not somewhat at least of the nature of action along lines of programmatic doctrine, exterior to that intensification [of] the new linguistic understanding, and the practice of it on individual ground, that has been here described as the unique mode of reform of habits of spoken and written linguistic expression, and so of habits of thought, in the general domain of human life as the world of human intelligence? There is nothing so much an affair of the individual person, occupying his or her individual mental ground, as the kind of consideration of what and how words mean that we have pursued in this book, by paths of exploration pertinent to lexicographical practice. Lexicography cannot be an intellectually responsible and a humanly honorable undertaking unless its labors are conducted within individual confines of intelligence and sensitivity. If there is partnering in the labors, it must be partnering from individual mental places. The dissipated state of lexicography in the contemporary era is related to its professionalization as a collectivist operation, conducted according to a synthesized rationale, a tradition of principles become mere conventions. When a tradition deteriorates in its values, there is no relief within it; it ceases to be itself, to live, to harbor the human spirit that infused itself into it.

Lexicography, as it is here recommended, which is as a ministration responding to the individual mind's need of making its own way in the language to the meanings of words, as against knowing them at the distance of standardized descriptions, is a natural gift out of the individual condition of mind to the individual condition of mind. It is in its natural character of the breed of all knowledge arrived at in the purity of cultivation prompted by the mind's own reasons, not by the pressing in on one of an imposing set of exterior inducements having the appearance of an honorific command from humanity at large—if not from a higher quarter. Existing lexicography partakes much

of this latter kind of knowledge-seeking activity. What we have envisaged for its replacement is merely an outgrowth of labor of love from that love of the same thing of which we wrote a little before this. The prospect of such a lexicographical future as we have delineated should neither stimulate desire to discipline the world of human life into linguistic good-behavior nor frighten the person moved to private-minded pleasure in contemplating what there may be to do newly with one's words, and newly with one's mind in doing newly with one's words, as a threat of new rules interfering with the foreseen possibility of freedom to speak with a new rightness. There is no rigor in this of any kind. The words will sort themselves into their places and their meanings for whoever go among them with inquiring spirit, under the influence of new care for them passing from one to another.

3.

There exists in these times, outside the individual ground of interest in affairs of language as affairs of one's personal own, a multiple actuality that cannot but excite concern for the general linguistic state of things, as embracing all and affecting all. This set of actualities, a long chain of public intellectual "positions," all of stout verbal substance, is strung out purposefully across the world of intelligence, and invites opposition by its pre-emption of the key points of values-defining, importances-naming, in that world. In other times such wisdom-institutions have been of a small number. Even, for long, one or two have formed the public teaching-faculty of the human generality, religion or philosophy, or religion and philosophy, providing the private person with guidance as to what-to-think and what-to-say on the "important things." Literature has also been a provider, but it has been more of an instructor to private human life in rhetorics of the imagination and the emotions than a public model of articulate wisdom. Then came an increasing variation of religion and philosophy into religions and philosophies. Then, eventually, the influence of science, which is by character a compartmentalized function of knowledge, conduced to the creations of a new kind of wisdom, a compartmentalized wisdom, no single component or combination of components of which could have more than an experimental, qualified wisdom-utility in a limited field of application. The full complement could have only the utility of representing a theory of potential synthesis. The conception of a real, whole actuality, wisdom undivided, has been generally shied from as implying an objective that could never be realized, never be more than an abstraction.

All human beings in their capacity as individual possessors of their language, and users of it upon a personal ground of potential competence to use it well, should be looked to to speak there, and from there, their own under-

standing of their being and of the world in which it has being. In so far as they have not as a whole risen to the full of this potential, some have always risen, among them, to a partial realization of the potential above the general level of realization of it. These superior competencies of mind, and word, have brought it about that the generality have been led forth to varying extents, along different paths and in different directions, from their backward places; but they have also been misled, the paths errant, or coming to false stops, because the competency of those of better understanding was not complete, was short of the human full. In these times, which have to all sensibilities, differently according to the differing personal nature of people, a feeling of finality, emphasis upon the individual human being as the prime unit of human life is politically, sociologically, philosophically, widespread; even the "totalitarian" political regimes postulate an essential type of individual human being, the good of whom they evoke as the reason of their system. But, even in the better than nominally "democratic" politically collective units of human life, an informal collectivistic intellectual government surrounds everywhere the individual personal ground; and, the more literally democratic the political regime, the more vigorously active, the more imperious, is this other government, taking its character of educative authority from the presiding political philosophy of protective benevolence towards an inner authority of individual mind and word viewed as lodged within the boundaries of personal ground as within a sacred enclosure.

The individual human being, in these times, in the most democratic of intellectual atmospheres, finds himself or herself propagandized with exhortative emphasis upon self-conscious individuality, in thought, expression of it, and act; but, under the general regime of such finalistic human sophistication about human life, the individual human being is more tightly imprisoned within the instructions of those of the recognized higher ranges of competency of understanding than the individual human being of all preceding times.

No human beings of other times have been so much fêted as the contemporary ones with compliments to their integrity of individual human realness, and, at once, so much subjected to educative assault upon their theoretically sovereign rights to cultivate, themselves, their individual ground of general understanding and self-understanding. Defensive resistance to the cultural faculty of publicly massed forces of compartmentalized modern wisdom-lore presents intricately baffling difficulties to human beings in their sensitivity to their responsibility to themselves, and their human fellows, to develop their competencies of action of mind and word as originating within themselves, and to be nurtured upon their own personal ground. Even before attempting to describe these difficulties one must face the fact that the members of the

democratic generality of human beings are in majority proportion in a condition of subdued dismay over the seemingly insoluble problem of choice between being their own mind, and speaker of mind, each, and surrendering to the beguiling assault-forces bearing emblems identifying them as friends of the genus "individual human being."

Greatly many of those who accept the identity "individual human being" suffer demoralization of their sense of possessing prerogatives of freedom of intelligence in the collapse of the older wisdom-patronages, and the inundating of the ground of collective worldly intelligence by a gross mixture of new teachings. *Where* is their own ground? Many of those who are conscious of standing upon it, and also of being under cultural siege, bear severe strains upon their mental poise in an endeavor to distribute their moral energies between fidelity to the cause of the intellectual adequate and linguistic good as a personal and private duty to oneself, first of all, and fidelity to that cause as the ultimate, infinitely comprehensive human duty. If they engage in action of opposition to the appropriation by the general, informally governmental educative faculty (one would better say "faculties") or college (one would better say "colleges") of all human ground, private and public, for its new, improved wisdom-material and exercises in experimental synthesis, how can they not lose their way back to themselves? How can countering action against all this invasion—invasion of one's private ground as a ground of right to public recognition of one's title to think and speak upon and from it as the human being actualized in one's individual self—not constitute a distraction from one's prior and fundamental duty to one's individual humanness, and ultimate comprehensive human duty extending and unfolding from that?

Further: if the general atmosphere of human thinking and speaking is laden with the emanations of a busy, varied activity of intellectual production of high academic grading and public prestige, will not the individual champion of individual beings in their numerical mass, and single personal defenselessness against the new democratically benevolent educative paternalism, aggravate the state of undeclared battle? Will not such a one, or such ones, propel into these public sectors of cultural intellectualism what will be viewed there as eccentric and overweeningly individualistic, over-insistently controversial, intrusion? Is it not but futility and indecorum to challenge authorities of past days who belong to the present by the survival of their ideas, doctrines and influence, and flesh-and-blood authorities of the present, all of some honor among themselves? Can one make an impression on both "the people," one's fellows in this universal difficulty, the individual human beings with all their varying conditions of linguistic sensitivity and insensitivity, intellectual self-assurance and abashment, and on the intellectual powers that be? What would move to retreat the mild-mannered colleagues in the Humanities, fiercely

loyal to one another in the observance of a gentleman's agreement to mutual intimidation, or the more separatistic colleagues of the language-wisdom faculty, each armed with his particular version of word-science?

And behind all these are all the other branches of the general faculty of contemporary educative culture. And in front of all these are the forces of the straggling vanguard, the loose, unorganized body that is the faculty of literature.

The "writers" lead the army of cultural intellectualism. They carry the language with them, or what seems to be the language. It is a version of the language adapted to the new compartmental principle of human understanding, the new wisdom-fashions. They pay diffident regard to the existence of linguistical schools of thought and doctrines of literary analysis promulgated by these. The language they proffer as the tangible evidence of their intellectual righteousness—the object of their professional solicitude and moral concern in behalf of the linguistic happiness of all—is a capricious version of the language of all; it abandons concern with the intellectual principles of language and the linguistic principles of literature, and leaves the field of intellectual and literary—as well as linguistic—criticism to the academical army in the rear. To the besieged ground on which is lived, or should be lived, the private life of the intelligence, the personally possessed ground of mind and word, contemporary literature brings its language as a peace-offering, an instrument of truce—or argument of inevitable conquest: "Give in, give in!" it urges, "come over to the side of the *Modern* Mind."

This book has headed into various kinds of difficulties. The simplest one, but also the one that has been most constantly attendant, has belonged to the book's central task, the core-labor, necessarily to be performed on our own private ground, personally possessed as individual human beings, of establishing a direct relation with the fact of language, and with the intrinsic actualities of our own language, in which to look *straight* at the general fact of language, heartily, and, from that, straight into the word-composition of *the* language, ever seeing the particulars, the words, in their identity as such and in their nature as reasonably held in unison by that which they reasonably compose. The central difficulty, having its start in the central task, takes on almost immediately, as the task is entered upon, that character of "grand" difficulty which has been here described. In all its reaches from the starting-point, the laboring movement has maintained its personal character. This character inheres also in the grand difficulty: it is all-personal. The outer circumstances of the laboring movement follow from the universal, non-sectional, address of its intention. They do not turn the movement into *public* "movement"; they constitute no provocation to hostilities or call for "support" cast abroad. The essential labor looks off in no special direction; it notifies the individual speakers

of the language (and all speakers of languages to whom the sense of the book might be, somehow, brought) of what is to be seen and known from their private individual human vantage, their place upon the ground of their own mind's understanding—according to our experience.

The problem of "the people," as there or not there to the account of language, and the English language, that has been delivered in this book, is progressively absorbed in the book's continuous travel futurewards, in its outlining of what has come to need doing, by and for speakers of the language, and of modes of accomplishing the total labor in a grand continuity of tasks. The "people" are made potential witnesses of the book's performance in its persistent anticipatory provision for their presence: it is a book, in so far as *they* are concerned, the purpose, the sense, of which, the findings of which as to what was and is, and spelt-out vision of what may be, the adverse and the hopeful judgement, are all confided to *them*.

But what of those who are not of this "they"? What of those who treat language, matters and problems of language, by the application of scientific methods of measurement, analysis, criticism—and all the others of the reigning intellectual corporation of humane professions, in which the subjects, including some additional "humanities," are moulded—reduced and trimmed in substance—to fit scientific tools of evaluation? What have we been doing here in our various raising of questions as to the pursuits of all these? Have we not, while professing to be not concerned with controversy as such, only with the blockages that the systems of new understandings have created between one human mind and another, others (and even between the individual human mind and itself), been ourselves inviting assault from all these? Have we been loading importance upon difficulties that lie outside the preoccupation-scope of "the grand difficulty?"

The difficulties that do not stand immediately within the labor of our study, thought, consideration of principles, proposal of procedures, are present to it in manifold secondary attendance as impediments that *at the least* cannot but haunt our conversations with our readers, and must *at the least* be recognized by us as focal areas of trouble-making for us all, which we the people are generally too weak in our hold upon our minds and speaking selves, and too few as we are not thus weak, to ignore.

A convenient, and just, view of the special professionally linguistic ideas of, and attitudes to, language characteristic of the general professional intellectuality of the times is that obtained by perceiving them in a historical light. They are of modern ancestry. They have expanded, in their descent from scientific investigations of the latter part of the last century in academic fields of the humane categories, into a huge network of theoretical analysis, exposition, disquisition. But the practical application, the intellectual consequences, of it all has remained largely within the framework of academic pedagogy and

scholarly intercourse, and learned reading-areas. The downward seepage into the ordinary levels of educated intelligence has taken the form mainly of vocabularistic and phraseological sophistications. In the linguistic fields, the donation to popular ideas and expressions has been especially meagre; the influence from the linguistic. Above is hardly more than a fact of academic prestige little shaded with familiarity. The most substantial manifestation of higher-status contemporary thinking on the common plane of the life of the intelligence issues from the psychological quarters of this ever-expanding composite intellectuality; theoretical generalizations about human beings issue from there almost ready-made into popular truisms, such as the jargon-lore that has accreted round the psychological term that has been peeled off from the word "identity."

Neither in its aggregate effects nor in the effect of any particular segment of it does the modern intellectual systematology have intellectual influence in its time. Its influence is *mental*. It produces a stimulation in the general world of intelligent life that it itself does not feed; and the obscurely affected mentality of that world must be repeatedly and increasingly stultified by the continuing experience if there is not an internally-born self-saving stir of the individual mind, in rejection of this *teaching* as historically inapposite to the time. This educative ideology is an artificial height of intelligence from which to evaluate human beings and human life in this era. The whole tradition of intellectual superiority that compensates for intellectual deficiencies in the human generality approached extinctness at just about the time that the personal profession of intellectual superiority itself approached extinctness, as the gradual but spontaneous loosening of individual human minds from the grip of hierarchically dispensed wisdom approached, as a historical actuality, the actuality of minds coming into their self-recognizing own of individual competency—that is, as *something that had already happened* and needed but the certification of living expression of the fact. This teaching, this thinking, this newer twentieth-century outcropping of impedimenta of intellectual superiority, is static history, projection from what was already becoming history when minds of the type of superior intellectual competency began moving from the democratized seats or chairs of general wisdom onto the benches of scientific methodologies of intellectuality.

The people—one might say [again] "we the people"—have, thus, had the skies of their intellectual time filmed over with the wastes of humanly unreal intellectual production. Through the film, individual human beings can know the sunlight of their minds only as a hazed-over, strange, scarcely identifiable illumination, and the stars of their endeavors of distinction of thought only as dulled or quite invisible presences in the night-expanse of their intellectual anticipations of themselves. (Even as in the state of Florida, in which this book has been written, one knows, of a slow sudden, that the purity of the sunlight

of nature's day, in this till not long ago still time-fresh portion of the earth-world, has been stolen by the excesses of reckless human activity; and sees the once sweet-to-see pointed starlight scribbled over with the same murky readings that confuse the day's skies.)

When too much history has been made, in earthly physical time, and public intellectual time, the time has come to withdraw from the scenes of alarm to the mind's individual private ground. Language will come along. It will be that by which one withdraws. It will be that by which one is of the general human competency that provides the people's wisdom, the method, the means, the very substance, of universal mutuality.

If imprints of controversy show in this book's demeanor, we must be resigned to them as unerasable. We have wanted our argument to stop nowhere in contention. Where we prove to have pressed the points of our argument overhard, overlong, here or there, here and there, we shall accept the presence of such unpleasant flaws as the price of perseverance against formidable odds: not in proud self-defensiveness, but in matter-of-fact consciousness of the pains endured to make our labor a giveable work, and one that, given, would withstand the wear of acceptance. We have allowed ourselves little ease in speculating on the possibility that the dominant sentiment in professional intellectual quarters might not be uniformly hostile to our book.

4.

What Thucydides wrote of the derangement of human senses of value in Corcyra, during its revolution, in the course of the Peloponnesian War—the horrors committed there by these ones against those ones, others against other ones, in spreading progression, a tangled chain of atrocity, the places at which revolution arrived last, "from having heard what had been done before," carrying "to a still greater excess the refinement of their invention, as manifested in the cunning of their enterprises and the atrocity of their reprisals"—has retained its sting all through the following ages of centuries. Who of those who nod intellectual recognition of the applicability of what he wrote to human behavior in general under stresses of fear, suspicion, greed of power, "so long as the nature of manhood remains the same," as Thucydides himself said (many of the later ones, however, with complacency of historical sagacity, believing that it likely will always remain the same), do not or would not extend the nodding to what he wrote on words, in that unveiling of the Corcyraean deliberate madness to all who might care, in any time, to look?

> Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to

be a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question inaptness to act on any. Frantic violence became the attribute of manliness; cautious plotting, a justifiable means of self-defense. The advocate of extreme measures was always trustworthy; his opponent a man to be suspected. To succeed in a plot was to have a shrewd head, to divine a plot a still shrewder; but to try to provide against having to do either was to break up your party and to be afraid of your adversaries. In fine, to forestall an intending criminal, or to suggest the idea of a crime where it was wanting, was equally commended, until even blood became a weaker tie than party, from the superior readiness of those united by the latter to dare everything without reserve; for such associations had not in view the blessings derivable from established institutions but were formed by ambition for their overthrow; and the confidence of their members in each other rested less on any religious sanction than upon complicity in crime. The fair proposals of an adversary were met with jealous precautions by the stronger of the two, and not with a generous confidence. Revenge also was held of more account than self-preservation. Oaths of reconciliation, being only proffered on either side to meet an immediate difficulty, only held good so long as no other weapon was at hand; but when opportunity offered, he who first ventured to seize it and to take his enemy off his guard, thought this perfidious vengeance sweeter than an open one, since, considerations of safety apart, success by treachery won him the palm of superior intelligence. Indeed, it is generally the case that men are readier to call rogues clever than simpletons honest, and are as ashamed of being the second as they are proud of being the first. . . . Thus religion was in honour with neither party; but the use of fair phrases to arrive at guilty ends was in high reputation. (*The Peloponnesian War* [Crawley translation] Book III, Ch. X, Random House, 1951)

(There is a sentence in a book *The Big Con* by David W. Maurer (Bobbs-Merrill, 1940) that joins well with Thucydides' account of the status of rogues and honest folk in that place, in that lurid period. The subject, in the modern book, is how rogues of the confidence-game profession work their arts upon their victims.

> It is not intelligence but integrity which determines whether or not a man is a good mark.

The "mark," of course, is the professional description of the chosen victim of the game.)

Thucydides, in his account of how it was as to words, supplies both the moral background and foreground of his terrible picture. But who of those who nod in sad comprehension of how it must have been with the speech of

the Corcyraeans will not have reservations as to words, and what and how words mean, acquired from the new linguistical philosophies, and the general scientifically modernized intellectual attitudes of the time, comfortably placed in their minds to cushion them against just such horror as what Thucydides told of on the state of word-use in the time of the Corcyraean revolutionary nightmare might excite if taken in without sophisticated protection? Who, of the nodding ones, will not divide the sense of horror that what Thucydides wrote cannot but at least momentarily evoke, in so far as the matter of word-use is concerned, into two parts, one issuing in the sighing thought "Ah, how familiar this is!", the other issuing in the comment "But of course we know that in any case language is always changing, that in any case words do not have "ordinary" meanings in the sense of stable meanings, uniform in the minds of all their users. Words mean"—goes this reasoning—"according to their contexts, and not only are contexts ever different, but concepts arise in certain influential contexts that take possession of words having some loosely constant ingredients of meaning, and altogether transform their meanings—for a time, until new conceptual appropriators of words spring up in new, more influential contexts, and new transformations of meanings occur. . . ."

And so the scene shifts to considerations of over two-thousand years later of the nature of human nature, and of the nature of that which is the most sensitive representative of human nature, that is, language in its practical reality as words.

It has been argued recently in private address to the first-named author of this book, by an earnest defender, of academic profession, of the position of intellectual modernism as to word-meaning, that the idea of a potential self-certifying of meaning as implicit in language is at odds with linguistic history. He cited the authority of *contexts,* and of "contexted concepts" and the authority of new investigations in the multiplying fields of what is called, blandly, "textual analysis"—which might be appropriately called "contextual" analysis. This pursuit is dedicated to an interminably extensive and intricate inspection of texts, with special eye to varying meanings and contextual modifications and transformations of meanings findable in literary texts, such phenomena being viewed as proper and natural to literature, and a key feature of the functional importance of writers. A summarizing of the comments that were made by the first-named author in response to the professorial contestation of abbreviated expositions of the thinking of this book, confided to him, should be useful in these phases of final account-giving of the book's stands in relation to its immediate intellectual environment. We present the responses in the informal language of a letter, which was the actual mode of their delivery—somewhat revised in this presentation, some simplified, some a little enlarged.

"I think our book is the showing of a very important step that can be taken by this 'us all' for the redemption of its, their, our, linguistic life, and all its, their, our, life. I see 'us all' as having got its mental feet stuck in ground in which it—or, let me say 'they'—do not move but can seem to themselves to move by the peculiarities of the standstill churning of it. I cannot avoid relating the general human movement, seen as such a state of mind, with attitudes to words comprised in it, to the intellectual status quo: that there is relation between them is a belief distinctly advanced in our book. That is, we attribute, in it, a good deal of responsibility for the linguistic status quo to the self-consciously intellectual areas of contemporary human life.

"As to language, and the 'self-certifying of the meanings of the words of a language,' I believe there *is* a language, that exists in continuous antecedence to all the fooling around with words that 'the people' do and the fooling around with them that writers do, more so than 'the people'—and with more free-handed purposiveness than they. Freedom of mind, the right to use words in freedom, I understand as the right to do, with the common gift of language, in honorable privacy of mind, what one feels the need and wish to do. The honor of the matter is that what one does with it be compatible with what one owes to the language as equally possessed by all. And what is it in this gift and possession that creates a duty to it? There is present in it the decent loyalty of reason of mind, peculiar to minds, as a common character of minds; and to this is owed the best reality of each individual mind, a respect to all thinking-speaking fellows that is at once a respect of oneself.

"Further as to the matter of words, and contexts, and that of 'textual analysis.' I have inadvertently contributed to the prominence of the last with a method evolved from my own scrupulosity of word-consciousness and applied to the *verbal* scrutiny of poems. This method was adopted and extensively variegated in adoption; and, in extended and further variegated adoptions of the adoption, the process eventually got bogged down in textual inspections in which the linguistic, the verbal, object of attention was (and is) utterly lost sight of. Generally, in so far as the 'textual analysis' movement has been and is concerned practically, materially, with texts, the textual attention exerted is characterized by a poring over words with finesses of attention to context. In such procedures, the investigators increasingly isolate themselves from the bearings of language. Contexts have no bearings outside themselves, and when one makes them areas of bearings one gets tipped over headfirst into a contextual morass of literary meanings in which there are, virtually, no words.

"The history of the development of the science of textuality, from the earliest relatively conventional new science of literary criticism to the present-day system of laboratory methods involving elaborate classifications of kinds of texts and differentiation between kinds of scientific interest in the literary

investigation of texts (or should the description be, kinds of literary interest in the scientific investigation of texts?), raises thought, in me, of how extravagant refinements imposed on civilized processes, methods, in any department of human conduct or activity, can produce barbarisms.

"I regard what has been devised by the linguistic sciences in relation to literature, devised for things to do to literature, treated as laboratory texts, as a barbarism; the professionals in the field of these refinements of the ordinary civilized processes of literary criticism and devotion to the study and appreciation of language, I regard as approaching dangerously the status of a superfaculty of the Humanities, with the self-assigned function, in relation to the other Humanities faculties, and especially the faculties of literature, of having the Last Say.

"If human beings were to rely on contexts for bearings, in their understanding of the meanings of words, in their own use of them and others' use of them, and on the concepts that made words nothing distinct, nothing definite, in themselves, they would eliminate *themselves* as humanity. Separated from the mental base-actuality of language, they would become dementalized. Without words that are words, words that mean what they mean, as the language of their human nativity provides, minds have no guardians of their sanity. . . ."

5.

There is need for readers of this book—and we have tried to proceed responsibly as to this need, recognized by us—of adjusting themselves in their reading of it to a position combining the status of "ordinary" speaker of the language, user of its words, and that of literate desirer of a fuller and surer knowledge of it, this being demonstrated to be possible. We have related our envisagement of an enlarged, better, knowledge of it to a view of it as formed and functioning according to universal principles of language, and an acquaintance with words seen in the light of an understanding of these principles. We have explored the problems of knowledge of the meanings of words with endeavor to establish that a natural possibility exists in a language of their being known with certainty, and that a normal capability exists in human beings so to know their words. We have linked this capability, in arguing it, with a human and intellectual necessity, affecting each individual speaker of a language, of unqualified possession of it, actualized in a steadily definite knowledge of the meanings of its words. We have thought that the combined attributed statuses of ordinariness and literateness of disposition to the matter of, and matters of, language would not of itself put any discomfort of joined identifications either upon readers who regarded themselves as categorically "ordi-

nary" in their linguistic condition or upon those evaluated by themselves as literate.

A main point of possible discomfort has seemed to us to be the question of the relation between ordinary and ordinarily literate readers and persons of a special *professional* identity by special interest in things linguistic, or of some other special identity having an aura of superiority of intellectual status attached to it. We have endeavored, and especially in this final chapter, to indicate that we do not regard the kind of concern with things linguistic that identifies itself as a professional science of language, or body of sciences, as a third element of the linguistic public. Viewing the professional performances and attitudes of those who practise a science of language as of no special, professional linguistic literateness, we make them present, in the address of our book to readers, only as they are of the joined identity we conceive as the appropriate for our sense of our readers, and their sense of themselves as such: we mean no address *to* them in their professional capacities.

We have felt that we owed it to our readers to report on professional scientifically slanted positions on language in relation to the book's own, and that we owed it also to the holders of such positions to do this. We think that our doing this—which has been no slight reporting, but not of a compendious nature—ought to make for a sense in the literately ordinary, and the ordinarily literate, readers of being the central, the focal, point of our book's address, with any discomfort felt as a reader not coming from any doubt of this. We hope that this will be so. We hope also that what we have presented as to the professional activities of the devotees of the scientific treatment of language will produce no other discomfort for these than that which is unavoidable in criticism comporting fundamental disagreement. We mean no disregard of any, be they of some special ideological identity in relation to the matter of language with which we cannot sympathize, in their identity as speakers in general of the common language and participants in its human and intellectual fellowship, and the universal linguistic fellowship.

We conceive of none as humanly absent from the readership of this book by our intention. As to ideological identity, identity in terms of professional thinking on language: we level no criticism at any linguistical ideology as being ourselves of a professional identity-status, we do not speak as ideological competitors. We have written as speakers-in-general of the language, not vesting our devoted sensibility of the reality of language and sensitivity to the actualities of word-meaning with any pretension to professional status or authority. As to the matter of lexicography, which figures so importantly in our book: even when our conception of what we might do to serve the rehabilitation of the general human linguistic sensibility was cast in a pattern of labor restricted to lexicography, we did not concern ourselves with identificatory

attitudes to ourselves as "lexicographers." We believe that it will be seen—should no further lexicographical studies issue from the quarter of this book's authorship—that we have made contributions of radical value to the course of lexicography. Let this be viewed as mere service of love, not as lexicographical professionalism. As to what may follow from the foundation we have set out: no dictionary or practical portion of one formed upon the principles that we have brought into view in this book as principles of language, that, in being this, are principles of meaning, and, in being this, principles of lexicographical procedure, will do a harm of arbitrary exercise of professionalistic power, of imposition of an ideology upon "the people." A professional *quality* would properly reside in such a production. But professional quality, in essence, should be little other than the mark of love-inspired scruple and care.

From the earliest manifestations of the scientific movement in language-study—the subjection of language to a scientific stand-off-to-see-the-better method of evaluation and understanding—words, words as entities of meaning, have been progressively lost sight of. As it were without the leave of "the people," various schools of new, modern intellectualism, in their different ways, deverbalized language, minimized its word-content, evaluated it as a behavior-system in its general manifestations and as a mechanism of adjunctive convenience in the conduct of professional intellectual processes, as it were non-essential but "there." This deverbalizing treatment of language has not destroyed the words of the speaking generality, but it has utterly removed the stimulus to word-consciousness that formerly penetrated to the general human areas of conscious life, from quarters harboring special forms of intellectual self-consciousness, and most substantially from literary and other quarters of public address. The quarters of public address themselves (literary, journalistic, other) have been severely affected, linguistically, by the contemporary professional intellectual downgrading of words from their hitherto presumed reality as things that mean. Literary professionals have, on the whole, lost sense of where they are, linguistically. Some, vulgarly, take on, as to display their flair for the intellectual sophistications of their time, the "lines" of scientifically ideological opinion of things human, and especially of things linguistic; most demonstrate embarrassment or disorder, mingledly intellectual and linguistic—all, failure of some sort to occupy a contemporarily responsible linguistic position of their own. (An essay entitled "Contemporary Fashion-Plate (Intellectual Gab)" is presented in the Supplement.)

No one anywhere is using words with confidence in what they are using as words. In literary and other public-address use, personalistic self-confidence is the center of verbal dynamics. In the "ordinary" course of word-use, people adhere to a general policy of diffidence towards assuming that any single particular word of theirs can have importance. Common discourse, spoken or

written, is habitually loose, easily both brusque and gentle, "relaxed" and nervously hurried, patternless and yet greatly repetitive in forms of expression, cast of sentences. Verbal utterance is a flow of words rather than a structure of words. In so far as the words possess in use any substantiality of meaning, they immediately get lost from minds until, at need, they are found again. If the general linguistic state of things for people is as bad as this, what of the "grand difficulty," here described as a good fortune of work-to-do? Is there enough word-consciousness left for aggregation of interest in this work-to-do? Are the words recoverable? If words are in danger of slipping away from people's minds definitively, are not people in danger of slipping away definitively from themselves? Could not the question be framed "Are people recoverable?" The grand difficulty might then be thought of as belonging to a work in which people proved themselves to themselves in proving their words to themselves.

The idea that words keep slipping away, exist ephemerally in these times in people's minds, may seem to be contradicted by the fact that, vocabularistically, people in these times, in their democratic numbers, are supplied with words in unprecedented profusion, even if the great tonnage of terms of varied proveniences that keep getting stowed into their vocabulary is not counted in. An ingenious experiment made in 1970 by a school-superintendent to assist younger school-children of, what was called in the *Time* magazine's account of the matter, "inner city" background to meet the pressure of the "accelerated vocabulary" accompanying the passing into higher grades was reported to have been very successful in its results. The children learned, with enthusiasm, many of the big, new words awaiting them in their textbooks. They were incorporated in classical tales rewritten by the superintendent, by name Dr. William Kottmeyer (he retired from his post in the same year) and broadcast over the school's radio-system, and lessons based on them intensified the training. The resultant knowledge was displayed in thank-you notes written to Dr. Kottmeyer. "The words were very *profitable* to me. . . . I felt like an *oracle* or a *brilliant* person. You made a *logical* superintendent." In another, gratitude is expressed for the ability to *cogitate* better with the help of these *myriads* of words provided by this *genial* man with the programme found very *apropos*. Former child-opponents of such programmes are now overwhelmed. In another note, an *insipid* subject is pronounced made jovial. In another, the time spent by the good Doctor is *appreciated*. And the words are described as *absorbed* like a *mellowed* strawberry.

The story is a pretty one. It is not told here unsympathetically. But the attainment would, with but slight stylistic modifications, bring the child, in respect to the learned words, to that level of proficiency in the use of words, of linguistic facility, which *is* the contemporary prevailing adult normal. The

big lessons for the children and the adults remain. The children have been taught to know the words in the way in which their elders know them, as ephemera in a style of word-use in which the actuality from which the words are drawn, the language, is itself known as an enveloping ephemeron.

Perhaps a simple view of words, to helpful point as to what kind of knowledge of the meanings of words can preserve them to people, and people to themselves as self-possessed minds, is that of regarding them as what we think with, rather than what we *say*. The saying comes after the thinking—if one does not at once communicate what one is thinking. In thinking with words, one is as saying what one is thinking within one's mind's attention of judgement. Such a view could enlist one's mind to corroborate the testimony of this book as to the internal reality of words as "having" meanings.

A good deal of human sense is allowed to slip away in the varied theories of meaning put forth by the proponents of scientific interpretations of the nature of language, from the inventors of logical positivism, with their empiricist criterion of meaning and their refusal to recognize anything but mathematical and empirical statements as "meaningful," to the ruminations of the explorers of the potentialities of "semiotics" as a universal analytic science-philosophy of "concepts" of meaning—meaning conceived of by these as both linguistic meaning and what they call "non-linguistic meaning." All who *think*—who know the process of putting their minds to work, or, it could be said, of their minds' putting themselves to work—know that they think with meanings: there is no other way of thinking. And the meanings with which they think are not other than what the physically utterable words, with which they *speak*, "have." And any differentiation between linguistic and non-linguistic meaning delanguages the mind; and it is mistaken, then, to talk of "meaning."

The mind knows the meanings with which it thinks with a life-quickness not habitually, indeed but rarely, equalled in the consciousness of meaning with which a word is spoken. But there is no natural gap between the mind's knowing and the speaking person's consciousness. The mind ought to be immediately, even instantly, there to one, to turn to, for one's own full understanding of one's words. In the long human course, mind and speaking person have undergone separations, of different kinds, and degrees. Grave is the present state of human beings: the history of these separations rests upon them. Up to the recent age, they have had a character of collective individual fault, the responsibility distributively divided, the individual human being guilty only of an involuntary stupidity. The individual human being is no longer a child of history. Human beings generally have attained to self-educatability in themselves. They have always known themselves as *knowable*—this is the mark of humanity. The difficulty has been how to go about the knowing, and how

sure to be of what is thought known. The mounted-up obscurities have worn to flatness, the tracks of inquiry have criss-crossed and tangled until all lead now fast back to themselves. They stand in the center of a clear field of capability of knowing themselves, the actual difficulty a formally, collectively, frightening one, but personally, individually, a grand difficulty of knowing what is theirs to know. Knowing the meanings of their words is the beginning of explicit wisdom of themselves.

As to the failure of human beings to fulfil to grand sufficiency their capability of knowing themselves: we see all as individually culpable, now, in the generally existing insufficiency in the knowledge of what they are. We see also a special culpability in those who have created language-sciences and related mind-sciences: to the extent of the acceptance and influence of these, their progenitors and proponents perform a surgery upon the human sense of self of prying apart mind and speaking person's consciousness to the closest possible approach to severance. But all separation of people from their minds, even that of such "way-out" objectivity, is reversible—by them.

6.

We approach the close of this book with words written on a scrap of paper, in the middle of the book's course, saved for possible usefulness at some point, and found. This may be a right point.

> Words are formed to serve thought in its action of self-making, self-completion, self-correction, self-understanding, self-explaining.

Added to it was a note of counsel, should use be made of it at some point. The language of the note is of work-shop abbreviatedness and privateness.

> But explain this "self" matter as a relating of thought to the unitary personality of being, its sameness individual to itself in the whole—thought being the presence-action of Being to all being.

Added to this note of counsel was a note of counsel as to *it:* "distinguish this conception from Whitehead's organic theory of nature." But we shall do no more here of explaining and distinguishing. Whatever cloud-like suggestions of mystery hover over these last words of our book should dissipate themselves in our will, in delivering them, to make the book's final scene one of confiding spirit, in which we do not differentiate ourselves from others as to the things of knowledge, wisdom, mystery.

Throughout our book we have labored to clarify our thinking to the limit of the instance, and hoped that there would be no accumulation of residues of obscurity. We have tried to avoid premature straining for the definitive with-

out either stinting in the possible definitive or treating readers' problems of incomprehension as no problems of ours. We have not made it our part to try to beat down, as antagonists of mystery, the shapes of the indeterminate rising from our slow persistencies of determination. Nor have we denied realness to the shapes of uncertainty rising from the yet unremedied insufficiencies in the knowledge of us all of our being.

Unknowns vanish as knowledge fills out: but, until they do, they are facts, each a manifestation that there is something to be known. In the case of knowledge of the meanings of words, one is at the heart of the human knowledge-experience. We believe this order of knowledge to be the mind's intrinsic scheme of knowledge, the uniform method of all knowledge-processes. If this be so, the better people know the meanings of their words, the better they will know how to know that which is to be known. And, if it be so, all is mystery without language: and "linguistic meaning," as some oddly call the meanings that words have in their languages, is the initiation into the unknown that is also the knowable. The rites of language in their entirety are rites of knowledge that should meet all the exactions of mystery.

NOTES

Chapter 1: *Introductory Explanations*

1. Our envisagement of language as having to do, essentially, with thought-expression—as being a formation directed at serving the needs of this—is, we are aware, at odds with what might be called "classical" modernistic linguistic theory. Thus Otto Jespersen characterizes such a view as ours as one-sided (in *Mankind, Nation and Individual,* Harvard University Press, 1925). "We shall never approach a complete understanding of the nature of language, so long as we confine our attention to its intellectual function as a means of communicating thought." After quoting one of the "highly distinguished investigators" who hold this view, he slaps it down with categorical severity. "No, neither its original function nor its present-day functions." He finds proof of the correctness of his view in what he thinks is evidence that "the earliest language was anything but intellectual," and in certain opinions that, while not those of "highly distinguished investigators," are those of famed personalities agreeing with his own. There is Talleyrand's cynical pleasantry to the effect that language exists to hide one's thoughts—which needs to be put in the wash, to emerge cleaned-up to "The perversion of language to the use of hiding thoughts, rather than expressing them, is valued by the dishonest as an art." Then, Søren Kierkegaard is cited in support, for his observation that many people use language to hide their thoughts: which is a sorry commentary on many people, and not the report of experience on the nature of language.

The third famed personality brought into the argument is Madame de Staël, who judged language to be not only a means of communication but an instrument delightful to play upon, producing effects in some comparable to those of music and, in others, comparable to those of potent alcoholic beverages. This picture of the diversion of the physical properties of words to the

excitement of pleasurable sensations gives much satisfaction to Otto Jespersen. "That is admirable!" he says of the description. We see it as a romanticized account of the debasement of language in the employment of it as a drug.

The idea that the functions of language are of an intellectual nature Jespersen considers applicable only to "men and women who think, and to them only in their most academical moments." This is to split language into two irreconcilable parts, one part a bulk of indeterminable character which becomes in use what anyone wishes to make of it, the other the accessory of an eccentric human minority that thinks, for use in its most priggish exercises in that (by implication) rather humanly unnatural pursuit. We regard such a view as not only offending against the nature of the human being, and the nature of language, by its misaimed realism, but as presenting as fact what are impossibilities.

Chapter 2: *The Authors: The Personal Background*

1. On the second author, by the first:

He wrote on books, for many years, for *Time* magazine; he was for a period in charge of the "Books" department, and subsequently acted as Poetry editor—this into the early 'forties. His preoccupation with poetry brought him into close acquaintance with poets; he had friendships, abroad, with W. B. Yeats, and Robert Bridges, and, in the U.S.A., with Robert Frost, Vachel Lindsay, and others. He rejected much of his own poetic writing in later time, and little of that is left, but some of the earlier poems remain, in published or manuscript form; in so far as his poems were known, they were very well regarded, and some were anthologized.

2. The change in the view of poetry that the first of us experienced was no mere turning away from poetry to something else—or turning away to nothing. This change, releasing her thinking from suspension in the belief that the attainment to perfection of being in the form of word-perfectness could be, must be, by poetic means, necessitated a revision of elements of her thinking involved in the past commitment to poetry. Her work outside of poetry had had the benefit of the intense anticipation of such perfection as a practicality that poetry allows to be nursed—and encourages. Her thinking was focused on, as naturally expectable, a near coming-about of a thorough illumination of the human state through the genius of words, borne within human nature. Her thought, her work, was plotted towards a general human event of full articulateness realized.

The expectation was justified by what language is in itself; and, also, the sense of the near-possibility of the expectation's fulfilment was justified by the evidences the age gave that human minds were nearing a brink of impatience

with themselves in their lagging ever behind the forerunning intuitions of consciousness; and faith in poetry as the area of ultimate fullness of expression in fullness of consciousness seemed justified by what it is as an area of human utterance long reserved for the trying-out of the extraordinary in human capabilities of expression.

Though the uses into which poetry presses words have a greatly persuasive appearance of being wholly concerned with perfection of utterance, the values of which could not be other than the values of truth, they are uses that conform perforce to poetry's requirement that making sense with words be left compatible with the use of them to consequences of sensuous pleasure: poetic values have discrepancies in them as values of truth. Awareness of this, become suddenly concentrated in a sensitivity to the immediate character of the poem-making process, as distinguished from the sensitivity by which the poetic results are formally premeditated and rehearsed, does more than merely change the attitude to poetry from one of hope of better than suggestive effects of truth, in the practice of it, to perception of the failure implicit in the practice to produce the unadulterated actuality. When enlightenment as to the ultimate linguistic unyieldingness of poetry strikes, there must be a reorganizing of the faith put in the promise of poetry into a faith in the promise of language itself.

Poetry vouches for realities of truth accessible to human beings speaking words as their spirit's intimate own. But this is a makeshift arrangement, based on an assumption of a general human deficiency in the linguistically perfect, and a compensatory gift of exceptionally sensitive faculties of linguistic expression, in an exceptional few—a gift to be exercised by those for the ennobling delectation of the generality. The linguistic destiny of human beings is not resolved by the existence of poetry; the existence of poetry belongs to the human ages of confounded linguistic destiny. There is a tolerance in poetry of error of utterance, a provided leeway for error, which allows of the illusion that touching the truth-mark is a far more likely occurrence in poetry than in other word-use—is an eventuality, indeed, peculiarly poetic. Intensities of exertion to meet the double requirement of poetry seem all in the service of truth, by this dispensation of poetry, taken for a liberal humaneness in its nature.

The exploring of the truth-possibilities in poetry to the breaking-point in the illusion (of potent plausibility) that poetry is hospitable to truth beyond all other areas of word-use, and to the point, for the poet, of renouncing poetry, leads first to a formidable sense of undefined freedom in the domain of word-use. Then, almost instantly, comes the problem-question, for the ex-habitué of the poetic verbal precinct, how to employ that freedom to better verbal effect than was possible in poetry. The first phase in the facing of the problem, for the first of us—and the second of us had like tasks of reorientation to a

general linguistic ideal, to take the place of the one enshrined in the setting of poetry—was a long process of adjustment of all her thought-functioning to standards of linguistic discipline, as the discipline of truth, not conditioned by the former identification of the values of truth with poetic values. The past centering of her thought to a poetic resolution of the difficulties of bringing everything seen to lie within the responsibility-scope of thought into express relationship had kept her ideas to a certain degree *off-centered* from the potential unity-point in the broad, open domain of articulate utterance at which harmony of thought and harmony of word must be necessarily one, in single immediacy.

The first of us, as a poet, had been aware of the error-element in poetry to the extent of feeling that linguistic weaknesses prospered too much in its climate, from poets' making themselves too much at ease in it, and she had exerted effort against the element as something that was part of poetic history, not poetry itself, needing correction. At the same time, she had exerted effort in her general thinking to keep her judgement-values, of which she had made poetry the guardian, in accord with a conception of poetry as in its intrinsic nature friendly only to linguistic strength that made for truth. Because of this compound effort, there was enough mobility maintained in her thinking to leave room for later corrections in it, after her finding that what she had taken for weaknesses become standardized as linguistic privileges of poets was an uncorrectable error-element in poetry; and there was also enough mobility maintained to leave room for a transference of values from the keeping of poetry, conceived of as the linguistically implicit realization of complete virtue of word-use, to the keeping of language in its actual complete readiness for serving as a pure instrument of truth.

What next? There followed a gradual enlargement of the scene of thought, and a great augmentation of the estimate of what it falls to human beings to do with words, an expansion of appreciation of what the labor of truth comprises; the expanded comprehension of that labor thrust into prominence the significance of universal functionality possessed by human life as having in that labor its very reason. And the next and the next became, for both of us, in part a going on from where we had been, and how we had done, with the course of doing corrected, and further corrected, as we went, and in part a preparing of ourselves for new things to be done in the interest of the general work of human beings of exhibiting the whole sense of being in their speaking as a whole. How to know what there is new to do in the things that belong to such speaking is as difficult as to *do* the new—know the nature of the immediately correct, not only that of the corrected. If this book is what we have meant it to be, it should provide examples of both kinds of accomplishment—of new things mingled with corrected old.

For the rest: much else must enter into the reckoning. As to death, it should not count anywhere as a finally limiting factor. For, what is yet known as to the difference hovering over the entire human record between the bodily history of any being and the larger story of the being, that, even before death-close strikes the former, can be seen, in ways refuting doubts, to be not containable in it, only fragmentarily suggested by it? Apart from the consideration pertaining to the matter of death, there is another, related to it, which concerns the question of what might be said in sum of the authors' later course of doing. However much there might be, besides the work of this book, to be reported on, it would be inconsistent with the spirit of the book to deal in summings. By the book's testimony, the general record of human doing is inconclusive. None should be other than fearful of excepting themselves from the general human record of major unaccomplishment: there could be no unabsurd claims of decisively good accomplishment until the sureties that language has in store were brought into purposeful use to speed better human doing, and towards its best form as speaking in which being has expressive utterance to its exact full. If we succeed in showing here that language holds in it sureties for the direction of human endeavor along the path of truth, this will confirm our hopes in thinking our book worth the effort expended in its making, and the effort of application it asks readers to put forth.

Chapter 3: *A Comparison of Objectives*

1. One of the products of the study made by the second author of Doughty's linguistic labors was a great glossary, or lexicographical complement, to Doughty's long poem *The Dawn in Britain*. The language of this poem is of a consistency and thoroughness in its character as practical English—an English, in Doughty's judgement, of the best period (that which verged upon the time of Spenser and went over into it but, as Doughty thought, began there to undergo dilution)—that readers of it cannot recognize unless they are provided with the kind of guidance that this glossary makes available, or set about to fill the need of it themselves. Adequate linguistic informedness is peculiarly important for this poetic work of Doughty's, for no other one of his matched the lively unity of its words as properties of the unique (in Doughty's characterization) Mother-tongue, though all the subsequent works are full of wonders of word-wisdom, word-rightness. There is almost no end, for readers of this poem who stay with it, of discoveries of meanings possessed by words that are very precisely (often startlingly) different from the first-view assumption.

After quite long, there came to be a small work, by the second of us, in which a direct exemplification is made, with a portion of the text of *The Dawn*

in Britain, of how Doughty used the words of the earlier English. Doughty's text is rendered into the English of our time with the closest possible correspondence, word to word, between the two time-separated English languages. This work, based on the intimate acquaintance with the verbal make-up of *The Dawn in Britain* that was acquired in the building of the glossary itself, should reveal the intensity of Doughty's quest for the discipline of linguistic conscience that words seriously treated invite from their users.

There remained, after my husband died, the writing of an accompaniment of commentary for the small work. There also remained unaccomplished a joint reviewing of a considerable portion of the transposed, or translated, text. I had learned enough about Doughty's words to have competence as a critic and adviser in this special project, but we did not reach all my notes as far as I had checked the text; my inclination, as I proceeded to do what needed doing to bring the work to a publishable state, was to leave the textual body of the work, my husband's rendering of the Doughty lines into contemporary English, as he had left it. I felt no hesitancy towards the providing of explanatory comment. We had made experimental attempts, separately and jointly, over the years, to tell the story of Doughty as a linguistic story, for introduction to an envisaged future publication of *The Dawn in Britain* with glossary; and it was assumed between us that the ultimate realization would be the work of both. I have, as I write this, reached a far point in preparation of the book comprising my husband's linguistic exercise and narrative and critical commentary of mine.

Chapter 4: *The Inner Guidance*

1. This view may be stated thus: there is an immediate maturity in the sympathetic attitude to words with which their users respond to their existence, the attitude being itself latent in that which is distinctly human in beings, before they know of words as part of their human environment. The processes that function by words—the processes from which words issue for their functioning—are part of human nature; the gift of language antecedes actual linguistic experience.

Misunderstanding of the quality of the motive disposition of human beings to have words results from endeavors to analyze the nature of language by making deductions as to "how it started" on the basis of study of contemporarily observable primitive languages. For example, the make-up of the vocabulary of such languages prompts generalizations to the effect that the words of primitive languages deal with sensations and impressions, and not with abstract ideas; and the intrinsically intellectual nature of language is treated as a phenomenon of development. Rather is it important to note, in the observa-

tion of primitive languages, that whatever its vocabularistic make-up, a language is, be it what is called primitive, most characteristically marked by its having a composition that serves the rational organization of thought. That it does so is not a function imposed on it, but one towards which it has formed itself, at the dictate of its nature.

Any language evinces a serviceability for expressive utterance that will be understandable because of the rationality of the processes of expression. It is not the word-subjects linguistically dealt with that define the character of linguistic operations: it is the general technique employed in them. The words of a language, whatever their topical nature, are in their essentials intellectual entities, and exact intellectual observance of rational discipline for their effective expressiveness and intelligibility. Deductions as to abstractness of thinking are irrelevant to the question of vocabularistic make-up. The degree of abstractness of thinking provided for in language is a uniform quality in languages; it is the general temper of language that determines this, not the individual vocabularistic content. The vocabulary of a language tells of the particular life-setting of its speakers, not of the nature of language itself. Language has only the setting of cosmically uniform human nature; it is the instrument by which this nature can achieve intellectual concentration of itself.

Chapter 5: *The Guardians*

1. Of linguistically perverse practices that seem to have become "unchangeable" may be cited such verbal forms as the following:

"I don't want to hurt your feelings, but—"

The form "don't want" is senseless, a locutory ineptitude hardened into an inexpressive colloquialism. An expressive locution would be: "If I hurt your feelings, in speaking so, I regret this." The rejected idea of "wanting" to hurt is a false intrusion.

"I'll let you know tomorrow."

The "let" introduces a conception altogether false to the kind of circumstances in which this locution is employed: there is no element of relaxing from a withholding of information. A linguistically inherent implication of *not* exercising power to withhold it is converted into a meaningless colloquialism, to employ for an ingratiating effect hardly detectable as such.

"Dear Mr. Smith—-"

This salutatory "dear" does violence to a word of long-tried usefulness for the expression of tender appreciation of someone or something as valuable to one by its very existence by making it serve in the predicament of an emotional

impotence to deal with a universally common, personally simple, circumstance, that of finding oneself in communication-encounter with a fellow human being: all its meaning is voided, just the skin left, for a "feel" of unspecific non-gruffness (though what follows of communication may be specifically worse than gruff in its actual writing tone). This locution is so deeply lodged in linguistic custom that any questioning of it is likely to be viewed almost everywhere as a naïve trivializing. How much damage the prevalence of this unchangeable "usage" does might be measured by the responses to criticism of it.

"Yours sincerely"—"Yours cordially"—etc., etc.

Such "unchangeable" forms as these not only shatter confidence in the worth of "sincere" and "cordial" as words of bona fide substantiality and distinction of meaning: they make a mockery of the locution "yours," which is potentially one of high emotionality of expressiveness when treated with syntactical propriety, and not flung upon the page for the recipient to interpret as meaning whatever he-she cares, or chooses without caring, to make of it.

Here are some examples, not happily brought forward, of how language is not "always changing."

Chapter 7: *The Nature of Meaning*

1. Our view of language as a complex and thorough provision-apparatus for the needs and possibilities of thought-expression has been presented in the early pages of this book. Our note to Chapter 1 treats of a view, formed in the laboratory of scientific linguistic analysis, that assigns to language native functions that do not pertain to intellectual operations but a variety of non-intellectual forms of behavior. It is relevant to what is argued on p. 91 as to language's character as a protector of the thinking-capabilities from the mind's continual exposure to potentially disordering experience to point to such theorizing as that of John E. Pfeiffer, whose book, *The Emergence of Man* (1969), presents a biological explanation of the ancestry of human aptitudes, including the linguistic aptitude. Guesses as to what a Darwinian reconstruction of the remote human past allows to be deduced about language have more credit in these times, as made from a "scientific" point of view, than conceptions of its nature resting on what it reveals itself to be in living self-characterization of its developed identity. Language *is* observable as inconsistent with itself when it is not serving the orderly action of thought to its issue in comprehensive expression. But contemporary human beings are offered, in the name of scientific enlightenment, vistas of reconstruction of linguistic

origins in which, for instance, words are seen as a by-product of the play-activity of the young of the aboriginal human animals. Yet it is reasoning of a more enlightened sort to construe an original fact of word-beginnings in sharp thrusts of intellectual effort of the same quality as are those that are now the active substance of the language-experience, in a profusion of differing articulately effective instances.

Searches for the significance of things peculiarly human in the accidental origins that are the beginning-of-the-story, in the evolutionary view of human existence (as accidental origins are, indeed, the beginning and end of all scientific explanation), submerge the actuality, which can only be encountered in the unity of its characteristics, in the depths of a purposively assumed ignorance of it. The principle of this method of knowledge is that the actuality is better knowable in imaginatively historicized remoteness, better accounted for in terms of what is most easily dissociable from it, in the immediately observable integrality of its nature, than in terms of *that*. The notion of a "deep structure" underlying language evolutionarily, which belongs to this intellectual system, and which has weighted the philosophic trend of contemporary linguistics, entirely blocks out the possibility of knowing how language is made from use of the words of a language with full consciousness of and fidelity to their character as partaking each, with functional fidelity, of the livingly enduring actuality that the language is. Language is all in evidence, in words; analytical substitutes for direct knowledge of it presume actualities that are not actually, but only arguably, evident. In trying to know language as something at a remove from themselves, in their living possession of it, human beings deal both in substitutes for the knowledge of *it* and for the knowledge of themselves as human. (Is not language the working essence of that which is human self-extracted from that which is not?)

Chapter 8: *Language and Linguistics*

1. Where words are defined on the basis of there being a restricted number of words "which are naturally the key words for Dictionary purposes," as they are in *The General Basic English Dictionary,* defining is necessarily limited to rudimentary, kindergarten explanation. The introduction claimed for the work the virtue of "not going around in circles" as other dictionaries did by giving "the sense of a word with the help of another which is itself made clear by going back, sometimes in a roundabout way, to the first." The definitions in this dictionary are, in fact, more self-swallowing than those of dictionaries having bona fide title to the description "general." Here is a sample definitional route followed in this dictionary (we give the main elements of each definition): *force*—"quality of being strong, power of body or mind"; *power*—

"quality of being strong enough, able, to do something, sp., physical force"; *strong*—"having, using, marked by, great, sp., physical, force." The difference between this and other dictionaries in respect to "going around in circles" is that in this one the circles are smaller.

2. The notions of the French psychoanalytical theorist Dr. Jacques Lacan illustrate how the positions of scientific linguistics reinforce new philosophic interpretations of human existence that tear it out of the contexts of human self-consciousness (which, in their entirety, are the contexts of reason!), and make the essential human being a mere response-mechanism. In Dr. Lacan's philosophy, the human being is the response-instrument of the Unconscious, and the Unconscious is existence itself impinging on this being in the form of language. And language is but a complex of patterns of physical behavior originating in significances of which the speaker is the involuntary actor-out: it is the physical agglomeration identified by the structuralists as language, not the rational instrument of the purposefully conscious being, which it has been traditionally taken to be. Indeed, "*it*" speaks, according to the Lacan linguistics-based philosophy, not the speaker: "To be is to be spoken." Not surprisingly, this philosophy looks to the discovery of principles of logic, of the rational key to language, outside the scope of language's own meaning-functions, which are seated in words and dependent for exercise on the rational volition of the speaker, and envisages the desideratum as an algebraically formulatable system. This is in general accord with the science-inspired view of rationality as not inhering generically in the intellectual processes of language. The new factor here is the new degree to which human beings are dehumanized, in the conception of the relationship existing between them and language—and the new extent to which language is dispossessed of its historic identity as the humanly formed instrument of conscious human personality. "Structural" linguistics, reducing speech to the routines of a socially regulated mechanics of utterance, opened the way for the reduction of the human being to personal nullity.

By such philosophic reading, existence itself cannot but be Nullity Itself, a great, busy Intellect without purpose, personality or sense, passing on its predicament to these little beings of its automatic creation, made in its image: and the little beings would be best advised not to try to make sense of it. No one and nothing is thus responsible for anyone or anything except the human intellects that assume the responsibility of demonstrating, with the help of science, that this—this existence—is no place for responsibility. Such advanced philosophic schools-of-thought of the time revoke the human conscience, in its universal proportions of responsible feeling.

3. The new modern psychology of logic is the philosophical arm of linguistical science. The study of logic, transplanted from the ground of tradi-

tional philosophy to that of science, as host-ground for philosophy itself, has ceased to be an investigation of the nature of the logical and the illogical by linguistic tests of propositional statements. In the new kind of logic, it is not statements themselves that are tested, according to laws of rational tenability as the criterion of truth, but language itself. The statements tested are not treated in good faith as honest-to-goodness statements, or, indeed, chosen or constructed for their serviceability as such. They are chosen or constructed as examples of what language is "like," and put through a gymnastics of supposedly scientific common-sense evaluation that reveals nothing about the logical or illogical make-up of the statement, serves only the prepared objective of demonstrating that language itself is very shaky in its logical structure.

Psychologically modernized logic, which takes much of its method from the simplicities and economies of mathematics, subjects language, when applied to it, to an obscuring of its natural logical complexities from which it emerges intellectually suspect—for those mentally committed to the precepts of this logic. Language "does not necessarily have any bearing on the truth of these statements." Since discorrespondent descriptions have the same validity, according to such precepts, a lie could retain its name of lie and still count as the equal of what by linguistic logic (as distinguished from the psychological, non-linguistic logic of linguistic science) is a truth.

Foreword to Part 4

1. For example, there is now not, just "grammar": there is "transformational grammar." There is not, just grammatical principle: there is "transformational-generative" (or "generative-transformational") theory. And, not only linguistic analysis or "logical" analysis: there is "tagmemic" analysis. And not merely syntax: there is "analytic" syntax, comprising "self-interpreting syntactic formulas." And all this is continually undergoing multiplication. Besides linguistics or general linguistics or "structural" linguistics, there is "diachronic" linguistics, also "psycholinguistics"—and historical linguistics, field linguistics, and, it might be, linguistic linguistics. Beneath a greatly diversified headline jargon comes still more in sub-headings, and, then, a mass of minutiae—altogether, a stupefying manufacture of laboratory-talk about words, removing them to distances from common knowledge at which they lose their linguistic identity.

Chapter 11: *The Knowledge of Meanings*

1. It is to the point of our report of our recognition of the existence of a bond of a like sense of linguistic and human values between our vision of the

possibility of a regeneration of the human linguistic sensibility (and intelligence) and Doughty's vision of it that we record our consciousness of elements of impossibility in his vision. We shall limit ourselves to generalizations; they should be understood as doing some injustice to Doughty's achievement. It must be said that he miscalculated the proportions of the plight of his fellow-countrymen—and fellow-speakers of the English language: it was worse than could be comprehended in terms of comparison with the earlier state of natural and literary and linguistic dignities. Further: what to do with the expanded later English language that *is*—with lines of life in it, and therefore of some discoverable living lines of principle? He cast the battle on a ground removed from the actual scene of the problem on account of which he gave battle. He chose a short-cut to the solution of problems of widest and gravest human importance. This left the way to solution still to be found. But no one had gone so far in locating the problem as one *there*.

2. Our speculation as to the character of the first, primitive utterances, if correct, might justify the view that the first *words,* following upon crudely name-like pre-words, were elemental nouns, constituting, themselves, language—the initial means of speech, that had to be made to suffice until word-form underwent diversification. There has been advanced, however, with scholarly data offered in support, a view that makes the verb the dominant word-form in the early stages of language's existence. Tabulations to be found described in *The History and Origin of Language* by A. S. Diamond (Methuen 1959) are taken to establish the numerical predominance of verbs in primitive languages and the gradual decline in the use of verbs in the development of the languages of civilized peoples, and rise in frequency of the use of nouns and other parts of speech. The predominance of nouns over verbs—given that it is a characteristic of advanced stages of linguistic development—does not establish that nouns are not the *natural* key components of a language, the primary constituents of a sentence. The predominance of verbs over nouns, to the extent to which it is indeed a characteristic of early or early-stabilized linguistic tendencies, could be reasonably taken to be linguistically abnormal by long-term linguistic evaluation—as many of the features of human habit of old time, or peculiar to old unchanging societies, cannot be viewed as humanly normal, necessarily. Who, a person sensitive to the nature of sentences as meaning-structures each complete in itself, a unity, can think that the domination of sentence-sense by action-sense, or verb meaning, is not a linguistic curiosity? In certain cases where there is an apparent dominance of sentences by verbs, allowance may need to be made for a possible imperfect comprehension of the grammatical peculiarities of the language; what is counted a verb may be an agglomeration of speech-parts. Primitive or antique languages are

not necessarily grammatically comparable point for point with civilized or modern language-systems. Furthermore, the primitive languages themselves are too far gone in grammatical and syntactical formalization to be regarded as throwing light on what the rudimentary beginnings of language anywhere were like.

3. It may be appropriately noted here that names in regular linguistic use, the standard names such as names of countries forming part of the vocabulary-at-large of a language, take on a word-like character in undergoing grammatical variation. "Austria," for example, can be no more, verbally, than a name. It does not "mean," only indicates. While it has the grammatical status of a noun in a sentence, it has none of the internal linguistic characteristics of a noun; as a fixed point in a sentence to which other words of the sentence relate, it has weight as a sound-quantity of a certain evocative (calling-up) force, rather than as a logical quantity. Adjectivalized into "Austrian," however, it becomes something else. "Austria" points attention to a single geographical political entity, in a sentence. "Austrian" is no longer a simple device of indication. Qualities of meaning have entered into it. It has become definable, though limitedly so because limited in meaning by the basic name-narrowness of the base-form "Austria." It makes a distinction that, though it is one restricted in sense to such a simple idea as that of belonging to, or pertaining to, or relating to, Austria, has a diverse applicability. "Austrian," that is, has more reality as an adjective than "Austria" has as a noun—is more of a word. The like can be said of "Austrian" in the phrase "an Austrian." Here is a distinction in which that made by the adjective has been endowed with a personal implication and transmuted into one of noun-force: something of a characteristically linguistic quality has entered, here, into this derivative of a name. It is well to be aware of such questions of verbal value as these. They lie at the fringes of the problems of language; but sensitivity to the central linguistic considerations is not complete without sensitivity to them.

4. The word "truth" is commonly, now, subjected to the same kind of fallacious argument. Such argument forms part of the multi-favored contemporary intellectual position that makes truth a variable. Tyrannical orthodoxy or fervent benighted belief, on the one hand, and on the other, new linguistic insensitivity, throw the mind back to the earliest child-conditions of word-learning, in which words are known associatively, as names, utterances that identify, rather than, rationally, as utterances that mean. The idea that truth is a variable necessarily leads into the idea that the word "truth" has no sure reality of meaning. Some of the confusion that exists about the word "truth" comes of a running together of two words "truth," as in "to speak with truth," in which the subject of meaning is a quality distinguished in uttered words,

and as in "the truth is difficult to find," in which the subject is a statement the words of which collectively possess this quality. Both words "truth" are concerned with a quality inhering in used words. But general linguistic loose-mindedness has caused the second "truth" to be primarily suggestive of fact that is an object of knowledge, and this character has spread to the other "truth," with the result that the essential "truth," involving a conception of words so used as to have a certain quality, has become diffuse, vulgarized, largely, into a crude image of discovered or uncovered fact. This process has left little besides sentimental room in contemporary verbal habit for the use of "truth" as other than a name. The mistreatment of "truth" leads especially far in the direction of linguistic demoralization. The good use of words requires the use of them according to principles of language that are in their significance principles of truth. But when knowledge of what truth "is" is the intellectual issue, minds veer from concern with the proper sort of knowledge, which is, knowledge of what "truth" means; linguistic ignorance converts itself into a dogmatic liberalism of view as to what truth "is."

"Beauty" was for long a subject of learned argument. But in its dethronement from the status of a word of high philosophical importance it has descended to a much lower level of interest than has "truth," in its reduction to a word the meaning of which in sophisticated parlance consists largely of reservations. "Beauty" does not have now even the distinction of being a suspect-word: it is, as a word, very largely a mere commonplace, with what beauty "is" a matter for categorical identification, the word itself the name of a kind of merit attributed to things for being pleasurably impressive in their effect on the senses—the implication of intense seriousness, in the attendant emotionality, worn thin.

There had always been some pomp of aesthetic morality attached to the word "beauty" that compensated for what was linguistically immature in its use by reason of its being left partly in a name-like condition of categorical particularity, its *meaning* correspondingly of incomplete distinction. St. Thomas Aquinas' attempt to define "beauty" was in part a treatment of it as a word, and in part a treatment of it as a name. As the name of a kind of merit, it had aesthetic implications of a lofty religious order. As a word it had for him elements in its meaning of a specificness short of constituting the substance of a definition.

Lexicography has had to grope its way out of the confusions, contradictions and shortcomings of philosophical definition while yet respecting the example of the effort of definition, and find a path of procedure in which a simplicity of effective completeness of definition was not a fanciful objective. It has left much behind of the encumbrances of the special-purposes definition

of the philosophical ages; but it has been for long proceeding in a path of merely self-protective intellectual economy in which nothing of new perception of the definitionally necessary and sufficient accretes.

5. The choice of a name can be so much affected by a motive unrelated to the normal name-function of identification that the name chosen does not succeed well in being a name. When names convey dramatically suggestive implications, honorific or laudatory or otherwise attention-drawing, they start with a handicap, as names; but this does not apply necessarily to the naming of people "after" others, since the motive of distinguishing someone by the honored name of another does not necessarily controvert the essential naming-motive. Where the purpose in the bestowing of a name is, beyond every other consideration, to render something or someone identifiable (linguistically identifiable), there are fair chances that the name will outgrow peculiarities of the choice deriving from the influence of other considerations. Many names are long in recovering from influences attending their choice, or their formation: the significance of the choice of a name, or the "meaning" of its make-up, can adhere long to it, and keep it, thus, from being in all truth a name. In some names that have been converted from designations or appellations into names, traces of their origin linger suggestively, blurring somewhat the identification achieved. The name "The United States of America," for example, is not quite perfectly a name: too much remains of what the words tell as words to allow of their evoking with perfect promptness and distinctness the image of country. Where pure name-force is wanted, *America* must be used.

Names, designed, properly, for linguistic convenience, often make inconvenience, drawing more attention to themselves than is becoming to their function. With other types of the verbal field to which a name belongs, such as an appellation, a designation, a title, there is no problem of attention-distribution: one knows immediately where one is linguistically, with these: they are linguistic types that stay within the bounds of their function. Names are subject to disorder. Their linguistic part is not a wholly natural one, linguistically; and, because of this, they can pull consciousness a little too much towards their quarter, in sentences, hold attention there almost hypnotically. The best-conditioned names strain the capability of the sentences in which they function of making a linguistic unity of them and the plain words. Among the difficulties that the presence of names in sentences can cause in them is one peculiar to the sound-aspect of names. There is often an obtrusive play with sound, in the sound make-up of a name, and this interferes both with the orderly operation of the linguistic sense of values, and with the efficient fulfilment of the name-function. Linguistic standards for names require

that the sound-element of a name conform to a reasonable norm of the linguistic ear. All unsimplicity in the make-up of the form of names increases their weakness as features of linguistic procedure, intensifies their inherent tendency to be distractive.

Chapter 12: *The Scope of Definition*

1. Quoted from an article by Professor Wimsatt, "Johnson's Dictionary—April 15, 1955" (this date being the 200th anniversary of the publication of the Dictionary) published in *New Light on Dr. Johnson,* 1959, a commemorative volume of "Essays on the Occasion of his 250th Birthday."

2. There is a stout *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary,* in which the number of historical usage-examples is much reduced; and there are *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* of the two brothers Fowler, and their *Pocket Oxford Dictionary.* The latter, of which the great *Oxford English Dictionary* was the ultimate source, appeared, revised, in 1969 in its fifth edition, and has been commented on as conspicuously liberal and enterprising in its inclusion of new words and usages. A comparison between the first [1924] and fifth editions of this little work, which, of course, provides no historical examples, makes clear the sobering influence the source-work can have on attitudes to the language-suffusing usage-divagations of the present English-speaking period. From the entry *forecastle* to the entry *foreword* (a random choice of a span of words for comparison) one new word appears in the later edition; and this is the linguistically unerratic *forename,* as meaning "first or Christian name." Among the other forty or so words, these are the modifications found:

    1. *forecastle* "raised deck at bow" to "raised deck at ship's bow" (because "bow" has become unfamiliar?); "forward part of upper deck in warship" to "forward part of upper deck in war-ship"; "forward part of under deck in merchant ship" to "forward part of under deck in modern ship, where sailors live" (because "merchant" has become unfamiliar?)
    2. *foreign* "not of or in one's own country"—the same in both, but, further, "of or in some country not in United Kingdom or English-speaking colonies" is modified to " . . . English-speaking countries"
    3. *forestall* some difference, here, in the note on derivation

    This illustrates the temperate mood of this lexicographical area in the matter of usage—as does the increase of but several dozen pages in forty-five years of usage-monitoring.

    In the case of *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* [1911] there have been, in sixty-two years, five editions, and numerous reprintings with revised ad-

denda. But the addenda in the last edition checked by us, that of 1964, contribute but nine pages to a total of 1,531 pages of lexicography. The inroads of contemporary-modern vocabularistic promiscuity into the realm of British lexicography have been kept to a decorous minimum by the natural force of a conservative lexicographical tradition. And even large-scale addition now under way of new vocabularistic material to the master *Oxford English Dictionary* is by *supplements*. While this confinement of continuous progressive vocabularistic modernization to extra-territorial lexicographical regions may be, in Oxford English Dictionary quarters, to some considerable extent based on exigencies of economy, the immediate present and the immediate future are by these extensions of grace less insecure, linguistically, than they would otherwise be.

The new Oxford English Dictionary *Supplements,* of which there will be three, the first of which (A–G) has already been published [1972], will incorporate all the entries contained in the 1933 single Supplement, and entries omitted from that by inadvertence or judgement now revised, and an intensively amplified provision of illustrations; very full provision of details of origin, and etymological information, is likewise a principle of the new volumes, thoroughly followed in the first one. The coverage of new words and usages, many of them dating from 1884, when the Dictionary began publication, extends into most geographical and ethnological areas, and most of the colloquial, and slang, and special cult-like verbal decorum-defying independencies. Apart from the effect of the authentication of title of the entries to the status of "good" words that their inclusion cannot but have in quarters of literateness where the volume is accessible, there is a general swelling of the popular linguistic heart with vague revelling emotions, induced by the mere seeping into the common linguistic air of knowledge of the existence of the new volume, and the project of an enlargement of the main Oxford English Dictionary word-mass by one-eighth of its historic number of entries, and the presumed implication of approval of a new expansion of linguistic libertarianism in higher quarters. The newspapers and other organs of the general Press take pleasure in the arrival of a new topic for a varied course of expatiation on matters linguistic, which always in any case provide a platform for general, easy-going wisdom, in which the observation that language is always changing is always good for a beginning or middle or end touch of the sagacious or all three; and the news that the staid portals of the Oxford English Dictionary have been opened to a mysterious "all" of the "four-letter" words allows of some devulgarized indulgence in vulgarity.

The Editor of the new supplementary Oxford English Dictionary volumes himself speaks words of sanguine-spirited lexicographical modernism that have an old-familiar ring. "The language is changing, and the lexicographer must

respond both to the changes and the quality of taste of his era." Those who concern themselves with such lexicographical performance, from the editorial and otherwise specialistic side to the side of educated lay-interest of various sorts and degrees, show a uniform satisfaction with [the] fact of vocabularistic increase as signifying a susceptibility of language to change to be nurtured under pain of having it slip away through one's teeth. Of course, it is only because language does not change, in its fundamental make-up, and in its vocabularistic essentials, that a profusion of vocabularistic additions fails to overwhelm it and cause the older to sink under the pressure of the newer—with the consequence of the whole's dropping out of sight of mind.

The Editor of the new OED Supplements, Mr. Robert W. Burchfield, provides a clue in the brief quoted account of principle to what has stirred conventional contemporary lexicography, even the agencies of historic responsible lexicographical institutions, to act to give the utmost possible recognition to the greatest possible number of newcomers to what has been the recognized, accredited vocabulary. The first principle is response to "changes." But additions are not "changes," do not in many instances involve a general vocabularistic change. "Changes" is rhetorical shorthand for "the demands of new vocabularistic variety." The standard for additions is, a certain persistence in new verbal customs, and the principle is: let people speak as it pleases them to speak. The second principle is response to the contemporary "quality of taste." This is rhetorical shorthand for the demands of new views of the nature of verbal propriety. The standard for verbal propriety is, a certain persistence in new verbal customs of impropriety, and the principle is: let there be no classifying of *any* words as defective in verbal propriety, let there be no recognized actuality of verbal impropriety. "We are including all these words describing sexual and excretory functions because the taste of the age has changed," Mr. Burchfield says. But this is not a matter of taste. The words in question were exiled from ordinary use not because they were characterized by verbal impropriety, but because they were characterized by human impropriety. They are not, in being lexicographically recognized, transformed into words of verbal propriety: they are added to the accredited vocabulary as words of human *and* verbal impropriety, they cannot be added as anything different. And they will continue to be this in their use after their recognition. The purposive point of the contemporary use of such words is not need of new words, but the pleasure of using, as with propriety of usage, substitutes for existent words and forms of expression belonging to little vocabularies representing aggressive disrespect of the subjects of reference.

The argument that "taste" is involved in the recognition of the old "improper" words is an argument of sophistication used as a shield of cowardice, as the argument of indisputable change is an argument of intellectual respon-

sibility used as a shield of impotence. In both cases, lexicographical professionalism could be exercised with intellectual liberality by organized identification of the character and status of the words and terms listed, an evaluation of them in relation to the language as a *constant,* and as the basic lexicographical concern and object of responsibility. Identificatory ordering of *additions* is even more important than the general vocabularistic ordering we recommend in this book for the clarification of word-meanings according to the principles of relation and distinction in which they exist in the language. The "new" words of sexual and excretory reference could, where an orderly presentation of additions was effected, be classified as indecent alternative terms come into expanded use with varying degrees of purposive substitution of them for the linguistically normal terms, and with varying responses of acceptance and objection.

It is a leaning here perhaps too fond to regard the OED's editorially expressed justification for the extent of the new inclusions, and the quality of some, as of wistful temper, according to its own meaning given for the word. The account of the (modern) meaning reads: "Expectantly or yearningly eager, watchful or intent; *mournfully* expectant or longing." (Italics imposed.) That is, very uneasy, with reservation of tremulous hope that the non-supplementary bulk of the language will somehow hold its own.

Chapter 13: *Words and Terms*

1. The *word* "name" has an established linguistic legitimacy where it implies a description of something as being, or not being, of a certain kind—as, to say of someone's feeling towards another that it does not merit the name of love. The usage is at the sophisticated pole of the use of the word. At the naïve pole of use of it is the old-fashioned grammar-book characterization of a noun as the name of something—which makes names of all nouns. A midway point between these is the bestowing on a term of a double identity of term and categorical name.

The basic word "name" (the capital-letter name) fits only a single function of identification. The subject of identification, with such a name, is in very clear focus. The use of "name" to indicate a generalizing description is wide and varied, and the subjects of descriptive identification are presented, by such names, in unclear focus. The distinction among "name" words of a categorical "name" having a specific classificatory function can confuse the distinctions between terms, categorical names of the linguistic value of terms, and true names, that can only be thought of as names; and confusion as to these distinctions interferes with distinct consciousness of the peculiar identity of *words.* The characterizing of words as names, whether in the making of classificatory

evaluations of them for rhetorical emphasis or for the uses of philosophical abstraction, adds to the general disorder of ideas about the nature of words. And the old loose, stock, identification of nouns as names lingers on in the educated mind, hindering serious appreciation of the nature of words, and of language itself. There is a strong propensity in the common attitude to words as things of meaning, and in the attitude of dictionary-makers, and in that of the linguisticians generally, towards regarding all as in some manner names, because for long, now, in intellectual processes, canons of classificatory association or simple referential departmentalism have been substituted for canons of meaning. Such a rough-and-ready mode of dealing with word-meanings takes on false appearances of objectivity, in dictionaries seeming both liberal and learned.

Categoricalism, the categorical view of words, spread over language, converts it into a neutral ground on which words exist in a state of diffuse difference from one another and diffuse relationship—together, but unorganized. This view throws into obscurity simple problems of word-evaluation to which naming and categorizing processes *are* clues. Thus, to speak of the words "honesty," "probity," "rectitude" as the names of virtues in a certain area of human behavior can be linguistically sensible if this is done with consciousness of using the word "name" rhetorically, to give a categorizing emphasis to the words, while knowing them to be not "the names of things" but pure words, each effecting a distinction of meaning, not mere identification or classification.

The words "tree," "shrub," "bush," can be understandingly evaluated if, while spoken of as names of plants of a certain area of vegetation-kinds, their character as *terms* is not allowed to be lost. As names—categorical names—they seem to have a force of meaning-distinction beyond the ordinary nature of name-words. The special force of precision in the words (in which an original name-force is absorbed!) comes of their having a predominantly terminological character: terms are capable of having, besides simple reference-force, an adjunctive logical (distinction-carrying) force of subordinate functionality. The view of such words as "tree," "shrub," "bush," affects the view of words that particularize upon the peculiar reference-force of these. If "tree" has its proper linguistic value in the mind, the word "oak" and other words thought of as the names of kinds of trees will then more easily fall into lexicographical place. As themselves words of the language, they will have to lose some of their force of imagistic evocations, undergo reduction from their character of name-potency to the plainer functionality: they will have to wear the linguistic identity of terms—terms the original name-character of which is perpetuated in a peculiar limitedness of identification. (Of course, such name-entities as

Latinate botanical names remain names—except as they become de-Latinized, joining the language then, as terms.)

2. In using the word "system" we do not in any sense subscribe to the generalities and technicalities of those linguistic theorists who posit for language a neurophysical substructure, systematically interpretable. Such theorizing, which endeavors to cover, totalistically, the entire detail of language's ramifications in the historical course of human consciousness, attempts to provide an intellectually more comprehensive, humanistically more respectable, psychologically and anthropologically more intricate, account of language than previous and existing scientific accounts of it. Where the others are, variously, critiques or laboratory apparatuses, the totalistic school of linguistical thought (the school of the transformationalists, the proponents of "transformational generative grammar") imagines that it penetrates the living actuality of language, pushing up into it from beneath, from the "deep-structure" level, with the help of a sensorium that supposedly reports on the internalities of the entire linguistic system in terms of its syntactical functioning. The very extensiveness, comprehensive ambitiousness, of this linguistic systematics is more of a hindrance to a general coming of people to their linguistic senses than other endeavors to devise accounts of language as scientifically explainable. But no account of language can serve human need adequately that is not *systematic.* Language is concerned with what is to know. Every word of a language belongs to a system of knowledge-integration; all the words of a language make the values of unity of thought, which are the fundamental human values, operable. Nothing more novel than ordered lexicography and faithful learning of its lessons is the requisite. Anything less of linguistic explanation will be complex with new confusions, complexly and newly confusing to common linguistic intelligence.

Chapter 14: *The Words Miscalled Synonyms*

1. A passage from a book of earnest scholarly concern with matters of language, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek,* by Thorleif Boman, translated from the German by Jules L. Moreau [1961], contains a passage on one of the major scientific theorizing-on-language movements of the age. The sense of it meets our own view of these movements as not concerned, devotedly, with language itself, but concerned with the pursuit, for its own sake, of a professional activity that uses language as an abstract subject upon which the intellect may engage itself according to special predispositions: theoretically tenable propositions issue that are not generically, only arguably, relevant to language's actual nature and internal circumstances (functional principles).

A man belonging to the Vienna Circle like Rudolf Carnap is looking not so much for a logic of language as for a language for logic, that is to say, he does not bury himself affectionately in the existing language to discover its inherent logic, but from his philosophical ideal of logic he criticizes actual languages as more or less unfit for his purpose and tries to form a logical sign language with the greatest possible elimination of words.

Chapter 17: *From Words to Words: The Continuum*

1. No reference has been made in the consideration of "structure," "building," "edifice," etc., to such words of special connotation as "mansion," "palace," etc. And there has also been left unexamined the more important case of the word "house": question of the placement of this is not dissociable from that of the placement of "building." But there is need, with "house," of introduction of a new element of meaning-evaluation. One must brace oneself to identification of it—as with "mansion," "palace," also—as a *term*. But the problem of identification (as between word and term character) is secondary to the problem of placement: it cannot be assumed merely on the basis of strong associative connection with "building" to be a natural inhabitant of the same area of logical placement as that in which "building" belongs. "House" will be found, on close consideration, to belong, by logical assignment on the basis of direct evaluation of meaning, "under" a placement-heading concerned with *function*. That is, it is not in connection with facts of construction or building that "house," or "mansion," or "palace," etc., has meaning but with the matter of designated use. Lodgement, residence, occupancy, utilitarian function: such are the orientation-tests properly applicable to the placement problem presented by these words. Once one has taken the step of dissociating "house" from necessary placement somewhere in the immediate neighborhood of "structure," "building," and begun evaluating it definitionally in the setting of this other kind of orientation, such a question as what relation there might be between "house" and "home" eliminates itself: there is no occasion for consideration of this, the matter being comprised and resolved in the general character of the meaning-area in which "house" belongs.

The case of "edifice," in this context, provides another instance of resolution of a problem of placement left over from our considerations as to "structure," "building," "edifice," "pile." "Mansion" and "palace" rise up as—surely?—standing in some close meaning-relation to "edifice"; one will find them thus placed, indeed, in the conventional word-books. But, with the principle of functionality (lodgement, occupancy, etc.) discovered as pertinent to "house," one has, also, strengthened clarification of the strict, exclusive

pertinence of "edifice" to what concerns its nature as something *built,* and not at all the matter of function: one can cut it loose associatively from the tangle of automatic mixture of it with "mansion," "palace," etc., in which it is lexicographically, and in usage-mentality, caught. This commentary on "house," and "edifice" may suggest how such exploration of the total territory of word-meanings as we outline in this book can make words exist for their users in the full realness of being distinctly themselves, each potent for use by its individual integrity in meaning *its* meaning without dependence on or confusion with that of any other word.

Chapter 18: *Truth*

1. The following is a reflection of the first of us, recorded some years before the book's completion. It has some pertinence to the view presented in this portion of the book on the nature of the mind.

Matter seems to undergo adaptation for the containment of mind; but, better to speak of its meeting the influence of the One Unity that, as met, has the form of presence to matter of *mind.*

The new scientific breadth of view—the supposedly newly vast conception of the material—deceives. The vastness is a religiosity of experimental supposition. Piecemeal account of the universe bewilders imagination of it, and dissipates the general sense of it lodged in the human consciousness.

Words convert the scene of being from the disjunctive physical to the joining-scene of the mental. The change of scene is a conversion of the circumstantial into the world of mental reality where unity, not difference, is the governing emphasis and interest.

(The thought, here, can be extended to the vocabularistic division between terms and words proper that we have posited as fundamental in the character of language. The terms reflect the separations of materiality; the words, the principle of unity, which mind articulates for spirit (unity moving).)

2. The choice of the noun "truth" as the definitional base, rather than the adjective "true" is to be understood as determined by the greater concentration in the noun of meaning-connection with the dominant proposition of *sure character* of that which is said—of the matter communicated to one or cast by one oneself into explicit form: there is a unity of stress in the word's—the noun's—historic and surviving function (not essentially destroyed by the contemporary dissipated sense of the word's linguistic reality) upon that proposition that cannot be found in the adjectival original, which has become a

number of different-meaning adjectives. That one of the number of adjectives "true" which retains the sense of the utterance, expression-depiction, perfectly trustable as such, has dwindled in its meaning-force: the stress of importance it gives to the character it attributes to the modified word is of much less intensity than the stress of importance that the noun "truth" gives that character, in nominalizing it. Such a development as this follows no rule of philological science. In any case of development of variant word-forms from an original presumable single form, the course is an individual course within the entire language's development, finding its own congruity in the whole.

3. Although no further exemplification of deliberate contemporary revision of the idea of the nature of truth, and of the meaning of the word "truth," should be necessary, there is a variation on the switching of "true," from what is comically called in the new truth-ideology its "classical sense," to a non-true sense allowed to serve as a conditionally true one, that ought to be noted if only to make sure that it is comprehended into what thin slivers the matter of truth has been cut up in the world of intellectual argumentation. Central in the additional example here provided is a doctrine of "models," a "model" being a determination arrived at in one area of intellectual exploration, according to which a "model" of scientific context might have application in a context of religion, these areas of argumentation being called "instrumentalism." In the play of argumentation here, "models" may be applied to the evaluation of concepts or statements as to their "truth" without having any validity in themselves as true or not true. This argument in turn is countered with a variant instrumentalist position according to which models, rather than being held to be in themselves true or not true, ought to be rated as somewhat of the character of truth. These different "instrumentalist" positions are varied by others.

The total (classical) sense of this concatenation of arguments seems to be that all agree that if reality were real and truth were true there would be no argumentation as to the reality of reality and the truth of truth. But if they are not sure, what are they talking about? With their word "truth" they are not talking about truth. Moreover, they cannot, with it, be talking about anything. There is no reality comprehended in their conception of reality, and no actuality of truth in their conception of truth. They are following the course of negation of meaning characteristic of the illogical positivism that has clamped upon this age a mind-paralysing grip of intellectual fashion.

Chapter 20: *Words and Things*

1. There is quoted below a passage from a study made by the first author forty years ago, the manuscript of which, from which she became separated, having come recently into her hands. It touches upon important female deities

of ancient times, making reference to their "mother" aspect, and their association with certain aspects of earth mythicized as the bountiful nurturer:

> In Mycenaean civilization the important deity was female—a mother-god. And certain primitive female deities, earlier than the Mycenaean age, survived into Hellenistic times; some were imported from Asia Minor or Egypt to supplement, in the form of earnest cults, the hackneyed traditional gods. The simplest, most comprehensive notions were represented by Rhea—old Mother-Everything—and Demeter, the primitive corn goddess, and her daughter Persephone. In Rome the *Bona Dea,* Mother Earth, survived from the earliest times, becoming a modernistic cult; and the cult of Cybele was imported during the Punic Wars and widely practised. Isis, the Egyptian goddess of nature and the underworld, was fundamentally more important than Osiris, though Osiris became more important ritualistically; and she was another of the large-scale divinities imported into Rome at the time when the conventional Roman gods were becoming trivial or obsolete. (The Greeks identified the Phrygian Cybele with their all-mother Rhea.)

The associations of the deities were with physical life-giving and life-sustaining functions, but the identity of these was a mystery in its very physicality. Now there is no mystery left in the human sense of the existence of the thing Earth, and of its actualities of intimate relation to human life itself. Yet it still does not exist for its possessors, despite their now greatly specific knowledge of what they have in having it for theirs, in the immediate reality of being *this thing*.

[The manuscript has been published as *The Word "Woman"* (Persea Books 1993, Carcanet 1994). The citation, except for the final parenthesis, is on p. 30.—Ed.]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAYS

Dr. Gove and the Future of English Dictionaries

This is a commentary on the thinking of Dr. Philip B. Gove, the editor of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (W_3, as Dr. Gove calls it, in familiar reference), on the problems of contemporary lexicography, particularly those which the so numerous workers in the field of "linguistics" make for lexicographers who would keep pace to the possible utmost with advances affecting the understanding of things linguistic, but who, unable to function as linguistic scientists themselves, reserve judgement as to a good deal of their prognostications of the ultimate in linguistic knowledge.

In the final contribution, which is by Dr. Gove, to *New Aspects of Lexicography* (1972), a group of essays by different authors edited by Professor Howard D. Weinbrot, in an essay entitled "English Dictionaries of the Future," Dr. Gove travels, or attempts to travel, in an intellectually safe course between the futuristically modern ideas of the scientific-minded linguistic professionals and the rather old-fashioned progressivistic ideas about things linguistic that constitute his actual intellectual position as a lexicographer.

Dr. Gove makes clear, at the very beginning, his leaning to progressivism. "All students of language observe without dispute that language is always changing." *And* for the better: he quotes from John R. Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1848) "The natural tendency of language is to improve." Even as *Who's Who* is now better than it was by its expansion to include leading American athletes, he argues, so are dictionaries "improved" by such additions as that of the baseball term "homer," and all the other words with which the English vocabulary has been—as Webster dictionaries, from earliest to the latest, record—progressively fattened. Lexicographical competence he considers fulfilled when "dictionary-makers continue to be competent observers of

present-day English." The principles of the relation between language and lexicography, according to such attitudes to them, may be formulated thus:

1. Language is always changing.
2. Change in language is always improvement of it.
3. Dictionaries necessarily improve as they report successive changes in language, that is, report how language keeps on improving.

To these formulations should be added these corollaries:

4. Change, and, therefore, improvement, in language consists largely in the addition of new words.
5. Improvement in dictionaries consists largely in the addition of new words to the number of words previously defined.

There is a good deal of progressivistic naïveté in the identification of change and improvement, the bland acceptance as an intellectually broadening process of the disorderings of rational usage and style, and the debasement of standards of coherence in meaning-attribution and sentence-structure and general sense-continuity in linguistic compositions, that have accompanied the growth of the English language into its present size. So much of what passes for beneficial alteration or obliteration of what long obtained as common good-rule and propriety is denominated "modern," as belonging to a new dispensation of liberating laxity, that mere being-modern in temporal, historical, identity can endow something with an aura of meritorious freedom from old progress-inhibiting strictures. There is an innocent predisposition, in those who would live up to their modern life-date with liberal-minded conceptions of the good as exemplified in the new, to an accommodating of their sense of value to the appeals of the modern as an endless totality—to an achieving of some harmony with its chaotically diversified definition of the good. Attitudes to language, belonging to a mental area of extremely mobile sensibility, are expectably responsive to the general intellectual climate of an era. In a lexicographer, and especially in one of Dr. Gove's extensive responsibilities, an active consciousness must be presumed of exposure to criticism, and need felt of some ready answers to it. Dr. Gove's naïveté is, surely, modified, at the least, with regard to the plaints as to the degeneration of the language that are not infrequently launched into the cultural air (in ritualistic cultural pomp), by a resolutely adopted common-sense contentment with the best prevailing lexicographical standards. One may imagine the self-justifying argument as going thus: lexicographers do a good job, and that on which they do their good job has got to be itself good: the goodness is "natural."

It *is* the case that dictionaries *are* quite good jobs *of a certain kind*. Somewhere along the line, in their development, it was generally grasped that the job was a much greater one than it was initially conceived to be when the idea

of making dictionaries first took form in human minds. Up to a certain point, in the course of lexicography, every person who addressed himself to the task of making a dictionary must have experienced the revelation that it was a far more complex one than he had imagined it would be, one calling for far more labor, care, study, wisdom, than he had assumed requisite. It is very plainly visible that, as dictionaries "progressed," they also, gradually, settled into a limitation of the job to a pragmatically determined version of the lexicographical "good."

One can see the model everywhere, in all existent dictionaries, of the lexicographical rule that was adopted as the reasonable desideratum. It is a polished rough-and-ready job. It is development arrested at a degree of convenience of execution beyond which the requirements of the lexicographer would be an exactitude of definitional treatment that no one expected of him, and no one *wanted*. The arrival at this point can be historically fixed, one may reckon. Would it not be just where lexicography, in its development, and the degeneration, in literature and the educated use of words generally, of the natural human sense of language as informed with a morality of right and wrong principles of truth protecting words and their users against false and ignorant use, came together in a confluence of progressivist forces, lexicographical, literary, intellectual, political, social—all streaming to one level?

While there would be difference in the dating of a general settling of standards of linguistic knowledge and intellectual discipline in linguistic practice at the level of a literate mean, all can surely agree, even those who would disagree with the view that lexicography and linguistic practice have long been carried along in a progress of deteriorating linguistic sensibility, that (for all the philosophizing about language's continual changing) the ordinary vocabularistic bulk of the (English) language is in a static, seemingly permanent, condition of definedness, in dictionaries, and in the word-consciousness of its speakers. And there would be, likely, little disagreement with the proposition that, for this bulk of the ordinary vocabulary, the settled ideas of meaning, in the dictionaries, and in minds, are of a loose approximateness to a generally assumed variability in meaning. Speakers of the language have become immobilized in a mutuality of liberal toleration of settledly incomplete thinking in the construing of the meanings of words in their use, and interpretation. That such a condition belongs necessarily to a far stage in linguistic decline perhaps needs no prolonged, elaborating demonstration. The poet Charles M. Doughty saw English linguistic decline as having begun even by the time of Spenser, who endeavored to resist the linguistic latitudes that had become literarily fashionable in his time.

Dr. Gove pictures the state of English-language definition, with an air of comfortable professional assurance which it is difficult to refrain from calling complacency, as in large part consisting of *work done* (notwithstanding the

settled lexicographical, and general intellectual, proposition that language is "always changing"). The remaining part is to be understood as concerned with intricacies of technical attention to incidental peculiarities of word-form and grammatical modes ever requiring improved identification, and needed refinements of coverage of usage variations and curiosities, revealed by workers in the still new field of language-analysis to be in kind and number beyond anything that had been in other times lexicographically imagined or anticipated. Dr. Gove's ready admissions of there being very much ahead to be done in new lexicographical productions do not include any expression of a sense of need of intensified application to the intrinsic problems of definition itself, the accounting for *meaning,* not usage: the elementary work of the determination of meanings receives no attention as being other than routine, for lexicographers, at any rate.

Such virtual dismissing, as in large part solved, of the problems of linguistic knowledge as human problems of thought, the forming and articulating of it in adequately expressive form, is tantamount to the dismissing, by some spokesman of current philosophic and religious positions of modern-type scholarly liberalness, as in large part solved, of the problems of spiritual knowledge, as human problems of understanding of existence itself, the achieving of this in adequate experiences of personal consciousness. Dr. Gove's conception of "where we are" in the matter of language is that of an institutionalized progressivism. The reigning institution of lexicographical practice represents, for him, a reasonable limit of achievement except for an eternal future of finishing touches, as a comparably progressivist reigning institution of philosophical-religious sophistication, comfortably arrested in certainty-like dubiety, can represent to its leaders and its followers a reasonable limit of achievement except for an eternal future of finishing touches to its ever-temporary solutions of achievement-proud incompletion.

Dr. Gove's conception of the full task remaining to English-language lexicographers, apart from the making of periodic enlargements on an "international" scale of what has been already done, can be understood, from what he has written of it, to be divided into three parts, in proportions left to the future of lexicography to determine. Actual old-fashioned progressivistic linguistic research—straight laboring to define the new words satisfactorily (define them, not just theorize scientifically on their usage implications) and the relatively few words he may be imagined as regarding as not in a permanent condition of adequate definedness—appears to constitute the smallest portion of the field for future lexicographical endeavor. The rest is divided between the potential contribution of computer technology, and the help to be drawn by lexicography from the labors of "language-analysis"—seen by Dr. Gove as already storing up data of a psychologically useful sort.

Only in the early twentieth century, Dr. Gove tells, did lexicography get help outside lexicography. The picture of the nature of this help, Dr. Gove sketches in very light strokes. Editors of the second *Webster's International Dictionary* were "not as aware of their ignorance of language behavior" as were those of "W_3." "Language behavior," one learns, is nothing other than how people use words. The term, the gift of linguistic science, signifies that there are no scientifically legitimate standards of good word-use, that all use of words by people is individualistically determined—is "behavior." Dr. Gove deplores the fact that because of the influence of certain handbooks of good usage in the early half of this century at least two generations of English teachers "have insidiously taught that there is only one kind of acceptable English." This is a foolish construction of an opposing anti-progressivist argument for the purpose of demolishing it. It is everywhere observable that usage—customs of usage—vary, and that personal habits of word-use differ, very considerably. So what?—as a perhaps dated vulgarism puts it. Does the existence of all sorts and degrees of moral disposition in people, from nobility of will to carelessness as to consequences to actual attitudes of a criminal quality, establish that all past doctrine averring the practicability of moral judgement is something "insidiously taught"?

The weakness of the doctrine of verbal relativity with which lexicographical progressivism has modernized itself is in its reliance on the word "usage" as its key term. The ultimate concern of the lexicographer must be with *meaning*. Very conspicuous, in Dr. Gove's essay, is the absence throughout of any discussion of meaning, or of the process of *definition*. Despite the confident submission of the "anything goes" (to take advantage of another vulgarism, for speed) rule of usage—Dr. Gove's decree that there are no linguistically ordained principles of word-use and no qualifying distinctions of kind of use appropriate to lexicographical interest—there is implicit in Dr. Gove's account of his lexicographer-position an appraisal of existing lexicographical achievement as of a fixed, self-sustaining substantiality. Of the word-definitions within the area of his responsibility, he must think rather well, hold them to be, for the most part, "good" definitions. If they are so, what of the use of them? Is Dr. Gove's idea of a good definition, after all, one that fits the use of the word in the adaptation of its meaning to the range of psychological disparity existing among speakers of the language, disparity in "linguistic behavior"—or might one say "linguistic ethics"? How settled a provision of lexicographical guidance is that?

As to the future potential contribution of computer technology to lexicographical advance, Dr. Gove is generous in conceiving of assistance from that quarter in the lexicographical dealing with the accumulation of all sorts of data with which lexicographical records are cumbersomely weighted. Computer-

ship is foreseen as a master secretary-editor of the accumulating accumulation, organizing it for convenient reference, simplifying it by the elimination of the merely duplicative. He draws a line at allowing for the potential usefulness of computership for defining, itself, but displays a will to be understood as unselfishly objective in not conceiving of the possibility of the replacement of lexicographers by computers. He limits himself, in drawing that line, to a profession of inability to imagine computers as defining "by techniques using formal logic." This amounts to an imagining of the possibility of techniques that would not use formal logic—but use some sort of logic. What sort of logic of an informal sort is Dr. Gove able to conceive of as possibly usable by computers, for definitions at least as definitionally effective, settledly useful, as he assumes the bulk of those of the lexicographical production with which he identifies himself to be? How can one regard such objectivity as other than an expedient diplomacy of avoidance of engagement with the forces of the scientific take-over of the things of language, to the limits of scholarly peaceableness?

Dr. Gove commits himself more extensively with regard to contribution to the lexicographical future to be anticipated from the science or sciences of linguistics, in a general way. Help for lexicography from "outside" lexicography means to him help from the protagonists of "language analysis"—of whom he cites Jespersen as an early example. He believes that the possibilities of benefit from language-analysis researches, in the form of illumination of "language behavior," have been demonstrated, to some extent, in the third edition of *Webster's International Dictionary*. Of just what such illumination consists one can only deduce from the examples given by Dr. Gove in his essay on the products of the investigations of the language-analysts that he considers to have bearing on the concerns and problems of lexicographers. Surely, one may take those concerns and problems to be centrally and rulingly concerns and problems having to do with the determination of the meanings of words for trustworthily definitive accounts of them made in the interest of stabilizing and perfecting the common knowledge of words. But what Dr. Gove cites in illustration of the gifts language-analysis is capable of making to lexicography touches nowhere critically on questions of meaning or considerations of the procedures and objectives of definition.

What does language-analysis add of notable lexicographical value to lexicography as the defining of the words of a language, to assist in the knowledge of them for correct use, by observations concerning the existence of such variant plurals as *cupfuls* and *cupsful* (one of Dr. Gove's examples)? "Cupsful" is not in fact a variant of "cupfuls." It is a late-modern development reflecting obliteration of the meaning-force of the "ful" in "cupful." This is a quantity designation: a cupful is that quantity of something equivalent to a full cup-measure of it. Three cupfuls is the quantity equivalent to three times a single

full cup-measure of it. "Cupsful" is also said. But it is said because sense of the original, and for long the only, form of the word has grown obscure in late-modern word-use. It may be that, although "cupsful" is used frequently, while "cupfuls" conforms to the implicit, intended, sense of the word, the users of both are without a clear conception of what they are saying: that they are mere variant forms of a word-blur, no longer a word and a deviant form of it. The contemporary lexicographer does not hesitate to record usages just because they are usages. He is lavish in his hospitality to verbal innovations and diversifications, needs no prompting by language-analysts. Help from "inside" lexicography is all he needs for an enlightened *lexicographical* review of the case of these "variants"; this would point up how the variants of long-established words, or new words—and such a word as "cupsful" is nothing other than a new word—added to the language, often come into existence from lapsing attention in speakers of the language to matters of meaning (and get perpetuated by dictionary recognition of a kindred linguistic temperament).

Another example cited by Dr. Gove of the kind of help now become available to lexicographers through "language analysis" is its distinguishing such verbs as "cost" and "weigh" as "middle verbs"—of which he had never heard, he says. Calling these "middle verbs" contributes nothing to a better definition of them. But a newly careful rendering of their meanings could contribute to a better understanding of their grammatical functioning. "Cost" as in "It costs five dollars" can be rendered definitionally as "to be of (a certain) cost." In like manner, "weigh," in "It weighs five pounds," can be definitionally rendered as "to be of a certain weight." Or, the formula might be "to have (a certain) cost," "to have (a certain) weight"—whichever formula was determined on, the specifications "five dollars," "five pounds," would be types of prerequisite qualifying components of a verb-form that, complete with component, constituted an idiomatic grammatical entity, or, it could be called, an idiomatic rhetorical entity. The qualifying component, the specific "five dollars," or "five pounds," or, it could be such a qualifier as "a great deal," has an adverbial character within the compass of the idiom as inclusive, in its verbal character, of the qualifier. All this ensues from lexicographical "analysis," or more simply, consideration of the matter of meaning—consideration of the meanings of the words in question, and recognition of the meanings as pertaining to the words as idiomatically used words. The identification of them as "middle verbs" contributes nothing to identification of them according to how they mean.

Similarly, the "outside" help to lexicography, from language-analysis, of identifications of other verbal oddities such as "A course of action was *agreed on*" or "He was *looked up to*" as "pseudo-passives" are evasions of the central and primary consideration for comprehension of what the linguistic case is, here, which is, what the facts of meaning are, here. "Was agreed on" is no

"pseudo-passive." "Agreed on" is the past-participle of "agree on" functioning as a virtual compound, a single verb-entity, of such a meaning as "to determine by agreement." "Agree" itself has a passive use, as in "It was agreed . . . ," the past-participle of it having such a meaning as "made a subject of agreement." "Agree" (as in "agree to continue" or "agree that . . . ") would only be defined in similar way—"make a subject of agreement"—as a transitive verb. Its main grammatical character is intransitive, and the definition of it as such would be a fundamental definition, not one employing a version of the word itself. The passive forms of "agree" and "agree on" are idiomatic enlargements of the utility of "agree." Attempts to solve their curiousness by grammatical classification will not yield illumination of their meaning-character: only a viewing of them from inside a lexicographical frame of "language analysis" can do this—and such a viewing will alone throw light on their grammatical character.

In the case of "He was looked up to," analysis of this curiosity in which meaning is made the key to its linguistic nature will focus on the meaning-value of "was looked up to," and identify a compound verb-entity "to look up to" as the active verb-basis of a genuine passive. This verb-form is of an idiomatic cast; but it has an integrity as a single verb-entity over, above, the justification of treatment of it as an idiomatic usage. By its figurativeness (its not meaning a physical looking-up-to but a simple, almost crude kind of revering) it is a compound having a tight unity of meaning, almost that of a single-word entity of meaning.

But Dr. Gove concedes to language-analysis more than the capability of helping lexicography in such matters as "middle verbs" and "pseudo-passives." At least, he does not quarrel with prophets in the camp of linguistics who anticipate changes so great in lexicography, initiated in the linguistical quarter, that the lexicography of the future will make the lexicography of the present seem hardly lexicography at all. He cites the hope expressed by I. A. Richards in *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford U. Press, 1936) for explanation one day of "these systematic ambiguity or transference patterns on a scale as much surpassing our best present-day Dictionary Technique as, say, our present competence in chemistry surpasses that of Bacon who foresaw it. . . ." And from "A Linguistic Definition of Literature" by Mills F. Edgerton, Jr., he quotes a passage in which a dream is presented of "sophisticated lexicographical works which could be built from such data and which would be vastly different from the primitive and unsophisticated dictionaries with which we struggle to operate to-day." The "data" in question here is in special relation to "elements of all sorts that are intrinsically and objectively present in a work of literature," the very listing of which is seen to be impossible in the present because of the inadequacy of existing "tools" and studies, and the lack of enough people and

time "to manipulate them [the data] so as to achieve a useful synthesis of them." Dr. Gove both hopes and sighs along with such anticipations that put fulfilment into scarcely imaginable futures. And what serene modesty there is in these lexicographical positions, and in the language-analysis positions as well, comfortably settled into their present boasted vast inadequacy for the proper linguistic job.

Neither of the parties, the lexicographical party and the linguistical party, has a straight linguistic conception of the linguistic job that has come to be divided-up between them—the party of the first part holding on to as much as it can of the job, with as much urbanity as possible, as the linguistical terrors pull more and more of it their way. The job is, the development and clarifying of the knowledge of language. The lexicographers have increasingly switched from the quintessential task of the linguistic job, that concerned with the knowledge of the meanings of words as components of a rationally self-consistent language, to a conglomeration of chores of adding to a static body of incompletely developed lexicography an endless supplement of new terms and new usages—with the consequence of an ever-enlarging loss, for the language, of its intactness, its integrities of inherent intelligence, for its speakers. The scientists of language have been more and more making literature the stuff of their job, with extension also into sociological and anthropological forms of analysis of things human, as implicitly if not explicitly rich in linguistic "behavior." Language as language they have eliminated from their field of linguistic study.

How much of a scholastic abnormity *language* is as a subject of the science, sciences, of linguistics can perhaps be comprehended from a declaration of Dr. Gove's in which he exerts himself to his utmost of lexicographical complaisance towards the language-analysis people. The subject of his declaration can only be identified as *language* if language is taken to be a disease perpetuated and cherished among human beings for its overpowering interest as a subject of vocabularistic "listing" and scientific analysis. Dr. Gove says:

> If the semantic properties of language are not now systematically obtainable, it may be possible for a traditional dictionary for the time being to fill the gap, to be a guide to current linguistic facts.

About half-way through Dr. Gove's essay, one *does* come to the word "meaning," but in this form (and spirit): "[S]ome modern linguists are becoming increasingly concerned about the rôle of meaning in linguistic analysis." Dr. Gove pays attention to the subject of meaning (not as subject of concern in relation to the importance of the knowledge of the meanings of words—the presumable proper area of concern for lexicographers—but in relation to "the rôle of meaning" in the labors of the language-analysts) in respectful con-

sideration of what was brought forward at the 1966 national meeting sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies "to look at the linguistic future." From Dr. Gove's account of what was generally brought forward at this meeting, one learns that among the lexicographers-humbling special concerns of those who appropriate to themselves professionally the ascription "linguists" are: "the pansemiotic science of verbal structure, the study of the word—man's unique species-specific biological endowment . . . "; the understanding of "the semantic component of a grammar" for sure understanding of "the other two" components, by these being meant "the syntactic and the phonological"; preoccupation by "modern semanticists," in their "new awareness of the complexity of language itself . . . ," with, for instance, "the extent to which grammatical form contributes to meaning, the dependence of the individual word upon its context, and the pragmatic nature of language."

In support of the cited depictions of the tremendous task that human beings as a whole, of the past, have left to human beings of the present, and that these, including lexicographers, are leaving, largely, to the language-analysts, Dr. Gove quotes from a monograph by Paul Garvin and two co-authors: "[T]he greatest gap in the field of semantics today (1967) is the lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the precise relations (similarities, differences, presupposition relations, and the like) between the meaning-carrying elements of a language." All this is excited injection of complexity-problems awaiting solution in matters of language where there is manifest want of natural sensitivity to fundamental linguistic simplicities—such as the actuality that "grammatical form" does not "contribute to meaning" but is the form of a word by a certain meaning (i.e., "grammatical form" is integral with meaning).

From the open waters of humility towards the broad charges of ignorance, and inadequacy of analytical competence, brought against traditional linguistic professionalism, in which lexicography of the past and present both is included, Dr. Gove moves again into the creeks, inlets and lagoons of appreciation of the superiority of late-born language-analysis professionalism in its purported new perceptions of missing elements of grammatical analysis in the general study of English word-meaning. To illuminations already cited (as to "middle verbs" and "pseudo-passives") he adds such new-order analysis, offered by a language-analysis scholar, as that there are some word-uses, exemplified in, for instance, *Hamlet,* not covered by the existing scope of English grammar, some that have never been covered by it, the meanings involved being described as "nuances of difference." This particular "new perception" proves to be the conception that certain word-forms, such as pronouns, are capable of carrying more implication of meaning than the grammatical account of them provides. The straight linguistic actuality is that pronoun-forms are words that are peculiarly clear, in their meanings, of components that, in many other words, color meaning with implications of contextual potentiali-

ties of use.* Such coloration is properly describable, rather than as of the substance of meaning, as an additive of knowledge of contextual custom that ingrains itself in a sensitivity of rhetorical experience in the use of words. Pronoun-forms have meanings that are distinctively implicationless. They have, allow of, no rhetorical aura or trailing tail of contextual anticipation: context "explains" their meanings in their uses. And this peculiarity needs no service of new grammatical analysis; the only linguistically natural illumination of its nature is from "inside" lexicography—if lexicography is credited with, and assumes, responsibility for a full task of determining *what* words mean, from study of *how* the language to which they belong means, how it functions as a system of meanings.

Another kind of language-illumination cited by Dr. Gove coming not only from outside lexicography but from outside grammar, as grammar has been known, concerns a supposed higher-grammatics mystery instanced in the sentence "He is singing at the Met." "Is singing," the new grammatical analysis teaches, is no mere "progressive": the sentence is "a four-way ambiguity" and can mean that "he" is at the moment in the process of singing, or singing at intervals these days or will be singing once in the future, or will be singing at intervals in the future. Other like illustrations of the need for a higher-grammatics analysis are cited, cases of grammatical complexity believed not analysable within the terminology of what the excruciatingly formalistic language-analysis grammarians call dismissively "the formalistic grammar of tradition." Dr. Gove concedes them nearly entire victory—won in their case against traditional grammatics—with a very diffident reservation.

Commenting on another example of supposedly obscure problems of meaning-identification supposedly insoluble within the bounds of "the formalistic grammar of tradition" (obediently accepting this characterization of grammar not of the language-analysis sort), Dr. Gove says, "A different approach must be found. I do not know what kind of grammar will be most successful, but I am sure that inherent lexical properties will be relied on in some way." The kind of problem that evoked this particular comment involves such curiosities of expression as "washing machine," "laughing gas." By "inherent lexical properties," Dr. Gove is speaking, for the security of avoiding controversy with these formidable competitors in linguistic explanations,

*I pause to enlarge on this a little lest the reader be detained by difficulty with the presented conception of the nature of pronouns. The sense is, here, that a pronoun is definitively limited in its meaning-content to a minimum of characterization. Even the "personal pronouns" are highly impersonal—"he" or "she" is as impersonal a mode of characterization as "it"; that pronouns introduce so little qualifying meaning-data into the contexts in which they are used accounts for their extraordinarily broad serviceability.

largely in their terms, and allowing himself the indulgence of a loop-hole-place for the lexicographer.

Now, a lexicographer with eyes all on the matter of meaning would recognize in "washing machine" a compound word ("washing-machine") grammatically irregular, as very many compound words formed of a verb and a noun in combination are, being compressions of lengthier and grammatically regular combinations of words. These compressions are, vocabularistically, terms the meanings of which are a matter of technical knowledge, lexicographically all-reportable. One might call them terminological idioms, in analysis pursued within the bounds of lexicography. To go outside these bounds leads to absurdities of mystification: "washing-machine" has the signification it has by an initial compounding of the two words into an expression of this signification and the expression's establishing itself in the vocabulary as a term of fixed serviceability. Likewise, as to "laughing gas," and other combinations of noun and verb word-forms. "Laughing-gas" has a signification in the vocabulary, as a terminological idiom, that needs no outside-lexicography explanation of it as exemplifying how there are "nuances of difference" between the kind of meaning "laughing" has in it, and "washing" has in "washing-machine." The signification of "laughing-gas" follows from the initial putting together of the compound to have such signification, and the compound's becoming a terminological feature of the language—for a time, at any rate.

The language-analysts, in seizing upon certain curiosities as typical of problems requiring a finesse of perception beyond and above that which is exercisable by mere application of meaning-values, reveal an insensitivity to those values that accounts for the triviality of the problems they make peculiarly theirs—magnifying them into the essential objects of language-study. One might try to excuse, or at least explain, the growth of this empire of professed post-traditional expertness in the things of language by the failure of lexicography to make good, to justify itself, in its traditional character as representing the central region of linguistic knowledge. However much this failure may have encouraged the new race of linguistic professionals to take over language as uncontested ground, one must place the general impetus of their continually accelerated progress in their insensitivity to meaning-values. This insensitivity is, in turn, recognizable as a product of the penetration of scientific thought-modes into the precincts of humane education as a new rationality. The number of those who make language their subject has swollen, in the atmosphere of a regime of the humanities revised to accord with the intellectual spirit of science, to a quantity in which all significance of special vocation is lost: language has become a field of enterprise for an unbridled variety of intellectual jobs. Ponderously much of the analytical rumination on curi-

osities of expression in which the laborers in this field engage, to results of futile classification and obfuscating explanation of unopaque simplicities, is make-work work.

The matter of "is singing" with which the formalistic grammar of tradition is challenged ought not to put any traditionalistically literate person at a loss for the capability of defending the form against the horrible identification of it as a "four-way ambiguity." The words depict a continuity in an action, an action as in a state of continuity. This is all that is pertinent to the identification of the meaning of the form. All other kinds or aspects of identification lie in the contextual setting; the element of continuity in the meaning of "is singing" gets its quality of particular reference, in the sentence in which it is used, from this. In "He is singing at the Met" there is only a particularizing as to the *where* of the continuity if nothing more is contained in the contextual setting: the *where* completes the sentence, determines *its* specific meaning. Almost every other possible sentence-meaning of "He is singing at the Met"—and there are other possibilities—depends on there being in the contextual setting, by reason of environing statement or question, of direct or indirect bearing on the six-word proposition, a reference to a particular time-condition that adds to the sentence's content of specific meaning. Not only are more than three (at least four) different temporal implications possible, but other reference-particularizations besides those of time-conditions could exist in the contextual setting. For example, there could be present contextually a consideration as to whether "he" was singing *anywhere;* and this consideration might be in reference to "his" having a singing engagement at the "Met" as against his having none anywhere.

Dr. Gove cites, among treatments of the aspects or "features" of word-nature complexity brought into view by the new perceptions of the language-analysis schools of language-study, a diagram for the definition of "bachelor." This diagram, replete with categorical specifications under the head of the single word "bachelor," gets *its* complexity from the mistaken treatment of *four* words as *one* and the putting of this four-in-one through a process of "analysis" that yields four very pedestrian definitions that make foolish diagram-comrades. The actuality is that there are four words "bachelor." One is a term of rank of feudal times, one is a term of rank in academic accomplishment, one is a term of social identification of a man as being unmarried, and one is a term adapted from this for zoological use, signifying an unmated male seal. Here one sees the lexicographical error of treating a number of words as one word having a number of meanings improved upon by a tightening-up of the composite meaning-material into a diagrammatic unity for break-down into diagrammatic disparities. Nothing has been effected but make-work upon a very shaky lexicographical scaffolding.

Dr. Gove continues to the end of his essay to protect his lexicographer-dignity with modest but firm loyalty to his profession, while manifesting a loyal tolerance of the stepbrother profession as a member of the family of language-specialists, with a will to success of its own. Very near the end, he allows himself the reward of some deprecation of some of the linguistical probing of patterns of sentence-sense, characterizing one instance as "unrealistic and fanciful, even if ingenious." He even does a little fun-poking. And he even points to types of sentence-explanation according to the new grammatics as to which he judges that the dictionary-maker would make the better contribution. And in the final paragraph, in which he applies himself to restoring his posture towards Linguistics to its respectful full, he has a little fling at it of rollicking condescension, conceding it, despite its "unwittingly" putting forth sometimes "a few amusingly distorted English sentences," the achievement of "inadvertently piling up a mass of information about linguistic behavior that must someday be a direct contribution to lexicography." But the closing words strike the note of a gracious bowing-away from the subject of Linguistics, with complimentary reference to the unprecedently large number of those now active in it, most of them with "half their careers still ahead of them." "The lexicographer of the future who neglects to tap these valuable contributions will do so at his peril."

Dr. Gove, as a lexicographer of the present, terminates his review of professional activity concerned with language with evident confidence in the safety of his progressivism, feeling, presumably, better able to deal lexicographically with language as "always changing" than the workers in Linguistics, for the validity of whose theories the language has to be made to hold still, under analysis—and to be treated as (scientifically) an entire unknown, with no such reliance possible as Dr. Gove's presumption, on lexicography's behalf, of an attained knowledge of words, settled enough in quantity and quality to allow of a fluid policy as to extensions and improvements. Language-analysis stands out, at the close, as in a greater plight than lexicography, or the language itself: it must believe in a constant trend of change, in language, it must believe in language's intrinsic settledness in analysable "features," and, crucially, it must believe in itself. Dr. Gove sets an example of cheerful readiness to move on from one lexicographical status quo to the next. He absorbs the future in anticipation of the like. And his rather amiable response to language-analysis' ill-tempered challenge to lexicography is a model of a morale of letting the future take care of things.

The Externalistic View of Language

Modern linguistics, in the externalistic character of its view and interpretation of language (which makes it but a branch of science, despite its philosophic pretensions), can, without frivolity, be judged as involved in a throw-back to primitive (or perhaps better said, barbaric) attitudes to language—although it has been an aggressive critic of general long-term prelinguistics attitudes to language as on a primitive, ritualistic, intellectually childish level. Yet the modern-linguistic position, despite its making language something "out there," physically distinct from those who speak it, even as early humans in their timidity, their posture of fearful ignorance towards almost everything of their experience (even what was intimately part of their lives), viewed almost everything, almost themselves, as of an "outer" nature, must be identified as an intellectual position. There is no fear in the new linguistical attitude to words, no knowing of language at emotional distances of mystery. There is in it a thorough impersonal disrespect of language as a collection of external phenomena of no more *human* sacredness than the fact of humanness itself, viewed scientifically as a biological evolvement, external to humanness personally conceived. What of the human mind, between which and language such active connections exist? To modern science, and its linguistic arm, linguistics, the mind itself is not to be viewed as having a character of internality.

Comparable to the scientific view of human nature as of evolutionary make-up is the linguistical view of words as having their meaning-make-up contingent on sentence-circumstances. Meaning is by such measurement a circumstantial acquisition, without a logic of existence, an internal reality: it ac-

cretes around sound, is maintained associated with sound by acts of remembrance rather than of thought.

The scientific, linguistical, conception of word-character is closely correspondent with the pre-linguistic, historically primitive name-character that belongs to the rudimentary words of language's origin. Modern speakers of languages are evaluated by this conception as using words not according to the development of language as a rational instrument, but according to a supposition that human beings use words as integers of name-reference, exchanged with one another in emotional events of experience (not thinking-events) marked by mutual corroboration of environmental unity. What is spoken, according to this supposition, is preliminary language, in which communication is a process of interreference to things commonly perceived to be "there": the instruments of reference mark the same things for all, but they cannot be said to mean anything. They do not express thought, knowledge of the things, only a fact of emotional impact; and this emotional impact is privately different with each—what is common is only the common presence to the things. Such is the basic assumption of linguistic science about the general relationship existing between people and language.

Although in the prosecution of life as necessarily, for the nurturing and preservation of human identity, languaged life, human beings have done much falling from grace as exemplifiers of the capability of language of generating expressible continuities of thought, and modern linguistic science might be viewed as having ground for its rudimental theories of language in human tendencies of linguistic degeneration, conceived of as collapse towards the natural, we think the scientific position on language is not thus ingenuously idealistic. There is, however, much to support the assumption that people are tired of the inherited responsibility of the intellectual upkeep of language, and the burden of confusion that seems inseparable from this. It is of their own linguistic confusion that people are tired, and this comes of failure to maintain linguistic good-order. But the offering of something new can go a long way towards convincing people that an existing something which they are in some manner wronging, to their discomfort, is wronging them. Modern linguistics offers something new, to replace the neglected internalities of language. This it cannot do. But it can, with its idea of language as knowable only by objectification, displace the remnants of intimate consciousness of it that linger in the minds of people—if new knowledge of its old vitalities does not come within their minds' reach, to renew the consciousness.

The externalistic conception of the method by which the nature of language may be made comprehensible manifested itself very programmatically in the method that had forceful influence in earlier modern linguistics called "logical analysis," which has left its mark on the further course of linguistical

science. The externalistic character of that method is perceptible first of all in the key-importance bestowed in it on the sentence. The internal actuality of language is constituted of *words,* and sentences are relatively external entities, are built towards an externality of collective identity. But, by the theory of logical analysis, linguistic trueness was lodged in the sentence—not in the words, in words. This making the focus of logical validity the sentence-at-large, and not each and every word, thrusts logic, in effect, outside the sentence.

There can be no such thing as a principle of logical validity which inheres in sentence-nature. There is no intrinsic sentence-nature, as there is intrinsic word-nature. The sentence cannot serve practically as a focus of logical validity—as its own test of its logical validity: the method was a method of applying a logic of fact, to the words of the sentence, as having, rather than meanings of their own, a collective sentence-meaning. The ultimate conditions of this system of evaluation are, a status of putative fact for the sentence judged against a standard on which is bestowed the status of scientific fact. There is a grim absence of consideration of *word*-value from such scenes of evaluation; and the same sort of grimness obtains in all the subsequent theorizing about language in which the sentence rather than the word is treated as the key unit or the focal area of meaning, and the linguistic values generally.

The externalistic emphasis on the sentence—rather than on the word—has the effect, as is here suggested, of taking logic outside the sentence into the realm of fact. But the actualness of the words cannot be disregarded. The externalistic view of language harbors a double view of the nature of meaning: it divides meaning into the factual and the ideational. This stand on meaning, of linguistic science, with its insistence on the factual as the reference-ground for the tests of logic, is one taken in opposition to the ideational as the ground of both logic and meaning. It reflects the opposition to the linguistic attitudes of traditional philosophy, in which ideational conceptions rule, characteristic of the linguistic attitudes of modern philosophy of scientific bias, from its beginnings; from this philosophic modernism *linguistic* science stems. It should be noted that in the theory of linguistic science the ground of logic and the ground of fact are one. This separation of logic from meaning leaves meaning in a far more elusive condition of ideationality than it ever was in the definitional conceptions of traditional philosophy—of the linguistic errors of which, as viewed by some of its critics of the scientific schools of modern philosophy, Plato is the permanent outstanding example.

Dictionary defining—the lexicographical attitude to meaning in its historical course—illustrates these problems of relating meaning to some ground of logic in its very evasion of attempt to establish a logical congruity of definitional practice: it shies consciously from effort to maintain an over-all con-

sistency of definitions with one another as from arbitrary procedure. Apart from this discreet lexicographical lawlessness, there has been nothing, until the advent of linguistic science, of endeavor to base ideas of meaning on principle but the philosophic ideational treatment of meaning, which might be described as a literary discipline of meaning-interpretation in which logic is itself an ideational structure, designed to be an intellectual improvement on factual standards of the reasonable. Plato, one might say, endeavored to unify the ideational and the "real" by this combining of meaning as ideationally internal with a logic that, supposedly derived from outer reality, was an ideationally constructed "true" fictive version of it. He has been criticized by the linguistic modernists for failing to distinguish between "symbols" and the thought these (according to the modernists) symbolize. But Plato did not have the symbolic view of words. *His* concept of meaning was, also, indeed a split one—split between the ideational and a logic that was a system of the ideational; but the two parts were both internalistic. The weakness of this was that the internality was itself not the internality of language but of an intellectually systematized thinking about meaning. Thus, the tradition of philosophic care with matters of meaning was in its curious way exclusive of the internal actualities of language: its internalism was, in its way, linguistically externalistic.

The Universal Pattern of Languages

1.

Language has become in current time a popular subject of declamation with those who feel they have grasped the thesis of the schools of research and thought that devote themselves to the scientific enlightenment of the modern world on things linguistic. As a subject for quasi-learned popular treatment, language has the appeal of being a fresh subject for cultural revision, though that appeal has been worn closer down than has been noticed to the base stuff of repetitive argumentation, that bores because it is not inspired with actual, personal, feeling about and *for* language, and from within the ground of a practical devotedness to words. One of the theses recently adopted for the excitation of reader-interest in this subject regarded still as in the category "new" is the proposition that each language is the envelope of a separate different world; that every language gives speech for, renders expressible, a different reality; that there is only, for habitation by human beings in the differences their languages manifest, a world of pluralistic understanding of things. Such generalization about language collapses under the touch of examination of it as consisting, in particular actuality, of words.

The general linguistic validity of a word inheres in the general human validity of the word's meaning, which, in turn, depends on the general reality of that which the word distinguishes in the general human scheme of understanding. If one takes a word of a language that has no apparent parallel in any other, one may be tempted to conclude that it does not have general human validity, that what it distinguishes is something private to the consciousness of the speakers of that language. It is a frequent general experience, in talking with someone who has a different native language from one's own, to be told that "we have a word in our language . . ." with the implication that its mean-

ing, or what it distinguishes, is something foreign to the consciousness of the speakers of one's own. This conception of the exclusive group or private reality of the things that certain words mean is contradicted by the occasional discovery of actual parallels, when the dust of conviction of individual linguistic uniqueness settles, and by general evidence of the convertibility of languages. It is possible, that is, for any human being to step into the boundaries of an alien language and, with the mere resources of human reason, to *know* what each word of it means. Such knowledge is not prevented by the nonexistence of words in the native language parallel to certain words of an acquired language. Where there is no native word-parallel, translation can be effected by definition of the word in native words—true translation, which is to say translation that is not casual paraphrase, employs a good deal of just such definition.

Every word of a language has a necessary general human validity because language is, first of all, everywhere, an organization of consciousness of things keyed to needs of minds that are human, and of a general range and energetic force of understanding, in being human. The "things" that the words of a language—any language whatever—mean belong all to a universal pattern of experience that is characteristically human. Every language has a general coincidence with every other as a verification of the comprehensive substance of human experience. Either that which a word of one language means can be specifically found in the pattern-of-things of another, or a place for it can be found: the nature of language is such that the *logical* coverage of any single one is stretchable—as the vocabularistic expansion common to all languages demonstrates. The reality of the things that words mean is of a universal order of reality because language is a product of the human sense of the universal.

2.

In speaking of a "pattern," of experience, or of meaning, one must keep aware of an inadequacy in the conception of a pattern as fitting the case of language or of the universe as matched, in its reality as the substance of human experience, in the "coverage" of language—its scope and particularities of distinction and identification. For language is not an inert "lay-out" but an organism—it moves, and as one; and the "universe," as the substance of human experience, is, likewise, no "lay-out," but the organism of existence existing as one. The human mind occupies both language and the reality called, in its total history of expansion and limitation, the universe. Language may be said to be the mind's comprehension of the universe as the humanly occupied; and the occupation by the mind of language may be said to be the occupation by it of the universe in active, consciously organized presence. Thus, language

brings "all" into the focus of human existence in existence: it unites the universe in, for, individualized consciousness of it, *and* it unites human beings, in their personal variance, into the single and unique nature of their being as conscious being in which the universality of existence is comprehended as a unity, single and unique. The idea that people in their situations of difference as speakers of different languages are divided by their languages into different humanities living by different conceptions of the universal reality, and therefore in existence-worlds of their own, is a treachery to the *common* humanity that manifests itself in the spontaneous issuance of language *everywhere* from human beings in their different separate existence-situations. The fact of the *same* kind of issuance, springing from mutual recognitions of one another as of a single character of being by the nature of their consciousness in their particular personal being, is reflected in all languages, in their identical law of unifying generalization to which every particular of mental note, of either distinction or mere identification, is subject.

The conception of language as a manifold, a case of merely resemblant phenomena, is matched by a conception of the individual human being's relation to the language of his or her mind as communally procured but idiosyncratically, independently, possessed. Language is not in each different occurrence a manifestation merely resembling others comparable in kind. It is in each occurrence uniform with every other in the essentialities of the human mind's reasoning collection of the universe of experience into a unity of comprehension informed with *its* unity. It is not an idiosyncratic communal invention in each occurrence; and the relation of the individual speaker of a language to *it* is not a relation to it as a language differing from all others, but a relation to it as language.

We have touched rather briefly, but very seriously, in this book, on mind as it is the general aspect in language of the personal agency that prompts thought and directs it towards the explicit. Mainly, we have avoided entering upon the subject of the supra-personal, or general, aspect of mind, general in the sense of functioning free of the strictures of individual physical containment: unless the movement in such a subject is in slow steps of explanation that are at once sure steps of understanding for readers, there can fast come an appearance of divagation into esoteric terrain. We make mention here of the general quality of mind as present in language in order not to oversimplify our account of the relation of the individual speakers of languages to their particular language-possession. It is, indeed, a relation not just to *a* language, but to language. But, in being that, it is a relation between individual mind and the general actuality mind that, however one chooses to regard it, must be assumed to be present where language is. (That is, if one does not regard language as an agglomeration of sounds to which values are arbitrarily attached,

as to playing-cards: that language should be viewed with the kind of objectivity with which a game is viewed has been one of the founding tenets of modern linguistical philosophy.)

It would be well for those who tend to think of language as a manifold to consider how there exists a parallel conception of manifold "I"—every speaker of a language a different interpreter of its words' meanings, every word differing inevitably in meaning, in its use. As this manifold "I" is the "I" of socially approved linguistic irresponsibility, so is the manifold disparate language the model of socially approved linguistic irrationality. For a language consists of words that cohere as such by the ubiquity of reason in them—in their meanings. If reason differs from language to language, there is not reason in them: reason that varies from itself is not reason. And what is called language is not language.

Finally, as to the matter of the identity of all languages, wherever they be, and of whatever difference from one another as language, to add Coleridge's beautiful word on the identity of language with itself in the variations of time—the differences that time produces in the human employers of language, languages. Does not language differ from itself continually in the mere succession of the generations of its speakers? As to the laws of language Coleridge averred that they were "the same in the first intelligible conversation of men" as they are now, and so will be "so long as the powers of thought remain the same in the Human Mind."

3.

To return, in closing, to the matter of "pattern." What of the philosophic question of an "independent reality," with which modern philosophic idealism tried to cope? To conceive of an independent reality to be apprehended outside the terms of human experience of it, of intelligent participation in it, matches the scientific effort to create a pattern of independent fact as a frame of knowledge—a changing frame for an ever-changing knowledge. There is no imaginable scientific pattern of fact that can serve as the complementary pattern of experience for language's pattern of meaning, as there is no imaginable pattern of independent reality that can so serve. Either pattern calls for the divorcement of the human being from the pattern in the construing of it: the pattern of fact scientifically construed posits an objective position of the mind towards universal materiality, the pattern of independent reality posits an objective position of the mind towards the conception of a universal immateriality that derives from the mind's intuition of the existence of what it is individually in a generally valid way. There is no pattern or system that can serve human intelligence for its understandings, that can serve the human

mind for its knowledge, which does not contain the human being within it, present by individual mind as of one sense with its sense. The pattern of meaning of language has the sense of the universe in it as reality not independent of human experience but as that which is humanly experienced within its interior, by the kindred reality of mind. Language knows no exteriority. It treats of all as of one self-including reality. Language does not merely proceed on the theory of this: it issues from the nature of reality as being so, and the human mind's presence in it as interior witness.

No language is exterior to another. Language everywhere opens up the interior of existence to complete occupation—which can occur "in" any language if its laws of meaning are observed to the full of the human mind's loyalty to itself as of the same mind as that which informs meaning in a language with laws, or sense.

Mathematics As an Intellectual Master-Method

1.

The contemporary appeal of mathematics as an intellectual medium capable of yielding results of superior logicality and accuracy of "statement" (a term by which mathematical formulations are hyperbolically called) reminds of the esteem in which mathematics was of old held by philosophers; the two admirations differ, however. The character and results of mathematical operations were seen as manifesting an ideal of intellectual perfection; they held an emotional appeal for earlier philosophers. The mathematical formulation, taking on the appearance of a model of "beauty" in intellectual achievement, could be symbolically related to philosophical procedures and objectives. In new-style philosophic thinking, mathematical nicety represents a practical intellectual ideal; mathematical processes of ratiocination become revered as intellectually workable on a philosophical scale, with results pertinent to general philosophical considerations and linguistic problems of logic and definition regarded as fundamentally philosophical.

The very meagreness of the equipment of mathematics for "statement" (all the virtues of simplicity being read into it) is construed as indicative of its basic suitability to the essentially philosophic task of general interpretation. Reality as a whole becomes, thus, a proper subject for mathematical description—seen as an unwieldy bulk that, otherwise unmanageable, is at least for experimental reasoning-purposes reducible to mathematical terms. The actual application of mathematics to philosophical uses is, however, dismally unproductive; viewed in mathematical perspective, generality is only statable as particularity in extension, and totality only as triviality infinitely reproduced. Wherever mathematics sets the value-terms, all values are ultimately quantitative values.

As the new modern intellectual confidence placed in the quantitative values of mathematics has manifested itself in attitudes to language, efforts have been made, with increasing zeal, to purge language of its qualitative value-force, and to establish mathematical values, conceived of as the universally authenticated basis of logic, as its critical norm. Resort has been made to mathematics in past time, even in recent past time, for the finding in it of formulative devices by which the logical nature of language might be expressed. But never before the present era has the seat of logic been placed definitively in mathematics, with language bearing the character of an outlying region of logical activity.

Contemporary academic linguistics has tended to assume the functional perfection of mathematics as a "language," and to draw on its nature and procedures for the understanding and explanation of the functioning of language. The extremes to which linguisticians can go in treating mathematics as the key-pattern of logic to which to refer the functional characteristics of language are suggested in an account of a mathematical-linguistic project given in *Linguistics and Your Language* by Robert J. Hall, Jr. (Anchor Books, 1960). In the project, techniques were worked out "for an algebraic, quasi-mathematical symbolization of all grammatical relationships, involving the establishment of formulae and equations, and their ultimate reduction to a very few formulae for a language's basic clause types." Mathematical science has raced ahead with the ball of logical modernity, so to speak, and evolved a logic that seems adequately up-to-date not only for mathematical, but all other intellectual uses. In spirit, this mathematical version of rational principle is a logic all-obedient to the intellectual will, arbitrary in its nature but assuring a relative correctness of mental operation, unchallengeable because its very standards are themselves relative ones—that is, they have always a specially restricted field of application. It is expressive of modern mathematics' view of itself as having gone beyond ordinary logical levels of understanding, and captured the secret of the supra-logical. Philosophy, and linguistics with it, have deferred to it as superior in validity to rational techniques governed by verbal values with very little resistant qualification.

The particular surrender of philosophy to science in the matter of logic—to mathematics as science's logic—is part of the general destruction philosophy has suffered at the hands of science, and of the general intellectual deterioration that science's pre-eminence in the intellectual life of this time has brought about. The imposition of mathematical criteria of logic on linguistic analysis has been fostering teachings that undermine what faith may still survive in the existence of standards of linguistic correctness, and the human importance of there being such standards. Where such an attitude of mind takes lead in the faculties of judgement, which require for their functioning fixed

value-scales, such as are to be found stabilized by endless testing in the logical scheme of language, the moral energies go into decline.

2.

Certain trends in contemporary linguistic doctrine in which mathematics figures are traceable to the mid-nineteenth century endeavor of George Boole to formulate "the operations of Language, as an instrument of Reasoning," in the terms of "a system of signs," these being "symbols of Logic" subject in their use "to definite laws, partly agreeing with and partly differing from the laws of the corresponding symbols of Algebra." His purpose in trying to make correlations between mathematics and language was to understand the laws of thought, which he believed to be mathematical in their form but actually developed in the essential laws of language. Boole's work was one of the sources of Bertrand Russell's "symbolic logic." But where Boole engaged in a relatively innocent scientific dogmatizing on the intellectual processes of language, as observed through the spectacles of mathematics, Russell sought to lord it over language with a logic reduced from mathematics.

"Symbolic logic" disciplined language's internal integrity out of it, putting in its place, supposedly, something of a finer sort, a superior precision, that improved language's truth-capability. The character of truth, in this conception, can be deduced from the kind of advantage that was expected from making language meet the critical tests of symbolic logic: it was predicted that so treated, language could yield formulations from which might be selected one seeming most advisable to regard as true. Truth, in this light, is the choice of logical expediency, a choice among alternative particularities of argument; traditional truth—general-scale, unqualifiedly true truth—has been exiled to the historical shadows, as belonging to language's unscientific past. Symbolic logic can be viewed as having itself become a thing of the past. But, however much "dated" it may now seem, the transmogrifications it worked in the modern intellectual temper, as a stimulant to philosophic and linguistic amorality, have active survival there still.

In the history of the endeavor to routinize the intellectual processes along the lines of a philosophically extended mathematics, one is in the region of a scientific vision of a simplified understanding of the intellectual processes, of the order of scientific dealing with physical phenomena. The endeavor is, *not* to try to understand everything—there is too much. Instead, games of understanding are played. One can engage oneself quite seriously, even in intellectual ways, in playing a game—as far as the game goes: up to the point where its capability of making sense of a sort comes to an end, the point where its

meaning gets all played out. Russell gathered together a number of strands of the game-making fascinations of scientifically disposed intellectuality, with linguistic game-making caught snugly in the skein. He had great enthusiasm; rules-of-the-game issues challenged his practical ingenuity. He sharpened his excited interest in games of the intellect on the preoccupation of others with scientific methodologies of thought (Frege, Peano, Whitehead): the intellectual energy exhibited in this activity is impressive.

The sheer impressiveness of huge expenditure of intellectual energy can both paralyse and intimidate judgement. It is a factor in the intellectual ascendancy acquired by the systems of scientific analysis that have pre-empted the fields of linguistic criticism, literary criticism, human criticism: the effect made of equipment with power upon the witnessing "ordinary" public, and even upon the special publics, or bodies of interest, to which these athletes of intellectual game-playing belong (this effect of the writers upon themselves, as it were), dulls perception of the actual intellectual and human nature of such analytical activities. They are accepted as what they represent themselves to be: intensely serious. They are so; but only so far as they go. That they seem not to come to any end of the game, ends of games, seem sustainedly and ever-increasingly serious, is the consequence of an endless restiveness of intellectual energy: new games lie ever ahead, there is always another game to play. This is why the logicalistic and the linguistical programmes, the semiotical and the sematological and other pursuits of analytical doctrine, keep, all, in a course of fast-moving change, with variation upon variation, multiplication upon multiplication of differentiations. Earnest play of intellect succeeds earnest play of intellect. The quantity of intellectual play is of overwhelming proportions. But the play keeps running away from itself. In its repeated newness, however, it never ceases to be, in intellectual quality, repetitive.

A conspicuously playful thinker, in whose mind mathematics and logic were companionably associated, belongs in the list of the contributors to the new mood of intellectual play that acquired before long an organized, professional philosophical character—in such intellectual projects as those of Bertrand Russell, for example. This was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, of the literary name of Lewis Carroll. Dodgson-Carroll composed a logic textbook, during the 'eighties and 'nineties, the first part of which was published in 1896; three parts were planned. The title for the whole was "Symbolic Logic." He was working on Part II when he died. Mr. W. W. Bartley, Professor of Philosophy at California State University, Hayward, made a long search for the manuscript of Part II; it was scheduled for publication in 1974. Of Part I Professor Bartley has reported "it is still readily available in paperback, is read

by most students of logic at one time or another, and is widely quoted in modern logic text-books." *

3.

The step between the attraction of mathematics as providing infinitely varied exercise in intellectual play and its attraction as a pattern of logic of potential serious utility beyond the field of categorically mathematical intellectual operations is a perception of it as a *magic* of simplification allowing of the exertion of intellectual *power* for solutions of problems in which intricacies of "ordinary" rational thought can be dispensed with. Many of the performances in scientific activity directly dependent on mathematical calculations have an appearance of miraculous wonderfulness, suggesting the achievability of things remarkable by a mental dexterity peculiar to a special superiority of intellect. Modern populations have settled in progressive accustomedness into an ever-enlarging provision of products of scientific creation. But the inherent processes of scientific achievement are encased, by the populations, in a superstitious attribution of capabilities of intellect equatable with the magical. A general propensity among human beings to superstitious reverence and a special propensity in some to engagement in intellectual activity as a form of power exercisable with simplicity and swiftness, as it is with forces of magic, meet in an inevitable deadlock of self-obstructing human intelligences.

In the closing part of an essay in which I treat of the idea of the mastermind as a dominating feature in the attitude of proponents of scientifically based intellectual values, and in special relation to the employment of these values for the interpretation of linguistic processes, I present instances of tribute to mathematics as a ground of highest assurance, competence, and suitability from which to dispense the general beneficences of intellectual power. I reproduce the last four paragraphs of this essay:

The effect of scientific-minded peremptoriness in the region of linguistics did not show in full until the immediate contemporary period. In the 'twenties, scientific modes of analysis were conspicuously introduced into philosophical considerations of problems of language, as in Bertrand Russell's narrow theories of the logical principles underlying linguistic forms and in the attempts of I. A. Richards (in which he made his start as collaborator to C. K. Ogden) at

*Professor Bartley wrote on these matters in the Spring-Summer 1974 issue of the literary magazine *Antaeus*, in introduction to some portions of Dodgson's work, presented there.

scientifically sensible simplifications of ideas of the nature of word-meaning. But this was no isolated manifestation; the appropriation of language by science as one of its proper studies was on its way—and not only in English-language linguistic areas. Russell's theories could only, in their narrowness, come to an end in themselves. Richards expanded his ideas into the area of literary analysis, where they resolved into a semi-dogmatic, semi-liberal, philosophy of rhetoric (which has exerted a mild, rather remote tyranny over literary criticism, as a critical regimen left rather capriciously incomplete in both its scientific and philosophic aspects). The "hard-core" of master-mind intellectualism is to be found, in this present period of time, in the now teemingly populated region of linguistics, which has become the cosmopolitan habitat of a greatly varied assortment of peremptory-spirited new races of scientific scholars.

A sharply plain view of the master-mind state of mind is afforded in Bertrand Russell's own words on the extremes of satisfaction to be enjoyed in the practice of mathematics:

> Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty—a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture. . . . The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than a man which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry.

The crux of the matter, the key to the intensities of pleasure, is the sense of *power* that this pursuit confers. The sensations described are of a kind that have long been associated with what might be called the mathematical experience: it has old repute as a very elegant aesthetic experience. But how extraordinarily much the sense of power figures in the satisfaction of the practice of mathematics, *and* of the sciences generally, has not been comprehended; perhaps this sense could not come into full activity in the field of scientific knowledge-acquisition until new opportunities arose for the exercise of such power, in practical application of new knowledge in the development of new intellectual modes of exercising it as the world of human life became enlarged through expanded facilities of communication. One must not fail to relate the tremendous expansion of linguistic study as *scientific* study, which has engulfed language in its movement, to the sense of power enjoyed in the treatment of language as mass, matter, material of knowledge to be analytically investigated and generalizingly organized, professionally owned, controlled, broken up into special care-taking departments. Language (which is the best teacher of itself) has, thus, been taken away from its speakers, and from itself, and taught back from the power-remove of a college of authorities.

(But what of poetry?—And sculpture? There is ground, indeed, for con-

sideration of the particular attitude of the practitioners of poetry to poetry, and of the practitioners of sculpture to sculpture, as exhibiting, or not, the attraction of *power* to be exercised in poetic performances, and, differently or similarly, in sculptural performances. But it suffices here to point to a characteristic component of the general attitude of master-minds to themselves: this is, to think of themselves, besides as workers in knowledge-professions, as "artists"—with an "artist" seen as one who functions in a quasi-divine arbitrariness of "creative" transcendence of the normal that is not only a law-maker for itself but a law of truth, beauty and everything superior for the general human run of things.)

Nathan A. Court, author of *Mathematics in Fun and in Earnest* (Dial Press, 1935 & Mentor Books), pronounces there on the glorious state of being a mathematician in a manner that caps Bertrand Russell's tribute to it—making that seem a little modest:

> The mathematician went so far as to do away with words altogether, or approximately so, and to replace them by special notations and symbols. This gives his statements a concision and an elegance quite inimitable. . . .
>
> Supremely confident in his creative genius, he [the mathematician] declares, like an olympic god: "Let there be chaos, and let me have a group of objects of any kind whatever in the chaotic world." Then he begins to promulgate laws by which these objects [subjects] shall be governed.

4.

The credentials of intellectual competence on which those fortified with advanced mathematical knowledge, and capability of agile application of it, depend for public confidence, or at least public acceptance of them as authorities in their specialties (whether they employ mathematics as a main or subsidiary instrument in them), consist of their prestige in their special fields. The public has no means of judgement of its own for deciding whether or not to oppose the special power of intellectual authority over the general life of the time they assume on their exercise of a compound professional authority: the public, having no clues to the personal intellectual quality of these intellectual specialists, gives up. How can ordinary people judge of the processes of *such* minds? Behind this question there is, however, another. How do the intellectual specialists judge of the processes of their minds in personal private? For each, though just an ordinary person to himself, must have something besides public confidence for resort, in the strains of maintaining intellectual operations that never accomplish more than to argue something to be arguable in a certain way, tenable according to a certain technique of postulation. He must, as an

ordinary person to himself, have confidence in himself as an intellectual specialist.

Long ago, in an early book (*Anarchism Is Not Enough,* Cape, 1928), I described my sense of how an intellectual specialist, one versed in the method of mathematics and, besides, affected with a love of lexicography, viewed as having a necessary kinship with mathematics, since he loved *that,* put himself to the test, to prove to himself as an ordinary person the internal validity of his processes of mind as an intellectual specialist enjoying public confidence. I present the little story as of possible use as suggesting that there are alternatives to solemnities of exposition of the fundamental deficiency in ordinary good sense of very much that is offered as new linguistic wisdom. But the relief of unhesitant pronouncing the judgement "nonsense!" upon lack-sense must not be allowed to serve as substitute for those solemnities. Solemnities galore attend the offerings of new linguistic wisdom: they "must" have their due of responsive pronouncement—which is, in brief, better, more solemn, ones.

Mr. Doodle-Doodle-Doo

Mr. Doodle-Doodle-Doo, the great mathematician and lexicographer, then put aside his work and said: "*adultery* and *adulteration* can wait until I return."

For Mr. Doodle-Doodle-Doo was at one thing or the other by turns, and this particular morning he felt his mathematical genius complaining: it was undoubtedly true that it was a long time since he had been out to get Numbers.* So, leaving *adultery* and *adulteration* to take care of themselves, he walked out into the Square, and from the Square into the Gardens; and in the Gardens he sat down on a bench near the rockery and began to think with the mathematical half of his brain.

"Let me see. I left off with *honey* last time. Now the problem will be to show that honey as a purely mathematical symbol is equivalent to honey as a philological integer. If I can do this I have once more proved that $2 \times 2 = 4$ is the equivalent of 'two times two is four.' For it's not enough to show a thing is true: you must also show that true is true. By being a mathematical lexicographer and a lexicographical mathematician, I am therefore able to check the truth with the truth. My last words are never 'that's true' but 'that's correct,' which explains how I can be a philosopher and a gentleman at the same time."

With this Mr. Doodle-Doodle-Doo crowed three times: once for lexicography (Doodle), once for mathematics (Doodle), and once for himself (Doo), wherein the truth was checked by itself and found correct. The immediate matter in hand, however, was honey. So he left off crowing and proceeded with his calculations, which went so quickly that it is very difficult to record them. But they were something like this:—

HONEY	=	HONE + Y
GONE + Y	=	GONEY (sailors' term for albatross)
LONE + Y	=	LONE(L)Y
BONE + Y	=	BONEY
ONE + Y + M	=	MONEY

*The implications of "get" are somewhat obscure even to me, in this late time. I suggest that it be understood as implying engaging in hunting numbers with fierce scholarly sportsmanship.

BONEY	GONEY	HONEY	LONE(L)Y	MONEY
1	2	3	4	5
H	O	N	E	Y
1	2	3	4	5

At this point he stopped following him. But that his researches must have reached some happy conclusion was obvious from the enthusiasm with which he later returned to his lexicography. His calculations then ran something like this:—

1 2 3 4 5
H O N E Y
1 2 3 4 5
A D U L T [E R Y

1 2 3 4 5
H O N E Y
1 2 3 4 5
A D U L T [E R A T I O N

∴ HONEYERY ∵ HONEYERATION

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
But H O N E Y = S W E E T
5 4 3 2 1 5 4 3 2 1

∴ SWEETERY ∵ SWEETERATION

Which went far enough to persuade him that in lexicography he was, if anything, even more skilled than in mathematics.

The Matter of Metaphor

"Metaphor," rather than "Figures of Speech," seems the practical choice for the subject of this little essay, although as a general, not categorically specific, term it has closer association with the poetic than with the general use of words, from the point of view of which it requires comment here. The suitability of the term here is in the concentrated reference it makes to the processes of figurative word-use as of a simple general identity as such, although "metaphor" has also the terminological function of specifying a particular kind of figurative word-use. "Trope" is too narrowly rhetorical in its significatory character; and has, moreover, the unpleasant current status of a word brought into new prominence as a proprietary feature of an aggressively specialistic literary criticism.

There is much to say on metaphor as a device of expression resorted to in poetic composition. "Metaphor" is, indeed, immediately suggestive of poetry, has no immediate implication of serviceability in ordinary word-use. It is counted as a device normal to prose composition, its employment there being more casual than in poetry; where it rises from the casual, it is rated as poetic in style—and can be stylistic erraticism when it is laboredly employed. Poetic composition can also be stylistically erratic, foolishly or grossly poetic, when the device of metaphor is employed beyond poetic limits in linguistic discretion.

Metaphor, of course, is not born of the compositional needs, the expression-proclivities, of poetry. It is embedded in the natural conditions of language; and the use of it in the ordinary, or regular, courses of word-use is governed by linguistic discretion, even as in poetry—the laws of discretion as

to metaphor there being of a certain privileged *looseness* as compared with constraints they impose in ordinary linguistic practice.

There is, it should be evident, both a natural character in metaphor as a component of linguistic expression and a character of irregularity, linguistic un-normalness, in any form of employment of it. Yet it is mistaken to think of it as a special department of expression, an extra area of linguistic expression, a something additive in the resources of expression. Metaphor has relation to vocabularistic shortages in a language: there are not words for "everything." There is no finality of vocabularistic sufficiency in a language; the measure of a language's sufficiency is in what the words of which it is constituted allow of, in the expressible, by the general scope of meaning that they encompass in their greatly diversified combinability.

The use of metaphor effects no expansion of the meaning-potentialities of a language. The device of metaphor works in instances of narrowness of expressibility, real or presumed, or created by some circumstance adventitious to the actual word-content of the language. In principle it is an accommodation of the resources of the language to particular difficulties imposed by their limitations. Figures of speech should not be regarded as enlarging upon the given expressible, but rather as—in principle—coping with particular vocabularistic deficiencies within a general linguistic sufficiency. A figurative likeness posited between one thing and another is bound to be defective as an identification of a certain character of the subject of the likening. The character could be identified with perfect descriptive accuracy, in time, with fairly sound vocabularistic acquaintance with the language—vocabularistic shortages are capable of being compensated for by the putting of the available verbal resources to well-considered use. The figure of speech is an immediate act of substitution of one meaning, possessed by an existent word, for another meaning for the expression of which there is no word or no word comes easily to mind, or the meaning of a composite verbal expression for what would more closely fit the need of the occasion if all the specific verbal components of an exact expression of the actual subject of expression were linguistically available, at no inconvenient delay of assemblage.

Metaphor, then, does not call for special treatment as a form of linguistic practice, a linguistic modality in its own right, a wonderful embellishment of, enlargement upon, the given ordinary verbal provisions of languages devised by human linguistic genius. It is, as a common feature of linguistic practice, an incidental expediency, a homely administering of first-aid by mother-wit to jams or halts in expression suddenly confronting speakers, with no respectable linguistic solution immediately in sight. The figure jumps or circumvents the blockage; it is, essentially, a rough, not a delicate, procedure. There is a pos-

sible pleasure of comedy in the successes of approximation achievable by it—they can never be successes of accuracy. There is an emotional satisfaction of getting *something* said where the circumstance of expressional difficulty is of a grave or painful character. There is adult relief of two intellectual kinds in the employment of the device, that of the light touch and that of the solemn pressure, overcoming, both, the embarrassment of want of the perfectly expressive word or words. There is childish delight, appeal for the fragmentarily verbalized child-mind; and the adult mind, in its potentialities of being "at a loss" in the management of linguistic apprehensions and articulations, has some not unchildish fond partiality for the practice.

Literalness in meaning is the natural principle of linguistic procedure, of expressional discipline in conversational and compositional practice. Figurativeness in meaning is makeshift linguistic procedure. It has a manifold utility. It is not "wrong" where it justifies itself as of practical linguistic advantageousness in the peculiar occasion of its employment *and where it is employed with regard for the basic proprieties of word-meaning as proprieties of rational literality.* The better-schooled in these proprieties the speakers of a language are, the more capable they cannot but be of making use of the device of metaphor with a skill of sensibility to the linguistic values of truth in over-all control of what they say.

The peculiar position of metaphor in poetic expression is related to two conceptions of poetry combined in its tradition. One conception allows for, envisages, possibilities in poetry of perfection in linguistic expression through freedom provided from the conventionalities and informalities of ordinary discourse, exacting only a preponderance—undefined—of right use, good sense, true expression: the poem, the ideal occasion of linguistic expression given a trial reality. The other conception is related to the fact that these ideal occasions, of the form of poems, have less reality than ordinary speaking and writing occasions in being addressed not to any particular hearers, readers, audience. They are as addressed to the world or the universe at large, or to imaginary beings endowed with the function of being "there" as listeners, for the stimulus of the sensation of making address to someone. This aspect of the poem, this problem of "To whom," "For whom," in its being out of the realm of ordinary communication, contributes to alliance of the poem as a thing of words with a sense of it as a physical, song-like entity of address, existing physically as something in itself apart from conditions of communication, existing as it were, as an effect, as music exists. Herein is the opening for the special prominence of metaphor in poetry.

In the combination of these two conceptions of poetry, which correspond to an idea of it as combining a function of exemplifying achievable perfection in linguistic expression and a function of lending to such expression a sheer

force of physical effectiveness apart from any linguistically natural effectiveness of interior reality as meaning, metaphor becomes detached from its state of integrated participation in the normal linguistic course of things: it is intensively physicalized, its character as a linguistically useful trait of the intellectual imagination is superseded in potency by a cultivated potency in the use of it as stimulator, mover, of the physical imagination. This curiosity invites serious weighing of the very large part given to metaphor in poetic writing, and what it signifies in its varying presence in the works of individual poets as to them, and in its special place in poetry as to *it*. But of prior importance to this is that there come to be a general appreciation of the part of metaphor in the ordinary, non-poetic employment of language. Indeed, without such an appreciation, full understanding of the employment of metaphor as a special property of poetic composition is impossible.

On Ambiguity

The word "ambiguity" has become, in less than fifty years, a banner word in a certain kind of poetic criticism in which there presides a thematic justification of ambiguity as a central, necessary, fundamental device of poetry. There inheres in ambiguity, according to this critical philosophy, the rhetorical dynamics of the difference between poetry and prose, contributing greatly to poetry's superiority in stylistic expressiveness.

Textual analysis has been the description of the programmatic method of this criticism. It had its source in a method applied to a sonnet of Shakespeare's (as well as to other poems) in a book on modern poetry, of which the first author of this book was the first author—*A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (by Laura Riding and Robert Graves, Heinemann 1927). The method originated with the book's first author. It had no point whatever in relation to an idea of ambiguity as a cardinal feature of poetry, calling for sensitive analytical attention. The intensive analytical examination of the sonnet made in the book on poetry was centered thematically in the necessity of, first, following the original punctuation of the poem, not the revised punctuation that brought the text into accord with later literary speculation on the course of the poet's meaning, in the poem. With the original punctuation taken as a fair guide, the course of meaning was pursued from line to line, and with interreference between line and line as individual words and the sense of phrases and lines indicated to scrutiny that *kept the whole poem* in view as reading and interpretation proceeded. The moral of the analysis, as applied in the book to the reading and critical evaluation of poems, was, test every feature of a poem—punctuation, word, grammatical construction, repeated and varying emphases, difference and reiteration in locution: know the poem thoroughly *linguis-*

tically, and you shall know the poet's meaning in its particulars and in the whole, in so far as he wrote with full linguistic self-consciousness. (Where the poet did not, the judgement would be not of the poetic mode of expression of meaning followed but of extent of linguistic failure.)

Mr. William Empson borrowed this method from the work of collaboration of which the first author of this book was the first author, according to a declaration of his own in an introductory announcement in his book *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (Chatto & Windis 1930). There precedes, in that announcement, an acknowledgement of indebtedness to Mr. I. A. Richards, to whom he credits not the method he uses in his book but the general idea of the book and suggestion of "various things to put in it." The resultant book of Mr. Empson's combines ideas—on the one hand—of the nature of word-meaning of the color of Mr. Richards' linguistic philosophy of the time, in which he propounded some of the doctrine of scientific linguistics of the early portion of the century softened with literary liberalities, *and*—on the other hand—ideas of potentialities, of Mr. Empson's envisaging, of formalizing, from the borrowed method, a special *poetic* linguistic philosophy, based upon the Richards ideology of meaning. Mr. Empson converted the borrowed method into an imitative exercise by which he analysed the poetic employment of language as a play of diverse ramifications of ambiguity of expression with which words could be used in poetry. Ambiguity of expression was postulated as an inherent element of poetry, both a gift and an imperative; the postulation rested, as a super-structure, upon the Richards general linguistic theory that there was a basic absence, in language, of an intrinsic, consistent, possession of meaning by words. Mr. Empson's novel theory of poetry, formed by a wrenching from the borrowed method of its pattern of energetic close-looking at the *verbal* actuality of a poem, electrified the backbone of the generally droopy poetic criticism of the time.

Upon the publication of Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity,* critics began, here, there, in the literary world, springing up from various postures of inanition with a new morale of looking closely at the poetic text, at its concrete verbal make-up. The idea seemed magic: you *looked* at the words. The punctuation? Mr. Empson let that part of the source-method sink back into itself: the electrifying idea was essentially that of taking the verbal suite of things *seriously,* every morsel of it. But, hold! This was a revised seriousness, matching Mr. Empson's vague apprehension of what the original method-exercise, as exemplified in the sonnet-analysis, revealed. He misunderstood according to his lights, which were dimmed by what he had imbibed of the new linguistics. He did not comprehend that what was revealed was that a poem was made up of language, and was best understood and evaluated in linguistic terms. He grasped the point of the method: poems were made up of words (etc.). But,

lacking a sure sense of the reality of words as words, he translated the revelation into a blurrily stale-and-brand-new proposition: that a poem is made up of poetic words, poetic language. And so the intricate little linguistic revelation made by the analysis of the sonnet in the book in question (and elsewhere, there), a rather homely public trial of a critical method (not there new-sprung, with its originator) involving a principle of requisite checking for honest linguistic substantiality in the using of words to *mean,* was stripped of its linguistic good sense, and presented as a gospel of ambiguity. Thus there sprouted what came to be called the New Criticism.

The New Criticism prospered. The idea of *looking* at the texts of poems for grist for the critical mill (as if there were anywhere else to look!) took wide hold; this one, that one, became a New Critic, and attributions of firstness in the practice were generously distributed, and modestly accepted. There was, however, no determinate healthy conception of a text as, simply, a straight linguistic "affair." The text had been, by Empson's rendering of the conception of what a text is that governed the model from which he took his method, converted into a special concoction of meaning made out of words: *not* the words, what the text meant by what *they* meant, was the closely regarded critical object. The critical eye was preconditioned by the doctrine of ambiguity that wrapped itself round the essential method to see the special literary meaning presumed to exist over and above the mere verbal meaning. And so the literary mind, and with this the ordinary mind, to the extent that it catches intellectual inflections of understanding, educated itself into a New Ambiguity in educating itself into the New Criticism. And a new word "ambiguity" multiplied the ambiguity of ambiguity.

The new "ambiguity" means, in a way adjudged favorable to literary, poetic, intellectually and psychologically well-devised and praiseworthily executed linguistic performance, uncertainty of meaning, or difficulty for the interpreter in identifying just what the meaning in question is: it means the old meanings of ambiguity *with a difference.* It means uncertainty of meaning (of a word or combination of words) purposefully incorporated in a literary composition for the attainment of the utmost possible variety of meaning-play compressible within the verbal limits of the composition. This "ambiguity" comprises within its sophisticated sense an acceptance of the two standing meanings of the word, i.e., the two meanings of two already existent words "ambiguity": the one distinguishes uncertainty of meaning as a *defect,* the other distinguishes a concealment of something in statement, an evasion of truthful statement, by the use of a word or words in a manner allowing of their being interpreted in different ways. But the sophisticated "ambiguity" not only comprises these two meanings. It compounds the contemporary view of ambiguity embodied in the cliché that makes it native to language as a fatal,

insuperable obstacle to full clarity of verbal expression (a pietistic deprecation of language by people for weaknesses in their own use of words resulting from their own weaknesses of linguistic carelessness or incompetence), *and* the derogatory meaning by which ambiguity is a form of vague lying, *with* an ambiguity extraordinary in which unordinary forms of linguistic expression used in literary-poetic practice are ennobled into devices of confusion and indirection and veiling of meaning for the transcending of ordinary ambiguity, by artistic license, to create more effect of meaning with the words used than they are actually capable of meaning.

Any closer account of the complexity of the new ambiguity might lock this explanation in more than seven types of explanatory futility. The matter can be left at a summary: the New Ambiguity—and/or the New Criticism—postulated a given created linguistic confusion as the generic and necessary character of poetry, capable of orderly analysis.

Mr. Empson amplified his elevation of ambiguity to the status of an invaluable and indispensable poetic procedure by linking it with the use of metaphor as a companion-relief to the linguistic strait-and-narrow, that shared with this higher ambiguity the virtue of packing into the literary text invisible meaning-content, which became perceptible to the critical eye when the method-glass of textual inspection that he had dislodged from its original idiom of critical analysis was held down over the page. The matter of metaphor has been treated of here in main orientation to its general linguistic character and function. The matter of ambiguity would not be treatable otherwise than as an incidental aspect of problems of usage had there not been developed in this modern era concepts of the nature of meaning that allowed—unfortunately—of the bestowing on ambiguity of an identity of useful literary procedure at odds with the identity inherent in the meaning of "ambiguity." Because of these circumstances, this essay has had to treat of ambiguity as a matter of quite large importance, travelling by a circuitous route to the putting of it in its proper minor place in the catalogue of things of a linguistic nature. The route has been one of tracing ambiguity to that place by evaluating in linguistic terms its occupying a major place in a contemporary much-thumbed catalogue of things of a literary, or poetic, nature.

"Create" in Modern Usage

The burden of the "create" of sentimental emphasis is carried, now, mainly by the adjective—"creative." This has become quite vulgarized into a term of the ordinary language referring categorically to activity in some art or field of literary activity. Classes in "creative writing" are part of the order of the educational curriculum even below the college level, and policies of stimulation of "creative" aptitudes, in school-beginners not far from the toddler years, are commonplaces of the now already old (and staler than the older, that aged so slowly) philosophy of education. Neither "creative" nor "create" was stylistically or lexicographically treated as in a distinct category of meaning, peculiar to contexts of artistic or literary production, until fairly late in nineteenth-century usage-developments. For long the use of "create" and "creative" in connection with—for example—a poet's powers, or certain faculties of mind impressive in effect, was a figurative association of the words with their exalted theological application. "Creative bard," "creative genius," were exalting characterizations, with no categorical difference of meaning between "creative" in such use and the "creative" of such a phrase as "God's creative hand."

There followed, then, in the developments of literary criticism, a use of "creative" exaltive in its implications but having also the technical force of a critical term; as such it had for quite long, as in the phrase "creative imagination," some dignity of rhetorical effect, some restraint of implication, in the balancing against each other of sense-association with grand power and with faculties practically involved in literary performance. Then, in its twentieth-century career, "creative"—the verb sharing in its fortunes—blossomed into its present condition of degraded serviceability as a word of reference to ac-

tivity classifiable with liberal indiscriminateness as to category and quality as belonging to the province of art or literature, or any region become sociologically sanctified as one of cultural experiment.

The shift in sophisticated verbal practice, from the fairly restrained use of "creative" as a term of fairly conservative nineteenth-century literary criticism, to the loosened use of it in the twentieth century as a general term of the rhetoric of intellectual disquisition, can be perceived in the following two examples of use (from the Supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary*). In 1875 A. W. Ward, in a book on English Dramatic Literature, wrote thus of Shakespeare: ". . . the spontaneous flow of his poetic creativity . . ." In 1926 A. N. Whitehead wrote in *Religion in the Making:* "The creativity whereby the actual world has its character of temporal passage to novelty." The term preserved some dignity of direct connection with literary criticism in the advancing twentieth century. One finds it, for instance, in *Literary Criticism: A Short History* by William K. Wimsatt, and Cleanth Brooks (Knopf 1957), used with literary references of grand association with the philosophic Yonder. "If we are willing to give this passage [from Plotinus] the benefit of some 1,400 years' anachronism, to place it momentarily in a context shining back from, let us say, the Germany of the Schlegels and the England of Coleridge and Shelley (and such procedure can be by no means contrary to the spirit of a really critical, theoretical inquiry), we may agree with those historians who have already proclaimed Plotinus as the earliest systematic philosopher of the creative imagination." But underlying both the uses of the word as a term of critical and general intellectual sophistication, and the uses that have broadened the sophisticated senses to embrace a democratic variety in kinds and degrees of personal enterprise, is an initial diversion of "creative" and "create," from conditions of usage in which their meaning retained some of its original innocence of linguistic function, to the usage-morality of a linguistic age of hardening expediency.

For very long, no one has cared what "create" or "creative" means. It has suited the temper of modern critical and philosophic rhetoric to employ the idea of creation with realistic sobriety as concerned with processes concretely identifiable, but to which some mysteriousness could be attributed. In this attributed mystery-aspect of "creative" activity is a varied potential for self-congratulation in the use of the word as one expressive of perceptive sensibility and as a highly honorific characterization of human processes and performances. That is, the word has come to be used for all its worth in a verbal atmosphere in which realistic discretion—against attributions of qualities or processes outside the realm of practical credibility—is mingled with appreciation of the glow of the extraordinary attaching to its mystery-implications (this extending to "create" or "creation" or "creativity"). That is, there is a

conscious—indeed, a self-conscious—play of divided attitude and purpose in sophisticated use of the word that cannot be rated as other than linguistically cynical—where language is placed within the jurisdiction of moral considerations.

Curiously, it is by the cynical element in the sophisticated use of the word, the calculated uncertainty of the total meaning, that it has descended to the level of the commonplace, as a term of honorific implications. The subdued glow of implied mysteriousness emanating from the word in higher-level uses dissipates on the lower-level into an almost cozy light of cheerful pretension. The pretentiousness inseparable from the term is, there, more open, and, by this, of a certain innocentness, that purges it of some of the cynical quality of the more elegantly careless type of usage. In the broadened application of this term, these terms, the intellectually and rhetorically pretentious element of the posture of use in the limited contexts is transmuted into something more naïve, and the creators added to the scene of human ambition tend to be of miniature mould. However, some giant-sized ones rise up among these, and win place with the regular run of creative divinities, increasing the number of these to confusion of difference between regular and popular types; and a general profusion of varying sizes of aim and distinction under the blessing of the term has added to the accumulated, already existing confusion as to what "creative" may or may not mean. The general moral problem of degenerated habits of word-use could have a premature individual solution with the "create" words in their becoming so top-heavy with virtual meaninglessness as to lose all appeal—the sense of unnecessariness and instinct of convenience acting as substitutes for the moral intelligence in matters of words.

The lexicographical course of the "create" words has in recent years fully caught up with usage-degenerations. For very long, apart from reverent place-giving to the theological "create," the general lexicographical practice was, concentration upon straight meaning, and connotation and implication developments within a practical range of straight meaning, with figurative, sentimental, rhetorical, usage left to find its justification or not, in the general definitional provisions. Then, at last, the conceits of literary and art criticism, and intellectual grandiosity, began to win place: and these can be found even in second place, as in the definition of "create" in the college edition (1968) of the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*—first-place "create" being a mongrelized affair of the sacred and the sensational.

1. to cause to come into being, as something unique that would not naturally evolve or that is not made by ordinary processes: *God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs.*
2. to evolve from one's own thought or imagination, as a work of art, an invention.

There is only missing from no. 2 some homely amplification, as, macramé work, and other handicraft productions pleasing to personal pride, or any product of presumed talent.

As to the initial fitness of "create" as a translation of the Biblical original: there may be pertinent interest in the assertion that I once came upon in my reading, but cannot now trace, that the Hebrew word to which "create" is regarded as a fair match is of a much more complex or specialistic meaning, for which a more faithful translation would be something of the sense "make to create." I cannot quite credit such a phrasing, but I can easily credit a conception of the "Creation" as an action comparable to making, even as "make" and "create" are related in meaning with some practical difference in the nature of the action connoted in each. If one can describe something one has made as having been created in the making of it, the mystery should be resolvable by evocation of the meaning of "create." Our own view of the general meaning of "create," as it is presented in our book, would particularize creating action or process as reflective of a peculiar distinguishable capability of the agent. I need not go into the actual definitions here beyond stating that the capability presented in our book as the peculiar distinction of "create" is not a mystery-factor but a practical one, that might be possessed by a human being within the norm of possible human capabilities, and possible kinds of performances.

It is perhaps viewable as an involuntary manifestation of the rational spirit of language that, given a word-use become solemnly ingrained in a language by a meaning of mysterious connotations, there should spring into being, with increasing boldness, uses that bring the mysterious connotations progressively further and further within the range of human capability of mysterious creation-performances, if not of comprehension of their nature. Thus human beings, indulging in grandiose talk of their "creative faculties," are at the same time pronouncing them to be human, whatever else they may be. But better than the practice of leaving it to the rational spirit of language to make rough adjudications between the mysterious and the sensible in usage is that of establishing oneself in the speaker's seat of knowledge of the meaning of one's words, and making responsible adjudications between what is congruous and incongruous with their meanings in one's use of them. One might say of those who would so use their words that they unmake mystery, and create truth.

[These last two paragraphs were written for presentation of this essay in *Chelsea* 35 (1976), where is also found "Habits of Linguistic Curtailment," originally one of the Supplementary Essays.—Ed.]

The Language-Champions

It is characteristic of the deploring of the contemporary state of language with which the contemporary state of intellectual opinion liberally sprinkles itself that this righteous criticism of prevailing linguistic practice is scantily reinforced with illustrative detail. The scale of the chiding is large but there is little identification of the practical aspects of the linguistic depravity of which general accusation is made. The habitual reprovers of the contemporary heirs of language do not speak from a position of studious perception of disregarded fundamentals; the dispensers of moral criticism of the contemporary linguistic course are as weak in appreciation of the practical nature of the common linguistic inheritance as are those of the general run of word-users, whose linguistic condition they name depravity.

In the early part of the decade of the 'seventies, the magazine *Time* took up the cause of language as the victim of universal human maltreatment (except in certain special quarters where it had friends and partisans, such as in *Time*'s inner government of magazine style). A rare instance of detailed exploration and specific criticisms of a feature of common linguistic practice was an article entitled "The Agonies of Acronymania" of mid-1970. There was no exposition, in the article, of the relation of the contemporary propensity to the employment of acronyms to the general state of the language (viewed as deplorable): the tone of treatment of the subject of acronyms moved between ridicule and irony. The question of practical alternatives to the usage-trends exemplifying the low state of the language does not concern the criticism of generalizing condemnation: it is a sentiment, rather than a process of criticism. Those who engage in it feel possessed of a private knowledge of what consti-

tutes virtuous linguistic practice. The failure to possess it they rate as delinquency in intellectual gentility.

In an article published in *Time* in the same period as that in which the subject of acronyms was dealt with in mocking buoyancy, there was laid down the law of linguistic propriety to the careless-speaking dissenters and protesters of the time. "Violent Protest: A Debased Language" was the article's title. The protesters were criticized for not using words effectively enough. Perhaps, it was suggested, they "have despaired of the efficacy of words before they have mastered them." There was too much reliance on slogans and diatribe. "There is often a disconcerting inexactness about to-day's rhetoric of dissent." The moral wisdom [of] the article is steeped in the "inexactness" of debasement in language—as the case is leniently put—charged to the protesters. This is the stock posture of cultural piety on the theme of language, that has been continuously assumed by those who, word-proud but not language-learnéd, constitute themselves an intellectual upper-class to those who ignorantly give their linguistic ignorance free hand. The "mastering" of words is the recommended mode of linguistic respectability, with "the ultimate value of the word" seen to be its serviceability to people for "efficacy"—success in the effort to be persuasive by the use of words as paraphernalia of intellectual dignity: "words are still as powerful a force as ever, when they are cogently used." This is the argument of an opportunistic intellectualism for which language is a weapon, capability of the management of which for rhetorical dominance over the particular public or set of hearers or readers addressed is the objective and fruit of linguistic knowledge.

Time has ever orientated itself to an objective of using words with "efficacy," straining the muscles of style for forceful verbal effects, making the phraseological verbal quirk the rhetorical pivot of linguistic success. In this sagacity of know-how as a substitute for knowledge, it has merely translated a contemporarily inveterate literary policy of intellectual opportunism in word-use style into a high-level journalistic policy. One witnesses in all contemporary outcry against the "debasement" of language the debasement of the traditional literary art of *rhetoric* to a programme of a power-play with words for successes in imposing in their use an impression of dignity of intellectual status—the problem of persuasive word-use being divorced from the requirements of linguistic knowledge for the creditable use of words. That the ultimate value of words is appreciable only by a knowledge of language as the apparatus of truth is a principle alien to the philosophy of contemporary defenders of language for whom it is an apparatus of rhetoric.

A very "successful" experiment in rhetorical programmaticness is the post-Marxian synthesis of political, sociological, anthropological, scientific-

linguistical, terminology into a persuasive style of critical authority—it has attained authoritarian dignity. The rhetoric of post-Marxian criticism reshapes language, the instrument of human intelligence, into a terminological apparatus in which variations of a type of scientifically rigid philosophical analyses of the panorama of human existence are assembled into the vocabulary of a style of intellectual polemics presumed to preclude the possibility of successful adversaries. *Time* itself supplies an example of the reshaping of language into the vocabulary of persuasion—preoccupied style—a work-day terminology of never-allowed-to-be-out-of-date well-informedness, the vocabulary of a democratically modish vernacular. (The improved, dignified, rhetoric of dissent recommended by *Time* in the article to which we have made reference may be envisaged as language reshaped into a terminology of impressive verbal poise, in the combative posture of which counter-dissent was successfully anticipated, and anticipatorily silenced.)

Language, the English language among others, has been converted by the many rhetorics of contemporary modern spawning that compete with it into a terminological jungle. There is no escape from this jungle in sophistications of mastery of the words of its vocabularies, which are transmogrifications of the vocabulary of the language of the civilized linguistic consciousness. The re-education of the speakers of the language in its natural elementary constitution and its natural sophistications will not come about by professions of reverence of "the ultimate value of the word" lifted up out of a scene of unregenerate defection from the commandments of linguistic fidelity. It can only come about by work to know what the language is, in sincere profession of the need to know.

The Physical Aspects of Words

1.

The shift to the scientific view of language greatly altered the quality of interest in its phonetical aspects that had long prevailed. While the linguistic physicalities had been earnestly studied, and even with scientific methodicalness, in what was called "philology," the later philological pursuits under the sponsorship of a rule of principles of scientific methodology applied generally to language, and languages, have thrust the physicalities of language—the raw phonetical actualities of the history of word-forms, and the reflections of grammatical and dialectal and stylistic developments in phonetical variations—into an undue prominence, exaggerative of their significance and importance. The term "philology" became antiquated; it would be unsuitable to the new modes of linguistic study if for no other reason than that there is no place for love (of which the term gives etymological notice) in the laboratories in which it is conducted, these being jam-packed with technical equipment for the measurement and recording of phonetical phenomena, and all other peculiarities of linguistic development of a formal character.

Now, in consequence of the shift from the older philological atmosphere of study of and concern with the things of language to the atmosphere of scientific linguistical interest by which the later study-disposition to language is characterized, besides by the disappearance of the factor of love of words, there has occurred a near-total elimination of direct concern with the *meaning-component* of words. This peculiarity derives from the conditions of "objectivity" that the scientific attitude imposes on study. These conditions, applied to the study of language, transform it into something of which *direct* knowledge is as impossible. Viewed under these conditions, language, any language, becomes indescribable as something-in-itself, an organically intact entity, a

something existing in a continuity of self-consistency. Languages, so seen, are analysed and interpreted as aggregations of continual accretions and fallings-away, alterations of diverse sorts; and when languages are so seen the idea of language becomes standardized into an idea of it as "always changing." The essential composition of language is meaning, each word being, essentially, a form of meaning; and the growth-movements in language are towards *stabilization* of these forms and not towards "change." The idea that language is "always changing" has taken hold in the general human consciousness in part because of a general development of disregard of the ruling consistencies of language—those of meaning, and grammar, and syntax. But it is the formulation of the idea as a scholarly verity by twentieth-century linguistical theorists, working on language with new-made tools of scientific relativism, that has made it "stick."

In the most seriously studious of the phonetically preoccupied scientific explorations of language-characteristics, there are to be found intensities of application to phenomena of phonetical variation, and phonetically manifested form-variation, that are not without some imprint of the philologist's loving touch. *Linguistic Evolution* by M. L. Samuels (Cambridge U. Press, 1972) merits mention as exemplifying this. But the very title of the book indicates the impossibility of providing in such terms a representation of language that is explanatory of its general nature and essential characteristics. To speak of the evolution of language is to posit a course of developmental origin culminating in an actuality that, however primitive its features may be accounted, *is* language, as the early creature biologically identified as a human being is a human being by definitive description. When language or the human being is responsibly identified as such, whatever the term "primitive" may connote in application to either, "evolution" has terminated. When something is justifiably pronounced "language," it is *language;* similarly, when something is pronounced a human being, the characterization being sincere and accurate, there is connoted, unqualifiedly, arrival at the human status.

The term "evolution" of Mr. Samuels' book is, as applied to language, a misnomer for *historical* change; to present a theory of "linguistic change" is the announced purpose of the book. Supposedly, it narrates how the English language, from its formation into a distinct *language* by a combination of components of contributory *languages* and of dialectal manifestations of these, and dialectal manifestations of itself, came to be what is recognized as peculiarly the English language. But, what the English language distinctively is, is a body of words that have been brought into relation, made into a linguistic body, because of their meanings; their organization into a body has been effected not by processes of change, but by a self-stabilizing action working within them

in their gatheredness through their adapting of themselves to one another, in their meanings, in intricate coherencies of logical co-operation. Languages have things "happen" to them that are productive of phonetical and formal consequences. But the determinative incidents and events in the history of a language—what affects the language as a continuing unity—are in its areas of *meaning,* areas of meaning-relationships between words: here occur the sharpenings of revisions of distinctions, and the reorderings of adaptation where vocabularistic additions or alterations have impressed themselves upon usage, by which a language holds its own against disintegration, inducts particularities of novelty or change into its rational structure without changing, itself.

Incidents and events of physical stamp or form that originate on the phonetical surfaces of language can penetrate into their meaning-content—the humanly co-incident thought-particularities, become commonly possessed permanencies of consciousness, of which a language is the embodiment; and there can follow, then, reasonable absorptions of such visitations. And the internal processes, in a language, of intellectually necessitated readaptation or revision of meaning-distribution and distinction for continuity of logical coherence, can produce "changes" in the outer parts, affect soundings and forms. But the vital statistics of a language's history are those related to its intellectual health as a body of words functioning according to constancies of meaning-principle. The statistics of "change" tell a story of epidermal life-and-death in which the living linguistic actuality is reduced to an invisible nondescript, the identified characteristics of consequence being those impressed upon it from without, circumstantially, as features of shape.

However devotedly thorough the historian of "linguistic evolution" may be in his endeavors to cover the entire field of language-characteristics in his tracing of the continuous life of a language from earlier to later times, his terms of description will deviate from the norms of linguistic characterization. For his terms will be terms of "change," designed to provide a general description of the language under study over the covered time-course; and no language can be rightly represented as it has been as a continuing actuality, of a continuing identity, in terms of change. The major features of a language's character must be the orientation-points of the historical description of it.

The history of a language as following a course of continual change can be—and that of the English language, in the book cited, is—impressively replete with intricacies of scientific classification and detail. In Mr. Samuels' book, features of phonetical and grammatical peculiarity, and of vocabularistic diversification of meaning, are marshalled into neatly named and ordered ranks, and a whole army of linguistic information stands all round in disciplined attention. Meaning is assigned to the branch of the forces denominated

"lexis." But the author explains that "Meaning is carried by both grammar and lexis, and all meanings can be expressed primarily by one or the other, though often by devious circumlocution or expedient." Grammatical categories—"deixis, negation, syntagmatic relations" are but some of the names of them—are sturdy components of the language-science forces. And one is advised that "grammar provides the language with a built-in level of redundancy that could not be achieved lexically." And it is the judgement of *this* book's authorship that such quantities of synthesized, scientifically particular information about language as *that* book offers (it being a very able work of its kind), enormous though they be, are products of industry that takes into charge all that belongs to the superficies of language, of languages—and leaves unaccounted for, disregarded, the underlying, fundamental linguistic substance.

Meaning, which is the component-all of the substance of a language, is active substance, in a language. In the dynamics of a language's arrangements for its total functioning, the workings of general compatibility among words in broad meaning-diversity, and of incessant necessities of consistency amidst complex conditions of meaning-distinction, meaning-difference, meaning-amplification, and vocabularistic alteration, are the first, the ever-undisregardable, the ultimate, order of business. The first subject, or ground, or central concern, of all description of language, be it historical or critical, categorically scholarly or categorically literary, has got to be *meaning;* or, at least, concern with things linguistic that is not directly with the matter of, and matters of, meaning has got to orientate itself to meaning as the presiding formative spirit of linguistic order or development. Every other aspect of the nature of, the history of, the structure and detail of, language lies within a scale of importances in which the matter of meaning is the peak-point, and standard of measurement. Where it does not have such standing in linguistic study, very odd representations of the composition and the historical course and the working features of language issue.

The more substantial the treatment of language from a scientific vantage of study, the more thorough the coverage of distinguished departments of study, and the more cogent the expository argument as to the categorical make-up of language, so conceived, the more are the realities of language obscured from common sight. The world of scholarship—education itself, which has in these times become the pawn of academic experiments in new ideologies of scholarship—has sent language, the historic familiar of human existence, to the Coventry of antiquated concepts, discrediting, in the eyes of the literate, the natural literateness of human linguistic sensibility and putting a scientific concept of literateness in its place. No new concept of language has been offered

in replacement of the old; language, for the new ideological positions of linguistic scholarship, is but a synthesis of verbal procedures, a succession of syntheses perpetuating a continuum of change having the name "language" as a courtesy of identity-attribution.

2.

It is a characteristic of attempts to analyse general linguistic make-up and the detail of linguistic forms according to scientific modes of procedure, which involve extended persistencies of classification, that there is methodical dependence on (a) specifically created terms for the procedure and on (b) the conversion of words by modification or qualification of their ordinary meanings into words of special sense in the contexts of language-study of this special sort. Thus, in Mr. Samuels' book, "denotations" are identified as meaning "common meanings," "connotations" are identified as "links" between "forms" and their "referents." Yet these senses are regarded as "traditional"—and "convenient for dealing with semantic change." Further confusion is introduced, there, by the adding of qualifications in which the ordinary view of the words and the special view of them in the terminological scenery of the book are made to stand arbitrarily on the same terminological spot. The arbitrariness, however, is not obvious, the ordinary view not being allowed linguistic reality. Here, there is only allowing of fictively common (ordinary) meanings, for words: such a meaning of a word is called "the so-called 'agreed' meaning."

Scientific havoc is visited upon linguistic rationality, in the Samuels book, in the explaining of changes in the meaning of words by such postulations as that "referents"—that which the words bring into consideration—are "extra-linguistic." By such a theory of the nature of language, that "sely" meaning "happy," "blessed," at one time, could later mean also "innocent" or "helpless," and then, later, "foolish," might be explicable in a decline in respect for religious people (the "referents"). By the same rule, where moral respect for virtue declined, "good," applied to a person, might mean "stupid." But this is not how meanings "change"; meanings do not disport themselves in this fashion. There have been internal linguistic processes in motion and internal necessities at work, where a word is found to differ considerably in meaning from what it meant in an earlier time. Other words are involved in such a development, redistribution of meanings, revision of distinctions, adaptations to new potentialities or needs of distinction. A language puts itself to a continual test of its vocabularistic sufficiencies and the adequacy of its flexibility, in its patterns of related meanings—the words requiring to be of an accentuated dis-

tinctness of meaning, in their relatedness in meaning. One does not have to go outside the language, to account for what happens *in* it, that is, in the constitution of its meanings. It does not exist marginally to "referents."

Scientific explanations of language-behavior resemble psychological explanations of person-behavior. The reason of a form of person-behavior is assumed always to be outside the essential being, in some factor of personality-manifestation—indeed, there is no assumption of any such entity as "the essential being." Language-behavior likewise tends to be traced to external promptings or conditionings. Meaning-variations are seen as to some extent comparable to phonetic variations, as in the cases of a pronunciation-change for stress and the choice of a word of "strong" meaning for forcefulness of statement though the use of the word is exaggerative—as to describe something as "marvellous" or "glorious" when it is not of the stated degree of extraordinariness. Such an explanation oversimplifies the processes of *word-choice*. The choice of such words is in relation to both individual problems of vocabularistic knowledge and the general state of linguistic literateness; and it is also in relation to the actual matter of adequacy or inadequacy of the provision of choices—there might be an excess of distinctions, at least for some, or there might be a blank area or scantiness in the vocabulary-range of words of moderate intensity of characterization. At any rate, such explanation, even as is the tendency in psychological interpretations of personal behavior, overlooks the *mature* actuality.

The psychological course of analysis breaks up the mature actuality of human personality into elements to which child-characteristics are assigned, as if the mature entity were a sum of child-components. The scientific analyst of language fits observed particularities into categories of causes corresponding to a conception of language that simplifies its nature into a collection of interlocking immaturities. The "grown-up-ness" of a language is, thus, a maturity composed of interlocking child-strains of word-nature. One finds, in linguistic explanation of this mode, the expression "I'm dying to see you" accounted for as a devaluation that the word "die" must be presumed to have undergone, comparable to the devaluation that is presumed for "marvellous," "glorious," from exaggerative use. Obviously, "die" has *not* undergone devaluation in meaning! Nor has "marvellous," or "glorious," though modern populations may feel a lack of worthy "referents" for the words. The devaluation attributed to "die," in *Linguistic Evolution,* is compared with the loss by "starve" of its Middle English meaning of "to die"—"but especially of hunger or cold if these causes were specified (sterue[n] of/for hunger)."

One cannot but be unhappy in criticizing with adverse judgement such fine scrutiny of verbal phonetic forms and curiosities of meaning-variation and development as has gone into the making of this book by M. L. Samuels.

There is no fault of carelessness of research-substantiation or inaccuracy of record. There is the ineradicable general error attendant on the application of scientific method to a subject requiring to be understood in its parts and details by processes of knowledge of its nature as a whole. The underlying error here is the assumption, based on knowledge-experience of the physical universe, that the knowledge of the nature of a language as a whole is impossible. There is no literate speaking of a language without a fair knowledge of its nature as a whole. When one comes upon, in this book, such an account of sympathetic connection between word-sound and word-meaning as the ascription of denotation of overt action without any basic implication of noise to *bake, make, quake, rake, shake, slake, take, wake,* and denotation of the making of noise to *creak, speak* (!), *squeak, shriek, screak,* and denotation of derogatory implication to *bleak, freak, weak, sneak, sleek, gleek, gibe, pique* (earlier *peek, peak*), and perhaps *meek,* one is witnessing a search for language-knowledge from an arbitrarily created observation-point of pure, scientifically ideal ignorance. Discoveries about a language made from that observation-point, however much fortified by learned detail, cannot but add up to categorizings that are not illuminative of the general course of linguistic processes, and a great quantity of analytical detail a considerable portion of which is of superficial or trivial interest, interpreted with mistaken attributions of significance.

There is no practically useful observation-point for the knowledge of the nature of language, and of the nature of a particular language, and the knowledge of it in the particularities of its substance, that is not itself a point of experienced comprehension of and sensitivity to the principles of significance applicable to all features, large and small, of a language. For the industry in itself expended in linguistic study from the scientific observation-point, one wants to be grateful, if it is such as Mr. Samuels' book manifests; yet it is very difficult, if not impossible, to separate the interest of the evidence of "change" detailed in it from the uneasiness produced by the failure to resort to general principles of linguistic significance, in the course of interpretation—the melody of the theme of "change" does not compensate for this failure.

The New Grammar

1.

One does not need to have familiarized oneself with contemporary adult speaking and writing, in the various ordinary and special fields of linguistic practice, and with the course of the over-developed science of linguistics (the continually multiplying sciences of linguistics), to feel that what has come to pass for language is a corpse variously put through motions that enliven it mechanically, according to formulas of expression in which there is little reflection of the organic functions of language. One can learn from observation of the children of the various school-ages of this time that there is no youthful intelligence of a living actuality, language, that language has been and is steadily being dealt out to the young, in this age, as a survival of itself consisting of fragments of things that can be said, less and less suggestive of a language knowable as a system of word-relations that belongs naturally to them and their lives. An educational authority addressing a body of teachers in recent time reassured them as to the seemingly dire continual decrease in the ability of the young, into the "teen" ages, to read, and take interest in the faculty of reading, by pointing to the general reliance on visual experience and visual "communication" and the prevalence of facilities ministering to this.

Does no one think that the Chomskyan notion of primitive prelinguistic patterns of linguistic expression is an academic murdering of the realities of language? First of all, murder of the words—which *mean,* hold in the intellectual stuff of language? Then, murder of syntax—which is implicitly present in the words by how they mean, which is in relation to their existence for functioning *together?* And, then, of grammar, which, as syntax is implicit in the *words,* is implicit in language? The Chomskyan reconstruction of the course of

language's coming to be itself has met with resistance among his scholastic peers, but with prudent allowance for its being correct in important ways. To reject it would be as to reject Darwinian reconstruction of humanity's coming to be itself: they are all loyalists, jealous of their science's acquired repute.

Language is the form of the words' structural integrity: each word is of a particular potency of its own, as a contributor to the unifying entirety, and is grammatical—is of a separate and distinct functional identity, from which comes its capability of supporting itself, as meaning what it means, when combined with other words. The desertion peculiar to contemporary times of words, grammar, syntax, these constituent parts of a language, and the substitution of a chaos of vestiges of linguistic usage throughout all the quarters and levels of verbal practice, has an extraordinarily close "cultural" match in latter-day linguistics, which mirrors it with a mirror of linguistic history and prehistory built derivatively *back* from the general latter-day collapse of word-use habitudes into dead stereotypes of varieties of things-to-say. The yield of this analytical process, suppositious word-formations, hypothetical grammatical phenomena, semantically arguable syntactical solutions, is offered as a replacement of words, grammar, syntax, which are the substance of language as the programme of explicit reason that minds project, and wherein minds meet. The new grammar, the new structural delineation of language, empties language of itself, leaves minds with nowhere to go.

Out of this disciplined terminological nightmare of continual formulation and reformulation issues an occasional sensible-sounding proposition, as, what constitutes a "well-formed sentence." One finds, however, that the proposition corresponds to nothing in the humane curriculum of the learning of the nature of sentences: the matter of crucial concern is likely to be the "semantic" reasonableness or unreasonableness of a change of place between the subject and object of a verb in a given sentence. If one can say, "These new grammarians invent language-principles to fit their science," could it not be semantically reasonable to say, "New language-principles invent these new grammarians to fit their science?" Why not?

Theoretical preoccupation with composition-peculiarities of sentences, rather than practical consideration of *words,* their meaning-nature as the structural material of sentences, is the mark of the new-grammar doctrines. Intensive concern with types of sentences, forms of expression as the structural units of sentences, is especially characteristic of the doctrine of "transformational generative grammar," which has taught a theory of rhetorical evolution in which language is conceived of as an outcrop from a limited prelinguistic supply of generalized expression-patterns of sentence-character. There is happy relief from such new grammatical lessoning, which proceeds in very

large part by presenting examples of uses and sentences, in such solid sensibleness as is to be found in William Cobbett's excellent *Grammar of the English Language* (London, 1833):

> To say, "your uncle *came* hither last night," is not the same thing as to say, "*it was* your uncle *who came* hither last night," though the *fact* related be the same. "*It is I* who write," is very different from "*I write,*" though, in both cases, my being writing is the fact very clearly expressed, and is one and the same fact. "*It is those men,* who deserve well of their country," means a great deal more than, "*Those men* deserve well of their country." The principal verbs are the same: the prepositions are the same; but the real meaning is different. "*It is* the dews and showers *that* make the grass grow," is very different from merely observing that "*Dews and showers make* the grass grow." . . .
>
> For want of reliance on principles, instead of examples, how the latter have swelled in number, and grammar-books in bulk! But, it is much easier to quote examples than to lay down principles. For want of a little thought, as to the matter immediately before us, some grammarians have found out "*an absolute case,*" as they call it; and Mr. Lindley Murray gives an instance of it in these words: "Shame *being* lost, all virtue is lost." The full meaning of this sentence is this: "*It being,* or *the state of things being such,* that shame *is* lost, all virtue is lost." (Letter XVII)

2.

The underlying clue to the injection of new language-principles into the field of linguistic study is not in there having come to be new apprehensions of the nature of language but in the great shift from religion-orientated philosophy—which all philosophy in pre-modern times in some manner was—to science-orientated philosophy. Some philosophers, such as Kant, and Hegel, belong to an interim historical position characterized by a marked detachment from religion-orientatedness, with science-orientation implicit in the centralization of their ideas in a metaphysics that makes human intellectuality the self-sufficient focal point of human sense-making of the universe of existence. The outrightly modern philosophical position has a model in science for a functional account of human intellectuality, and, thus, an appearance of escaping the abstractionism of the metaphysical spokesmen of the conception of an ideal human intellectual authoritativeness. The new linguists, acting from the new, all-modern, philosophical orientation, have inherited the philosophical modernism of the post-proto-moderns in philosophy, who labored to dissipate the metaphysical authoritarian subjectivity of the proto-moderns, substi-

tuting for it a scientific objectivity characterized by a more imperious authoritarianism—the observers, the self-classified objective exercisers of the perceptual faculties, making their own laws as to in what objectivity (intended to be the perceptual rule for all) consists.

To the objectivity of Noam Chomsky, and the clan of language-philosophers of which he is an outstanding member, there are two phenomena confronting human understanding: one is "the world," which exists for observation, the master perceptual object, the other is the human mind. *This* phenomenon, the human mind, is distinct from *that* phenomenon, the world, existing in detachment from it although "in" it in the sense of being in the sphere of its existence as an observer of it. By the philosophical creed that accounts for reality as having these two components, separately treatable phenomena, as it were co-existent but distinct objects of observation, there is *nothing* of inter-connection between the two in a unity transcending them, or implicitly presiding over them, as being of *one* nature, one source, and one sense, verging, verging, within the unity towards explicitness. In the shift from religion-orientatedness to science-orientatedness, philosophy has thrown out the conceptions of reality as unitary except as materialistically so. It qualifies the materialistic account of reality in the phenomenalistic dualism of the "world" and "human mind" pair of basic objects of perceptual evaluation, or subjects of explanation; and there is a philosophic idealism of post-religion orientation that squeezes into the finalized modern philosophic position a weakling third spiritual component of reality existent unto itself in a perfection of private immutability. But it is this dualistic phenomenalism ("the world"—"the human mind") with which contemporary philosophical intellectuality is mainly substanced; and the consequent want in it of allowance for an implicit unity in reality, a one-sense permeating the content of it to an effect of expressible *meaning,* evinces itself with an especial peremptoriness in the dogma philosophical and technical of contemporary linguistical theory.

For such linguistical dogmatists as Noam Chomsky, language is but a phenomenalistic aspect of the phenomenal nature of the human mind. All that the mind accomplishes is conceived of as originating in itself. Grammatical formations are imagined as pressing their way to concrete linguistic existence from "deep-seated" and "rather abstract" primeval mental principles that work their influence up to the surface of mental performance, causing the structure of sentences to be what it variously is. By the Chomskyan conceptions of human existence, the world, language, one must find the key to the understanding of the nature of language in the action of the "innate schematism" of the mind, engineered processes that deliver hidden lower-level mental forces to a destination in top-level, "visible," grammatically determinate form. This "surface" area of the linguistic "condition" (as contemporary philosophi-

cal jargon phenomenalistically names the actuality of human beings' being human beings) is endowed, by realistic introduction of sociological and biological theory, with direct connection with "the world": the human mind enters here into "interaction with the social and physical environment"—and from this junction of "innate mechanisms" and externalities of the other general phenomenon (the world), there results "a system of knowledge and beliefs." Thus goes the story of life, being, existence, according to the new grammar, the new philosophy, the new linguistic ideology. Mr. Chomsky's special brand of modern mentalism—which dispenses with such old-fashioned paraphernalia of ontological understanding as the conceptions "self" and "reason" and, in summary effect, *the soul*—is a pragmatically simplified version of the bulky pomp of Claude Lévi-Strauss' general analysis of the nature of things human in terms of anthropological retrospect: the explanation of language in its developed state is by digging into an imagined "deep" linguistic mental substructure from which it may be theoretically argued to have grown into what is (i.e., language).

The appeal of all this scientific philosophization on human mentality, and language, and languages, is to the modern intellectual bias towards the "easy to understand." Eliminating the "difficult to understand" subjects of inquiry with which religious intellectuality occupies itself, and which were concerns of the older philosophers, the new account-givers of the existent world and the human factor in it as in it, but [as] something *in itself,* offer for human intellectual comfort a combination of freedom from connection with any inspiring, general power or force of *meaning* presiding over the world-with-human-beings-in-it and a self-made determinism of the human mind as having lodged in its evolutionary depths a "code," as Lévi-Strauss has dubbed the automatically possessed convenience, which it "obeys." A complex system of self-obedience is posited, to replace the religious and the older philosophic conceptions of laws and values inhering in a believable capability possessed by an element of the existent of transcending its material conditions, with human individuality itself allowed a resemblant capability. In the replacement-system, social existence extrudes from personal human existence as an outer envelope embracing the field of operation of "the code." Speech, according to Lévi-Strauss' description of the idiosyncraticness of the phenomenon of the human mind, is "only one of the ways in which society 'explicates' itself"—other ways being, music, art, ritual, myth, cookery, and everything else identifiable as a human form of interest or activity, all being regarded as "language."

The superficialities of grammatical conundrum-posing and solving that are the main content of such "explication" as the scholars of language-analysis offer on the nature of language can be understood, against the background of

such general philosophical analysis, as a department of extruded human existence—social extrusion in the form of words.

The elimination, from the account of the elements of existence, of a possible third factor, an actuality identifiable as of a spiritual nature, such a factor as has been thought of, religiously and philosophically, as a third phenomenon to "the world" and the phenomenon of human intelligence, used to have the demotic name of "atheism," a binary-type idealism distinguished from the various trinary concepts of the make-up of existent being with which religion and philosophy struggled, in their efforts to picture a coherence of unity as fundamental in the universal complex of being. The most advanced "explications" of scientific philosophy of the make-up of existent being protect themselves from such characterizations as "atheism," or "materialism," in binary-ism so exclusive of reference to anything but itself that its scholars make free with words related to concepts of a spiritual factor having actual presence in the universal complex of being. They enlarge their binary-ism with psychological sentimentalities associated with "creative" impulses and imagination needs of the human mind. Thus, Lévi-Strauss, tracing the human mind's looking for some unity of meaning in what he calls "the chaos of the universe" to the presumed "code" located in primitive mental depths, avers that "what primitive man seeks above all is not truth but coherence: not the scientific distinctions between true and false but a vision of the world that will satisfy his soul." Truth, in this ideology, is a scientific technicality; and the soul is a desire lodged in the primitive depths of the human mind for a picture of reality, of its own making, that will satisfy the desire according to principles of art, not truth.

Does no one resent the use of science-fiction methods, applied in temporal reverse, for the "creation" of a rationalistic doctrine, a scientific "truth" that reduces the human "vision" to connivances of the imagination, and the human soul to an artistic appetite? Human spiritual morale, of an almost timeless toughness until these modern times, has been taking punishment for so long from the scientific moralists dedicated to the debunking of it (it being still severely crippled from Freudian belaboring of it) that its former toughness seems to have become transformed into a mere ability to endure stunning by blows aimed at it from various quarters of scientific assault.

All "binary" ideology—ideas of the nature of human beings as having, in the possession, *mind,* a component of a two-part actuality, *mind* and *world*—is more or less of animalistic temper: the key to human identity, as located in the human mind, is in the evolutionary capsule in which, by this ideology, it exists as a phenomenon for scientific "explication." The phenomenon is viewed as explicatable by backwards-directed observation of the contents of the evolu-

tionary capsule; fourteen-or-more million years ago "we" were put on our way to where we are by the mechanics of evolutionary predestination: we are a self-originating, self-developing, and self-explicating phenomenon. The evolved human being is always and everywhere the evolved human animal—a creature of self-enclosed transcendence to himself. All that we are is a product of what we were when we began to be a different sort of animal. We once lived by hunting? We are still hunters in our modes of non-hunting existence. We have "architecture"—this is activity within our social development of our fundamental biological propensities. We *speak?* How else can this have started except in the primitive group-play of the first young of the animal that turned itself "human" and somersaulted into its very own capsule of biological eccentricity in the very process of making it?

3.

The book *The Emergence of Man* by John E. Pfeiffer (Harper & Row, 1969), a profusely documented presentation of an evolutionary pattern of collective mentality as the true (true scientific) story of the human mind, embraces the story of language in the general story of the human mind—all developments of a mental character in human behavior and performance, from a presumed animalistic basis of human identity, coming, in such analysis, under the head of "culture." Thus, reporting on flint-"artifacts" that seemed to their examiners as of little or no practical use, but, rather, as "symbols," signs of "trends in the evolution of language" (the author voicing the stock contemporary scientific identification of the nature of language—and of human personality), the author commits himself to such generalizations as that "a common element may link the fashioning of beautifully shaped tools with the freeing of language . . . as well as with the origin of art." He also provides the prophetic gloss (from the stock modern anthropological view of language) that "the anatomy of grammar will be better understood when we learn how the brain cross-indexes its remembrance of things past." And his report of the illumination that the evolutionary principles of analysis of the workings of the human mind [are] held to provide, of their spiritual levels of operation, is a concise summary of the ingenious scientific-minded encompassing of those levels within the range of the "creative" anthropological imagination. "Ritual suggests the belief or hope that a connection exists between repetition and truth, the notion that if a possibility is stated often enough it becomes a certainty."

The programmatical obsession of scientific historicizing, which makes human mental activity, that in the linguistic field especially, a behavior responsive to preliminarily-existing directive instructions within the human evolutionary capsule, has inflamed the mind of many a member of the contemporary faculty

of linguistical science. The conception encourages presumption of ease of access to the "secret" of language by fanciful analysis dignified by the terminologies of the humanistic sciences of anthropology, psychology, aesthetology, etc. "Deep structures" are identified, with a scholastically fierce speculativeness, as the secret's inner area. Language itself as it is "known"—that is, less and less known by the users of words!—is, within this hotbed, this isolated, protectively tended intellectual chamber of theorizing on language, but a surface, or outer, manifestation of the guessed-at structural primordials. The ultimate secret of language thus known is seen as lodged in *grammar,* that is, grammar conceived of as consisting of structures of word-functioning regarded as preexistent to words, in a crazed heat of simplification of linguistic actualities.

Contemporary scholastic plumbing of the secret of language takes place within a hell of intellectual conceits that, feeding the assurance of those in academic residence within it, are delivered to the outer, lay, areas of human acquaintance with language as a new gospel of human self-understanding, centered in the understanding of the primitive mysteries of language. In the new preaching on linguistic themes, standards of rightness in word-use, which the pioneers in language-analysis threw (now quite long ago) on the midden of modern intellectual and moral discards, are replaced by rulings as to what language is not, and as to what is not wrong that has been held to be wrong according to traditional canons of linguistic propriety, that are more rigidly "prescriptive" (a term of denunciation much favored in language-analysis quarters) than anything prescribed by them. The very idea of correctness in language is represented, in this doctrine, as a myth that has been imposed by classicism and mediaevalism on the speaking laity, and become, by their bigoted credulity, an opposing force to a modern linguistic good-sense.

Modern linguistic good-sense is partial to the idea that speaking is a different "dialect" from writing, and that writers can learn, from the informalities of speech, possibilities of freedom in word-use that, while not in the old sense correct, are happily suitable to the occasion. "Precision" is "old-hat." "Flexibility" is the modern ideal of the good. Professor Albert Kitzhaber, a past president of the National Council of Teachers of English, put the case for the easy-going in word-use as the proper general standard, and key to good writing, thus, some years ago, in criticizing the textbooks that did not take into account the actual linguistic experience of students, from early childhood onwards—very, very, little of it comprising exposure to "correct" English. Textbooks and teachers should be, according to his recommendation, realistic. They must avoid insistence on correctness, not press the "mistaken notion" that "good writing and correct writing are synonymous terms. . . ."

The fallacy in all the prescriptive sensibleness of professional linguistic modernism is in the assumption that definite formulations about the nature

and "structure" of language can be made in the terms of a policy of flexibility as to what is "good." There is great confusion where "good" and "correct" are tumbled about together, in argument. "Good" has reference by its meaning to the general character of a unit of linguistic expression. "Correct" can have reference by its meaning only to individual features of the verbal detail of a unit of linguistic expression. All such argument begins in a dissociation from language as a coherently existing actuality—the naturally fashioned instrument of human knowledge. From this point of dissociation, language is conceptually reconstituted, according to analytical principles borrowed from science, with substance that is not language-substance, but a hodge-podge of miscellaneous scientific knowledge-material. Instead of the meaning-essences that constitute the knowledge-material of language, there are generalizations of the vaguest, on the model of scientific generalizations, as to the nature of language, and elaborate pseudo-technical accounts of the particulars of linguistic content.

A continual flow of hypothetical descriptions of language from the distance of scientific-minded dissociation from it has filled the consciousnesses of the literate, in these times, with notions that, respected because they come from where they come, add, to the passively endured confusion as to things linguistic characteristic of the literate contemporary intelligence, the confusion of all this academic learnedness (which stimulates uncomfortable efforts to accept it as "correct" and "good" and "right," even of its being as-it-were divinely unauthenticatable). The practical heart of it all is in the grammatical hypotheses, of not-quite identical-twin relationship, "structural grammar" or "phrase-structure grammar" and "transformational grammar," the speciality of Noam Chomsky.

"Structural grammar" analysis displays its scientific mettle by theorizing on the functioning of language not as a progress of articulating thought in which words are used according to rational principles that thought and language reciprocatingly confirm in each other, but as an employment of linguistic building-blocks for the construction of sentences. Words, in this particular kind of scientific treatment of language as queer stuff that went long ununderstood until science began to take note of it and investigate it, are not the irreducible components of language, things in themselves, each of the identity of its particular meaning: they are material of classifiable kinds out of which sentences, or language-structures, are made in conformity with certain stabilized sentence-building practices of material-distribution. The conception that the sane employment of language inheres in a naturally given relation between the movements of the thinking mind and the matching of words to these in their individual meanings, is an outlawed one for those affected with

scientific suspicion of everything that has been traditionally respected, as being a tyrannical imposition, perpetuated by ignorance and irrationality.

Transformational grammar prides itself on the discovery of deep-down foundation-types of sentence-potentialities from which other sentence-potentialities reproduce themselves, within a scientific cathedral superstructure of linguistic architecture. In transformational doctrine, words in themselves are even more unreal, as the employment-dictating constitution of language, than they are in standard "structural" or other schools of scientific language-study. The ingenuities of those of the Chomskyan school of grammar-theory, in their propounding of the possible variety of forms of linguistic expression by reference to primeval foundation utterance-patterns presumed to govern the entire development of modes of statement, have at least the advantage of impressive intricacy, with the general linguistics audience, over more simple scientific accounts of variations in grammatical structure given by those of intellectually less sprightly schools. For instance, language-scientists of the latter lose out to Chomskyan readings of complex interpretation-problems into subject-and-object and active-and-passive circumstantialities. Where a Chomskyan riddle is posed by mind-tantalizing suggestions of interactive, maze-creating, relationship between such statements as "The man closed the door" and "The door was closed by the man" (not to speak of, here, such an alternative statement as "The door closed the man"), others would conduct the discourse on such a matter by, for example, proposing an *actor-agent* terminology of solution to the identity-crisis precipitated in a speaker's choice of either an active or passive form of verb, for a statement. To the general linguistics audience, such solutions are dull business beside the bright, dazzling course of Chomskyan twisters of rational impossibilities into scientific semblances of sense.

Contemporary inurement to verbal riddles of language-analysts' proposing has gone so far that few within and few outside of the professional bounds of linguistics, or its wider bounds of intellectual prestige, would take a public stand against the making of paleographic riddles out of normal cases of the grammatical processing of courses of expression that originate at the level of stabilized maturity of the human capability of infinite variation of the expressible. Linguistics has (too easily) argued people out of their (rather dazed) consciousness of intellectual committedness to using their words from that level.

To riddle over sentences having active and passive forms of statement, likeness in content being taken to exist between them, is to impose scientific addle grammar on a language. The English language, among others, embodies a grammar intrinsically present in it in a high degree of developed responsiveness to the requirements of intellectual functioning of a high degree of developed

flexibility (sensitiveness to the infinite potential of rational thought in its language-inclined determinations). To raise question of a need of explanation of a postulated resemblance-factor in such a case as "The man closed the door" and "The door was closed by the man" is to thrust the human mind's achievement of rational thought, and the partnering achievement of equipment with language (that armature of love contesting the idea of reality as a self-sustaining disunity), out into the abyss that scientific analysis creates in substituting itself for truth.

"The man closed the door" is either an expression of ordered thought attendant on an experience of perception, informative in effect, or it is an invention prompted by speculation on the nature of grammar that originates in discomfort with the fact of it. The exercises in grammatical speculation conducted under the auspices of language-analysis evince, all, *non-acceptance* of the actual imbuement of language—of the words that are the content of language—with functional properties of connectibility with one another, resident in the meanings of words themselves, which *are* grammar. The abnormally enlarged, hydrocephalic, grammar-preoccupation of the language-analysts comes of an extreme condition of hebetude with regard to *words,* words as entities of meaning. This condition is the characteristic, the marking, condition of the scientific investigators of things linguistic; and it is one that makes them the least likely of people of the intellectual professions to comprehend the intricacies of linguistic functioning. Not starting their studies within the given content of language, that is, with words, with the essentialities of meaning, they perforce look for theories from which to take their start. Where meanings are not treated as the prime object of linguistic study, are viewed as suspect linguistic quantities, even, grammar necessarily assumes the appearance of the main subject of investigation. Hit upon a theory of grammar that fits the mess of words that language is by the light of scientific investigation, and you will be able to present to the speakers of languages, the users of words, a menacingly plausible account of what they are doing, in using words—*apart from* what they think they are doing, that is, *meaning,* and saying, trying to say, with their words, what they mean.

The door is closed by the man? For the language-analysts, this has nothing to do with a process of expression of ordered thought attendant on an experience of perception, informative in design. Not *meaning,* not the concern of the mind with gathered perception of the door's having had itself closed—or, in the other case, the concern of the mind with what the mind gathered in perception of what the man had done: it is not the identification of the intellectual nature of what is said that is the object of analysis, but a description of the formal, the quasi-physical composition of the statement, an account of it as a pattern of placement of verbal material. The point of such patterns, that

is, "sentences," is not, for the transformational generative grammar-analysts, one of sense: the sentence is not a meaning-construction, a unit of organized sense, but a unit of patterned placement of words. The point is in "rules" of placement, of connective location of words. For these, one must go back, analytically, to the types of placement deducible as having been evolved from primeval dispositions in the pre-linguistic state of human mentality to certain kinds of verbal patterns. What is said in any linguistic instance, sentence-instance, is not to be traced to the thought of the speaker, in the speaker's condition of literate knowledge of the meanings of words and the functional aptitudes possessed by words, because of what they mean, for co-operation with the progress of thought in sequences of coherent linguistic expression of it. The *sense* of linguistic utterances is treated as lying outside of language—language as an intrinsically intelligent system of meanings—in mental behavior-patterns presumed to be not otherwise "explicatable" than according to a phenomenology of the mind based on a view of it as an idiosyncratic other-world to the general physical world, a curiosity of self-evolution.

4.

What can unlock, from its crippling enclosedness in the confines of scientific theorizing on grammar, the great-framed subject of language, and the operations of word-use as employments of words in intelligent knowledge of their ready lendability to the rational expression of the rational thought of individual minds? In a variety of sentence make-up possibilities limited only by the number of speaking minds and the degree of intellectual vitality and scope of perceptual experience of each? The scientists of the populous region of grammatical linguistics keep struggling amongst and also against one another to create freedom and language-wisdom amidst the constrictions of its premises—its deep-structure foundations, its scaffoldings of "rules," types and examples of "meaningful" (as they might be scientifically called) patterns of meaningless sentence-formation (that is, conforming to rules rather than to individual living circumstances of mental intention). Such scholarship is unalterably imprisoned in its given working conditions. It cannot exist without its founding premises, which are, yet, but a mystical theory of beginnings, of a nature undefined (and assumed to be so deeply lodged in the past as to be undefinable), from and upon which rises a superstructure conforming to the hidden substructure in strictly definable ways.

Scientific linguistic scholarship is occupied, in its most advanced stages, with endeavors to reduce the endlessly various potentialities of individual thought-modes and expression-modes to skeletal forms of functionality that can be hypothetically assumed to emanate from a primitive pre-linguistic

mentality-basis. The future of this scholarship is limited to endless positing of, and argument as to the relative merits of, a varyingly limited number of expression-modes, of varyingly limited kinds, derived from a hypothesized underlying code of expression-possibilities, itself derived from a hypothesized derivation of linguistic typicalities from *it*.

There is only, within the reaches of the scholarship of language-science, a mobility between poles of hypothesis, a continual coming to immobility. The action does not take place on the ground of language: the roots of investigative quest are not in a care for language itself. Whether the form of quest is grammar-analysis or a special linguistics of literary criticism or the linguistics of a synthetical criticism in which philosophic philosophy, political philosophy, anthropological and sociological psychology, biological theory, literary theory, are sweepingly subsumed, it is all a scholarship of the head, not of the *mind*. It is mentally mechanistic, not *human,* action; it is conducted in an emptiness of misapplied science, not in the domain of the spirit, the life-space of the human mind. The entire range of modern intellectual activity seems to come under the interpretative government of this scholarship; and, by its edict-like pronouncements, the very sentences people speak are hardly their own, rather echoes of remotely determined behavior, to the origins of which the scholarship holds the keys. The scholarship is not able to use its keys to open the doors of understanding to the origins themselves, except in rituals of scientific intuition, from the experimental symbolism of which specifically analytical truisms of linguistic, literary, metalinguistic, metaliterary, meta-everything, "explication" are precipitated. But all the work of theorizing is done under the stern ordinance that it has got to be proved workable, since human beings have nothing other than *it* by which to know what they, in their character of intelligent beings, are "all about." The theoretical apparatus has got to work: human beings themselves are presumed not to know anything, or to be capable of knowing anything, actually, for sure, about themselves, in their very character as intelligent beings.

Scientific humanism, of which language-science has become the Biblical center, provides a self-renewing regime of experimentally authoritative intellectual authority, to take supervisory care of all the problems human beings have of understanding of their human mentality in its varieties of functioning. It is a diversified Intellectual Medicine faculty: it has its standard recipes of understanding, its new "innovative" (as contemporary intellectualist jargon goes) programmes of interpretation, its (relatively speaking) conservatives and liberals in this department and that. One is never very far, in the System, from the pioneer theses, such as that of the Danish Louis Hjelmslev, one of the deans of linguistical science, from whose ideology Chomskyan theory derives a good deal of its basic doctrine. The publisher's account of a book of his presented in

translation in recent years, *Language, An Introduction* (U. of Wisconsin Press, 1970), tells that his thesis is

> that beneath language usage lies a language structure which determines the identity and constancy of a language; fundamental rules can be found to govern that structure; and the transformation of languages can be conceived and described as a series of linguistic states defined in terms of the dictates of the structure. Hjelmslev thus definitively overcomes the polemic difference that had previously separated structural from historical linguistics.

The terminology of *dictation* can be seen here to abound both in the scholar's personal mode of thinking *and* in what is empirically attributed to language as automatically "there": "which determines the identity and constancy . . . ," "fundamental rules that can be found to govern . . . ," "a series of linguistic states defined in terms of the dictates of the structure." As to the overcoming of the "polemic distance" between "structural and historical linguistics," all that this means is that *Linguistics* scoops old-fashioned philology, concerned with the history of words, as the essential stuff of language, into its sphere of authority, and subjugates the natural, elementary, linguistic fact of *words* to the higher fact of the prepossession of Linguistics with its late-modern antediluvianistic conceptions of predeterminations as the natural, elementary, linguistic fact. However, one does not have to hold still in the atmosphere of such analytical fundamentalism. One can, for instance, betake oneself to the department of Biological-Linguistical Relations, where the theoretical atmosphere is more lively.

In the area in which biological analytical theory and linguistical analytical theory are joined in doctrinal interplay, one finds the language-analysis conception of "models," of mathematical inspiration, paralleled by a like device for the explanation, or, at least, description, of biological processes. Anthropological and linguistical conceptions of evolutionary inevitability, structuralist determinism, acquire here a look of biological resemblance. The theory of embryological development and that of generative grammar appear in a sympathetic alignment of comparability. The solemn posing by language-analysis scientists of sentence-recomposition into potentialities factually or logically absurd but amounting to "structurally" reasonable statements has an ally in such a "structurally" sensible fancy of biological theory as that the three embryological forms ectoderm, mesoderm, endoderm, have a match in the sentence "The cat ate the mouse," all being perfectly correspondent between them, to the fanciful structural identicality of endoderm with the object of the sentence's verb, the prey. When the genius of scientific analysis moves outside the boundaries of functional science, converting itself into a replacement of

philosophic-religious summarizing wisdom wherever a vacancy seems to exist, it will make a zealous most of the diverse intellectual opportunities it seizes upon (creating some on simple scientific ground itself). And nothing will stop the advance, the diversification, the intensification, of this demonic force of analytical "truth." Except the ever-growing controversy with itself that must accompany its growth because its activity is not governed by any principle of intellectual harmony. The empire of analytical authority must fall apart at the pace at which it builds itself up. It is a scientific version of the authority of the human mind, that represents the mind both as an evolutionarily activated nit-wit and as its own Professor in the study of itself and its fellow-phenomenon "the world."

5.

The development of scientific systems of interpretation of the nature of grammar has proceeded to a large extent in an independent course of activity. The case has been the same with the scientific systems of interpretation of the nature of language as inhering in the nature of *words*. The tracks laid for the systems of semantical linguistics were among the first evidences of the scientific invasion of linguistic terrain. But they have been criss-crossed by the tracks of other language-interpretation systems, developed with increasing intensiveness. Much of the roadbed of semantical linguistics has fallen into disuse, and this entire set of systems is as a whole in disrepair. For instance, one of the cardinal features of semantical linguistics, the theory that a word is a "symbol," though still an axiomatic commonplace of general talk on words and language, has "aged" considerably, and receded from the foreground of linguistical discussion. This is not because such an argument (is it not one of Erich Fromm's?) as that the illusion that the word is the experience makes the word cease to be what it ought to be, "a symbol of the fact," is demonstrably itself an argument based on an illusion—for the use of words as if they were the same as experience or fact is an impossibility both mental and physical—but because other lines of linguistical analysis besides those concerned with the interpretation of the nature of words have come to predominate in the scientific penetration of linguistic terrain.

Systems other than those aimed at the analysis of the word-substance of language now exceed them in intellectual popularity because they have been more successful in providing ways for dealing with language as something other than it is, something unresistingly accommodatable to scientific analysis. They have yielded scientific interpretative derivatives of the actuality for the construction of descriptions of it that will serve the purposes of scientific interest in language. The character of scientific concern with a subject is with

parts of it, the subject itself being not "all there" to the rationalizing processes of scientific observation. The character of scientific concern is, that is, theoretical, with the partially evident defined in theoretical terms. Practical consequences of such concern are accidental products of it. Where a subject is "all there" to human knowledge and understanding, as language is, the application to it of scientific methods of knowledge and understanding shoves it out of view. What Linguistics has been and is exhibiting as *Language* is a theoretical furniture of explanation the intellectual room for which has been made by a displacing [of] the actual subject with a postulation of it as something unknown except for some distinctive features of scientific perception—on which to base presuppositions as to a hypothetical whole.

The grammarian portion of language-science activity has proved a strong propulsive force in the scientific modernization of language-study. The bustling about over stressed issues of grammar that constitutes the activity of this linguistical area advertises it as the central area of linguistical realism. The developing and sustaining of realistic attitudes to language was the objective of the original scientific attack on the subject of language, seen as one obscured from modern daylight either in the dust of philological archives or the atmospheric rarefactions of metaphysical philosophy. There was both grammarian and philosophical rebellion in the initial stages of the Linguistics movement, with an identical strain in each of dependence on traditional philosophy's own modes of attempt to impose rational linguistic controls on philosophical speculation: the new grammarianism and the new philosophy, of scientific inspiration and mood, both extracted from traditional philosophy *its* device of linguistic realism, realistic self-criticism, for their scientific rebellion against traditional understanding of the nature and functionality of language. This device is *logic.*

Logic, the philosophical science of rational testing of philosophical propositions, became, *and remains,* the basic technique of new-grammar realism and new-philosophy semantical realism. Traditional logic had, in its philosophical ground-bed, the reality of reference to the practical philosophical concern with *thinking*—with rational observance of the linguistic proprieties in philosophical processes of thought-extension, thought-organization. The realistic device of logic, in its use in the vari-branched scientific attack on what the attackers jointly damn as tyrannical—silly, pernicious, stupefying—linguistic and philosophical idealism, is the essence of traditional logic elaborated and expanded in ratiocinative refinements beyond anything produced in the genre by professional logic-choppers of the past. In its realistic extremes, logic becomes a metaphysics of realism.

The queerness of the intensively busy traffic of analysis that has come to dominate the working scene, in the scholarship of the humanities, is in its

being exclusively an activity of theoretics. The animating realism of the network of analytical pursuits has not been able to escape from the mechanics of the intellectual activity that generated it. That is, it is all done on a philosophical plane. Nowhere does it have exit onto practical ground. This surprises less if one reflects that "realism" is itself but a philosophical concept—as are such academic improvisings upon realism as "pragmatism," "empiricism."

It has not been perceived, because, for one thing, the performances of theoretical description and explanation of things in the various fields of analytical investigation are so impressively, so intricately, energetic, the performers so indefatigable-seeming, that none of the issue of this has *practical* relation to the subjects of investigation. It all begins and ends, and goes on beginning and ending, without cease, in theory. The assumption generated by all this activity that it must have far greater practical issue than anything of traditional-style explanation, interpretation, supplying of "rules," can be tested by consideration of the effect of the introduction of "New Mathematics" into teaching doctrine: traditional rationale and practicality, in the teaching of the ground principles and rules of mathematics, were replaced by the teaching of theory—and theory doctored with presentation-techniques to energize it into practicalness or to give it practical appeal. The issue was a change, for the taught, from fairly easy acquisition of elementary mathematical competence to no better than a fumbling hold on even the simplest reckoning-facilities.

The reason of the unbroken, sustained (and unbreakable), philosophical orientation of analytical activity in the humane fields of modern scholarship is in the qualification of the straight scientific approach that forced itself upon the pioneers in realistic thinking in those fields. For, unlike straight scientific realism in its functioning in such a field as physics, or mathematics, this was, is, a realism that must function under certain disabilities where the reality of human nature is concerned, the identity "human," and the reality of the human mind, as an aspect of human nature exemplifying the nature of human nature—and the very reality of language, which has always seemed something of an intellectual mystery while exhibiting at least some main features of the nature of the human mind. Realistic treatment of the humane subjects was scientifically ordained. But for the investigators there was, is, an embarrassment that no bravery of scientific-mindedness has been able to, or could, overcome. For these subjects involve, touch into, the prime fact of the being of the investigators themselves, and of those to whom they present their explanations and interpretations. There is a certain hesitancy in their venturing with their theoretics onto the open ground of practical application, the ground of common human relevancy. They lack the purity of total committedness to theory of the practitioners of the "straight" sciences.

The case of psychology, and that also of sociology, might seem to gainsay the sense of what has just been argued, both seeming to execute theoretics in practical programmes, and sociology seeming to incorporate in its programmes those of psychology, and the theoretics of anthropology as well. But the practical aspects of psychology and sociology are all experimental. Theories are applied, of course, but there are no psychological (or psychoanalytical), and no sociological, practical programmes in which theory is absorbed—in which theory demonstrates itself to be more than theory. Theoretics, in these, wags the dog: the dog is a theoretical dog. If the theories of psychology and sociology seem to work, if their applications are brought forward as proof of their working, it can be countered that the applications are executed under scientific control. These sciences exist nervously on the fringes of the reality of human nature, and of the identity "human," and of the inseparable reality of language. They may edge through the fringes to the border areas: but, once they cross the borders, they can function only by an intellectual politics of self-imposition. Of such practicality of the theoretical, the human world has seen, and sees, many examples: it is a practicality of forced application.

In the field of anthropological analysis, the all-theoretical character of the scholarship is dimmed by the practicality it attributes to itself, with much employment of psychological and sociological rhetoric, as a historical description of the development of human behavior in the members of the biological class of creatures known as humankind. The symbolical structuralism that Lévi-Strauss has read into the story of human life is scientific hypothesis presented in the form of history. It is not history, but imaginatively historicized theory. However, its being presented in historical form lends it an appearance of realistic relevance to the time-course of human life—the philosophical tentativeness of the *ideas* is enlivened with factual coloration. Such use of mythical history as factual justification of theory is found throughout the range of scholarship in which analytical methods are applied to subjects of the humane class. Its use in Linguistics acquired the importance of a general foundational requisite. The grammatical pioneers find it indispensable.

Even in the phonetical province, mythological explanation performs services of rendering theory realistically credible. Phonetical trends in their infinite variations are endowed with significance as main forces of linguistic history. The very composition of speech-sound is historicized as an aggregation of distinctive features of different sound-values become concurrent—such analytical realism annulling the reality of the sympathetic vocalities (tonal, enunciative, vibrative, modulative) by which the mind's meanings and their utterance as words are harmonized. But, in the grammatical province of lin-

guistical analysis, the providing of a historical basis for theory, in structural grammar, and in transformational-generative grammar especially, took on the character of intellectual legislation. "This is how it was, this is how it is." The principle of explanation became, here: "We have got to be perfectly definite, we have got to transcend the philosophical quality of idea, in our theory, we have got to *create* fact."

Grammar-analysis procedure has had influence in other language-analysis areas, either extending its theoretically practical theoretical rulings into them or stimulating a matching autocraticness of regulatory pronouncement. The rulings, the pronouncements, rest their authority on presumptions of historical and logical validity, injected into them as necessary for their imaginative appeal and intellectual persuasiveness. In the special fields of "stylistics," or style-analysis, and of criticism of "texts," that is, of literature as consisting of processes of verbal arrangement rather than of processes of linguistic expression, autocratic assurance is manifested that is very close in scholarly temper to that found in the grammar-analysis field.

In the scholarship of stylistics, actual use is made of transformational-generative-grammar rulings, such as that there are five basic sentence-types, for the structural frame of stylistic theory. One programme of style-analysis explains style as deviation from a norm that is itself but an abstraction: against the background of this *ideal,* non-existent norm, individual variation makes its play upon the transformational-generative-grammar keyboard of sentence-types. Generally, according to stylistics, style is not governed by standards of linguistic good-judgement in the management of and choice of words, in the syntactical treatment of the thought pressing towards expression in emphasis-distribution, the pacing of the succession of word on word, phrase on phrase, sentence on sentence, paragraph on paragraph—and other modes of exercise of the faculties of linguistic sensibility: it is a fixed variable, chances of free individual choice and conditions of basically limited linguistic possibility meeting in conjunctions of deterministic accident.

The scientific accounting of Linguistics for the nature of style is at a far remove from the actuality of human engagement in thought-expression with a purpose of making the linguistic result a faithful reproduction of the peculiar personal nature of the thought—style being nothing other than the operation of the purpose in the activity of thought-expression. The distance of the scientific report from the actuality is comparable to that of the paleontologist from the live actuality of the exposed fossil. In an article published some years ago in the *Times Literary Supplement* Mr. Geoffrey Leech applauded stylistics as a healthy successor to "the senility of rhetoric and prosody as academic disciplines"—as a very rehabilitation of the understanding of style, even as

grammar-analysis is "the rehabilitation of grammar." It is a characteristic of these various analytical practices that they improve upon past scholarship in a subject by eliminating the subject as a live actuality, and recreating it as an integral property of the scholarship. One studies grammar, in the new linguistical dispensation, by studying grammar-analysis. One studies language by studying language-analysis. One studies literature by studying stylistics and/or literary criticism renovated into "textual exegesis"—by studying literature-analysis.

6.

In all this labor of grammatico-stylistico-critico-linguistical analysis, in which the practicalities of study and explanation are effected within the laboratory of theory, the stairway of connection between subject and laboratory being taken away as soon as the apparatus for the study of it is set up, a ghostly connection with philosophy is maintained. There is, for instance, considerable looking to Ludwig Wittgenstein as a go-between between the rejected metaphysical linguistics of philosophy and the common-sense logic of scientific realism. Wittgenstein, as did before him the American pioneer of philosophical modernism, Chauncey Wright (from whom Peirce and James took so much), extracted from philosophy the instrumentalities of logic for use for the recreation or redempting of language, language being viewed by the science-affected philosophers, in their rebellion against philosophical traditionalism, as the creature or captive of philosophy. Wright was interested in modern philosophical correction of traditional philosophical linguistics. Wittgenstein had, uniquely among the philosopher-rebels who treated language as possessing inherently the vices of philosophy, a stubborn attachment to language, paradoxical in relation to his intellectual view of it as suspect in the manner in which he regarded metaphysics as suspect, capable of confounding real and unreal. He believed in it as having proved itself in human terms to have *some* validity. Wright dwelt, and dwelt, upon what he called the "misleading nature of syntax"; and other philosophical participants in the putting of language into its scientific place stripped it of its historic functional reasonableness, and fitted out the scientific concept of it with a scientifically analytical logic, or device of interpretation.

Wittgenstein has come to stand, in the development of *Linguistics,* as a patron saint of a scientifically wise philosophical realism about language. But this has not come about because of any provision by Wittgenstein of an orderly, systematic, comprehensive, new account of the nature of language, and its processes. He provided a philosophical examination of scientifically defined

problems of language that was in actual substance an emotional plea for the treatment of language as, whatever its "limitations," concerned with what had human realness, though not necessarily scientific realness: he argued that the word or other entity put communicatively forward was a picture or model of something of actual identity of some sort in, for, human experience. Wittgenstein's phrase "limitations of language" has been a favorite for citing in loose philosophization on the necessity of resignedness to a fundamental, unalterable, unequalness in language to ends of exactness and fulness of expression—ends of specific truth. But this was not the point of the phrase in his use of it. He meant, in his characteristically paradoxical technique of argument, which was to press a point beyond where it might seem to come to rest, at first consideration: "Do not let what language limits, of the sayable, in its substantial provisions for the sayable, be a curb upon what is said—make the most of the provisions, make the most of language."

Wittgenstein's famed disquisition on *Sprachspiel,* in which he argued the usability of words in many ways, the applicability of a word to many "things," as reasonable by the nature of language, has been confusedly comprehended under the description of his argument as propounding a "games" theory of language. He himself is a good deal responsible for the miscomprehension by the quixotic character of his illustration of the reasonableness of uses of words in widely different applications with the case of the word "game," how it could be applied in a broad range of differences between what was described as a game, this justified by a family-resemblance of character among all the instances. He used "game," fancifully, both as illustration of how a word worked, in the matter of meaning, in extensive diversifications of use, and as a proper characterization of the general functional temper of language, as allowing to words much spread of *play* in meaning-extension to use-diversity.

The translation of Wittgenstein's *"Spielen"* as "games"—the word *"Spiel"* serving for "play" and "game" in German—has intensified Wittgenstein's wilful, almost disdainful, disregard of the illogicality of his argument's leap from his lexicographical point as to the meaning-character of *"Spiel,"* or "game," as illustrative of the meaning-character of all words, to a philosophical point as to a character of language of flexible word-applicability describable in the whole, analogically, as *"Sprachspiel,"* or linguistic games-playing. This is a serious mental slip, fallen into by Wittgenstein in his impatient defiance of his self-contradictoriness in his entire approach to problems of language. He was divided between a *conviction* that language had real relation to human internalities of sensitive intelligence and a professional intellectual position of opposition to metaphysical (as purely intellectual) processes of proof, even while engaging in them for support of argumentation. The division prevented him

from formulating the single sense of his view and understanding of language: this was, that a word had a meaning!

Wittgenstein was both resourceful and severely incapacitated in his treatment of the subject of language. He argued about it from a personal position of humanistic pleading for acceptance of language as having a natural, a practical, sensibleness and authenticity. But he was personally tortured between a competition of philosophy, science, and language for the respect of his intellect. The effort to maintain the posture of a reasonable being in a mid-position between scientific disallowance of much of language's order of things, as one of pseudo-rational abstraction, and modernized philosophy's sanctioning of a realistic apparatus of logic for a new, philosophically supervised assignment to language of a restricted potential of rational self-justifiability, could not have been other than an excruciating one.

In the long run of his discomfort with the implications of the anti-language positions of intellectual modernism (of both scientific and philosophical realism), Wittgenstein modified his initial and basic defense of linguistic processes as picturing processes confirmable in reality, to liberalize it from the critical dogma this invited of necessary substantiation of the existence of a counterpart "real" to the "picture." He developed an intellectually, and humanistically, sophisticated principle of "verification" that allowed for a dispensing with total verification for the authenticity of statements—their grammatical and syntactical respectability in a general climate of philosophical-scientific suspicion of linguistic processes: if there were enough of the verifiable in a sentence, the unverifiable elements could be regarded as non-contradictory of the whole. The crucial feature in Wittgenstein linguistics is anti-intellectual, it is feeling about language, and for language, resorted to in the emergency of commitment to intellectual positions, philosophical and scientific, recognized intuitively by a person of sensitive intelligence, squeezed between them, as anti-language positions.

Wittgenstein, throughout his attention given to language while in pursuit of a sensible modern revision of traditional philosophy, was haunted by a frightening certainty that he was doomed to being generally misunderstood. He was keenly aware, in the particular matter of language, of the paradoxality [*sic*] of his position; and yet he could not maintain a position on language, even devise one, and define it, without paradoxality in relation to his position as a philosophical modernist (itself a strained one). What has been made of his exposition as to the word "game" and the obliquely related games-theory of language, and his "picture of reality" and "verification" offerings of theory in support of language's unwrongness, its entitlement to investments of good-faith in it, healthy reliance on it, fails to mark out the sense-direction of his

argument. Wittgenstein himself failed in his loyalty to language because he did not grasp its intrinsic intellectual strength. His defense of it was weaker than its own self-justifying authority.

It is a constant characteristic of language-analysis developments that they assume disparate forms, which fail to establish sympathy with one another though in the whole deriving from the same kind of attitude to language. Differences, even when they are variations of a same general premise, are easily made the basis of controversy between individual thought-aggroupments without there being distinct edges of thought-opposition between them. The different developments have the miscellaneity of scientific branchings without the centralizing or synthesizing adhesive of being parts of a subject. Each soon becomes a separate conception of the subject, because the subject nowhere starts in a field acknowledged, in each approach to it, to be a field of common knowledge: the investigative spirit characteristic of language-analysis is separatistic.

Even where what seems to be a stabilized trend of language-analysis theory becomes adopted ground for varied sorts of investigative activity, everything is soon tumbling about in an unsteady condition of connection-in-disorientation. The "verification" of sentences of Wittgensteinian theory runs into collision with the special concern of linguistical logicians with types of sentence-structure called quantification, of the sort that logicians have always been fond of for mind-teasing. The possibilities of disagreement almost immediately exceed the possibility of a harmony of unaggressive confusion: the atmosphere of analysis becomes ill-tempered by the mere absence of a controlling orientation of scholarly procedure to a predetermined what-are-we-talking-about. Language? Hardly, or not exactly: sentences; and logical questions of informativeness; and the new modality, improving on the earlier non-modal logic of the pioneer period of Linguistics. With attention to Kantian linguistic analyticity, and philosophic election of the human mind to the post of being its own legislator; and to Hegelian categories; and to Leibnitzian thinking on the relation of subject and predicate, and on possibility, and identity. And with scrutiny of Platonic ideas, and reconsiderations of earlier linguistical suspicion, and worse, of the propositions of Descartes on the validity of propositions the mind casts in the language of validity.

More and more will be tossed up into view, in the enlarging field of disorientation, of irrelevancies to the subject of language, magnetized into relevancy by the philosophical broadening of the scientific narrowing of the subject of language. The Marxian formal philosophical criticism of the "Frankfurt School." Postulates as to "discourse" implicit in a certain kind of "social precondition," and as to "the ideal speech situation." There is no end to all this but total self-abrogation, or total human rejection of it as a scientifically con-

cocted substitute for language-knowledge, with scientifically processed philosophical substance for filler. It is a sanity of calculated aberration supposedly controlled—but the aberration-forces more and more steal the controls from the more and more aberration-inclined sanity.

7.

There turned up in the issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* of February 14th of 1975 a dramatically forceful illustration of the abandon with which language-analysis presses its strained sanity to extremes in which the bearings of reasonable reference can become obscured to the point or the appearance of being lost. This was an article by George Watson of the title "Chomsky, What Has It to Do with Literature?" Mr. Watson is a sympathetic observer of both English literature and Linguistics, for whom Chomskyan linguistics came to have a very strong appeal; in 1970, in a book of articles of the title *Literary English since Shakespeare* of his editorship, he included an article of Chomsky's, "The Current Scene in Linguistics," much admired by him, which, he judges, must have struck some readers of the book as an alien presence. He writes with an impassioned insistence not only on the relevance of Chomskyan linguistics to the study of literature, but on its necessity for the survival of literary criticism.

Mr. Watson's article introduces into the pattern of language-analysis aberrancy, much of which reaches out towards happy-hunting-grounds of literature-analysis, a new wrinkle: literature-analysis comes to language-analysis—reaches towards *its* happy-hunting-grounds! In this straining of literature-analysis sanity to far reaches, under Chomskyan inspiration, Mr. Watson has responded to Chomsky's progressive recasting of his modified structuralism into a more and more ambitious coverage of the expressive functioning of the human mind, towards an embrace of it all that is *literary*. The reformed Chomskyan object revealed in Mr. Watson's article is to purge linguistical philosophy of its scientific unamiableness, translate it into a gracious *literature* of language-lore incorporative of literature itself, along with philosophy, *and* the study of literature (and what else not?).

Mr. Chomsky appears to have gone much further than any other preacher of new grammatics-gospel towards evangelical civility to literary audiences. One can see him in the rôle of Linguistics' angel of response to the literature-study specialists' yearning, voiced by Mr. Watson, for something vitally new in literary-criticism principle and technique, something more solid than that pettifogging New Criticism onto which various language-analysis schools have endeavored to graft their theories (as that of textualistic realism, the idea that literature consists of texts, and that of criticism as expectancy-diagnosis of

the unexpected, also as a nice cracking of the nut of meaning into two different nuts, one that does the meaning, and one that has the part of being-meant—etc.). Chomsky is depicted, in Mr. Watson's sympathetic portraiture, as standing at the outpost point of the salvationist creed of transformational generative grammar, in open-armed readiness to receive pilgrims from literature into the faith.

Mr. Chomsky has evidently aspired to general humane utilitarian acceptance, for his linguistics, and labored to identify himself sufficiently with traditional, historic, literary and philosophical thinking on things linguistic to disidentify himself from the conventionally scientific realism of the early—and of the later—schools of Linguistics. Mr. Watson, from the vantage of his hankering for more vigor in the study of literature, urges welcome for Chomsky from the literary ranks as one who has discarded the machinery of conventional linguistics and replaced it, in his language-analysis powerhouse, with the machinery of a grammar theory tooled into unconventionality—into a modernism of linguistic theory that will not divorce conventional literature-study specialists fatally from literature itself *as it has been known and apprehended before the advent of Linguistics*. Mr. Watson, attempting to sell Mr. Chomsky as a true prophet of a new, scientifically enlightened but not scientifically regimented teaching of how to understand literature (the meaning of literature), swallows whole his identification of *his* grammar with what he calls, in terms of *his* theory, the "universal grammar"—the old-reliable of the traditional linguistic, philosophical, literary, attitudes of *pre*-New-Grammar intellectual history. All that everybody used to know about grammar, and language, is subsumed, under the head of "universal grammar," *into the very thing* that Mr. Chomsky, according to Mr. Watson, has been pointing out all along. That is, the message of transformational generative grammar, its exposing of the orderliness of language and its functioning by a limited number of sentence-types, and of the preconditioning of the linguistic behavior of human beings by mentally innate pre-linguistic dictates, was, implicitly, a confirmation of the implicit principles of the grammar of tradition.

The love-affair between transformational generative grammar and literature that Mr. Watson sees as the salvation of the study of literature, driven back by non-Chomskyan language-analysis upon its own depleted traditional resources, is destined to have its fulfilment, he fondly anticipates, in the progeny of new understandings of poetic and other literary sentence-making that he thinks *must* be the issue of their embraces. The fertile power of suggestion as to sentence-types variation-possibilities with which the transformational generative grammar hypothesis can stimulate the ordinary linguistic imagination will produce a revival of Renaissance antiquities of literary sensibility! Mr. Watson's vision includes Chomskyan justification of the utility of old-

fashioned scholastic poetic-literary interpretation by paraphrase, fallen into contempt with traditional structuralists. Appealing to conventional literature-study's rather timid annoyance with the language-analysts by stomping on them himself in open challenge, Mr. Chomsky succeeds at least with Mr. Watson—and why not with others?—in appearing in the heroic guise of the *different* language-analyst, the structuralist who is no structuralist, whose grammarian kindness to literature and the study of literature will give back Shakespeare and Milton and Dickens *and* Dylan Thomas, to literary scholarship, nursing it to recovery from structuralism-shock. Chomsky, thus, wins the linguistical trade of literary scholarship. Mr. Watson: "If the hypothesis of generative grammar can be seen as true or probable, then grammar is no philosopher's stone: our search is for something that is there. . . . It is language that dominates literature, and grammar that dominates language."

What we have here, in this Chomskyan-Watsonian fusion of linguistical appetite for large-scale approval by the scholarship of literary criticism and the appetite of that scholarship for large-scale approval by the linguistical powers that be—Mr. Watson speaking as one who represents the powers that be of the study of literature—is a meeting of two professional pursuits that, related in nature, have moved further and further away from their proper points of orientation to ground that is common ground only in being for both a situation of total disorientation. To define the two pursuits in their natural state: one is the study of language, and the other is the study of the use of language for compositions of general human address, intended to be of some permanent virtue. *What happened?*—that a spokesman for the study-of-literature people should propound, with evident belief in the necessary acceptability of his position to his professional fellows as reasonable and right (all having become so disorientated as to be desperate for *some* position), that language "dominates" literature, and grammar "dominates" language? For language to be conceived of as a quantity other to literature in relation to *it* as a quantity, and grammar to be conceived of as a quantity other to language in relation to *it* as a quantity, something must have gone wrong, or *failed to go right,* in the total human quantity.

Instead of the total human quantity's having gradually gathered itself, in its gradually growing consciousness of itself, into its unities, and the unities' having gathered themselves into their unity, the sophistication acquired by the Quantity in itself created temptations to make definitive divisions of itself into separate quantities, as if the intrinsic value of the human state were thus increased—the original uncharted terrain transformed into multiple distinct property-entities. The mythological name of this divisiveness, in its minimal, personal, aspects, has been The Devil. The force, in the total human quantity, that tempts such divisions as language and literature, and language and gram-

mar, and all the other categorical departmentalism of modern professionalistic intellectuality, is of the same quality as what has been mythologically termed "devilish."

One can trace in English literature—in any literature—its course backwards from its separateness of status as a quantity in itself, suitable for treatment as such, back to where the distinction between it and language was not categorizable in terms of professional interests. And one can, also, identify the humanly decent sophistication of consciousness of the total human quantity in the study of literature—the humanely sophisticated study of literature, the humane non-distinction between linguistic and literary values. And one can trace, in the history of language-study, as to English, or any other language, or all languages, the course backwards to where language became mutilated into a categorized quantity: language!—the summation of the unity of the total human quantity in its self-demonstrating inspiritedness with the principle of unity by which being has corroboration in beings who *are*.

As literature became aggrandized in departmental quantitativeness, lexicography developed into an instrument of segregation of language into a progressive quantity-withering departmentalization of *it*. And, finally, literature in the disorder of its aggrandization, and language in the abasement of its integrity of total human significance to a pulp of spiritually poverty-stricken scientific attributions round a desiccated core of intellectually poverty-stricken scientific recognitions of the existence of some inner sense in it, scientifically termed "grammar," find each other, in a desolate triumph of discovery that they belong to each other in their hunger for *substance*. Language-study forces of scientific scholarship-areas become converts to the religion of segregate literary values, and philosophically "conservative" explicators of human intellectual talent: an exchange of complimentary amenities occurs between these conciliatory language-study forces and literature-study forces at wits' end for something more than just literature as the key to literature—and something other than the language-analysis programmes of linguistic-bugs extermination to which it has been bullied into lending itself.

The Chomskyan campaign of respect-paying to the traditional dignities of literature, and associated philosophical dignities, must be presumed, by the confident notes of Mr. Watson's support, to have made some fair progress among the literature-study faculties. Mr. Chomsky's gentlemanly revisions of language-analysis behavior (including his own) with regard to the study of literature offer relief from what must have been viewed by many of the professionals in literary subjects as insufferable, while suffering linguistical intrusions into their fields in mute helplessness. Mr. Watson's plauditory reflections as to literature and grammar (grammar is Mr. Chomsky's real categorical quantity of professional interest, not language—to him an accompaniment to gram-

mar of vague identity) are the response of literature-study that has felt itself drained of its priority in its own fields by psychologics, sociologics, anthropologics, and finally, linguistics. Mr. Chomsky restores language to literature, and literature to literature-study therewith; and at the heart of the restoration-process is grammar—the ultimate indispensable. Praise for Mr. Chomsky, who gave us grammar, which gives us language, which gives us literature!

8.

What has been inflicted, by the language-analysis flooding of the intellectual scene with "discoveries" that are only elaborations on the confusions of the explorers, on the "relaxed" intellectual tolerance of the twentieth-century mind, in its matured indulgentness and self-indulgence, goes beyond the scale of sober measurement. Dignities of indignation are bound to get lost in the flood, nearly everything said in sober criticism of language-analysis movements is subject to categorization as controversy—as within the moderate nature of dispute. To characterize those movements with due moral specificness requires straining of the limits of critical decorum, for giving priority of emphasis to the moral implications of criticism. And moral explicitness has no common terms in the contemporary critical vocabulary: one must press the moral points with the help of feeling. But if arguments of feeling are resorted to in accusation of modern analytical intellectual procedures as having played the devil with human consciousness of what language is, and what literature, how strong must they be to excite in the contemporary intelligence a sense of the extent to which it is fooling itself with assumptions of arrival at new sophistication in things linguistic?

If people—but a few!—could be stirred to recognize that Linguistics stultifies linguistic sensibility where it takes hold, a beginning would be made in a moral sophistication of preparatory value for new linguistic sophistication. The grammar-sophistication that is the latest of the contributions of Linguistics to contemporary intellectuality is perhaps the most damaging. Grammar executes the moral honesty of language in procedures that are both intellectually exact and simple. In the accounts that Linguistics has given, and gives, of grammar, intellectual folly and intellectual deviltry are present in forms that the contrivers of them themselves regard as legitimate modes of intellectual play—immune from moral challenge as exercises in scientific objectivity.

The moral insensibility that overhangs contemporary linguistical activity is a feature of the total confusion into which the human Quantity is dispersed. Where to look for, where to find, the moral sensibility that is the energy-source of the intelligence's power of knowing the Quantity as a unity? The conscience of the intelligence, in these times, has been trapped into an ever-

intensified pursuit of methods of adding together the ever-multiplying parts of the ever more widely dispersed Quantity into a simulacrum of itself, to serve as the tutelary image of human self-knowledge. What can this be called that would truly name its character of portrait in reverse, constructed with a chaotic imitation of methodicalness, of the sanity of being human?

But what is the nature of the "old" grammar? What is the nature of *grammar?* Grammar cannot without false picturing of its nature be thought of as having a nature separate from the nature of language. There is no grammar without words: the words come first. Grammar *is* where words *are;* grammar is the provision language makes *in* words by which they can follow on each other one by one in sustained continuities of meaning. Grammar is not a device for sentence-making, it is not a provision *to* language of a supply of sentence-types. Sentences *result* from the grammatical combination of words in the advancement of thought towards expression in logically complete units of communication. Grammar is, thus, something both in language, and in the speaking, writing, *thinking,* mind.

As something in language, grammar is that in words, that in their very meanings, which enables them to interact in meaning with each other and with one *another,* with sequential force; by it, meaning-sequences are constructed in forms of progressive expression according to a communicative plan of the deliberating mind. As something in the mind, grammar is the rational principle, or responsible force of intelligence, by which thought orders, and coheres with, itself, in its intentional processes. That is, what grammar is in language corresponds operatively with that which it is in the human mind; and it may be said, in the inverse, that what grammar is in the human mind corresponds operatively with that which it is in language. The origin-point in the correspondence is, as is the operative nature of grammar, of double, self-duplicating presence. The mind's part is the personal initiation of the course of action in which thinking and expressing thinking are integrated: this kind of course of action begins in the mind's having a communicative plan, of its making. Language's initiating part is in its possession of an authority of inspiration that commits it to serving the rational expression of rationally conducted thought. Language possesses this authority not as a multiple borrowing from the individually possessed responsible intelligence of minds, or as a derivation from the use of language by human beings as a social entity animated by a collective intelligence. The inspiration of language that shapes it towards the service of human intelligence is of the same source as is the inspiration of that intelligence.

The single inspiring source of human intelligence, and of language's functional correspondence with it, is in *being,* being itself, a universality of sameness within the bounds of all the diversifications of being. The meaning of being,

as a whole not lost to the diversifications, pervades the whole as a meaning of sameness to itself; and this sameness of entire character in being manifests itself in its experienceability as such. Human intelligence springs from this, as an intelligence of being of itself issuing distinctly from this universality of sameness implicit in it, as having real wholeness, as *real.* And language takes its authority of coherency of meaning, in the entirety of explicit diversifications of meaning that it becomes as the summary of potentialities of experience of being that is called for by human intelligence, from the experienceability of being in its diversity manifested in its sameness to itself, and its sameness to itself manifested in its diversity.

How the mind moves to understand experience, which in its diversity is "the world," with a united understanding matching a felt sameness in experience, as all of one all-encompassing meaning; how language adds the substance of explicit meaning to the mind's premonitions of a knowable real, a sameness in experience of unknown meaning knowable as being itself; and how the communicative plan of the minds of human beings, and language's making, manifest the reaches of experience that lie within the reaches of understanding; neither the old grammar nor the old stories of language told us of such things. But they did not leave them out. They did not try to go so far. The rest was left to the revelations of human minds to themselves: to their recognizing human intelligence, and language's wisdom of many meanings, and a prompting reality, of one meaning, as all of the same spirit of purpose. The binary explanations of language and grammar of the language-analysis schools omit the fundamentals of the story of language and grammar. It is a large story. The new language-scholars and the new grammarians make it a very small one, a much, much smaller one than any of the old language-scholars and the old grammarians ever did.

The principle of sameness penetrates being, beings, the ways of minds, and the compositional structure of language, and the scheme of word-use anticipated in language as "grammar," which is present in it in the invariable meaning-identity of each word, inclusive of an invariable potentiality of functioning in use in that identity. And the principle of sameness penetrates also, in one actuality of penetration, the life of human experience as a life of the intelligence. Human beings, by a sympathetic interaction between their intelligence and the felt presence of a unitary force of meaning in the total substance of experience, know accession to a state of reason that is as the having of a common being, in their intelligence, with that force of meaning. All this has effect in the mind's workings, not only in the processes of thinking, but in what has been here described as the "communicative plan of the deliberating mind." In this "communicative plan," human beings apply the assumption of having a common being, in their intelligence, with a universal constant—a

unitary force of meaning functioning as a universal intelligence in the universal frame of experience—to their relation to one another. They assume one another to be, by what they know themselves to be, intimate in mind with this constancy in the substance of experience, this unity in it of general sameness with itself, that manifests itself, in the numerous midst of the particulars of diversification, in constancies of particular samenesses. They know how the others think, understand, in knowing how they themselves—each of them—think, understand. The words of one are predeterminedly the words of the other: they mean to one what they mean to the other. Words are unfailingly the words of one another because language makes consciousness of the sameness of human intelligence co-actual with consciousness of a principle of sameness exhibited in the universal constitution of experience.

The lineaments of grammar can be discerned in the story of a penetration, of all that contributes to the formation of coherent, self-explanatory, word-sequences, by a principle of sameness. Grammar is the system of construction by which these sequences are formed; and the principle of sameness is the practical essence of grammar. In its elementary aspect, grammar maintains the individual identity of words: maintains them, in their use, separate and intact in their individual meanings. The description of words in terms of "parts of speech" is not the device of an old-fashioned "grammar-analysis": it concerns the actual linguistic nature of words, what they are as words having functions of use with other words according to what they mean and the kind of function for which their meanings fit them. Grammar is elementarily concerned not with sentences, but with meanings. The grammatical term "agreement," the necessity that words used together "agree" with each other, comprises a basic reference to the maintaining [by] each of its meaning in the conjunctions of use. Their meanings, invariable for their users, as the meanings of words expressive of samenesses of thought in the distinguishing of components of common, same, experience, unite, by the grammatical, the functional, the linguistic, intelligence incorporated in each, in a manner conducive to making the full linguistic value of each count in the conjunction.

A verb may or may not be marked with a token of plural significance in "agreement" with a token of plural significance in the word-form of the noun it follows, in a constructed sequence. But, marked or not, the fact of the words' being in grammatical use-conjunction enforces the principle of sameness as a system of organized growth of meaning in the construction of word-sequences: the noun-word and the verb-word will have a sameness of general meaning in their grammatical sum—they could mean nothing else but what they mean, thus conjoined. One could have, with a noun and verb thus conjoined, the sequence not being extended, but presented as self-concluding, a sentence! The sentence in its actual human makings, is no more, and no less,

than the development, in a grammatical course of word-combination, to a point of conclusion, of the sequence-continuity that spells out the course. It is a climactic affair, whatever its length: it is a product of a course of thought expressively grammaticized—that is, rendered with a fidelity of words to the thought designed to establish a relation of sameness between the substance of intelligence of the thought and the grammaticized delivery of it.

When sentence-finality is achieved, this is because of a decision of the speaking mind to bring a sequence-continuity of thought-expression to a close, as amounting to a complete meaning-continuum, sufficient to itself as far as it goes. Such a decision conforms to no choice from a limited number of primitively basic, mentally predetermined "sentence-types." It is, in an absolute sense, a *personal* decision, a new decision in every grammatical procedure, emanating from the speaking mind as the deliberating, the responsible, executor of a communicative plan that is its personal own. Sentences can be only crudely classified as falling into certain syntactical patterns and as exemplifying certain kinds of ideas of the sayable. There are no limits to syntactical variety but the decision by the speaking mind as to what suffices for the particular sentence. Syntax is how grammar accommodates its elementary method of joining words in sequence-formations, in which an equality of force is maintained between distinction and congruity of meanings, both to the needs of complex content-quantity that a communicative plan may impose and to language's requirements of intellectual compactness (there must be no empty space, interruptive of meaning-continuity, in a verbal construction—all must hold together unified).

The potentialities of syntactical management of content-quantity and the potentialities in what is reasonably sayable belong under one rule of judgement. Many of the specially invented problem-sentences that engage the interest of Linguistics professionals for the testing of the logical feasibility of certain kinds of ideas of the sayable are too meagre, syntactically, to allow of more than a bare content-quantity. They present a sentence-expanse that seems broad enough for study; but much of the breadth is empty space taking the place of meaning-content. In traditional philosophy, in which the invention of the problem-sentence originated, the device was intended for the sharpening of philosophical wits on discoverable dangers of nonsensicality lurking in generalization. In the transference of the device of the possibly absurd sentence to scientific linguistics, the object has changed from that of providing a mode of intellectual self-discipline to that of providing a mode of detection of the absurdities presumed latent, not in human frailties of intellectual perception, but in the logical mettle of language itself. The difference between the outright philosophical problem-sentence and the problem-sentence of linguistic science is in grammatical quality: in the latter, syntactical

laxity in the construction of sentences in which idea is over-simplified takes on a false resemblance to problematical philosophical postulation. In this area of linguistic science's experiments in the clarification of problems of language, the separation it makes between the sayable and the thinkable is markedly evident; the thinkable is a stage-ghost presence in the scene of the sayable, while the grammatical realities of the sayable are only stage-real.

Concern with grammar, here, is in relation to the descriptions of its nature that derive from the view of language peculiar to scientific linguistics. But the intention is not to present an opposing scheme of grammar-depiction. It is confined to the demonstrating of the artificiality of the scientific depiction of grammar by countering to the scientific view of language one of internal orientation to its constitution, an evaluation of its make-up and processes from within the ranges of direct access to it in intimacies of constant use. From such a view of language, it is possible to form an idea of the nature of grammar supported by practical familiarity with it in the experiences of word-use: one can draw upon one's sense of the reasonableness to one of the course one follows in putting words together in sequences that mean, progressions of meaning. Attention has been pointed, in this essay, towards such internal confirmation of the reality of grammar as the manifestation of a natural functional fitness of the words of a language for reasonable use. It has been pointed away from the speculations of scientific linguistics, from the postulation of rules governing grammatical procedure that define, not actual word-performance answering to conditions inhering in the nature of language, but theoretically conceived necessities of word-performance. These necessities are restrictions upon linguistic possibilities, while the provisions of grammar in its natural identity are facilities of unlimited multiplication of them. They are "rules" as well as facilities. But there should be no odium attached to their being taught as rules, as they used to be; the more that is learned, known, about the detail of grammar, the more effectively are the facilities possessed for variation and expansion in linguistic accomplishment.

The detail of grammar embraces much that can seem arbitrary formality, mere custom the reason of which has been too trivial, punctilious, to survive. Modernized teaching of language, and especially of the English language, in which there has been a peculiarly strong tendency towards the elimination of inflectional complexities, and towards phonetical simplifications, favors a dogma of permissible ungrammaticalness where ungrammaticalness is the customary. However, language is not a container of words to be taken out and used according to accidental conventions prevailing in the quarters of their use: it is a system of words formed to maintain them intact in meaning, in all the uses to which they may be rationally put. This system that language con-

stitutes may be described as a system of meanings that is capable of functioning as a system of grammar: words *are* grammatical, they are grammatically qualified in their meanings, they exist in a grammatical condition, prepared in their meanings for use. Where inflectional variations are dropped, as with "are" (we, you, they, *are*), use remains grammatical: the meaning of "are" in "we are" and the meaning of "are" in "you are" or "they are" are different in their relational quality. Each "are" is a different word, meaning-congruity of verb with subject has not lapsed; the case is not that grammatical sensitivity has lapsed, but that grammatical sensitivity is sophisticated enough to control the proprieties of meaning-congruity in what might be called, after the rapid procedures termed mental arithmetic, mental grammatics.

Grammar, in reflecting the intricate provisions that are organically present in language for uses of words that both preserve their distinction of meaning and adapt them, by the process called "logic," to unifications of meanings into independencies of *meaning,* is reduplicating language's reflection of the mind's conduct of itself in the organization of thought to the requirements of the understanding of experience. The intricacies of grammar are a product of encounter of the human mind and the substance of experience in the medium of thought. The encounter itself breeds its laws; grammar's peculiarities start here, in, one might say, a state of nature, or, one might say, in the state of the intellectual nature of "things"—of the life of the mind in its intimacies of thought with the substance of experience.

The key identifications of grammar, "nouns" and "verbs," reflect the elementary propositions of the understanding. Everything is, in its distinguishability, a subject: it *is,* by the mind's finding. Words, the linguistic distinguishing of subjects, are, in their elementary condition of meaning, all of noun-quality. Verbs distinguish a kind of aspect of subjects in which to their identity, in being what they are, is added activity or other condition distinguishable separately from their intrinsic identity: the subjects that verbs distinguish are all relative to the subjects that nouns distinguish, are all components of circumstance (rather than of identity). Into question of the other parts of speech must enter such considerations as those prompted by a view of verbs in their fundamental character as distinguishing aspects of subjects separately viewed. Indeed, the other parts of speech are all affected by this peculiar relation between nouns and verbs, and by, first of all, the dominance of noun-quality as the prime word-quality. How "nounish" in their essential meaning-character verbs are can be perceived if certain pairs or groups of them are considered as words standing in special relations of meaning-distinction to each other (words of the kind miscalled "synonyms"): when such verbs are evaluated, their meanings very pointedly scrutinized, an essential nominal cast of meaning-formulation is the most likely to present itself.

Prepositions can seem to be adjuncts to a vocabulary, more grammatical devices than words. But they, too, *mean*. Even some of them exist linguistically to each other in special relations of meaning-distinction. "At" and "in," in some of their uses, have such an impingement of special distinction of meaning upon each other; "with" and "in" in some of their uses, also "with" and "by," have a relation of alternative distinction of meaning; likewise, "by" and "in." And, of course, "but" and "except." Conjunctions also manifest such relation in difference of logical point, as in the case of "because" and "since." And there are, of independent, interjectional, adverbs, "however," "nevertheless," and "but." But all words that are not of direct identity as nouns or verbs, or, as adjectives and adverbs, members of one or the other grammatical family of words, have a certain character intermediate between that of noun and verb identity that makes it possible to use them in combinations in which the emphasis is either of nominal or verbal quality, or, variously, distributed between the two. "Of," for instance, as of possessive force, is very verbal; between the noun to which the phrase formed with "of" is attached and the grammatical object of "of," "of" establishes the kind of relation that a verb of active sense establishes between two nouns. With such a use of "of" as that in "a case of mistaken identity," there is established an identicality between "case" and the "object" of the preposition; the grammatical effect is nominal, quasi-appositional—or, if a verbal emphasis suggests itself in such a use, the verbal effect is no more than predicative.

The identification of the niceties of grammatical value implicit in language's provisions of syntactical diversity of expression (opportunities of economy and elaboration of expression at ready availability) would be of a scope for which there could be no room in scientific grammar-analysis at its furthest stretch of theoretical supposition. The inspection of what is grammatically secreted in the syntactical arrangements effected with prepositions, and co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions, of the part of the meaning-functions of such words in their grammatical impact, and of the intricacies of meaning-ramification wrought in the use of words of adjectival and adverbial identity—all grammar-study of a linguistically comprehensive, a practically analytical, kind—must verge towards the lexicographical. The more the study of language is a study of the meanings of words, of all the words of a language, the more familiarity will there be with the nature of grammar, grammar as the functional faculty of the language as a whole realizing expressively the functional faculty of thought in its processes of understanding experience. New interest in the grammatical rudiments of language needs no honorary namings of the subject as "The New Grammar." New knowledge of grammar cannot be other than incidental to new knowledge of what and how words mean, sought and acquired in the interest of the perfect-

ing of linguistic practice, for the more effective exercise of the intelligence in its expressive manifestations.

The general reading and the academic publics have been subjected, in the activities of investigation and explanation comprised in the new-grammar department of new, twentieth-century, language-analysis, to doctrines without substance of relevance to their natural linguistic experience, and to their natural and emergency linguistic needs. The intellectuality of these doctrines is out of orientation to the intellectual circumstances of human engagement in linguistic performances. Human beings cannot feel at home with themselves or with language, in the precincts of this intellectuality. In their present general intellectual disorientations, they are not so remote from linguistic realities as are the contemporary professional explainers of language. Revival of their sense of mental location in language would help them to find their spiritual way to themselves.

Contemporary Fashion-Plate (Intellectual Gab)

The writer Norman Mailer, who is more of a publicist dealing in a broad variety of popular themes of the intellectual day than a writer in the traditional sense of the term, provides illustration of the temper of the enlightened educated intelligence of the immediate contemporary period. In the verbal world he inhabits, "taste" is blown out of the window breezily, tolerance is not asked, but assumed, for a new loosening, a modernly literate rapid supermodernizing, to the verge of vulgarity, of standards and attitudes associated with modernly literate judgement. He is verbally fluent, personally unashamed, professionally unabashed. He makes exposure of the raw, humanly undigested new ideologies, and their phraseologies, which now constitute, as a balanced "interdisciplinary" educational diet, the approved mental food for the literate classes of contemporary society. What is intaken by him of this food, his mind subjects to no private treatment: it is at the ready for uninhibited outspilling, and in the copious flux of his utterances one meets with great gobs of current opinionatedness.

Mr. Mailer's discourse is "about" everything, the synthetic everything of the imaginatively meagre categories of contemporary generalization. The language he employs is language that loses its identity and character in the masses of tendentiously free-ranging commentary into which it is converted. Everything, language included, is put into its place—from which it almost immediately becomes detached, because there are no fixities in this professional addiction to reproducing the stock intellectual sophistications of the period. What Mr. Mailer writes, says, attracts interest not because of its intellectual content as personal thinking but because, in his voracious mental energy, he takes in so much that is obligatory thinking, or talking, writing, for those who

would wear the mark of knowing what everyone schooled in the literate modernism of the period "should" know.

Mr. Mailer, in an interview reproduced in the Spring/Summer 1974 issue of the magazine *Antaeus,* touched descantingly on art, science, myth, magic—and, of course, language; the interviewer was Mr. David Young, described as a painter and film-maker. "Language," said Mr. Mailer, "may bear the same relation to man that technology bears to husbandry." Here speaks one of the most aggressively free word-spenders. But perhaps it may be said that modern husbandry is an aggressively free spender of technology? From this Mr. Mailer rolled verbally on into an ecstasy of conceiving for the primitive individual a giant oak at the center of the forest: he lives under the hegemony of the oak. "Think of that as equivalent to talking about the aura that surrounds a human being." Mr. Mailer was laying out his instruments of magical persuasion, with which to demonstrate that everything, in these times, is learnedly discussible by anyone educated in the conglomerate rhetoric of learned discussion of the times. He then juggled away busily in psychological speculation, maintaining rather grandly the posture of an expert; Hebrew tenses then had their little moment of spotlighted interest; then this magician of the art of showing the educated modern mind in voluble variety of allusory competence handled deftly for a moment "the anxiety system of the dream."

Then, back to the oak, oaks: Mr. Mailer's gives forth some prominent features of the discourse of contemporary linguistics, which has a circulation-spread like that of advertising matter. "Primitive man could communicate with these oaks, would have intimations beneath the level of language . . . we may have lost it the moment language began. Once there is verbal language man has feedback. He no longer communicates to other men the way he once had a dialogue with the tree and the field." The point of this evocation of pre-verbal "language" is that by dialogue-relationship with tree and field man was able to transmit "mood" to others. "But language . . . must as its first function interpose itself against mood." What would it be like, one cannot but speculate, if Mr. Mailer could transmit mood to others instead of all this *rechauffage* of intellectually popular scraps of the dialogue of contemporary linguistics with itself? Would there not issue from him a great *rechauffage* of primitive communication-stuff, under-the-breath mood mutterings of primitive man passing from one to the other by the magic of oak and field telegraphy?

But Mr. Mailer is no fool: words are what a writer must work with now. Old-time primitive magic is just for distractive chatter-reference as he goes through the routines of his word-magic. "Our senses are so destroyed that we may be a light-year away from primitive man." Mr. Mailer feels in no danger of being challenged upon his linguistics, psychologistics, anthropologistics, philosophics: he has the indispensable equipment—language!—for his profes-

sional rôle of late-modern articulate man—in his pocket, up his sleeve. A routine of general analysis of human life from primitive first to modern last closes out challenge upon his sense of history: in a brief passage, the entire synthetic doctrine of contemporary intellectualism is compressed into a knotted corner of Mr. Mailer's rhetorical handkerchief. Primitive humans, he told, in this interview, sought "to escape primitive existence and existential life, in order to gain technological life. For precisely the reason that they thought it would be easier. Now humans have found that it isn't easier. It may even be deadly. So now they have got to go back." But their senses are destroyed! How without them are they to travel that light-year to primitive-man time? And there is the further difficulty of locating, with the Braille of contemporary existentialism, the meanings of that primitive existentialism from which primitive humans sought to escape.

The plot of the Mailer story squeezed into the knotted corner of the handkerchief thickens into mucilaginous toughness. Everything is stuck to everything else! How to get it all unstuck? By going back? Mr. Mailer says "back to the universal dread we tried to escape five, ten, fifteen, twenty-five thousand years ago. Suppose it's now become the underlying trip of the world." Back then, to universal dread: perhaps, if just universal dread is sought, and not the intricacies of primitive existentialism, there can be quick arrival at new ease in new-old difficulty? What if the Mailer rhetorical knot comes undone, in the effort to get back, and the gluey story proves to be just a mess? There are still three other corners to the handkerchief. And there are no restraints of intellectual consistency and linguistic coherence upon Mr. Mailer's disquisitional drives. He is merely making use of the free tickets for underlying trips of the world that the impresarios of twentieth-century ideological novelty bestow upon the indefatigable voicers of their *opera* of endlessly disparate themes.

This Mailer exhibit belongs to a general modern-writer pathology of derivative thinking, of derivative verbalization. All is stale theory, and stale expression—stale in its very newness. Language is renovated to serve an intellectualism of opportunistic facility. The thinking is insufficient because the language is lazy: the language is insufficient because the thinking is lazy. The additions made, in this period, to the record of literate human apprehensions are for the most part scrapings from the barrel of intellectual history. The things that seem new, in thought or language, are ideological pittances, theoretical trifles. The thinkers are not really thinking, the writers are not really writing; they are living on what has been thought, what has been written, their labors are exercises in vanity. Mailer is an exaggerated (a self-exaggerated!) example of current intellectual style and verbal behavior, but one can take the measure of the times by him. He is as a historical marker

jutting out from them, telling what the times *were* like. Imagination of the future has got lost in them. This has not happened in any other time.

(But when the exercises in vanity have all had their say, and the silence of exhausted time falls, the better will be the conditions for hearing the exercises in modesty that are always in preparation in the linguistic workshop of truth, in the ever-present future.)

Leaves from the Book's Notebooks

1.

The system by which a language functions is *in* the language because its users of the past have put it there, and its users of the present keep putting it there. It is the natural fidelity of every human being to the mental principle of the human being.

The system may be described as the unity its words have as the words of the ideal person, the human being as the perfect mental being conceived of under the language's particular imaginative light. Every language is inspirited with the conception of the human as the perfect mental being, or ideal person.

The conception of human beings of themselves that issues in language differs from language to language, and undergoes modification from one time to another in the individual language. But all the differing conceptions approximate to one another sufficiently, as conceptions of the mental principle of the human being, to make it possible for speakers of one language to identify themselves sufficiently with the ideal conceptual personality of any other to be able to speak it. Those who have a common language can achieve peculiarly useful, pleasurable and beneficial forms of identification with one another through the conception; but the general actuality, language, puts all human beings within learnable reach of intimate mental access to one another.

2.

Language originates—all languages originate—in the emergence of a universal consciousness from the folds of self-consciousness. As in the individual selves of beings the sense of the particular reality of being-one develops into a

sense of a general reality of One-being, thought takes shape: a mentality of a universal nature rises up in single beings, and they, *between them,* as they order themselves to its same workings in them, give it embodiment in them. The fundamental use of language is to serve the needs of human minds as they perform the functions—the performance of which *is* their humanness—of applying this universal sense of being to being in its material diversity. Language is *not* (as it is widely understood to be) a mere miracle of inventive cleverness, a bootstrap device by which a certain strain of creatures raised itself above animal level to a status of cosmic oddity. It issues naturally from the universal circumstance; it is not the work of intellectual upstarts in the universe, but the work of that which is intellectual in the universe—which is active yet immaterial, which is One but not numberable.

In the developing universal consciousness there comes, first, thought. Then there comes language. First comes the notion of One, the knowing of unity in diversity, and then the knowing of diversity in unity. It is in this second knowing, which is the substantiation of the first, that words are generated.

Thought is the occasion of language, and is not a consequence of its existence. Language is not so much an instrument of thought as it is an instrument of reason, which imparts itself to both thought and language. Reason has been put in the category of the human virtues, as the virtue of intellectual sobriety; but it is nothing so humanishly particular, so moralistically localized. It is the genius of the universal mentality, the prompter of the notion of One, the force of being that, in the midst of the division of being towards infinity and loss, is like a universal memory in being of an inviolable integrity in itself. Reason is an actual force of unity, that causes all things—the material diversity of things—to be in a certain manner One. This certain manner in which all things are One may be said to be merely an order of congruities that obtains in thought: the rational order, it may be said, is purely internal, of the mind, without material reality. It has, indeed, only an immaterial reality. But this does not mean that it does not have reality. Its reality is that of being as One; and the extensions of thought made under this order are at least as real as material events occurring under the order of infinite difference, which is the natural order in universal physicality.

In language, the rational order of things, in the universe, meets with physical order, and, in its manner, and to varying extents, according to the degree of universality of mind (rationality) attained in the use of words, digests it. And as all language is ultimately traceable to the notion of One, the source of meaning, so is the existence of minds traceable to a universal One-being, the source of intellect.

The rational unities of meaning with which language is animated are per-

petuated realizations of one-mindedness attained by human beings in the becoming ascendant of the universal in their nature. The universal in the nature of human beings, which manifests itself in language, corresponds with what is called God conceived of as truly—not merely figuratively—something within them. Words are the way in which that purity of being associated with the idea of divine nature is immediately achievable by human beings. In using words with generous rationality they exemplify the essential character of being.

3.

It is what is called facilely a "toss-up" whether in our book a reference to the opinions of Mr. Marshall McLuhan, who made himself the official approbator of the contemporary vulgarization of language and every other instrument of human dignity and grace of being, is inappropriate or appropriate. We settle for the solution of a few glances in Mr. McLuhan's direction, a jotting down of impressions. "Change is king!" he bellows, assuming the rôle of louder-than-anyone bellicose enthusiast of Continual Newness as the new way of the world. Everything now (he bellows) is topsy-turvy (Hurrah!). The West goes Oriental, the East goes Occidental. All is rolled into one by the new inventions, the devices of sound and picture reproduction called "media." The celebrative McLuhan report of what is going on is a rip-roaring report of confusion. Why universal confusion should be cause for celebration is not explained in the circus-barker flow of description of what there is to see: just come on in, the message is, seeing explains seeing.

One is aware that Mr. McLuhan is sitting somewhere off from a central viewing-position, in his report of what there is to see. One comprehends, after determining from just where he holds forth, that he is seeing nothing but change—or rather that he interprets everything he sees from the peculiar position from which he views the contemporary world, seeing all that is going on in it, from there, as manifestation of change. The unchanged that he sees he sees as changed in having its reality exploded by all the changes around it; and the changes are hurrying to have themselves succeeded by changes as fast as possible—otherwise *they* would acquire reality and have to be exploded. As Mr. McLuhan puts it: "When change has accelerated to the point where the effects are felt almost as soon as the innovation is released, past experience is of no relevance." One can begin to put together an idea of what Mr. McLuhan shuts out from his view by choosing to sit where he sits to watch the passing show of the century. He places himself outside of *reading* range not only of the immediate human world, but of the entire historic human world. By this we

mean not that he refuses to read books, magazines, papers, but to read the life of his time in order to try to make sense of it. To make sense of it, one would have to see it in the imaginative perspective of what has been, and to understand it in the intellectual perspective of language. One would have to do what the human mind does, of its humanity, in its *linear* course of moving word-step by word-step in the path of reason: one would have to *think*, and think to a consequence of articulate judgement.

Mr. McLuhan has condensed in himself, to a point of sputtering bravado, the fear of *words* that has spread so widely and so penetratingly into contemporary emotionality. The use of words multiplies in speed, number, in every form of facility, with an ever-intensifying avoidance of pausing to consider and know what they mean, use them with meaning, hear and read them with meaning. Human attention, more and more engaged by particular material and physical subjects, and by technical "media" of knowledge of them, and by technological particularizations of general subjects, is becoming atrophied in its capability of engaging itself in comprehensive human concerns. Explanation ceases to deal with meaning: to know not what things mean but what they "are" in terms of empirical experience is the dominant intellectual objective of the age. There courses a passion for seeing "it" all, having "it" all, and a frightened running away from a possibility of understanding what "it" all means. Humanity itself becomes a medium; it vulgarizes itself into an observing instrument, a looker-on. Television embraces this process concentratively, reducing human existence to a pictorializing of itself. One picture is worth a thousand words, is the McLuhan gospel. And it corresponds gruesomely to the status of words in the modernized human life of the era: they are as accidental, flying mites of sound, in non-linear, i.e., accidental, arrangements, speckling the living moving-pictures with ephemeralities of meaning that disappear too fast to be—are, indeed, incapable of being—added up into consecutive, substantial sense.

The widespread failure of school-children in this era to learn to read—or the failure of schools to educate them in reading—has come to be recognized as an emergency-condition, and much money, related to programmatic endeavor, has begun to be expended on the emergency. The cause is everywhere, not especially in the children or in the schooling. There is scarcely any forthrightly *linear* speaking of words anywhere, or forthright writing of words or forthright reading-attentiveness to words upon pages. The children, and Mr. McLuhan, in his boisterous grown-up way, are only reflecting, in their aversion to treating words as important (for that is what the matter is with the children, and Mr. McLuhan), the general propensity of minds in this era to turning away from what is to be known by words, by the medium of meaning.

There is an imbecile quality in the intelligence of people who make light of words; it has not yet been grasped, in this era, how light those who hold themselves of the rank "intelligent" make of their words.

4.

The degree to which *language,* the linguistic actuality of words, has been exiled from the critical consideration of literary production and replaced—as a factor in literary works and the process of literary criticism—by *linguistics* is obscured in contemporary general-public literary awareness. But for teeming numbers of "linguistic" critics of literature—who have been making deeper and deeper inroads into the literary domain, establishing colonies of "linguistic-analysis" converts and addicts in it wherever weariness with traditional or traditionalized-modern literary and critical attitudes have set in—there is no actuality *language* immediately present in a piece of literary work. There is the literary phenomenon, the Thing, to be "objectively" evaluated by the techniques of "linguistic analysis."

Traditional literary criticism has been, largely, an affair of translating literary rhetoric into critical rhetoric—an aiming at a dead-end where nothing is left to be said; and traditional-modern literary criticism has been, largely, an affair of building a psycho-analytical bridge between a literary work and its author, on which the critic travels back and forth in an attempt to establish that the work was indeed written by the author. To the criticism of rhetorical authentication and that of personal authentication, these would-be founders of a critical tradition of final indisputability add a technique of *linguistic* authentication. It is supposed to be indisputable because the would-be disputant cannot deny that literature is made of words. But the would-be disputant, who is transfixed into silence by the formalistic insistence of the linguistic-analysis cohorts and colonies upon the undeniable linguistic nature of literature, soon finds that language, what one knows as language, that is to say, words that go together in intellectual comity, is not at all what these new critical traditionalists have in mind. They are concerned either with being on the march, forming new seats of linguistically analytical literary investigation, or with carrying on their critical business at the seats, which are partly in polemical relation with one another, partly in mutually protective alliance: the members of this third critical world do not allow for interruption.

Even if the various linguistic-analysis critical establishments provided for argumentative intercourse besides that with one another, the divergencies among them are such that each separate critical philosophy of linguistic analysis is focused upon a different conception of what is "linguistic" in the constitution of literature—none of it, in simple, distinct identifiability, *language.*

Apart from the isolation of these fellows in their analytical halls, and from the fact that almost no one of worlds outside this third world is sufficiently devoted to the linguistic integrity of literature to break in on them to denounce their encouraging the writers of literature to make it more ghostly, more linguistically unreal, flimsy, more unfirmly, unhonestly, put together *as words,* than it had become, they have it in their favor that particular, specific, actions of argument against the particular, specific, definitions of the essentially linguistic, essentially analysable component of literature, in the linguistic-analysis critical sense, would force the opposition into learning the terminologies of the different schools of criticism. When one has to master the terminology of the thinking of others in order to express one's disagreement with them, one loses one's case in the mastering of it; and linguistic-analysis schools of criticism provide many cases to lose by this means. One can, however, try to extricate oneself from the terminological clutches sufficiently to demonstrate how little all this linguistic-analysis preoccupation has to do with language.

Let us take, for example, the school of critical thought centered on the work of Michael Riffaterre, as exemplified in his article on "Style Analysis" published in *Word, The Journal of International Linguistics,* and republished in his *Essais de stylistique structurale,* Flammarion, 1971. Style is represented here as that which determines the linguistic elements of literary production, these being regarded as heterogeneous. Just how the linguistic elements are heterogeneous need not preoccupy anyone: the main thing to comprehend is that this view does not imply that the linguistic elements are words. The view has little to do with words in relation to style. In so far as it has anything to do with language, language is conceived of in it as something having only remotely to do with words. Hence the Riffaterre definition of style is that it is something that inheres in the relation of a work and its reader.

Style has no reality as the area of linguistic analysis, in the critical philosophy of Riffaterre, except as the reactions of readers to a work are of a roughly resemblant kind. Or, let us say, general readership reaction, so general as to be but an initial consensus that there is something to which to react. This is called the "*architecteur,*" the sum of readers identifiable as familiar with the work (including the writer of it himself!). It does not matter if their reactions vary: their resemblance in this scientific linguistic-analysis procedure is in that the reactions are reactions (!): it is the fact of and not the reason of the attitudes to, judgements of, the work, that matters. And so a "stylistic fact" stands out dominating the textual scene. Besides the stylistic fact, there is the fact of difference, or "*écart,*" as it is called in the formal linguistic-analysis jargon, by which is profusely meant the differing effects experienced in progressive contact with the "lexical" background—the "text" becomes a "background" (!): the effects standing out in relief against the "background," which is what a

literary work is, in this philosophic science of the actuality of "language" in literature. The differing effects that develop from the initial springing into being of the "stylistic fact"—the presiding actuality—keep imposing or deducing new contexts, as the text goes its linear way, with the text and the stylistic fact having a relation to each other through the intervening *"écart,"* with the stylistic fact the orientation-point for the critic, the from-where from which the stylistic effects are identified and the particular trains of (linguistic) analysis determined.

If one can go this far in the fortitude of bearing with an instance of this extraversion-introversion treatment of literature and language, wherein the actual apparatus is so extraversive as to make the literary-linguistic subject introversively invisible (so that all that one can perceive or know *is* the extraversive apparatus), without screaming "Stop!" either to oneself or to this particular school of linguistic-analysis torture (of those not anaesthetized to the terminology), one can learn that Professor Riffaterre is not altogether of one mind with the "*Tel Quel*" school of linguistic analysis. Whether this school is also of Formalist ideological derivation (of early Russian source), as that of Professor Riffaterre is, we do not hold ourselves responsible for knowing. Indeed, we feel painfully close to knowing too much already of these weird operations pursued under the head of "linguistic analysis" (an inappropriate characterization, for there is no concern here with language as such, that is, as a general human instrument the principles and nature of which are not retroactively altered by extraversive interpretation of literary "texts"—but the characterization "literary criticism" would surely outdo it in inappropriateness).

We must confess to being aware (which we are not proud of being) that Professor Riffaterre is somewhat leary of the *Tel Quel* school's way of choosing the stylistic effects to be diagnosed, the kind of analysis appropriate to the textual "background" or "*discours*." Should the "structures" of critical statement, the "*métadiscours,*" be correspondent with the work under analysis, as the *Tel Quel* people think? Professor Riffaterre very intricately departs from the dangers of subjectivism in this objectivism. We have not mastered the terminology, here, to the extent of *not* being able to scream: we are just holding out a little longer, to be fair. In fairness, Professor Riffaterre should be credited with some loyalty to the textually literary as well as to the textually critical aspects of a literary work: one must, after getting the critical apparatus in readiness, pay respectful attention to the text, as a starting-point for the critical journey away from the text, not disregard the message encoded in the text. And not indulge in interpretations to an extent that would reduce the text to senselessness. Critical analysis must keep in touch with the text!—or the text's *context*.

Professor Riffaterre makes good his identification of his school of criticism

as of the linguistic-analysis general creed by daringly postulating that the realities to which literary texts make reference are all of the nature of verbal concepts. While this denies any direct pertinence of literary writing to human experience and concerns, it does appear to recognize that words are real presences in literary writing. But, not so fast. We have a proposition that the words constituting a literary text do not so much mean, right in the text, what they mean, as language, but, rather, refer to concepts attached to them outside themselves, and, of course, outside the text; and the "linguistic" analysis of a work involves the critic, thus, in a history of associations possessed by a text's words. An example of this liberalizing of a basically strict Formalistic orientation to questions of stylistic effects with actual attention to words, even to individual words here and there, is Professor Riffaterre's view of Baudelaire's use of the word *désert* in his poem "Les Chats": he is at pains to place the associations of the word as used there in the verbally conceptual field of "solitude" associations rather than in the verbally conceptual field of "heat" associations.

Before a screaming-point is reached here, in this note that, though but a random note, we are including in our book as of some utility, as depicting the curiosities that take shelter in these times under the classificatory term "linguistic," we want to do all possible justice to the Riffaterre collection of these curiosities. They stretch structuralism, objectivity, "semantic" analysis of how, in literary art, word-meaning and word-sound contrive structure, and the springs of meaning draw mysteriously upon mysterious origin-sources of language itself, way, way, back, and branch forth into the area of commonplace verbal systematics where language dissipates into communication. We cannot suppress our view of Professor Riffaterre's doctrine, in recounting its features, as belonging to an unfortunate course of academic developments in linguistic and literary studies. But it deserves, as an elastic one of its kind, good measure of description. It comprises, for instance, the conception, a radical one for a "structuralist" thinker, that, while judgements as to the value of a literary work are impurities in criticism, value can be attributed to a work in a special sense where it is successful according to linguistic-analysis standards of literary effectiveness—in terms of the Riffaterrean stylistic-effects identification of the essence of the linguistic ingredients of a literary work.

But how can we be giving credit for that which we regard[,] in the recounting, as fundamentally absurd? We see all such representations of the nature of language and literature, and language in literature, as the witness of persons who have allowed contemporary so-called "culture" to draw them into its cramped paradise as into an island of intelligence in a chaos of anthropological time. From that position, everything looks simple in myriad little ways and inscrutable in a big way. And all that is pronounced from there upon

the subjects of human intelligence is, as we judge the circumstances, arbitrarily removed from the immediate live clutter of human distress and hope, and is, as it wins attention in the area dominated (properly) by these emotions, harmfully distractive, interfering with the operation of intelligence under their influence, a naturally healthy one. We feel this thinking to be feelingless; self-consuming, self-infatuated, self-dehumanizing, and the more so as it strains to justify itself to itself as humanly valuable.

5.

The application to concern with language of the term "linguist" ought to be of the practicality it used to have. It ought not to be pressed to identify a person as other than one who knows at least one language with a certain expertness. But the setting up of a "science of language-knowledge," as if there were a knowledge of language that was other than the knowledge of one's language, and it might be, of another, or more, with a breadth and depth of familiarity that gave one understanding of the nature of languages generally, has imposed an arbitrarily specialistic coloring on "linguist" for many.

Philological knowledge is beautiful. It is, in relation to language, like geography in relation to earth. But one must be careful to derive one's knowledge of the meanings of the words of a language from what they are *there*, in it, in their interrelated state as interfunctioning components of it.

6.

The criticism to be made of such an expression as "a warm individual" is not of "usage," is not concerned with rules, but with the general loss of sensitivity to the values of word-meaning, and principles of word-integrity. "Individual" ought to be *felt* as a rather demeaning, off-hand, reference-term for a person or human being. "Warm" is thrown about these days in helpless contentment with the emotional failure to do anything other than give the figure "warmth," which has expired in over-use, adjectival pseudo-resurrection.

For Colophon

The linguistic conscience in active state is a vantage-ground of common-sense vision, where the intelligence contemplates what there is to understand with no blinders imposed from without. People can introduce into their minds, in their putting themselves into dutiful relationship with the language by which they think, a light of self-knowledge that reveals to them the powers of their minds.

There are some words of Voltaire's on common sense in which its nature as natural good sense is spelt out with a bold hand. Voltaire himself was a type of the working intelligence stranded upon the ground of an intellectual age battered by conflicting weathers of reason and sentiment, and materialistic practicality and moral idealism. He held his own, in its midst, by a common sense that was an instrument of isolation rather than a bond of community, so that he was unhappily erratic, his wisdom touched with folly, his folly touched with wisdom. But he has left samples of what the working intelligence is like in any age when enlivened with common-sense perceptions.

> It is sometimes said that common sense is very rare. What is the meaning of this statement? That in many men certain prejudices check the development of incipient reason; that a man who exercises sound judgement in one instance will always blunder in another.
>
> An Arab may be a good mathematician, a learned chemist, and an accomplished astronomer, and still believe that Mohammed has half of the moon in his sleeve. Why does he excel in the three sciences mentioned and go so far astray on the issue of the half moon? The reason is that in the first instance, he has seen through his own eyes and perfected his intelligence;

in the second, he has closed his eyes, seen through the eyes of others, and perverted his innate common sense.

To revert to what has been here said as to the linguistic conscience's serving as the vantage-ground of common-sense vision. Seeing by the eyes of others—that is, thinking by the minds of others—has its most blinding or stupefying effect in the quasi-official words that have been provided with special meanings as words of a special age, forcibly domesticated on the ground of contemporary educated linguistic conscience. We have referred to such estranged portions of the modern English vocabulary—"identity," for example, its meaning modernized out of it to make it signify a psychological predicament of human nature; or "meticulous," so vulgarized out of its meaning that "scrupulous" is often brought in to shore up its dilapidated meaning-structure. The relation between knowing one's words, and thinking and speaking by their native human meanings, and seeing with one's own eyes, understanding with one's innate human intelligence, is one that, once recognized at its point of linguistic beginning, should extend the trails of the intelligent consciousness far out into the world of general problems of understanding.

Someone wrote to me long ago, in rather despiteful comment on words—he, a poet, a professional user of words: "Words are enemies—stuff of clichés, catchwords." I wrote in return on how people make words enemies by using them against their character as instruments of truth—as which they are *friends*. I described them as escaping their users, when not so used[,] as "leaving only husks in the hands of the fools and liars—remaining themselves intact, not really used." Further, I wrote, replying to the person's assertion that it mattered not much to distinguish closely between the meanings of words, that such distinction "matters more than anything else in the world."

FINISH

Laura (Riding) Jackson

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become central to the latter half of her long life and would finally result in *Rational Meaning*. Included in this edition are essays that Riding wanted published as supplements to *Rational Meaning*.

At the core of *Rational Meaning*, which aims to restore the truth of language by arguing that meaning inheres in words, stands the idea that a total renovation of the knowledge of language is needed, not to develop mere verbal sophistication and respectability but fundamentally to reinvigorate the intellectual processes of consciousness. The book reveals the disastrous extent to which language has been "unlearned" and shows how it may be learned again. *Rational Meaning* will be essential reading, not only for students of literature but for radical-minded linguists and lexicographers unhappy with the orthodoxies current in their disciplines.

Among Laura (Riding) Jackson's recent publications are *First Awakenings: The Early Poems of Laura (Riding) Jackson* and *The Word "Woman" and Other Related Writings*. Schuyler Jackson's writings have been published in several magazines, including *The New Republic* and *Time*.

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