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c   Journal

FORMAT

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The editors would like to express their thanks and appreciation to Mr. Cantor who is resigning his post as editor. Thanks are due to all those who have helped with the production of this issue.

The Unconscious structured like a Language

This paper is concerned with Jacques Lacan's statement: "The Unconscious is structured like a Language". It is in no sense intended to be a full investigation of the Lacanian labyrinth.[1]. It is rather a tentative venture into enemy territory. Since the difficult and the hostile are locked into a dual relation that only a return to the organic state resolves, it is imperative that we resort to various threads (filiations) to make sure of our place in the day light.

What I have not done, then, is to produce some kind of summary of work of a Lacanian kind done so far within Social Anthropology. There is a huge distance between Lacan's own fleeting references to Ethnography, to Mauss and to Levi-Strauss, and the clinical work carried out by Marie-Cecile and Edmond Ortigues in Dakar (1962-1966). There is a greater distance still between the Ortigues' conclusions in Oedipe Africain (1966:1973), and the devastating criticisms to which they are subjected in the Anti-Oedipe (1973) by Deleuze and Guettari. It is not that I feel that anyone should refrain from the application of what could be called Lacanian insights within Social Anthropology. Such a request would be absurd, given the fact that it was the early writings of Levi-Strauss that helped Lacan to 'depass' a phenomenological position, and move towards a 'structuralist' one.[2] However, I feel that it is imperative to place Lacanian Psycho-analysis within the social formation of which it is necessarily an ideol-ogical moment. This 'totalizing' strategy requires more, not less, intel-lectual rigour, and demands that we read a book such as Oedipe Africain symptomatically, with an acute attention to that which is not in the text itself, and yet cries out to be heard. A preliminary investigation of certain aspects of Lacanian thought is then, essential, before one can consider its descriptive powers in other Cultures.

If we are to think about other cultures it is obviously vital that we understand the Unconscious rules of formation that delimit the terrain upon which our knowledge claims scientificity for itself. I am thinking here of the work of such thinkers as Foucault and Derrida, who in their attempt to 'make strange' the very categories that are the scaffolding of our social being, necessarily resort to the shimmering surface of a poetics. It is simply not sufficient to be forewarned against the dragon of ethno-centricity as though the heraldry of one's good intentions were enough to restore all intentionality to a (transcendent) innocence. Against ethno-centricity, its opposite (lack of ethnocentricity) enters the lists, as if it were a saving grace, as if recognition of the sin were to lead to redemption. Whereas it is precisely our guilt that we see other Cultures through our own Social formation, and in the light or darkness of our own concrete historical relation with them.[3]

If Psychoanalysis is located within a social formation as much as any other form of knowledge, it is also a form that has the power to rise above its own complicity with the dominant ideology. If American Ego-psychology can be shown to have an almost completely normative ideological function (cf. O. Mannoni 1971: 180-190), the same cannot be too easily claimed for Freud's initial formulations in Vienna at the beginning of the century, nor for Lacan's brave theoretical inquiries from the 1930's until now. Since Psychoanalysis is concerned with the dialectical relation between persons, as both Imaginary and Symbolic (and Real) constructions, it is the key Science with which to unveil the ideological instance of a Social formation.[4] This was explicitly recognized by W. Reich as early as 1929 (W. Reich 1929/1972), and has been reiterated in a different way by Althusser. In a short paper on Lacan[5], Althusser has acknowledged his debt to him, and almost all his writings on ideology are permeated with what is in fact a Lacanian approach to 'the Imaginary' and to the

fetishisations that hinder thought's appropriation of 'the real'.

In this paper, I have laid a very limited stress on the Levi-Straussian nature of 'The Symbolic' and the Hegelian nature of 'The Imaginary'. What I have done is to read Freud through Lacanian spectacles, referring to those aspects of De Saussure and Jakobson that helped Lacan to clarify his concept of an Unconscious structured like a Language. It is an inadequate account insofar as it reduces the complexity of the Lacanian problematic in favour of a clarity which can only mislead. The answer to that is, of course, simple: to understand Lacan, there is no alternative but to read Lacan. But, in addition, (and this is the slant I have given to this paper) one should read Freud. As Lacan writes:

> "... on lit Freud comme on écrit dans la Psychanalyse;"
> (Ecrits 1966)

By which Lacan means that his return to Freud is a return to more than just the spirit, it is a return to the letter, to wit, to Freud's own use of Language and choice of terms. Lacan's obsessive concern with language is no more than a continuation of Freud's own, and any theme of Freud's (viz: "Where Id was, there Ego shall be") is played in the form of several different variations (Ecrits: 1966:416; 801).

Anna O. (Bertha von Pappenheim) dubbed Freud's therapeutic method "the talking cure", and it is there from the mouth from one who is to be cured, that Psychoanalysis founds its own specific discourse. There are of course, several other models in operation in the Psychoanalytic armoury, and these will be referred to in passing in this paper. Some of them have been passed over almost in silence (it would seem) by Lacan, and it is from these that a movement antithetical to Lacan has arisen within Lacanian Psychoanalysis.[6] But if so many analysts following Freud acquiesced in the repression of the function of the analysand's word in therapy, Lacan's theoretical interventions may I think be seen as a return of the repressed. His 'Discours du Rome', a highly polemical talk given to the Congress of Psychoanalysts in 1953, is specifically concerned with the word of the patient:

> "Whether it sees itself as an instrument of healing, of
> formation, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis
> has only a single intermediary: the patient's word."
> (1953/1968:9)

But the talking-cure is characterized not by bringing the symptom to consciousness: it is made word. It is the insistence of the letter that is in question not that of the subject's consciousness. Nor is it necessarily a question of the good faith or love of the analyst. The analyst does not direct the consciousness of the patient, it is not a question of moral guidance. He directs the cure, and in the analytic situation his own being (through transference and countertransference) is also put into question (Ecrits 1966:586).

This paper is concerned precisely with the capture of the human animal within 'the nets of the signifier' (Laplanche and Leclaire: 1961), so that he then becomes an animal gifted with speech. Gifted even in that despotic sense given to the word 'gift' by Marcel Mauss: the wretch is obliged both to receive the word, and reply to it. Both sender and receiver are compromised, in that the gift is syn-thetic, & constitutes a relation which inheres in neither person (persona), but derives from the symbolic totality which preceded and determined them. Neither word, nor 'copper', nor 'vaygu'a', nor phallus (as Lacanian signifier of desire),

can be finally appropriated. The search for their essence is an imaginary project, a fetishisation. Their essence resides only in their existence as circulating signs that bind social persons in relations that are nowhere.

Even as early as Studies on Hysteria (SE II), the clinical study that Freud wrote with Breuer, there are definite linguistic insights as regards the working of the psychic apparatus. However it is in The Interpretation of Dreams (SE IV-V) that we find a way forward to a linguistic formulation of the nature of the Unconscious. Thus, Freud makes a clear division between the manifest dream-text, and the latent dream-thoughts. The manifest dream-text is the text of the dream that the subject assembles on waking, whereas the latent dream-thoughts comprise the more complete dream underlying the former:

> "The dream-thoughts and the dream-content are presented
> to us like different versions of the same subject matter
> in two different languages" (SE IV: 277)

The Unconscious is presented here as a different language underlying the manifest language. The dream-content is described as a 'transcript' of the dream-thoughts 'into another mode of expression', and we are asked to 'compare the original and the translation'.

Condensation and Displacement

To make Freud's thought clear, we should concentrate, as he does, on the operations that link the manifest content of the dream to the latent dream-thoughts. The two key operations are those of Condensation and Displacement.

Let us take condensation first. If we compare the manifest content of the dream, as we assemble it upon waking, or again as it is told to the analyst, with the latent dream-thoughts that are teased out of the words and silences in the analysis itself, we find that the latent dream-thoughts are far more extensive than the manifest content. To put it simply, the manifest dream is laconic. It has been radically condensed. Many of the examples of dreams in The Interpretation of Dreams are approximately four or five lines long, whereas the dream-thought that Freud draws out of them, like the endless stream of silk scarves tied to each other that a magician draws from his hat, are often four or five pages long. Condensation is immense, so immense in fact that interpretation is never final. If we take any one element in the manifest dream, it is condensed or 'over-determined'. When we say that it is over-determined we mean that it has multiple connections with other elements in the latent dream-thoughts. Freud notes in his analysis of the dream about the 'botanical monograph', that the word 'botanical' led 'by numerous connecting paths, deeper and deeper into the tangle of dream-thoughts' (SE IV, pp. 169-176). Because the word 'botanical' is so heavily over-determined, it is described as 'a regular nodal point in the dream'. Elsewhere Freud uses the word 'Switch-word' to describe the same idea, and in this metaphor the idea of a 'points' system is evoked, where the word is seen as a kind of switch located at the intersection of several different tracks or pathways. Lacan makes much of these terms used by Freud, and provides several variant translations (ie 'noeuds de signification', 'mots carrefours' etc.). The Lacanian Symbolic Order (derived from Levi-Strauss' Symbolic Function, and opposed to Freud's Die Symbolik) is characterized by the plurivalent nature of each signifier.

Displacement, the second key operation in the formation of dreams, refers to the fact that 'the dream is, as it were, differently centred from the dream-thoughts' (SE V: 305). Elements which are central to the

manifest content may be peripheral to the latent dream-thoughts. In the same way, elements which are crucial to the latent dream-thoughts may be completely absent from the manifest text. It is the work (the labour) done by the patient in his free association (and against the fact of his own resistance) that allows us to retrace the connections between the two systems. Displacement is a form of 'distortion', a distortion made necessary by the existence of 'censorship' between the different 'systems' of the mind.

Metaphor and Metonymy

According to De Saussure (1974), any linguistic sign involved two modes of arrangement, Combination and Selection. Combination refers to the fact that each sign is made up of constituent signs and can only occur with other signs. De Saussure stressed the linear nature of the signifying chain (1974:70) - in fact it is the second property he singles out for emphasis after the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. It is combination that unites the links of the signifying chain, one to each other, and once they have been combined they are in a relation of contiguity to each other.

The axis of Combination is concerned with the Message. It is diachronic and can best be represented horizontally. It represents, in Saussurean terms, Speech rather than Language, event rather than structure.

The other mode of arrangement of a linguistic sign is known as Selection and it refers to the selection of signs from a set. Any selection from a set implies the possibility that another sign might be substituted in its place. This of course implies that Selection and Substitution are both aspects of the same operation.

The axis of Substitution is concerned with the code, and can best be represented as vertical. It represents Language rather than Speech, structure rather than event. It is vital to realize that, in normal speech, the two axes operate in conjunction. Combination and Selection together arrange linguistic signs. It is only in language disorders that we can clearly perceive the separate nature of the two modes of arrangement. Thus, it was through his study of the different kinds of Aphasia that Jakobson was able to distinguish one from the other (1963: 43-68). Indeed, the fact that both Jakobson and, after him, Barthes (1967:21) have reserved the term 'Idiolect' primarily to describe the language of the aphasic, a language marked by its skewed participation in the Symbolic Order (cf. Levi-Strauss 1950: xvi-xvii), should remind us that Aphasia shows us language in a state of disintegration.

From his study Jakobson concludes that there are basically two poles of language, the Metaphoric and the Metonymic, and that these two poles are linked to the two modes of arrangement of the linguistic sign. Depending upon the type of Aphasia concerned (Contiguity Disorder: Similarity Disorder), those suffering from it tended to produce a kind of language centred either on the Metaphoric or the Metonymic poles.

The concepts of Metaphor and Metonymy developed by Jakobson are used in a slightly altered form by Lacan in his model of the Unconscious structured like a Language. For Lacan, the Freudian concepts of Condensation and Displacement that we have already discussed, are directly homologous with the Jakobsonian concepts of Metaphor and Metonymy (Ecrits 1966: 495). Critics of Lacan have questioned the validity of the Metaphor/Metonymy distinction. Anthony Wilden (1972) argues that the two terms are in no way specific to language, but can be equated with (more general) processes present in all forms of communication:

"Metaphor and Metonymy are not primarily linguistic processes:
they are communicational processes. Selection from the code
and combination in the message must and do occur in any
communicational system whatsoever, whether in the genetic
code of the DNA molecule, or in the organism, or in the
life processes of bacteria, or in a social system". (1972:
350)

This is undeniable, but Jakobson in his study of Aphasia was
dealing quite specifically with language and its disintegration. In
that study he did isolate two poles of language, the metaphoric and the
metonymic. It may be that these two poles exist in all communication,
but the beauty of Jakobson's study was that it located the existence of
these two poles in language, and since one pole was damaged in each of
the different forms of aphasia, it provided a means of dividing parts of
a process that is unified in everyday speech. In studying social life
there are several possible epistemological confusions with regard to
'levels'. One can suncumb to the temptations of a 'micro-measurement'
that studies phenomena at a level that is below the level at which
'meaning' resides (Ardener 1971: 451-452). Since one of Lacan's finest
pieces of writing, the Seminar on The Purloined Letter by Edgar Alan Poe
(Ecrits 1966: pp. 11-61), is about precisely just such a misapprehension,
one has to be very cautious before accusing him of that kind of theoretical
inadequacy. Wilden does not exactly accuse Lacan of such a 'misapprehension',
but his claim that Lacan reduces the cultural to the ontological (1972: 479-
483) is a parallel critique that demands more substantiation than Wilden
offers. Indeed, at this point, Wilden's polemic seems to lean very heavily
on Fanon's critique of the application of European Psychoanalysis and
Psychiatry to other cultures. If Fanon's work (1970) is concerned with the
violence of reducing psychic phenomena that are actually relative to a
particular historical conjuncture to a supposedly transcendent ontological
reality, Wilden's appropriation of it does not blend easily with the general
systems theory approach of System and Structure (1972). Whatever one may
think of the Lacanian Symbolic, and however much one may regard it as
permeated by Imaginary fetishizations, it is nevertheless defined as a
tissue of meaning and not as a mechanism that determines. When I refer to
determination here I do not mean that fatal determination, that celestial
pre-ordination of which Lacan writes so often. I mean determination is-
suing from the (Marxist) real, a determination present in the real and its
productions, and one that underlies the overdetermination present in the
Symbolic. Hegelian and Idealist as Lacan finally is, it is an error to
confuse the tissue of signs that is the Symbolic with the exchange of
energy and information that characterizes organization at the eco-systemic
level. The Lacanian dialectic must be inverted, and each moment of the
Symbolic must be reckoned as being in the last instance determined by the
infrastructure. Wilden by subsuming the Symbolic so absolutely within
an ecosystemic perspective, obscures the level at which Ideology does over-
determine social reality and estranges people from the nature of the lives
they lead.

Phillipe's Dream

I want, in this section, to reach a deeper understanding of the lin-
guistic relations within the psychic apparatus, by taking a particular
dream and considering a Lacanian analysis of it. I want to do this in
order to demonstrate that we are dealing here not only with the construc-
tion of dreams, but also with the general workings of the Unconscious.
If we are dealing with the latter, then our conclusions are necessarily
relevant to all areas of Social Anthropology where the Unconscious is
described, invoked or dismissed. I do not mean by this that the Lacanian

model can necessarily be used in the analysis of other Cultures. I mean
only to suggest that Lacan's reading of Freud is one that cannot be ignored,
and one that is crucial to any evaluation of other psychoanalytical posi-
tions that concern Social Anthropology (ie Roheim, Kardiner, Jung, Fanon
etc.)

The dream is taken from an article by Laplanche and Leclaire (1961).
Their general theoretical position was, at that time close to that of Lacan
(Ecrits 1966: 493-531). Ideally, of course, we should take an English
example of this kind of approach, for the sake of verbal resonances, but
I am not aware of the existence of any studies of this nature originally
written in English. In the clinical situation, the dreamer, Phillipe had
not only recounted another dream closely related to the one given below,
but the material of the dream was lent further significance by certain
items of obsessional behaviour present in the patient. I have made only
minimal reference to the second dream, and to the patient's symptoms, as
I wanted to carry out a fairly simple exposition.

Phillipe's Dream

The deserted square of a small town; it is unfamiliar, I am looking for something. Liliane appears, barefoot – I don't know her – she says to me: its a long time since I've seen such fine sand. We are in a forest and the trees seem curiously coloured, with bright and simple colours. I think to myself that there must be plenty of animals in this forest, and just as I am about to say it, a Unicorn crosses our path; all three of us walk towards a clearing that is visible down below.	La place deserte d'une petite ville; c'est insolite, je cherche quelque chose. Apparait, pieds nus, Liliane – que je ne connais pas – qui me dit: il y a longtemps que j'ai vu un sable aussi fin. Nous sommes en foret et les arbres paraissent evieusement colores, de teintes vives et simples. Je pense qu'il y a beaucoup d'animaux dans cette foret, et comme je m'apprête a le dire, une licorne croise notre chemin; nous marchons tous les trois vers une clairière que l'on devine en contrebas.

This dream-text on its own tells us almost nothing. Without the free
association of the dreamer it is worthless. This cannot be stressed too
much.[7] In the text, the significance of the words present in it is not
given to us, but is discovered in the process of analysis. The exact forma-
tion of the dream derives from several sources; (1) Events of the previous
day, which in the context of the dream are described by Freud as 'daytime
residues', (2) stimuli originating from within the body, in this case, the
need to drink, the subject having eaten salted herrings the previous evening;
(3) events from the past, and in particular, memories stretching far back
into childhood. Freud describes dreams as 'hypermnemic', and insists on
the permanence of the memory-trace within the psychic apparatus, although
in his attempts to describe this fact he often found himself in great dif-
ficulties. As early as 1895, in The Project, he had stressed that no Psy-
chology worthy of the name could be established unless it was securely founded
on a theory of human memory. We shall see in the later part of this paper,
how important Freud's concept of memory was to his understanding of the Un-
conscious, and how it can be interpreted in a manner that is explicitly
opposed to the Lacanian position (Derrida: 1967/1972).

In this account I have chosen to treat the psychic and somatic resi-
dues of the previous day together.

(1) (2) Events of the previous day (Daytime residues)

There were various daytime residues, in the form of memory traces
of what Phillipe had done the previous day, that contributed to the con-

struction of the dream. Phillipe had in fact taken a walk the previous day in the forest with his niece Anne. They had noticed at the bottom of the valley where the stream ran, traces of deer and does, where they came to drink. On this walk, Phillipe remarked that it was a long time since he had seen (il y a longtemps que J'ai vu) heather of such rich flaming colour. These daytime residues play a significant part in the dream, as can be ascertained by glancing back at the original text of Phillipe's dream.[8]

At the somatic level we notice that Phillipe had eaten some herrings that evening, and therefore had a _need_ to _drink_. Dreams, it will be remembered, are described by Freud as the guardians of sleep. In this case, the dream guards Phillipe's sleep against the organic fact of his thirst, against his physiological need to drink. The dream guards Phillipe's sleep by fulfilling a (repressed) wish. It cannot fulfil his need to drink: only some liquid can do that. The dream fulfils a (repressed) wish or _desire_ to drink (a desire that is inscribed in one of the subject's memory systems), and subsumes the (temporary) organic need of the subject's body within its own (timeless) trajectory.

(3) Childhood Memories

(a) The first memory was of a Summer holiday when he was three years old: he tried to drink the water which was flowing in a fountain. He cupped his hands together and drank out of the hollow that his cupped hands formed. The fountain was in the Square (Place) of a small town and had a Unicorn (Licorne) engraved in the stone.

(b) The second memory was of a walk in the mountains when he was three years old. The walk was tied to the memory of imitating an older child cupping his hands, and blowing through them, imitating a siren call. This memory was also associated with the phrase 'Il y a longtemps que J'ai vu'.

(c) The third childhood memory was of an Atlantic Beach (Plage) and again the phrase 'il y a longtemps que J'ai vu un sable aussi fin'. This was associated with Liliane - a barefoot woman in the dream who said exactly that.

In the course of the analysis, Phillipe took apart the name Liliane, and separated it into the two components Lili and Anne. Anne, as we already know, was his niece, and Lili, his Mother's cousin. Lili had actually been with him on that Atlantic beach, when he was three years old, at the beginning of those same Summer holidays when he had been taken to the town with the fountain and the Unicorn engraved on it. It is important to bear the French not the English words in mind, and to note the various homophones (between Lili and Licorne, Place and Plage etc.) These linguistic connections will be shown to be more and more significant as the work of interpretation advances.

We have already seen that, if, as Freud has said, all dreams are the fulfilment of a (repressed) wish, then this dream, from all angles, finds its centre, its unity in the need or the desire to drink. On that hot July day, when he was three, Phillipe had said again and again, and with great insistence 'J'ai soif' or 'Choif'. Lili, his mother's cousin, used to tease him, and say 'Alors, Phillipe J'ai soif', and it became a kind of formula, and the sign of a joking relationship between them: 'Phillipe-J'ai-Soif'.

At this point, this nodal point, we remark that Phillipe's thirst is (at the least) doubly determined. It derives organically from his _need_ to drink that night when he dreamt the dream; but it also derives psychically from the _desire_ to drink which the _demand_ emanating from the Symbolic has caused to be inscribed in him, in the waxen surface of his memory. Since dreams are hypermnemic (Freud), since they permit a privileged regression to that point at which childhood memory appears to constitute its unthinkable origins, we are concerned with the 'primal' (and therefore mythically constituted) formation of _desire_. We are concerned with the point of entrance of the 'drive' into psychical life. Dreams (and indeed lapses) are a privileged path, a royal road back to that (mythical) moment at which 'difference' is established and the global calibration of signifier to signified almost obscures the sovreignty of that transcendent signifier which actually operates as a redoubled fury in the very heart of objects.

As I have said, need has no place in psychical life. Only the 'representatives' or 'delegates' of need may enter the agencies of the mind. If we consider Phillipe's dream, we can identify the Ideational Representative of the oral drive, which is "the first to be distinguished in post-natal development" (1972:140). At the level of need, Phillipe was easy to feed and easily satisfied, but we are not concerned with need but with the fixation of drives to their ideational representatives. We are concerned with both Death and Sexuality, although the representation of the death-drive is most clearly discernible in the dream we have chosen not to consider. We find two representatives of the oral drive in the dream. One is a gesture, the other a formula. They are not present in the manifest content of the dream but can only be identified after free association.

The gesture which is 'registered' or 'inscribed' as an 'image' is the gesture of cupping the hands together in a conch shape to produce a siren call. We learn from the analysand that this gesture is tied to the cupping of the hands together at the fountain of the Unicorn, and thus signifies 'quenched thirst'. When I write that this gesture signifies 'quenched thirst', it is precisely the nature of this signification that is in question. What kind of relation is there between an acoustic chain present in the psychic apparatus, and any visual chains that are also there. This relation is especially crucial to any understanding of the structure of the Unconscious. Eugen Bär has remarked that:

> "the semantic ambiguity of a natural language could not exist
> without a more general type of semiology supporting it by
> instances such as moments of silence, blushes and gestures."
> (1971:246)

This more general semiology, which existence Lacan has emphatically denied, cannot yet be said to have been created. Those theorists, following Lacan, who have been concerned with just such a general semiology, have tended to do little more than extend certain metaphors already present in Freud's writings.

The second representative of the oral drive is the formula 'J'ai soif'. It is a kind of representative in this boiling hot summer of Phillipe's moi, his ego. Since the Lacanian ego is constructed out of a basic misrecognition, and is embroiled in an endless struggle for recognition from the other, it can be said to be synonymous with the death-drive.[9] The formula is also associated with Lili, as we saw in the narration of the third childhood memory (of the Atlantic Beach) elicited in the course of the analytic session. Since we are concerned with the oral drive, we are by definition concerned with the question of thirst,

and in this context it is important to note that the acoustic chain 'Li'
is common to both 'Licorne' and 'Lili', the woman who listens to his cry
of thirst and is in a position, it seems, to receive his word. It
seemed like that to Phillipe because Lili was seen by him to have an
'ideal' marriage to her husband, and thus symbolized a harmony and satis-
faction not present in Phillipe's Mother's marriage. A harmony and satis-
faction doubly associated with the acoustic chain 'li' in French: for 'li'
can be metonymically connected with 'lit', and Lili with 'lolo', which
signifies 'milk' or 'breast' in French baby talk.

The Unconscious structured like a Language

When Lacan claimed that the Unconscious was structured like a lang-
uage, he meant exactly what he said:

> 'I do not mean a structure to be situated in some sort
> of so-called generalized semiology drawn from the limbo
> of its periphery, but the structure of language as it
> manifests itself in the language which I might call
> positive, those which are actually spoken by the mass
> of human beings'. (Ecrits 1966:444)

There are certain objections to this statement implicit in Freud's writings,
I want to consider these objections before continuing the argument.

Freud talked of language existing in the Preconscious, and in the
Secondary Process (which is at work in the Preconscious), but the language
he saw as existing in the Unconscious was something very different. The
fact of there being no negation, no logic, no syntax and no time in the
Unconscious makes it hard for us to accord any process there the status
of a language as it is spoken 'by the mass of human beings'. Without
negation, it is hard to imagine the metacommunication that is vital to
any language.

There was a language in the Primary Process, Freud stressed (SE
XIV: 199), but it was the language of Psychosis, and of dreams in their
regression to the form of images:

> "In Schizophrenia words are subjected to the same process
> as that which makes the dream-images out of latent dream-
> thoughts – to what we have called the primary psychical
> process. They undergo condensation, and by means of
> displacement transfer their cathexes to one another in
> their entirety. The process may go so far that a single
> word, if it is specially suitable on account of its
> numerous connections, takes over the representation of
> a whole train of thought'. (SE XIV: 199).

Here, in the 1915 paper on 'The Unconscious' we clearly have some kind of
conception of an Unconscious structured like a language. As Ricoeur
points out (1970:400) 'the problem is to assign an appropriate meaning to
the word "like"'. Is language a privileged model that we compare with
the structure of the Unconscious? Or does the term 'a language' merely
mean that the Unconscious is semiologically structured, with language
a term of reference only because of its role in the Preconscious and the
Conscious?

Thing-Presentations and Word Presentations

In his analysis of the relations between the different systems of
the mind Freud introduced a new terminology in 1914/1915. He distinguished

sharply between what he called 'Thing-Presentation' (Sachvorstellung)
and 'Word-Presentation' (Wortvorstellung). It is significant to note
that the nuances of these terms were often lost in early translations,
which saw 'vorstellung' as meaning 'idea' and not 'presentation'.

Thing-Presentations are essentially visual, they are perceptual
entities, images or memory traces. Freud's description of them in The
Ego and The Id as 'optical memory residues' shows in fact how little con-
flict there is between this new terminology and the terminology of
'inscription', whereas in 1915 he had been quite adamant that the new
terminology rendered the old one redundant. Word-Presentations are
essentially 'auditory' - 'The essence of a word is after all the memory-
trace of a word that has been heard' (1961:21) - and in this sense are
De Saussure's acoustic chain.

Freud expressed the relation between the Thing-Presentation and the
Word-Presentation, and their participation in the different 'systems'
in this way:

> 'The conscious presentation comprises the presentation of
> the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging
> to it, while the unconscious presentation is the present-
> ation of the thing alone'. (SE XIV:201)

The unconscious presentation is stated here to be 'The presentation of the
thing alone'. In what sense can this kind of presentation be said to be
linguistic? The linguistic sign has two basic components, the concept
and the acoustic image.[10] What is the exact nature of the thing-presentation
in relation to this? It should be clear by now that Freud was uncertain,
and that not all of his statements are consistent with each other. He was
at least clear in his own mind that the thing-presentation could not
attain consciousness without being 'bound' to a word-presentation (and
the Bioenergetic language of 'binding' is significant here):

> 'The locality at which the Repressed breaks through is the
> word-presentation and not the concept attached to it' (SE XIV)

Here, the Thing-Presentation would seem to be simply the Saussurean concept
in the formula $\frac{concept}{acoustic\ image}$ $\frac{signified,}{signifier}$ initially set out by De Saussure in
the Cours (1974). However, Freud is clearly not happy with a simple two-
tiered formula, and is always half aware that there is some kind of sig-
nifying chain in the Unconscious too. This paper is largely concerned
with the different attempts that have been made to formulate clearly
Freud's fleeting perceptions as to the relation between the Unconscious
and Language. Both Psychoanalysis and Linguistics, once they are brought
together, seem to demand certain modifications in each other.

The original formula of De Saussure places the signified above the
signifier, thus:

$$\frac{Concept}{tree\ |\ Acoustic\ image}$$
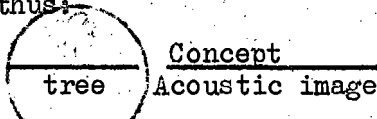
Lacan, for reasons related to the nature of Repression and the Unconscious,
reverses this formula:

$$\frac{tree\ |\ Acoustic\ image}{Concept}$$
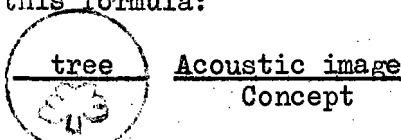
Using the symbols 'S' and 's' to represent signifier and signified, Lacan

writes the formula in this way:

$$\underline{S} \quad \text{(signifier)}.$$
$$s \quad \text{(signified)}$$

The formula is inverted because Lacan holds that the signifier has priority over the signified, and that meaning is constituted through the relation between signifiers (Ecrits 1966:498). Like Levi-Strauss (1950), Lacan would argue that meaning is created by a chain of signifiers, that, in its globability, created meaning 'd'un seul coup'. When the two global registers (S/s) were created in that mythical cruci-formation to which myths (collectively) and dreams (individually) bear witness, a 'supple-mentary ration' was necessary to support Symbolic thought in its opera-tions (Levi-Strauss 1950: xlix). For given that the two registers are created simultaneously 'comme deux blocs complémentaires';[11] human thought, impelled by the desire for recognition from the other, can only appropriate otherness through a 'suplus of signification' that underpins its operations. The wandering of the mind that, in the shape of 'the floating signifier', draws from the actual the fuel necessary to feed the symbolic, is also that wandering that subverts any constant 'bi-univocal' relation between signifier and signified. This is completely in accord with De Saussure's rejection of language as 'a name-giving system' (1974:16) or 'a list of words, each corresponding to the thing it names' (1974:65). Such a theory of 'labelling' would imply that the signified was a thing in itself rather than a concept, and that implication would be anathema to Lacan as to De Saussure.

Lacan is, however, actually concerned to modify De Saussure. He rejects the Saussurean illustration of the relation existing between signifier and signified because it suggests to us that 'the signifier answers to the function of representing the signified' (Ecrits 1966:498). Lacan insists that 'the signifier intrudes into the signified' (Ecrits 1966:500). By this, he means that 'meaning' inheres in (metonymic and metaphoric) relations between signifiers, which are both everywhere and nowhere (since relations are 'nowhere'). Rather than being a 'representa-tion', 'meaning' in Lacanian Psychoanalysis seems to be a question of 'production'. Meaning is produced out of a difference that separates 'the letter' (ie. 'the essentially localized structure of the signifier') from 'a necessary topological substratum' which Lacan compares to an infinite series of interlocking rings in a necklace where each necklace is itself also a ring in another necklace (Ecrits 1966:501-502). How are we to understand this metaphor?

Wilden argues that when Lacan refers to 'a necessary topological substratum' he means to imply the phonological level of the Unconscious. If Lacan is concerned here with that level at which phonemes can finally be dissolved into distinctive features, and Lacan's text is not absolutely clear on this point, then it is illuminating to relate it to Levi-Strauss' programmatic statements on the relation between Structural Linguistics and Social Anthropology (1972: Ch. 2, 3, 4, 9, 11). Even as Levi-Strauss was formulating the parallel between the phonemic structure of language, and the structures of 'languages' such as kinship rules and myths, he realized that the analogy was a flawed one. Even if it was possible to reduce social 'languages' to unconscious systems of relations, the units one was concerned with remained words and not 'distinctive features', and as Levi-Strauss noted: "there are no necessary relationships at vocabulary level" (1972: 35/36).

The relation, then, between linguistic terms and kinship terms, is not simple. If they are formally the same, if they can both be said

to be produced by a Symbolic Function (1972:203), yet they are finally
terms existing at a different level. This is partly because any language
beyond the reduced language of Psychosis is necessarily always already
in a social world organized in terms of certain key-signifiers. The
clumsiness of expression here is partly due to the impossibility of
describing a language in a reduced state. Lacan's version of the Fort!
Da! game played by Freud's grandson (Beyond the Pleasure Principle pp.
8-10) treats it as an initial entrance into a Jakobsonian world of phonemic
oppositions. The corellation between the presence and absence of the
child's mother, and the child's 'symbolic' use of the two phonemes (o/a)
to locate himself within such a 'difference', has been quite fiercely
attacked (Wilden 1972:147-152). Here I want only to note how it is that
Lacanian Psychoanalysis is concerned to describe the quite specific
entrance of the child into the Symbolic Order, a re-capitulation of that
vertiginous 'moment' in which the two reigsters (S/s) were created in
their globality (Levi-Strauss:1950). Of course Lacan is always in a place
from which he stresses the 'exteriority' of the Symbolic Order, whether
it be the circulation of value in a Melanesian chain of islands, or the
same circulation between boudoirs and hotel-rooms in 19th Century Paris.
Indeed, Lacan would consider the couple Exteriority/Interiority to be
quite spurious, as can be seen by noting his various references to Levi-
Strauss. The 'already-there' quality of the Symbolic Order is invariably
affirmed, the Freudian Oedipus re-inserted as a mere moment of a wider
system that is either present or absent:

> "The marriage tie is presided over by a preferential order
> whose law implying the kinship names, like Language,
> is imperative for the group in its forms, but unconscious
> in its structure." (1966: 276-277 Wilden's translation).

Lacan, in typical style, then proceeds to dissolve any specificity
that European post-Industrial kinship organization may appear to have, by
situating it within the wider modalities of alliance and descent as they
have been described in the ethnography:

> "This is precisely where the Oedipus complex - insofar
> as we continue to recognize it as covering the whole
> field of our experience with its signification - may
> be said, in this connection, to mark the limits that our
> discipline assigns to subjectivity: that is to say what the
> subject can know of his unconscious participation in the
> movement of the complex structures of marriage ties, by
> verifying the symbolic effects in his individual exist-
> ence of the tangential movement towards incest which has
> manifested itself ever since the coming of a universal
> community." (1966:277 Wilden's translation)

This seems acceptable enough, but in another context (1966:219), in which
Lacan is re-analysing the case of Dora, this dissolution itself begins to
appear suspect. The cycle of exchange of presents, with all their under-
tones of cynical sexual purchase, that envelops Dora in a structure of bad
faith that she also fails to discern, cannot be so easily wrenched from
the specific historical context. I mention this case because it is not
so often that Lacan's Levi-Straussian formulations can be considered in a
concrete historical context, and it is only then that one can decide to
what extent Lacan is guilty of the "violence of reducing the cultural
(ie historical) to the ontological", (Wilden 1972)

Moreover, if Lacan learnt so much from the early Levi-Strauss, he
rarely attempted a formal analysis of the kinds practised by Levi-Strauss
in the early essays on myth and on kinship. It is partly for this reason

(a reason related to Psychoanalysis as a therapy concerned with the
structure of intersubjectivity) that Lacan has never been so absolutely
tied to a Structuralist formulation in terms of binary oppositions.
Certainly the Oedipus has been correlated with the now largely discredited
'atom of kinship', but the con-fusions of the Imaginary and the Symbolic
that the subject is caught within in the Psychoanalytic discourse, have
tended to help Lacan to avoid adopting a reductive position. This is not
a defence that would be accepted by Wilden (1972) or Deleuze and Guettari
(1973). My own position on this is related to my (as yet) incomplete
situation of <u>Oedipe Africain</u> (1966:1973) with regard to Lacanian Psycho-
analysis and Social Anthropology. It is there, in formulating a critique
of the work of the Ortigues, rather than in momentary allusions to Levi-
Strauss in Lacan's writings, that some resolution of these matters is to
be found.

Lacan justifies his emphasis on the signifier by referring us to De
Saussure and to certain of his explanations of the arbitrariness of the
linguistic sign. De Saussure talked of 'le glissement incessant du sig-
nifié sous le signifiant' ('the incessant sliding of the signified beneath
the signifier') and this point has been much stressed by Lacan (Ecrits
1966:502-503). For Lacan, the signified becomes less and less important
simply because it e-ludes us, it slips playfully away from us. The in-
trusion of the signifier into the signified can also be phrased in terms
of the subversion of the subject that Lacanian theory demands. Just as
it is impossible to allow the subject to bathe in the radiance of his
own thought, as it constitutes him as present to himself, so also is it
dubious to regard language and thought as being in the service of some
perfectly calibrated celestial machine. It is not that Lacan fails to
distinguish between thought and language (Bär 1971: 246). He is concerned
however with the (metonymic) movement of language and the progressive-
regressive movement of desire that is invested in it, with the (meta-
phorical) blossoming as the chain is momentarily suspended, and that which
is suspended from it, intrudes.

In the section on the mutability of the linguistic sign (1974: 74-78),
De Saussure writes of a loosening of the bond between the acoustic image
and the concept, of a shift in the relationship between the two. His
examples are of changes between Old German and Modern German, or between
Classical Latin and French (viz: the Latin 'necare', <u>to kill</u>, becomes the
French 'noyer', <u>to drown</u>). These are obviously changes taking place over
long periods of time, indeed whole centuries. The inference, however, as
far as Lacan is concerned, is quite clear:

>"Language is radically powerless to defend itself against
> the forces which <u>from one moment to the next</u> are shifting
> the relationship between the signified and the signifier".
>
> (1974:75 mv italics)

It is the 'change from one moment to the next' in the relation between
signifier and signified that allows Lacan to superimpose Saussurean lin-
guistics on the Freudian dream-text. The dream-text is a finely spun
web (note that the Latin word 'textum' = 'web') of linguistic inter-
connections: yet analysis cannot exhaust it. Analysis of a dream is
indeed 'interminable'. However, at certain points, the work is halted,
comes up against 'nodal points' which are, in Freud's words, 'un-
plummable'. For Lacan, these nodal points are points at which the two
registers (S:s) are anchored to each other: he describes them as
'points de capiton', as raised buttons on a mattress or armchair. These
'points de capiton' are the place at which need is re-presented in psy-
chical life, and in achoring the two 'chains' to each other 'they bring

to a halt the otherwise indefinite sliding of meaning' (Ecrits 1966:805).
Lacan compares the analyst to a fisherman who is fishing 'in the flow of
the pre-text', but who cannot hope to catch the actual movement of the
fish. The signified is marked here with a bar (viz $\not{s}$) because it is
always disappearing into the organic, into the 'insondable'. If Lacan[12]
here does seem to confuse the Saussurean concept with the thing itself
this is only because, in defining the real as that which is real for the
subject, Lacan would align himself here with Benveniste and (1966: 49-56)
circumscribe Edmund, the bastard son, within the hegemony of the dog-
star he answers even in his denial of it. The real is an orphan un-
conscious: the real is a necklace threaded with stars.

Lacan's treatment of the Saussurean signifier/signified relation is
highly idiosyncratic. It hinges around the significance of the bar separ-
ating the two registers. Insofar as De Saussure is concerned with Syn-
chronic relations alone[13], the bar is simply that which separates the
acoustic chain from the concept. When De Saussure talks of the linear
nature of the signifier, he stresses that the signifying chain is linear
because it can only unfold in one dimension, that of time (1974:70). The
Freudian Unconscious is timeless: this is one of its most basic properties,
and that on its own would seem to render the presence of a linear chain in
the unconscious unlikely. Indeed, given the various kinds of regression
involved in the dream-work, and given the presence of Thing-Presentation
in the Unconscious , we would seem to be far closer to De Saussure's
consideration of semiological systems that are visual. Visual signifiers
can 'offer simultaneous groupings in several dimensions' (1974:70), De
Saussure writes, and here one is immediately reminded of Freud's descrip-
tion of the 'transcription' of signs from system to system (1954: 173-175).
This is really the 'kernel' of the problem, and must be approached with
great caution. For Lacan, the language that is present in the Unconscious
is that which is spoken by the 'mass of human beings'. On the other hand,
Freud himself, in his description of the memory-system, repeatedly invoked
the metaphor of a script, of writing, present in the Unconscious. In
this context, his references to pictographic and ideographic scripts in
the Interpretation of Dreams should be taken quite seriously. The point
is this: we can think of the Unconscious in terms of a spoken language
or a written language, or in terms of both. Each of these decisions would
still allow for that necessary continuity between Unconscious and Pre-
conscious. In discussing Lacan's position it is, I think, dangerous,
to place him too simply within the kind of logocentrism attacked by
Derrida (1967/1972). This is Wilden's argument (1972: 396fn.) and I
think it represents an over-simplification both of Derrida and of Lacan.
The highly complicated argument and diagrams that try to evoke the
process that Lacan calls 'capitonnage' (Ecrits 1966:804-809) are, I
would argue (and insofar as I understand Lacan's text), against any
complicity with the utopian plenitude of an absolutely present origin,
whether as signifier, subject, or both. If Lacan's final point of
reference is with phonology, nevertheless, in his insistence that the
signifying chain is to be read backwards as well as forwards, is indeed
finally sealed up in its meaning by that which is not yet and is yet
retroactively already there, he is not so far from defining the psychic
as 'text' (Ecrits 1966:805).

As I have said, the bar in Lacan's system represents the repression
of the signified. In De Saussure it has no such value, but is simply the
line that separates the two chains. However, Psychoanalysis is continually
concerned with the fact that the relations between the different agencies
of the mind are a kind of flawed semiology. The Preconscious and the Un-
conscious are both related and separated at the same time. There is a
'censorship' separating them, and yet communication between them does
exist. Indeed it must, if we are to avoid that 'Psychoparallelism'

against which Freud warned us. If certain passages (following the image
of Russian censorship) are blacked out, there are aspects (ie 'derivatives')
of the original text that can still be deciphered in spite of the oblitera-
tions on either side. Thus, the pure linearity of the signifying chain,
as De Saussure described it, has to be modified so as to include the in-
trusions of another chain that lies beneath it and insists that it be
read:

> "There is in effect no signifying chain which does not
> have attached to the punctuation of each of its units
> a whole articulation of relevant context suspended
> vertically from that point" (Ecrits 1966:503) (Jan Miel's
> translation)

This 'other' chain that lies beneath, and is suspended vertically ('si
l'on peut dire':Lacan) from particular points, is composed of signifiers
that have fallen to the rank of signifieds. To understand exactly what
is meant by this, we have to look at the connection between Metaphor and
Repression.

Metaphor and Repression

In Metaphor, as Lacan sees it, a new signifier replaces (re-places)
the original one. The original signifier then falls to the rank of the
signified (Ecrits 1966:708). If we represent the new signifier as S',
we can explain the process diagrammatically:

STAGE I: STAGE II:

$\underline{S}$ (original signifer) $\underline{S}'$ (new signifier)
s (original signified)   S (original signifier fallen
                                              to the rank of the
                                              signified)

To understand this diagram, we must remember that we are concerned not just
with the structure of language, and not just with a bar between signifier
and signified, but with Repression. In a language without Repression,
things would be as the linguist describes them, but since Freud, we have
learnt that intrusions into the text of everyday life make STAGE I $\underline{S}$ a
purely hypothetical case: s

> 'In a language without metaphors, there would
> indeed be relations of signifier to signified
> (rapports de signifiant à signifié) which may
> be symbolized by $\underline{S}$; but there would be no
> equivocation, nor any unconscious to decipher'.
>   (Ricoeur:1970:401)

Indeed, there is no 'original plenitude except in the 'pre-texte' and ques-
tions about the 'pre-texte' receive only mythical answers. Lacan des-
cribes Repression as a snag or rip or rent in the cloth of experience, and
such snags make it difficult to sustain a Structural Linguistics constructed
solely on the basis of a bar separating an acoustic chain from a con-
ceptual one. The general Freudian category of 'distortion' would seem
to demand some kind of acknowledgement, for it was Freud's achievement
in the monographs on dreams, jokes, and parapraxes, to show that there was
a locus of language to which the conscious subject was, in Lacan's
word 'excentric'.

Repression, for Lacan, 'is' metaphor. The snag in the tissue marks the place where the original signifier is, as it were, vertically suspended. It has been 'displaced' and has fallen to the rank of the signified. However, although it has fallen (and the topographic nuance is, I think, faithful to the process) it persists as a repressed signifier itself. This persistence (and insistence) of a repressed chain is precisely what give poetry, that most metaphorical of arts, the quality of saying what it says as much by what is not there as by what is. To hear the thing that is not said beneath the thing that is, the basic attitude is one of phenomenological suspension of the kind described by Bachelard in his theory of reading, and attitude not so far removed from that advocated by Freud: 'the evenly suspended attention'.

There is a slight problem involved in equating metaphor and Repression. It is this. If metaphor is seen as equated with repression, the existence of a repressed chain suggests that, from the whole paradigmatic axis, only two elements are actually involved: (1) the new signifer(S') and (2) the original signifier fallen to the rank of the signified (S). Thus, whereas the paradigmatic axis is defined by the possible substitution of all its elements, one from another, the idea of repression seems to endow certain signifiers with a more privileged position than that of others along the paradigmatic axis. I think there is an answer to this. The quote from Ricoeur above (1970:401) reminded us that there is no language without metaphor. Similarly, we must remember that except in the form of aphasia described by Jakobson as Contiguity Disorder, there is no language without metonymy. Since metonymy connects both the message and the code, it is the metonymic movement of language that connects the repressed chain of signification to the rest of the elements in the code. In Lacanian terms, this movement is the movement of Desire, and it is quite literally the 'restlessness' of this desire that Psychoanalysis imputes to language. If Lacan's position is valid it represents a kind of subversion of the study of language (cf. Ecrits 1966:467). It is within the practice of Psychoanalysis that Lacan's understanding of the workings of language is situated, and those linguists who criticize Lacan from the point of view of 'normal' language are really missing the point. By this I mean that it may be more meaningful for us to reverse Lacan's aphorism: 'Language is structured like the Unconscious'. Lacan's wilful obscurity (and it is, in no ironical sense, precisely that) is based on his belief that theory and practice should be united, and the primacy of the signifier over the signified results in a masking of sense that only diligent work can unveil.

Another approach to the problem of the fixity that the metaphor/repression equation seems to ascribe to the workings of language, is that developed by Laplanche and Leclaire (1961) in their analysis of Phillipe's dream. They argue that the persistence and insistence of a repressed chain demands representation in terms of 4 levels instead of the 2 levels shown to us by De Saussure.

These four levels, divided up into what Laplanche and Leclaire call the Preconscious and Unconscious Chain, can be represented like this:

$$\frac{\underline{S'}}{s}$$

The Preconscious Chain

$$\frac{S}{S}$$

The Unconscious Chain

This formula does give a highly useful representation of the relation between the Preconscious and the Unconscious, and it does allow us to make a close correlation, topographically represented, between metaphor and repression. In fact this diagram's meaning cannot be grasped until we have looked at Freud's writings on the nature of Repression. We will also have to discuss the question of the (fictitious) origin of the Unconscious and its relations to language. Until we have tackled this, the meaning of the lower half of the diagram, where we have a signified that is apparently its own signifier, can only elude us.

Repression

If the formulation of the concept of the Unconscious was the crucial event in the history of Freudian Psychoanalysis, Repression was also a concept that was indispensable to it. Stekel, be it noted, abandoned the concept of the Unconscious, and also Repression too - 'the cornerstone on which the whole structure of Psychoanalysis rests' (SE XIV:16). In discussing this 'cornerstone', my key points of reference are to the two papers on the Unconscious and on Repression of 1915 (SE XIV)

In talking about Repression we are concerned with relations between the systems of the mind as Freud defined them - between the Unconscious and the Preconscious, and between the Preconscious and the Conscious. We have already looked at the relations between these systems in terms of presentations, in terms of 'word-presentations' and 'thing-presentations', and have shown how persuasively the terminology of Structural Linguistics has been used to describe these concepts.

The fact is that Repression, although described by Freud at one point as 'a failure in translation', demands some kind of use of energetic terms. The initial definition in the 1915 paper - that 'the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance from the conscious' (SE XIV:147) - is quite a mild expression of the force with which a censorship must be invested.

Freud divides Repression into two phases, (1) Primal Repression and (2) Repression Proper. Since Repression Proper (or After Repression) is the kind we are usually concerned with, I have chosen to treat that first.

Repression Proper

In Repression Proper, the presentation which is repressed is affected by two different 'forces'. It is, first of all, repulsed by the Preconscious system, and 'cathexis' is withdrawn. Secondly it is attracted by a chain already existing in the Unconscious (the repressed chain of signification ie. $\frac{S}{S}$ in the diagram above). Thus, a repressed chain to which it is attracted. Some explanation then has to be made for primal repression. To understand the relation between 'Repression Proper' and this 'Primal Repression' it has to be accepted that our reconstruction of it is necessarily a fictitious one. This is not as problematic as it might seem. We can only treat an origin as a fiction because an origin is an entity that eludes the structures of thought, that we would use to contain it, precisely because the origin of our structures of thought is the dark side of those structures, and it is in opposition to that dark side, through repression of it, that those structures claim their right to exist.

Primal Repression

However, Freud was intensely preoccupied with the problem of origins, a preoccupation that on occasion overrides his more Saussurean concerns.

In the case of Primal Repression, since it is so closely concerned with the 'entrance' of the drive into psychical life, it is especially interesting to Freud. If this primal repression happens - at least as a mythical event - then we have to postulate a kind of mythical state prior to the splitting up of the mind into systems. This mythical state is apprehended not through experimental psychology, nor through psycholinguistics, but through the archaeology of the subject that Psychanalysis lays bare for us. A mythical event cannot be proven as true or false: it is irreducible to that kind of measurement.

Briefly, what happens in the Primal Repression is this. The psychical (or ideational) representative is refused entrance to the psychic apparatus. A _fixation_ is then established - 'the representative in question persists unaltered from then onwards, and the instinct (drive) remains attached to it ' (SE XIV:148). With this fixation, the instinct (drive) accedes to the level of the signifier, or: 'is caught in nets of the signifier'(Laplanche and Leclaire: 1961). The idea of fixation expressed here, since it so explicitly suggests an immutability, can be compared to Freud's model of the mind as a 'writing-machine' on to whose mnemic systems traces are 'inscribed' or 'registered'.

It is the ideational representatives of sexuality and of death that are fixed in Primal Repression. Ernest Jones' claim that there are certain limited symbolisms relating to life, death, one's kinsmen, and one's body, (1916/1923), can only be related to the domain of Primal Repression, a privileged arena whre the hieroglyphs are not washed away with each tide. It is the privileged nature of this arena that lends substance to the arguments of Derrida (1967/1972) and of Deleuze and Guettari (1973) regarding the primacy of the written (the traced) over the spoken. When I have described the primal repression in more strictly Lacanian terms, I will return to this question of the trace and writing, and the problematic relation between the phonetic and the 'grammatic'.

In the case of Phillipe, whose dream we have been considering, the formula '(J'ai) soif' becomes the representative of his need - it represents the oral drive. With the primal repression, the Unconscious is mythically constituted. It is the Unconscious Chain created at this point that underlies and supports language. The psychoanalytical evidence suggests that this Unconscious chain is constituted through the agency of certain 'key-signifiers'. These key signifiers, operating as hinges between the Universe of Rules and that of blind need, structure human language. Here is how Laplanche and Leclaire conceive of key-signifiers:

> 'Dans le schéma de la metaphore, il est necessaire
> ici de concevoir l'existence de certains 'signifiants-
> clés', placés en position metaphorisants, et auxquels
> est dévolué, par leur poids particulier, la propriété
> de mettre en ordre tout le système du language humain'.
> (1961:116)

The key-signifier we are concerned with here, (J'ai) soif (Choif) is then the one that because of its 'particular weight' organizes Phillipe's insertion into the Symbolic Order, the order of language. The myth can be reconstructed.

Prior to his entrance into the Symbolic Order - and we can note, in passing, the importance of the presence of the _Je_ in the formula, which, in grammatical terms is a shifter and through its particular weight, its duplex structure, organizes language (Jakobson: 1963) - we can imagine

Phillipe as a child who simply existed within the non-signifying world of his own need. In this (mythical) time, to have thirst is simply to engulf in a blind need which is then satisfied. Suddenly, with Lili's joking remark 'Phillipe-J'ai-soif', the world becomes significant, and what had been a blind instinctual impulse is caught 'in the nets of the signifier'. This is illustrated diagrammatically:

Lili says:

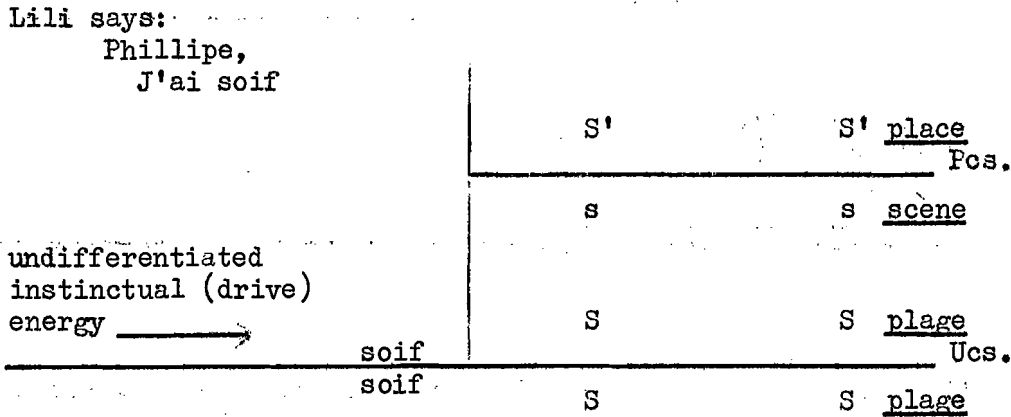|	
Phillipe, J'ai SOIF	S'
	s
Undifferentiated instinctual (drive) energy	S
————————→ soif soif	S
	S
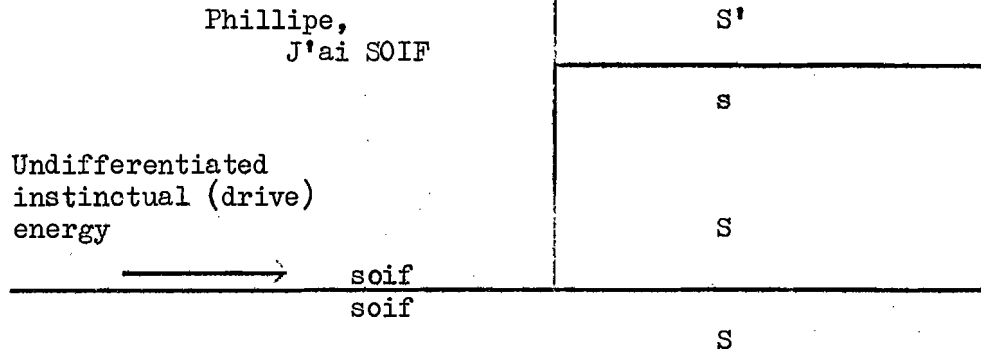
Thus '(J'ai) soif' is one of the 'kernels' of Phillipe's Unconscious. The work of analysis, in its untiring elimination of the outer husk, will always come up against this 'knot of signification'. It is a 'point of umbilication' (Lacan) because it is so radically over-determined. Thus, it should be noted that Phillipe's memory is of Lili saying 'J'ai soif'. His insertion into the Symbolic Order occurs, then, through the mediation of another whose name (Lili/'lolo': breast, milk in French baby talk) invokes his dual relation with his mother. However, it is also significant that the name 'Lili' was not Phillipe's aunt's name at all, but merely the affectionate nickname by which she was known by her husband, and by her husband alone. Thus, the desire to drink, around which Phillipe's dream is organized, is multiply over-determined. Besides the desire to drink, we are concerned with Phillipe's desire for Lili, Lili's own desire to drink, and finally, and most significantly, Lili's desire for her husband. Since Phillipe was one of those children who said 'moi-je' (ie. he had not mastered the use of 'shifters') the formula 'Jai soif' signified the dizzy moment in which he was to move away from a situation of narcissism, where Lili/lolo was merely an extension of his being, to a Symbolic Order which placed the other under the sliding mark of the Other (L'Autre). If it was Lili who was the mediating force in this transformation, that would have been because it would make sense that an other should break the spell of the dual relation with the mother and open up an order organized in terms of an Oedipal structure of three separate persons. In such a structure, being is not a narcissistic closure (ie. 'moi-je'), but a locus of subjectivity which cannot be appropriated. However, regression from the Symbolic to the Imaginary is always possible. For, as need is transformed into desire through demand, the radical lack of being of the child whose organism has been altered (from a calyx of bright, only partially centralized slivers of light, into the fused silver of a total mirror-recognition), is re-inscribed at the level of the signifier whose aleatory movement alone invokes the flaw it labours to conceal.

Indeed, if the formula '(J'ai) soif' is able to act as the kernel of the dream, if it is so heavily over-determined, it is because even primal repression does not finally cut off the 'derivatives' of the repressed representative of the drive. If there is sufficient 'distortion' for the 'derivatives' to overcome the censorship then they have free access to the preconscious and conscious, and in the process of free association Freud notes (SE XIV: 149-150) that the analysand goes on

spinning associative threads 'till he is brought up against some thought, the relation of which to what is repressed becomes so obvious that he is compelled to repeat his attempt at repression'.

In Phillipe's dream we can identify some of the derivatives of the instinctual representative '(J'ai) soif'. In the manifest text of Phillipe's dream the word 'place' appears. Here is how this particular signifier can be related diagrammatically to what is suspended vertically from it:

Lili says:
    Phillipe,
        J'ai soif

S'	S'	place
		Pcs.
s	s	scène
S	S	plage
		Ucs.
S	S	plage

undifferentiated
instinctual (drive)
energy _____→
                    soif
                    soif

In this diagram we are concerned with the four-tiered formula again, and with metaphor (repression) as the superimposition of signifiers. The new signifier (place) is superimposed on to the original signifier plage, which has fallen to the rank of the signified. The signified is the scene (scène) where the action takes place and here of course it is 'confused' with the original signifier plage. Our problem is one of conceptualizing a four-tiered system in terms of a terminology rooted in a two-tiered signifer/signified system. As we have already noted, since all language involves metaphor (repression), there will be no language that is not underpinned by a repressed chain of signification. The radical condensation that we detect in the dream-work is in fact then, the result of the crossing of the Saussurean bar between the language of conscious and preconscious and that operating in the repressed chain, Condensation operates, as it were, vertically, between a signifier and another signifier that has fallen to the rank of the signified. Condensation is then a feature of language that is never completely there, but exists somewhere between the work of distortion and the work of interpretation, the latter in its guile simply reversing the former:

> "The creative spark of the metaphor does not spring
> from the conjunction of two images, that is of two
> signifiers actually actualized. It springs from two
> signifiers one of which has taken the place of the
> other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier
> then remaining present through its (metonymic)
> relation to the rest of the chain'.
>   (Lacan:Ecrits 1966:507; Miel's
>   translation).

The important point to note here is that the operations of metaphor and metonymy are mutually interdependent, as was emphasized in the discussion on Jakobson. If metaphor creates a superimposition of signifiers, metonymy effects a continual sliding of signifiers: it is 'the one slope of the effective field of the signifier in the constitution of meaning' ('le premier versant du champ effectif que le signifiant constitue, pour que le sens y prenne place' Ecrits 1966:506). The point is that metonymy,

for Lacan, concerns only the relations between signifiers, it does not concern the signified at all, for the signified is continually slipping away from underneath.

We can understand the nature of metonymy better by returning to the diagrammatic representation of Phillipe's dream. I have already attempted a description of the (fiction of) primal repression. I have also shown how it is that a signifier such as place exists by virtue of a signifier that it has displaced - plage. Or, to put it in another way, we have seen how the original signifier plage is in a metaphorising position with regard to the signifying chain 'above' it. Since we are concerned with what Freud calls the 'derivatives' of the repressed instinctual (drive) representative, we need to trace the connections between the right and left hand side of the diagram.

Freud's initial point in separating out the two different kinds of repression was quite simply a logical one. If it was argued that, for repression to occur, the 'presentation' (signifier) had not only to be repulsed by the Preconscious, but also to be attracted by a chain already existing in the Unconscious, then a Primal Repression had to be hypothesised. The associative chains connect the already existing chain in the Unconscious to the (distorted) derivatives of the repressed instinctual representative around which the Unconscious chain is organized.

Thus, when we have undone the work of distortion we find the original signifier/signified relation plage. The last syllable 'ge' is phonetically
related to the 'je' in the 'J'ai soif' of the Unconscious chain. We can postulate a metonymic sliding to the left of the diagram, from plage to

-ge to je and so to (J'ai) soif. Here, then, is the completed diagram,
-ge   je

Lili says:
    Phillipe,
    J'ai soif
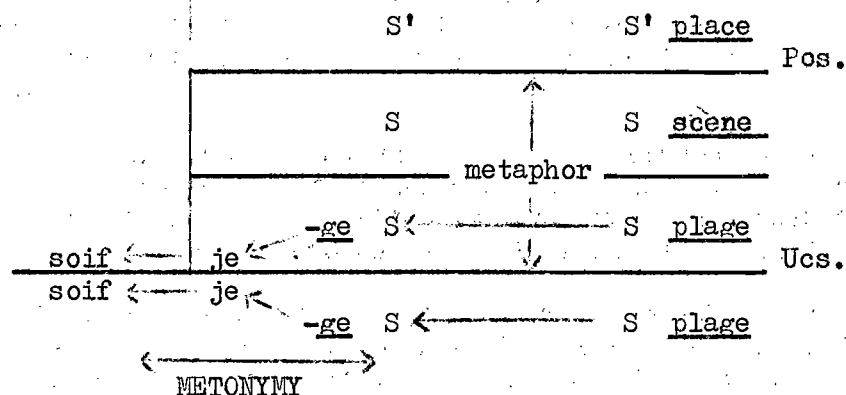
Conclusion

One crucial question remains to be considered. I cannot answer it, I can only highlight my own confusions, and my feeling that the Lacanian problematic is, at this point, seriously flawed. The crucial question, and one that I have not ceased to ask in different ways throughout the paper is this: What is the nature of the 'language' ($\frac{S}{S}$) in the Unconscious Chain? Here is how Laplanche and Leclaire conclude:

> "The 'words' that compose it are elements drawn from the
> realm of the imaginary - notably from visual informa-
> tion - but promoted to the dignity of signifiers."
>
> (1972:182)

What seems clear then is that we have to think of a Primal Unconscious (established by Primal Repression), and also an Unconscious which is the domain of After Repression. It seems to me that the Primary/Secondary Process distinction[14] is not adequate to contain the series of 'levels' that this demands.

To understand the distinction between these two forms of Unconscious, I want to consider briefly a paper written by Benveniste on the relation between Psychoanalysis and Language. He offers two meanings of the word 'symbolic' the first one as defining 'the most manifest property of Language', that it 'symbolizes' things in their absence. Lacan's own account of the Fort! Da! game, and the phoneticization of the real involved in the child's use of toys as signifiers, corresponds to precisely this sense of the word 'symbolic'.

Benveniste compares this most basic property of natural language with "the symbolism of the Unconscious discovered by Freud, which offers characteristics quite specific to itself" (1966:85). We are concerned here with the heritage of Stekel, a dangerous heritage as Freud had been quick to point out (SE IV). We are concerned with a 'fixed Symbolism'. (Die Symbolik). A careful reading of The Intepretation of Dreams and an attention to the dates at which certain passages were added, will reveal a gradual transformation in Freud's thought. The sections on fixed Symbolism were more and more extended, until his express warnings against the over-indulgent use of them, are all but buried under a mound of suggestions (for possibly universal symbolisms) from his co-workers, and indeed from himself. However, in a note dated 1909, Freud insists that the consideration of Symbols should never be carried out separately from free association:

> "I should like to utter an express warning against over-
> estimating the importance of symbols in dream-interpreta-
> tion, against restricting the work of translating dreams
> merely to translating symbols, and against abandoning
> the technique of making use of the dreamer's associations"
>
> (SE IV)

If the free association can be considered to be that work done by the analysand in following the threads in the manifest dream-text to the latent dream-thoughts, it would still seem to be in the domain of After-Repression. What, then of the fixed Symbolism?

Ernest Jones, in one of the key papers on the subject, claimed that "all symbols represent ideas of the self and the immediate blood relatives, or of the phenomena of birth, love and death" (1923:169). Since Lacan's whole work has been concerned with an emphasis on the lack of fixity in language, he has naturally militated against a too great reliance on any theories of fixed Symbolism, Stekelian theories that Freud had effectively rejected in his initial discussions of archaic methods of dream interpretation. Even the symptom is shown to be partici-pant in the chain of signifiers, if only negatively, in a frozen violence that both hides and reveals the text suspended from it (Ecrits 1966:259). However, in an interesting tribute to Ernest Jones (1966:697-717), we find certain clues to Lacan's theoretical position. In general, as I hope I have shown in this paper, Lacan is far more concerned with Le Symbolique than with a fixed symbolism. Indeed, insofar as he accepts

a fixed symbolism he seems to equate it with those 'key-signifiers' that
organise the insertion of the subject into language as the primal re-
pression happens. Lacan writes of symbols in terms of primary ideas:

> "Ces idees primaires designent les points ou le
> sujet disparaît sous l'être du significant: cu'il
> s'agisse, enseffet, d'être soi, d'être un père,
> d'être ne, d'être aime, ou d'être mort" (1966:709)

Thus, Phillipe, and his 'disappearance' beneath the signifier 'soif'.
However, if these 'primary ideas' are crucial to the insertion of the
subject into the Symbolic Order, can they really be said to be 'signifiers'
themselves? Are they not, rather, as much part of the Imaginary as the
Symbolic, thing-presentations in face 'elevated to the dignity of signifiers'?
If they are Imaginary elements, are they not, as Benveniste argues,
'Infra-linguistic', because they have their source 'in a region deeper than
that in which education instills the mechanism of language' (1966:86)?
Certainly, the domain of primal repression in its timelessness and lack
of syntax, and in the production of desire that operates there (in the
shape of Kleinian partial objects) would seem to be 'infra-linguistic'.
Whether it is possible, however, to imagine a language of inscriptions,
a system of writing, of traces, at this instance of the Unconscious, which
nevertheless insists so strongly because it persists, and because all
'derivatives' are traced back to it, is another question. 'What must the
psychic be' Derrida asks 'for it to be a text?' (1967/1972)

Almost everyone discussing Lacan's conceptualization of the Unconscious
(15) has explicitly or implicitly produced this question that demands an
answer: an answer that loses itself in the unplummable. What is this
domain, this 'infra-linguistic' domain, this Unconscious chain that gives
language 'ballast', this 'landscape of writing'? If we try to enter the
(mythical) time before primal repression, its phenomenology, its
libidinal production beneath the law of the Symbolic Father, do we find
a scrambling of several codes, an interpenetration of several 'chains', as
Deleuze and Guettari argue? (1973:47-48). For Derrida also, a writer
concerned to emphasise the metaphor of writing in Freud's writings against
the general hegemony of the Logos within the European tradition, the
Unconscious is marked by a 'writing' that pre-exists the phonetic - "not of
a 'writing' that simply transcribes the stony echo of muted words, but of
a preverbal lithography: metaphonetic, non-linguistic, a-logical" (1972:85).
There is much evidence for such a system of writing in Freud's works, and it
is especially insistent when he considers the question of memory. This
writing is perhaps a writing 'straight out of the real', infra-linguistic
certainly, meta-phonetic, clearly, the infant's actually but latterly
celestial appropriation of every grove and stream. No quarter, then.
Convulsive beauty: the phonemic operator. That the signifier marks the
polymorphous meadows with a heraldic quartering, and imaginary figures
blaze still against the squaring of content (the ellipse, the flow of the
pre-text), continuing.

It should be clear that there is far more at stake in this debate
than I have developed here. Whilst an adherence to phonology allows us
to slide all too easily into an idealism, an insistence on the image of
inscription, of _écriture_, places us firmly within historical materialism,
and makes possible a conception of the Lacanian Symbolic as an exterior
register inscribed in the actual 'discursive practice' of the social
formation. The Lacanian Symbolic is always already there, it _does_ pre-
cede and determine any possible 'presence' of any possible 'subject'.
Yet, since Psychoanalysis has been concerned with ontogenesis, with a
personal myth of origin rather than a collective one, it will always tend
to fall back into an idealism. Dangerous myth of origin, then, the Fort!
Da! game. Dangerous to locate the materiality of the two registers only
in the tension between an original disappearance and a play of binary
oppositions supplementing the lack:

> "Through that which takes on body only by being the trace
> of a nothingness and whose support from that moment on
> cannot be impaired, the concept, saving the duration of
> what passes by, engenders the thing". (Ecrits 1966:276;
> Wilden's translation)

If, ontogenetically, the latter is only a symptom of a nothingness (an absence of the other pregnant with the threat located in the Other), it has to be said that the Symbolic cannot be so easily emptied of the Real (in the Marxist sense) that must, in the last instance, determine it. This is no 'realist imbecility' (1966: 25), for it does not allow the level at which meaning resides to elude it. It is merely an insistence that the 'law' of the Symbolic be reinserted within the differential histories of the culture that made Psychoanalysis and Ethnography possible, and the cultures that were subjected to the actual violence of its gaze.

<div align="right">Martin Thom</div>

Notes

1. Given the massive amount of material by Lacan that is still to be published, every reading is necessarily a very fragmentary one.

2. As Annette Lavers has emphasised (Semiotika 1971), the break in Lacan's thought should not be over-emphasised. Indeed, Psychoanalysis as a practice is so permeated with the Imaginary (ie. la parole vide as symptomatic of méconnaissance) that it is unlikely to fall prey to the lure of an absolutely seamless Symbolic, a Symbolic that would be in that measure itself an Imaginary (ie. an Ideological) imposition. The Hegelian category of Desire that Lacan has utilized so convincingly to illuminate Freud's thought tends to militate against any 'structuralist' closure of the phenomenological dimension.

3. Thus, Levi-Strauss (1950), in a paper that was both influenced by Lacan, and in turn influenced him, argued that the old phenomenological problem of the opposition between self and other could be resolved by resorting to the Unconscious. This statement (which calls to mind both Surrealism and the Lacanian conception of 'truth') is applied to the ethnographic situation in an Idealist manner. Idealist because it dehistoricizes the encounter between self and other, and resolves it by reference to a transcendent domain where a human essence is eternally in residence.

4. This is where I differ from Wilden (1972). He rejects the idea that there is 'anything particularly specific about psychoanalysis except insofar as it is a historical product of a certain type of socio-economic system' (1972:450). It is very hard to situate Wilden politically, but I consider that his emphasis on the digital, logocentric, phallocentric, patriarchal etc. nature of Lacanian Psychoanalysis blinds him to the power that inheres in it to unmask ideologies, including that which is ideological in its own construction.

5. viz. "Freud and Lacan" in Lenin and Philosophy 1971, pp. 189-221.

6. The tone is deliberately hesitant. Reading Lacan from a distance, with no real knowledge of his writings beyond the Ecrits, any other attitude than caution would be foolish. I am referring to Laplanche's

6. 1965 postscript to the 1961 article (written jointly with Leclaire), to his book, La Vie et Mort en Psychanalyse (1970), and also, in slightly different fields, to Derrida (1967/1972), and Deleuze and Guettari (1973).

7. Much Anthropological field-work has been marred by its insensitivity to the free associations of the dreamer (cf. The Dream in Primitive Culture: Lincoln 1935:99). Even so Lacanian a work as Oedipe Africain is not absolutely sensitive to the linguistic situation.

8. The use of the word 'text' here is merely a recognition of the fact that Phillipe's 'dream-text' is presented typographically. This is in no way meant to pre-judge the status of the dream as 'text', for this paper is in fact centrally concerned with the rival claims of a linguistics based on phonetics, and a 'graphematics still to come' (Derrida 1972:104).

9. Indeed, it was the ego-drives that were transformed into the death-drives in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (SE XVIII).

10. But c.f. Benveniste 1939: 49-56.

11. The phrase is from Levi-Strauss (1950), but Lacan also refers to the S/s relation as being that of two registers, 'le mot registre désignant ici deux enchainements pris dans leur globalité' (Ecrits 1966:444). He insists that there is no bi-univocal (ie term to term) relation involved, but only that of register to register.

12. But cf. Ecrits 1966:705 - 'le rapport du réel au pensée n'est pas celui du signifié au signifiant'.

13. De Saussure was quite sensitive about the methodological necessity of separating the study of Synchronic from Diachronic relations. It was not, finally, an ontological judgement (cf. Ardener 1971: xxxviii-xxxix).

14. Wilden's (1972) superimposition of the analog/digital distinction on to the Primary/Secondary Process distinction seems to me also far too blunt a strategy. If I have not discussed the general conclusions of the 1972 book with regard to Lacan, it is because I am not happy with the way the analog/digital distinction is used, and it seems to me that there is a certain violence present in the reduction of the Lacanian to the Batesonian. Having said that, I should add that I consider the translation and commentaries in the Language of the Self to be very fine, and that I no longer have any way of ascertaining how much of my limited understanding of Lacan is due to Wilden's work.

15. i.e. Laplanche and Leclaire: 1961: Derrida 1967/1972; Bär;1971; Deleuze and Guettari: 1973.

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Ethology, Language, and the Study of Human Action

Any adequate study of human action must acknowledge the obvious fact that human beings are meaning-makers, for our possession of semantic capacities makes us members of a self-defining species. This point not only influences what a scientific account of human activity should look like, it also has important implications for what characteristics a science studying such creatures should possess. For instance, in anthropology the investigator and the people being studied possess the same basic analytical powers for the simple reason that it demands considerable anthropological skills (self-knowledge, communicative abilities, understanding of others, etc.) to be a person at all. In other words, those powers which make social inquiry possible are the same as make any social relationship possible: indeed, social inquiry is a species of social interaction. This basic truth means that there must be important differences between human studies and the physical sciences or indeed any discipline which does not deal with semantic beings who use language, follow rules, employ symbols, and the like.[1]

We can usefully express this gulf and the nature of the extra difficulties involved in describing human action by employing the distinction from translation theory between 'transcription' and 'transliteration'. Theoretical statements in the physical sciences can be said to register conceptually connections between occurrences. With human actions, however, these conceptual links already exist because they are already structured by (and indeed substantially constituted by) the fact that they embody the meanings of their agents. Physical sciences, then, transcribe in the sense that they devise a graphological set to systematise a structure previously unrecorded. By contrast, the social inquirer has to transliterate since the system in which he is interested, being a semantic structure, already possesses a conventional orthography. The scientifically crucial point to be observed here is that description in human studies must not destroy this structure since it is an important part of the reality being dealt with. In anthropology, therefore, our facts are not only already classified, they are classifications. When dealing with human action, science must build on this semantic foundation.[2] As our life is a semantic fabric, an adequate scientific investigation of it cannot escape being a conceptual inquiry in large measure, for if one fails to acknowledge the inherently meaningful nature of the subject matter being considered one simply destroys the nature of the facts being investigated.

These brief reflections on the nature of human action and the differences between human studies and physical sciences

suggests that anthropologists should look very critically at
that ethological growth of the social sciences which has of
late been so enthusiastically recommended by several colleagues.
For one, the distinction between those who see ethology as of
great value and those who do not is already supposed to con-
stitute a major division in the discipline (Reynolds 1973:
384). Naturally, no one could possibly deny that in our
present state of knowledge the Durkheimian view of the 'social'
as an autonomous domain is an unacceptable instance of a
closed system. If there are cultural universals which can be
grounded in some physiological basis, research is quite rightly
directed to the links between the two realms. To leave such
matters uninvestigated simply because they require one to go
beyond the orthodox boundaries of social science would be
absurd. At the same time, the very vogue of 'ethologism' -
a combination of romanticism, gloom and science (Callan 1970)-
in our culture suggests that there may be at work a fascin-
ation for animal studies which is not of an altogether c
scientific kind. This filtering of social concerns through
the animal world - an employment of the natural realm to
yield terms of human self-understanding just like the 'totem-
ism' of primitive cultures - should at least make us wary as
to our reasons for being attracted by ethology.

The recent popularity of ethology has resulted in a
great amount of poor work in a field which can boast the
presence of a number of conscientious scholars. But the
former work is not irrelevant to the writings of the latter
because it is the same perception which builds the bridge
that make possible both types of contribution. When Desmond
Morris declares in an untroubled way that he is a zoologist
and man is an animal (1969:9), this is essentially the premises
from which the more sober approaches take their start. And
one need not be a fundamentalist believing in the separate
creation of man to feel sceptical about the framework of
ethological inquiry which springs from it. Human powers
which are exercised in social interaction (intersubjective
understanding, the use of language, and so on) obviously have
a natural basis and an explanation of them will ultimately
be supplied by sciences like neuro-physiology. But just as
the severe naturalism of Levi-Strauss' search for unconscious
structural invariants involves the high cost of decomposing
facts before their complexity is understood, similar con-
siderations are relevant in assessing the work of ethologists.

Man no doubt cannot shake off his long evolutionary
past, but to view our social activities as the outcome of
natural selection by speaking of 'genetically programmed
behavioural predispositions' (Tiger & Fox 1966:77) obscures
a great many conceptual problems. Among others, only man
has any knowledge of his biological history, and this knowledge

must alter his relationship to it. The social sciences study
people who not only live but also have a conception of life.
Thus an account of human action must take into consideration
the fact that we do not just behave, but act - that is we
have conceptions of behaving. There is a logical gulf
between action and behaviour,[3] and we might therefore wonder
by what means ethology can show us, for instance, the links
between customary activities and impulsive behaviour (Freeman
1966:337, 340). One need only recall the pioneering work of
Mauss (1936) to know that the human body is part of a system
of collective representations and so a theoretical instrument.
It is simply not possible to view human movement as if it
were mere behaviour. Of course we are subject to physical
constraints, but no adequate scientific account of human
movement can ignore its profoundly semantic qualities (Williams,
in press). Our semantic powers create the multi-dimensional
realities in which we live as social beings, and it is the
flat descriptions of human action given by supposedly
scientific disciplines which are in fact metaphysical.

No one would wish to prejudge the ultimate value of
scientific attempts to place human culture in the context of
evolutionary biology. But the conceptual character of human
activity is itself a part of the natural history of our
species, and so it is quite reasonable to insist that
ethologists address themselves to some of the semantic pro-
blems concerned with human action before they can expect to
capture our attention. In the hands of those like Tinbergen
ethology has been a tremendous advance on animal studies
carried out in laboratory conditions, but the discipline is
still an essentially biological explanation of behaviour.
And those who advocate ethological approaches in the social
sciences have still to produce a satisfactory conceptual
bridge between the biological realm and the semantic sphere
in which action occurs. Callan, who has cautiously set out
some useful links between ethology and anthropology, has
quite rightly claimed that the extent of the gulf between the
two disciplines has been seriously underestimated by some
practitioners (1970:34). Furthermore, ethological explana-
tions tend to be functional (ibid: 71): so this extension of
anthropology would return us to the framework from which
other recent developments have been freeing us. Concepts
here themselves become functions as quite literal 'adapta-
tional devices' (Tiger & Fox 1966: 81n6). Conventions,
rituals, and symbols are shared modes of adaptation, the
displacements of a pre-existing behavioural repertoire
(Freeman 1966:339, 340n). In this way the shift in modern
anthropology from function to meaning is blocked by the advent
of an ethological functional semantics.

The general problem involved in the ethological

approach in social science can be stated in terms of whether
we are dealing with two systems (animal behaviour and human
action) which differ only in degree of complexity but where
the phenomena are of the same basic kind, or whether the gulf
registers the difference between systems which are at two
discrete levels of organisation such that we have features on
the higher for which no analogue can be found on the lower.
If the words 'social' and 'language' cannot be employed of
animals with the same implications that they have in a human
context, they should not receive a dual use. If it is the
case that only at a certain level of organisation can the
phenomenon of a rule or convention exist, we cannot regard
them as just highly complicated behavioural regularities. Now
it seems scientifically imperative that we regard language-
users and those without language as belonging to different
levels of logical complexity. There are features in the
activities of rule-following language-users which are unique
to them and which cannot be handled at all by conceptual
systems adequate for describing other species. If we need to
use different kinds of models and even different descriptive
terms for the two levels of complexity, clearly notions like
a 'primate programme' in human beings will belong to a
terminological limbo. Not only do they not form part of a
conceptual system, they semantically violate the two types
of description on either side of the gulf between human action
and animal behaviour.

As has often been contended, language is really the
crucial test here. It has become common to speak of 'animal
languages', but there seems good reason to regard language
as species-specific. Hockett has even suggested that a
valuable way of searching for the universals of human languages
is to contrast them with the communication systems found among
animals (1963: 8ff). The view that there is a difference of
kind between animal communication and language is strengthened
should the suggestion prove correct that language is not the
manifestation of a general high intelligence but of a specific
language faculty (Lenneberg 1964). And of course Chomsky's
stress on the fact that human speech is an open-ended system
which is free of environmental stimulus would further widen
this gap.

We already know that the stimulus-response model of
verbal behaviour (itself extrapolated from animal studies)
leaves out the most basic characteristics of human language use.
If, by contrast to such language, animal signals form a
behaviourally-rooted fixed repertoire, we have to say that
the difference between an animal screeching in the presence
of danger and a grammatically articulate proposition that
'such and such is the case' is not a matter of increased
complexity but that they are two different sorts of phenomena.

And those like Sebeok who admit that language is an unbridge-
able gap between man and animals cannot solve the problem
simply by recommending a wider zoosemiological framework
(1973). Just as behaviourist accounts of human verbal activity
fail, so projected behavioural rooted semiotic systems (see
C. Morris 1955) seem grossly inadequate. Our non-verbal
communication may be more like that of animals than our
language, but we can still easily exaggerate the similarity
between our gestures, for instance, and animal communication.
After all, humans can perform semiotic transmutations; they
can substitute a phrase for a gesture, for example. And if
this equivalence is possible, our non-linguistic signs must
partake of the same systemic complexity as language itself
(Jakobson 1967: 673).

This conclusion suggests we should not use the term
'sign' in speaking of animal communication at all. Far from
being biologically caused, in human conventional signifying
activity arbitrariness is basic. A similar proscription seems
advisable with the concept of a rule, which despite its great
complexity and resistance to definition is a notion that is
indispensable to the scientific description of human activity
(Harre 1974). A rule implies semantic structures, publicity,
and non-necessity. Just as free human action is something
where the agent could have acted otherwise, so human conven-
tions could have been different. When one describes an event
as 'conformity to a rule', therefore, one is in a discourse
of a logically different type to that subsumption of an
occurrence under a general law typical of causal accounts in
natural science.

If the gulf between man and animals has to be stated in
terms of distinct types of powers, science demands that the
difference be conceptually recognised. Indeed, ethology and
social science should have very different characteristics
because if language separates the two realms, it also signi-
ficantly affects the nature of description in the two sciences.
The social sciences study persons who have conceptual systems
of their own actions. Language therefore appears twice.
Firstly in the theory of the scientist, and secondly as part
of the activity of the people studied by that science who use
language, among other things, to formulate explanations of
their own. In ethology one obviously cannot begin by exploring
the linguistic resources of those one studies since animals
do not possess the institution of language. As a natural
science, ethology must content itself with external observation.
The ethologist here is the only one to formulate discourse
for explanation since animals do not give accounts of their
behaviour.

There have been many poetic statements about language

creating a distinctively human symbolic atmosphere. What we
need is a more scientific way of expressing the truth con-
tained in this view, and perhaps the notion of 'reflexivity'
is valuable in this connection. Language both manifests and
is an index of an organic system with highly reflexive
abilities (Hockett 1963:13). Human beings not only speak,
they can also speak about language. This capacity to operate
on a meta-level - to communicate about communication - seems
absent in systems of animal signalling, although claims have
sometimes been made to the contrary. Here again then, we see
that 'quantal' principle at work which gives us a hierarchy
of discrete orders of logical complexity. Reflexivity is not
a capacity which increases gradually but is an instance of
'emergent' properties. In other words, there are critical
points in levels of organisation above which a creature may
be described as a symbol-user, but below which there is no
rudimentary analogue of such a power.

Clearly then, whilst zoosemiotics has greatly increased
our knowledge of animal communication, this more general
framework does not solve our analytical difficulties. There
are 'design features' of a fundamental logical kind which
still separate our signifying capacity from any communication
systems found in animals (Hockett & Altmann 1968: 63ff).
These cannot scientifically be characterised as merely cases
of increased complexity (Lenneberg 1968: 598, 611), so one
is entitled to be sceptical about a proposal for the study
of communication in general'. Communication is one aspect
of a whole mode of being, and we must be very careful lest
in concentrating on this single perspective we do not regard
as parallels what are very superficial similarities indeed
(ibid 1969: 136). Nothing in animal communication resembles
the semantics of being human and of human interaction as
realistically described as Goffman (1959; 1967). We may
describe the performance by the honey bees which convey the
location of honey as a dance, but such an activity can neither
state negatives nor can it convey a message about the per-
formance itself. Again, apes under exceptional circumstances
have been taught to combine counters to make simple proposi-
tions, but a real demonstration of the reflective capacities
of a language-user in such a creature would require it to
state such a proposition as 'I am stating a proposition'.

These examples demonstrate the value of Bateson's advice
(1964) that Russell's theory of logical types can enable us
to appreciate fundamental aspects of natural communication.
Man sends messages, but his brain also allows him to frame
messages which classify messages, and again messages which
classify these classifications. These three kinds of
message cannot belong to the same logical type. We can
further use this scheme to state the nature of the 'accounts'

which are so important in the understanding of human action.
Accounting is an expression of reflexive powers because the
reports a human being gives on his own performances are not
cases of mere verbal behaviour which belong to the level of
the action itself. It monitors the action from the frame-
work of another system. Not only do animals lack this power,
human beings display this capacity on several levels. Thus,
a human being not only processes information, he also pro-
cesses the processing of information, so he can monitor the
monitoring of his actions. This is the basis of the familiar
complexity in human semantics. Language can convey informa-
tion, but it can also be used for lying. Furthermore, humans
can pretend, pretend to lie, and so on. Clearly, therefore,
whilst it may be sufficient to regard animal communication
as an information system, this cannot be so of human language.
Language is so much a part of our imaginative life, so much
geared to the creation of 'alternities' (Steiner 1975: 222,
218) that we miss much of its genius if we do not also regard
it as a system of mis-information.

Our hierarchical framework has further elaborated the
gulf between human action and animal behaviour. It is clear
that if we are to advance our understanding of social inter-
action we need a better knowledge of the basic properties
which make human beings capable of activity of this logical
kind. And this cannot come from studying creatures who lack
these powers. Just as a constitutive rule creates a pheno-
menon, so we could say that a certain level of organisation
brings into being a whole new range of features. If animals
lack our neural organisation we cannot regard language as a
development of the communication systems of a lower order,
nor can we think of human institutions as complex combinations
of patterns of animal behaviour. This stratification in
nature has to be marked conceptually by science (Shwayder
1965). That is, we need a different way of talking
scientifically about a creature who plans, has models of
plans and models of those models (Miller et al. 1967). Some
animals may be conscious of their behaviour, but human beings
are aware of their consciousness, which profoundly affects
the nature of their activities. Human interaction requires
the activation of powers of mutuality: the understanding of
oneself and other needed demands that one knows that the
other knows that one knows, and so on. Of course, the
potential for operating on this level is not always fully
exploited by human beings, but the possibility of exercising
these abilities must affect how we describe all their
activities. Certainly no natural science which studies
animal behaviour has anything remotely like the necessary
conceptual resources for doing this.

Wittgenstein made the philosophical point that there were certain concepts which could only be applied to a language-user (1967: no.520). We have now seen many reasons why such a viewpoint must be respected by science, even those branches which wish to go beyond the boundaries of existing disciplines. If, for instance, it is correct to say that we are symbol-users because we are intentional creatures, to have decided that only those who use language can be said to possess symbols rules out whole areas of human vocabulary as inapplicable to animals. These conceptual truths must be respected by science since science cannot make sense if it violates the semantic conventions of language by the way it describes its subject matter. No matter how human the dance of the honey bee looks, it cannot be described as 'rational' since there are such strong linguistic affinities between the concepts 'rationality', 'intention', 'rule', 'symbol', 'reasons for', that such a predicate is only semantically acceptable when one has a creature that can speak (Bennett 1971). We are therefore forced to give a different type of explanation employing a different set of terms for human action from that we use when describing animal behaviour. Human activity is not pre-existing natural behaviour to which rules are added: it is the rule and a being capable of following it which create the activity.[4]

Because creatures with and those without language have to be scientifically described by two different conceptual systems, ethologists themselves have a crucial problem of language in that they must find a system of concepts in which to express the parallels and links upon which their science is based. We cannot adequately describe human action with terms used to refer to animal behaviour since we cannot link them to notions like 'rule' and 'intention'. This is why behaviourist accounts of our activity leave out its most basic characteristics. On the other hand it is no less objectionable to employ action concepts to describe animal behaviour. Thus, it has become commonplace to speak of the 'authority structure' of primate groups, but in a human social context authority is a notion linked to ideas of legitimacy and to systems of values and beliefs. If these circumstances do not hold in the animal case, it invites confusion to use the same term.

This problem is even more clear in the case of ritual. Whether one adopts the positivistic position of the functionalists that ritual is a special kind of behaviour - that related to 'mystical' beliefs - or whether one argues that all human action is ritual because all action is symbolic and patterned (albeit at different levels of formality), in the human context ritual is profoundly semantic. By contrast, in an animal context, the term is specifically

applied to those biologically rooted performances of an
impulsive and instinctive kind such as the attraction of a
mate or the defence of a territory. But if such behaviour
is spectacular, in common usage 'performance' means the very
reverse of instinctual, just as human conventions are the
reverse of impulsive (Leach 1966). Even when we speak of a
person indulging in an impulsive activity, we are referring
to ritual which shares the symbolic nature of other human
actions.

These examples carry a general warning. Unless etho-
logists are very careful their approach to social phenomena
could well remove them from the domain of science by failing
to locate it in any acceptable conceptual system. As such,
the enterprise could then only be a mixture of observational
method and linguistic confusion. There are different levels
of logical complexity in nature, and ethology cannot become a
science if it disrespects the architecture of our language
which registers these discontinuities. Ethologists cannot
hope to convince us just by providing the findings of more
detailed research, since we can only feel happy with these
results once the ethologists have subjected their own science
to conceptual scrutiny. In the meantime social scientists
should not forget that human beings are creatures who,
possessing considerable self-understanding, can offer
explanations of their own action. Perhaps therefore it would
be far more profitable to explore and make explicit the
nature of this knowledge as a means of building the social
sciences than to observe rats and chimps.

If social scientists wish to advance their understanding
of human action they might do well to look to areas where
rules and meanings definitely apply - for instance, in law
and language. It is an illusion created by such edifices as
the Comteian hierarchy of the sciences that makes us think
that animal studies will gives us a 'deeper' understanding of
social facts. Of course we commonly speak of animal
'societies', but since social is a term intimately bound up
with other terms like symbol and language, it may well be
that this usage too will mislead. We do not yet know what
are the minimal features of the social, and what its systemic
prerequisites, but there is no point in hastily handing over
problems to new disciplines and speaking of 'social bio-
grammars' (Tiger & Fox 1972) if invariants can be located at
the social level itself. If students of human action broaden
their disciplines by scutinising such fields as linguistic
theory and the philosophy of law they will at least know
they are dealing with systems of the right level of organisa-
tion complexity. If ethology is partly a response to the
past lack of theoretical growth in the social sciences,
then it is certainly welcome. Yet we can possibly develop

and even transform the disciplines concerned with human
action at their present level rather than by seeking to
reinvigorate them by finding a route into biology.

Malcolm Crick

Notes

This critique of ethology forms part of a larger
investigation to be published as Towards a Semantic Anthro-
pology: Explorations in Language and Meaning.

1.   The idea that there can be no science of an inherently
semantic subject matter because meanings are 'internal' and
'inaccessible' rest upon a profound error, for language and
rules are essentially public phenomena. Of course, this
publicity is not external in any simplistic observationalist
sense, but meanings are locatable in shared conceptual
reservoirs by dialogue between the social investigator and
the people being studied - that is, by that process of
communication which makes possible both social science and
social life.

2.   The semantic structure of human action is very largely
embodied in ordinary language. However, it does not follow
that a scientific account can rest content simply with tracing
the forms mapped by this institution. It has to account for
the nature of these forms, and here one may need to go beyond
ordinary language in order to state adequately these deeper
structures.

3.   The very notion of 'human behaviour' - the subject matter
which social scientists ordinarily suppose they are concerned
with - is problematic in that it risks confusing two separate
semantic fields. There is a deep conceptual gulf in our
language which separates 'behaviour' where causal notions
are relevant and adequate, from that semantic realm of human
action where we refer to meanings, reasons, intentions, and
so on. Indeed, often we speak of behaviour precisely when
the human being concerned is not fully a person because his
agency, for one reason or another, is absent. It is worth
recalling in this context that behavioural accounts have
signally failed with human language which is a paradigm case
of human rule-following activity.

4.   It is for this reason that biological concepts cannot
act as an 'ideal language' for plotting kinship systems
(Gellner 1957). A kinship system, being constituted by a
set of semantic categories, is a system of an entirely

different order. In Ardener's terms (1971) we can regard
kinship as a paradigmatic structure, and biological events
like copulation, birth, and death as parts of a syntagmatic
chain. In the latter we are dealing with organic individuals,
in the former with person classifications. And because of
the logical relations between p- and s-structures, elements
of the syntagmatic discourse do not provide terms adequate to
state the paradigmatic structure.

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Linguistics to Social Anthropology: The Problem of Theory

As students of natural language have become concerned with linguistic universals so have social anthropologists belatedly seized upon such discussions as a potential source of methodological inspiration. The Prague school phoneticists produced an hypothesis regarding such linguistic universals; an hypothetical framework which was used by Claude Levi-Strauss in his analysis of kinship systems. A somewhat similar methodological adoption occured in the U.S.A., as the disection and classificatory procedure that had been developed by the linguists of the Bloomfieldian school was extended to form the basis of the techniques used by the componential analysts of the New Ethnography. These techniques, like those utilised by Levi-Strauss, were developed on the basis of a consideration of universal features of arrangement.

In both of the above cases the analysts attempted to determine how the particular arrangement of elements amongst social phenomena might be accounted for in terms of a finite number of non-empiric characteristics in various combinations. Thus, though the analyst might ultimately be concerned with non-empiric features, yet he was to gain access to them through a consideration of empirical social phenomena. Any claim that their procedure was scientific, made by the social anthropologists or the methodologically-prior linguists, could be justified only if couched in terms of a nineteenth-century scientific epistomology. Their findings might be verified upon considering a sample of recorded empirical data, and observing how the theoretical 'model' was able to provide account of the same. The correspondence between data and model was immediate: this was a empirical science.

Despite the reliance on theoretical models and their appeal to non-empiric features, such results as these procedures might give are nevertheless available for immediate empirical testing. Such a theoretical practice provides a theoretical account for that which is immediately available to the senses and reason. The truth value of any theoretical model is relative to the degree of correspondence which is seen to hold between the immediate empirical knowledge of that phenomenon under consideration and the account provided by that theoretical model. 'Truth' is apparent when the two coincide.

For many years it has been recognized that for any finite set of empirical data more than one theoretical model could be constructed which would provide an explanatory account of that data, each account corresponding with an immediate empirical knowledge of that same data. Such a realisation presents a problem as to the truth of such accounts. (see Burling, 1964). In defence of such procedures Dell Hymes has placed considerable emphasis on the ability of a 'correct' account to predict the name of a novel item: "To predict naming is to treat the analysis as generative" (Hymes 1969) Again it is noted that a correspondence between the prediction and empirical referant guarantees the truth of the theoretical model.

The recognition that theoretical models are generative introduces the concept of a set of elements that might not all be included in any set of recorded data of performance but for which the model, constructed on the basis of that set of recorded performance, might predict the names. Such a model is generative in a weak sense of the term, in that all the elements, for which names might be provided, are given as immediate objects for analysis prior to the construction of the theoretical model.

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard has proposed that the revolution in scientific method, which he sees as having taken place in the early twentieth century, introduced a theoretical practice which comprises models, generative in a powerful and altogether different sense. Such theories produce concepts, the existence of material elements corresponding to which not being available for immediate empirical verification. There is a lack of immediate empirical guarantee of the truth of these theories; this latter only being established at some later date when the produced concept might be materialized under experimental conditions.

Such a new theoretical practice has grave implications for the Cartesian 'cogito', which has been a very central feature of Western Philosophy for the past centuries. In this philosophy the cogito, or conscious subject, was understood as constituting himself in terms of his relations with the object of his enquiry. Likewise, knowledge of the object was understood to be, in some way, an externalising of the subject. With the emergence of the new scientific procedure a rupture was made between the subject/object couple.

Halliday (1967, 1970) has suggested that language should be understood as being based on such a subject/object couple; that the English language, based on a nominal style, comprises a number of Verbs (i.e. relators) whose function it is to establish relations between nominals. These relations are established between things (common nouns), names (proper nouns), and processes, qualities, states, relations, attributes, which are 'nominalised', by being objectified. Any threat, therefore, to this subject/object couple should have serious implications for the efficacy of a language which is based upon a faith in such a relationship. The ability of language to 'fill-in' between objective knowledge and subjective opinion and interpretation[1] (Strawson, 1974) would be stretched to its maximum, and a rupture would seem inevitable. It must be noted that Strawson makes no reference to the possibility of such a rupture. Rather it is the very business of language to prevent this happening.

In an earlier publication (1972) Strawson had presented the outline of a linguistic theory not dissimilar from that which formed part of the foundations for that theory suggested by Halliday (1967, 1970). Although he makes no explicit reference to the 'functions' of language, nevertheless he would agree with Halliday that the "atoms to be structured" should be the relationships implicitly recognized as the product of compatible roles performed by lexical formatives; these latter being regarded as the minimal meaning elements in any natural language. They also propose a very similar implication of their respective theses. Halliday has proposed that 'language style' is not only a major constituent of "cultural knowledge", but also a determinant of "cultural behaviour". Analogously, Strawson has suggested that although some fundamental structural principles might be found to be (or postulated as) common characteristics of the various, apparently unrelated, languages, yet these dissimilar languages might evince significant differences in the classificatory frameworks of the peoples involved.[2] Neither of these two theses is to be regarded as constituting a radical alternative to the generative grammars, whether syntactically or semantically based, as they are both to be understood as necessary developments of their predecessors.

For formal linguists the word is seen as an 'existent', definable in terms of classificatory features (selectional and sub-categorisation features - Chomsky; semantic markers - Katz and Fodor; and a host of terms in componential analysis - 'plereme', 'semene', 'semantic component', semantic category, etc.) It matters not one jot whether such formal linguists propose that the 'meaning' of an utterance is to be equated with a set of compatible semantic markers found amongst the lexical

items constituting that utterance (Chomsky 1965; Katz and Fodor 1963);
or with the Case relationships between the Verbs and their associated Noun
Phrases (Fillmore 1970); or the 'case-like' relationships between con-
stituent semantic elements (Lakoff 1962; McCawley 1970). All such proposi-
tions are formal and rule-governed; such a procedure necessitates the
recognition of words as 'static' entities.

Although apparently poised, ready to take a step in a new direction
in linguistic research, Strawson (1972) appears to retreat from the
vision of a state of disequilibrium to the relatively 'safe' ground of
"correct grammatical relationships" which, being so "critical for semantic
interpretation" must, therefore, be "rule-governed". Certainly, he
criticises Chomsky-Katz-Fodor for their insistence that the lexical items
introduced to the deep structure need only their corresponding set of
formal characteristics to enable an adequate semantic interpretation of
an utterance, claiming that a knowledge of the potential roles that such
lexical items might play is also required. The implicit relationships
which might be established as the result of bringing two such potential
roles together was, however, to be discoverable by some form of formal
analysis. It is as thought the speaker of a natural language has a stock-
list of 'implicit relations', cliches, metaphors, etc., each of which
might be brought into use by the selection of lexical items with the
necessary 'potential roles', the correct (for Strawson - logical) gram-
matical relationship providing the essential, and immediate, catalyst.
It is suggested that an analysis of a set of resultant effects might well
provide evidence of a more fundamental classificatory framework. It is
obvious from this discussion that Strawson, despite the initial attrac-
tion of his thesis, remains firmly entrenched within his own philosophical
tradition. The lexical item, or word, is still regarded as an entity with
an existence of its own. What is more, it is apparent that those 'poten-
tial roles' which Strawson credits to each lexical item, are nothing other
than more classificatory features, differing from those suggested by other
writers only in being more difficult to locate.

The degree to which Strawson is justified in regarding his thesis
as offering any real alternative to his predecessors and contemporaries
in the field of descriptive linguistics, can be judged by comparing his
comments on the essential nature of linguistic theory with those of George
Boole, over one hundred years earlier. The choice of George Boole is
not arbitrary, as Chomsky based his model for a generative grammar on his
interpretation of Boole (1854).[3] Boole might be regarded as a common
influence on the writings of Chomsky,[4] Strawson, and in fact, the vast
majority of those theoreticians working within the field of formal lin-
guistics, both before and after the so-called Chomskian revolution.

George Boole wrote extensively on the subject of linguistic signs,
seeing them as "the elements of which all language consist...; an
arbitrary mark,[5] having a fixed interpretation". There is a notable cor-
respondence between such a proposition and the attempt to assign to each
lexical item a set of classificatory features, such as undertaken variously
by Chomsky, Katz, Fodor, et al. Boole continues by postulating that such
linguistic signs are "susceptible of combination with other signs in sub-
jection to fixed laws dependant upon their mutual interpretation" (Boole,
1854:25-26). Such a proposal might well have been cited by any of the
generative semanticists as a working premise, and presents us with more
of a paraphrase of Strawson's 'alternative' framework.

Rethinking

Reference has been made above to the French philosopher Gaston
Bachelard. To consider again recent linguistic theory, bearing in mind
Bachelard's writings, will demonstrate the inherent inadequacy of such
contemporary theory.

Bachelard was to demonstrate how philosophy failed to take account of how the physical sciences had re-defined many of the concepts which were central to philosophical discourse. As regards linguistic theory this criticism can be shown to be as valid now as it was when Bachelard first noted it (see Bachelard, 1927). However, in order to fully estimate the implications that Bachelard's thesis might have for linguistic theory, and beyond that for social anthropology, it will first be necessary to have a working knowledge of certain concepts which are important in Bachelard's writings.

Central to any understanding of Bachelard's writings is the notion of 'epistemological break'. Such a 'break' refers to an essential re-definition of terms in discourse; such a re-definition being instituted in a rupture from all previous definitions; i.e. there is no sense in which the new definitions are to be seen as a development from former definitions. Neither would there be sense in appealing to any concept of 'transformation' in order to re-establish the continuity which the epistemological break precipitates. Bachelard claims that science progresses in a series of such epistemological breaks; therefore, there is a <u>discontinuity</u> in the history of science.

He suggests that an epistemological break occurred between the nineteenth century Newtonian physics and the twentieth century Einsteinian physics, and much of his writings display an attempt to calculate the implications of this 'revolution' in science for philosophy. The notion of discontinuity is an essential feature of his writings and he insists that the new Einsteinian system is "without antecedents" in the Newtonian system. Moreover, the break or <u>rupture</u>, which occurred between the two systems, is seen as so absolute that there could be no way of plotting a rational process from the former to the latter. Rather an <u>effort</u> of <u>novelty</u> is demanded of the scientist in order to grasp the relativist theories.

Bachelard recognizes that the relativist theories have "exploded the concepts" of Newtonian science – the very concepts which philosophy still uses. It is as though philosophy had failed to note that science had said anything about them. Noting once more the absolute nature of the break between the two scientific systems, and the impossibility of explaining the new in terms of the old, there is thus a <u>discrepancy</u> between philo-sophical and present-day scientific discourse. The reason given for this discrepancy is philosophy's unwillingness, or inability, to accommodate the discontinuity of thought essential for an understanding of Relativity in science.

All philosphy is portrayed as "depositing, projecting, or pre-supposing" a reality which is regarded as being rich and complex. This philosophy believes that science has advanced by generalising from the particular, at the level of the empirical impressions themselves, in search of general laws or in the hope of penetrating into "the veritable being of things". Such a false picture of contemporary science led philosophy to claim that such a technique of generalisation and abstrac-tion inevitably resulted in the systematic impoverishment of the notion of individual sensation. Rather, science should be concerned only with precise questions concerning empirical impressions, it being the business of philosophy to construct generalisations.

Philosophical generalisations would be concerned with the founda-tions of human reason and intellect which would be displayed in the several relativist theories of science. Only in this way might philosophy maintain its position as arbiter of the validity of scientific progress. Claiming insight into the foundations of human reason and intellectual

activity philosophy believes that it might guarantee the truth of the products of science, thus providing a continuity between the world of common sense and the world of scientific knowledge.
But having assumed a unity and eternity of human reason, philosophy is unable to accommodate the discontinuity of thought necessary for an understanding of Relativity in natural science. Whereas philosophy has maintained a belief in the absolutes of reason, Bachelard has proclaimed the arrival of the time of a "decline of absolutes".

Philosophers have maintained that scientific knowledge must be derived, rationally, from a consideration of that which is given, i.e. which has a "direct realistic value in ordinary experience" (Bachelard, 1953, 142). As if in opposition to this 'given' philosophy has instituted a notion of 'construct'. Corresponding to this couple, i.e. given/construct, philosophy has established a series of further couples, e.g. real/thought; being/knowledge; concrete/abstract; etc., etc. Such a list can be extended through natural/artificial; plenitude/poverty; to the eventual couple, viz. philosophy/science; where philosophy appears on the side at which are also found, given; concrete; plenitude etc. Science is thus placed alongside construct; abstract; poverty. Bachelard noted quite correctly that it was philosophy which had made this allocation; that as well as being disputant in the debate philosophy was also the judge. Thus, believing itself to be analogous to the concrete, the given, and the real, philosophy believes itself to be the custodian and guarantor of truth. Now insofar as scientific knowledge is seen to be derived from a consideration of the given then a harmony is maintained between the above couples. This harmony corresponds to the philosophical notion of truth. Bachelard sees this as the conceit of the philosopher, who regards himself as the final arbiter of truth.

A central argument in Bachelard's writings is that whereas a situation such as that just outlined would be a fair representation of the relations which held between philosophy and pre-Einsteinian physics, it appeared to him that philosophy had failed to register the novelty of Einsteinian physics, believing it to be a development of the Newtonian system. In fact, Relativity Theory and the mathematical-physics which it comprises is seen now to have profound implications for philosophy as it, at worst dissolves the above philosophical couples, at best, inverses them. Of the couple given/construct Bachelard says: "The datum or given is relative to the culture, it is necessarily implied in a construction" (Bachelard, 1928:14).

A most influential agent helping towards the disintegration of these couples, however was the rethinking of concepts central to both Newtonian physics and philosophy, space, time, mass, etc. These constituted the Newtonian world, which corresponded to the world of common sense to such a degree that no effort of revision was necessary in order to move from the commonplace, natural world to the world of scientific discourse. In fact we lived in the Newtonian world as if in 'a spacious and bright dwelling' (Lecourt, 1975:35). With the establishment of the 'new' science any such correspondence was annulled; there appearred a dissociation between the commonplace notions about the world and the new, artificial scientific notions, which require an effort for comprehension. This is no more than re-emphasizing the fact that there is no transition between the Newtonina world and the world of mathematical physics. The implications for philosophy of this dissociation might be glimpsed by a consideration of the effects that this has on the philosophical couple subject/object.

. The 'object' of philosophical discourse is that thing which is given to ordinary knowledge, i.e. the philosophical 'object' has a direct value in ordinary experience. Scientists, however, use the word 'object' to refer to the <u>result</u> of a theoretical procedure. We might say then, that whereas philosophers construct theories on the basis of objects, scientists produce objects as a result of theories, philosophy is concerned with the organisation of the given, whilst science constitutes its own world. More-over, the world that science constructs is a product of theories expressed in mathematical form. From now on mathematics does not express the ob-servations on a 'real' world, rather it allows for the objectifying of a world which is not immediately given to sensory experience.

For as long as scientists were to express their observations using a mathematical 'language', and were to regard these mathematical statements as being a simplification, or generalisation and hence an abstraction from the complex 'real' world, then the philosophical couples, viz. subject/ object, and concrete/abstract, were to be maintained. Since the revolu-tion in scientific procedure, however, these couples have been reversed; the abstract formulations of the new mathematical procedure might later be objectified under controlled experimental conditions. Now whereas Newtonian scientists had used mathematics as a means of expressing their experimental results, had translated into mathematical language the facts released by the physicist's experiments, present-day mathematical physics no longer proceeds from a non-mathematical fact or object. Rather the calculation proceeds from that already thought by mathematics. Further, in the mathematical process there is no 'object-result' envisaged or pre-supposed; the 'object-result' thus being a result of mathematical thought, i.e. it is not first philosophically thought. Mathematics, therefore, is no longer an expression of non-mathematical thought, rather, mathematics thinks 'for itself'. The calculation proceeding from that already-thought by mathematics and with no object-result envisaged, then neither the 'point-of-departure' nor the 'point-of-arrival' provide any criteria of philo-sophical 'reality' or 'truth'. Thus the 'shift', from regarding mathematics as a means of expressing experimental and observational data, i.e. mathe-matics as a language, to providing mathematics with an autonomy enabling it to 'think for itself', has required a corresponding change in the use of the term 'reality'. The term no longer refers to the object-things of empirical science, but to the process of mathematical thought.

If one were asked to abstract from these notes on Bachelard the fundamental notions of his writings, the following two points would have to be emphasized. One is that the criterion of scientific knowledge is not to be found outside its own field, i.e. there is no foundation from which the contemporary science proceeds and to which reference might be made for the purpose of verifying the results of such a procedure. Secondly, the process of scientific knowledge reveals that the world that is given to common sense is a 'tissue of errors'. By this world we mean the philoso-pher's world of Newtonian space, time, mass, etc. Rather, the world of mathematical physics is not an immediate given and does not exist prior to the process of its production.

If any one aspect were to be singled out as having the most profound implications for linguistic and anthropological research, it would have to be this final remark, viz. that the world of the new scientific dis-course is not immediately given and does not exist prior to the process of its production. The object-result of this mathematical process will be a mathematical statement or equation for which there is no necessary corresponding element in the real world of common sense.

It has been noted that the present-day mathematical physics is not engaged in generalising nor abstracting from the world given to common sense. These mathematical statements and equations, however, in some way[6], do refer to the total environment in which we live, although in no sense can they be said to refer to realisable empirical objects. It would appear rather that these statements, etc., in some way, make reference to relations which are purported to pertain between the infinitely small.

"The substance of the infinitely small is contemporaneous with its relations" (Bachelard 1933; in Lecourt, 1975:38). Bachelard, aware that 'substance' was an altogether misleading word, was later to propose the alternative term _existance_. The word substance was regarded as dangerously misleading because it carried an implication of 'thingness', of objects with existence in their own right, between which relations might pertain. Re-iterating this notion, Bachelard noted that no phenomenon is simple; rather, every phenomena is a 'tissue of relations'.

Floating the Linguistic Currency

Returning once more to review recent linguistic theory there now appears to be more than a slight correspondence between the methodological framework implicit in such theory, and the common sense presuppositions of Newtonian physics; the common feature being a notion as to the primacy of the substantive object for analysis, and subsequently the particles which comprise the whole.

The relationship between the 'structure of language' and the 'structure of knowledge' has been the location of research undertaken by Halliday, who has proposed that, for him, the term 'structure' refers to the relations which are seen to hold between elements in a particular field of knowledge. The 'structure of language', again only a cognitive, or 'ideational' structure, relates to the 'function' of language; this 'function' being to establish three sets of relations. Firstly, between speaker and hearer; secondly, between speaker and 'real' (i.e. empirical) world; and thirdly, between Noun Phrases of the utterance. It follows, ipso facto, that these Noun Phrases are regarded as elements, by Halliday. In fact it can be demonstrated that several recent formal linguistic theories share this very feature. The Noun Phrase, under which heading we must also include those processes, qualities, states, relations, and attributes, which upon being nominalised "... take on the potentialities otherwise reserved to persons and objects" (Halliday, 1967), has thus been credited with 'thingness', thereby maintaining Halliday's proposal concerning a connection between the 'structure of language' and the 'structure of knowledge'.

Now such a proposal might constitute a working hypothesis only on the basis of a structure of knowledge couched in terms of the Newtonian system. Under this sytem Noun Phrases, as the substantive elements of language, like the irreducible particles of the Newtonian world, have been attributed a status of being 'in themselves'.

Seen as substantive elements by linguistic researchers, the Noun Phrase became an object-thing corresponding to that immediately given of Newtonian physics, i.e. both have direct realist value in ordinary experience. It was remarked on, above, that having once accepted such a linguistic item as having an independent 'existence' linguistic researchers have engaged in the task of defining this object-thing, in terms of classificatory features, semantic markers, pleremes, etc., etc. It can be demonstrated further that it is of no significance whether the meaning of an utterance is to be equated with a set of compatible linguistic characteristics, or relations which are regarded as holding between such characteristics, as in either case the procedure necessitates the recognition of

the linguistic item as a static being.

It might be claimed, therefore, that the 'meaning' of an utterance does not correspond directly to those linguistic characteristics which have 'direct realistic value in ordinary experience'. Moreover, even a consideration of the various classificatory features which are accredited to each linguistic item, and which have no realistic value in an empirical sense, e.g. Nouns are classified as Common, or Proper, or Abstract, etc., does no more than introduce a greater complication.

The dictum expressed by Weinreich (1972:44), viz. that "... the meaning of a sentence of specified structure is derivable from the fully specified meanings of its parts" has been accepted by almost all recent linguistic theoreticians as an axiom, an established principle upon which to base their analyses. This was shown to be a procedural framework constituted under the aegis of the Newtonian scientific practice, which layed great emphasis upon the notion of truth, as philosophically defined. Bachelard, however, has demonstrated how Einsteinian science has revealed that the real world of ordinary experience is, in fact, a tissue of errors; further, that no consideration of that Newtonian world could provide an inductive theory sufficiently general as to unify our multiple and divergent experiences. It was first necessary to forsake the equilibrium and reassurance of the 'real' and objective world offered by the Newtonian system if a more general unification was to be accomplished.

In order to grasp the novelty of the world constituted by the Einsteinian mathematical physics it is first required that we forsake the 'old' Newtonian world,where the correspondence between 'science' and common sense was immediate. This venture brings about an immediate experience of disequilibrium as a result of a fundamental shift in the nature of our discourse. Our lexical items lose their status as substantive carriers of meaning, in themselves; they no longer represent object-things available for semantic analysis. Whereas before, these lexical items ('formatives': Chomsky, 1965:3) were regarded as the constituents of the sentence, each having its 'fully specified meaning', there is now no independent semantic component available for such scrutiny. We claim rather, that the meaning of a sentence corresponds to the object-result of its production; not to an abstraction from the object-thing.

Mike Taylor

Notes

1. Strawson made such a suggestion in a paper presented to the Linguistic Circle of Oxford, 5.2.74.

2. Ross (1970) has noted that the continued extension of the 'base component' of the Chomskian grammar implies that the syntactic representations become more abstract, more closely resemble the semantic representations, therefore reducing the differences between apparently disparate languages.

3. Although Chomsky admits to the importance of Boole's writing in his formulation of a generative grammar (noted in Katz 1970), in fact he uses much more advanced mathematical and logical concepts, especially those concepts introduced by Post (1944).

4. The extent of such an influence is the subject of an article by Frank C. Parkinson (1972:55-63).

5. cf. Saussure: 'the whole system of language is based on the irrational principle of the arbitrariness of the sign'.

6. No more than a qualification which I hope might placate the more 'purist' amongst the scientists.

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Review Article

GYPSIES: The Hidden Americans. Anne Sutherland. Tavistock
Publications 1975. £6.90

Field work with the Gypsies raises, in an extreme form, questions
which anthropologists more easily evade elsewhere: namely the
reliability and status of the information and events as presented to
the outsider. The anthropologist cannot establish a new 'objectivity'
independent of the historical role of the outsider. Gypsies have
survived as a separate ethnic group while maintaining regular
economic and political interaction with gaje (non-Gypsies and outsiders).
In communication with gajes, the Gypsies will be suitably flexible.
Questions stimulate chamaeleonic answers. Even more disappointing for
the anthropologist, Gypsies have a vested interest in preserving their
secrets and can hardly be persuaded of benefits arising from gaje
knowledge of them. Participant observation among Gypsies should minimise
any intervention which draws attention to the observor's real interests.

It is not surprising that systematic or original material on Gypsies
is gold dust, despite the massive bibliographies. Scholarly gypsiologists
have lifted and distorted others' field work or generalised from a
single encounter. Theoretical understanding of ritual taboo or nomadism
has emphasised 'Eastern origins' or genetic determinism. More recently
sociologists and educationalists have tried to intimidate us with
concepts of 'underdeveloped marginality'[1] or 'cultural deprivation'.[2]

Anne Sutherland has avoided these temptations and deceits. She
makes explicit her official role among the Gypsies as female gaje teacher,
and explores both its limitations and potential. By pointing to those
areas where her material is less complete, she lays herself open to the
recent criticism in RAIN[3] that her ethnography is 'rather thin'. I can
only marvel at the quality of her ethnography.

Sutherland takes as axiomatic the ideological distinction between
Gypsy and gaje. She reveals the American Gypsies' remarkable adaptation,
not projected disintegration, in an advanced industrial setting. Policy
makers in England and elsewhere should note that the majority of Gypsies
or Rom in Barvale, California are 'housed', but neither assimilated nor
sedentary. The average family travel 42% of the time, camping in station-
waggons, motels and relatives' houses from Alaska to Hawaii. The Rom
have adopted American symbols but reinterpreted them. For example, the
Gypsy leaders sport a gold sheriff's badge. Thanks to modern technology,
any Gypsy temporarily banished for ritual uncleanliness can speak to
other Gypsies by telephone. Since Gypsies were supposed to disappear
with development, they remain unidentified by many Americans. Rom
fortune tellers disguise themselves more profitably as Indians.

To other Americans, looking from the outside, the Rom may appear
demoralised. But the Rom's model of themselves is different. Recourse
to welfare, a stigmatised activity for gaje, is something to be exploited
by Gypsies, just as begging in the past. Illiteracy appears to be no
handicap in manipulating bureaucracies. Contact with the police is not
a sign of harassment but a weapon used by a Gypsy 'big man' against his
rivals. The Gypsies retain their own legal machinery - for example the
Kris, the gypsy trial, which some gypsiologists have considered defunct.
Here Sutherland offers analysis of its workings and detailed case studies -
something which few have done before.

A major contribution is her discussion on pollution. Scattered references to taboos exist in the literature but almost no-one has recognised the crucial relationship between pollution and the Gypsies' maintenance of an ethnic boundary. Ritual beliefs reflect and reinforce the Gypsies' independence from the larger society, and cannot be classed as neutral 'culture' in any programme of liberal integration.

Sutherland, as a woman, gained access to ritual beliefs (the responsibility of Gypsy women). As head teacher in a school for Rom, her status was useful for insights into political rivalries. But her direct observation of the Gypsies at work was inevitably limited, especially as she could not travel with the families. There are some intelligent comments on co-operation in work and avoidance of wage-labour.

However, it is important to know to what extent the Gypsies frequenting Barvale succeed in exploiting a special economic niche, with their variety of occupations. We do not know whether, on their frequent travels away from Barvale, the Rom found ample or limited work opportunities. By comparison, the graphic and hilarious accounts of Welfare obtained in Barvale may inadvertently exaggerate the importance of this source of income compared to others.

Sutherland has concentrated on the Gypsies' internal organisation, to discredit popular classifications of the Gypsies as a pariah group. This may be a necessary starting point. But the internal coherence of Gypsy society is not independent of the encompassing host society, upon which the Gypsies rely for their livelihood, and where access to territory is subject to gaje approval. Despite the important categories and sub-divisions within Gypsy society, the dominant categories are Gypsy in opposition to gaje. A theory for the internal society should include it's interlocking points with the larger society and beyond. Stereotypes on both sides are useful pointers. They may be inversions of the ideal or reinterpretations of empirical information, not images created in vacuo.

Meanwhile Sutherland's book sets an example for future studies of Gypsies anywhere. Well versed in her discipline, she displays an astuteness to match the Gypsies and has raised the level of analysis in gypsiology - a subject which includes our fantasies.

Judith Okely.

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Book Reviews

The Savage in Literature. Brian Street, R.K.P. London. 1975.
xii, 207 pp. £5.75

Brian Street has broken new ground with his book The Savage in
Literature. He has drawn attention to the influence of anthropological
theory on the image of the savage in English literature from 1858-1920.
The reason for the choice of these dates is not altogether clear, but
with a training both in anthropology and literature Dr. Street is in a
good position to show where the two disciplines meet. As he says in
chapter 1:

> "... Part of the object of this work is to show how
> and to some extent why particular aspects of 'primitive'
> life were seized upon by many European writers in the
> later nineteenth and twentieth centuries and taken as
> representative of the whole...Such descriptions tell us
> more about the Victorians themselves than about the
> people they purport to describe". (p.2).

His book suggests, though it does not altogether prove, that current
anthropological theory was one of the main influences underlying and
re-enforcing the choices that writers made in their portrayal of the
primitive. Of course the problem of selection is not only confined to
novelists; the problem of how to represent the "mass of orderly life"
also confronts anthropologists - in our day as much as in Tylor's.
Dr. Street does not consider directly the origins of those representations
which affected the perceptions of the anthropologists. Certainly the
'feedback' between a society's representations - and scientific enquiry -
is more difficult to evaluate. But his main interest is in literature
and the influence of anthropological theory upon it. He states that:

> "... It is one of the contentions of this work that the
> development of a body of theory in academic anthropology
> at the end of the nineteenth century altered this image
> /of the primitive_7 more than slightly..." (p.5, my italics).

But this perception of the 'primitive', albeit in a fictional form,
also tells us something about the society in which these writers were
operating:

> "A major concern of this work is the conflict between
> 'romance' and 'reality'. And since the reality is the
> 'character' of other cultures, the enquiry is appropriately
> an anthropological one". (p.11).

One assumes, though, that the 'reality' which Dr. Street mainly deals
with is that of Victorian society - in its perception of 'other cultures'.
It is the 'point-counter-point' in the perception of the Other that enables
us to examine the way the Victorians perceived their world. Hence it is
the identification and charting of their 'collective representations' (surely
the leitmotif of Brian Street's book) that gives this study its anthropol-
ogical flavour.

However, to gauge the 'influence' of anthropological theory on
imaginative writing is not an easy task. Merely to identify bits and pieces
of 'theory' floating around in a novel results in a serious distortion of

the work - if not in its total reduction. One can only suggest that
certain ideas were current in the intellectual and social milieu in
which the writer worked. Thus with reference to the theory of Evolution,
and the way it affected the comparison of savages with children, Dr.
Street observes:

> "....Haggard, interested in anthropology through a long
> friendship with Andrew Lang, often echoes the anthropological
> comparison..." (p.69).

and

> "...Although there is no specific references to Frazer
> in Nada the Lily, and Haggard's interpretation is not based
> on Frazerian Divine Kingship, nevertheless the very fact
> of Haggard's interest in the symbolic nature of chiefship
> arose from the climate of thought that writers like Frazer
> were creating at the time..." (p.151-2).

In other words, despite, in spite of the 'echoes' and 'climate(s)
of opinion' created by anthropologists, and definitely affecting the
perceptual world in which the writer worked, one cannot assume a straight-
forward reflection of the one in the other. But there is also the possibility
that the writer will come to be seen primarily as a passive agent. From
this perspective the writer's task is to ornament in fiction the represent-
ations of his culture shaped by the anthropologists. Thus anthropological
theories were represented in "fictional form" (p.73), where they were
brought to life "on the ground"; they were given "life" in "vivid
characters and exciting adventures" (p.80); and the writers only served
to add "personal details" to the "stereotype" or "common core" of
ideas. (p.80).

Of course to say that the writers were concerned with "dressing up"
certain scientific theories in a fictional form is an over-simplification.
Dr. Street acknowledges this when, in restating his thesis, he says:

> "... Occasionally specific references to scientific studies
> can be found in the fiction. The object here is less to
> point these out than to demonstrate the use of general
> themes, to show what happens to them in literature, and to
> show the subservience of empirical thought to the framework
> of thought of the observer" (p.98).

But as the above selection of quotations may have indicated, there is
no theoretical discussion of the relationship of literature to its period,
and the validity of using the former to investigate the latter. While
there may be no definitive answers to such questions, Dr. Street does not
grant that they even exist. Furthermore he gives no consideration to
differences in literary genre; novels, poems, detective stories are all
grist to the mill (and why stop there?). In spite of his interest in a
particular period, he has little feel for the effect of history on
literary 'traditions'. For example, he refers to T.S. Eliot's transformation
of the metaphor of 'Divine Kingship' in 'The Waste Land', in the following
terms:

> "By doing so, he gives it /the metaphor_7 new imaginative life,
> makes it seem more significant to his contemporaries and their
> condition, and makes it part of the literary furnishings of
> the English-speaking world for generations to come" (p.178).

Yet even accepting the (uncontroversial) view that the idea of Divine Kingship was originally culled from Frazer, Dr. Street doesn't emphasize that the significance of this metaphor lies in the way it is used. For while Eliot draws his metaphor(s) from 'traditional' sources, he uses them to confront us with the alien nature of our own tradition (which at the same time we cannot live without). Hence the relation of Tradition and the Individual Talent (and the relation of the writer to his public) after the First World War was totally different from that in 1858 - when <u>Coral Island</u> was written.

Jeffrey Meyers has pointed out in <u>Fiction & the Colonial Experience</u> (1973) that the appeal of the primitive to writers of the 'colonial novel' from Kipling to Graham Greene was twofold. Firstly it enabled them to posit the "heart of darkness" that is potentially within us all, and which can burst out whenever 'civilised' constraints are removed or weakened. Secondly, the portrayal of the individual's relations to the hostile world of the tropics:

> "...often symbolises modern man's alienation from his own
> society and civilisation. All Europe contributed to the
> making of Kurtz, who is the prototype of Eliot's hollow men..."
> (Meyers, p.lx).

Now while 'alienation' may not be prominent in the literature of the first half of Dr. Street's study - where he seems most at home - it receives no attention from him in the second. Thus a wide range of ideological and political factors are ignored. And Jeffrey Meyers' book a significant contribution to the subject - receives no mention.

In addition, one is still unsure as to how 'anthropological' this study is. Is it solely a contribution to the 'history of ideas' - through literature and science? Or does the 'anthropological' perspective somehow enrich our understanding in a new way? An anthropological training should move us away from the consideration of discrete 'ideas' or 'beliefs', and make us look at the "collective representations"?) His final quotation from Evans-Prichard raises the question as to the difference between "collective representations" identified in a pre-literate society and those identified in written texts. Perhaps a discussion of "collective representations" in literary and anthropological study would have been useful.

One's overall feeling, by the end of the book, is that Dr. Street has not finally decided what he is trying to do. The focus of the book is unclear, and many of his statements of intent (as I have tried to indicate) are subtly contradictory. At times the material is not well organized; though Chapter 4 seems to me the best argued part of the work. Thus while the book is in no way a 'monster', it certainly is 'baggy'.

In spite of the frustrations of the book, and the anecdotal nature of much of its presentation, I found a great deal to enjoy. There are many fascinating nuggets of information, such as the anonymous Oxonian who thought that 'primitive' races were inferior because they didn't practise practical jokes. The fact that there is much to disagree with indicates the stimulating and controversial nature of this book.

<div align="right">Daniel Tabor.</div>

<u>Tales of Power</u> Carlos Castaneda   Hodder & Stoughton 287pp

<u>Reading Castaneda: A prologue to the Social Sciences</u> Donald
Silverman   Routledge and Kegan Paul 113pp £1.95 (paperback)

It is fifteen years since Carlos Castaneda met Juan Matus
in an Arizona border town. In that time he has produced four
redactions of his experiences as apprentice to the Yaqui <u>brujo</u>.
With the fourth, <u>Tales of Power</u>, the cycle is completed:
Castaneda finally arrives at the 'sorcerer's explanation' and
bids farewell to Don Juan. The various techniques used in Cast-
aneda's training are shown to be merely instrumental in the att-
ainment of 'knowledge': the psychotropic plants, 'stopping the
world', 'erasing personal history', 'the right way of walking',
are all, ultimately, distracting tricks, didactic devices
designed to open him up to other possible realities - even
'seeing' itself is only one of several routes ('<u>dancing</u>','<u>dreaming</u>')
to this knowledge. The role imagery of the previous volumes -
plant-gatherer, hunter, warrior, traveller - is redeployed and the
experience of non-ordinary reality described in them subsumed
under a new pair of concepts, <u>tonal</u> and <u>nagual</u>.

The analysis of these two categories occupies over half the
book and is an extended attempt to adumbrate the relation between
'ordinary' and 'non-ordinary' reality. Conventional anthropological
accounts of Mexican cultures describe the <u>tonal</u> as the guardian
spirit obtained by a child at birth, and the <u>nagual</u> as the animal
that sorcerers transform themselves into. Don Juan, of course, mocks
these descriptions: the <u>tonal</u>, he says, is 'everything we know',
then, imitating Castaneda, he says it is 'the social person', the
<u>nagual</u> is everything we rule out in making sense of the world,
everything the <u>tonal</u> is not; the <u>tonal</u> is 'reason', the <u>nagual</u> is
'will'. This is not to suggest that the two are a pair in the
(colloquial) sense of mind and matter or good and evil, for this
would be to turn the <u>nagual</u> into an item of the <u>tonal</u>. The nagual
is <u>possibility</u>, a different order of reality, 'that part of us for
which there is no description - no words, no names, no feelings, no
knowledge'. Se we re-enter the realm of the ineffable, of ciphers
and language-shadows. And even this brush with comprehension is
subverted: the <u>nagual</u> cannot be described, says Don Juan, it cannot
even be thought about, it has no meaning - 'A warrior does not care
about meanings'. The sorcerer's explanation itself is 'not what you
would call an explanation' - he speaks of 'handling' not 'understanding'
experience - 'nevertheless it makes the world and its mysteries, if
not clear, at least less awesome. That should be the essence of an
explanation, but that is not what you seek. You're after the reflection
of your ideas'.

Don Juan's ideal of the knowledge practised by the free, fluid,
'tight' warrior embodies a kind of relativism that is outside our
experience. It is an open system of knowledge not in the sense that
it is open to criticism and change but in the sense of being open
to coexistent alternative realities. Don Juan's system of thought
emphasizes the provisionality of both world-views, and the necessity
of both. Thus 'Order in our perception is the exclusive realm of
the <u>tonal</u>; only there can our actions have a sequence, only there are
they like stairways where one can count the steps. There is nothing
of that sort in the <u>nagual</u>. Therefore the view of the <u>tonal</u> is a
tool, and as such it is not only the best tool, but the only one we've
got.' The nagual does not subvert the <u>tonal</u> - it even complements it,
structuring its interstices, the stray sensations, dreams and twilit
zones - but it challenges the primacy of the rational.

It is understandable that as he absorbs some of Don Juan's relativism and approaches the 'sorcerer's explanation', Castaneda should himself become more enigmatic. The glowing lucidity of his style remains, but the spiky rationalism that characterised the protagonist of the other three books is muted. This is the only one which does not begin with a retelling of Castaneda's first meeting with Don Juan. Instead it contains Don Juan's account of the event. Thus Don Juan, who all along has guided Castaneda's experiences and elicited and ordered them by his questioning in a wry inversion of the usual anthropological relationship, now has direct influence on the retrospective version too. This partial surrender of control over his narrative may reflect an ambiguous attitude developing towards the book itself. If 'knowledge' is beyond WORDS, writing only makes sense as an act of 'controlled folly' and it may well be described as 'tales', suggesting not simply a literary genre, but a logical status precluding simple judgements as to truth or falsity. 'An <u>act</u> of power to a sorcerer', says Don Juan, 'is only a <u>tale</u> of power to you'.

In A <u>Separate Reality</u>, Castaneda read to Don Juan from the <u>Tibetan Book of the Dead</u>: ' "Perhaps the Tibetans really <u>see</u>", Don Juan went on "in which case they must have realised that what they <u>see</u> makes no sense at all and they wrote that bunch of crap because <u>it</u> doesn't make any difference to them; in which case what they wrote was not crap at all'. In this spirit, Castaneda embraces the pain and paradox of <u>seeing</u>, of knowledge beyond words, of teachings that are barely understood, a reality that comes in flashes, a journey that never ends and tales that go on forever.

The publication of <u>Tales of Power</u> coincides with the appearance of the first Castaneda primer. 'Castaneda's accounts' according to Silverman, 'provide a fitting occasion to review the basis of the sociological enterprise', but how much <u>Reading Castaneda</u> has to do with understanding the books is perhaps better suggested by the author's Introduction: 'There is no requirement...to read Castaneda's books...in order to follow my argument'. 'It does not matter to me whether any or all of the 'events' reported by Castaneda ever took place' he says. Indeed, 'what I write for you cannot possibly be 'about' <u>his</u> book it must at all times be about <u>my</u> book'. Thus equipped with an uncritical acceptance of the nouvelle critique, Silverman moves chattily through such topics as observer bias, the limits of knowledge, consensus reality and 'textualization' towards his banal vision of a 'reflexive sociology' with the inane joie de vivre of the sociologist who has just discovered Barthes and Wittgenstein. 'Scientific explanations', he tells us, 'works of art, everyday accounts are all persuasive because in understanding them as they wish to be understood, we sustain our communal mode of existence' and yet, he continues breathlessly 'together with Castaneda, we learn that making sense together is not an easy affair and that whatever sense we do make involves a commitment to play a particular game'. Blithely avoiding all possible subtleties either of epistemology or of textual criticism, we are lead through a melange of cliches to the final revelation: '..the enterprise which my writing seeks to point towards is <u>thinking</u>'. In fact it is all very simple because 'understanding can only express what, in a deep sense, one knows already.' And that, indeed, is the only feeling one gets from reading this book.

John Ryle

Chamulas in the World of the Sun: Time and Space in a Maya Oral Tradition. Gary H. Gossen. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1974. 382 pp. £7.50p.

This book is a richly documented study of the oral tradition of the Tzotzil speaking Chamula Indians of Mexico. But it is also far more than this, for in it Gossen pursues in a fascinating way the obvious point that language, being a social fact, will share many of the organising principles of a culture's other symbolic systems. Thus he shows how the native taxonomy of verbal activities fits with Chamula spatial symbolism, the classification of time, and their categories of different persons. Moreover, he reveals the way in which features of a technical linguistic nature (redundancy, syntactical parallelism, metaphorical stacking, and so on) serve to mark out the internal boundaries of this system of oral genres. With increasing interest shown in symbolic structures over the past few years, anthropologists have come to recognise how crucially their discipline is concerned with language. Certainly this has been a field of major advance, although the work by both British anthropologists on symbolism and Americans on ethnographic semantics has frequently been glaringly deficient. Studies like this one by Gossen which takes verbal activity as a totality and shows how its structure relates to other types of cultural activities, and how it calibrates with systems of cosmological symbolism, clearly shows how much more refined the links between anthropology and language can be.

Malcolm Crick.

Books Received

Meaning in Culture   F. Allen Hanson. R.K.P. (International Library of Anthropology edited by Adam Kuper), 1975. xi, 127 pp. £3.95.

Men of Influence in Nuristan: A Study of Social Control and Dispute Settlement in Waigal Valley, Afghanistan. Schuyer Jones, Seminar Press, 1974. xii, 299 pp. £4.90.

Patterns and Processes - An Introduction to Anthropological Strategies for the Study of Socio Cultural Change. Robert L. Bee. Free Press, 1974. xi, 260pp. £2.

A Chief is a Chief by the People. Stimela Jason Jingoes. Oxford, 1975. xviii, 252pp. £6.50.