LANGUAGE AND ACTION

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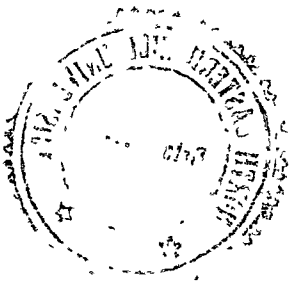

C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by Querang Z.Lungalang, that the contents of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the dissertation had not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other University.

In habit and character Querang Z. Lungalang is a fit and proper person for the degree of Ph.D.

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CONTENTS

LANGUAGE, MIND AND REALITY

In this chapter, I would like, first, to consider the logical relationship between Language and what may be called external reality as such. Secondly, I take up the issue of the relationship between Language and social, or rather, cultural reality. Thirdly, I considered certain issues which arose from the view that a particular language gives the culture which is native to it, a sort of autonomy which can be best described, although parodoxical, as relative autonomy, but autonomy nontheless.

The first task at hand therefore is the attempt to seek an answer to the question: 'What makes it the case that we are able to talk about our experiences?' Or 'What are the conditions of experiences that enable one to talk about them?' But perhaps, the more instructive approach to the problem of the relation between the notion of an experience, and that of its articulation is to ask the question: 'Can we conceive of experiences which in principle, we are unable to articulate?' And this it appears, is precisely the central question of Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

As found in the chapter on the 'TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES', Kant maintains that the minimal notion of experience is that one must be 'aware'

of certain what he calls 'representations'. One cannot, at this juncture, call them objects, as that will prematurely be accepting what is required to be proved. However, the "I" cannot be 'aware' of anything unless I place the awareness under a background of a unity of consciousness. Now the fundamental characteristics of consciousness, the very condition of its existing at all, is its unity; and until this has been recognised, there can be no understanding of the associative connection which arises under the conditions which consciousness supplies. To attempt to explain the unity of consciousness through the mechanism of association is to explain an agency in terms of certain of its effects. It is thus to explain the fundamental in terms of the derivative, the conditions in terms of what they have themselves made possible. Kant's arguments therefore, is as follows: "Representations" do not become associated merely by co-existing. They must occur together in a unitary consciousness; among the conditions necessary to the possibility of associations are, therefore, the conditions of the possibility of experience. So this 'association' cannot be a part of experience, but 'Transcendental' in nature. Hence, far from accounting for the unity of consciousness, it pre-supposes it — as determining the conditions under which it alone can come into play. In other words, representations must exist in consciousness

before they can become associated; and they can exist in consciousness only if they are consciously apprehended. However, in order to be consciously apprehended they must conform to the transcendental conditions upon which all consciousness rests; and in being thus apprehended they are set in unity to one another and to the self. They are apprehended as belonging to an objective order which is the correlate of the unity of self-consciousness. This is what conditions and makes possible their associative or empirical connection.

In A; 121-2 of Critique of Pure Reason, Kant expresses his position in a more ambiguous manner. He may seem to be arguing that a certain minimum of regularity is necessary in order that representations may be associated, and experience may be possible. But this section, in fact, reinforces the stronger and more consistent thesis:

> "This subjective and empirical ground of reproduction according to rules is named the association of representations. If this unity of association did not also have an objective ground, which makes it impossible that appearances should be apprehended by the imagination except under the condition of a possible synthetic unity of this apprehension it would be entirely accidental that appearances should fit into a connected whole of human knowledge. For even though we had the power of associating perceptions, it would remain entirely undermined and accidental whether they would themselves be associable; and should they not be associable, there

> might exist a multitude of perceptions, and indeed an entire sensibility, in which more empirical consciousness would arise in my mind, but in a state of separation, and without belonging to one consciousness of myself. That however is impossible. For only in so far as I ascribe all perceptions to one consciousness (original apperception), can I say in all perceptions that I am conscious of them. There must therefore be an objective ground (that is, one that can be recognised a priori, antecedently to all empirical laws of the imagination, upon which may *rest the possibility, nay, the necessity,* of a law that extends to all appearances...."

Kant is not merely asserting that the associableness of ideas, and the regularity of connection which that implies, must be postulated as a condition of experience. That would be merely begging the question; the correctness of the postulate would not be independently proved. Kant is really maintaining the much more important thesis that the unity of experience, that is, of consciousness, is what makes association possible at all. And since consciousness must be unitary in order to exist, there cannot be any empirical consciousness in which the conditions of association, and therefore, of reproduction are not to be found.

The fundamental characteristic of consciousness is the verified form in which alone it can exist; only when this unity is recognised as necessary, and therefore as

invariably present whenever consciousness exists at all, can the interrelations of the contents of consciousness be properly defined. Now since the unity of consciousness conditions association, it cannot be explained as the outcome and product of the mechanism of association.

Kant entitles the unity of apperception as original; let us consider how far and in what way this title is applicable. Self-consciousness, according to Kant is more fundamental and original than consciousness of objects, in so far as it is only from the subjective standpoint which it represents that the objective deduction can demonstrate the necessity of synthesis, and the empirical validity of the pure forms of understanding. It is as a condition of the possibility of self-consciousness that the objective employment of the categories is proved to be justified. This however, is not to mean that the self has been proved to be original in an ontological sense, as though it preceded experience and through it rendered objective experience possible of achievement. It would then appear that the transcendental ego is independent of all conditions and that to its synthetic activity the various forms of objective consciousness are due. Kant does not profess to prove that it is self-consciousness, that is, the 'I think', or the transcendental ego, that ultimately renders experience

possible. The most that we can legitimately postulate as conditioning experience is that it synthesises in accordance with the categories. For only upon the completion of such synthesis do consciousness of self, and consciousness of objects come to exist. Of course, the consciousness of objects does indeed involve consciousness of self, since self consciousness is the form of all consciousness. But then, by the same argument, it is equally true that only in and through consciousness of objects is any self consciousness possible at all. We may hold therefore, that consciousness of self and consciousness of objects mutually condition one another. So it follows that only through the consciousness of both simultanesouly can consciousness of either be obtained. Self consciousness in itself is not any more ultimate or orginal than is consciousness of objects. Both alike are forms of experience which are conditioned in complex ways. In the Paralogisms, Kant maintains that the unity of apperception must be noumenally conditioned, but it cannot be shown that in itself as self consciousness or apperception it represents any noumenal reality.

I have so far talked about the relationship, according to Kant, between consciousness, self consciousness and our experience of a world of objects, that is, of an

objective world. The three are inalienably connected, in the sense that, none is possible except in necessary conjunction with the others. What determines the possibility of each and all of them is our ability to bring what Kant calls the "categories" to bear upon what he terms "the manifold of experiences". However, we have not yet talked the role of language in all these. Kant himself however does not discuss language it seems, in any direct fashion. The nearest he comes to talking about language is when he discusses the notion of judgement and its connection with concepts. But perhaps we can safely say, that for Kant, our ability to make judgements would be essentially the same as our capacity to use language.

Now what Kant calls categories are of course concepts, although a special variety of them. If categories are essentially and necessarily involved in our experience of an objective world, the question for us to ask is perhaps: 'How are concepts related to language?' or 'Is our ability to use concepts, in any way logically connected with our ability to wield language?'

There have of course, been theories which see only a contingent link between a language and concept or what, in the Western tradition of Philosophy have been called 'ideas'.

Locke for instance, thought there is only an associative link between ideas and words, and that we ourselves are responsible for establishing this link. For him, thus, ideas are recognisable as such independently of this associative link with words, just as words are recognisable without, or independently of, this link. We find the same idea recurring in a very forceful way in the Philosophy of G.E. Moore for instance. Thus, Moore regarded an investigation into the nature of the idea of 'good' as altogether independent of any linguistic consideration about the use of the word 'good'. He speaks as though the idea of good was a special sort of entity in the mind, which have nothing at all essentially to do with any language in which the word 'good' or its equivalence might occur.

I do not intend here to embark upon the criticism of this, what might be called the 'idealist' tradition of thinking about the relationship between concepts and language. Wittgenstein in his later works provides the most brilliant and convincing criticism of this tradition. I will be content here to make a few points about what it is to have a concept at all.

We might think that animals, at least some of the higher ones, frequently exhibit the capacity to wield concepts, although we may at the same time be reluctant to

ascribe to them, on this ground alone, the capacity to use language. There are however, great difficulties in this area of Philosophy primarily owing to the fact that we have no clear conception of what it would be like for us to be, as it were, put subjectively, in the position of an animal — say a horse, or a dog. But we can at least say the following: Our inclination to ascribe the capacity to wield concepts to animals arises primarily from our inclination to say that animals exhibit a capacity to classify and recognise. Thus, we might feel inclined to say, on the basis of the observation of a cow's behaviour alone that it can distinguish between say, grass and stone, or from a dog's behaviour that it does distinguish between a bone and a piece of wood. The important thing to note however, is that an animal's capacity to 'classify' is capable of being explained in purely mechanistic terms of a more or less complex relationship between a stimulus and response. And when such an explanation is forthcoming our inclination to ascribe the capacity to wield concepts to animals would correspondingly and hence understandably, become weaker. This is, because, we think that our capacity to classify involves much more than merely, in however complex a way, to respond to a certain stimuli. Among other things it involves the capacity to respond to questions, to deny, to make general statements, to draw inferences,

and to connect the present with the past. Thus for instance, when we classify something as, say, a horse, it is assumed that, in principle, we are able to respond to the question: 'What makes it a horse?'; to deny, if the occasion arose that it is a dog; to have the thought that 'since the animal in front of me has such and such properties, it is therefore, a horse'; and to make the judgement, for example, 'this is a cow because I was told what a cow looks like'. Now I think it is possible to make out a fairly strong case for saying that all these are capacities which cannot, without some fundamental distortion to the ideas of these capacities, be explained in mechanistic terms (think of Chomsky's criticism of Skinner in this context).

Granted that the use of concepts in say, classification, is such a complex activity, what is its correlation with language? The answer seems clear enough. Asking questions and responding to them, making general statements, deducing conclusion from premises, denying that something is the case, and having thoughts about the past are activities which are inalienable from man's capacity to use language.

To look at the problem from another point of view, consider the question: 'What is it for a person to have a

a concept?' I think it can be said without a danger of much controversy that the question is much the same as the question: 'How do I know that somebody, 'X' has a particular concept?'. Let us suppose we are trying to find out that whether 'X' has the concept of a dog, for instance, One thing that we do not do here is to try and find out whether there is a specific mental content (e.g. idea) in 'X's' mind. This is because (1) it is neither possible for us to do this from outside even if there were such a mental content in 'X's' mind, and, (2) nor is it necessary for us to do so. For 'X' to count as, without a doubt, having the concept of a dog is not for something peculiar to go on in 'X's' mind, but for him to <u>do</u> certain things. And in the normal case those things that 'X' must be able to do would include: (A) 'X' can say something which is analytically true about dogs, (B) 'X' can make true synthetic statements about dogs which are both singular and general. Thus for instance, 'X' can make the analytic statement, 'a dog is an animal', and also true synthetic statements as the following: 'most dogs are domestic animals', 'some dogs have long fur while others have short fur', 'this is a dog although its tail is missing', 'dogs vary a great deal in their size, shape and colour' and so on. It seems to be clear enough that the capacity to do all these things is quite incapable of being alienated from one's capacity to use language.

Hence, indeed I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that concepts are embedded necessarily in language. We come thus to the conclusion which we had been groping towards, that our perception of reality outside us, whether they be reality of objects or the reality of human society, is in a very important way, bound by the bounds of our language. This is not however to deny that there can be reality which is beyond language, or that there can be experiences which are in some sense 'ineffable'. All that I wish to say here is that there is a logical oddity in the claim that there can be such a reality and such experiences.

From the foregoing arguments, we can claim, I feel, with some measure of confidence that man's capacity to use language is necessarily bound up with his capacity to be aware of a world. But the phenomenon of the incredible variety of human languages is rather an awe-inspiring one. We may perhaps say, tentatively at this stage that a particular language marks off a particular culture. And now think of the amazing variety of human cultures. Prima facie it seems to be a trite assertion that 'Man' may, from the point of view of physiology be the same, but yet be as culturally as diversified as, to put it rather cryptically, there are differences in culture. In contrast animals appear

to behave in a much more definitive way, a more uniform pattern that is peculiar to their species than human beings to theirs, that one can almost be certain that dogs in a particular region will behave in a way much similar to members of its species elsewhere. The choice of food, the seasons for mating, their fidelity to their masters, expressions of pain, anger and happiness and so on, may perhaps be quite rightly assumed to be more or less uniform. Against such background the expression 'this is how dogs behave' seems to make good sense. These may serve as a rough example, but definitely not as a proof, to illustrate that animals do necessarily behave the way they do. Hence, as mentioned earlier, does the word 'instinct' connote a more or less mechanistic concept? Or do animals have a language similar to the articulated human language in however rudimentary a form? It may seem that the only means available to us to determine these questions is to really enter the minds of the animal in question and see what goes on inside there. But this, however, is clearly a logical impossibility. Fortunately, there is a more helpful approach available, and this is to examine certain features of our language to see that their explanation must not be in terms which are radically different from explanation available of features of animal behaviour which might at first sight, be thought to embody a language. The following features may

be regarded as crucial to our language; our ability to use words, and combinations of them in such a way as to say things in a language which might never have been said before; our ability to present the past and the future; to make general statements and so on. With these considerations it is highly probable that animals do not have languages but are subject to mechanistic causal laws. Now according to Wittgenstein, all these features of our language cannot be explained in terms of the causal laws. It is in principle impossible.

If we want to grant to ourselves the uniqueness in being the users of language, we ought to be in a position to explain such fundamental questions as:

1) How do words acquire meanings?
2) What is the relationship between language and reality?
3) What are the features necessary to the very idea of a language?
4) In what way is language, as some thinkers believe, the embodiment of a people's culture?

It is in reference to the last question that the Anthropologists Rudolf Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf remarked: "language is not just an element of culture which interacts

with other elements; it is the very forge from which cultures emerge as they do".[1] For the purpose of this chapter only the last two questions need to be answered.

With regard to the question whether there are any necessary features to the idea of a language, Immanuel Kant, as we have had the occasion to mention earlier appeared to have supplied an answer. He maintains that our capacity to think at all depended necessarily upon our being able to bring in concepts to bear upon our 'representations' — or to be less technical — the object of our thought. It is of course undeniably true, that all thinking must be through concepts; Kant however, was not asserting a trivial fact. What he attempted to emphasise on was the belief that the concepts through which we think about the world must include some other concepts without which no thinking — not merely about particular objects or areas of experiences — but no thinking at all would be possible —. They are the concepts of 'space', 'time', 'substance', 'causality', and so on, as propounded in the 'Transcendental Deduction of the Categories', in the Critique of Pure Reason. From this consideration we may safely arrive at the conclusion that language and thought

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1. Language, Harcourt and Brace, 1921, p. 233.

are logically inseparable. Hence, language is not possible without thought and vice-versa. However, to those who might find this theory too radical and may be ready to challenge its position, a weaker theory would have to be offered. This would be the thesis that, not all, thinking would be impossible without language, but that all conceptual thinking would be impossible without language. According to M. Miri, this thesis leaves open the possibility of their being a 'self conscious' experience which was such that — notwithstanding Kant's arguments of the 'Transcendental Deduction of the Categories'— no concept is brought to bear upon it, and which therefore is "ineffable". As the argument offered by Kant is based on the assumption that all thinking is conceptual in nature, the process of thinking must be via a language. It follows then that any language must necessarily have room for concepts without which no conceptual thinking would ever be possible. This is what led Kant to remark that basic concepts in all languages are shared; thereby revealing that there is a basic conceptual framework in all human thought. All what this suggests is that different languages must have a common core, namely, an essence, which Kant calls 'categories'. Thus, this view establishes a fundamental similarity among all languages — a uniformity consisting in 'sharing'

a basic conceptual framework. There may, of course, be differences in detail, but the fundamental structure must, of necessity, be similar. A good example may be the concept of time. Here, an interesting case-study reveals that the notion of time among the Hopi Indians is such that several Anthropologists believe it to be radically different from our understanding of that notion. Whorf, of course, go so far as to say that Hopi "has no general notion or intuition of Time as a smooth flowing continuum in which everything in the universe proceeds at an equal rate, out of a future, through a present, into a past".[2] This, to my mind, is an unwarranted exaggeration. The Hopi conception of time is undoubtedly different in interesting and, may be, radical ways from 'our' conception of time. But, of course, it does not follow from this that the Hopi does not have a conception of time at all. Or else, it will be meaningless to talk about, as Whorf frequently does the Hopi 'conveying' in his language what we would convey by means of the use of temporal concepts.

The Hopi, as is frequently acknowledged can without difficulty, get across what we would describe as temporal information; but this they do so without using terms that have any close correspondence to English words like 'after',

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2. Language Thought and Reality: M.I.T. Press, 1969, p.57.

'now', 'future', 'ago', and so on. One may quite justifiably ask; 'How is it then possible for them to succeed in conveying their message at all about their experiences? According to Whorf, the Hopi employ two basic concepts — those of the 'manifested' and the 'manifesting'. This is "the realm of expectancy, of desire and purpose, of thought thinking itself out from an inner heart (the Hopi heart) into manifestation."[3]

So by employing words belonging to these categories the Hopi can give 'temporal' information. For instance, anything which we would call future will for the Hopi, be in the realm of manifesting — that is that which can be hoped for. What is past for us, is for them in the realm of manifested - that which can no longer be hoped for. However, it must not be assumed that the Hopi talk of manifesting is at all similar to our talk of future. They do have words which are capable of, what we would call temporal information, but the words they use belong to a different group from the one to which our temporal words such as 'future' belong. The words they rely on belong to what might be called as the 'mental' group, since in conveying information about time, the Hopi thereby

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3. Ibid., p. 60.

reveals information about mental life — about hoping, and what can be hoped for and so on. Our temporal words however, do not belong to this group. In saying that something is in the future, we are not referring anything to the mental life. The point gets clearer when one considers anaφlogies employed by the Hopi in illustrating their notion of time.

It is interesting to note that our analogies of the notion of time are frequently spatial in character. We speak of 'rivers', 'stretches', 'lengths', and so on, of time. On the other hand, and strange to us certainly the Hopi talk of time in terms of 'tendencies', 'intensities', and so on. These terms, however, at least in the English equivalent are found to be more appropriate for talking about the mind. Roughly, therefore, the Hopi seem to conceive of time not on a parallel with space, but with the mind, which is, as though, maturing and developing.

Thus, in a sense, the Hopi can convey information about the past and the future in terms of the 'manifested' and 'manifesting' dichotomy, in a very broad sense. But how we may ask, do they talk about two past occurrences in which one occurred later than another?

For an answer to this question, one must, first of all, look at their concept of 'space'.

This notion, Whorf noticed, cannot exclude "that element of extension or existence that we call Time".[4] They have an overall concept of distance which includes what we would call spatial and temporal elements. "The Hopi conceive time and motion in their objective realm in a purely operational sense — a matter of the complexity and magnitude of operations connecting events — so that the element of time is not separate from whatever elements of space enters into the operations."[5]

When we speak of two events being separated by space and time, the Hopi speak of the number and complexity of the operations and activities that take place between the two events. We would speak of a place, say a school, or a market place, for example, being a long distance from home. The Hopi would convey this in a different way. They might, for instance, say that many complex operations must be undertaken in order to get from, say one's home, to the place in question; that is, following the example, the school or the market place. Since such an operation would take time, it follows that the Hopi do not speak of spatial distance except in terms that involve the notion of time, however remote the referent may be.

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4. Ibid., p.57.
5. Ibid., p. 63.

It is still hard, no doubt, for us to understand the Hopi ways of thinking and talking about space and time. Perhaps the following consideration might assist us to apprehend their interaction with a little more ease. Much of what appear to be literal talk for the Hopi occurs to us as metaphorical. For instance, we speak of a generation gap, where we mean, not that there is actually some geometrical space between parents and children, but that communication between them is difficult. The word 'gap' therefore is used metaphorically. Again the phrase, 'the world has become a smaller place to live in since the aeroplane' simply means communication between long distances is much less difficult.

These metaphorical ways of talking in English, and most other languages, I am sure correspond quite closely to what appears to be literal talk for the Hopi. Their word corresponding to the English term 'gap' seems to have, as part of its literal meaning, reference to difficulties in communication. It may be that, just as we can say certain things by metaphorical extension from our literal ways of talking about space and time, so that the Hopi can get across 'pure' spatial and temporal information by metaphorical extension from their literal talk about manifested and manifesting, and about difficulties and operations.

It is though true, to my mind, that language embodies a people's form of life, it is self-defeating to insist that one cannot understand the concepts of another society however 'radical' the difference one might believe to be. Such judgements are uncalled for. Should the concepts of another society appear to us as unintelligible, this is not something we could ever know. One has to learn the language in question to understand these concepts. A matter of serious concern arises when one, even if not quite derisively expresses, at least genuinely feel, out of ignorance notwithstanding, that certain cultures are vague (e.g. it is widely held by most people that tribal cultures are vague and also impute these vagueness to the people about their own culture) interestingly and self-defeatingly expose their own unimaginative self-handicapping intolerance, or at best, reveal their own vagueness about their understanding of the culture under study. While dwelling on this topic, let us briefly and hurriedly examine under what conditions a notion or a concept can be considered vague: (1) An idea my be vague <u>for</u> someone without being vague in itself. An idea may be vague <u>for me</u> in that I cannot spell out the conditions of its applications; but it need not follow from this that these cannot be spelt out at all. My idea of an electron may be vague in this sense.

(2) On the other hand, there are concepts such that, from the nature of the case, the conditions of their application cannot be spelt out exhaustively. These are the concepts to which Wittgenstein's idea of 'family resemblance' has an application. Wittgenstein's multiple use of the concept of 'game' as an illustration here is instructive. However, it does not follow at all from the family-resemblance idea that the concepts to which it applies are vague. There is no vagueness about the concept of game. It is clear as it can possibly be.

(3) A concept may be vague in itself in that any attempt to spell out the conditions of its application in detail inevitably leads to confusion or incoherence of one sort or another. From this illustration it is often seen that criticising or condemning a culture as being vague usually stems from the reasons given in (1) above, and hence no criticism at all in the true sense of the term. To make a disdainful remark thus, for reasons expressed in (1) is a self-exposing ignorance. Similarly, taking the ideas from (2) and (3) the ideas of vilifying a culture from without must be really considered impertinent, since with or without one's subjective approval a 'form of life' is considered complete in itself, and hence vagueness within it cannot be an integral part of it.

It is interesting to note that in the Reconstruction of Khasi Religion, P.R.T. Gourdon claimed that "the Khasis have a vague belief in God". It is perhaps very likely that by the term 'vague belief', Gourdon is describing his own state of unclarity about U Blei (God). While it is perfectly understandable, this is of course, not what he meant. The vagueness that he talked about is supposed to be part of the Khasis's idea of his God. This is without doubt, both misleading and potentially dangerous. It may of course, be thought that the notion of U Blei is vague in the sense of (3) above, indeed much criticism of religious ideas whether of Christianity, Buddhism or any other major religion of the world rests on the belief that they involve logical confusion of one sort or another. The philosophical debate concerning this I shall pass by. I wish to make, merely, the remark that the clarity of a concept is sometimes a matter of its place in the conceptual framework of a culture. When a concept plays a role in the life of a culture, becoming clearer about it coincides with the progressive exploration of this.

Such a central role is played by the concept of U Blei in Khasi religion.

Now having discussed at some length about the irrelevant criticisms levelled usually against certain cultures on the ground that they are 'vague' or 'inadequate' or whatever, let us refer back to the 'form of life' which is considered radically different by some anthropologists, namely, the Hopi Indian way of life. As already mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs with reference to language in general, it has been established that the very basis of all human languages without which no language, since no thinking, is possible at all without them, are what Kant, as mentioned, calls the 'categories'. Therefore, however 'radical' the Hopi world-view might appear to be, yet, they too, despite what appears to us as strange, have and must necessarily have, at their centre of their concept of Time, such distinctions as 'now', 'early', 'late' and so on, if they do want to make reports of their experiences at all. Hence, Kant proclaimed that one could never talk about one's experiences in a language which did not make distinctions such as these. It follows then that basic concepts in all languages are shared. In other words, there is a fundamental unity of all languages which ensures the mutual sharability of human experience.

Wittgenstein had observed two principle characteristics of language. They are: (1) a language is essentially a rule-governed activity, (2) a language embodies a 'form of life'. The simplest way perhaps to explain the first point is that, the meaning of a word in language is the rule which defines its use. An important point about such rules, at least the language of our everyday discourse is concerned, is that, they are in most cases 'openended'. That is, the rules for use of words are not too rigidly spelt out, they do not sharply define the boundaries of the meaningful use of a unit of language — in technical terminology these rules do not lay down the "necessary" and "sufficient" conditions of the correct application of a word. Let us take a concrete example of a word with an extended meaning. The word 'uncle' is generally, at least in the English speaking countries, applied not only to one's parent's brothers but also to older acquaintances. Indeed, sometimes children are encouraged to address any male adult by that term even though there might be no blood relation at all. Now, should an outsider conclude that 'uncle' does not express a blood relationship would be making an error — for he would be failing to distinguish a central, primary sense of uncle in which only a blood relative can be one, from an extended secondary sense.

Similarly, it would be a mistake to say that the word 'brother' has no specific, genealogical role, on hearing members of a religious organisation or a trade union, address each other by that term. Terms such as these are often employed in extended sense because of analogies between how we treat our older friends and fellow-workers. Are we then justified to conclude that they are therefore, terms not essentially expressive of some single blood relationship? It would obviously be an error to assert that they do not. Again, another word which has an extended meaning employed rather frequently, at least by the Angami and Zeliang Nagas, and seemingly, by other Oriental peoples as well, particularly the Chinese is 'teacher', thereby revealing and granting the highest respect, not quite at par, but certainly with almost the same reverence as one's parents, the respect due to an elder. It is, one feels a suggestion of, if not quite a testimony to,the love of learning and wisdom held in such high esteem by such people. It is also not uncommon to call someone, apart from one's actual parents of course, by the term ' father' or 'mother' with if I can employ the word, solemnity, unlike the flippancy of addressing an elder by the equivalence of the English slang 'pop'. It is also not infrequent to address the recipient of one's admiration as an 'old man', a term

I fear, that will not be taken too kindly in some societies, particularly the American and European societies. The emphasis here is not on the literal chronological age of the person under consideration, but on the wisdom rather that invariably accompanies old age. Hence, in such societies, after attaining a certain age one maintains a modest silence on being asked about their age. It may certainly amuse, if not altogether surprise, one not belonging to such a society as to why this should be so, since, as it is quite evident in certain societies, particularly the Capitalist societies where a person's usefulness, indeed one's 'worth' depends entirely on how successful he remains to acquire material wealth. This usefulness, obviously gets progressively diminished with age, and so to accord such respectability to old age might seem to them as totally unintelligible. Hence, we may safely assume that, I feel, depending on the contexts they are used in, words acquire meanings. Wittgenstein remarked in section 43 of the Philosophical Investigations: "for a large class of cases — though not for all — in which we employ the word 'meaning', it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language."

To get a clear picture of how the same terms or words have acquired and continuously acquire meanings other than

those already imbued to them, let us examine some of the areas of our everyday life. That is, make a study of the workings of some of the institutions of our social life, which, as it were, comprises our social reality and see how differently they might mean in different 'forms of life', or different cultures. Take for instance, the institution of 'marriage'. In most cases, the 'father' is not only the one member whose responsibility is to provide sustenance to his family, but also the one who carries on the lineage of his family, or clan, or what have you. In most cases he is considered the most 'important' member of the family, in the sense that he is, within the bounds of rationality, obeyed by all his immediate family members, such as, his wife and children. In short, his authority in the family is, in a way, never questioned. However, despite this right granted to him, the institutions of 'marriage', and 'family life' do not grant him carte blanche powers to behave wantonly. He may not, for instance, in most cases, profane the married life by being unfaithful to his wife, nor maltreat his children with impunity, nor abandon them at will. Yet, his indifference to his wife's or his children's profligacy will be considered reprehensible to society. Hence, in such a society the notion of 'fatherhood' or 'husbandhood' connotes the

ideas of reasonable 'firmness', 'gentleness', 'faithfulness', 'fairness', 'authority' and so on. The term 'father' or 'husband' therefore, besides implying the ideas mentioned above, also has a male-dominant ring to it. On the other hand, to illustrate an extreme example to the contrary, there are societies where the wife assumes precisely those rights usually conferred to a husband or a father as mentioned. In societies of this kind, it is usually observed that as a husband, he has neither any influence over his wife, in the sense of his decision prevailing over hers, nor claim, apart from the strict biological sense, the children as his (this is generally, invariably noticed in the event of a divorce). When such a form of life is also matrilineal, then, as the term suggests, the girls carry on the family lineage. In such cases the man's role is as of a drone in a community of bees, whose main task and usefulness ends after procreation. Now in such a culture, the notion of 'fatherhood' or 'husbandhood' must quite obviously, radically and expectedly be different from the notion as understood in the society mentioned earlier. We have thus observed, how pliable the use of a word is, and how the same word(s) can convey quite different meanings in different contexts. Let us draw our attention also to a very common institution of social reality, namely, the institution of politics and attempt to

understand the notion of, say, 'democracy' in the two, seemingly different senses, of which one hears so much about. In the Presidential form of Democracy as in the United States, South Korea and so on, as well as the form of Democracy practised in the Parliamentary system of Governments in countries such as India, Britain etc., the notion (of Democracy) carries with it, as it does, the idea of public participation in forming a government and formulating policies through their elected representatives. One point worthy of note here in the systems mentioned is that the idea of Democracy and its importance lies not so much in the need to abide by the majority decision, which of course, acquires legal sanction as regards its application, but I feel, more importantly, it grants the citizens the right to exercise their own opinions, by even opposing the governmental policy. This of course, may not be expressed through "disturbing public peace" and encouraging anarchism, but through the process of legislation. So, in such sustems the presence of opposition political parties is not only allowed but indeed a necessary part of the process. And such political set-ups leave open to the public, the option, after the expiry of the term of office of their elected members, the liberty to choose once more, a party of their choice, which may be

such that the one in the opposition earlier might now have the mandate of the majority to form a new government. Hence, the idea of Democracy in its most literal sense, under such systems, is 'people's participation' in public affairs. This notion has been most lucidly and comprehensively stated by Abraham Lincoln in the remark: "Democracy is Government of the people, by the people and for the people". It is not surprising therefore, to refer to countries which permit the freedom of expression to its citizens as highlighted in granting them the right to dissent, as 'free countries'. On the other hand, the idea of Democracy prevailing in totalitarian States, as in the Communist countries, and Dictatorial Sovereignties such as Pakistan, has quite a significant difference. In systems such as these, there exists only one political party, namely, the ruling party. Hence, this partyforms the Government and formulates all laws and policies which filters down to the masses in the form of commands, the transgression of which renders one liable to penal servitude. From this illustration alone, one gets an idea that a State has the pre-eminence and the prerogative over the people. The right of opposing the Government in whatever form, is denied. A good example perhaps is the case in Pakistan where all the opposition parties were banned.

Again another instructive case is the 'Solidarity' movement in Poland recently, where the leaders of the organisation such as Lech Walesa, and some of his fellow workers had been jailed for alledged anti-party, anti-governmental activities.

Now from these cases, we have noted how two different notions of democracy emerged as practised in what is known as the 'free countries' and the 'closed societies'. Thus this is indicative of how a word might convey different notions depending on what 'form of life' it is making a reference to. Such 'open-endedness' of words makes the language of which it is a part or a unit, a dynamic one.

I would like to conclude this part of the discussion by citing one last example of how a word might conceptually vary, quite drastically, from one culture to another. Let us, for example, take the notion of 'shame'. I have chosen this idea deliberately in the hope that the clarity of the other related notions will depend centrally on the understanding of this one. Clear enough, the concept of 'shame' is not an independent, generic concept. The conditions under which this idea makes sense must be taken into consideration. In this sense, it is not unlike the notion of 'rationality', which cannot be understood out of context.

Take Naga society for instance, from a careful analysis of the society in question, it will appear that the fundamental value underlying Naga social life is the notion of 'honour'. This is most clearly manifested in the institution of 'war'. It is considered and not just, merely worthwhile, but compellingly felt, as one's duty, even against extreme odds in being out numbered, to face the enemy. It is far more desirable to die in battle than to return home a shameful defeated man. The sense of shame in such cases weighs harder on one than to invite societal rebuke for the commitment of a crime such as, say, theft, murder, arson. and so on. It is quite expected that an outsider will brand such commitments to the idea of honour as fanatical, since the mission could very well be a suicidal one, just as by Western standards, the Japanese soldiers were similarly considered. To one however, who belongs to such a culture, the devotion to the idea of honour is not at all fanatical in the sense in which it is understood usually, which has, really, a pejorative sense. But rather, an extreme devotion to a most legitimate cause. And to die in warfare is the consummatory realisation of honour.

An extension of this idea of 'shame', or conversely, 'honour', is seen in the manner of treating guests in one's home. It is frankly not the mere love of guests, but rather

the disagreeable idea of shame and embarrasment for a guest to leave one's hearth unsatisfied, that prompts a host to do well by his guests. Hence, the idea of 'miserliness' is a 'self-humiliating', contemptuous idea. In this regard, a brief mention can be made how Naga hospitality is frequently misunderstood. It is not uncommon for outsiders to remark with unconcealed surprise that Nagas are extremely affluent. In the vast majority of cases, nothing is further from the truth. Some even sneeringly, thanklessly and ungratefully proclaim with open jealousy that 'they would do the same' if similarly placed. Now such comments in the Naga form of life, particularly after having imbibed in someone's hospitality, is in itself, shameful to the extreme. It is not uncommon, indeed, it is frequently noticed, since it is expected (but never demanded) that the wealthy occasionally helps those in need with their requirements. It is an uncoerced, unspoken form of responsibility. Hence, though there exists, so far, no class distinctions as such whatsoever, on grounds of wealth or religion, such obligations 'bind' the rich to practice, what might roughly resemble the idea of Noblesse oblige.

Another instance, where words such as say, 'employer' and 'employee' might mean quite differently from what it is normally understood, is observed in the relationship between

a worker and his employer, as found in, to continue in the culture under discussion — the Naga form of life. The peculiarity lies in the fact that a worker will never ask for his wages unless extremely in need, even when it is due to him — let alone demand a higher salary. The employer, on the other hand, does not take advantage of this and violate the delicate mutual goodwill between them. It is not, of course, the case that the worker or the labourer finds his wages or the prospect of earning a higher salary undesirable, but the pride in themselves prevent them from giving evidence to their existence being dependent on anyone. Again the employer is guided by the principle of fairness, which makes him feel that perhaps, he is not only underpaying them but very likely over-working them. Living up to the same spirit the wage earner claims inadequacy in justifying his wages, and thus commonly works far longer than mutually agreed. Thus, in such a form of life the notion of an employer as synonymous with the idea of 'exploitation' and the workers as the 'exploited' is really not felt at all. This does not mean of course, that theoretically and economically it cannot be proved thus. All I am trying to convey is that this form of business ethics is not unlike the cordiality and friendship underlying family relationships, such that, the feeling of hostility and resentment, specially on the part of the workers, is hardly ever evoked.

The employer and the employee maintains their honour by honesty and humility. So does the warrior, the host, the artisan and so on, who despite their respective skills speak disparagingly of their own activities and achievements, giving credence to their belief that 'arrogance is a negation of pride'. From these considerations, one may now get a rough idea how the notion of 'shame' must be relatable to a whole complex of other notions within the same "language-game" for one to be able to appreciate its specific meaning within a given culture — a 'form of life'.

Now, we have seen that there exists no unalterable rules which prevent words from acquiring new meanings. Hence, there is no specific boundary, no specific limit to the correct use of a word. What would constitute as a correct use is precisely the usage — which depends on a vast network of linguistic and non-linguistic activities complementing each other simultaneously to evolve, as it were, a 'pattern' designed to formulate how words are to be used. This 'pattern' as I have called, is what Wittgenstein labelled as a 'form of life'. An incorrect use of a word will arise when the custom is not followed. But this custom, or the rules of usage as mentioned is not unalterably rigid: that however is not to be taken as though rules can be altered, as it were, on the spur of the moment. In

this regard it should be hastily added, that the usage undergoes a gradual transformation. Thus the pliability of rules of language which allow the possibility of words to encompass activity hitherto excluded reflects the vibrancy or the dynamism of language. Hence, only the speakers of a language having a general idea of the 'form of life' can successfully and spontaneously follow the rules of that language and extend them.

It is therefore understandable why a language should afford a bond of unity among its native speakers. It represents a unity of activities which in some undefinable sense, lays down the bounds within which the speakers of the language seek and find through mutual linguistic interaction, their collective, as well as individual identity, for endowing the speakers with a sense of participation in a distinct 'form of life'. This aspect is frequently emphasised for political expediency and other social and economic programmes. But 'forms of life', distinctive as they may be, are again similar to the rules that govern the use of words; indeed, precisely because of these rules are not unalterably rigid but flexible and therefore, similarly, 'open-ended'.

A particular form of life may, and indeed does, undergo certain transformation without losing their original

general characteristics. Take for instance the English language as spoken now and as during the Shakespearean or the Victorian era. Certain words have either been added with more meanings and connotations or else, dropped from the present vocabulary altogether, without, however, drastically affecting the language in general. Another interesting aspect of language is that within its own form of life it can accommodate tremendous variations which in due course, emerges, in many cases, as a distinct language in its own right. Observe the form of English spoken in England by the majority of people and the kind spoken in the United States, Australia and India. The differences may not be such that a native of one finds it impossible to understand a native of another, but the fact that different dictionaries have been published accordingly, suggests a 'form of life' peculiar to each. Now it is possibly true that languages, despite their regional differences, which are called English, are off-shoots of the language spoken in England. This, however, should not, as it often does, render the English arrogant, in the belief that their language being the original, must therefore, be superior to the others, except of course, in a narrow and trivial sense of showing some pride, in that, their language had engendered the evolution of other more or less similar languages. However, the very notion of employing evaluative

terms, or the attempt at a moral judgement at all, as regards the worth of which is the 'better' one is a totally impertinent endeavour, as that will, by implication, lead to the absurd position of determining which 'form of life' is the better one. This however, is not to support the idea that 'modesty' as widely believed, is a virtue, and so one who brags of one's merits with such flagrancy ought to be censured for ludicrous self-righteousness. The absurdity here, is the logical error involved in the use of evaluative terms. I wonder if it even makes sense to show one's preference for a language to another except in a way that is suggestive of one being more at ease in one than another for reasons of proficiency or perhaps for scientific investigations on grounds of expediency and efficiency where certain words and phrases such as 'electron', 'nuclear fission', 'implosion' and so on, may be lacking in other languages. But merely to declare one's preference for a language without reference to any context is an irrational attitude, since the 'form of life' each language encompasses is, to assert a seemingly trivial truth, best suited to it (one cannot therefore, I feel, even sensibly wish to adopt the life of a people of a different culture with its associated activities devoid of say, their linguistic aspect and vice versa). Mistakes such as the above,

what might be called linguistic chauvinism, arise out of a frequent case of ethnocentricism, perhaps unwittingly, or, for the very anti-thesis of it, that is, a feeling of inferiority. These are not in essence, different errors, but merely two variants of the same mistake, since rules that are applied to one society are, without question, being extended to another. The fact that there may be noticed certain similarities does not warrant one to apply the same yardstick appropriate to a form of life to another. Such cases of similarity may, on closer analysis, reveal quite a difference in significance. A devout Hindu bathing in a river cannot be said to be performing an activity similar to a Christian Baptism, though on the surface there may be similar traits.

Considering that language embodies a people's culture, it could be a sincere and well meant endeavour, though insufficient, to learn of an alien culture simply by grasping the syntax, pronunciation and so on, of the language of a culture in question. What results in such cases is frequently an inauthentic use of the language (this is discussed in some detail in chapter V of this dissertation.) It may appear to be a little paradoxical yet the occurrence is often observed, that a native does not usually speak his language as "correctly" as one who has

learnt it — unless of course he is teaching the language to someone. This is not to mean that the native must be usually expected to be wrong in wielding his own language. That will be an absurd idea. Not that he cannot make mistakes now and then of course, but what I mean here is that, his manner of speaking when conversing with a fellow native is in most cases not as formal and complete as he would in fact himself teach an outsider to observe the rules of his language. Of course, here one could defend the native quite easily on the ground that their everyday discourse with its cliches and short verbal expressions in fact replace some otherwise lengthy expressions, and so really cannot be imputed the anomally of solecism. However, an over conscious faithfulness to syntax and accent somehow 'betrays' a person's identity. Learning a language based therefore only on such issues produces an artificiality of employment of the language. This is where most fail (e.g. the Christian missionaries who came to spread the Gospel among the tribals) for accepting as paramount, only the linguistic considerations at the cost of the non-linguistic activities which really form the basis of the rules for the employment of words in a language.

Now, how does one really understand another culture? This aspect of the matter has been dealt with in the

following chapters, so I will not discuss the matter here in any serious manner. Suffice it to say that the linguistic aspect alone does not help. In other words, without learning the non-linguistic behaviour one's understanding of a language cannot be 'rich' or profound enough. We find in section 208 of the Philsophical Investigations where we can agree with Wittgenstein, that to have learnt a language with all its linguistic and non-linguistic activities is to be able to continue a "pattern uniformly when told to do so. And also to continue progressions". As long as this capacity is lacking, one could not claim to have grasped the regularity of the behavioural and the linguistic correlation, which together constitute a "form of life".

CHAPTER - II

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN ACTION

My aim is to examine "what is involved in our knowledge of other cultures?" It may be interesting to approach this question via a consideration of another simpler looking question: "What is involved in my knowledge of another person?"

Human relationships may involve, as Strawson pointed out in Freedom and Resentment (1) an objective attitude, and (2) a reactive or participatory attitude. Very often in day-today life one adopts deliberately or undeterminedly both those attidues off and on, as it were. Hence to come to understand another person or more broadly, a people of another culture is to examine their behaviour with the 'proper' required attitude. What the word 'proper' here means is the 'correct' attitude. But to emphasise this notion at this juncture will be merely begging the question. It is necessary therefore to clarify what is generally understood as 'objective' and 'reactive' or 'participatory' as regards attitude. To quote Strawson: "to adopt an objective attitude to another human being, is to see him perhaps as an object of social policy; as a subject of what in a wide range of senses, might be called treatment; as something certainly to be taken account, perhaps

precautionary account, of; to be managed, or handled, or cured, or trained, perhaps simply to be avoided —. The objective attitude may be emotionally toned in many ways; it may include repulsion or fear, it may include pity or even love, though not all kinds of love. But it cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger or the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be set to feel reciprocally towards each other. If your attitude towards someone is wholly objective, then though you may fight him, you cannot reason with him. You can at most pretend to quarrel or reason with him."

The objective attitude may be more or less partial under the following conditions: (1) Towards a particular action, while retaining the full range of reactive attitude towards every other activity. Such are the cases where statements such as, "he hadn't realised," "he had to", "he didn't mean to" and so on, are employed to express a genuine error, an ignorance of a situation, or a case where the agent had acted the way he did having no other options. (2) One may adopt this partial objective attitude towards an agent who may be passing through what might be sensibly

called quite an abnormal frame of mind — when such an abnormality is a more or less temporary phase of his life. In cases of this kind statements such as "he wasn't his normal self" because of abnormal stress, or acting under abnormal post-hypnotic suggestion, might be true of the agent.

But there are cases where there are compulsions on the objective attitude to extend beyond any particular phase of the agent's life to encompass, as it were, his 'entire' life; and in such cases all our reactive attitudes tend, correspondingly, to be profoundly modified. Here, the agent "is himself" for all purposes since there is more or less a state of permanence as to his mental-state. He may be psychologically abnormal and hence has a "warped" perception, or the agent may be a child. Quoting Strawson again: "seeing someone, then, as warped or deranged or compulsive in behaviour or particularly unfortunatein his formative circumstances — seeing someone so tends, at least to some extent, to set him apart from normal, participant reactive attitudes on the part of one who so sees him, and tends to promote, at least in the civilised, objective attitudes" (p. 9). Thus what emerges from the Strawsonian distinction between the two kinds of attitudes is that the reactive or participatory attitudes are, as it were, consti-

tutive of normal human life. The word "constitutive" is meant not in the strong Kantian sense of the word, but in the sense of being a practically irrepudiable fact of human life. "The human commitment to participate in ordinary inter-personal relationship is — too thorough-going and deeply rooted for us to take seriously the thought that 'our world might change in a way such that in it there were no longer any such things as inter-personal relationships as we normally understand them: and being involved in interpersonal relationships as we normally understand them precisely is being exposed to the range of reactive attitudes and feelings that is in question" (p. 11). It is also clear that the reactive attitudes are also radically connected with the notion of morality. The ideas of resentment (or indignation), forgiveness, gratitude and love are basic to morality, at least in so far as the idea of goodwill is basic to it: because the availability of these ideas depends crucially on the possibility of genuine expressions of goodwill and its opposite. However, the notion of morality and its relationship with language is dealt with in the following chapter. So for the purpose of the present argument, it will be confined to merely expressing (the intimacy that exists between the concepts of morality and language or more), definitively, the connection between reactive/objective attitudes and the idea of morality. Take the notion of forgiveness, for instance. To forgive

someone, is on the one hand, that resentment may be the proper attitude to take towards his behaviour to one, while on the other hand, to abandon, deny or repudiate this attitude. And precisely as behaviour towards which resentment is expressive of ill-will, forgiveness is necessarily expressive of goodwill.

Quoting Strawson again, to bring out the distinction between the Reactive and Objective attitudes: "the objective attitude is not only something that we naturally tend to fall into — where participant attitude are partially or wholly inhibited by abnormalities or by immaturity. It is also something which is available as a resource in other cases too. We may look with an objective eye on the compulsive behaviour of a very young child, thinking in terms of treatment or training. But we can sometimes look with something like the objective eye on the behaviour of the normal and the mature. We have this resource and sometimes we can use it: as refuge, say, from the strains of involvement; or, as an aid to policy, or simply out of intellectual curiousity. Being human, we cannot, in the normal case, do this for long, or altogether —. But what is above all interesting is the tension there is, in us, between the participant attitude and the objective attitude. One is tempted to say between our

humanity and our intelligence. But to say this would be to distort both notions." For it is obviously absurd to hold that these notions must necessarily be mutually exclusive.

My contention is that my knowledge of another person, in so far as knowledge of a person at all, must at least, in part, be against the background of participant or reactive attitudes. An exclusively objective attitude to another is incompatible with the knowledge of him gua person, for the objective attitude, to put it quite bluntly, turns the other person into a mere object, petrifies him into an object as Sartre might have put it. But if this is true about my knowledge of another person, it is also true to a very large extent about my knowledge of another culture or 'people'. Another people is not just a collection of objects, but consist of persons. My knowledge of another people, as people, therefore, must involve my engagement with them in participatory attitudes.

But let me at this moment, try and say something about the problem of understanding human actions. An attempt is made in the following pages to show that any valid ~~signs~~ science of man will involve interpretations at the level of both the 'subjective' and 'objective' meanings. Before plunging into an elaborate argument into this issue,

it would perhaps be enlightening to reveal some of the significant mistakes committed by some of the social scientists as regards their understanding of the central subject of enquiry: Man. Controversies centering around this subject matter is, though enormous in its variety, have at its origin, the rigid and seemingly irreconcilia-ble views of two schools of thought, namely, (1) the Cartesian dualistic metaphysical position which claims that there are only two basic categories of existence - the mental and the physical, and the relationship between these two categories is purely a contingent one. (2) The scientific tradition which rejected the dualistic thesis and tried "to establish a 'natural science' of society and human behaviour which would match the precision and the explanatory scope of physical sciences and possess the same type of logical structure."[1]

Descartes maintained that it was a logical possibi-lity to indulge oneself to think of something mental i.e. of the mind, without implying that this mental entity had anything to do with something physical e.g. the living human body. This claim, naturally and quite obviously had insurmountable difficulties as regards the criteria by

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1. Satya P. Gautam: On Understanding Human Action.

which the 'mental' could be distinguished from the 'physical', and also about the nature of the relationship between the two. Problems arose in the criteria that were proposed for drawing a distinction between the mental and the physical, namely, the dichotomies such as, 'conscious' and 'non-conscious', 'inner' - 'outer;' 'unextended' and 'extended' and so on.

It might, of course, be mentioned in passing that in formulating the separateness of mind and body, Descartes was not really speaking of an actual separation, but of a possibility of such, that is, of a disembodied mind. This doctrine had given rise to several difficult problems of epistemology which the scientific tradition made an attempt to avoid by entirely rejecting the dualistic thesis and instead applied the principles involved in the study of the physical world to the study of man. However, this attempt at the rejection of dualism was achieved through a demolition of the conceptual framework applied in every day life for describing and understanding human actions. This position owed its allegiance to a particular view of language, with St. Augustine probably as its chief proponent. According to this view there is an isomorphism between the constellation of words in our language and the objects in the world. Thus words are names of objects, and

acquire meaning only in so far as they refer to objects in the physical world. Hence, the meaning of a word, according to this theory of language, is a kind of object, and its meaningfulness or meaninglessness depends on the presence or the lack of an object of this kind. Taken in conjunction with the Cartesian dualism, and the belief that mental events are 'inner', 'private', 'subjective', this theory implies that concepts such as 'pain', 'anger', and so on are meaningful only by virtue of their reference to something inner which is not accessible by anyone else, besides the one who is experiencing the 'pain', 'anger', 'sorrow' and so on. Thus another person can never know for certain what I think or feel or sense. No one other than the person in question, can ever verify one's inferences about the mental states of another conclusively. The world, as it were, can observe only the physical behaviour, which is external, public, and therefore objective. Such an absurd conclusion led the behavioural scientists to accept a new approach of study — the positivistic inquiry which abandons the distinction between the essence and appearance on the ground that scientists are entitled to deal only with directly observable facts. Those assumptions imply that the concepts and the categories which are indispensable to describe the physical world are enough to describe and explain human actions as well.

What is quite clear from the view of the Cartesian school and that of the Positivists is that either the experiential realm has been denied existence, or it has been declared as private and hence wholly subjective. Consequently, it is not directly accessible to anyone other than the person concerned and there is no criteria to verify such experience claims. The error in ignoring the experiential claims is however, enormous. It does not need much argument to illustrate that to accept as insignificant the experiential capacities of human beings is to really dehumanise them, for it follows that they are incapable of meaningful actions.

The main problem as regards the behaviourists' antagonism to mind could be the result of a misunderstanding of the nature of the concepts that are employed in discourse about the mental realm. The behaviourists may be quite right, in rejecting introspection as a method of understanding human actions, but wrong in denying experiences any place whatever in scientific discourse.

The concept of action that has prevailed in sociological literature following Weber, as against the behaviourist's approach in psychology, holds that action is to be distinguished from 'mere' behaviour by the presence of a 'mental' element. The view postulates that the

definitive feature of action, and its meaning, is consciousness of sort of subjective experience in the mind of the actor. "In action is included all human behaviour in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it." The task therefore at hand, is, according to this view, to interpret action with reference to the subjective meaning that the agent "attaches". It looks as though, Weber really makes a distinction between behaviour and subjective meaning. It is not difficult to apprehend that "the description of action in terms of behaviour plus a mental component is a consequence of Cartesian dualism and a fallacious theory of language."[2] Weber accepts that understanding of the meaning of an action is essential for theories on the study of Man, he however, demands that the interpretation of meaning must be supplanted by a causally adequate explanation. In order to provide a causal theory of social action, a sociological theory usually takes recourse to the reduction of human agency to internalisation of values and fails to treat social life as actively constituted through the doings of its members.

It may be considered ironical that both the behaviourists and their opponents, despite their disagreements on the methodology of social sciences share the view that

action derives its meaning from the subjective experience of that agent. As mentioned earlier, the behaviourists confined their interests to observable behaviour, and rejected the inner states which cannot be scientifically observed. The phenomenologists on the other hand have argued that this approach precludes a proper understanding of human behaviour. The solution to this impasse perhaps lies in the recognition that meaning is not the "property" of any inner experience, and that actions can be understood only against the background of the agent's relationship with the social context in which they are performed. It is of course a triviality to emphasise that meaning requires a subject in so far as it is an individual who acts in accordance with his own perceptions, intentions, and so on. However, meaning is not subjective since it transcends individual behaviour. Social reality is constituted by the fact that people not only act but also inter-subjectively understand each other's actions. Someone who greets me with palms pressed together, what in India is usually known as the sign of 'Namaste' get a similar response from me. The fact that the particular action or signal means what it does exists as a social fact independent of any specific individual's understanding of it. One's ability to understand pre-supposes the fact that the agent or the actor has a common frame of reference

with the others in society without which communication would be impossible. Now this common frame of meaning cannot be shown either as a physical object or a mental object. Moreover, the meaning cannot be a private or a subjective reserve since communicability is a pre-requisite for meaning. Hence the condition for a successful communication is that, meaning is available both to the speaker and the hearer.

The fact that one understands another's point of view or the meaning as it were, on hearing the other's verbal expressions of feelings and thoughts seems to imply that experiential-statements are as significant as expressions or statements about overt behaviour. It is of course not the case that one genuinely confronts with problems of this nature in daily life, where one reacts with people as persons and objects as non-persons. In this connection it might not be irrelevant to mention that various disciplines of human knowledge deal with different aspects of human activities and that each of these disciplines formulates its problems in terms of its specific interests, and not a comprehensive study of Man.

The above argument was an exposition of the problems involved in accepting man as either a mental entity or

purely as a physical being. The study of man, therefore, from the point of view of either of dualism or of what might be called physicalism has serious flaws either way.

Man as an explanation-seeking creature is also a 'language wielding', 'symbol-creating', and therefore 'meaning - generating' creature. It is in language that all explanations are necessarily embodied. Now as the purpose of the chapter is about "Understanding human Action", let us make an attempt at illustrating the difference between an action and a non-action. In the analysis of actions the central problem is whether or not it is possible to state the criteria by which a line could be drawn between them. Various philosophers had answered in various ways the question that Wittgenstein had posed: "What is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?" The underlying assumptions in most of these answers has been that the question demanded an explication of the relationship between bodily movements and actions. Though there is a wide disagreement on the question of assimilation of the concept of action under the concept of movement (a sequence of events) or behaviour, a major theme of recent writing in analytical philosophy is that 'movements' can, under specific circumstances — usually where they can be linked with conventions

or intentions, rules or motives, etc. — be counted or be re-described as a movement, or as a sequence of movements, (except perhaps those actions which have the character of refraining). The implication of this is that there are two alternative ways of describing the same conduct — one in which an action is described as a mere happening and the other in which it is seen as a doing.

It may be argued that these two alternative modes of describing actions, as the proper unit of reference for analysis of action has to be the agent himself, who is lost sight of in the mode of description in which action is seen as a movement. The view which regards actions to be a subset of events, or holds that there is no difference between action and behaviour, cannot be very illuminating, for any characterisation of action merely in terms of changes in the physical realm fails to draw a distinction between what human beings do, what happens to them, and what they undergo. It may be pointed out that even if doing (i.e. an action/and undergoing were exhaustive categories, they are not mutually exclusive; the person committing a crime may also be feeling guilty; and the man who had been robbed may have resisted his assailant). The propounders of the assimilation of the concept of action within the concept of event or the concept of

behaviour, do not quite fully appreciate the reflective character of the awareness that human beings have of their capacity to intervene (or not to) in the world with a view to bringing about certain consequences. Actions and events are unlike in the sense that actions involve the idea of self-awareness and therefore articulation in language by the agent, whereas events do not. Human beings are language-using creatures and therefore are capable of self-reference; a capacity lacking in objects and animals despite Kaffka in 'The Metamorphosis' and fairy-tales to the contrary. It is only human actions in which language is used by the agents involved in actions, though of course, animal behaviour and physical events can be discussed, described, and explained in language – but language is not involved in their occurring. Language is used not only in talking about actions but also for engaging in action itself, e.g. in planning an action, in the process of its being executed, and finally in assessing and evaluating it.

To illustrate that actions are different from events, it must be argued that action is not identical with its corresponding event or events, since the same action may involve different events and also the same events may be involved in the performance of different actions. The thought of every action being identical with some event

is erroneous for it is a category mistake to think of events as intentional or unintentional. It does not make sense to speak of an event as intentional or unintentional for unless 'X' was already characterised as an action it would be irrelevant to ask whether 'X' is intentional or unintentional. Having now exposed the differences between an Action and an Event, let us see how human actions are to be understood in more concrete terms:

(1) First as mentioned earlier in the proceedings, man being 'language-using' creatures, it is in language that all explanations are reposed.

(2) Secondly, the concepts in terms of which man seeks explanation of himself and other fellow-human beings are primarily concepts such as: thought, motive, intention, wish, desire and variants of those concepts e.g. hope, aspiration, ideal and so on. Here we need to make a clear distinction between the notion of a 'cause' and the notion of a 'reason'. This distinction is perhaps, fairly familiar in philosophy but unfortunately is not given the importance it deserves by social scientists. To take up the first notion, i.e. of 'cause' one can ask: "What is it for two events to be causally related?" The answer would be that, they must temporally and spatially be related to one another in a particular way: let us take an example, when I switch

on the electric fan, the blades start to revolve. When the current is switched off, it finally stops revolving. Hence there is a temporal connection between the fan revolving and my putting on the switch. Again when the radio is switched on one hears the news being broadcast. The sounds coming from the radio are temporally related to things happening in the broadcasting room of say, Akashvani Bhavan, Delhi. In spite of the distance between Delhi and Shillong, it is still possible to trace (what I might question beggingly be allowed to call) a spatio-temporal causal route between the two events or sets of events.

Secondly, there is a brute matter-of-factness about causal connections. What is meant by this is as follows: causal connections are either there or not there. It does not make sense to say of a causal connection that it ought to be there or ought not to be there, that it is right for it to be there or not right for it to be there, that it is proper or improper, that it is justified or unjustified, that it is good or bad. Of course, occasionally we do talk about a cause being good or bad, proper or improper e.g. women's liberation movement is a 'bad cause' or workers' unity is a 'good cause'. But here quite obviously, the word 'cause' is used in the sense quite different from

the sense in which it is used to describe an event which is related to another as its effect. Fire is the cause of burning; but is it a good cause or a bad cause, a proper or an improper one, a right or wrong one? These questions do not simply arise. There is of course a host of other things that is important to remind oneself of when one is contemplating the concept of a cause. But for my purpose this might do to go on with.

While the concept of cause is wielded in the explanation of natural events, the idea of reason is employed specifically in the explanation of human action. Supposing we are seeking an explanation of the following action; 'X is lying in bed even at 10 in the morning although he is normally up by 5'. A preliminary shot at answering the explanation - seeking question "why is X doing this?" maybe to say "X is depressed". Now depression, although undoubtedly it is a temporal notion, is not an event, not even a mental one, in the way in which the cause of the sounds coming from my radio is an event or a series of events. The word 'depression' here is not used in the same sense as the lowering of X's blood pressure, nor the slowing down of his bodily metabolism. Things may happen even though he is not depressed.

Is depression then the sudden, sinking feeling one gets? Again the same answer applies. One response at this point may be to say: "to say that X is depressed is not an explanation indeed of X's action of lying down at 10 in the morning, it is rather an alternative description of X's action". This however, introduces us to an area of philosophy where a controversy persists — namely, the controversy surrounding the distinction between "explanation" and "description". Now to bring out the distinction between the notion of an explanation and a notion of a description, let us take an example of, perhaps a simpler case. Take for instance, the life-style of a monk. Peter Winch seems to be correct in so far as he holds that the behaviour of the monk cannot be understood as being meaningful, without our knowledge of the rules for his behaviour, which stems from his religious conceptions. However, if we accept this as a sufficient explanation of the monk's behaviour, it is certainly not a kind of explanation which goes beyond the form of life, or what we may call 'institutionalised ideology' of his behaviour. It certainly does not allow for the possibility of any objective theory of motivation. The tendency to consider these two forms of explanation as mutually incompatible arises from the belief that they constitute rival forms of explanation of the same phenomena. The answer seems to lie in the distinction between a conceptual question and a causal one.

An example of this confusion is best illustrated by considering the case of psycho-analysis in connection with the problem of accounting for what has been called "analytic experience". As M. Miri in the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis puts it: "however apart from the conceptual question a purely causal question, corresponding to the physiologist's question about experience can be asked. Such a question would have the form: what is it that is causally responsible for producing analytic experience? Let me explain the difference by means of an example: suppose it is the case that the intake of bhang produces a state of mind which can only be described as 'warmth and affection for everybody'. Now this state of mind would be recognisable as one of warmth and affection independently of our knowledge that the person in question had taken bhang; and this, even if we accept a causal analysis of the emotion of warmth and affection. Its recognisability is a question of whether or not certain concepts can be brought to bear upon it. Now, I would like to say that psychoanalytic technique is part of the causal conditions which bring about analytic experience. The question of the comprehensibility of analytic experience is independent — or at least partly so — of what it is that brings it about; and this even if we accept a causal analysis of some of the concepts (e.g. resistance) the applicability of which makes analytic experience recognisable as such."

It is obvious that our distinction between the causal condition of analytic experience and our conceptual account is a logical one. The account of how the drug alkaloid, T.M.C. entering the blood stream — finally affects the micro chemical process in the brain, by itself, is a complete account (we could extend the causal chain to include such phenomena as distortion in perceptual judgements, and other secondary physiological effects).

The level of sophistication of the causal schema is quite unlimited, but the distinction which we want to draw here is that, in the case of psychoanalysis, this could never exhaust our conceptual account of the experience. The condition of the intelligibility of the analytic experience, in this case the emotion of "warmth and affection" is independent of our causal account. Its (the emotion of warmth and affection) recognisability is "a question of whether or not certain concepts can be brought to bear upon it." On the other hand, our causal explanation is an investigation of the condition which brings about the so called "analytic experience".

Now having discussed at a fairly superficial level the distinction that exists between 'description' and 'explanation', let us refer once more to the earlier example

of: "X lying in bed" because of depression. Supposing his 'being depressed' is a description of X's action in question, then it is quite justified to further ask an explanation-seeking question: "Why is X depressed?" The answer may be something like: "because X has not written a word in the past one year", "X thinks President Zia of Pakistan is a threat to India". Here, it is not clear that the temporal connection between say X's feeling that President Zia is a threat to India and his (X's) being depressed is of the same kind as that between e.g., my putting the light switch on — and the light going on (the latter being a causal connection). For one thing, it is not certain that thoughts can be described as events at all, even mental ones. Of course I can perform certain particular acts of thought which must, in some sense, be events, e.g. I may at this moment be performing the act of thought that Sociology and Social Anthropology are really one and the same academic discipline; and this is an event in a fairly straightforward sense. However, one crucial point emerges here. The thought that Sociology and Social Anthropology are one and the same academic discipline is <u>not identical</u> with the performance of this act of thought; for I can certainly count as thinking that Sociology and Social Anthropology etc. at time 't', although at that time I may not be performing any acts of thought at all (which will be the case, if I am, say, asleep at the time).

But even if thoughts are treated as events, their relationship to action in whose explanation they may be invoked, is not of the brute matter of fact kind which holds between a cause and an effect. Take again, the explanation of X's depression. Of each of these, what we might now call reasons, we might say, 'but X ought not to be depressed for a reason like this' — and this, even if one accepts the reason in question as giving an explanation. Sometimes one might even say: 'X ought to be ashamed of himself for being depressed for a reason like this'. However, purely causal relations, of course, cannot be made the subject of such evaluation.

But 'depression' may not be a good example of human action. It is not, as it were, something that man <u>does</u>; it is much more like something that happens to him. Let us take an example of an action, which is much more of an action. Suppose X is standing in a queue on election day. The correct answer to the question: 'why is X standing in the queue?' maybe, 'X is waiting for his turn to cast his vote'. This will be an explanation in terms of X's intention to vote. The latter may be further explained in terms say, of X's motive of love or admiration for a particular candidate, or for democracy as such, or his <u>hope</u> that his vote will make a difference, and so on.

Here once again, it is not clear that the intention and the action are related temporally in the same way as a cause is related to its effect or effects, for it is not at all clear that intentions are events of any sort. And more importantly, it is always possible to ask of an intention or of a motive or of a wish, or a hope whether it is proper or improper, right or wrong, good or bad and so on.

An important point that perhaps emerges is that a human action can always be made the subject of an evaluative judgement, and that this is logically connected with the kind of explanation that is typically given of human action.

Now what intentions can a person have? The question may sound strange, but for the social sciences it is an extremely important question to ask. But before an attempt is made to answer this question let us dwell a little longer on the notion of 'intention'. And what is said about intentions would also generally apply to things like, motives, wishes, hopes and so on. It is possible for me to act intentionally, and yet to be unaware of my intention, either at time of the action or even afterwards. For instance, X behaves in a certain, particular way towards a girl. The obvious explanation of this may be to say that

he is flirting with the girl, i.e. that X's action is in some sense, the expression of his flirtatious intention towards the girl. But X might vehemently and quite sincerely deny any such intention. The important point in this is that although one may not be aware of the intention of a particular action of one's it is also the case that given the appropriate circumstances it must be possible, for one to become aware of it or acknowledge it. That is so, follows perhaps, from the fact that as mentioned before, man is a self-explaining, self-understanding creature. If an action of mine is to be correctly understood in terms of a particular intention of mine, then I must be capable of understanding it in terms of the very same intention, for otherwise it follow that it is impossible for me to understand my own action. And the least that it must be possible for me to do in order to be capable of understanding my own action, is that I acknowledge or own up the intention behind the action.

We are now in a position to realise, seemingly, at least part of the importance of the question: "What intentions can one have?" For if there are intentions, which for one reason or another, it is impossible for one to have, then, in explaining one's action these intentions cannot be invoked. And there are frequently, intentions which it may

be impossible for one to have. Thus, given that I am totally ignorant of the language of experimental physics – it is impossible for me to intend to carry out an experiment in Physics. And my handling with the equipments in the Physics laboratory cannot be explained in terms of any intention to conduct an experiment in Physics. My inability to conduct an experiment in Physics springs from the following logical fact that for one to have an intention is also for one to describe or envisage the situation in which the intention can be seen as having been fulfilled. Thus, I cannot intend to conduct an experiment in Physics, because I cannot envisage (i.e. articulate, describe) the situation which will count as the fulfilment of this intention. Hence for the same reason, someone who is completely unfamiliar with concepts such as 'people's representative', 'majority rule', 'polling', and so on cannot possibly intend to vote. Of course he may indeed go through all the motions associated with polling but he cannot really count as having voted. As far as he is concerned, he has merely marked a paper and inserted it in a box. Another important point in respect of both these examples is that either of them is at all possible only within the framework of a particular on-going, as it were, institution – a way of life. Thus an experiment in Physics is possible only against the background of what we might call, the 'institution of

scientific enquiry or investigation', or that is, the way of life of scientific enquiry. It is this that determines, or contains the criteria for what is to count as an experiment at all, and for distinguishing between a proper one and an improper one, a vigoruous one and shoddy one, and so on. And for me to conduct an experiement in physics is for me to partake in the way of life of scientific enquiry, to know my way about in the conceptual framework of what we call science. The up-shot of all this may be put as follows: I cannot have an intention which is such that I am incapable of envisaging (articulating) etc. the situation which will consitute its fulfilment. And frequently my capacity to have an intention depends on my ability to participate in a certain more or less complex form of life. Thus, frequently, to understand an action of mine is to place it in the context of such a 'form of life'.

What I have said about intentions may, with some, not very crucial modification be applied equally to concepts such as motives, hopes, aspirations, wishes etc. What motives, wishes, aspirations, hopes etc. a person can have depends on his capacity to envisage the situations which would count as their fulfilment, and frequently the latter capacity can be experienced only <u>within</u> the framework of a certain way of life.

I have so far used words such as 'institution', 'form of life', 'way of life' in a very loose and general way. An attempt is made further on about the distinction between an 'institution' and a 'culture' which might help one to understand human actions in as near as authentically possible.

3. Meanwhile let us see the importance of what has been said for the social scientist generally, and in particular those engaged in research in the North Eastern part of our country. It seems quite clear that most social scientists are not able to take the suggestion seriously that explanations of actions within a given context i.e. 'a way of life' or 'a form of life', may not be available in a different context. For example, is the Naga head hunter doing the same sort of thing as the Mafia killer in Chicago or New York? Are the polyandrous women of Tibet no different from the film actresses of Hollywood or Bombay? Is the naked Sadhu on the banks of the Ganga engaged in an activity similar to that of the nudists on an American or a European beach? In each of these cases the answer is "no". The Sociologists and the Anthropologists will of course accept this answer indeed; but they do not very often realise the profound implication of this acceptance. For the implication is no less than this: the explanation of the native's action

must at least be available to the native himself, or it must be such that given the framework of his thought, it is possible for the natives to see it as an authentic explanation of his action; for otherwise, it will follow that it may be impossible for the native to understand his own actions. And this, is an absurd conclusion. The native can understand his action only in terms of his intentions or hopes or wishes or aspirations that it is possible for him to have; and it is possible for him to have only those intentions etc. which he can envisage or articulate the fulfilment of; and he can do this last only within the framework of concepts which define the boundaries of sense and non-sense for him, the framework of activities it is impossible for him meaningfully to engage in. To understand a native's action is, therefore, to know one's way about in this framework.

4. It is important at this point to make a further distinction between what may be called an institution and a culture. An institution is a network of practices and a set of norms of propriety within a culture (e.g. family, marriage, war etc.); and a culture is the system of symbols and meanings which gives all institutions encompassed by it their proper significance in relation to each other and in relation to the whole. As an anthropologist puts it: "culture

constitutes a body of definitions, premises, statements, postulates, presumptions, propositions and perceptions about the nature of the Universe, and man's place in it — where norms tell the actor how to play the scene, culture tells the actor how the scene is set and what it all means. Where norms tell the actor how to behave in the presence of ghosts, gods and human beings, culture tells the actors what ghosts, gods and human beings are and what they are all about...."[2]

It should now be clear that to understand a native's action is to place it in the framework of the native's system of meanings... his bounds of sense and non-sense.... what is meant by the latter is this culture and not merely a particular institution within it or even a particular set of norms within it. Thus to understand the action of a Naga head hunter it is not sufficient that one is able to see it as part of the Naga institution of war, but it must also be possible for one to see it as meaningful against the background of his total culture... the native's metaphysics, as it were. This is so because the fullest articulation of the Head hunter's hopes and aspirations is not possible except against the backdrop of their metaphysics, or that

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2. Meaning in Anthropology edited by Keith H. Besso and Henry A. Selby, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

is the entire comprehensive world view of the natives.... In short, their philosophy. Similarly, of course, as mentioned earlier, would the Mafia gangsters. It is not comprehensive enough, not sufficient enough, that the Mafia killers intentions, hopes, and aspirations are articulated in terms of the framework of the institution of gangsterism. Their full articulation is possible only against the background of total American culture or, if you like, civilization. Also physics. It is important, one feels, to note this; because of the social scientists' fondness for the study of institutions as though they are independent, autonomous generators of meaning.

5. Another point that needs to be mentioned is about the alleged inhumanity or — a word more frequently used — "barbarism" or "savagery" of head hunting. Even without being a moral relativist, it is generally accepted that killing is bad; and this is recognised in every human society. And this is not because of a universal human decision, but because of the full awareness or knowledge that killing is bad. But it seems, in almost all societies some kinds of killing are regarded as justifiable. The task before the anthropologist or the philosopher is first to see whether the justification of a given kind of killing in a given culture is consistent with the fundamental presuppositions

of that culture, and that to see whether it is also consistent with our knowledge that killing is, generally, bad.

About head hunting as barbaric practice, perhaps the following may be said: the barbarism of the practice is not inherent in the practice itself; but rather emanates from how a particular act of head hunting has been done or is perceived to have been done. It depends as Wittgenstein says in his Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough, on the spirit of the practice: what he says in effect: when I speak of the inner nature of the practice, I mean all those circumstances in which it is carried out that are not included in the account of the festival, because they consist not so much in particular actions that characterise it, but rather in what we might call the spirit of the practice: which would be described by, for example, describing the sort of people that take part, their way of behaviour at other times, that is, their character, and the other kinds of games they play. And we should then see that what is sinister lies in the character of these people themselves.

6. The 'system of meanings' which is culture is embodied primarily in language... and if we widen the meaning of language a little to include things such as symbols... one might even say with some plausibility that all meanings are

deposited in language. But whether the latter is really true or not, it should at least be clear that if a culture is a system of meanings at all, its language must be an inseparably significant part of it, and that its vital concepts must be embodied in its language. But sometimes this is denied... it is indeed often remarked that the native's language is very often only an inadequate and confused embodiment of his concepts, that it needs a better language for these concepts to be clearly and adequately exposed. But for the moment, the linguistic aspect of the cultural studies we have engaged in, will be kept in abeyance. The matter will be discussed in detail in the last chapter of this thesis in connection with the issue on 'Linguistic Relatavism' under the chapter heading 'Language and the understanding of other cultures'.

In conclusion, a word about what it really means to have understood a culture. First, understanding a culture is always a matter of degree... just as most understanding of meaning is a matter of degree... ranging from the extremely superficial to the most profound. For an example, take the notion of love and how it admits of progressive refinement and depth. Take again the difference between Gandhi's grasp of Indian culture in all its comprehensive wholeness and that of V.S. Naipaul's who seems to give only a visual account of the matter.

Secondly, it will be wrong to draw the conclusion from the account offered, that it will be necessarily wrong for someone belonging to a particular culture to make evaluative judgements about activities in another. Human 'self-understanding' is after all an irrepressible factor which underlies any possible knowledge of man in the social sciences. However, it must be mentioned that this 'self-understanding' is not a mere methodological devise. Rather it determines the form of our understanding in the human sciences, and it is precisely this that because of which human sciences could not be really value-free. The terms of adequacy and comprehension are not given to us through the 'independent observation' of perceivable phenomena, that is, of things outside us. There could not be any independent observation in the sense of facts 'uncontaminated' by the human significance of our data.

This, however, does not mean that the social scientist, must not, or is incapable of shedding his prejudices, likes or dislikes and so on, in characterising his findings. The only point that needs to be clearly emphasised is that, before making an evaluation, they must understand —not as just mentioned, in a value-neutral sense, but understanding in a sense of resisting the will to see only what one is inclined to see.

CHAPTER - III

CONCEPT OF LOVE, MORALITY AND RELIGION

What appears to be clearly a characteristic feature of modern moral philosophy is its almost exclusive preoccupation with the most general moral concepts such as 'good', 'right', 'duty', and so on. This has given rise to theories in moral philosophy which try to define, what are sometimes called the purely 'formal' properties of a moral action or a moral judgement. This concern with the formal has also quite naturally led to an unfortunate neglect of ideas which form, as it were, the core substance of, what might be called, the moral life. Thus the ideas which are overlooked are ones such as 'love', 'humanity', 'courage', 'self-sufficiency', 'purity of heart', 'moral discipline' and the role of examples in morality and so on.

It is also apparent that the theories in modern moral philosophy of both the analytic and existentialist varieties are also such that they are quite unable to throw any fresh light on the special phenomenon of moral life. A truly philosophical account of morality must at least begin with the consideration of the elements of the moral life and the special relationship between these elements which inevitably confers a sense of unity and coherence to the moral life. It certainly appears that the idea of 'love' is the most crucial of all ideas, since the unmistakable mark of a moral

life seems to be the predominant and organic role that love plays in such a life. The accent of this chapter is a philosophical justification of this idea.

Mention has also been made about the role of examples in the study of the moral life as crucial. It is quite obvious that in the entire history of mankind, there are no more than a handful of people whose lives would unqualifiedly deserve the title of 'moral'. The peculiar quality of the moral life can, therefore, best be understood through an understanding of what held the moral life of such people together. I would like specially to consider, in this connection, as examples, of the moral life, Christ and Gandhi.

The ideas expressed here are a good deal based on two articles, namely, 'The Availability of Gandhi', and 'The Means-End distinction, rationality, and the moral life' by Mrinal Miri.

A study of morality must necessarily take into account a study of the concept of man. Hence, at the root of the moral self-awareness of modern civilisation are two seemingly mutually contradictory conceptions of man which are powerfully peculiar to our age. There is the one derived from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, according to

which, man in his true being is 'autonomous'; and there is the other idea which seems to have been influenced by the essentially monistic completeness of modern science. According to this, man is logically reducible to 'an object of nature'... the very anti-thesis of the former idea.

Interestingly, diametrically opposed as these two conceptions of man seem to be, they share, the argument reveals, a common failure, namely, that of the inability to account for the traditional moral insights of man. Here, of course, the adherents of either school of thought, might be tempted, defensively, to argue that the fault lies not with the conception of man in question, but rather with the so-called moral insights themselves. This stand however, as it is explained below, is unjustified: it does not generally seem to be a point of the effort in the articulation of these two conceptions of man to reject what has been termed as the traditional moral insights of man. Rather it is the case that the endeavour is to incorporate these insights into the conceptions; but this attempt succeeds — and on sound logical grounds - only by distorting the moral insights. So paradoxically, such a success is therefore not a success at all. Thus the only explanation available as regards this situation is that there seems to be a kind of incoherence involved in each of the conceptions. And so,

"they are in a fundamental sense, unable to do what they would, at least, want to be able to do."[1]

Let us now consider both these conceptions of man and their differences in moral philosophy which that entails. Firstly, we will deal with the one that is derived, as mentioned, primarily from Kant. The salient features of this conception seems to be: (1) The criteria for distinguishing the moral and the immoral, and the notion of moral and the non-moral "need make no appeal to anything else other than man himself in his isolation from both God and nature". (2) Now whether these distinctions are to be, in Moore's sense, intuitively apprehended or conforming to what goes by the name of "universalisability", implicit in man's capacity to think rationally, or even by the criteria of the "Existentialists" such as J.P. Sartre, that is associated with man's exercise of his freedom, it is man alone, that is the source and ground of these distinctions.

2. What motivates man to actions is his 'pure' choice. "Pure" here means, the absolutely ungrounded pristine choice suggestive of the ultimate exercise of freedom.

Our concern now is: "how would the traditional moral insights be appropriated into this conception of man", or

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1. M. Miri: The Availability of Gandhi, NEHU.

"what would be the place of ~~the place of~~ the traditional moral insights within this conception of man", when one considers insights such as "one ought never deliberately to injure another human being (ahimsa)", "humility (conquest of egotism) is a supreme principle of morality", "moral perfection and complete fearlessness are inseparable?" (these moral principles, in recent times, seem to be embodied in the life of Gandhi with such near perfection that that earned him the title 'the Mahatma' or 'the Great one'). Take for example, the view that the condition of the moral character of a principle is its fulfilling the notion of "universalisability'.

It has been made seemingly, abundantly clear in recent philosophical debate that the formal requirement of universalisability for a principle to qualify as a moral one is not a sufficient one, though a necessary one. This requirement can quite easily be shown to be capable of being satisfied not only by undeniably moral principles as the ones mentioned, but also by principles of action which are only dubiously moral or downright immoral. This must be expected as natural, since morality as traditionally conceived has its groundings on insights which transcends the merely 'formal' properties of man's capacity to reason. And this is precisely, what gives it its distinctive

character. Hence, if the traditional morality were to conform to the formal properties of reason, the distinctiveness of the former would be compromised.

Let us consider Kant's attempt to show why it is that it is one's moral duty to develop one's natural talents: someone finds in himself a talent whose cultivation would make him a useful man for all sorts of purposes. But he sees himself in comfortable circumstances and he prefers to give himself up to pleasure rather than to bother about increasing and improving his fortunate natural aptitudes. Yet he asks himself further: "does my maxim of neglecting my natural gifts, besides agreeing in itself with my tendency to indulge, agree also with what is called duty?" He then sees that a system of nature would indeed always subsist under such a universal law, although (like the South sea islanders) every man should let his talents rust and should be bent on devoting his life solely to idleness, indulgence, procreation, and, in a word, to enjoyment. Only he cannot possibly will that this should become a universal law of nature or should be implanted in us as such a law by a natural instinct. For as a rational being he necessarily wills that his power should be developed, since they serve him, and are given him for all sorts of possible ends. (The Moral Law p. 86). It is thus clear that the reason for which Kant

would consider the maxim" one ought to develop one's natural talents" a moral maxim is precisely the ground on which he would, otherwise reject a principle as being moral, the ground that, it can be represented as a hypothetical imperative (e.g. if you want 'X' then you must do 'Y') A. K. Coomaraswamy proclaims in a similar issue: "manufacture is for use and not for profit. The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man who is not an artist in some field, every man without a vocation is an idler. The kind of artist that a man should be, carpenter, painter, lawyer, farmer or priest, is determined by his own nature, in other words, by his nativity. The only man who has a right to abstain from all constructive activity is the monk who has also surrendered all those uses that depend on things that can be made, and is no longer a member of society. No man has a right to any social status who is not an artist". (Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art, p. 24).

This conception of man thus induces a kind of moral anarchy which characterises much of modern civilization. Phrases such as, "the permissive society", "every man's right to pursue his own ideal" and so on, are linguistic expressions of this phenomenon. One of the most prominent feature of this anarchy is the acquisitive nature inherent in it. In Eric Fromm's word it is a life devoted to the pursuit of 'having' rather than to that of 'being'.

4. Some of the important ingredients of the other conception of man, which, as mentioned, derives its idea from the essentially monistic completeness of modern science are the following: 1). man is ultimately exhaustively describable in physical terms alone 2). that being so, man in his totality is reducible to an object of nature 3). therefore, man and his cosmology can be explained in terms of the norms of explanation of the natural sciences. This conception of man has given rise to the popular notion of behavioural studies as evidenced in the academic discipline of experimental or behaviouristic psychology. In philosophy this view of man finds expression, quite ambiguously, in what is known as the doctrine of philosophical behaviourism, 'ambiguous' because, as the argument goes, while on the on hand, it essentially agrees with the notion that man is really nothing more than a special kind of material body, it, on the other hand, finds it, strangely necessary to make irreducible distinctions such as between "cause" and "reason", "law" and "rule", "movement" and "action", "utterance" and "speech", "fact" and "truth". While the first of each of these pairs of concepts are applicable to the natural world alone, the second of each of these pairs are supposed to be indispensible to understand the reality of man. Hence this paradoxical ambiguity appears to be a resistence to the idea of reducing man to

an object of nature. Considering the metaphysical base of philosophical behaviourism, the irreducibility of the distinctions cannot be justifiably maintained. Take the notion of the "freedom of the will", and observe how philosophical behaviourism might seek to solve this problem. The explanations that are offered in this regard are nothing but the arguments that would be typical of psychological behaviourism in dealing with this problem. Now the problem arises from the contention that if man could be exhaustively explained in terms of causal laws alone, then the idea of his "free will" being exercised in any of his actions is clearly a logical impossibility. Philosophical behaviourism might answer to this in the following response: Human actions are categorially distinct from the concept of mere physical change. This is evident in the employment of concepts such as "motive", "intention" and "reason" in explanations to human actions. Thus, as a philosophical behaviourist would contend, to accept the appropriatness of such explanation is to reject, at the same time, the appropriateness of explanation in terms of causes. And so "man's possession of freedom of will is just another name for the fact that the explanatory concepts appropriate for human action are what they are."[2]

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2. Ibid.

The notion of physical change is however, still, unfortunately centrally involved for the philosophical behaviourist, in the concept of human action. The problem of the will arises when it is maintained that the physical change involved in human action might quite exhaustively be explained in terms of causes alone. To insist at this juncture, that the idea of the free will of man is still tenable because the concept of human action is a logically distinct concept would be merely to beg the question.

Having gone so far, it is now quite plain to see that morality, if one can sensibly call it that, as maintained in the sense of the behaviourists is no morality at all, at least from the traditional point of view. If notions such as "praise" and "blame" etc. are used merely as means to effect certain desired changes, then, as I see it, threats of any kind might prove to be just as efficaceous. This follows quite logically from what is implicit in the behaviourists idea of morality as merely illusory. So fundamental moral concepts such as "responsibility", "blame", "praise" etc. have no legitimate application at all in its metaphysic. This indeed is the view held by many. Now others even within the domain of the behaviourist school might prove to be somewhat more tolerant - not with the understanding that 'morality as illusory' rests on a mistake, but indeed, from

the preception of morality as conceived traditionally, for a flagrantly immoral reason. Hence, moral notions though considered illusory, are not entirely useless, and so might profitably be retained within our vocabulary. According to this thought, to praise or blame somebody may not literally make sense; but as long as 'praising' or 'blaming' brings about desired changes in human beings and societies, their usefulness as means or devices is conveniently defended.

It is all too plain to see, that this view of morality or rather tragically and more accurately, the devaluation of moral values has cleverly or unwittingly entered into what might be considered to be one of the most basic activities of human life - namely, the institution of politics, and has permeated all spheres of life. What can be more glaring an example of this phenomenon than the primal motivation of present day politics, which nationally or internationally, is "manipulative" in nature and seeks to control both peoples and societies everywhere by the attempt to bring them under its ambit. Thus the insidious 'moral exhortations' required in fulfilling this motivation has, as the argument reveals "much the same role as bombs and missiles and the behavioural scientists' experiments with population and resources control methods'"[3] This

3. Ibid., p. 7.

devaluation of moral values is found to be a natural associate of the moral anarchy implicit in the idea of the absolute "autonomy" of man.

It would be of relevant interest to note what Chomsky had remarked about the social reality, albeit principally that of American society, that: "what can one say about a country where a museum of science in a great country can feature an exhibit in which people fire machine guns from a helicopter at Vietnamese huts with a light flashing when a hit is scored? What can one say about a country where such an idea can ever be considered? You have to weep for this country" (Noam Chomsky: AMERICAN POWER AND THE NEW MANDERINS, 1967). This was said during the U.S. Military involvement in Vietnam but the astoundingly disturbing transformation of values symbolised in this one act has become a general feature of present political life. One has to weep for mankind.

Having observed the failure of these conceptions of man to account for morality and the resulting moral confusion which that expectedly entails, let us now dwell on the Gandhian idea of morality and its criticism of the present social values. Prof. A.K. Saran proclaims that: "Gandhian thinking strives to participate in the transcendental centre;

it is concerned with the destiny of man, not with the prospects of a given civilisation; hence its explosive stance. Once this is firmly grasped, it will be easy to discover the essential texts and context of Gandhian thinking." (Gandhi and the Concept of Politics", Gandhi Marg, 1980).

To come to grasp with what is now known simply as Gandhian morality, one must begin with the "Truth-God-Ahimsa" trio of concepts. This is not only the basis on which all Gandhian thought springs up from, but also that, it can be shown to be an inalienable part of any adequate conception of the moral life.

In Gandhi's use of the term, "Truth" had little to do with the logician's sense of the term in which only propositions can be "true" or "false". Thus Gandhi was more concerned with the truth of being, rather than a logician would, with the truth of statements (It has been recorded that Russell claimed total incomprehension when D.H. Lawrence, remarked about the "falsity" of a person. His only incredulous response to the suggestion apparently was; "Only prepositions can be true or false. How can one speak of persons being so?). What Gandhi meant by "Truth" was perhaps in the sense in which Wittgenstein had remarked, highlighting the nuance: "No one can speak the truth, if he

has still not mastered himself. He cannot speak it; —but not because he is not clever enough yet. "The Truth can be spoken only by someone who is already at home in it; not by someone who still lives in falsehood and reaches out from falsehood towards truth on just one occasion" (CULTURE AND VALUE, BLACKWELL, 1980).

It can, no doubt, be said that the Gandhian sense of "Truth" is reducible to the other more "fundamental" sense. However, as this exercise, like most other attempts at "logical reduction" will leave the core of the other out of consideration, the attempt may not be quite profitable here in this context. Suffice it to say that though the two senses of "Truth" are quite undoubtedly related to one another, there is a radical and phenomenological difference between the two.

What might be understood minimally from the Gandhian conception of truth is that of the conquest of "self deception"; which may be considered, though there are other things besides it, to be the core of the concept. This being the case, it is implicit in the idea that once the shroud of self-deception is removed, one is in touch with the TRUTH of one's being. But this is no easy task. Wittgenstein pronounces: "nothing is so difficult as not deceiving oneself". Perhaps it is too radical to declare hastily that

for human beings self-deception is totally impossible to overcome, but still it can be maintained that the phenomenon is almost inescapable. Only God, by the very notion in which the idea of God is conceived is NECESSARILY free from all self-deception. Thus it is in this sense that God and life of truth are one and same. Hence, Gandhi's occasional equation of God with truth and vice versa.

The most expected question now, in this matter is, 'Why is man almost doomed to a life of self deception?' What seems to be the most reasonable answer to this problem is that 'man is endowed with a powerful ego;, and it is the responsibility, as it were, of the ego of each man to show him off in the best possible way under all circumstances. The "action" of the ego is most clearly manifested in one's relationship with other human beings. Each person's ego is perpetually in competition, either covertly or overtly with other egoes; and so frequently, the only way to save one's own ego from being crushed by other egoes is by deliberately distorting the reality of other persons. The ego, has a way of infiltrating over into our most "noble" emotions which goes by the name of "altruism" such as "kindness", "generosity", "affection" and so on. It is here that the mechanism of self deception links up and operates with the ego. The mutual complementarity of the ego and self-delusion

is depicted most remarkably in some of the literary works of fiction associated with the classical writers such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky, William Shakespeare, Tolstoy and so on. Perhaps a rewarding way of treating such works is to think of them primarily as explorations of distortions in one's perception of the reality of oneself and others owing to the involvement of the ego. In actual life just recollect the times one realizes with a start, the mistakes one commits in one's assessment of oneself in relation to others, or vice versa, because of the distorting influence of one's ego.

Despite the literal difference in expression 'distorting another persons reality' and 'distorting one's own reality' are really two variants of the same process. Thus, the ego-generated illusions keep not only the other person's reality out of reach of one; but they must, simultaneously distort one's relaity as well; since the primary motive behind misperceiving the other's reality is "the aggrandizement - no doubt in its multiferous variety - of one's own ego; and such aggrandizement can succeed only by not being recognized as such by oneself. The latter, as it were, is a condition of the former."[4]

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4. Ibid.

Thus, the ego, being the prime generator of illusions, both about oneself and also about others, how does one overcome this obstacle? Perhaps the only solution lies in the practice of ahimsa in Gandhi's sense of the term. Generally, the term ahimsa "is taken merely to mean "non-violence". However, a more accurate translation of the word seems to be "non-injury"; and non-injury includes not just physical non-injury but moral non-injury as well. It is quite inconceivable therefore, that ahimsa could be somehow compatible with the demands of the ego. So how can one count as practising ahimsa if in doing so, one is merely serving the interest of one's, as Iris Murdoch puts it, "big fat ego"? For in 'practising ahimsa', thus, one would indeed make a mockery of it. For by using the other person for the gain of one's own ego; and to use another person this way is to do him moral injury. An ahimsa, so called of this kind, is no ahimsa at all. The "way of ahimsa" is the way of gradual overcoming of the ego, which therefore is the way to the truth of being. As Gandhi defines it: "It may entail continuous suffering and the cultivating of endless patience. Thus step by step we learn to make friends with the world; we realize the greatness of God - or Truth. Our peace of mind increases in spite of suffering; we become braver and more enterprising; we understand more

clearly the difference between what is everlasting and what is not. Our pride melts away, and we become humble. Our worldly attachments diminish, and so does the evil within us diminish from day to day". (from YARVADA MANDIR p. 10).

So what has been conveyed so far is the idea that ahimsa is the antithesis of ego-centricism, and can thus safely be equated with "egolesness", which is just another name for "selflessness". Now the idea of "love" in its most profound, absolutist sense has, as its main characteristic the notion of selflessness exemplified concisely in the expression "love for mankind" as concretised in the lives of Christ and Gandhi. This idea of love transcends all particularities and yet is inclusive of all of them. Contrast this with the kind of love associated with consumerism and adolescent romantic involvements. The latter two are instances of the ego-generated activities, and are thus, in the absolute sense, no love at all. For at the basis of these involvements is the attempt to satisfy the "I" or the ego, which, as it were, draws everything upon itself with the intent to possess, and so is diametrically opposed to what the Bible or ahimsa exhorts. This is a clear illustration of love being the opposite of egotism. Hence, it might be claimed that "love" is the positive mode of ahimsa; for

to have loved someone is to have conquered one's ego in relation to that person.

We might justifiably ask now, 'what is the connection of all this to morality?' The answer to this is already implicit in what has been said so far. Firstly, the notion of "selflessness" is related directly to the notion of the moral life. And selflessness or the overcoming of the ego is a pre-condition of the moral life. Secondly, the idea of "justice"is also central to morality; not merely in the sense in which one's assessments of one's fellow human beings must be capable of justification, but more importantly, in the sense in which one's own perception and the assessment of another must do justice to him. To do this successfully, what definitely seems to be a necessary condition, even if it may not be a sufficient one, is the removal of all traces of the ego from one's perception and assessment. Thus it can now be safely proclaimed that the idea of truth-of-being — and ahimsa are central to an adequate conception of the moral life, that is, of the phenomenology of morals. What, if any, is the role of God in all this? God is the very epitome of the moral life- the very embodiment of moral perfection as evident in such concepts as "total selflessness", "omniscience" (absence of self delusion) and the master of "loving justice". It can be said

that in a fundamental sense, God is beyond the life of morality, for an essential aspect of the moral life involves a continual striving towards perfection, and in God there is necessarily no such striving. This being the case, it is impossible to find, in real life, a totally indubitable example of the morally perfect person. Mention may be made here that for Christians, the life of Christ on earth, in human form exemplifies precisely the idea of a morally perfect life. Hence to them, in Christ the metaphysical and the moral come together. The idea of God for morality is essential because it ensures that the ideal of perfection that the conception of the moral life involves is not merely a conciliatory (and therefore illusory) ideal.

Perhaps another way of illustrating the centrality of the Gandhian trio of concepts - God, Truth and Ahimsa, to a conception of the moral life is as follows: A moral life must be one where all the so called virtues are realized and won over, the vices, as it were. It is a life where all the virtues come together in a unified whole. So moral life is a life of a unity of virtues. Virtues in isolation, do not, by themselves contribute to the moral life. Take for instance, the virtues of courage, intelligence and temperance. Both courage and intelligence can be

put to most effectively immoral and evil uses. Just reflect the abundance of these qualities in a Godse or a Sobraj. As for the other virtues mentioned, that of "temperance"; unless this is expressed in the vital unity of the moral life it is perpetually vulnerable to degenerate into mechanistic ritualism. So we may quite legitimately ask: what is it that infuses moral life into the virtues? It is the all comprehensive unconditional love, embodied in the word ahimsa. It is only when virtues are rooted in a life free from self deception that they really form a part of the truly virtuous life. It is truth thus "that gathers the virtues into the vital unity of the moral life, it is love that is the surest way to the truth"; for love is the antithesis of the ego; and to repeat it, it is the illusions generated by the ego that are the most stubborn obstacles in the way of the knowledge of truth - of one's being, Where we can ask again, does God feature in this explanation of morality? The very idea of God embodies the unity of the moral life in its absolute perfection, and thus logically ensures the reality of this unity. One important feature of the concept of morality, or more precisely, that of moral goodness is the inclusion of the idea of transcendence within it. This perhaps is not quite in the sense in which G.E. Moore talked about "good" being a non-natural property, but in the sense in which goodness always transcendence any

embodiment of it in space and time. This means simply that however perfect an example of goodness a particular person might be, there is something more to goodness than the exemplification of it. That is why, as suggested earlier, it is impossible to find a human being who embodies moral perfection in its absolute totality. Moral perfectability as an ideal must, perhaps paradoxically, for ever remain an ideal for a human being. As Gandhi commented that one can always be more perfect than one is. Hence the self-refuting character in the expression "I have now achieved moral perfection" is apparent enough. So pointing out the earlier dilemma that if total perfection is not an achievable ideal; is it the case then that the idea of morality is merely an illusory one? And if this is recognized as such, then does this not confirm the validity of what has been characterized as our modern moral self-awareness? For a religious person however, what saves morality from being an illusory pursuit is the absolute reality of God.

Let us now attempt an analysis of the notion of a moral life of whether it could be taken to mean a "rational" human activity. The effort might highlight whether or not, as it has been shown as claimed in certain quarters that the idea of morality is mainly an illusory concept. This task will involve first of all an exposition of, what is understood by the concept of ~~'morality'~~ 'rationality.'

It is perhaps rightly claimed that the concept of 'rationality' is not a unitary or generic concept. This seems to be quite an indubitable claim as the criteria of rationality may vary quite radically, if not quite from one context to another, at least from one "form of life" to another. Of course it is another matter what is actually meant by the expression "form of life" has not been made very clear. It is claimed for instance that the "form of life" of scientific investigation is different from the "form of life" of religious rituals, and that, correspondingly, the idea of rationality informing the one is different from the idea of rationality informing the other. Understandably the entire discussion leaves one rather uncertain about how best to construe the concept of a "form of life". This vagueness is matched by an equal unclarity about the difference in the "concept of rationality supposedly involved in the different "forms of life". Although this idea of the non-unitariness of the concept of rationality is admittedly unclear there are some distinctions between different kinds of reasoning and therefore, presumably between different kinds of rationality. These distinctions such as that between deductive and inductive reasoning - in spite of the unity - seeking attempts at reducing one kind to another, the distinctions between them is generally acknowledged; and that between theoretical and practical

reasoning. Perhaps it can be said that the acknowledgement of these distinctions does not necessarily commit one to a view about the non-generic nature or the non-unitariness of the concept of rationality.

In this chapter, the question of the unitariness, or otherwise, of the concept of rationality is ignored. What has been attempted instead is the exploration of the idea that there may at least be different levels of employment of the notion of rationality in the sphere of what has been called practical reasiong – that is, reasoning which has to do with our actions rather than with theoretical thinking. It is expected that this endeavour will shed some light on the significance of the means-end distinction in the understanding of human action.

It is usually felt that in the sphere of "praxis" there is a central area where the means-end distinction is crucial in the determination of the rationality (or otherwise) of human actions. Indeed it is frequently believed that the means-end distinction is the only basis there is for making the distinction between the idea of rationality and irrationality in this sphere of human behaviour. Take the account of Harvey Mullane in Psychoanalytic Explanation and Rationality about the rationality of a piece of human

behaviour. Thus "A piece of human behaviour" is rational only if the agent is justified in believing that what he does: (a) is likely to achieve, or (b) is one possible way (which in certain circumstances may be a very unlikely way of achieving what he wants to achieve, and (c) it is not likely to bring about other consequences more undesirable than the prospective desirability of what is intended to achieve.

In this account of the rationality of an action, it will be noted that the words "means" and "ends" have not been actually mentioned; however, it is clear that the distinction between what a person "does" and what he pursues "to achieve" is precisely the distinction, between a "means" and a corresponding "end". Thus from this account the distinction made between them is quite inescapably linked with the assessment of the rationality of any action. From this account of rationality one might feel justified to make the following comments:-

(1) It does not require one to think that every action is either rational or irrational. It can thus admit the possibility of actions which are neither rational or irrational; such actions aoculd be called non-rational.

(2) It does not require one to think that the rationality/irrationality distinction must be applied for every possible end for an action. The crucial point here is that, for the distinction to apply at all the action which is the means must be linked up with the end via the agents belief that his action is likely or not likely to bring about the end in question in a required way (these two considerations rule out what are ordinarily called reflex, non-voluntary and involuntary actions from the class of actions which may be either rational or irrational, or perhaps, more or less so. For none of these aforementioned types of actions is done in the belief that will achieve a particular end even if it indeed does so).

(3) The account of rationality given here, seems to require that a rational action is consequent upon a deliberation about whether or not the action has the right kind of relation to the end for which it is a means. However, it needs to be mentioned that actual deliberation need not be involved in every case, as long as the agent can enter upon a deliberation when the occasion demands, in justification of his belief that the action has the right kind of relationship to the end intended to be achieved by its means.

(4) Finally, the rationality of an action is necessarily dependant upon it being conceived by the agent as a possible means to a particular end. That is, the rationality/irrationality distinction, on this account be understood except by reference to the means-end distinction.

The main problem with this account of rationality seems to be its rigidity. That being so, it can be considered too restrictive. In the normal course of things there are so many actions which are not deliberated at all about their suitability for their achievement of particular ends; and yet it would be totally absurd to place them outside the ambit of the rationality/irrationality sphere. It can be mentioned that apart from most habitual actions such as eating, walking, playing etc. they would also include what might be called "spontaneous" actions such as enthusiastically greeting a friend whom one has not met for a considerable length of time, or helping an old person across the road, or giving a coin to a beggar by the road side, helping up a fallen child and so on. It can be said, of course, actions such as these are rational, but their being rational requires that they are capable of being <u>justified,</u> and that their justification would require the agent to relate them suitably to ends either after or before the action in question. Though this account of rationality might save it from

being too narrow and therefore restrictive, there would still be other class of actions which even by this less restrictive account of rationality would still have to be treated as either irrational or quite outside the purview of the rationality/irrationality scale altogether. By this is meant the class of actions which are so uniquely distinctive of human beings that it would be quite incredible to treat them as either irrational or non-rational — actions which usually are labled as "artistic activity". And so people who engage in such activities as poets, sculptors, painters, musicians and so on with various kinds of ends in view, e.g. attracting other peoples' admiration and earning a livelihood and so on. However, frequently, they may engage themselves in these activities without any end in view at all; so that the only justification on the part of such artists or perhaps more technically, agents of such an action may be to say that it was done purely out of pleasure. The expression: "I simply felt like doing it, and that is all there was to it", just about sums it up. Yet it would be absurd to think of such an action as irrational or non-rational. A person recognizing his own poetic skill might undertake to write a poem without any end in view further then merely that. And yet perhaps there cannot be anything more deliberate than writing a poem; only this effort may

frequently not be that of the consideration of ends to be achieved by the action, "nor even of any ratiocinative process as ordinarily understood. Reflect on the following passage from Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago: "After two or three stanzas and several images by which he was himself astonished, his work took possession of him and he experienced the approach of what is called inspiration. At such times the correlation of the forces controlling the artist is, as it were, stood on its head. The ascendency is no longer with the artist or the state of mind which he is trying to express, but with language - his instrument of expression. Language, the home and dwelling of beauty and meaning itself begins to think and speak for man and turns wholly into music, not in the sense of outward audible sounds, but by virtue of the power and movement of the inward flow. Then like the current of the mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movements, the flow of speech creates in passing, by the force of its own laws, rhyme and rhythm and countless other forms and formulations, still more important and until now undiscovered, unconsidered and unnamed". (Dr. Zhivago, Tr.: Max Hayward and Manya Harare, London, 1958, p. 105). And yet, as mentioned already writing a poem must certainly count among the most rational of man's actions.

Hence, though it might be claimed that one writes a poem because of the satisfaction that it might bring to one, such an assertion unfortunately renders the means-end distinction rather useless for an understanding of the concept of rationality. For such a justification, namely, of the form, "I do this because it brings me pleasure", will in principle, be suitable for any action whatever that a person might do; and thus all actions would then be rational — which simply would render the concept of rationality as no longer legitimate to distinguish one class of actions from another class. Without this function the concept would simply be empty.

Perhaps a more hopeful line of defence for the account of rationality under consideration might be found in the following arguments: although most artistic activity may not have any conscious or "pre-conscious" ends, they always, according to Freud, have ends that are deep in the unconscious. In such cases their rationality gets revealed when the so called "unconscious ends" are brought to the surface to the level of consciousness (with the help of psycho-analysis). Thus think of Freud's account of some of the paintings of great artists such as Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci. It is interesting to note here that, despite the agents apparently aimless activity, there

exists, from Freud's account powerfully persuasive arguments for the existence of motives (or ends) which although they might lie concealed in the unconscious are nonetheless pursued. Even though for the purpose of this paper a detailed analysis of the Freudian theory may not be required, it may at least be mentioned by way of illustrating, as a paradigm, the difficulty encountered in the previous explanation of rationality with regard to artistic activity. Freudian theory offers an explanation, in terms of unconscious motives not just of artistic activities, but indeed, centrally, of the activities of the neurotic. An acceptance of the Freudian theory of explanation of neurotic behaviour would place such behaviour firmly in the class of behaviour that is rational. Thus according to the Freudian theory, not only would artistic activity conform to the criteria of rationality (according to the account of rationality that we are considering), but neurotic behaviour would also be considered as rational. The situation then confronting one is, if neurotic behaviour were just a good an example of rational behaviour as artistic activity, would there be any clear example of irrational behaviour left at all? Thus an appeal to unconscious ends in trying to explain the rationality of some actions which are so obviously rational, or even paradigmatically rational, might result in the obliteration or near obliteration of the distinction between the

rational and the irrational and might thus self-defeatingly preclude the whole purpose of a theory of rationality.

Now continuing with this account of rationality there is yet another fairly large class of actions which would, or so it seems, have to be treated as either irrational or non-rational. This is the class of actions which may broadly be classified as religious rituals. Many indeed treat behaviour associated with religious rituals as irrational - supposedly attributing such activities to neurosis, superstitions etc. Such views of religion are held usually by those who advocate the "cause of rationalism", "the scientific outlook" and so on. Despite however, claims to the contrary such people unilluminatingly show some reluctance to brand behaviour so uniquely characteristic of human beings such as rituals, as irrational or even non-rational.

Likewise, if Kant were right about the morality of an action not consisting in any considerations of ends that it might or might not achieve — and to be sure, Kant's moral theory is not merely a quaint intellectual exercise — all moral actions qua moral actions would indeed be seen as non-rational, if not irrational, on this account of rationality. But it would, however, be another matter what Kant

considers actions which are clearly moral, on his criterion of morality, to be the supreme example of the exercise of rationality.

The difficulty of this theory of rationality might be expressed thus: The theory totally ignores the rationality of ends. Apart, however, from the classes of cases that have been considered, there is also the traditional idea of the proper or correct end of human life. There have been different approaches for such an end. In traditional Indian life, one notes for example, the notion of dharma or the virtuous life, moksa or happiness, wisdom and so on. The idea which is crucial here, is that in so far as the method for the "proper end of human life" is conceived merely and purely as an end, and also not as a means to a further end (that is, an "end-in itself" as traditionally expressed) its justification cannot, quite obviously, consist in citing any end to which it might be a means. (Without some such notion of an "end-in-itself" the argument concerning whether or not the end justifies the means indeed becomes unintelligible). On the other hand, one cannot fail to notice that much of traditional moral philosophy consists in attempts at justifying, or at least advocates for the "proper end" of human life. Therefore, from the traditional point of view of morality, the idea that ends (in-themselves,

if one wishes) being excluded from the bounds of rationality must be taken to be, if not absolutely unintelligible, at least strange indeed.

In our modern philosophy in its linguistic or existentialist mode, as the works of people such as Sartre, who represents the Existentialist mode of thinking or as evidenced in the ideas of linguistic philosophers such as Hare, Hampshire and Sartre testify, the 'self', or rather the real agent stands, as it were, over and against the world of facts, that is, over the world of knowledge, both theoretical and practical. There is also the widely held belief that rationality in practical matters, as opposed to theoretical matters, is really a matter of matching of means to ends, which may, in their turn, be means to further ends. Here the real agent is, as it were", a tiny spark of freedom" whose very being consists in making choices which transcends all considerations of rationality."* This idea, as has been mentioned already, in the earlier parts of this chapter, is derived ultimately from Kant. But Kant made a serious attempt to show that the self in the exercise of its freedom, can be either rational or irrational. On the other hand, in the existentialist-linguistic mode of thinking, the moment the process of

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* The Means-End Distinction, Rationality and the Moral Life: M. Miri.

rationality begins, the 'self', as a result of that, enters into the web of knowledge and of calculations which bind or ensnare its freedom. In its original, pristine and unfettered state, the self simply makes choices which are as it were, uncorrupted by the calculous of rationality. It is this state of freedom of the self which, most of these philosophers like to claim, is the most "authentic", (whatever the word might mean here) state for a human being to be in. Therefore, it is claimed, man's ultimate choices of ends, his ultimate principles of actions, are beyond the bounds of rationality. However, this perhaps does not make them irrational, although some might say it does, but at least it makes them non-rational (not perhaps in the same way as a reflex action is non-rational).

Let us, for a little while dwell on some speculative intellectual history here; this modern turn in what might be taken to be the central debate in traditional moral philosophy is, interestingly, really the point where several currents of contemporary thought and practice converge. Here are some of them: (1) there is the idea following Strawson, that the only intelligent (and, therefore, rational) attitude to take towards nature as well as human action is the "objective" attitude (as opposed to the "reactive" or "participatory attitude". Now morality, which deals with the

possibility of goodwill or ill-will is dependent on the legitimacy of the "participatory" or "reactive attitude".*

(2) There is the idea that the belief that there are absolutes in matters of morality is an illusory one (hence the notion of a "permissive society").

(3) The rationality that man exercises in matters of theory and practice can, in principle, be just as well exercised by machines if not better; yet the machine is not "free" (perhaps precisely because it is so rational, or "logical" as it is sometimes put) though one might conceive of machines going out of control and turning "destructive".

(4) There is also the lurking anxiety that devoid of freedom man loses his special unique status.

All these ideas about man, in modern philosophy quite naturally, generates the debate about ultimate ends. Man is declared as, indeed, free; but this freedom in the sense it is meant is thus only possible of being exercised "in an intellectual vacuum". Therefore paradoxically, man's humanity might be saved only by allowing him to transcend, in his most authentic being, his intelligence. The tension, as

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*This has also been dealt with in Chapter 2.

again Strawson puts it, between are "humanity and our intelligence" is resolved by "freeing", as the argument goes, the former from the latter. Thus from the standpoint of modern moral philosophy, rationality is ruled out from any genuine exercise of his freedom by man; and consequently ends, if they are the result of any genuine choice, are not rational even if, for that reason, they might not be irrational.

Now, we might thus ask that if our ultimate ends are not rational, or at least, are neither rational nor irrational can they, then be moral or immoral? or are they indeed beyond the morality/immorality distinction as well? One common answer to this - which is quite typically modern - has been that the notion of the morality of ends is indeed a legitimate one; but however, what endows the characteristic of morality to our ultimate ends is precisely the facts that they are totally ungrounded. That is, they are the result of the unfettered exercise of man's freedom. A logical consequence of this is the much quoted existatialist dictum "man creates his own values" - literally creates, ex nihilo, God like - it is quite clear that morality and irrationality - or at least non-rationality from this account of man's absolute freedom, are to the modern mind, very close logical associates.

Instead of dwelling on the crucial difficulties with this modern vision of moral life and the pursuit of ends let us, more profitably, at least for the purpose of this discussion, look for an alternative vision of the moral life where rationality, and not non-rationality or irrationality, is the inalienable concomittant of the moral life and pursuit of proper ends.

What would be considered the central idea of this vision is that the discrimination between ends is not ultimately a matter of man's ungrounded choice; it is rather, as the argument goes, man's general search for truth. And an end might be a moral end, not because it is the result of "free" choice (in the sense of the existentialist - linguistic mode of thinking) but because it is known or recognised as such. Thus the vision of morality puts the moral ends firmly within the class of ends which it is rational to pursue. The moral end is justified because it is the moral end quite independently of any exercise of my freedom, and its rationality is guaranteed by the fact that it is known to be moral.

The rationality of the moral endeavour is, however, not just a matter of one's knowledge that the end one is pursuing is the moral end; it is also, much more significantly, a consequence of the fact that the moral pursuit is,

in its essence also an epistemic endeavour. One of the various ways of explaining this, as we have had the occasion to note earlier, may be as follows: let us say, the moral end, consists in achieving justice in relation to others. Here the term "justice" minimally means justice in one's evaluation of one's fellow beings. To be just in this sense also means not only to be justified in one's assessment of another person, but perhaps more importantly also to do justice to him. This could be explained thus: one is justified in one's assessment of another person in the same way as one might be justified in making a claim to know that p. Whatever p might stand for. Hence, for one to be justified here is for one to be able to give a sound justification of one's assessment. But to do justice to the other person involves the idea which is much more than being merely justified in one's assessment of him; what is of paramount requirement is that one has ensured that one's ego has not, in its multifarious subtle ways clouded one's assessment, One's ego uses these ploys to deceive oneself in relation to the other; and to have done justice to the other person is also to have conquered to the extent possible, one's self deceiving ego. Here it will be wrong to think that whatever might lend rationality to the moral end, the rationality of the pursuit of the moral end is still a matter of calculated matching of the means adopted towards achieving this end. (Removal of self-deception as the most

suitable means, in the required sense, towards achieving justice to the other person). Here, from the phenomenological point of view, "the end" is inconceivable "apart from this means". How can one be sure that one has done justice to the other person, if there is the slightest possibility that in one's assessment of him one has only self-deceivingly served one's own ego? In such an eventuality, it will be absurd to talk about the 'means' as the "best" or the "most suitable", since given the "end", the "means" is quite inescapable. Indeed, the very idea of a means-end distinction is totally inappropriate in this context. In the phenomenology of morals, justice and freedom from self-deception are related to each other in a way in which a "means" and an "end" ordinarily do not. For example, doing physical exercise is a means to good health, but the two are not bound to each other as a "moral end" is bound to its means. Thus, the very process of achieving justice towards another person is the very process of attaining freedom from self-deception.

Think now of the moral end as the achievement of the virtuous life. A virtuous person is not merely one who possesses the so called virtues such as courage, intelligence, temperance and so on. Though this argument has been offered earlier, let me dogmatically repeat some of the

central points about what constitutes a virtuous life. A moral life is one where the virtues come together in a mutually enhancing unity. In isolation and taken singly, the virtues need not, in fact very often do not, form a part of the moral life at all. Mention has been made, as an example of Godse who has used the virtue of courage for a most immoral purpose: that of killing a human being, thereby ignoring the other virtues such as "kindness", "tolerance", "forgiveness", and so on. And similarly with the virtue of "intelligence". As to temperance, "if it is untempered by the vital unity of the moral life it is for ever in danger of degenerating into soulless ritualistic desciplining of oneself"*. The question now is 'what makes these so called virtues an inseparable part of the idea of the moral life?' It is truth and love (or more modestly, perhaps, ahimsa). Truth once again in the sense of freedom from self-deception. And here, as already mentioned earlier, it is never enough that one speaks the truth only occasionally; one must, indeed, live the life of truth. Once again, we invoke the idea of Witlgenstein who declares that, for one who has not mastered himself, is in no way possible to speak the truth; not because such a person is not clever enough yet, but because the truth can be spoken only by some

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*Ibid., p. 14.

one who is at home in it - not by someone who, despite living in falsehood on occasion reaches out to the truth, and as we have been groping so far to explain, the life of truth can be hoped to be achieved, only through love, or at least through the practice of ahimsa —Not in a sense of non-violence but more correctly, in the sense of non-injury. For the idea of "non-injury" to others must include desisting from using the other - in however self-deceiving and devious a way - in the service of one's own ego. As has been maintained, ahimsa may occasionally flower into love; and love perhaps much more than ahimsa is the opposite of egotism. Gandhi declares that love is the positive mode of ahimsa. Thus to have loved someone is also to have conquered one's ego in relation to that person. At the heart of the idea of love is the idea of total selflessness - which is just another way of expressing the idea of ego-lessness. So, the idea of love here carries with it the responsibility of the perpetual need to suppress the ego. It is an ever gnawing consciousness of the easily compromisable effort to slacken its vigilance and defeat the whole purpose of even the most altruistic of our actions. What we might call love is therefore, no love at all, if its metaphysical truth is unrecognised or ignored. Thus the crucial point to remember here in this regard is the fact that love is reflexivity.

The reason why many fail to achieve this notion of love is because of the fear of the challenge it poses. Hence, very often, our metaphysical timidity quashes our moral aggression.

Thus, the rationality of the moral end is once more guaranteed by the fact that the moral pursuit is at the same time, the pursuit of truth. So, by now, if one apprehends the notion of the moral life in the sense expressed here, it will be wrong to think of truth, ahimsa and love as the "means" to the achievement of the goal of the virtuous life. As it were, they are at the heart of the life of the virtues. Hence, the virtuous life can, as conceived traditionally 'move and have its being' in the vital matrix of truth, ahimsa and love.

From this account of morality, or the vision of moral life, it is clear that "freedom" here cannot mean the freedom which creates, ex nihilo, moral values, because of the plain fact that moral values are not created at all. Nor can the idea of freedom be a matter of completely ungrounded decision. Of course, decisions to act one way or another may indeed in that narrow sense be ungrounded. But this has nothing to do with the concept of morality. Thus, free action, when it is also a moral action, must on the other hand, have its legitimacy on prior knowledge. When I have

unself - deceivingly known the other in love and ahimsa, my action towards that person springs from this knowledge, and freedom consists precisely in this spontaneous flow of action from knowledge.

The notions of any society is bound to generate insufficient knowledge, or worse still, a wrong idea of the workings of that institution, if its relationship with other institutions is excluded. The result would be a report based on a warped perception. It is obvious therefore, that 'religious' concepts cannot be studied in isolation. Part of the understanding of what may be called the "spirit" of a religion consists, it seems to me, in one's being able to relate the religion to other institutions and spheres of life of the society in question. Take for instance, the Christian notion of God as "Father". It would naturally be absurd to accept that in such anthropomorphic literality. But then, however, it is also more than merely metaphorical in its use. The meaning of such usage would emerge only against the background of a form of life which encompasses much more than what may narrowly be understood as the "religious", and one's understanding of the concept becomes richer through progressive exploration of the concept in an indefinite variety of contexts and also against the background of an equally indefinite and unpredictable variety of

experiences; or examine the notion of the popular dictum: "Love thy neighbour as thyself" which appears to be the central core of Christianity. It is seemingly an exhortation, to transcend one's egocentricism, and instead practice 'humility' — similar to the Gandhian 'ahimsa'. This ideal of total selflessness may never be attained as has been discussed, by anyone, considering human frailties, but the morality nevertheless, lies in the effort. The point however, is that this is the profound meeting point of the concepts of religion, morality and society. A progressive exploration of this idea is, at the same time, an exploration into the nature of religion, morality and human society. One must not, however commit the fallacy of assimilation while thinking about other religions. Certainly a dialogue between the representatives of different religions is possible, but each must understand the other in the context it is presented in. In a similar fashion, when one's attention is directed towards the study of a society as a whole, one must be cautious that the various institutions form the ensemble of that society, and thus, to study one institution to the total exclusion of the others would lead the observer in acquiring an impressionistic view of the rituals/practices which may at best understandably appear to one as absurd. For the native,

however, the co-ordinated functions of all the various institutions, such as the 'political', 'social roles', 'religion' and so forth, determine his social reality.

The idea of God, as I suggested earlier, guarantees the non-illusory character of the moral pursuit. It is not as though a non-religious person cannot be convinced of the authenticity of the moral life. However, for the religious person nothing can be clearer than this. It ~~is~~ now seems to be necessary that we have some understanding of the idea of the religious in the context of the phenomenon of the plurality of religion.

We have already made the point that there is a particularly intimate connection between a religion or a form of life and its language. Clarity about the concepts of a particular religion cannot be achieved except by relating them to the language in which they "live and have their being", and the form of life which this life embodies. This however does not entitle us to draw a relativistic conclusion about the relationship between different religions. Although the concepts of different religions may vary from one another according to the form of life in which they play their specific roles, yet the suggestion that the concepts of one religion may frequently throw light on the concepts of the other and vice-versa, is not at all unsound,

but it is also a fact that there are clusters of concepts which in spite of their differences in their specific normal settings, are easily recognizable as religious concepts, that is concepts which, as it were, transcend the bounds of any particular religion and somehow enter into the idea of religion as such. Such are the concepts, for example, of surrender to a non-human intelligent power, of prayer, of meditation, of the search for the spiritual as opposed to the merely material, and the idea that there is much more to this world than what can be perceived merely through the senses. These ideas may be differently spelt out in different religious languages and they may be embodied in activities which may be substantially different from one another. Thus think of the concept of prayer and worship, and imagine the enormous differences between activities which are connected with these concepts in different religions. Even within the same religion there are differences. But in spite of such dissimilarities it can hardly be doubted that one can talk about the concept of prayer and worship in relation to religion as such, and not just as always specific to a particular religion.

Perhaps one might fruitfully make use of the Wittgensteinean concept of "family resemblance". One might say that we have the concept of religion at all, not because there is

a network of criss-crossing similarities among all the activities which go by the name of religion. One must however be cautious in accepting such a position. There have been people who have, for instance, talked about the essential unity of all religions, and when such claims are made it is some particular feature that they have in mind and not just a network of similarities. However, such claims are usually not purely descriptive but rather normative in character. (This might however raise the interesting question as to whether philosophy when it is concerned with either Religion or morality can be completely value-neutral. I shall however leave this question aside for the purpose of this present work). One can say the following about the claim of the essential unity of religions.

1. That it is not obviously odd or nonsensical.
2. That it may itself be the product of a profound religious insight.
3. That there is nothing absurd in the suggestion that the claims might at some future time be taken seriously by all religions and be incorporated into their respective forms of life. In other words, an inter-religious dialogue is not an incoherent concept and the consequences of such a dialogue might well be the realization, on the part of all the protagonists, of the basic unity of all religions.

Given this caution, however, the idea of family resemblance is a useful one in thinking about the phenomena of religion. It is useful because there are not only genuine differences between religions and religious practices, but, even the similarities that they exhibit are always, or almost always, similarities - to put it paradoxically — with a difference. There are for instance obvious similarities between the devout Hindu's total self-surrender to say, Krishna, and the devout Christian's total self-surrender to Christ. But the phenomenologies, as it were, of these self-surrenders are different, and an access to these different phenomenologies can be afforded only by a grasp of the two different religious languages and their corresponding 'forms of life'.

CHAPTER - IV

LANGUAGE, TRADITION, MODERNITY AND CHANGE

Let me begin this chapter with a quotation from Verrier Elwin's A Philosophy For NEFA, where late Jawaharlal Nehru remarked:

> "I am alarmed when I see - not only in this country but in other great countries too - how anxious people are to shape others according to their own image or likeness, and to impose upon them their particular way of living. We are welcome to our way of living, but why impose it on others? This applies equally to national and international fields. In fact, there would be peace in the world if people were to desist from imposing their way of living on other people and countries."
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> "I am not at all sure which is the better way of living, the tribal or our own. In some respects I am quite certain their's is better. Therefore, it is grossly presumptuous on our part to approach them with an air of superiority, to tell them how to behave or what to do and what not to do. There is no point in trying to make of them a second-rate copy of ourselves."

From the above remark one gets a fairly clear idea of the late Prime Minister favouring a non-interference as far as possible, in what is generally known as the 'tribal' way of life or another 'form of life' in the hope of "reforming" it. There are numerous social scientists who subscribe to this view, for instance, names such as John Collier in America, Rattray in Africa and so on, are familiar upholders of this notion.

The central theme of this chapter is the question of understanding the ideas of 'traditionalism and modernity'. It is often asked as to which of these two notions is the more desirable one. If the enquiry is directed towards weighing the merits of one over the other, the absurdity is certainly apparent. Firstly, every age calls itself 'modern'; it can also claim to be traditional in the sense of continuing with or participating in the observance of certain basic rituals and moral and social norms, without which the expression 'being traditional' can have no sense. Now of course, if the concept of modernity has a historical continuity with traditionalism, the latter must be seen as an evolvement of the former. It is perfectly intelligible to imagine a culture which has remained static for a length of time Thus, the concept of modernity has significance only with reference to the past, and susceptible to alterations in future. This must be so if a culture is to survive, by conforming to environmental and material changes. A progressive or dynamic culture always brings life-enhancing changes in all areas of life. However, just look around and one observes that technological growth encourages, vulgar consumerism at the cost of ethical values and jeopardizes the delicate balance of one's moral or spiritual life with the world of materialism. In every progressive culture,

there is the provision for the uniform growth of both these aspects of man's life. Wittgenstein's remark that 'every language is complete' must surely mean that a culture or a 'form of life' is an autonomous, self-sustaining unit with all the various activities within it imbued with significance and no parts non-sensical. Hence, the well-being of a 'form of life' depends on the multifarious parts acting with each other in a mutually enhancing way. Man is essentially a centre of sanity and wisdom; his aspirations in its nature cannot only be wholly a mechanism for ordering impressions of sensations which the human organism receives from outside and for signalling a variety of messages useful for survival, important though these functions are. Besides being a 'language-wielding', 'self-enquiring' creature, man is also a 'truth-seeking' creature. This aspect of man determines his attitude and relationship with the physical world and the spiritual world. It is perhaps only through this, that one might realise quite distinctive world-views held by man in primordial times and in the present modern situation. This distinction is, very possibly, the most crucial difference between what may be termed as 'Traditional thought' and the modern view of the 'Self'. As to the exposition of the traditional man and

his relation with nature, I have relied quite substantially on the view held by A.K. Saran.[1]

It is believed that the main characteristics of traditional man is that he identifies himself as an indivisible part of nature or the cosmos. This being so, man is thus an integral part of the universe. This premise presupposes therefore, a certain unity between 'the microcosm and the macrocosm'; it may hence, be called either as an anthropocosmic or, alternatively, a cosmo-anthropomorphic vision of man.

Secondly, this vision of man is based on what might be called a doctrine of signatures, or the creative theory of language. The fundamental principle of this theory is based on the assumption that, the visible or what is apprehended is the manifestation of the invisible. The underlying significance of this theory is that the invisible imbues substantiality to the visible. It is not, as the argument goes, a dialectic between the known and the unknown; it is not the unknown that calls forth knowledge, but the invisible, the unknowable. Hence, it is the unperceived that lends form and legitimacy to what is seen.

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1. Language Tradition and Modern Civilisation. Indian Philosophical Quarterly Publications, (Ed. Ramchandra Gandhi). Department of Philosophy, Poona University, Pune.

Conversely, therfore, "knowledge and language are always being let, as it were, into a secret".[2] What this system advocates is that one draws forth knowledge from an inexplicable, ineffable, alchemical reserve of infinite cosmos, which, in its endless bounty remains ever elusive to finite man's attempt at a holistic grasp of it.

The interesting feature of this system of knowledge is its assumed unity. It is not the case that man's pursuit for knowledge culminates somehow contingently, advantageously or maybe, even inconveniently in an integrated unified system. Nor is it the case that such a system is, therefore, quite dispensable. The essence of the matter is that the very system assumes a common core, that is, a centre which is, as mentioned, 'the unknowable' or 'the invisible'. Hence, this traditional theory of knowledge assumes, at the very outset, a unity. In contemporary theories of language, signs or symbols are thought to be a product of language and knowledge. In the traditional view of language, however, knowledge is the product of given signs. Hence, what this vision postulates, is that, knowledge is the result of truth derived from nature.

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2. Ibid.

Traditional thought maintains that there is no clear-cut definitive distinction between unity and multiplicity. The 'I' carries with it the notion of a symbolic unity with the cosmos, and simultaneously, the possibility of the idea of manifesting itself in plurality.

In the traditional view, knowledge accrues from deciphering the symbols that are manifested, and the explanations always have a gnostic interpretation, unlike, as Saran contends, parochial scientific thought which, because of its agnosticism, is naively and dogmatically impoverished to that extent. Scientific thought pronounces that 2 + 2 is merely 4, while symbolic thought searches for the hidden meanings hidden behind the number of phenomena. Since these meanings are not sensuously experienced, they remain ever a secret. Symbolic Hindu thought, as the example goes, interprets the number '4' as symbolising the 'universe' and not merely the aggregate of four units. Similarly for the grammarian, the alphabets are not just building blocks, as it were, of spoken or written languages. It is said that the second letter of the DEVANAGIRI script 'kha' symbolises the ether, sky and the cosmic world.

It has been argued that the modern concept of man is an aberration and hence, the only valid question in this

area is not the anthropological question 'what is man?' but the more comprehensive traditional query: 'who am I?'. The approach to the matter in the traditional set up forms a segment or a part of agnostic inquiry into the 'unknowable' whose cosmosity is given, as it were, and in which is contained the symbolic correspondences constituting the invisible life of the cosmos. This cosmosity implies a unity and multiplicity which entail each other. Now, the very notion of anthropology is a modern notion.

First, the anthropological mode 'what is man'? has the consequence of man being objectified, so that this question is on a par logically and substantively with the question like 'what is a table'? or 'what is a blackboard'? and so on. It fails to express the presupposition that man is not an object and thus lets us lapse into the status of objects and this is clearly a paradoxical situation, for although man is considered as something unique, something different from the rest of the cosmos, the anthropological mode of questioning does not, in any way whatsoever, hint at this either logically or even syntactically.

Secondly, if this mode of enquiry is accepted as a basis for investigations about man, then the question starts with a gap between the epistemic and the ontic levels;

between knowledge and being. This is an irredeemable chasm that cannot, in principle, ever be bridged.

The third consequence of all knowledge of man, accrued through anthropological investigation is bound to be impoverishing as the enquiry is principally empirical. Hence, the research results in an account of man of what he has done in the matter of civilisation and culture. The other aspect of man, namely the ontological aspect is ignored. Hence, the form of enquiry excludes man's essence, from the very outset. The modern view, therefore, that man can only have a history and be understood solely through his accomplishments and does not find it necessary to take into account his nature and destiny, is incomplete in its investigation.

Fourthly, the anthropological enquiry fails to offer a coherent account of pre-modern man either in terms of a discontinuous dichotomy, or as in the works of the structuralists, in terms of a continuum linking both pre-modern and modern man. The result is that traditional man is made problematic. Modern thought here faces a dilemma. If history, as such, is denied modern times, it must be considered non-historical. Yet, it prides itself on being historical. Now again, if the history of man is taken into account before the emergence of the modern age, the consciousness

of traditional man may be explained in one of the following ways: It may be explained in evolutionary terms with the process of a continuous development from beginning to modern age, or as the difference between error-ignorance and 'knowledge-truth'. At first, a discontinuity was considered and posited with its inevitable difficulties. However, now modern thought finds it more convenient to explain traditional man's consciousness by positing a continuity as found in the works of the so-called Structuralists, among whom Levi Strauss has earned prominence.

Thus, now it is rather clear to apprehend that the modern form of the question 'what is man'? jeopardizes or disrupts the traditional conviction of a unity between man and the 'divine', since man, in this mode of questioning has been reified. This separativeness, though, inevitably encourages unacceptable conclusions, there is seemingly, within this framework, a redeeming theory which advocates that man must become, to the extent possible, master of the world. This is not, on the final analysis, a solution to the problem, but it explains modern man's vision of himself, and his ambitions and has indeed, drawn the attention of social scientists as a prestigious anxiety. The conquest of nature by man, by its very logic, is descriptive of the unity and is thus responsible for the reversal of the normal

relationship: whereas, knowledge should control its applications, the possibilities of application now control knowledge.

Lastly, the nature of the question 'what is man?' though excludes the questioner (which could in theory be a non-human being) it is an indubitable fact that it is man himself who is asking it. While on the other hand, the autological question 'who am I?' includes the questioner both semantically and syntactically. Thus it might be called a pseudo-question from a certain point of view.

In the modern scientific mode, knowledge of man is necessarily through his works, and since man himself is the enquirer, it is quite plain to admit that the object and subject of enquiry here is one and the same. In the human sciences, man is both the object and subject of enquiry, unlike in the natural sciences where he is only the subject and not the object of enquiry. However, from the point of view of traditional man the subject of enquiry, say the natural scientist, is not distinguished from nature. So, whether man is investigationg nature or himself, it is the same phenomenon he investigates. However, in the modern view,

with the loss of the unified anthropocosmic view, which as we have seen, pre-modern man had elaborated, there is a feeling of objecthood and alienation which modern man seeks to overcome, with no hope of success, by trying to reshape the cosmos in his own image. It is the modern view's slogan that we can understand only what we have made, and so, since nature is not man-made, we cannot ultimately have valid knowledge of it. However, as history is made by man, he can have systematic, valid knowledge of history. It is also a postulate of traditional thought that we can understand only what we ourselves make. The crucial difference however, in traditional thought is that the world and man are not man-made, so a holistic grasp of either by man is not possible. Therefore the logic of modern thought leads man to pronounce that since he cannot understand what is not made by him he employs science at his command and disturbs the normal science-technology relationship which a healthy scientific climate would require.

This modern attitude to life has certain tremendous adverse consequences. The first being that man's relationship with the material world is inverted. It was normally the case that man finds his earthly limitations as a negation or an obstacle, albeit temporarily, to his identity with the infinite cosmos. Now this, being the

case, the anthropological question of making the subject and object of study the same, inverts this relationship. And so, given the rupture that separates man from nature, there is a categorical division between the natural sciences, where man, along with other natural phenomena is the object of study, and the human or social sciences, where man is a problematic subject - object of investigation. The moment that this need for the knower and the known to be identical arises in the context of enquiry, the enquirer faces the principle that you can only understand fully what you have made or done yourself, and thus concludes since we do not understand fully what we have not made, we will have to make our own universe so that we may come to understand it, by reshaping it under our control. So man, a finite, empirical being, whose vision has narrowed down to the point where he sees himself as an object, ends up determined to play the role of an infinite, transcendental, environment reshaping being. Thus, an empirical theory of transcendence is presupposed in this mode and the very enterprise rests on the efficacy of this mode.

However, since this enterprise rests on a misunderstanding of our own nature, as well as that of the cosmos, there are grave and ultimately prohibitive costs within the modern form of investigation and its associated

technological adventure. These costs, characterised as unassailable 'residues', left by the modern endeavour become indubitably pronounced within the modern perspective itself; and the costs are so high that, some day, people will have to return, as the argument goes, to the traditional view of things.

The residues which modern thought about man leaves and recognises have been explicated in the following ways: they are the residues of temporality, experience and imagination, identity and rationality.

First, the residue of temporality. No one has any memory of one's birth, nor experienced the overtaking of death. As opposed to the traditional world-view, where life and death, sleeping and waking, demons and angels have all the appropriate ontological explanations and form a part of the totality of the cosmos besides other phenomena, modern thought fears and so basically avoids any theory related to the idea of death. But this is mainly in the individual level and so pronounced that science as such, is not concerned with the individual. However, if one looks at pre-history for instance, or geology, archaeology and anthropology in the light of ethnography one finds that a time has been posited when nature and earth existed, but man's existence had not yet

evolved. But when one conceptualises it, it is done as if mankind were already there, because the modes of perception through which this is done are human modes. This is an obvious contradiction, since if mankind had not existed then, a description is not possible at all. It is not like saying today's man is not the Roman man or a Chinese and so on, because we do posit some continuity between ourselves and the people of the races mentioned. Similarly we might even posit a link between ourselves and pre-historic man. However it seems to be an absurdity to talk of a continuity between a time uninhabited by man and times inhabited by him. This impermissible description of such a residue of time seem to be basic to some theories of the social sciences as regards the construction of pre-history.

There is, similarly, no relationship seemingly, in man's life, between the past and future. One is related to the past through memory, and the future only through experience. However these are pure subjective concepts and so, unless one can appear to a non-subjective theory of memory and hope, the conceptual discontinuity between past and future, and the existential continuity between them will never be bridged. This is yet another instance of a residue of temporality, not only palpable but actually created by modern thought, and still unfortunately incapable of absorbing it.

Secondly, there are the residues of experience and imagination. What is observed is the unaccountable wonder that man's energy exceeds his experiences, and also that strange laws and demands are imposed upon him. How is it that man has been the subject of a language which has been formed without him, and within which he is obliged to lodge his speech and thought? Is it that the words he uses merely animates a segment of his varied energy to innumerable possibilities? In other words, the concepts we use for understanding ourselves in contemporary thought have as its basis in a frame of imagination which man in terms of anthropological knowledge lacks. Thus, this becomes a residue.

The next residue is that of man's identity with regard to the explanation of it in modern terms. A description of the 'Self', whatever the description maybe, in whatever aspect, the implication is that the 'I' is always 'n plus 1'. What is meant is this: that 'I' apart from being the knower, is also the known. And the known must be 'n plus 1' because ~~the~~ it cannot be equal to 'n' which he knows. Now this being a residue, modern thought has no way of coping with it, but indeed ironically, it has engendered it. The problem is not that valid human theories do not know of residues. As mentioned and implied

all along, traditional thought has its basis on the concept of residues. So in this conceptual framework, the notion of residues has its rightful place in the Ontological scheme of things.

The residue of rationality appears rather strongly as the culmination of the earlier ones. Its characteristic seems pronounced in three main aspects of life. They are unreason or irrationality, the unconscious and sex.

1. Even in the modern frame of thinking, the 'unconscious' is taken to be an autonomous concept, which means, it is not believed to be a part of the conscious and which, in due course of time will become conscious. The notions of sleep and death are accepted as independent generic concepts. In certain ways, the unconscious as a concept is the discovery of modern thought itself. Marx might, therefore, have been hasty in pronouncing that in some future time, man will have full understanding of all that there are and that there will be nothing unexplianable, for those who recognise it, cannot honestly speak of it as being abolished at any time.

2. On the surface, the idea of 'irrationality' looks like a lower form of rationality, one might very well be tempted to brand it as a kind of sub-rationality. On analysing the form of irrational structures, however, as

discovered by modern social sciences, one will not think of them as a derogatory form of rationality which could be overcome with the development of human reason. Modern thought recognises various irrational structures of which religious form of life is one. The idea is also understood in terms either of a combination of unconscious motives and irrationality, or purely as irrational structures of which there are many. Therefore, it may not be correct to say that religion as such, and not just certain mistakes inherent in it, will disappear altogether when there comes a day when man understands everything about the natural world. The notion of irrationality is as independent and autonomous as the concept of reason, similarly as the idea of the unconscious which is inborn with man and employed as a principle of explanation and theory construction in modern social sciences.

3. Lastly, sex is basically a residue because it is usually treated as a kind of primal energy not essentially a part of human life, so that its form, transformation and perversions are usually recognised against the background of a combination of the unconscious and sex or in terms of itself. This is quite evident in the modern attitude to life, where language, being a repository of a 'form of life' reflects the monopoly of the scientific and industrial

mode of production over the traditional mode of cosmic perception. The language of modern society particularly the industrial nations identify the worth of labour with the outputs of industry. The seemingly total materialization of consciousness is self-reflected in every activity of life. Schools have, as their aim of production 'education', while earlier, people ask what children 'learn'. "The functional shift from verb to noun highlights the corresponding impoverishment of the social imagination. People who speak a nominalist language habitually express proprietary relationships to work which they have". Modern people, whether they be labourers or bureaucrats, talk about having-work, while peasants say they do it. Those who have been modernized expect industries not only to produce more goods but also more work for more people. People acquire knowledge, mobility even sensitivity or health. They have not only work or fun but even sex. Hence, the sexual aspect of man which is treated traditionally as a necessary adjunct to human or animal life is treated now as something 'extra' which may or may not be had according to choice. The perversion of this instinct is too evident, particularly in the modern Western societies where science has determined the evolution of, what is known popularly as, the 'permissive society',

Of course, this is not to say, (it will be too wrongly naive to claim that it does) that even in former times, licentiousness does not exist, nor celibacy considered virtuous, but each has its proper explanations, unlike modern times, which basically, tries to ignore it from the realm of morality. Problems in this regard are solved merely jurisprudentially. Hence, this is also a residue of rationality since reason is regarded as the basic tool and a sufficient one for understanding and coping with them. Yet they are not subsumable by reason alone and regarded as sovereign and autonomous from other areas of life, with their own particular needs and demands.

We have seen some of the problems basic and inevitable to society which views man as an object, illustrated in the question: "What is man?" or a distorted transition from the traditional self-enquiring, truth-seeking "who am I?" The traditional concern by its very nature of the enquiry reflects the very idea of self-consciousness, which, by implication, would mean a perpetual anxiety for the 'Self' and its relationship with the non-human world. The 'I' as in speech, is established as a manifestation of our independence from causality in the narrow but humanity-defining area of our lives where self-consciousness explicitly reigns. Thus, it seems to me that, in a broad sense,

the 'Self' must have precedence over the material world and not, as is often the case, presently in many societies, be subsumed under it. Intemperate consumerism is the inevitable result of identifying the 'Self' with the world of materialism. This inversion of perspective from the traditional to the modern leads to an inversion of values.

What is now quite expected to be asked is: 'What is the idea of progress?' Does it mean technological sophistication alone with the spiritual aspect relegated to a mere contingency? The ills of this perspective is all too evident in the irreligious, unmetaphysical scientifically — advanced countries. The spiritual poverty renders them liable to fall prey to all sorts of meretricious cults with temporary remedies. Hence, poverty in the spiritual aspect of one leads to self-destructive consequences. For instance, the high rate of suicide in the West testifies to a contempt of life as difficult and meaningless. On the other hand, one cannot rationally advocate a social system where science and technology are vehemently discouraged to the extent of threatening earthly existence. Common sense recognises that scientific discoveries can be used in at least two different and opposite ways. Namely, where the essence of man or the 'Self' is relegated to serving

machines, and where technology is subservient to it. The first leads to "specialisation of functions, institutionalisation of values and centralisation of power and turns people into the accessories of bureaucracies or machines. The second enlarges each person's competence, control and initiative, limited only by other individuals' claims to an equal range of power and freedom."[3]

To formulate a theory or framework about a future society which is considered modern and at the same time not dominated by industry, the principle concern should be the recognition of natural scales and limits. The first case to bear in mind, it would seem to appear, is that only within certain limits can machines replace human labour; "beyond these limits they lead to a new kind of serfdom".[4] Similarly, within certain limits can education be relevant to a man-made environment, beyond that, it leads to a naive dogmatic system. Likewise, politics, too, has its place — its concern ought to be towards the distribution of maximum industrial outputs rather than with equal inputs of energy or information. If the limits of these activities are recognised, then it may be possible

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3. Ivan Illich: Tools for Conviviality, p. 12.
4. Ibid.

to articulate the triadic relationship between 'persons', 'machinery' and a 'new society'.

The issue that concerns us next is, the modalities that would be required in establishing what might be presumptuously labelled as a progressive, balanced modern society. Now a culture, being a form of human life, must of necessity be 'open-ended' if it were to survive in time by adapting itself to the needs and ingenuity of its people. As long as the changes are however not so drastic as to jeopardise other activities within that form, then such ideas are easily incorporated. But if they were to have an adverse effect on the fabric of that form then such ideas would be unwelcome.

Having arrived at this juncture, it may now be appropriate to concern ourselves with the task of answering just how ought a society, for want of a better word, to 'progress'? It will, of course, be inadequate to talk of modernity without taking into account the aspect of technological progress as well. What has been objected to in the Western model is the total, or near total, exclusion of the spiritual aspect of man, thereby, losing sight of the essence of the Self, which is a mircaculous synthesis of mind and body.

For a culture to survive, it must have the element of dynamism in it. In fact, its very survival is its dynamism, which ensures its progressiveness. The truth of this is evident in any of the spoken languages which 'couches' as it were, the spirit of a people. We have had the occasion to mention in a previous chapter that, what lends 'life' to a language is precisely the vibrancy of the culture of which it is a part. Thus, any contemporary language is a 'live' language. Conversely, a 'dead' language (e.g., Latin, Sanskrit or the language spoken during the Harappan civilization) reflects a 'dead' culture. So, unless a culture keeps growing, debilitating inertia would ensure its destruction. A state of entropy is a sign of regression. So, a resistance to change under the garb of cultural loyalty would ironically and tragically only ignorantly auger for its extinction. Thus, obscurantism in cultural life is self-annihilationism. Now the growth of a culture appears to depend mainly on the interaction between self-generating evolutionism (which perhaps could go by the name of 'ingenious creativity') and the internalization of external influences (which might be described as 'innovative adaptations'). This brings us right back to where we have begun: namely, 'how ought to a society modernize?' To assert 'this ought to be undertaken within the cultural

framework' is merely begging the question. To attempt an answer to this question one could not, one feels, do without a clear understanding of the notions of 'reform' and 'revolution' — terms which are so popularly in use in human society these days in modern times.

Before exposing the literal conceptual difference between these two terms, let us first see the natural link between the social life and political life of any given society, so that these notions are better understood which might, hopefully assist one in making a rational choice of either, according to the need of the times.

A political act is usually vindicated by its context. In traditional life, the act of governing is an organic part of the cultural ensemble. In modern times, too, this truth, though very often forsaken, must at least in principle, be recognised. Weber asserts that when an action is directed towards the others, it is then, a social action. Thus, political actions must be such actions which usually find sanction under two main legitimising conditions. They are namely, (1) through the idea of 'Assent' ... which is that the expediency of an act rests on the authority of a culture. (2) 'Dissent' ... this form normally espouses a general principle without any cultural reference. Thus, such an act becomes merely formal.

If one really apprehends culture of a people, there are, one finds, various forms of delight in its institutions. The totality is reverence for the culture. It has been said that 'man', besides being a terrestrial creature, is also a social being. So an action, which conforms to this need, by recognising and pursuing this fact, for the general welfare of society, is constitutive of a 'good life' on earth. The political laws must be such that they always leave open the possibility for the human imagination to exercise its creativity. The section dealing with a 'Critique of Judgement' as found in the Critique of Pure Reason, reports that Kant opines the faculty of 'imagination' builds a schema between what he calls the 'pure' concepts and the 'sensuous' concepts. Hence, the faculties of 'understanding' and 'sensibility' naturally fall in together in imagination (e.g., the appreciation of beauty).

Cultural meanings are usually embedded in two forms, They are, namely, (1) Contextualization or specificity, and (2) Decontextualization or universality (or symbolisation). They are not ontologically different but are two aspects of cultural significations. Symbolisations may be called transcendental concepts, for, as the word suggests, decontextualization transcends situational specifics and thus, effectively serve as exemplars, (e.g., Hamlet — the meaning

is so fecund it can be used as countless generalities and expressed over and over again). Culture may said to be the totality of exemplars, which thus, in principle, cannot be defined exhaustively. They are organic unity orchestrated where each exemplar plays a role. Now, any action has (1) Behaviour — which includes not just involvement but an understanding by the perpetrator, of what is being done and (2) Text — which embodies a representation of a classic communication and may express its meaning either in (a) Hermeneutical form, and (b) biographical form.

A hermeneutical author is not an empirical author. Here the anonymization of the author transforms the empirical author into a subject or the self. The text has a universal addressee and severes the spatio-temporal bonds. The character or the actor of the text is made 'larger than life', and thus acquires a characteristic which is more than a mere person. The figure becomes a 'Personage', whose speeches and actions seem to be prophetic. An epochal actor seems to be adopted by Time to perform a providential act, by articulating the consciousness of the community. The very expression of the text unifies and projects the vision of the good life, besides articulating the longing of the group which they may not even be aware of. So, when politics and culture interact, one becomes

aware of prolific sources of imperatives. Political acts derive its significance from the culture of a people which it seeks to serve; though, however, they are not really parasitical on culture. Any conscientious political act must thus respond to a situation and derive its legitimacy from either or both moral and cultural grounds. So now, we might say with some measure of confidence that 'politics without culture is blind, and culture without politics is empty'. This is not to mean, however, that the cultural aspect of a people is the only source that lends legitimacy to political acts, or that is, political legitimacy is based necessarily on cultural sanctions. One can observe — as in the revolutionary Marxist governments — that traditionalism in such systems has only contingent applications (as in the selection of cultural items such as, songs, dances and literature etc.). The purpose of this discussion is not to show which system of government is more valid but merely to expose the organic relationship that exists between 'culture' and 'politics', — since the idea of politics as conceived traditionally, is as much an integral part of the cultural life as, say, the institution of 'marriage', or religious rituals etc.

On passing we can briefly glance over the doctrine of nationhood which involves a transformation of both politics and culture. Only through this two fold transformation from what is the case, what ought to be, could be envisaged a political culture that would infuse legitimacy into nationhood and statehood. The concern here with nationalism is primarily with nationalism as a doctrine rather than nationalism as a movement, with what constitutes its core ideas rather than with what lends appeal to these ideas at any particular juncture of time and circumstances. There can be little doubt however, that variance of the projected and transformation (of culture and politics) are capable of serving national movements as legitimizing ideologies. And in so far as they are, neither of them are immune to ideological distortion. Which of the two variants lends itself more easily to ideological perversion is however, less relevant to my argument than it is to determine if there is such a thing as an a-political or non-political form of nationalism. The thrust of the argument points to a negative answer. My contention is that both doctrinal variance involve not a shift from the political to the non-political but rather a redescription of the political itself, and a radical re-appraisal of its basis of legitimacy.

If I am correct in this, the significance of the cultural nationalism lies not in its being a-political or non-political but in directing attention to a profound change in the source of political legitimation. Culture now emerges as something not only potentially relevant to politics but as something indispensibly necessary. A nation is no longer simply a group of people owing political allegiance to a common sovereign but to a community bound by spiritual ties and cultural traditions. Indeed I would suggest that it is precisely the infusion of culture with political content and the infusion of the political with cultural content, which characterize modern nationalism. Nationalism in this view is unthinkable without the appeal of some cultural values. But for this change to come about, for culture to be invoked in the making of political claims, culture itself must first be viewed in its political contexts. Languages, dances, folk songs, plays, legends, philosophies, religions, poems, paintings and so on all require political handling (or manipulation) to be politically serviceable. It for this reason that I refer to a dual transformation: not only culture but politics too undergoes a drastic change in the propagation of nationalist doctrine. And it is this dual transformation which constitutes the change in the political legitimation and marks the historical transition from the state-nation to the nation-state.

I have no wish here to rehearse all the well known objections to the diverse nationalist claims based on the cultural (linguistic, religious or 'ethnic') criteria. It is obvious enough that the "trinity" of anthropological, psychological and ethical assumptions which underlies the idea of cultural nationality is far from self-evident, and indeed may require more than purely logical argument in order to acquire persuasive force. Clearly, it is more than argueable whether nationality is inherent in human nature, whether a person "needs" to live with those sharing his nationality, and whether states not based on a distinctive national culture fail to be rightful states. Clearly too, it is one thing to grant the plausibility of national culture as a criterion of a state's legitimacy but quite another to decide what in a particular case constitutes a distinctive or dominant culture. In the final analysis therefore, the questions posed by cultural nationalism seem to me to be unanswerable. The marriage between culture and politics may indeed prove a source of lasting bliss and its offspring the truly just society, but by the same token culturally based states may turn out to be no more just, peaceful or harmonious than non-culturally based states. There is simply no logical, historical or any other kind of argument necessarily governing the outcome in any particular case at any particular time.

Much the same could be said about the international order among culturally determined nation-states. Potentially, international relations can be cooperative and peaceful, but they can also be competitive and torn by conflicts. Conceivably, wars, should they occur, might be less bitter but, just as conceivably, they might be far more intense than wars between state-nations since the gains or losses in cultural terms could be viewed more seriously than those involved in purely political bargaining. When the purity of a language, the sacredness of a civic religion, the survival of cherished traditions, or the very core of a people are at stake, compromises do not easily suggest themselves.

My point in raising these questions is to demonstrate the impossibility of making wholesale judgements one way or the other. National culture, as a legitimizing principle, is subject to the same range of contingencies as any other legitimising principle. There simply is no basis for deciding on general grounds that a state based on national culture is inherently superior to a state which does not invoke culture as its legitimising sanction.

It follows that the cultural sanctions in themselves are no more capable of serving as sufficient legitimising warrants than the purely formal sanctions of man-made laws whenever political legitimacy is in question. A doctrine

that has come to be closely associated with the idea of nationhood, the doctrine of national self-determination, seems therefore, to have as much need to press moral or (quasi moral) categories into service as the older (but no less complex) doctrine of natural law. In the form in which it is usually put, the doctrine of national self-determination derives its additional legitimizing force from making a specific type of political consciousness the essential condition of man's moral consciousness, thus rendering political indistinguishable from moral obligation. It does so by merging two highly persuasive but commonly opposed principles: the principle of traditionality and the principle of rationality. The former invokes the "logic" of history, the latter the logic of moral reasoning. By means of this simultaneous appeal to tradition and reason "emergence" and "creation" converge. One's understanding of oneself as a free moral agent is wedded to one's self-consciousness as a member of a community, that is at once a historical growth and a rational-ethical creation. It is this ingenious fusion which confers on the doctrine of national self-determination its impressive ideological comprehensiveness and vigour.

Yet the undeniably persuasive force of the doctrine is apt to conceal the fact that political legitimacy generally involves at least three levels of applicability: the

who, how, and where of government. By tending to focus on the third level of political legitimacy - the ethnic composition of the population and its territorial boundaries — it either disregards the first two levels (who should properly rule, and in what manner) or views them as necessary entailments of the third, thus collapsing the three levels of political legitimacy into one. What is more, the principle of self-determination which the doctrine invokes is a notoriously problematic principle. In its collective application it rests on the additionally questionable assumption of complete identity between national ends and individual ends. At best, therefore, "national self-determination" is but a vicarious expression of Kant's (and Rousseau's) moral principle while, at worst, it threatens to deny individual choice entirely. In any event; it has as a principle of political legitimation, little in common with a doctrine of political obligation which makes subordination to governmental rule contingent on the consent of persons viewed as individuals and not as mere components of national cultures.

Cultural criteria of political obligation, then, are no more self-evidently rational or ethical than any other criteria of legitimation taken by themselves. National culture as a contextual requirement may conceivably enrich or

indeed transform our understanding of the political; but from this it does not follow that it necessarily renders the legitimation of politics less problematical.

However, as the general part of the discussion involves centrally on the aspect of the organic relationship between 'culture' and 'politics', let us now focus our attention on the 'close-knit' nature of the institution of politics with that of culture, as highlighted succintly by Ashis Nandy in his article: Cultural Frames For Social Intervention: A Personal Credo, where it has been shown that the (British) Imperialist policy had systematically carried out a system of oppression by denying the subjects certain vital traditional practices crucial for their social cohesion; this is instantiated by Amilcar Cabral, the African freedom fighter, who spoke of the "permanent organised repression of the cultural life of the people" as the very core of colonialism. "To take up arms to dominate a people is to take up arms to destroy, or at least to neutralise... its cultural life". A theory of culture has to be the core of any theory of oppression at our times. A stress on culture reinstates the categories used by the victims, and this is taken as a deviation from the modern idea of expertise, an idea which demands that even resistance be uncontaminated by the 'inferior' cognition or

unripe revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed. A stress on culture is taken to be the antonym of post-Renaissance European faith that only that dissent is true which is rational, sane, scientific etc. according to Europe's understanding of these concepts.

Hence, the relationship or the link between culture and what might be called critical consciousness of the past and the present situations, and the social change in this country of ours is not an experience unique to India, but a general response of societies which have been the victims of history and are now trying to rediscover their own visions of a desirable society in basing on their own version of values. When modernity of the western model threatens every non-western culture with its meretricious attraction to the extent of overwhelming these cultures, the slogan of the last century proclaiming cultural-protection as pure claustrophonic obscurantism loses its credibility.

Unmixed modernity is no longer, as the argument shows, desirable even in the modern world. The ultra-positivists and the Marxists, once so vehemently and arrogantly anti-traditional have revised their perspectives substantially to criticise, if not the modernists vision in its entirety, at least some crucial parts of it. Two

prominent members of such "revisionist" schools namely, Lionel Trilling and Peter Gay had gone so far as to pronounce such modernist dislike for modernity as indeed a unique feature of modernity itself. Instances of this transformation of this attitude can be cited in the works of Picasso with its underlying primitivism, and the defiance of science and rationality in surrealism. One exponent of this idea is associated with the name of Andrē Breton. These appear to be cogent indicators of how modernity at its most creative find its opposite indispensable, that is anti-modernity.

These criticisms, however, might be said to be 'internal' to modernity in so far as they try to abide by the values of European enlightenment, and the idea of modernisation is an attempt to realise these values. They can thus be called forms of "critical modernism", as found in those models of scientific growth or technological transfer in the third world which accept without question the content of modern science; and also the critiques of the existing world-order which take for granted the modern nation-state system; as also the kind of critical modernism which believes that happiness can be attained by displacing the elites or classes who control the global political economy.

On the other hand, are the criticisms of modernity from outside. These reject the values of the Enlightenment, and thus seem, to say the least, bizarre to the modern man. Emerson, Thoreau and Tolstoy, to name a few, are some of the better known critics of modernity in the West. In our times, perhaps Gandhi had been the most consistent and vehement critic of modernity who rejected the modern nation-state system, modern science and technology, urban industrialisation, and so on, while cherishing the traditional ideas of the state, science and technology, civic living, and social transformation. Many so-called Gandhians never could fathom this part of the Mahatma, but as Gandhi was not one given to fantasies, this idea is tolerated as an integral segment of his cosmology. Yet despite the similarity in their dislike for modernity, Gandhi and Ananda Coomaraswamy differed in their attitudes towards traditions. The latter kept open the possibility of assessing or altering traditions from the point of view of traditions. However, as it appears, he was trying to do for past times what the anthropologists attempt for distant cultures, there was no significant criticism of traditions in his works.

On the other hand, Gandhi never praised the Indian village nor exhorted for a return to the past. He sought

to reorder the hierarchy of skills and instil the idea of the dignity of labour and delegitimise the Brahmanic arrogant aloofness. Being a realist, he despised the dirt and diseases that accrue from unhygienic living, and personally undertook its removal with a passionate plea for cleanliness, which became almost religious in its intensity. His love for traditional values practised in villages made him remark with acerbity towards Catherine Mayo's Mother India as a 'drain-inspector's report' for taking count only of what is visually perceived as representing Indian tradition in its entirety. His own version of this facet of village life is summed up in the expression 'dung-heap'. Yet his understanding of the eternal values were not clouded, as was the case with Mayo, by impressionistic impulses. Gandhi was a social reformer, and his means of doing so was religion. He believed that the means justified the ends and not as it is usually the case, the other way around. Even though the ends may be frustrated many times, as truth cannot be judged by its effects, the means, proper to an end, is based on the idea of 'love' which cannot be compromised. Coomaraswamy, who also defended tradition, perhaps equally fervently, has had his notions set seemingly, on strict traditionalism, including the practice of sati which he unashamedly defended. Gandhi, in this regard, is not an obscurantist - only that his framework is

traditional, in the sense that traditional values gained precedence over technologically based values of human relationship which he feels obfuscates one's spiritualism. Though the frame within which Gandhi sought to operate were traditional the specifics within the frame were frequently modern. For instance, he found no dispute between his rejection of modern technology and his advocacy of the bicycle, the lathe and sewing machine. Many modernists quite expectedly, find this hypocritical and are prepared to accept such eclecticism only when the framework is modern.

However, it is virtually impossible to make a choice between modernity and traditions in their pure forms. The choice therefore is between critical modernism and critical traditionalism, or that is, a choice between two frames of reference and two world-views.

Now critical traditionalism refers to living traditions which includes a theory of oppression. For our times, no tradition is useful or even valid, unless it has an awareness of the nature of evil in modern times. This is to say that no theory of oppression make sense unless it is understood in terms or categories used by the victims of our times. This is not to be understood as a restatement of the ideology of instrumentality which dominates

most theories of oppression, nor is this suggested as a strategy of mass mobilization which includes certain compromises with the so called false consciousness of the historical societies. This is rather to be taken as a comprehensive cognition of those at the receiving end of the present world system, and of the primacy which should be given to the political consciousness of those who have been compelled to develop categories or understand their own suffering, and who reject the so called nativism of modern theories of oppression using, hypocritically, the idiom of nativism to conscientize the cultures of the oppressed. The resistance to modern oppression must be the denial of the connotative meanings of concepts such as 'development', 'growth', 'history', 'science and technology', for they have become associated with mystifications for new forms of violence and injustice. The resistance must include an awareness of the links between cultural survival and global structures of oppression in our times. What is meant here by the expression 'critical traditionalism' is akin to Rollo May's concept of authentic innocence as opposed to what he calls pseudo-innocence. Authentic innocence, according to the author, Ashis Nandy, "includes an updated sense of evil; pseudo-innocence does not. Pseudo-innocence thrives on what psychoanalysis calls secondary gains from the oppressive system."

What this idea expresses is that the living traditions of the non-Western societies must include a theory of the West to recognise the fact that the relationship between the West and the non-West has become deeply intertwined with the problem of evil in our times.

The problem confronting us now is: 'can we construe such a tradition so as to have a native theory of oppression?' The possibility of this idea lies in apprehending traditions as an 'open-ended' phenomena rather than a rigid, closed one. The (Indian) civilisation has for long, survived the vicissitudes of history not only because of the 'valid' or 'proper' exigencies of the traditional texts but also because of the 'improper' or 'deviant' or 'far-fetched' interpretations of the sacred and the canonical. There is, for instance, the first social and religious reformer of modern India, Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) 'legitimately' interpreting Shankara's Monism as mono-theism, and the instance of Gandhi as 'legitimately' borrowing his concept of Ahimsa or non-violence from the 'Sermon On The Mount' and claiming it to be the core concept of orthodox Hinduism. However odd such distortions might appear, they are the means the Indian civilisation has used to update its theories of evil and to ensure cultural survival while keeping open the possibility of such large scale interventions. Now to apprehend

such reinterpretations, one must acknowledge three, what might be called 'languages', which often conceals the implicit native theories of oppression in many Non-Western traditions. These are, namely, the languages of 'continuity' of 'spiritualism' and of the 'self'. On the surface, they may look life aspects of a primitive false consciousness to the moderns; however, they continue to be the means of cultural survival for the non-Western victims of history.

The language of continuity assumes that every change can be seen as aspects of deeper continuities, that is, any change, howsoever enormous, is still a special case of continuity, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. In the dominant Indian tradition, each change is thus accepted as another form of the unchanging, another revaluation of the existent.

Interestingly, the language of continuity is mostly spoken by the victims of the present oppressive system, and expectedly the language of 'disjunction' by the powerful and the rulers of the system. Also by those who opt for the status-quo. For instance, the Shah of Iran spoke of modernisation and social change, while the opponents of this idea placed emphasis on cultural identity and conservation. Military rulers in South America jingoistically

talk of transforming their societies into powerful nation-state systems, while their opponents are more concerned about the protection of the native Indians and their cultural life. It is quite apparent, therefore, that the language of continuity was employed by those who ran the older oppressive systems. Hence, words such as 'development', 'maturity', 'scientific temper' and so on are in the vocabulary of those who see themselves as either deservedly ruling the world or, as its future rulers.

The language of 'spirit', often expresses an analysis of oppression which rejects the analytic categories of the rulers or the elite. both the 'respectable' versions of the language of spirit which even the spiritually-minded themselves reject as mere trickery, often serves a number of purposes of the oppressed. For the enlightened, such analysis is seen as not only camouflaged self-interest, but also seemingly, paradoxically, as sentimentalism and a subjectivist hoax. What is meant in the above statements is simply this; if it is only sentimentalism, it cannot, at the same time, be a camouflaged statement of self-interest, and also, if it is an indirect statement, of self-interest, it cannot quite be that subjectivist after all. Marx seemed to have acknowledged this when he spoke of religion as expressing the pain of the oppressed.

However, he either failed or did not go so far as to take seriously, the cognitive 'frame' which went with the pain. He might not have noticed that, (1) the frame criticised the society as it existed, (2) it also rejected the conventional (i.e. the 19th century), concepts of science as irrational and inhuman. The language of spirit also has a *sub-category which rejects the idea of history, that is,* the idea of historical laws as a new tool of oppression. Instead, the language seeks to reinstate the mythopoetic language, which is closer to, and understood by, the victims of history, on the assumption that myths for traditional man express and communicate life experiences and cultural roots, while history conceals them.

Finally, the language of self includes what is known as, the idea of 'fatalism' of the primitive mind, against which the process of conscientization plays an inseparable role. The language of self also implicitly expresses the world, that is, the not-self, and thereby contains a theory of oppression. To use some psychological terms, it can be said that 'autoplasticity' contains in this case, 'alloplasticity'. As detailed in the beginning of this chapter, that in many of the non-Western traditions, the 'Self' has a plurality of centres. Perhaps the Vedantic cosmology vouchsafing the many-centredness of the self is the most

convincing. It is held that the 'self' is not only included in the laws of nature and society but also that, nature and society are subsumed in the self. Notions such as 'self-enrichment', 'self-realisation' include the principle of intervention in the outside world.

In the present age, with its own theories of oppression, and its obsessive predilection for the language of discontinuity, impersonality and ultra-materialism, it has become fashionable to arrogate to itself the capacity to represent the sanity of the oppressed. These theories have given birth to a new elite — the revolutionary vanguard with new sets of values, poised to break-down the pre-scientific temper of the masses. Tragically, however, these new systems operate not only similarly to the way the older system it had rejected by legitimising violence and dominance and greed, they have also engendered to (1) produce systems which reject, what are known as the cardinal virtues by encouraging violence and employing means which are unjust and exproprietory in the name of 'liberation' and freedom, (2) mobilize public opinion in the adoption of a system which seek to justify dissent. Hence, in such a system, dissent becomes just another form of conformity, unless, of course, it seeks to subvert the rules of the game and the language in which the rules are framed. It may not be quite wrong to assume that George Orwell

realised this. He opined that the oppressed, when it comes to the issue of survival, had no obligation to abide by any model, or any rule of the game. Hence, seemingly, the only way to check such 'methodological anarchism' is, (1) to recognise with a sense of urgency, the experience of man-made sufferings and (2) which invites analysis of every remedial suggestions for its removal.

The method of adoption of the means to realise a change now seems crucial to a given society which seeks to (a) either redress an inconvenient practice(s) and supplant it with a more helpful one or, (b) totally reject the entire 'form of life' that is, the age-old cultural tradition in its totality and acquire a new identity. In order to undertake either of these, one needs to be clear about the conceptual distinctions between 'reform' and 'revolution' as suggested earlier.

When the discontent with the state of things in society becomes acute enough to stimulate action, it will produce different effects according to whether it attaches importance to particulars or not. To the query what causes the discontent and the consequent suggestions to its removal, there are basically two kinds of responses. One of these responses consists of stating particular cases that are considered wrong, such as, poverty, racial and caste

discrimination, alcoholism, prostitution, drug abuse, and so on. The other form of response denies this method as inadequate on the presumption that nothing can be corrected short of a new beginning altogether, that the whole system as such, is wrong. So when it comes to the question of strategy, the first response will lead to proposals for reform; the second, a fervent call for revolution. Reform proceeds in a methodological step-by-step precision, while revolution overthrows the basis of the system so that no part remains unaffected by it.

The content of a reform can thus be listed exactly since it is only a partial change in a system whose other components are thought of as remaining constant. Thus one might seek to reform educational policy or electoral rolls etc. on the assumption that such elements of the system can change quite radically without disturbing or necessitating radical changes in the other elements. One cannot, of course, rule out the causal influences of the constituent elements on one another. In such an eventuality, various mutual adaptations will have to take place which will require a certain amount of systems-theoretical sophistication if they are to go on smoothly, but the understanding of complex systems has advanced sufficiently, however, to provide that. It is, besides, entirely possible that reforms might proceed in all the elements of the system

simultaneously so that the effect is total, but since each component would have the partial character of a reform the entire process would not be thought of as revolutionary.

Though the last remark is not necessarily in agreement with the generally-held notion of revolution. It is, according to Peter Cavs, "a rather special meaning for 'revolution'".* Since, ordinarily, we would be prepared to say of a process that had changed every aspect of a system that it had amounted to a Revolution. It is in this light that one speaks of the Industrial Revolution or the Copernican Revolution. As such changes are historically significant for having generated complete social changes without the means of violence, which is the criteria for the usual cases of revolution, its distinctiveness is recognised by labelling them epochal revolutions. The other form of revolutionary change takes place primarily in one component of the system, namely, the political, and consists of a more or less rapid and violent seizure of total political power by a revolutionary group. The paradigms for this are the French Revolution and the October Revolution. They are political revolutions, which seek to reject an existing constitution and replace it with another, and not merely one batch of enthusiastic political actors wresting

*'Reform and Revolution' in Philosophy and Political Action; Editors. Virginia Held, Kai Nielsen, Charles Parsons.

the machinery of government, that is, the legislative, executive and judicial powers from another, without affecting the constitution of the State. Thus, Aristotle states: "the one affecting the constitution, when men seek to change from an existing form into some other for example, from democracy into oligarchy, and from oligarchy into democracy or from either of them into constitutional government or aristocracy, and conversely; the other not affecting the constitution when, without disturbing the form of government, whether oligarchy, or monarchy, or any other, they try to get administration into their own hands..."** only the former count as a political revolution in this sense.

As is well-known, the Marxist brand of revolution considers that the main focus of attack must be the set of economic relations in bourgeois society that constitutes the base on which bourgeois politics, law, religion, and the like, have been erected as superstructure. We note here another possible distinction between revolution and reform: *reform merely alters the superstructure, while revolution changes the base*, whether that is considered to be economic or otherwise. An interesting question now confronts us: 'would not a series of reforms that affected every element of the superstructure turn out to have changed the base?'

**Aristotle Politics

Again, 'if politics belongs to the superstructure, is there any guarantee that a political revolution will affect the base?' A political revolution, being confined to only one of the many aspects that together characterise a society, can only be part of the story and thus remain an open question whether such a success can be linked to an epochal one. To all intents and purposes, Marx's revolution certainly appears to be epochal as it envisages a complete change in man's social and historical condition, in their relations to each other and to the world. The aim is to abolish the class structure and the adoption of a system that would overcome the alienation between man as a producer and the means and fruits of his production. As this will naturally involve changes in the political power structure, Marx in his life, felt many a time, that conditions in certain countries were appropriate for his brand of revolution, that is, violent seizure of power possible. Quite surprisingly, however, despite his claims to the theory he had helped found as scientific and therefore inevitable, none of the countries he had predicted would fall did so under the rule of the proletariat. However, the epochal revolution which also was heralded by him is evident not only or even mainly in the places where successful political revolutions have invoked his name.

It appears that what led to the association of the two forms of revolution in Marxist doctrine was, mainly because of Engels' adoption of the Hegelian law of the passage from quantitative to qualitative change, an idea that is recognised now as a mistaken scientific model. The accumulation of small quantitative changes in society produces internal tensions, thought Engels, which consequently, mount towards a critical level without any accompanying apparent change. When this level is reached, a sudden and violent change occurs, as the theory goes, which overturns the society and ushers in a new and qualitatively different social order. The sequence of cumulative changes gives the appearance of an epochal revolution, while the sudden transformation looks like a political revolution; therefore, the theory concludes, an epochal revolution is successfully achieved by political action. Engels had based this view on nature, particularly that of water changing into steam at boiling point. However, the process of water changing to steam is not particularly sudden or violent. (Science explains that it takes seven times as long to convert water to steam as it takes to boil it, starting at room temperature; and provided there is space for the steam to expand into, the process goes perfectly smoothly. What makes it look dramatic in kettles is that the change takes place at the bottom where the space

is evidently already occupied by water, so that the steam emerges at the top). As an analogy for repressed change, this seems to hold good, but it is not a mass phenomena, since a small amount of water produces a large quantity of steam —and, this is the crucial point, that there is nothing inherent in the change from water to steam that would sustain the revolutionary analogy.

Now the law of quantity and quality need not be abandoned, but it is capable of a different application. The most dominant characteristic of an epochal revolution is that everything gradually changes till the whole becomes completely different: so the change between the beginning and the end is qualitative, while the details are quantitative. Hence, a series of reforms might, by sound dialectical standards, constitute a revolution. And this suggests that the opposition revolution or reform is an artificial one. "Unfortunately, it is enshrined in current usage as an opposition between the rapid, total and (probably) violent *on the one hand, and the deliberate*, partial, and non-violent on the other". Thus, if at all, as believed, revolutionary strategies are opposed to reformist ones, then, reforms that might be implemented while awaiting the revolutionary opportunity, or even working to create it, will appear counter-revolutionary; but

then failing to carry them out will only quicken the revolution — whence the probable violence — or simply an unnecessary delay in the correction of undesirable conditions. As mentioned, the opposition to reform may be due to the unwillingness to attenuate the spirit for revolution; this attitude indicates quite clearly an undue attachment to a component of revolutionary activity, namely the political, that may, in fact, be even unnecessary to the achievement of genuinely revolutionary ends.

Epochal revolutions, expectedly, tend to be rather long drawn affairs, and there is a theoretical limit on the speed with which they can be achieved. Thomas Jefferson, as we find, was fond of pointing out that the adult of his day had a half-life span of nineteen years and so there should be a constitutional amendment every nineteen years, since, on the one hand, an inherited consitution is an infringement on the liberty of the new generation and, on the other, the new generation might expect, quite reasonably after the half-life, to be in the majority. The relevance to epochal revolution is obvious if stress is placed on the disappearance of the old generation rather than on the emergence of the new one.

With the advances made in the field of medical sciences, the half-life now is much longer which makes epochal

revolution even slower. While few people change their minds in the course of their lives, most do not, and so, the only way to be sure of having safely established an epochal revolution is to wait for the older generation to pass away or outnumber them overwhelmingly. Thus it is glaringly obvious to note the risks involved in trying to establish an epochal revolution by a political one, since the temptation to hurry the process along by eliminating the unregenerate cannot indeed be ruled out.

The operative part of a political revolution takes place, of necessity, in a much shorter period of time much less certainly than the half-life, since the need to maintain the society at an even minimally operating level, power has to be wielded continuously, Such a revolution, therefore, cannot certainly, take on the character of an epochal revolution, unless of course, suppression of civil rights or massacre, or both, is resorted to, since a comprehensive change entails a change of habits and attitudes. It is perhaps remarkable that most principle figures of political revolutions do not survive to experience the change they wrought, mainly, because such figures being from the old epoch, carry with them the consciousness of that era, albeit unwittingly, and creates dissensions. Hence, it should only be expected that the

advocate of an epochal revolution with political revolution as a means towards it, will almost certainly be disillusioned and may even be ignored. Jean-Francois Revel in his book Ni Marx ni Jesus described that the epochal revolution which Marx had perceived in America was indeed correct, but the categories in terms of which he came to analyse it, namely, 'class' and 'capital' have turned out to be irrelevant to the course it has taken.

One dominant feature of political revolutions is that whatever may be its various causes and reasons, their immediate end is always political power, even when this is intended to serve more distant ends such as peace and justice. Such ends cannot, by themselves, make a political revolution into an epochal one. Interestingly, the major political revolutions of the last centuries have taken, more or less, the direction as part of the general movement away from tyranny and towards democracy. Towards the latter stages of this process which has been a universal phenomenon and has not depended on revolutions for its progress, a contrary movement as Aristotle noted is quite likely to evolve: "In oligarchies the masses make revolution under the idea that they are unjustly treated, because... they are equals, and have not an equal share, and in democracies the notables revolt, because they are

not equals, and yet have only an equal share".* It is evident that the military coups d'etat that have become so frequent have been counter-revolutionary against the threat of revolutions of the first kind. The Fascist regimes of Europe, mainly Italy and Germany also took over too soon, it seems, to make them suitable examples of the second category. Perhaps Spain under Francisco Franco fits the bill. The present Pakistan regime seems to be barely justifying itself of supposedly following the dictates of Islam for fear of a backlash from the masses whose cries for revolution of the first category could hardly be stifled.

A plausible case can be made for the essential similarity of all the standard examples of political revolutions, perhaps the first important one in modern history was the Puritan Revolution of 1640-49. It served to establish a principle that the rights of Kings could be challenged and power transfered to the authority of the legislature. So once this is demonstrated in practice, it was, in one sense, unnecessary for these propositions to be worked out again by revolutionary action. Therefore, it is now understood that the other two great revolutions of the Western world, namely, the French and the Russian, were, in an important sense, repetitions of the Puritan Revolution. The striking similarities, apart from the local

* Aristotle Politics.

differences, were that of a despotic behaviour of a monarch on the one hand, and the assertion of parliamentary rights on the other. In each case, the symbol of monarchial tyranny was eventually executed. By saying that these later revolutions were unnecessary, does not of course mean that in the context of their times, they were either avoidable or even unjustifiable, only that their social, as distinct from their ideological objectives, would probably have been attained sooner or later, by other means. No doubt, in every case, the existential situation appeared incapable of any other resolution.

Having now proceeded so far on the general nature of 'Reform' and the two kinds of 'Revolution', namely, the epochal and the political, let us now examine more closely, the conditions under which the political form of revolution might be successful. The reason for my choosing this particular field, is not because the other two mentioned are unimportant, but by virtue of this being an activity which has a direct bearing on society. According to Marx, the motive force of revolution is a numerically dominant class suffering from an unqualified wrong.* In his time, what he meant by 'class' was the proletariat of the late Industrial

*Karl Marx: Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Reprinted in Easton and Guddat, op.cit., p. 263.

Revolution whom he expected would become the revolutionary engine. This, however, was not realised. The theory as such, may not be wrong, but he seems to have failed to take into account the psychological factor of man.

It is a fact that the majority of people instinctively reject revolutionary activity unless their situation has reached a level of desperation. Again, Thomas Jefferson had remarked: "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experiences hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed."*

An extraordinary feature of the so-called revolutionary movement is that the enthusiasm of those who participate in it, is aroused by the sufferings of <u>others</u>, and also by the failures of the government, rather than by conditions affecting them directly. The idea of revolution becomes a matter of morals as much as of politics. However, as John Locke proclaims: 'such revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs. Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the slips of human frailty will be

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*Thomas Jefferson: Letter to Colonal Smith, Nov. 17, 1787.

borne by the people without mutiny or murmur.... For till the mischief be grown general, and the ill designs of the rulers become visible, or their attempts sensible to the greater part, the people, who are more disposed to suffer than right themselves by resistance, are not apt to stir. The examples of particular injustice or oppression of here and there an unfortunate man moves them not."* Hence, even if oppression affects a number of people, still knowing as they do that the larger sections of the population is not immediately affected by it, they may decline to be drawn into revolutionary action. Here, it must be mentioned that the oppressed do not often realise they are so, until brought to consciousness of the fact by political agitators — fatalistically accepting their condition as destined (note the conditions of the Harijans in this country). "Though they have a right to defend themselves, and to recover by force what by unlawful force is taken from them, yet, the right to do so, will not easily engage them in a contest wherein they are sure to perish; it being as impossible for one or a few oppressed men to disturb the government where the body of the people do not think themselves concerned in it, as for a raving mad man or

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*John Locke: Second Treatise of Government, Chapter XIX.

heavy malcontent to overturn a well-settled state, the people being as little apt to follow the one as the other."*

To conclude the chapter, I wish to add a few more points about the inherent differences of political and epochal revolutions. To be a revolutionary in the political sense when the conditions are not appropriate is irresponsible. It is however, possible to be an authentic revolutionary in the epochal sense even though they are slow and may consist in a series of reforms, having in mind, while doing so, what the eventual state of the whole would ideally be after the reforms had been accomplished.

It is to be noted that the term 'revolution' sometimes has additional connotations in the context of which reforms cannot be, or rather, are usually not accepted as revolutionary. An analogy of this is found (which is expressed more in detail in Chapter III of this dissertation) in the field of religious language. There, it has been shown that having acquired a change of perceivable habit without a corresponding change of 'heart' or 'attitude' is considered inadequate. In other words, reform without conversion is incomplete. Thus, conversion is the evangelical counterpart of revolution, and has some of the same drawbacks. For instance, a person who has improved (in this

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*Ibid., Chapter XVIII.

particular context) practically by having stopped certain acts which are considered wrong and started committing other acts which are considered right, by dint of one's own efforts, would, from an evangelical point of view, have achieved nothing.

A similar case is observed in political revolutions: when the triumphant regime is just as oppressive (towards different victims to be sure), as the one it had overthrown, still its ideological virtues absolve it. Whereas, in contrast, a government which, over a long period, inspite of numerous difficulties, managed to bring a society nearer to the ideals of justice and equality might appear to have achieved very little, if this were done without the dramatic excitement of a political revolution. The reason for this seems to be a psychological one, in that, the revolution may come to seem more important as a struggle between good and evil in which the wicked are punished, than as a means of liberating the oppressed.

Now exploiting the analogy between the individual and the state, there may be a use for the notion of revolution as interior, to refer to a kind of secular and political conversion which consists in the refusal in one's own person, of the inequities of the repressive regime without

involving, its actual overthrow as a matter of immediate strategy. Under this interpretation, the idea of revolution becomes a question of attitude rather than of activity, the individual or the group is in a state of permanent revolution, since the attitude is one of openness, to radical change, denying the fixed categories of the received social, economic and political order. According to Kojeve this is precisely the condition of Hegel's slave when he has transformed the world by his works and is about to achieve the final dialectical overcoming of the Master. It is typical of the Master whose route to self-realisation lies in a fight to the death for pure prestige and to depend on a fixed order in what concerns the Slave's relation to him; he, the Master, as Kojeve declares is the true conservative, embodying the values of the old regime. What the Master does not realise is that the Slave has become more human than himself and that the Master's humanity has always been dependent on, or parasitic on, the Slave's, while the latter has won an autonomous humanity against a hostile world and so can dispense with the rigidity of a fixed, unchanging system.

Interestingly, although the Slave has been presented as being ready to fight again (for recognition) that he previously abandoned by yielding to the Master (thus

originally entering into his condition of slavery) the revolution that he accomplishes is not against the Master but against the world. For the first time he becomes equal to the world, and by conquering its hostility, has brought himself into harmony with it. This process can only be an epochal revolution and thus is the realisation of the permanent revolution. No political revolution can help this process — since, some opposition such as the one between King and Parliament or bourgois and proletarian or between radical and conservative, is not only necessary for the occurrence but also necessarily survives it, whereas, such oppositions under the conditions of the permanent revolution might be expected to disappear, or be reduced to a formal level — such as the two-party system in which the policies of the two are very similar. Now in connection with the last point, it is possible or rather, at least conceivable that institutions suitable to the permanent revolution might come into existence before the people are ready for them. In such a case the challenge would be double: to educate the population to the level of its opportunities and to <u>resist</u> the temptation to destroy the institutions because they might have been incapable of preventing errors and abuses on the part of leaders as yet uneducated.

Let us now look at another reason why the arguments that defend institutions are unattractive to a certain class of revolutionaries. Political revolutions besides being sudden and morally dramatic are also violent and hence people do tend to get confused between the term 'revolution' and the word 'violence' as being synonymous, even in the case of epochal revolutions. In such cases the fear of revolution is really a fear of violence. Of course violence seems to be inherently satisfactory, at least it might appear to be justified in conditions such as long standing injustice (Gandhi of course would object to this, but that, under the circumstances, is a different matter).

What is being objected to is not, in this sense, violence itself, but rather the hasty use of it. If for instance, violence has already entered the situation on the part of an oppressive regime, it is quite natural to oppose it with equal violence. However, the danger of initiating violence in an otherwise calm situation, no matter how oppressive, is the likelihood of provoking a disproportionate reaction, or worse to be taken advantage of by the regime in power. What must be kept in mind is the question whether a well prepared and restrained use of violence is ever possible outside a military organisation, such as a disciplined guerilla force. An unorganised wielding of force would not only be senseless dissipation of energy but

suicidal. Most important the disposition of the populace has to be carefully assessed. Many social injustices, such as slavery, child labour and so on are abolished not from violent manifestations from slaves and children but from the moral concern of men. Hence the point at issue now, if violence is to be eschewed is to concentrate available energy and information behind reforms in those parts of the system most likely to yield to rational reform or reconstruction in the short-run, while simultaneously persuing a strategy of education with respect to principles and the less tractable parts of the system. The rationale is that if the reforms are accepted to the people, they will in principle have the power to implement them. On the other hand, if the proposed changes are not accepted by the people, no one has the right to impose them.

Hence, what is at stake is "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice." What this explicitly means is that it is to the <u>reason</u> of the people that the reformer must appeal. If not, the alternative is to accept the somewhat distressing conclusion envisioned by Plato: "Man never legislates, but accidents of all sorts, which legislates for us in all sorts of ways. The violence of war and the hard necessity of poverty are constantly overturning

governments and changing laws"*. However, there is also a hopeful note to save man from anarchy. He was convinced of the necessity for careful systematic intervention in the process of government: "Let the change if possible, be one thing only, or if not, of two, at any rate let the changes be as few and slight as possible. In the light of what has been said, the change he went on to propose has, even now, immense practical wisdom: "I think that there might be a reform in the state if only one change were made, which is not a slight or easy though still a possible one — until philosophers are Kings, or the kings or princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those common natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils, - no, nor the human race, as I believe, - and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day".**

This celebrated passage is usually in danger of being read as a cliche. The expression 'philosopher - King' has erroneously become the paradigm of the concept but by "philosophy" Plato did not mean an academic discipline —

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* Plato: Laws, 709.
**Plato: The Republic.

at least, not a discipline among others; and the philosopher-king is not necessarily a philosopher who becomes a king — he may equally well be a king who becomes a philosopher. The philosopher, as Plato goes on to define the notion, seems to be one in whom the permanent revolution has taken hold, who refuses the fixed and closed and maintains an attitude of openness towards the world.

It may be recalled that mention has been made, indeed emphatically, that a people must remain ever open to the idiosyncracies of the world for their society to remain dynamic. What is imperative to continuously maintain this is 'education', that is, the communication of possible solutions to people who are in a position to implement them justly. Men are rational not in the sense that they can, by the aid of reason, solve their immediate problems, but in the important sense that other things being equal, they tend to recognise rational solutions when they see them. But other things are usually not equal, as all sorts of prejudices and dogmas intrude themselves. True education performs principally two functions: it makes dogmas and prejudices harder to survive, and it imparts the accumulation of selected rational strategies that we owe to preceding generations and to mankind in other parts of the world.

Thus, once some of the kings have become philosophers in Plato's sense, they may be encouraged to become philosophers in Marx's sense, that is, men who can recognise not only reason but also alienation when they see it, who arrive not only at theoretical understanding but also at 'practical criticism' which means the overcoming in their own persons of the alienations of economic and political institutions and the modifications in the institution of lessening the alienation for others. Hence, it is quite apparent that the word 'philosopher' as Plato envisaged is one that connotes rational decision in practical matters and otherwise. The implication of this is virtually impossible to be defined exhaustively.

In conclusion, I would like to quote a passage from an article entitled The Maasai Coming Of Age which, I feel, is relevant here. Thus:

> "She is determined to persuade her people of the value of education. But she is opposed to any dilution of Maasai rituals.
>
> "We need to maintain our integrity and culture", she says.
>
> Even for the majority of Maasai who welcome change, there are painful choices. Some Maasai clans have already been forced to choose farming over their traditional lives as nomadic cattle herders. Others have succumbed to government pressure and abandoned

herding in favour of ranching on prescribed lands. The Loita Maasai are determined to resist government efforts to carve up what remains of their reserve into privately-owned segments. The reason is simple: At the heart of Maasai culture is the concept of land being communal.

"At 99, Ole Sentue is said to have 22 wives and 100 sons... He does not oppose change.... He has just given the latest group of Loita Maasai their new name IRWANTAII, after a famous Maasai wizard who long ago blessed his people with courage greater than any lion, buffalo or man, and conferred upon them the title of "The chosen people."

"In the future Ole Sentue knows the courage of the Maasai is to be tested in a struggle not so much against lions as between warring principles. He is afraid government will impose too many changes before the Maasai are ready for them. "Many", he says, "may die from shock because they cannot change so fast." He quotes a Maasai proverb that counsels the wisdom of gradual evolution. Says the old Maasai holy man: 'God, give me life that comes slowly over the hill'".*

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*Time: July 1985.

CHAPTER - V

LANGUAGE AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES

The main concern of this chapter is the consideration of the problem of relativity and its claims about the nature or reality, particularly that of social reality, where from the given fact, that there arise different institutions, and along with this, different attitudes and values; it is often claimed that there must exist separate realities, corresponding to the same 'raw material' of experience; and this might be supposed to be corroborated by the way experiences of the world are expressed or described; and the modulation of the particular structuring segmentations. The articulation of the experiences into concepts and propositions is, so it must be thought, a function of the language one speaks.

Benjamin Lee Whorf claims "all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar or can, in some way, be articulated".[1] This perhaps, clearly supports the claim that there can exist totally separate realities; these 'realities' being what they are because of the influence which the structure of the language we use exerts our understanding of the environment. "The picture of the universe shifts from tongue to tongue."[2]

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1. Language Thought and Reality: M.I.T. Press.
2. Ibid., p. 212-3.

This position appears to be, the most extreme version of the relativistic thesis, and one that may not have ready acceptance in certain quarters even though there may be agreement in the contention that language, in some way, influences our perception of the world. This reveals one crucial point: there is a basic commitment to one dominant idea, viz., that the organization of new experiences into the form in which one sees the world, is, in some way, revealed in the implicit metaphysics of our language.

Perhaps the problem which is best suited to demonstrate the relativistic standpoint, is the problem of translation. For the possibility of translating one language into another pre-supposes the possibility of conveying all the concepts and cognitive experiences from one language to another. If one includes in the concept of a language translated into another, the requirement that poetic connotations, nuances, emotive values, and so on, in the habitual and contextual relations of the original expressions, the thesis of relativism becomes quite unassailable.

Now one fundamental reason why this may be so, is that the meanings which words and statements carry, it is claimed, are, in most cases, dependent on - and influenced by - the social interaction between human beings. This

seems to explain why analoguous concepts may differ in the language of different societies, and in many cases, the total absence of certain concepts in one language may indicate the main interests which are characteristic of the 'form of life', of the particular society. Thus for instance, Naga society does not have the concept of class stratification. It shows, hence that a form of classless democracy is practised. Similarly, some societies may not have the concept of 'war'. Such a lack of terminology might give us some idea of the character of life carried on in such a society. However, from the examples offered, it does not follow that there cannot be an understanding of what "class-stratification" or "the notion of war" is all about; nor is it inconceivable that, through time these concepts, and similarly, other hitherto unknown concepts, will feature in the language of societies in question.

It is undeniable of course, that some of the statements of "remote" cultures can be translated into English only to some extent with the help of lengthy and tedious descriptions of the beliefs and practices of that society. The crux of the matter appears to be really this: there must be a background of agreement between these languages, otherwise it would be impossible for one to recognize it as a language at all, on the other hand, the attempts to

underestimate the differences between one language and another, will lead one to deny the subjective aspect of language; it is important also to realize that these differences which exist between languages, are not merely arbitrary differences; that is, these differences are not accidental, but must, in some way, reflect the different ways in which we see the world, or if you wish a different "form of life".

The idea that in the process of translating one sentence into another, factual references, or denotation is the core of meaning, and the rest, i.e. emotive overtones etc. are mere verbal coverings or accessories to meaning is derived from one theory of meaning which holds that language is the communicative system par excellence, and that anything that deviates from its communicative function is peculiar and redundant. Communication is the essence of language, and our understanding will therefore be possible when we understand the essential nature of the relation between language and communication; let us consider then what would be the case with our conception of language if we accept the view mentioned above, namely, that the essential nature of language, which consists of rules and conventions can be understood with reference to the primary function of language communication.

In the past a number of approaches to the problem of accounting for the nature of the rules and conventions of language and its relation to meaning has been developed within the view that communication is the primary function of language. Thus when I translate an expression E_1 of a language L_1 into another expression E_2 of another language L_2, E_1 which is a function of L_1 i.e., $E_1(L_1)$ is considered equivalent to $E_2(L_2)$ via $E_2(L_2)$ relation to what is communicated, say, R and $E_2(L_2)$ relation to R.

Thus we have a scheme of the following kind:-

$E_1(L_1)$ - R-$E_2(L_2)$ - (1).

Clearly there are more sophisticated schemes, but all in all the basic distinction between meanings which are related to the utterances of a particular language, or if you wish, the function of a particular language and the meaning which is a function of another language, in the process of translation, both refer to the same thing - whatever we may label this mediatory relation, a thing, an idea or a reference.

Hence, the main problem in the type of scheme presented above is in the accounting for the relation between two distinct entities: one which is clearly linguistic, and the other which is extra-linguistic. Thus, W. Haas presents the problem in the following way:

> "If there are such entities as are postulated in a dualist theory of sign and a triadic theory of translation - if there are pure meanings or pure external facts, these are certainly nothing we can say about them. We cannot rescue the former from their occult state by tying them to, or replacing them by the latter. The facts or the reference so called, if supposed to be grasped independently of any and every language, are themselves shadowy and nebulous as the naked ideas they are meant to reinforce or replace."3

Now any situation which makes communication possible involves basically, information, be it state of affairs about the things in the world, or ideas, or state of being. A statement, a symbol, or a sign, is taken to be the carrier of information and meaning. The relation between meaning and utterances involves serious problems - and I will have occasion to consider some of them later on - but no one would doubt, seriously, about the fact that communication involves an act of some kind - call it linguistic, symbolic or verbal. It may be interesting to note that even telepathic communication, if such communication is at all possible, pre-supposes an act of some kind, and it is to these acts or symbols that meanings are attached. In any ideal communication, there must, of course, be the speaker say 'S', who produces the necessary symbol say, 'R', which

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3. W.A. Haas: On Translation Philosophy, Vol. 37, 1962, p. 208-228.

'stands for' whatever is 'meant' to be communicated and a hearer 'H' who acts as the receiver.

There are certain objections to the idea that what occurs in a speech situation is just an exchange of information. For in saying this, I am not only involved in severely reducing the nature of language, to one thing only, namely, the exchange of information. I am also implying that, it is because of the possibility of information exchange that language is possible.

Perhaps it may be ascribed to Wittgenstein that words like 'intending', 'meaning', 'understanding', do not <u>denote</u> anything at all in the sense that names denote objects, and do not function as description of the states of mind; (Ryle, for example, illustrates that it is quite senseless to ask 'how long did you mean last night'? Where it makes sense to ask 'how long did you discuss last night?') and similarly they do not function as descriptions of states of feelings or some other mental processes has not only ridiculed the idea, that communication must be the essential function of language, but also that it can serve to explicate the nature of language in general. This seems to follow from the fact that it refuses any scheme which would postulate the existence of any extra-lingual fact in a linguistic

situation. Thus, in so far as we involve the notion of communication we are committed to drawing a distinction between that 'something' which is communicated, and also the means by which it is communicated. This, however, is not to say that, in saying things, I do not communicate anything - that would indeed be quite absurd. Indeed, in the process of various utterances I communicate my feelings, ideas, intentions, beliefs, attitudes, and so on.

The fact is that when I make a statement, for example, 'The dam is breaking!' or, 'There is an electrical short-circuit in your kitchen', I am not only communicating a certain state of affairs. I am also doing something. In such cases as the example above, I am issuing a warning. Hence, in the words of Austin, Searle and others, I am performing a 'speech act'. Similarly, when two adults of different sexes utter the phrase 'I love you', it does not merely convey the message of a particular mental state, but a whole range of meanings, such as, the willingness to marry and abide by its obligations, or at least, the expression conveys, as it were, a predilection for a certain 'form of life' - that is, it conveys a commitment to a 'rule'. Hence, the act of uttering 'I love you' also invokes the notion of a pledge not entirely different in essence

from the utterance 'I promise' to do (or not to do) something. Therefore, a 'speech act' evokes the idea that language is a kind of activity.

It may be noted however that we have not done away with the facts of communication in a speech situation, though it has been relegated somewhat to a secondary status. For instance, when we consider the theory that "to say that a speaker 'S' meant something by 'X', is to say that 'S' intended the utterance of 'X' to produce some effects in a hearer by means of the recognition of his intention." Here one can still say that there is involved in this an act of communication, namely, the communication by speaker 'S' of his intention, via the utterance 'X'; but since 'intention' however does not describe any sort of entity, physical or mental, nor even a process, we have purged our concept of meaning communication of its occult commitment. (It is as though one has discovered that the heart not only pumps blood, but that in doing so, it also performs many essential functions, which one would not necessarily observe in the bare fact: that it pumps blood).

The question however remains, whether meaning can be reduced to or explained exhaustively in terms of intention. It seems there are times when we ask questions about meanings where the actual intention of the speaker is not

known, for example, poets, writers, and so on. Yet, it is perfectly appropriate to ask questions about meaning. It may indeed even be important to distinguish between what a sentence or a set of sentences meant, apart from what someone meant by it. Again however, it may be unimportant to know what a poet intended to be appreciated in his works. This is perhaps because what the author intended may have nothing to do with the nature of the poem. Furthermore, I may not have the intention of getting the hearer to know anything at all, and yet, this does not mean that, what I say has no meaning whatsoever. It remains at least meaningful.

This account seems to beg the question of the distinction between what a sentence means literally and what a sentence means when it is used, that is, when we include the subject, or the one who makes the utterance, in a certain situation.

Chomsky, for one, appears to be critical of the view that meaning can be exhaustively explained in terms of the speaker's intention in communication. He asserts that the theory of speech acts "may help to analyse successful communication and it led to interesting discoveries about the semantic property of utterances, but it gives us no way to

escape the orbit of conceptual space that includes such notions as 'linguistic meaning', without such intrusion the theory simple expresses false statements about meaning'. His belief seems to be that we fail "to distinguish between the literal meaning of a linguistic expression produced by 'S' and what 'S' meant by producing this expression. The first notion is the one to be explained in the theory of language - the sedond has nothing particular to do with language: I can just as well ask, in the same sense of 'meaning' what 'S' meant by slamming the door. Within the theory of successful communication, we can draw a connection between these notions. The Theory of meaning however seems quite unilluminated by this effort."

In this regard, Chomsky seems to be quite right in his objection that every field of linguistic activity must involve communication. In fact one can point to a great variety of activities which we perform with language where we use expressions meaningfully, without any reference to the intentions of an utterer with regard to an audience - if only because the nature of activity does not involve an audience (even a hypothetical one). It is not the case however, that Grice, Searle and the others quite do not

acknowledge this difference. There is an obvious distinction between the sentence: 'This thesis was written by me', and what I mean by actually saying so. In other words, the connection between one's meaning something by what one says, and what that which, one says actually means in the language. The latter case is quite clearly determined by rules, while the former is determined by the intention of the speaker, to get the hearer to know that certain states of affairs specified by the rules obtain. Hence, in a successful communication situation, there is the production of an utterance 'S' with a certain intention, say 'X' - where 'X' may stand for the intention to warn, describe, inform, surprise, etc. - and where the meaning of 'S' is intended by certain syntactical, lexical and phonetic rules, and the illoqutionary act 'X' performs (A) is a function of 'S'. Thus: A-X (S)

The speech act 'A' therefore contains an intentional aspect 'X' and a conventional aspect 'S'. It may be necessary here to speak of rules, rules of syntax, semantic rules and so on, and most such rules which bind 'X' and 'S' to make 'A' possible. However, it is not really my intention in this chapter to dwell at length on the 'meaning-rules' of language. So I will conclude this issue by briefly explaining the following: From the scheme A-X (S) above,

Searle has emphasised that a clear distinction must be drawn between the cases where the state of affairs or the effect that I produce via the recognition of my intention 'X', in stating 'S' occurs, where 'S' is only contingently related to 'X', eg., in cases where my object is to deceive. This is the sense of meaning Chomsky seems to object to, a sense which has nothing to do with language. But an illocutionary act, Searle says, is one which does not admit of a mere contingent relationship between what 'A' means and what 'S' means. What we can mean is a function of what we are saying, that is, the recognition is achieved in virtue of the fact that the rules for using the expression he utters associates the expressions with the production of that effect.

It would seem that, we cannot really separate the literal meaning of an expression 'S' from its meaning in use, in at least a great number of cases, for reasons already shown. This is not to say, however, that we cannot, as it were, consider an utterance in isolation. What is at issue here is whether the distinction between 'literal' meaning and meaning in use is really possible at all by way of distinguishing between two logically separate entities. On the face of it, there seems to be a sense in drawing this distinction, in so far as we assume that one is here

employing different notions of the term 'meaning'. But is the distinction valid? When we find out the meaning of a word in the dictionary, say the word 'bachelor' which would read something like 'an adult unmarried male' we might say, "Now I know what it means". This way of learning a word is not via an instance of its use. Another way of teaching someone the meaning of 'bachelor' would be to show him the many instances of its use, in different connections, different situations. This way of teaching him would be very much like teaching someone a rule in a game, e.g. how a Knight moves in a game of chess. Now when we reach the point at which we can see that he can make the correct moves in a game, we can say that "Now he understand the rules" or, as Wittgenstein says, "he knows how to go on". Similarly, in the case of words and expressions, we know the meaning of a word when we know how it is used in various contexts: Waissman, for example, says, "How should we, for example, explain to anyone what the word 'naive' means? We should perhaps first circumscribe the meaning with words which come fairly near to meaning the same as 'naive'. We should say 'naive' means something like inexperienced, uncritical, unsuspicious, rational, not blasē, not worried with doubts, and so on. But then, we should say that, that does not exactly hit off what the word means and should give an

example of its use. We might tell an anecdote for it? No, but in the words of my question I have provided an instance of its use".*

It would seem, on a closer scrutiny, that in accounting for a meaning of a word in the form 'X' means 'Y', we are not really talking about meaning in the sense that is really separable from our earlier assumption, even more so, this kind of 'dictionary meanings' seems to presuppose meaning in use. In our example where 'bachelor' means 'unmarried adult male', what we have done is simply equated an expression 'bachelor' with another expression whose use is already known i.e., 'an unmarried adult male'. It is just another way of saying 'bachelor' has the same use as 'unmarried adult male', and we merely establish this equivalence on the basis of the fact that they denote the same 'linguistic act potential'.

2. Now as the title of this chapter, namely, 'Language and the Understanding of other Cultures' suggests, perhaps in an indirect way, the question of the notion of translability, let us examine in this light, the issues involved in such a venture. On the face of it, the possibility of translating one expression into another seems to depend

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*Ref. Waismann F. Principles of Linguistic Philosophy, Ed. R. Harne N.Y. St. Martin's Press, Macmillan Press, 1965.

on the possibility of there being at least some objective criteria to determine whether an expression in one language is the same as an expression in another language. And it appears that only when this was possible could we observe that the rule which determines the use of a word in one language was similar to the rules which determines the use of a word in the other.

How, it would be naturally asked, can one, if concepts are peculiar to a particular society, even talk of one expression being the same as some other, if one is not even in a position to know whether the word 'same' is used in a similar way? Yet, if this was the case, then what we are left with is a kind of "relativistic dilemma". It is, of course, true that there are substantial differences between languages spoken in different cultures, (This is particularly clear when one considers the case of languages perception. There is a point here in invoking the notion of non-linguistic criteria) and so, when a translator undertakes the task of establishing correspondences between expressions of the different languages, he may, sometimes find, as is often the case, with say, English to Angami — Naga, that it is impossible to find a normal sentence in one of the languages to match the other. This is quite evident in the attempt to translate the Scriptures, or say,

the Bible, or even songs, into the native dialect. This does not mean, however, that the translator is unable to go on; he sees the difficulty as really a technical one. Thus, he operates on the assumption that even though there cannot be a one-to-one correspondence between the utterances or expressions in the two languages, there is, at least the possibility of there existing some unit which permits a fair degree of workable correspondence. And in cases where these, if I may use the word, "esoteric" units or concepts are not available, he may introduce a new expression. A brief explanation as to how a workable translation is at all possible: Kant declares that there are, in all languages, the concepts of 'space','time', 'substance' 'causality' and so on. His emphasis was that, as already mentioned in Chapter I, without these notions, no thinking — not merely about particular objects or particular areas of experiences, but no thinking <u>at all</u> would be possible, as propounded in the 'Transcendental Deduction' of the categories in the <u>Critique Of Pure Reason</u>. In modern times, Strawson, who, having endorsed this view, expressed the similar idea that there is a 'basic core' in all human conceptual framework. And thus, it is this common factor which makes translation at all possible. I have, so far used the word 'workable' as regards the possibility of

translation deliberately. It is thus possible, logically, to translate certain aspects of one language to another as commonly instantiated in religious and literary works but this, however, can never convey the entire idea as the words involved in the original are specific, that is, organic, to that 'form of life'. And it is really those notions which gets lost in translation that gives the original tongue its 'feeling' or 'flavour' or its 'spirit'. Think for instance, the possible absurdity involved in translating an Angami or Zeliang Naga folk song to Hindi or vice-versa. As mentioned already, a particular language embodies a particular form of life, and hence, the incongruity of the type mentioned arises; and it is precisely this that makes every language unique. To merely say that a language is different from another without taking into account the 'forms of life' associated with it, is stating a trivial truth and yet, the assertion does not remain 'trivial' any longer as soon as branding another language as 'inadequate', 'poor' or 'bad' is considered. We will come back to this topic a little later on.

We have seen how our ability to consider expressions independently of its meaning, often leads us to think that the significance of each expression depends on its concomittances with other things, natural facts and such like: this

is more so in the case of translation. We do tend to think of a bi-linguist, as someone who is capable of establishing the equivalence of an expression in one language into another via their respective equivalences to something extra-lingual and objective.

What would be the case, if supposing, we were to find that a particular society uses the concept 'P' in a way different from ours. That, for example, they do not consider as cases of 'P' most of what we consider as indubitable instances of it? Is that any justification in saying that their concept was inadequate? A common expected answer may be that, their concept less accurately portrays the nature of 'P': as if it were the case that both societies observed the nature of P and then drew different conclusions. What one fails to see is that the concepts of reason, justification, adequacy and so, are relative to various language-games.

If supposing one were to change the rules that determine the use of 'P', in an imaginary society, then we would be changing its meaning, and as Wittgenstein says, "in that case we may just as well change the word too" the reason why rules differ between languages is that there are

different language-games corresponding to different 'world pictures'. It might seem, this follows the view that, reality does not give language its sense, the justification for the correct use of a term, and standards which relate to the meaning of concepts not derived from an objective basis, as Bernard Williams remarks: "... whether something is empirically explicable or not is itself relative to language; for such explanation, and a fortiori particular forms of scientific explanation, are just language-game among others."

Peter Winch also holds a similar view when he says, "... we could not, in fact distinguish the real from the unreal without understanding the way this distinction operates in the language. If then we wish to understand the significance of these concepts, we must examine the use they actually do have in the language."

A corollary of this which bears on our problem of translatability is that we cannot discover what a people's concepts are except through the language. Thus, it is possible for us to say that the concept 'X' is different in two societies because the way they use the term 'X' differs between the two societies. We come to this conclusion not by correlating language with something else but

by correlating some aspects of language, with whole ranges and ways of talking about something.

The corresponding concept of 'X' in different languages, is intelligible to us when we are capable of describing their language-game, with the concept 'A'. To say that their concept is wrong would be to use our language-game "as a base from which to combat theirs".*

How does our ability to describe their language-game with 'X', imply that we understand their concept 'X'? This problem is more intense in the cases where in a particular society certain cases which fall under the concept of 'X' in our societies are not regarded as instances or part of the concept of 'X'. Wittgenstein often found it useful to imagine fictional societies in which people spoke a language and lived a life radically different from ours. In one instance he imagines a society of people who used the word 'pain' to include only those cases where the damage is visible; the other cases, that is, those instances that we call pain such as headaches, stomachaches, rheumatism and so on are "tied up with mockery of the complaining one".

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*L. Wittgenstein: On Certainty, Sec. 609; Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1969.

Here the most natural tendency on our part is to think that these people are mistaken, and that their lack of a concept of an invisible cause of pain stems from an inability to perceive the similarity between the two types of behaviour. About Wittgenstein's examples some points are worth mentioning here:

It is not the case in our fictional society that there is a radical difference in the physiological make-up of the people. If we were to imagine a story where the beings of a distant planet were physiologically built to feel pain, when a visible damage occurred to their body, then it would not be absurd for us to imagine someone having a different concept of pain. In this case one sees that the practice of regarding someone's expression of pain as mere pretence and malingering is reasonable to us.

Apparently, this is not a problem which can be solved by an appeal to empirical data, or even to behavioural criteria. The difficulty with the appeal to behavioural criteria for testing the similarity of concepts, is that it involves circularity. As David E. Cooper says: "... the difficulty with this suggestion is that if we mean by 'behaviour' actions as opposed to mere bodily movements, then it is impossible to know what the behaviour is without

interpreting it properly. But to interpret it properly we must know how the agents conceive of it". Hence, behaviourally, there does not seem to be any difference between the manifest pain behaviour between the people of our society and the hypothetical one. If we were to refer solely to behaviour, as generating differences in concepts, we would find that concepts do not vary radically at all between societies.

On the other hand, it is utterly trivial to say that concepts vary with language, if we say that differences in the language of pain by themselves constitute differences in the concept of pain. What is difficult to reconcile at this point is not that there are differences in the use of the word 'pain' but that this is simply not the way we react to pain-behaviour, and our reaction at this level is, as it were, pre-rational. What we have established is a basic difference in the level of practice. We are unable to react to pain behaviour in the way that our hypothetical society does. Any attempt is to re-educate such a 'misguided' society from the commitment of a fundamental error would not only require us to use criteria of evidence, proof, and so on, different from theirs. It would also require us to teach the new concept in a way different from the way we have learnt ours, namely, by giving reasons for justifying the use of a concept.

In On Certainty Wittgenstein emphasises that the language-game is something unpredictable, that it is not based on grounds, not reasonable or unreasonable, but, is there, as it were, given - "like our life".

There is, therefore, no guarantee that our attempt to revise the concept of pain in our hypothetical society will pull off — we may give all sorts of reasons, arguments, and use examples, or even attempt at persuasion, but the success or failure of our attempt will not be decided by the acceptance of what is ultimately true or false. It is not the adequacy or inadequacy of our teaching which is at fault here. In 206 of the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein says: "following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so. We react to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts in one way and another in another to the order in training? Which one is right...?"

What ultimately decides the issue is at the level of instinctual reaction, and this agreement is not a matter of opinion but in the 'form of life'.

At this point, we are dangerously close to accepting the idea that cross-cultural comparisons, in so far as they represent differences at the level of instinctual reaction as differences in the form of life — is impossible.

Thus, this analysis seems to have led us to restrict our judgements to our own form of life, that, what is intelligible and makes sense to us, what is true or false, is determined by our language.

There is a sense here in which the concepts of our hypothetical society is inaccessible to us. And there is another sense in which it is a contradiction in terms to say that these concepts are unintelligible to us. The latter sense is derived from the idea that, if the concepts of another society are really unintelligible to us, this is something we would never know — since to know this we would have to understand these concepts.

The concept of 'pain' is not unintelligible to us in the hypothetical society, in so far as we know the role this word plays in the life of the society. In The Blue and Brown Books, Wittgenstein says: "whether a word of the language of our tribe is rightly translated into a word of the English language depends upon the role this word plays in the whole life of the tribe, the occasions on which it is used, the experiences of emotion by which it is accompanied, the ideas which it generally awakens which prompt its saying" etc.

What is meant so far, is that, we cannot imagine a language so radically different from ours, that we are totally unable to determine what role the concepts of that language plays in the life of the society. We might imagine a situation, where such a society existed, where people behaved in the same way as we do, but there is no regular connexion between what they say, the sounds they make, and their actions. And these sounds they make are not mere accompaniments to their actions, in that, "their actions fall into confusion" without them. How are we to say then that these people have a language? There is, as Wittgenstein says "not enough regularity to call it language"?

It would be impossible for us to imagine, thus, whether the people in our imaginary society had a concept of 'pain' at all, if, in observing their behaviour, we were to find that there were no regularity between their uses of the word 'pain' and the pain behaviour. In fact, we would not be in a position to even say that they were using or that they even possess, the concept of 'pain' at all. This follows from the fact that they did not follow a rule. Now in games, there are to be found certain conceptual disparities, but this does not put into doubt our recognition of a game as a game. We know that this is typical of the way games differ from each other. In this

regard one must note that, what is typical between games is not, in the same sense as what is typical between different languages. The rules which determine certain aspects of a game, may be peculiar to that particular game. We would not be able to find any counterpart, or points of similarity between two different games, say, a game of chess and cricket. What determines their being games is external to the nature of games.

However, when someone like Wittgenstein invents or postulates a language different from ours, his freedom is restricted by certain limitations. For instance, he cannot, invent new games as concepts and rules as freely as one can invent new games. Hence, in this sense, the rules of language are not arbitrary like the rules of games.

When Wittgenstein postulates a concept — in this sense 'pain' — which is different from our concept of pain, he cannot, without being absurd, invent a notion so remote, that he would not be able to explain to us how this concept worked — because then, we would not, in fact, even consider it part of the language at all.

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter that, translatability of a language to another is quite possible, with,

of course, the persistent and unavoidable danger that the 'spirit' of the original is never fully captured in the translation. But it is a commonly-held belief that sometimes, when one comes across societies with institutions such as ethical, religious and so on, far removed from those one is familiar with, or identified with, that translation is not possible. Such an attitude may spring from an antipathy to a way of life different from one's.

Of course, translation involves quite obvious difficulties, such as finding an appropriate word or unit to match with another, and it may so happen that where a one-word would suffice to explain a concept in a particular language, the translation of the same word into another might involve in dealing with a much larger field. Perhaps it may even be required to deal with a lengthy description of the practices and beliefs in that society. In many cases, a borrowed word would have to be incorporated to provide the required correspondence to the appropriate contexts.

What is important, it seems, in this issue of translatability is, what it is which makes it possible, accepting that there is diversity in language — and forms of life — that there can be inter-culture/awareness across the wide and diverse spectrum.

We have seen how the possibility has been marred by certain myths about the nature of meaning, and certain principles of objectivity which distorted the nature and uniqueness of language. Taking the latter, we have seen, that the relative incompatibility of concepts between languages (in particular, our example of the fictional society where at the basic level of human response, namely, pain behaviour) leads to a tendency on our part, to believe in some objective principles, which our peculiar concept of pain has fallen short of — but as we have seen, whether a concept is adequate or inadequate is not determined by something external, or independent of the "form of life" within which it plays a role ... that is, seeing that a concept, say 'pain' plays a particular role, does not necessitate the postulation of an independent check. It may be thought that this may lead to a form of relativism, in that, what is, and is not the case, is merely a matter of human agreement. For instance, it seems that, it is enough that the people of a particular society accept and agree that a particular concept means such and such — that in so far as these differences exist, we shall never be able to understand each other's concepts. However, we have seen that this is not the case, how it is not merely a matter of an arbitrary agreement of opinion, but that of an

agreement in the particular language, in the 'form of life'. And the possibility of understanding what a particular concept means in one language in another even when a direct substitution of one concept in terms of another is not possible, is that there is a common background of agreement, between languages which is not merely an agreement in, what we know to be the case, but in what lies beyond reasoning, deduction and attitudes in what we may call with Wittgenstein, "the common behaviour of mankind."

Thus any study of human societies, which we may hope to undertake must take into account the plurality of manifestations and expressions of this "common behaviour of mankind "which finds expression in the many societies and cultures. The discussion have, so far been the subject of meaning at the linguistic phenomena, specifically in terms of the concept of meaning rules, and these meaning rules were, as we have seen, in a way, different from other types of rules, in that, they were not accountable in the same manner that the rules of a game, or an institution were unaccountable. This made our account of the concept of rules rather vague and indeterminate. However, this was only because the general feature of a language-game was such that we could not go beyond the nature of the so-called language-game to, as it were, something objective

or extra lingual to justify a particular aspect of the language-game. Our point of reference was not "the world of nature", but rather human life and the common activities which he is normally engaged in. For example, when we were dealing with the problem of translation, that to imagine a concept correctly in a particular language is to be able to use it according to a rule, and to know that we have used a word or a sentence correctly is not to see that it corresponds to 'what is the case' in the objective world, but rather to see that it fits into a certain order which corresponds to the range of human activities, or what Wittgenstein call 'forms of life'.

This, however, is not to say of course that what we call "the case with the world" has really nothing to do with these forms. The natural world clearly conditions the 'form of life'. It is because certain natural states of affairs prevail in the world we live in, that we are capable of pursuing all the multifarious activities which basically characterise our life form, be it eating, playing, building and ceremonies involving marriage, death, harvest and so on.

Wittgenstein remarks in On Certainty; "Certain events would put me in a position in which I could not go on with

the old language-game anymore. In which I was torn away from the sureness of the game. Indeed can't it be obvious that the possibility of a language-game is conditioned by certain facts."

One significant point to remember is that the relationship between the intelligibility, truth and falsity, sense and coherence of what we say, and the state of the natural world is not, however, like the relationship between natural facts, say, for example, the functionality of electronic circuits found in television, radios and computers etc. and the fundamental laws of electricity. For example, suppose the fundamental laws of electro-chemical behaviour of semi-conductors suddenly become devoid of its natural properties, our circuits would cease to function. We could then follow a series of causally connected sequences of relations which would finally lead to an explanation of why all of a sudden, our transistors, receivers and amplifiers had ceased to function. We would be able to, on the basis of our theory, predict what would happen. In this case our understanding of electronic circuits, would be dependent on our capacity of predicting what would be the case if such and such happened.

Now our language-game is not, in this way, conditioned by natural facts. It is, of course, certainly true, that

particular forms of human activities such as, for instance, agriculture would depend on certain natural conditions of of life such as, good climate, favourable soil conditions and so on, it is also true that our concepts would not work if the natural laws were to break down completely. It is quite easy to see, how, on this account, we can so easily make the mistake of thinking that the reality given to a form of life can be seen or observed from the outside. The form and method of human activity is not determined by what is experienced, but, rather, the form and activity by which we characterise the world determines what we discover and find desirable. Thus, when we say the meaning of language is grounded in human life, we are saying that what one describes and discovers in the world is determined by how he acts. As Bernard Williams says; "Any empirical discovery we could make about our views of the world, as that it was conditioned by our use of correct words or whatever, would itself be a fact which we were able to understand in terms of, and only in terms of, our view of the world."*

Thus it would seem quite clear from the sustained argument so far, about language being a "form of life", which, as we have seen 'couches', as it were, all activities

*Bernard Williams: Wittgenstein and Idealism in "Understanding Wittgenstein". Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures Vol. 7, 1971-73. Edited by G. Vesay.

peculiar to any specific linguistic stock, it may now be only too appropriate, to delve a little on the matter of what might be termed as, the idea of 'linguistic-chauvinism'. This notion, as is evident, usually gives rise to serious social and political issues in several countries besides ours. The most obvious manner in which, this problem might be viewed with sympathy would, of course be to adopt an attitude of what is normally termed as 'objectivity'. The question thus: "What ought to be my attitude towards another language?" has to take into account the following mentioned points on grounds on which a language is normally criticised:

1. It is a distorted version of another language, e.g. Assamese is a distorted version of Bengali, or Nagamese is a distorted form of Assamese and Hindi and Bengali.
2. It does not have a script e.g. "no tribal language in the North-East of India has its own script."
3. It does not have a literature e.g. the Zeliang language does not have a literature and, therefore, it is only a dialect.
4. It is incomplete and inadequate e.g. the Bengali or English says much better what the Angami Naga language can say only inadequately.

I. To take these in order: Firstly, two languages may be very closely similar to each other, and can then be shown even to have a common origin, but this does not make either of them an inferior version of the other or of the 'original' language. A language, or a form of life, is what it is and not another one in a different guise. The individuation of a language is undoubtedly a difficult task, and often, in the actual act of individuation, considerations other than 'linguistic' - in the broad sense of which a language encompasses a distinct form of life - may be involved. Such considerations may be political, economic, historical, social and so on. But the claim by a group that their native language is autonomous and therefore, distinct, although motivated partly by any or all of these considerations - (is there ever a 'pure unmixed' motive of any human action?) - is almost always associated with the perception, by the group, of significant differences in their form of life. That is, differences in language must reflect differences in conceptual frames and not differences in the degree of clarity of the same concepts. To think that this language is a distorted version of one's own, may exhibit an arrogance and insensitiveness which in a way, is the same as the arrogance and insensitiveness of thinking that there is no way of looking at a thing other than one's own.

II. To criticise another language on the ground that it lacks a script is peculiarly misplaced. The script of a language is not an integral part of it. It stands as it were, outside the language, in a way in which the activities we have talked about cannot stand outside, and it gets whatever 'life' it has from the language and not the other way around. A script without a language is "dead", but a language without a script is very much a language, not less of a one. The presence of a script may undoubtedly help in the growth of a language in so far as it facilitates the exploration of the possibilities of the language but such exploration can take place, and have taken place without a script. The absence of a script is not a criterion of the poverty of a language.

III. The third kind of criticism, mentioned above is serious. The possibility of literature is inherent in any language, and it is in literature that the bounds of meaning of a language are continuously explored and extended. A language which has not developed a literature has not, as it were, realised itself. But is there, in fact, a language which does not have a literature? If the emergence of literature is not thought to be dependent on the existence of a written tradition, then there is really no language without this aspect - since literature will include

stories, songs, legends, myths, parables, incantations and so on. Hence, it is quite safe to say that there isn't a language which does not have a good measure of all these. In fact the primary source of creativity even in a written tradition of literature is to be found in the symbols employed in these stories, songs, etc.

IV. Fourthly, in a sense, no language is complete, because it must be always, possible for new things to be said in it. But when a language is criticized as being incomplete, what is meant is that somethings are, and even can be, said in the language but vaguely, confusedly and inadequately, while the same things, can be said with more clarity, and adequately, in another language. And this is not true. An attempt to improve a language by inducting elements into it from a different language, so that the same things may be said more completely in the former cannot succeed, because the result of such an attempt is not that the same things are said <u>less</u> confusedly in the language, but that something <u>different</u> is also said in it now. When Wittgenstein says that any language is "complete", he means that you fall into a confusion if you try to provide a more perfect system for what may be said in it. Whatever may be said in the new system, it will not be what was said in the original language.

Thus, if what had been said about the relationship between a language-game and a form of life, is correct, then it is quite clear that a language must afford a specially intimate access to the culture of the people whose native language it is. A culture, of course, includes things like, as mentioned sometime earlier, activities such as, the way they cultivate the land, bury the dead, celebrate marriages, build their houses, and so on. Hence, a study of the culture must include all these various activities and more. But these people's language, which of course, must include its literature, is not to be taken as <u>another</u> of those cultural things they have. The literature embodies the <u>special</u> 'life' and 'tone' of the entire culture. So it is important to take note of the fact that mastering another language is just not a matter of mastering its grammatical rules, vocabulary and accent. But, much more importantly, it is a matter of understanding nuances, of gestures, pauses, voice and subtle differences of action and reactions. In the absence of such an understanding, speaking another's language with a mastery over its grammar, etc., is speaking it without grasping the 'life' of the language. Therefore, it is quite easy to understand that one's access to another culture, based on what might be called a 'mechanical' understanding of its language, its grammar and pronunciation, is,

bound to be a very superficial one. Hence, any assessment of a culture based on such an understanding of its language, must be fraught with danger, both intellectual and moral. There is always the susceptibility of assimilating it with one's own culture and applying to it, (that is, judging it by) one's own criteria of evaluation. If the assimilation is wrong, then it is easy to see, the evaluation is bound to be wrong. Thus someone who thinks 'polyandry', as practised in some societies like Tibet or 'polygamy', which is a prevalent practice in some Islamic countries, as indicating extraordinary moral depravity in such societies, makes this type of mistake of assimilation and evaluation.

It is an extremely interesting point which some social scientists, missionaries or any foreigner, desirous of learning an alien culture through obviously, the medium of language of the culture in question, would do well to note - indeed, cannot afford to overlook, is the idea of 'silence' which admittedly, one normally does not take into account at all, out of ignorance, as a significant notion. In the article 'The Eloquence Of Silence', Ivan Illich gives a most lucid classificatory account of the different nuances of silence which, he rightly seems to claim, has a role in language of no lesser significance than the actual vocative expression. One indeed gets the idea in his remark

> "An objective study of the ways in which meanings are transmitted has shown that much more is relayed from one man to another through and in silence than in words. Words and sentences are composed of silences more meaningful than the sounds. The pregnant pauses between sounds and utterances become luminous points in an incredible void; as electrons in the atom, as planets in the solar system. Language is a cord of silence with sounds the knots - as nodes in a Peruvian quipu in which the empty spaces speak. With Confucious we can see language as a wheel. The spokes centralize, but the empty spaces make the wheel".*

Thus it is seen that to understand another people one has to learn when to maintain silence, this of course, has profound truth when we examine our own lives. It is customary for most people (by this I mean in most cultures) to remain silent or quiet in the presence of superiors or elders, as a sign of respect. Against such cultural background are derived social norms such as: 'do not speak unless spoken to', 'remain silent when the other is speaking', 'it is in bad form to speak to strangers of the opposite sex', 'it is arrogant to collar a conversation', 'it is bad manners not to respond to a greeting', and so on. Hence, the process of learning a language must include the 'spirit' of the spoken word, the 'tone', the 'clothing' which gives the language its 'life': namely, the language of silence. Quoting Illich again in this context:

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*Ivan Illich: 'The Eloquence of Silence'; Celebrations of Awareness. Pelican 1970.

"To learn a language in a human and mature way, therefore, is to accept the responsibility for its silences and for its sounds. The gift a people gives us in teaching us their language is more a gift of the rhythm, the mode and subtleties of its system of silences than of its system of sounds. It is an intimate gift for which we are accountable to the people who have entrusted us with their tongue. A language of which I know only the words and not the pauses is a continuous offence. It is as the caricature of a photographic negative."

"It takes more time and effort and delicacy to learn the silence of a people than to learn its sounds. Some people have a special gift for this. Perhaps this explains why some missionaries, notwithstanding their efforts, never come to speak properly, to communicate delicately through silences. Although they speak with the 'accent of natives', they remain forever thousands of miles away. The learning of the grammar of silence is an art much more difficult to learn than the grammar of sounds."

"As words must be learnt by listening and by painful attempts at imitation of a native speaker, so silence must be acquired through delicate openness to them. Silence has its pauses and hesitations, its rhythms and expressions and inflections; its durations and pitches, and times to be and not to be. Just as with our words there is an analogy between our silence with man and with government. To learn the full meaning of one, we must practice *and deepen the other.*"*

Having laboured so far about the nature of language with all its multifarious connotations and possible connotations that reflect its 'dynamism', and also having dealt

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*Ivan Illich: Celebrations of Awareness, Pelican 1970.

with what attitude one 'ought' to have towards another language, it might be of some interest to gloss over briefly, this 'form of life' from quite another perspective, and appreciate its application to present cultural life. What I have in mind here is the idea of a 'dead' language.

What, therefore, is a 'dead' language, and how is it different from a contemporary language which is considered 'live'? The obvious answer that comes to mind is that a contemporary language is one that is actually spoken, where the meanings of words 'evolve' as it were, either by coining new ones, or in some cases, by drafting in foreign words to embody certain human activities which are hitherto unknown. Perhaps the word 'CYBERNETICS' is a good example to illustrate a recent human scientific pursuit and which (the word cybernetics) had been, it appears, got included in many non-English languages. A typical characteristic of language is that words get more complex in their meanings, corresponding to the activities they embody becoming more complicated and intricate. On the other hand, in the absence of such activities, the meanings may vanish altogether. Thus, such traits of language which accordingly adapt themselves to the idiosyncracies of life may be labelled as "live" in character for bearing testimony to the dynamism of life itself.

It has been of course, argued that language is itself an activity, that is, an activity which is much more than the act of "speaking" or "writing" the language. Indeed Wittgenstein has agreed, as we had the occasion to note earlier that what gives "life" or meaning to a word at all is the network of activities surrounding its use. Take almost any word, say, a word in the English language of greeting. The phrase "good morning" for instance, and imagine its connections with other areas of the language and the entire life of the activity of greeting. Contrast this with greeting with perhaps, what might be considered to be, an equivalent phrase in a language unfamiliar both to the speaker and the hearer. Here, even if the hearer and the speaker were aware of the equivalence, the artificiality of using such a phrase is apparent enough. The artificiality arises of course from the lack of the background - which is frequently dense - of connections between the phrase and other linguistic, and non-linguistic activities. In the case of language which is merely unfamiliar, or as we say "foreign" but "live" in character in the sense of being the spoken language of a group of native speakers, this artificiality is overcome by learning, or that is, acquiring the language — thereby entering into the life of this language. Now in the case of a 'dead' language this possibility is ruled out, as there are no native speakers of this language.

No doubt connections can be established between such a language and activities of life, but this must be done via a language which is not 'dead'. Hence, the density and the dynamic character of the relationship between a language and the activities of life are absent in the case of a 'dead' language. Now a 'dead' language if it has a life at all has only borrowed life; borrowed from one that is live'. Undoubtedly, it may be possible to revive a 'dead' language but such revival can take place only by the language acquiring an autonomy and independence of connections with the ordinary activities of life.

An aspect of the dynamism of the relationship between a word and the activities of life is that it is always possible for us to discover new and some might say profound meanings of many words in common use. Thus, take words such as 'love', 'courage', 'happiness', 'good', and so on. Contrast our understanding of these words at different stages of our lives. The word 'love' for instance, may undergo quite radical changes and extension of meaning as our awareness of the dynamism of the 'life of love' changes, and the discovery of new meanings and connections with a whole range of other words. This constitutes, one might assume, the genuine "open endedness" of words in a 'live' language, which necessarily is lacking in a language which

is 'dead'. Of course a word occasionally acquires a profounder meaning by being related to some words in the 'dead' language. But here again, this is so only because of the possibility of pointing out connections between the word in the 'dead' language and other words in the language under consideration, and through them, with areas of life which one might so far have been unaware of. This however, does not give a 'dead' language a capacity for growth and novelty which necessarily characterizes a 'live' language.

Now in a 'dead' language where the meanings become, as it were, 'petrified' such a language loses its dynamism and are hence, labelled 'dead'. The network of activities surrounding a word in such a language becomes understandably, limited. Take the word, for instance, "non-sequiter". Its use is confined to mean only an illogical inference, a conclusion arrived at, which does not follow from a given premise. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the usage is manifestly artificial to one not possessing the knowledge of the background of that language of which the word is a part. A foreign word, such as "Shalom" for instance, which is the Jewish form of greeting is yet another form of illustration of artificiality in its use for most cultures, though Hebrew may not be a 'dead' language. For, this word literally means "peace", and so, to one ~~whose~~ whose social

background is noted especially for its tranquility such as, in Hawaii for instance, before it was acceded to the United States, this form of greeting might not bear any significance at all. Yet, to the Jews, whose history is noted for violence, and continues even now, this term may not only reflect the hopes, but also suggest the aspirations of the people for peaceful co-existence with its neighbours. Thus to one who is ignorant of the history of this word and its significance to the people with which it is associated, its use will evidently be artificial. This arises out of the lack of density of connections between the word used and a whole range of activities, both linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. Now, any attempt at linking a 'dead' language say Latin, to ordinary activities of life would quickly acquire, and so be understood, in terms of the world-view of the language through which it is interpreted. However slight such a deviation may be, it would still be a misleading venture, and any endeavour at clarifying a puzzling notion might lead to the paradox of mystifying it further. This after all, is a problem involving translation in general (which has been mentioned earlier, however briefly, so, I will not dwell on this particular issue again.

The main reason for a word to lose its dynamism is, it appears, the rigidity of relationship between the word and the activity of life it embodies. Thus, this lack of "open-endedness" precludes the discovery of new and profounder meanings of words in everyday use, and hence, makes it necessarily 'dead' in character. Accepting the premise therefore, that the meanings of words in a 'dead' language are 'petrified' it follows that there exists no alternative avenues which may engender multifarious connotations depending on the varying degrees of understanding of a word. It might safely be conceded therefore, that in a 'dead' language, the words involved are, to a great extent irretrievably organic, merged, as it were, with the culture at a particular period of time — that they run the risk of being considered redundant, and so liable to rejection with the occurrence of a change in the social scheme, which, however imperceptible, is yet, an inevitable process of history. The use of Sanskrit and Latin might highlight some of the glaring anachronism in their employment in the present day context. This is compellingly revealed when Sanskrit had to be abandoned shortly after its introduction in the 'All India Radio' broacasting services when it was discovered that the language was far too prim and exaggeratedly formal to the point of disconnection with the mundane

prevalent social reality. This 'unnaturalness' must imply an artificiality which is the principle reason for its abandonment.

We have had the occasion to mention earlier of the possibility of reviving a 'dead' language. Now such resuscitation can occur only by the language acquiring, as we learnt, an autonomy and independence of connections with the ordinary activities of life. An interesting case, however, is the employment of, what we have called 'dead' languages for purposes of religious rituals. Most Roman Catholic Church services are still conducted in Latin, and Sanskrit is widely employed in Hindu rites. These languages, 'dead' as they may be when referring to the ordinary activities of life, are to be understood no longer in those circumstances, but in a context independent of them. In this particular sense, a special one surely for the religious, they are no longer 'dead' and so, no longer useless, but indeed indispensible and therefore, very much 'live'. The use of these languages in religious incantations seem to fulfil two requirements — whether these requirements are humanly contrived, or, out of a sense of necessity in fulfilling, what is believed to be Divine directives.

Firstly, religion adds a fresh dimension to our ordinary, what has been called 'secular' life — a dimension which has a necessary element of mystery and ineffability in it. This is the dimension of the Transcendent. A 'dead' language is therefore peculiarly suited to express this dimension of our life - it is suitably remote from our ordinary mundane activities and besides, there is also the right kind of mystery surrounding it.

Secondly, man's relationship with the transcendent is such that it is normally represented in activities which are frequently exaggeratedly stylised in order to stress their primary symbolic character, and also to express the degree of solemnity which is inherent in the relationship. A language like Sanskrit or Latin is ideally suited for use in connection with activities such as these. Through such formal languages, the God-head is best projected as the most exalted figure, which, for its sublime characteristics, demands reverence. Thus the Hindu notion of '<u>Brahman</u>' and the Christian 'Trinity' is effectively attributed to have the rightful claim to be worshipped by mankind. Hence, through the manipulation of such formal languages, the 'Highest Being' is best understood. 'Dead' languages may therefore, have no place though in ordinary life, are found to have a unique employment in the religious 'form of life'.

From the argument so far pursued, I would like to conclude this part of the discussion by making a mention of the fact that, language, as we have had the occasion to explore, thus acts as a kind of 'receptacle' of all the activities of the 'form of life' of the people who wield it. Hence, the most honest attempt at understanding the culture under study must necessarily include as the primary concern, the study of the language of which it is a part, and then examine if it corresponds to the account given by the native speakers themselves. This is a crucial, and also the most authentic, form of enquiry, since, (as we know) man, being a language-wielding creature is also a 'self-enquiring' and 'self-expressing' creature as well.

However, it will be unmistakably an anachronism to study however earnestly, a language spoken by a people say, for example, a Naga tribe a hundred years ago, and preserved in book-form by some linguists, since as mentioned, a language which is organic to the 'form of life' of a people undergoes change as the social activities of the people goes through a transformation. This aspect of the matter, if ignored, or overlooked, will ultimately only turn out to be, in the final analysis, a study on a 'dead' language for all practical purposes.

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