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Speech and Language: On the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Speakers

> *I conceive of two sorts of inequality in the human species; one, which I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature and consists in the difference of ages, health, bodily strengths, and qualities of mind or soul; the other, which may be called moral or political inequality, because it depends upon a sort of convention and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. The latter consists in the different privileges that some men enjoy to the prejudice of others, such as to be richer, more honored, more powerful than they, or even to make themselves obeyed by them.*
>
> Rousseau (1775)[1]

I use the second paragraph of Rousseau's second *Discourse* as an epigraph, and adapt its title, because I want to call attention to a link between his concerns and ours. Like him, we think knowledge of human nature essential and pursue it; like him, we think the present condition of mankind unjust, and seek to transform it. These two concerns, for example, provide the frame for Noam Chomsky's recent Russell lectures.[2] Unlike Chomsky, but like Rousseau, moreover, some linguists are beginning to attend to a conception of linguistic structure as interdependent with social circumstances, and as subject to human needs and evolutionary adaptation. And like Rousseau, our image of the linguistic world, the standard by which we judge the present situation, harks back to an earlier stage of human society. Here Rousseau has the advantage of us. He knew he did this, and specified the limitations of it (see the end of note *h* to the *Discourse*). We do it implicitly, falling back on a "Herderian" conception of the world as composed of individual language-and-culture units, for lack of another way of seeing the resources of language as an aspect of human groups, because we have not thought through new ways of seeing how linguistic resources do, in fact, come organized in the world. Thus we have no accepted way of joining our understanding of inequality with our understanding of the nature of language.

Chomsky's Russell lectures are a case in point. The first lecture, "On Interpreting the World," presents implications of a certain conception of

the nature of language and of the goals of linguistic research, leading to a humanistic, libertarian conception of man. The second lecture, "On Changing the World," is about injustice, its roots in inequality of power, and the failure of scholars and governments to deal with the true issues in these respects. There is little or no linguistics in the second lecture, just as there is little or nothing of social reality in the first. Such principled schizophrenia besets linguistics today; the scientific and social goals of its practitioners are commonly compartmentalized. Such an alienation from experience and social reality of one of "the many kinds of segmental scientists of man," against which Edward Sapir warned years ago,[3] does not mirror either the true nature of language or its relation to social life; rather, it reflects a certain ideological conception of that nature and that relation, one which diverts and divorces linguistics from the contribution, desperately needed, that it might make to the understanding of language as a human problem.

The heart of the matter is this. A dominant conception of the goals of "linguistic theory"[4] encourages one to think of language exclusively in terms of the vast potentiality of formal grammar, and to think of that potentiality exclusively in terms of its universality. But a perspective which treats language only as an attribute of Man leaves language as an attribute of men unintelligible. In actuality language is in large part what users have made of it. Navaho is what it is in part because it is a human language, and in part because it is the language of the Navaho. The generic potentiality of the human faculty for language is realized differently, as to direction and as to degree, in different human communities, and is useless except insofar as it is so realized. The thrust of Chomskian linguistics has been to depreciate the actuality of language under the guise of rejecting an outmoded philosophy of science. We need not now reject a modish philosophy of science, but we must be able to see beyond its ideological use and recognize that one cannot change a world if one's theory permits no purchase on it. Thus, one of the problems to be overcome with regard to language is the linguist's usual conception of it. A broader, differently based notion of the form in which we encounter and use language in the world, a notion which I shall call *ways of speaking*, is needed.

Let me subsume further consideration of how it is that linguistics is part of the problem, under the following consideration of some of the other dimensions of language and of some general sources of inequality with regard to it. In both sections I shall try to indicate the need for a conception of *ways of speaking*.

Some Dimensions of Language as a Human Problem

It is striking that we have no general perspective on language as a human problem, not even an integrated body of works in search of one. Salient problems, such as translation, multilingualism, literacy, and language de-

velopment, have long attracted attention, but mostly as practical matters constituting "applications" of linguistics, rather than as proper, theoretically pertinent parts of it. There are notable exceptions, as in the work of Einar Haugen, but for about a generation most linguistic thought in the United States has seen in the role of language in human life only something to praise, not something to question and study. Perhaps this situation reflects a phase in the alternation of "high" and "low" evaluations of language to which the philosopher Urban called attention.[5] The skeptical period after the First World War did see leading American theorists of language devote themselves to language problems, such as those involving new vehicles for international communication (Jespersen, Sapir), the teaching of reading (Bloomfield), literacy (Swadesh), language as an instrument and hence a shaper of thought (Sapir, Whorf), and linguistic aspects of psychiatric and other interpersonal communication (Trager, Hockett, in the early 1950's). Perhaps this issue of *Dædalus* is a sign that the climate of opinion is shifting once again toward a balanced recognition of language as "at one and the same time helping and retarding us," as Sapir put it in one context.[6]

In any case, it is unusual today to think of language as something to overcome, yet four broad dimensions of language can usefully be considered in just that way: diversity of language, medium of language (spoken, written), structure of language, and functioning of language. Of each we can ask,

(1) when, where, and how it came to be seen as a problem;

(2) from what vantage point it is seen as a problem (in relation to other vantage points from which it may not be so seen);

(3) in what ways the problem has been approached or overcome as a practical task and also as an intellectual, conceptual task;

(4) what its consequences for the study of language itself have been;

(5) what kinds of study, to which linguistics might contribute, are now needed.

I cannot do more than raise such questions here; limitations of knowledge would prevent my doing more, if limitations of space did not. To raise such questions may, I hope, help to stimulate the development of a general perspective.

Overcoming Diversity of Language. This problem may be the most familiar, and the historical solutions to it form an important part of the subject matter of linguistics itself: lingua francas, koinés, pidgins and creoles, standardized languages, diffusion and areal convergence, multilingual repertoires, and constructed auxiliary languages. The myths and lexicons of many cultures show a widespread and presumably ancient recognition of the diversity of language, although not uniformly in the mold of the Tower of Babel. The Busama of New Guinea and the Quileute of the present state of Washington believed that originally each person had a separate language, and that com-

munity of language was a subsequent development created by a culture hero or transformer. Thus it is an interesting question whether it is unity or diversity, within or between speech communities, that has seemed the thing requiring an intellectual explanation.

In Western civilization the dominant intellectual response to the existence of diversity has been to seek an original unity, either of historical or of psychological origin (sometimes of both). The dominant practical response has been to impose a novel unity in the form of the hegemony of one language or standard. The presence of the Tower of Babel story in the civilization's sacred book legitimated, and perhaps stimulated, efforts to relate languages in terms of an original unity and played a great part in the cumulative development of linguistic research. Indeed, some rather sophisticated work and criticism on this subject can be found from the Renaissance onward, and the dating of the origin of linguistic science with the comparative-historical work of the early nineteenth century reflects its institutionalization as much as or more than its intellectual originality.[7] The force of Christian and humanitarian concern to establish the monogenesis of man through the monogenesis of language was felt strongly well through the nineteenth century, from the dominance of the "ethnological question" in the first part through the controversies involving Max Müller, Darwin, Broca and others.[8] The special interest of Europeans in Indo-European origins became increasingly important in the latter part of the century, the idea of a common linguistic origin stimulating and legitimating studies of common cultural origins and developments. Humanitarian motives played a part as well—Matthew Arnold appealing to Indo-European brotherhood as a reason for the English to respect Celtic (Irish) culture and perhaps the Irish, and Sir Henry Maine making a similar appeal on behalf of the peoples of India. Sheer intellectual curiosity and satisfaction must always be assigned a large part in motivating work in comparative-historical linguistics, and humanistic concern has probably played a part in the major contemporary effort to establish empirically a common historical origin for languages, that of the late Morris Swadesh.[9]

The most salient effort to establish a conceptual unity of human languages today is, of course, linked with the views of Noam Chomsky. Concern for such a unity is itself old and continuous—the appearance of disinterest among part of a generation of U. S. linguists before and after the Second World War was a local aberration whose importance is primarily due to Chomsky's reaction against it. He has reached back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for an ancestral tradition,[10] when he had only to take up the tradition in this country of Boas and Sapir, or the European tradition, partially transplanted to this country, of Trubetzkoy and Jakobson. In both of these traditions some significant things were being said about the universals of language in the 1930's and early 1940's. It is true, however, that the history of the tradition of general linguistics stretching back through the

nineteenth century (and, Jakobson would argue, continuing straight back through the Enlightenment to origins in medieval speculative grammar), had been lost from sight in American linguistics, and a sense of it is only now being recovered. It is true, too, that since Herder and von Humboldt, the tradition does not much appeal to Chomsky, since its universalism is combined with an intense interest in typology, that is, in the characterization of specific languages as well as, and as an instrument of, the characterization of language.

Here we touch on the inescapable limitation of either kind of effort to conceive the unity of human language. Although one used to speak of the discovery of a genetic relationship as "reducing" the number of linguistic groups, both the language and the thought were badly misleading. Languages may disappear through the destruction of their speakers, but not through the publication of lingustic papers and maps. The newly related languages remain to be accounted for in their differences and developments as well as in terms of the portion (often quite small) of their makeup that shows their common origin. Likewise, the discovery of putative universals in linguistic structure does not erase the differences. Indeed, the more one emphasizes universals, in association with a self-developing, powerful faculty of language within persons themselves, the more mysterious actual languages become. Why are there more than one, or two, or three? If the internal faculty of language is so constraining, must not social, historical, adaptive forces have been even more constraining, to produce the specific plenitude of languages actually found? For Chinookan is not Sahaptin is not Klamath is not Takelma is not Coos is not Siuslaw is not Tsimshian is not Wintu is not Maidu is not Miwok is not Yokuts is not Costanoan . . . (is not Tonkawa, is not Zuni, is not Mixe, is not Zoque, is not any of the numerous Mayan languages, or affiliates of Mayan, if one extends the horizon). The many differences do not disappear, and the likenesses, indeed are far from all Chomskyan universals; some likenesses exist because of a genetic common origin (Penutian), some because of areal adaptations (Northwest Coast for some, California for others), some because of diffusion, some because of limited possibilities and implications (à la Greenberg). Franz Boas once argued against exclusive concentration on genetic classification, calling the full historical development of languages the true problem.[11] A similar point can be made today as against concentration on putative universals. Most of language begins where abstract universals leave off. In the tradition from Herder and von Humboldt through Boas and Sapir, languages are "concrete universals," and most of language as a human problem is bound up with the adjective of that term.

Both of these modes of overcoming diversity of language intellectually, genetic classification and the search for putative universals, locate their solutions in time. There is a past reference, a historical origin of languages

or an evolutionary origin of the faculty of language; and there is a present and future reference, one which draws the moral of the unity that is found. Neither speaks to the present and future in terms of the processes actually shaping the place of language in human life, for the faculty of language presumably remains constant and genetic diversification of languages is literally a thing of the past. The major process of the present and foreseeable future is the adaptation of languages and varieties to one another and their integration into special roles and complex speech communities. The understanding of this process is the true problem that diversity of language poses, both to mankind and to those who study mankind's languages.

The essence of the problem appears as communication, intelligibility. Some are concerned with the problem at the level of the world as a whole, and efforts to choose or shape a common language for the world continue.[12] Some project this contemporary concern onto the past, speaking of a "stubborn mystery" in the "profoundly startling, 'anti-economic' multiplicity of languages spoken on this crowded planet."[13] Such a view is anachronistic, however, for the diversity was not "anti-economic" when it came into being; it was just as much a "naturally selected, maximalized efficiency of adjustment to local need and ecology" as the great variety of fauna and flora to which Steiner refers in the phrase just quoted. Universal processes of change inherent in language, its transmission and use, together with separation and separate adaptation of communities over the course of many centuries suffice to explain the diversity. Simply the accumulation of unshared changes would in time make the languages of separate groups mutually unintelligible. There is of course more to it than physical and temporal distance (as Steiner insightfully suggests); there is social distance as well. Boundaries are deliberately created and maintained, as well as given by default. Some aspects of the structures of languages are likely due to this. If the surface form of a means of communication is simplified greatly when there is need to overcome barriers, as it is in the formation of pidgin languages, then the surface form of means of communication may be complicated when there is a desire to raise or maintain barriers.[14] This latter process may have something to do with the fact that the surface structures of languages spoken in small, cheek-by-jowl communities so often are markedly complex, and the surface structures of languages spoken over wide ranges less so. (The observation would seem to apply at least to North American Indian languages and Oceania).

In any case, the problem is one of more than languages; it is one of speech communities. Here the inadequacy of dominant concepts and methods in linguistics is most painfully apparent. The great triumph of linguistic science in the nineteeth century, the comparative-historical method, deals with speech communities as the source and result of genetic diversification. The great triumph of linguistic science in the twentieth

century, structural method, deals with speech communities as equivalent to language.[15] Genetic diversification can hardly be said to occur any longer, and a speech community comprising a single language hardly exists. The study of complex speech communities must benefit mightily from the tools and results both of historical linguistics, for the unraveling and interpretation of change, and of structural linguistics, for the explicit analysis of linguistic form. But it cannot simply apply them, it must extend them and develop new tools.

The needs can be expressed in terms of what is *between* speech communities and what is *within* them. Despite their well-known differences as to psychology, both Bloomfield and Chomsky reduce the concept of speech community to that of a language.[16] This will not do. The boundaries between speech communities are thought of first of all as boundaries of communication, but communication, or mutual intelligibility as it is often phrased, is not solely a function of a certain objective degree of difference between two languages or some series of related languages. One and the same degree of "objective" linguistic differentiation may be taken to demarcate boundaries in one case, and may be depreciated in another, depending on the social and political circumstances.[17] And intelligibility itself is not only a complex function of features of linguistic form (phonological, lexical, syntactic), but also of norms of interaction and conduct in conversation, and of attitudes towards differences in all these respects. In Nigeria one linguist found that as soon as members of a certain community recognized a related hinterland dialect, they refused to understand it;[18] other communities are noted for the effort they make to understand despite great difference. Such considerations cut across language boundaries. One may be at a loss to understand fellow speakers of his own language if his assumptions as to appropriate topics, what follows what, and the functions of speech are different (as happens often enough in classrooms between teachers of one background and students of another); and many of us have had the experience of following a discussion in a language of which we have little grasp, when the topics, technical terminology, and norms of conduct are professionally shared.

To repeat, communication cannot be equated with a "common" language. A term such as "the English language" comprises all linguistic varieties that owe their basic resources to the historical tradition known as English. That "language" is no longer an exclusive possession of the English, or even of the English and the Americans—there are perhaps more users of English in the Third World, and they have their own rights to its resources and future. Many varieties of "English" are not mutually intelligible within Great Britain and the United States as well as elsewhere. In fact, it is an important clarification if we can agree to restrict the term "language" (and the term "dialect") to just this sort of meaning: identification of a historically derived set of resources whose social functioning—organization into

used varieties, mutual intelligibility, etc.—is not given by the fact of historical derivation itself, but is problematic, needing to be determined, and calling for other concepts and terms.

We are in poorly explored territory here. Even with consideration restricted to groups which can communicate, there is a gamut from "I can make myself understood" at one end to "he talks the same language" at the other. Probably it is best to employ terms such as "field" and "network" for the larger spheres within which a person operates communicatively, and to reserve the term "community" for more integral units. Clearly the boundary (and the internal organization) of a speech community is not a question solely of degree of interaction among persons (as Bloomfield said, and others have continued to say), but a question equally of membership, of identity and identification. If interaction were enough, school children would speak the TV and teacher English they constantly hear. Some indeed can so speak, but do not necessarily choose to do so. A few years ago I was asked by teachers at Columbia Point why the children in the school did not show the influence of TV, or, more pointedly, of daily exposure to the talk of the teachers. A mother present made a telling observation: she had indeed heard children talk that way, but on the playground, playing school; when playing school stopped, that way of talking stopped too.

Community, in this sense, is a dynamic, complex, and sometimes subtle thing. There are latent or obsolescent speech communities on some Indian reservations in this country, brought into being now principally by the visit of a linguist or anthropologist who also can use the language and shows respect for the uses to which it can be put. There are emergent communities, such as New York City would appear to be, in the sense that they share norms for the evaluation of certain variables (such as postvocalic *r*), that have developed in this century. There are other communities whose stigmata are variable and signs of severe insecurity, like those of New York, or the community of *porteños* in Buenos Aires, comprised principally of immigrants concerned to maintain their distance and prestige vis-à-vis speakers from the provinces (who, ironically enough, have lived in the country much longer). There can be multiple membership, and there is much scope for false perception; authorities, both governmental and educational, are often ignorant of the existence of varieties of language and communication under their noses. An unsuspected variety of creolized English was discovered recently on an island off Australia by the chance of a tape recorder being left on in a room where two children were playing. When the linguist heard the tape and could not understand it, he came to realize what it was. That such a language was known by the children was entirely unknown to the school. Indians who have been beaten as children for using their Indian tongue or blacks who have been shamed for using "deep" Creole will not necessarily trot the language out for an

idle inquirer. In general, when we recognize that this diversity of speech communities involves social as well as linguistic realities, we must face the fact that there are different vantage points from which diversity may be viewed. One person's obstacle may be someone else's source of identity. In the United States and Canada today one can find Indians seeking to learn the Indian language they did not acquire as children. Leveling of language seems neither inevitable nor desirable in the world today. It is common to mock efforts at preservation and revitalization of languages as outmoded romanticism, but the mockery may express a view of human nature and human needs whose shallowness bodes ill for us.

What is within a speech community in linguistic terms has begun to be understood better through recent work in sociolinguistics. Empirical and theoretical work has begun to provide a way of seeing the subject "steadily as a whole." It suggests that one think of a community (or any group, or person) in terms, not a single language, but of a *repertoire.* A repertoire comprises a set of *ways of speaking.* Ways of speaking, in turn, comprise speech styles, on the one hand, and contexts of discourse, on the other, together with the relations of appropriateness obtaining between styles and contexts. Membership in a speech community consists in sharing one or more of its ways of speaking—that is, not in knowledge of a speech style (or any other purely linguistic entity, such as a language) alone, but in terms of knowledge of appropriate use as well. There are rules of use without which rules of syntax are useless. Moreover, the linguistic features that enter into speech styles are not only the "referentially-based" features usually dealt with in linguistics today, but also the "stylistic" features that are complementary to them, and inseparable from them in communication. Just as social meaning is an integral part of the definition and demarcation of speech communities, so it is an integral part of the organization of linguistic features within them. (Cf. Bernstein's concepts of "restricted" and "elaborated" code, classical diglossia, liturgy.) The sphere adequate to the description of speech communities, of linguistic diversity as a human problem, can be said to be: *means of speech, and their meanings to those who use them.*[19]

No one has ever denied the facts of multilingualism and heterogeneity of speech community in the world, but little has been done to enable us to comprehend and deal with them. Until now a "Herderian" conception of a world of independent one-language-one-culture units, a conception appropriate enough, perhaps, to a world pristinely peopled by hunters and gatherers and small-scale horticulturalists, has been tacitly fallen back upon. There now begins to be work to characterize complex linguistic communities and to describe speech communities adequately. Such description must extend to the place of speech itself in the life of a community: whether it is a resource to be hoarded or something freely expended; whether it is essential or not to public roles; whether it is conceived as in-

trinsically good or dangerous; what its proper role in socialization and demonstration of competence is conceived to be, and so forth.[20] Through such work one can hope to provide adequate foundations for assessing diversity of language as both a human problem and a human resource.

"Diversity" could stand as the heading for all of the problems connected with speech and language, once our focus is enlarged from languages as such to speech communities—existing diversity as an obstacle, and sometimes diversity that it is desired to maintain or achieve. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to comment separately on three topics that have been singled out for attention in their own right. These are problems connected with the media, the structures, and the functions of language.

Overcoming the Medium of Language. Not long ago one might have said that most of the world was attempting to overcome the spokenness of language through programs of literacy, while some of the advanced sectors of civilization—the advertising and communications industries, and the university—were hailing the imminent transcendence of language in graphic form. McLuhan is less prominent now, but these twin poles of spoken and written language remain very much with us. A good deal has been said about speaking and writing, about oral and literate cultures,[21] and I have no new generalization to add, but I do have a bit of skepticism to advance. We really know very little as to the role of the medium of language. Technological determinism is not generally popular, for good reason, so it is puzzling to find it avidly welcomed in the sphere of communication. There is no more reason to regard it as gospel there than elsewhere. Certainly, it is impossible to generalize validly about "oral" vs. "literate" cultures as uniform types. Popular social science does seem to thrive on three-stage evolutionary sequences—David Riesman, Margaret Mead, Charles Reich have all, like McLuhan, employed them—but if dogmatic Marxism is not to be allowed such schemes, again for good reason, it really seems a little unfair to tolerate it in dogmatic McLuhanism.

In such theses, nevertheless, lies the threat and fascination of media. Is use of one medium rather than another more than transfer of a constant underlying competence in language; is the medium in which language is used itself constitutive of the meaning or reality expressed, and hence perhaps of the language itself? No doubt the evolutionary adaptation of communication through the oral channel has shaped some aspects of human language (e.g., the range in number of phonological units and distinctive features). Modern linguists have commonly treated writing as merely a derivative of speech. Their attitude was due, in part, to the need to overcome the massive dominance of written forms of language as symbols of cultural dominance, a struggle that continues. (It is no accident that many of the languages of the world have been "reduced to writing," not by natives, but by outsiders, that is, by missionaries, anthropologists and other

linguists, and that the efforts of the outsiders toward an accurate orthography for representing the spoken form of a language are often deeply resented. Haitian Creole is a case in point.) Even in the period in which any interest in writing was heterodoxy in U.S. linguistics, more realistic scholars, such as Dwight Bolinger and Josef Vachek, defended the obvious fact of writing's relative autonomy. It seems fair to say that the issue is now a matter of indifference, especially to the Chomskyan school, who denigrate concern with the "external realization" of language as of little or no theoretical interest. Their own work often enough depends on examples possible only in written communication, and commonly ignores features inseparable from spoken communication (try characterizing narrative discourse without reference to intonation and voice quality). We are left, as we so often are, with sweeping claims, on the one hand, and on the other hand, with indifference on the part of those who could contribute precision to the study of the matter.

As a general principle, one may assume that difference of means will condition differences in what is accomplished; that would seem to hold for the comparative study of symbolic forms as a whole, including those of speech and writing. That speech and writing are not simply interchangeable, and have been developed historically in ways at least partly autonomous, is obvious. There is little hard knowledge, however, as to the degree of autonomy and the consequences of it.

One thing we do know is that a given society may define the role of any one medium quite differently from another society, as to scope and as to purpose. I have elaborated this theme with regard to speaking elsewhere. Here, let me illustrate it briefly with regard to writing.[22] For one thing, new writing systems continue to be independently invented—one was devised in 1904 by Silas John Edwards, a Western Apache shaman and leader of a nativistic religious movement. The sole purpose of the writing system is to record the sixty-two prayers Silas John received in his vision and to provide for their ritual performance. Competence in the system has been restricted to a small number of specialists. Discovery and study of this system by Keith Basso has shown that existing schemes for the analysis of writing systems fail to characterize it adequately, and probably fail as well for many other systems, having been devised with evolutionary, *a priori* aims, rather than with the aim of understanding individual systems in their own terms. The development of an *ethnography of writing*, such as Basso is undertaking, is long overdue.[23] Here belongs also study of the many surrogate codes found round the world—drum-language, whistle-talk, horn-language, and the like—for their relation to speech is analytically the same as that of writing,[24] and they go together with the various modalities of graphic communication (handwriting, handprinting, typing, typographic printing, etc.) and the various modalities of oral communication (chanting, singing,

declamation, whispering, etc.) in a general account of the relations between linguistic means and ends.

As to ends, the Hanunoo of the Philippines are literate—they have a system of writing derivative of the Indian Devanagari—but they use it exclusively for love-letters, just as the Buan of New Guinea use their writing. In central Oregon the town of Madras has many signs, but the nearby Indian reservation, Warm Springs, has almost none, and those only where strangers impinge—the residents of Warm Springs do not need the information signs give.[25] Recently Vista workers tried to help prepare Warm Springs children for school by asking Indian parents to read to them in preschool years. U.S. schools tend to presuppose that sort of preparation, and middle-class families provide it, showing attention and affection by reading bed-time stories and the like; but Warm Springs parents show attention and affection in quite other ways, had no need of reading to do so, and the effort got nowhere. The general question of the consequences of literacy has been forcefully raised for contemporary European society by Richard Hoggart in a seminal book.[26]

In general, many generalizations about the consequences of writing and the properties of speaking make necessities out of possibilities. Writing, for example, *can* preserve information, but need not be used to do so (recall IBM's shredder, Auden's "Better Burn This"), and we ought to beware of a possible ethnocentrism in this regard. Classical Indian civilization committed vital texts to memory, through careful training in sutras, for fear of the perishability of material things. Classical Chinese calligraphy, the cuneiform of Assyrian merchants, and the style of hand taught to generations of Reed students by Lloyd J. Reynolds, are rather different kinds of things. Television may have great impact, but one cannot tell from what is on the screen alone. In any given household, does the set run on unattended? Is the picture even on? Is silence enforced when a favorite program or the news comes on? Or is a program treated as a resource for family interaction?

We have had a great deal more study of means than of meanings. There appear to be many more books on the alphabet than on the role of writing as actually observed in a community; many more pronouncements on speech than ethnographies of speaking; many more debates about television and content-analyses of programs than first-hand accounts of what happens in the rooms in which sets are turned on. The perspective broached above with regard to speech communities applies here, since media are a constituent of the organization of ways of speaking (i.e., ways of communication). We need particularly to know the meanings of media relative to one another within the context of given roles, settings, and purposes, for the etiquette of these things enters into whatever constitutive role a medium may have, including the opportunity or lack of it that persons and groups may have to use the medium. In England a typed letter is not acceptable in some contexts in which it would be taken for granted in the United States; the family

Christmas letter in the United States is a genre that can be socially located; subgroups in the United States differ dramatically in their assumptions as to what should be photographed and by whom.[27] At Warm Springs reservation last August, at the burial of a young boy killed in a car accident, his team-mates from the Madras High School spoke haltingly in their turn beside the grave and presented the parents with a photograph of the boy in athletic uniform, "as we would like to remember him"—a shocking thing, which the parents stoically let pass—for the last sight of the dead person, which bears the greatest emotional distress, had already been endured in the church before coming to the cemetery. When the rites were complete, Baptist and Longhouse, when all the men, then all the women, had filed past the gravesite, taking each in turn a handful of dirt from a shovel held out by the uncle of the boy, and dropping it on the half-visible coffin within the site, when the burial mound had been raised over the coffin, the old women's singing ended, and the many flowers and the toy deer fixed round the mound, then, as people began to leave, the bereaved parents were stood at one end of the mound, facing the other, where their friends gathered to photograph them across it. That picture, of the manifestation of solidarity and concern on the part of so many, evident in the flowers, might be welcome.

The several media, of course, may occur together in several mixes and hierarchies, in relation to each other and in relation to modalities such as touch. Communities seem to differ as to whether tactile or vocal acts, or both together, are the indispensable or ultimate components of rituals of curing, for example. In some parts of Africa, languages are evaluated partly in terms of their greeting systems, and the Haya of northern Tanzania, who are acquiring Swahili, find it less satisfying than their own language, for in a Haya greeting one touches as well as talks.[28]

Finally, the use of media and modalities needs to be related to the norms by which a community takes responsibility for performance and interpretation of kinds of communication. My stress here obviously is on the qualitative basis of assessing media as a human problem. Statistics on radios and newspapers and the like barely scratch the surface. I think it entirely possible that a medium may have a constitutive effect in one community and not in another, due to its qualitative role, its social meaning and function, even though frequencies of occurrence may be the same in both. We have to do here with the question of identities and identifications, mentioned earlier with regard to varieties of language in schools. We need, in short, a great deal of ethnography.

Overcoming the Structure of Language. Concern to overcome the structure of language seems to have centered around the function of naming, either to achieve a uniform relation between language and meaning as a semantic ideal, or to avoid it as a spiritual desert or death. Early in the development of Indo-European studies, when modern languages were thought degenerate

in form, the great pioneer of reconstruction, Franz Bopp, sought to infer an original Indo-European structure in which meanings and morphemes went hand in hand, reflecting perhaps an original, necessary relationship. Others have sought to realize a semantic ideal in the present, by constructing an artificial language, or by reconstructing an existing one to convey the universal meanings required by science and philosophy. One thinks especially of the late seventeenth century (Dalgarno, Bishop Wilkes, Leibniz) and the early twentieth century (Russell, the early Wittgenstein, Carnap, Bergmann and others). Still others have thought that the ideal relationship between meaning and form might be glimpsed in the future, once linguists had worked through the diverse structures of existing languages to the higher level of structure beyond them. Such was Whorf's vision.[29]

At an opposite extreme would be a philosopher like Brice Parain, who despairs of the adequacy of language, and of course adherents of the Zen tradition that regards language's inveterate distinguishing of things as a trap to be transcended. Intermediate would be the conscious defense of other modes of meaning than that envisioned in the "semantic ideal," in particular, the defenses of poetry and of religious language.[30] And here would belong conceptions of literary and religious use of language as necessarily in defiance of other, conventional modes of use. Much of philosophy and some of linguistics seem to have found their way back to an open-ended conception of the modes of meaning in language, and are experiencing great surges of interest in poetics and rhetoric.

Such work is of the greatest importance, but it does leave the general question of the adequacy of language, or of a particular language, in abeyance. It would seem that the structures of languages have never been wholly satisfactory to their users, for they have never let them rest. Shifts in the obligatory grammatical categories of languages over time, like the shift from aspect to tense in Indo-European, bespeak shifts in what was deemed essential to convey. Conscious reports of such concerns may have appeared first in classical Greece, when Plato complained that the processual character of Greek verbs favored his philosophical opponents, although, at the time, devices such as the suffix *-itos* for forming abstract nouns were growing in productivity. When in the fourth century A.D. Marius Victorinus tried to translate Plotinus from Greek into Latin, there was no adequate abstract terminology in his contemporary Latin, and his clumsy efforts to coin one met with little acceptance, thus inhibiting the spread of the Neo-Platonic philosophy in that period. Some centuries later "theologisms" had evolved in Latin which quite matched the terms of the Greek fathers in precision and maneuverability.[31] In the early modern period, English writers lamented the inadequacies of English and set out to remedy them.[32] At Warm Springs, some fifteen years ago, a speaker of Wasco (a Chinookan language), acknowledging Wasco's lack of a term for a contemporary object, said that when he was a boy, if one of the old men had come out of

his house and seen such a thing, he would have coined a word for it, "just like that" (with a sharp gesture). There are no such old men anymore to coin words or shape experience into the discourse of myth.[33] Such fates are common, though not much attended to by linguists. The official preference is to stress the potentiality of a language and to ignore the circumstances and consequences of its limitations. Yet every language is an instrument shaped by its history and patterns of use, such that for a given speaker and setting it can do some things well, some clumsily, and others not intelligibly at all. The cost, as between expressing things easily and concisely, and expressing them with difficulty and at great length, is a real cost, commonly operative, and a constraint on the theoretical potentiality of language in daily life. Here is the irreducible element of truth in what is known as the "Whorf hypothesis": means condition what can be done with them, and in the case of languages, the meanings that can be created and conveyed. The Chomskyan image of human creativity in language is a partial truth whose partiality can be dangerous if it leads us to think of any constraints on linguistic communication either as nugatory or as wholly negative. As to the force of such constraints, the testimony of writers and the comparative history of literary languages should, perhaps, suffice here.[34] As to their positive side, we seem to need to repeat the development of thought discerned by Cassirer in Goethe, Herder and W. von Humboldt:

> To them, the Spinozistic thesis, that definition is limitation, is valid only where it applies to external limitation, such as the form given to an object by a force not its own. But within the free sphere of one's personality such checking heightens personality; it truly acquires form only by forming itself. . . . Every universal in the sphere of culture, whether discovered in language, art, religion, or philosophy, is as individual as it is universal. For in this sphere we perceive the universal only within the actuality of the particular; only in it can the cultural universal find its actualization, its realization as a cultural universal.[35]

We need, of course, ethnography to discover the specific forms which the realization of universality takes in particular communities, and, where the question is one of speech, we need ethnographies of speaking.

Whorf himself led in describing the organization of linguistic features pertinent to cultural values and world views as cutting across the usual sectors of linguistic description, and as involving "concatenations that run across . . . departmental lines" (that is, the lines of the usual rubrics of linguistic, ethnographic or sociological description that divide the study of a culture and language as a whole).[36] Whorf referred to the required organization of features as a *fashion of speaking*, and one can see in his notion an anticipation, though not developed by him, of the sociolinguistic concept of *ways of speaking*. The crucial difference is that to the notion of speech styles, the sociolinguistic approach adds the notion of contexts of situation and patterns relating style and context to each other.

Here, as before, the great interest is not merely in diversity or uniformity,

but in the possibility that such differences shape or constitute worlds. Do semantic-syntactic structures do so? Sapir and Whorf thought that for the naive speaker they did, although contrastive study of language structures was a way to overcome the effect. What Chomsky describes as the seemingly untrammeled "creative aspect" of language use was treated by Sapir as true, but not true in the same way for speakers of different languages. Each language has a formal completeness (i.e., it shares fully in the generic potentiality of human language), but does so in terms of an orientation, a "form-feeling" of its own, so as to constitute quite a unique frame of reference toward being in the world. A monolingual's sense of unlimited adequacy is founded on universality, not of form or meaning, but of function, and that very sense, being unreflecting, may confine him all the more. The particular strengths of a given language are inseparable from its limitations. This is what Sapir (preceding and giving the lead to Whorf) called

> a kind of relativity that is generally hidden from us by our naive acceptance of fixed habits of speech as guides to an objective understanding of the nature of experience. This is the relativity of concepts, or, as it might be called, the relativity of the form of thought. . . . It is the appreciation of the relativity of the form of thought which results from linguistic study that is perhaps the most liberalizing thing about it. What fetters the mind and benumbs the spirit is ever the dogged acceptance of absolutes.[37]

I think this is as fair a statement of the evidence and parameters of the situation today as it was a half-century ago when Sapir wrote it. I cite Sapir here partly because I think that linguistics in the United States, having worked its way through a decade or so of superficial positivism, shows signs of having worked its way through another decade or so of superficial rationalism, and a readiness to pick up the thread of the complexly adequate approach that began to emerge in the years just before the Second World War in the work of men like Sapir, Firth, Trubetzkoy and Jakobson.

To return to relativity: the type associated with Sapir and Whorf in any case is underlain by a more fundamental kind. The consequences of the relativity of the structure of language depend upon the relativity of the function of language. Take, for example, the common case of multilingualism. Inference as to the shaping effect of some one language on thought and the world must be qualified immediately in terms of the place of the speaker's languages in his biography and mode of life. Moreover, communities differ in the roles they assign to language itself in socialization, acquisition of cultural knowledge, and performance. Community differences extend to the role of languages in naming the worlds they help to shape or constitute. In central Oregon, for example, English speakers typically go up a level in taxonomy when asked to name a plant for which they lack a term: "some kind of bush"; Sahaptin speakers analogize: "sort of an A," or "between an A and a B" (A and B being specific plants); Wasco speakers demur: "No,

no name for that," in keeping with a cultural preference for precision and certainty of reference.[38]

This second type of linguistic relativity, concerned with the functions of languages, has more than a critical, cautionary import. As a sociolinguistic approach, it calls attention to the organization of linguistic features in social interaction, and current work has begun to show that description of *fashions of speaking* can reveal basic cultural values and orientations. The worlds so revealed are not the ontological and epistemological worlds of physical relationships, of concern to Whorf, but the worlds of social relationships. What are disclosed are not orientations toward space, time, vibratory phenomena and the like, but orientations towards persons, roles, statuses, rights and duties, deference and demeanor.[39] Such an approach obviously requires an ethnographic base.[40]

Overcoming the Function of Language. Diversity is a rubric under which the phenomena of language as a human problem can be grasped; the questions which underlie our concern with diversity can be summed up in the term, *function*. What differences do language diversities make through their role in human lives? Some of these differences have been touched upon, and I want to take space for only general consideration here. Linguists have mostly taken the functions of language for granted, but it is necessary to investigate them. Such investigation is indeed going on, but mostly not in linguistics. It is a striking fact that problems of overcoming some of the ordinary functioning of language in modern life attract increased attention from philosophers, writers, and sociological analysts of the condition of communication in society, while many linguists proceed as if mankind became more unified each time they used the word "universal"; freer and more capable of solving its problems each time they invoked linguistic competence and creativity. (This is what I mean by superficial rationalism.)

Serious analysis of the functioning of language is to be found in England and the continent much more than in the United States. Let me merely mention here Merleau-Ponty on the "prose of the world," Heidegger on speaking as "showing," Brice Parain (already cited) on the inadequacy of language, Barthes on *l'ecriture,* LeFebvre on *discours*, Sartre on precoded interpretations of events such as the Hungarian uprising, and Ricoeur on hermeneutics, and state briefly the significance of two approaches, those of Bernstein and of Habermas.

Bernstein's work has a significance apart from how one assesses his particular studies, which have been considerably shaped by the exigencies of support for practical concerns. His theoretical views, which precede these studies, are rooted in a belief that the role of language in constituting social reality is crucial to any general sociological theory, and that that role has not yet been understood because it has been approached in terms of an unexamined concept of language. For Bernstein, linguistic features affect the

transmission and transformation of social realities through their organization into what he calls *codes;* that is, through selective organization of linguistic features into styles of speech, not through the agency of a "language" (e.g., "English") as such. He is noted for his twin notions of *restricted* and *elaborated* codes, and this dichotomy has not always done the texture of his thought good service, for the two notions have had to subsume a series of dimensions that ought analytically to be separated, since they cut across speech communities in different ways. (See an analysis in my paper cited second in references 20.) Nevertheless, one dimension essential to his views is particularly essential to understanding language as a human problem in the contemporary world. It is the dimension of contrast between restricted speech styles that are predominantly particularistic or context-specific, and elaborated speech styles that are predominantly universalistic or context-free.

The point is not that some groups have only one of these styles, and other groups only the other. The potentialities of both are universally present and to some extent employed. Bernstein's point is rather that certain types of communication and social control, especially in families, may lead to the predominant use of one style or the other. Nor is the point that one of these styles is "good," the other "bad." Each has its necessary place. The restricted style, in which understandings can be taken for granted, is essential to efficient communication in some circumstances, and to meaningful personal life in others. A life in which all meanings had to be made explicit, in which there was never anyone to whom one could say, "you know what I mean," with assurance, would be intolerable. Many life choices, not least among academics, are made for the sake or lack of "someone to talk to" in this sense. The elaborated style can be quite out of place, and even destructive, in many circumstances. But, and this is an element of Bernstein's views that has been largely overlooked, the universalistic meanings of the elaborated style are essential if one is to be able to talk about means of communication themselves, the ways in which meanings come organized in a community in the service of particular interests and cultural hegemony, and so to gain the objective knowledge necessary for the transformation of social relationships.[41]

Habermas develops a contrast somewhat like Bernstein's, in terms of uses of language or kinds of communication: those appropriate to contexts of symbolic interaction, on the one hand, and to the purposes of technological and bureaucratic rationality, on the other. It is Habermas' view that whereas the "free market" concept was the dominant rationalization of the capitalist order in the nineteenth century, that of "technological progress" serves that role today, and that one of the great threats to human life in modern society is the invasion of spheres of symbolic interaction by the technological, bureaucratic communicative style. Value preferences and special social interests masquerade in the language of instrumental necessity; personal and expressive dimensions of meaning become illicit over a greater and greater

range of activity. Official social science in its positivistic interpretaton of its task actually aids in the maintenance and establishment of technological control, unlike those trends in social science concerned with understanding sociocultural life-worlds and with extending intersubjective understanding with what may loosely be called a "hermeneutic" orientation, and those trends concerned with analyzing received modes of authority in the interest of emancipating men from them. In his recent work Habermas has given special attention to the limitations of a Chomskyan conception of competence and to the positive contributions of a psychoanalytic perspective.[42]

Habermas might be said to give a reinterpretation of the Marxian categories of analysis in communicative, partly linguistic terms. He conceives of the forces at work in society in terms, not of classes or of superstructure and base, but of kinds of cognitive interests (technological-bureaucratic, symbolic interactive, and emancipatory) and their interplay. Such a reinterpretation may not be adequate sociologically (for non-Marxists any more than for Marxists), but it offers a mediation among sociological analysis, cultural criticism, and the study of the actual organization of linguistic means in contemporary life that is unparalleled. If his particular formulation does not prove adequate to overcoming the compartmentalization of professional work and social concern among linguists, then the solution must nevertheless be found along the lines that Habermas (building in part on Bernstein) has opened up. Clearly I think that Bernstein and Habermas, by focusing upon the functional organization of linguistic resources in society, stimulate the ethnographic work that is a necessary foundation for understanding language as a human problem.

Thinking About Linguistic Inequality

Occasionally linguists have been so carried away by ideological certitude as to state that all languages are equally complex. This is of course not so. It is known that languages differ in sheer number of lexical elements by an order of magnitude of about two to one as between world languages and local languages. They differ in number and in proportion of abstract, superordinate terms. They differ in elaboration of expressive and stylistic devices—lexical, grammatical and phonological. Languages differ in number of phoneme-like units, in complexity of morphophonemics, in complexity of word-structure (both phonological and morphological), in degree of utilization of morphophonemically permitted morpheme-shapes, etc.

The usual view is that such things are distinctions without a difference, that all languages are equally adapted to the needs of those who use them. Leaving aside that such equality might be an equality of imperfect adaptations, speech communities round the world simply do not find this to be the case. They are found to prefer one language for a purpose as against another, to acquire some languages and give up others because of their suitability for

certain purposes. No Third World government can afford to assume the equality of the languages within its domain.

The usual answer to this objection is that all languages are potentially equal. In fact this is so in one vital respect; all languages are indeed capable of adaptive growth, and it is a victory of anthropologically oriented linguistic work, particularly, to have established this point. The difficulty with the usual answer is twofold. First, given that each language constitutes an already formed starting point, it is not at all clear that expansion of resources, however far, would result in languages being interchangeable, let alone identical. Limiting consideration to world languages, we find that many who command more than one prefer one to another for one or more purposes, and that this is often enough a function of the resources of the languages themselves. The other difficulty is that the realization of potentiality entails costs. The Chomskyan image of the child ideally acquiring mastery of language by an immanent unfolding misleads us here. It has an element of truth to which the world should hearken, but it omits the costs, and the constitutive role of social factors. Most of the languages of the world will *not* be developed, as was Anglo-Saxon, into world languages over the course of centuries. (It is speculated that Japanese may be the last language to join that particular club.)

I regret to differ from admired colleagues on this general issue, but it seems necessary, if linguistic work is to make its contribution to solution of human problems, not to blink realities. How could languages be other than different, if languages have any role at all in human life? To a great extent, languages, as I have said, are what has been made of them. There is an element of truth in the thesis of potentiality and an element of truth in the thesis of equivalent adaptation across communities; but both theses fall short of contemporary reality, where languages are not in fact found unmolested, as it were, one to a community, each working out its own destiny in an autonomous community. Not to take the step to that reality is to fall back on the "Herderian" image, a falling back that is all too common. If that image were a reality, then the analysis of linguistic inequality would perhaps be only an academic exercise for scholars who take pleasure in languages the way one may take pleasure in kinds of music. Given our world, however, analysis of linguistic inequality is of great practical import.

What, then, are the sources and consequences of linguistic inequality? The kinds of diversity already discussed contribute, of course; but the plain fact is that having hardly raised the question we have no clear notion. A Parsonian set of categories can serve as an initial guide.

First, languages differ in their makup as adaptive resources; the linguistic resources of speech communities differ in what can be done with them, as has been indicated. A generation ago some kinds of difference were regarded with a spirit of relativistic tolerance, as the special virtues of the languages that had them, and so one got at least some account of their lexical and

grammatical strengths. The present temper, however, treats mention of differences as grounds for suspicion of prejudice, if not racism, so that poor Whorf, who believed fervently in the universal grounding of language, and extolled the superiority of Hopi, has become, like Machiavelli, a perjorative symbol for unpleasant facts to which he called attention. Until this temper changes, we are not likely to learn much about this fundamental aspect of language.

Second, linguistic resources differ as an aspect of persons and personalities. In addition to the variability inevitable on genetic grounds, there is the variability due to social patterning. Conceptions of male and female roles, or of specialized roles, including that of leadership, may differ markedly among speech communities so that eloquence or other verbal skills may be necessary for normal adult roles in one society (commonly for men, not women), and essential to no important role at all in another. The requirements of a speaking role may be simple, or subtle and difficult as they are in the special bind of a traditional Quaker minister who had to speak out of spiritual silence and, desirably, after periods of doubting his calling.[43] Differences in verbal skills desired, of course, feed back upon the ways in which the linguistic resources of a community are elaborated.

Third, linguistic resources differ according to the institutions of a community. So far as I know, comparative analysis of institutions has not much considered the ways in which they do and do not require or foster particular developments of verbal skill and resource, or at least has not phrased its findings as contributions to the understanding of language. There are indeed some analyses of the development of the verbal style and resources of particular sciences, of science as a social movement, and of religious and political movements. My impression is, however, that one finds case studies, but not coordinated efforts toward a comparative analysis and a theory.

Fourth, linguistic resources differ according to the values and beliefs of a community. Infants' vocalizations, for example, may be postulated as a special language, one with serious consequences, such that special interpreters are required, so that a child's wishes can be known and its soul kept from returning to whence it came. The shaping of linguistic resources by religious concerns appears to be attracting a surge of interest.[44] A community's values and beliefs may implicitly identify spontaneous speech as a danger to the cultural order, as among the traditional Ashanti, or they may treat speaking and especially elaborate speaking, as a badge of inferiority, both between persons and among the orders of a social hierarchy, as is the case with the Wolof of Senegal. The normal condition of a community may be constant chatter on the one hand, or pervasive quiet on the other, according to how speech is valued.

Such a guide to differences does not in itself go beyond a "Herderian" perspective of discrete speech communities, each part of the cultural plenitude of the world. Such description bears on inequality, however, when

speech communities are viewed in a larger context. Differences by themselves would constitute inequality only in the sense of lack of equivalence, not in the sense of inadequacy. But just as the resources of a speech community must be described as speech styles in relation to contexts of situation, so must they also be assessed in relation to their contexts when the perspective is that of human problems. The essential thing seems to me to be to assess the situation of a speech community in terms of the relation between its abilities and its opportunities. Every speech community is to some degree caught up in a changing relationship with a larger context, in which opportunities for the meaningful use of traditionally fostered abilities may be declining, and novel opportunities (or requirements) for which members have not been traditionally prepared may be impinging. The term *competence* should be employed within just such a perspective. It should not be used as a synonym for ideal grammatical knowledge as by Chomsky, or extended to a speech community collectively as by De Camp, or extended to ideal communicative knowledge as by Habermas, or done away with as Labov would seem to prefer; rather, *competence* should retain its normal sense of the actual ability of a person. Just such a term is needed to assess the processes at work in actual speech communities, and their consequences for persons. *Competence* as a term for ideal knowledge may overcome inequality conceptually for linguists, but only as a term for the abilities of persons, assessed in relations to contexts of use, can it help to overcome inequality practically for the members of speech communities.

Conclusion

To sum up: from one standpoint the history of human society can be seen as a history of diversity of language, of diversity as a problem—both diversity of languages as such, and diversity as to their media, structures, and functions. From another standpoint, that same diversity has been a resource and an opportunity—for scholars to understand the potentialities of human language, and for speakers to develop the potentialities of their forms of life and of their identities.

From antiquity it has been the mark of a true science of man, of greatness in a science of man, to attempt to comprehend the known diversity of cultures and history. Herodotus did so in a narrative of his age's great conflict between East and West, incorporating the ethnology of his world. The Enlightenment, while recognizing a debt to antiquity, was conscious also of the superiority and the challenge of a new horizon provided by its knowledge of manners and customs from the New World, and from remoter Africa and Asia; the Victorian evolutionists, while recognizing an Enlightenment precedent, were conscious of a superiority and the challenge of a new horizon provided by the recent recognition of the great prehistoric antiquity of man. In this century there has been no new horizon of

data in space or time that has vivified the whole (unless one counts primate studies and finds of fossil man as such), but a principle of methodological relativism has been gradually established that is of equal importance. Now we are at a juncture where only the future of man offers the challenge of a new horizon to a science of man; the choices for its future appear to be irrelevance, the service of domination, or the service of liberation through universalization. That is, the sciences of man have developed in the matrix of a certain relationship between one part of the world and the rest; a relationship defined in terms, not of aspirations, but of activities. Anthropology, for instance, is fairly described as the study of colored people by whites.[45] That matrix has changed irreversibly. A science of man limited to certain societies or interests was always implicitly a contradiction in terms; increasingly, it has become an impossibility or a monstrosity. Knowledge about people is a resource, like control of oil and of armies. Nations cannot accept permanent inferiority in this regard. For the social scientists, the problem is complicated by the relations not only between his own country and others, but by the relations between the governments of other countries and their own peoples; for usually any knowledge that he can gain that is worth the having entails entering into a relationship of mutuality and trust with the people he is studying. Thus universalization of the science of man must mean extension not only to all countries of participation, but to all communities. The proper role of the scientist, and the goal of his efforts, should not be "extractive," but mediative. It should be to help communities be ethnographers of their own situations, to relate their knowledge usefully to general knowledge, not merely to test and document. Such a role could be the safeguard of both the intellectual and the ethical purposes of the science itself.

The study of language has had a checkered career in the history just sketched. It first became a self-conscious activity, and to a great extent has developed since, as an instrument of exclusion and domination. The analysis of Sanskrit in ancient India, of classical songs and writings in ancient China, of Greek and then Latin in the ancient Mediterranean, of nascent national languages in the Renaissance (e.g., Nebrija's grammar of Castilian), were all in the interest of cultural hegemony. It is only in our own century, through the decisive work of Boas, Sapir and other anthropologically oriented linguists (as components of the general triumph of "methodological relativism" in the human sciences) that every form of human speech has gained the "right," as it were, to contribute on equal footing to the general theory of human language.

The present situation of linguistics in the United States is quite mixed, where it is not obscure. Chomskyan theory holds out the liberation of mankind as an aspiration, but its practice can contribute only conceptually at best, if it does not in fact stand as an obstacle to the kind of work that is actually needed. This paper has argued for the study of speech commu-

nities as actual communities of speakers. In this way we can go beyond a liberal humanism which merely recognizes the abstract potentiality of all languages, to a humanism which can deal with concrete situations, with the inequalities that actually obtain, and help to transform them through knowledge of the ways in which language is actually organized as a human problem and resource.

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25. These observations are from the work of Susan Philips, to be presented in an article in *Foundations of Language Development,* eds. E. and E. Lenneberg, sponsored by UNESCO.

26. R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957); note the introduction to the French edition, *Working Papers in Cultural Studies,* trans. J. C. Passeron (Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1971), pp. 120-131.

27. The ethnography of taking pictures in U.S. society is being studied by Richard Chalfen of Temple University; see Sol Worth, *Through Navaho Eyes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).

28. I owe this information to Sheila Seitel.

29. B. L. Whorf, "Language, Mind and Reality," 1942; cited from *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, ed. J. B. Carroll (Cambridge: The Technology Press, 1956), pp. 246-270.

30. B. Parain, *Petite Métaphysique de la Parole* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), translated as *A Metaphysics of Language* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1971); K. Burke, "Semantic and Poetic Meaning," *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941); E. L. Mascall, *Words and Images* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968); I. T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (New York: Macmillan, 1957).

31. From a comment by G. E. von Grunebaum, in *Language in Culture*, ed. H. Hoijer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 228-229.

32. R. F. Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953); cf. F. Brunot, "La Propagation du francais en France jusqu'à la fin de l'Ancien Régime," *Histoire de la Langue Francaise des Origines à 1900*, VII, 2nd ed. (Paris: Colin, 1947); and E. A. Blackall, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

33. E. Sapir, *Wishram Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1909), p. 48, lines 1-2.

34. E.g., Eliot's "one has only learnt to get the better of words/For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which/One is no longer disposed to say it." *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1943), p. 16. The general question of the "Herderian" standpoint and of the mixed standing of linguistic resources as determinants is reviewed in Hymes, "Linguistic Aspects of Comparative Political Research," *The Methodology of Comparative Research*, eds. R. T. Holt and J. E. Turner (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 295-341.

35. E. Cassirer, *The Logic of the Humanities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 24-25.

36. B. L. Whorf, *The Relation of Language to Habitual Thought and Behavior* (1941), cited from Carroll, *Selected Writings of B. L. Whorf*, pp. 158-159.

37. E. Sapir, *The Grammarian and His Language* (1924), cited from Mandelbaum, *Selected Writings of E. Sapir*, pp. 153, 157.

38. From work of David French. On the general issue, see my papers cited in reference 20.

39. H. M. Hogan, "An Ethnography of Communication among the Ashanti," *Penn-Texas Working Papers in Sociolinguistics*, I (Austin: University of Texas, Department of Anthropology, 1971); R. Darnell, "Prolegomena to Typologies of Speech Use," *Texas Working Papers in Sociolinguistics* (Austin: University of Texas, Department of Anthropology, 1972); and papers by J. T. Irvine, E. O. Keenan and J. F. Sherzer in *The Ethnography of Speaking*, eds. R. Bauman and J. F. Sherzer (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

40. M. Cole, J. Gay, J. A. Glick, D. W. Sharp, *The Cultural Context of Learning and Thinking* (New York: Basic Books, 1971) is an excellent demonstration of the

necessity of ethnography for assessment of linguistic and cognitive abilities, even though, unfortunately, the authors do not disclose the linguistic characteristics of the material on which their work rests.

41. B. Bernstein, "A Critique of the Concept 'Compensatory Education,'" *Functions of Language in the Classroom,* eds. C. Cazden, V. John-Steiner, and D. Hymes (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972).

42. J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); cf. T. Schroyer, "A Reconceptualization of Critical Theory," *Radical Sociology,* eds. J. D. Colfax and J. L. Roach (New York: Basic Books, 1971); Schroyer, "Toward a Critical Theory for Advanced Industrial Society," *Recent Sociology No. 2,* ed. H. P. Dreitzel (New York: Macmillan, 1970); and Habermas, "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence," *ibid.*

43. R. Bauman, "Speaking in the Light: The Role of the Quaker Minister," *The Ethnography of Speaking,* eds. Bauman and Sherzer.

44. Papers on language and religion from a working group at the 1972 Georgetown Round Table Conference; it is expected that these papers will be published under the editorship of W. Samarin.

45. W. S. Willis, Jr., "Skeletons in the Anthropological Closet," *Reinventing Anthropology,* ed. D. Hymes (New York: Pantheon, 1973). This discussion draws on my introduction to the book.