

Practical Knowledge:

Outlines of a Theory
of Traditions and Skills

Edited by J.C. NYÍRI and BARRY SMITH

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Preface

The seeds of this volume were planted at a symposium on 'Kunstgefühl, Sprachgefühl, Rechtsgefühl: Zum Problem des praktischen Wissens' which was held in Schloss Lichtenau bei Gföhl, ancestral home of the von Ehrenfels family, on the 26th and 27th of August 1985. Our thanks go to the Abeille Ehrenfels, Reinhard Fabian, Wolfgang Grassl, Rudolf Haller and Otto Schindler, all of whom had some hand in the organisation of the symposium. Special thanks are due also to the Österreichische Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Niederösterreichische Landesregierung, whose generosity made it possible.

J.C.N., B.S.

Budapest and Manchester, November 1986

Knowing How vs. Knowing That

Barry Smith

1. Practical vs. Propositional Intelligence

More than forty years after Gilbert Ryle published his paper on "Knowing How and Knowing That" in 1945,¹ the problem of practical knowledge has still failed to establish for itself a secure position in the field of problems dealt with by analytic philosophers. Thus even today it can safely be asserted that it is discursive or theoretical knowledge, knowledge linguistically expressed, above all knowledge in the form of *propositions*, that holds centre stage in analytic treatments of epistemology and cognition. The present volume, which consists of treatments of the presuppositions and specific character of practical knowledge in different spheres, is an attempt to fill this gap. The successive chapters fall into four interrelated groups:

(1) those dealing with general theoretical problems associated with knowledge and practice and their interrelations;

(2) those dealing with habit, learning, technique and skill as *social* phenomena, phenomena tied to socially established traditions and customs;

(3) those dealing with that special kind of practical knowledge which is manifested in our use of language; and

(4) those dealing with the role of practical knowledge and of tradition in the sphere of art.

Questions as to the role and nature of practical knowledge were addressed by the classical Greek philosophers — not least by Plato in *The Statesman* and by Aristotle, for example in his writings on *akrasia* — as also *inter alia* by American pragmatist philosophers such as William James and Dewey.² It is however in the more recent philosophical literature of continental Europe that the most sustained attempts to cope with questions of this sort are to be found. One thinks, for example, of Nietzsche, with his emphasis on the role of training and drill and of the pain involved in repetition and in the punishment of deviation, all of which Nietzsche sees as powerful determining factors in the moral and cultural evolution of mankind. One thinks of Heidegger, whose *Being and Time* is, in its phenomenological core, nothing less than a description of the various forms of everyday action, both successful and unsuccessful, and of the ways in which such action shapes and determines the ontological structure of the world of everyday experience. Above all one thinks of the Gestalt psychologists with their conception of perceptual experience as a spontaneous total process of physiological equilibration, as contrasted with more traditional empiricist views of perception as involving separate or separable phases of sensation and cognition.

2. Perception and Action

Central to the different theories of Gestalt is the idea that our perceptual experiences do not arise because we consciously or unconsciously apply rules or concepts to putatively meaningless collections of data gathered at our sensory receptors. Rather, we have been formed by our previous experiences and by our immersion in our present perceptual environment to the extent that the information taken in by our senses is already, in normal circumstances, endowed with meaning. That this is possible is a consequence of the fact that the contents of sensation are not mere sums of elementary data separated off from the

other elements of the physiological and material contexts to which they belong. Rather, our sensory contents are a matter of holistic structures, experienced as being tied intrinsically to certain kinds of surrounding conditions and to certain characteristic presuppositions and outcomes. Such contents are, most importantly, *regularly recurring*, so that we have been able to build up through experience a repertoire of perceptual structures which we are able spontaneously to call in aid in relevant circumstances. It might indeed be argued that it is recurring holistic structures of this sort which constitute the true building blocks of our perceptual world, something which may explain for example our capacity spontaneously to apprehend a facial physiognomy or the style or period of a work of art or piece of music.

What holds of perception, now, holds also of our actions. Thus Christian von Ehrenfels, founder of Gestalt psychology in the 1890s, points to the way in which complex higher order actions are executed by being broken down into constituent, relatively routine tasks, each of which may be performed without thought or conscious reflection. A given higher order action is then itself able to be carried out more or less automatically in virtue of the fact that the objects whose successive realisation is aimed at in the given constituent micro-actions have become, in different ways, stamped with value in their own right. The desires necessary to call forth each particular task thereby enter into consciousness automatically, or, to put the matter in another way, the subject himself has become affected in such a way that desire for the realisation of each given object arises spontaneously within him, without his having to recall or work out rationally in each successive instance why it is that he finds this given object valuable.³

Our everyday actions in the world are effective, then, not primarily because we think out in each case what it is that we want to do. Rather — in part because we have been shaped in certain ways by past experiences — the world in which we act is positively and negatively charged, in different ways, by a pattern of values which as it were attract or repel our successive actions.

3. The Structure of Behaviour

The later Gestaltists argued quite generally that our capacities to think and to perceive are not separate, independent faculties, but rather mutually dependent aspects of a single physiological-psychological whole which would embrace in principle also the habits and skills of the thinking and perceiving subject. The philosopher who has done most to bring out the implications of a view of this sort in regard to its practical, behavioural implications is undoubtedly Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose phenomenology of bodily experience must come close to being the most sustained defence of the primacy of practical knowledge in the literature of philosophy. For while Gestalt-theorists such as Koffka acknowledged that the holistic implications of their work extended beyond the sphere of purely perceptual phenomena, they themselves were concerned in their work almost entirely with the latter, so that Merleau-Ponty can be said to have drawn out the latent implications of their ideas for the sphere of human practical experience.

In his *The Structure of Behaviour*,⁴ Merleau-Ponty argues that, just as proponents of empiricist theories of perception have been misled by the assumption that sensation is to be understood in terms of sums of elementary data, so proponents of behaviourist theories of stimulus and response are misled by the parallel assumption that higher levels of behaviour are a matter of mere sums of meaningless reflexes. Such summative or aggregative accounts of behaviour may, it is true, have some sort of validity for actions carried out under the abnormal conditions of laboratory experiments. In our everyday experience, however, it is precisely the global, non-aggregative effects that are of greatest importance; for our actions are here not passive or mechanical responses to separate pre-existing stimuli of equal value; rather, they are complex wholes within which it is at best possible to distinguish relatively stimulus-like and relatively response-like dimensions. They are in addition wholes whose elements

manifest different degrees of salience — to the extent, in fact, that the subject may be said to choose the stimuli to which he will be sensitive. The functioning of our muscles, nerves and psyche is not, then, identical to the functioning of a mosaic of juxtaposed parts. Human action is rather a matter of integrated behaviours whose physiological and psychological sides are fused together, in much the same way as the information from our five separate senses is fused together in our everyday perceptual experience.

Here again, the subject will acquire, in part through repetition, a repertoire of behaviour patterns, a wealth of different portmanteau reactions (walking, running, tripping, sliding, lifting, pushing, speaking, writing), to which he may resort, spontaneously, from occasion to occasion. These behaviour patterns are as it were written into his muscles ('become part of his very flesh', as Merleau-Ponty would express it). They are however built up in such a way that they can be transferred immediately for example from one group of muscles to another, should occasion arise (for example when a limb is amputated, or when we move from writing words on paper to writing the same words on a blackboard or in the sand).

It is in the promotion of such adaptability — something which cannot be explained by appeal to the notion of repetition — that Merleau-Ponty sees the distinguishing feature of human learning. For where conditioning or drill seems to be at best capable of establishing only the power to produce copies of responses which have been produced earlier, learning proper may lead to spontaneously adaptive responses, to the aptitude to produce novel forms of behaviour in unfamiliar circumstances. Something like this occurs already, for example, in the course of an everyday conversation: the successive remarks of my interlocutor constitute, in effect, a series of more or less trivial problems which I must solve by making remarks of my own in more or less spontaneous and more or less predictable ways. Our adaptability as users of language is indeed so well developed that human speech is to a large extent automatic: we produce our sentences without thinking them out word for word. For our bodies have acquired a sophisticated repertoire of portmanteau reactions in relation to the different words of our language and to the

different patterns of combination of words; this allows us not only to produce well-formed sentences at will, but also to improvise with language, to enjoy successful linguistic combinations and to detect unsuccessful combinations through the displeasure they may cause.

Where such holistic patterns of adaptive responses have been laid down, it is not as if there were cognitive strings pulling different muscles in succession, muscles which are in themselves passive and uninvolved. Rather, the cognitive and muscular movements of the organism are part of a single spontaneously equilibrating whole. Human life itself is conceived by Merleau-Ponty as a single non-decomposable, behaviour-Gestalt — where theories of conditioned reflexes and the like impose onto our organic behaviour alien modes of cleavage, divisions appropriate to a world of merely physical events.

The fact that perception, cognition and action are intertwined in the way Merleau-Ponty describes implies also that the objects experienced in perception are not in the first place things (and nor, *a fortiori*, are they mere data of sense). Rather, they are salient figures against a less salient ground. Typically, they are objects for use, objects with practical, symbolic and emotional values, bound up in our experience with possibilities of action and movement. Thus the objects of experience are not separate items existing side by side and independently of each other and of the subject. Rather, they manifest relations of interdependence and mutual involvement, are locked together within larger networks of interrelations wherein 'each dynamically knows its neighbours'. But now also, as Merleau-Ponty conceives matters, the linguistic signs representing such objects are themselves similarly linked in parallel networks, so that signs represent objects not merely in virtue of their direct empirical association with objects taken singly, but also in virtue of the fact that they stand in relation to other signs in ways which track the relations of the objects signified. Children are thereby able to learn the meanings of words not merely by ostension but also by a constant cross-checking of contexts, to the extent that the similarity of one thing to another may in certain depend for the child upon the fact that the same word is used for both.

4. Learning by Doing

Our experience, then, as Merleau-Ponty conceives it, involves of necessity the gradual building up of aptitudes, of general powers of responding to situation-types in ways which will bring about a spontaneous but always provisional equilibrium of action and cognition. We do not need mental processing in order to react appropriately to, for example, the handle of a door. Such processes have been long ago internalised, as also have many of the processes involved for example in reading French.

For all the generality of Merleau-Ponty's results, however, there is one area where his work seems less than adequate: the area of science, or of higher cognitive processes in general. Here it is above all the Hungarian philosopher Michael Polanyi who has done most to compensate for this defect, and Polanyi's works are indeed in a number of respects complementary to (though produced independently of) those of Merleau-Ponty.⁵ Central to Polanyi's work is the idea that science, far from being a purely rational enterprise of cognition and calculation, involves of necessity a non-formalisable, non-mechanisable, characteristically human phenomenon which one might call 'judgment', 'intuition', or, with Polanyi himself, 'tacit' or 'personal knowledge'.⁶ This tacit or personal element is manifested, for example, in the scientist's skill in anticipating the consequences of given adjustments of his equipment or in seeing through or beyond established conceptual divisions; it is manifested in the scientist's capacity spontaneously to recognise the rightness of the pattern generated by some new axiom or theory or taxonomy or in his capacity to distinguish what might be a highly subtle and hitherto unacknowledged type of order against a background of randomness. Polanyi, in fact, sees the scientific enterprise itself as resting on a deep-rooted and fundamentally non-utilitarian fascination with order or pattern. Such fascination, which is present already in the baby's pleasure in experimenting with coloured blocks or

with the melodies of language, is manifested particularly clearly in the drive of the pure mathematician to discover the properties of abstract mathematical structures for their own sake, structures for which an application may be found, if at all, only generations after his death.

This personal dimension of science is not capable of being rendered explicit and codified into rules, Polanyi argues, since the higher forms of human activity are always such that the rules for their performance are not and cannot be fully known to the performer. This implies the indispensability, where such activities are cultivated, of personal contact between master and pupil, of *learning by doing* (an idea which might be exploited, in passing, to explain the relative fertility of those contemporary schools of philosophy — from the Brentano and Schlick circles in Vienna to the Wittgenstein circle in Cambridge — where philosophy has been cultivated as a matter of disciplined discussion and argument between successive generations of disciples).

Learning by doing facilitates the extension of the pupil's focal awareness beyond the particular features which first catch his eye to the global features which are normally more truly relevant to the exercise of a given skill. Polanyi makes much of the way in which the craftsman will encourage his apprentice to use his tools in such a way that his attention is focused directly always on the object worked and only subsidiarily on the means applied. Similarly, Polanyi argues, the novice scientist must be brought to a state where he need pay only subsidiary attention to the theories, languages or interpretative frameworks which he is called upon to employ in his work: he must, in Polanyi's own words, learn to 'dwell within them', to allow theoretical tools, languages, disciplines, to serve as natural extensions of his psyche in much the way that the blind man's stick serves as an extension of his body in walking.

Theories, languages and interpretative frameworks are therefore, in Polanyi's view, not abstract objects fixed in some Platonic realm, but rather social formations tied to their contingent factual realisations in the practices nurtured by the community of scientists at any given stage. Thus the technical terms of a science as these are con-

ceived by Polanyi have meanings which are the residues of established usage; hence they will change and mutate with the gradual evolution of this usage within the larger context of scientific practice and will at any given stage be only partially determinate.

That linguistic meanings are only partially determinate, however, implies that language in and of itself must remain at a certain distance from the concrete objects or experiences which it is used to describe; hence in this respect, too, language is subject to a necessary completion or animation in or through the personal experience of relevant language-using subjects. This incompleteness or lack of full determinacy explains also the transparency of language, the fact that when listening to someone speaking the primary focus of our attention is normally directed to the objects to which his words refer and not to these words themselves. (This explains our greater facility in producing summaries of what people say than in remembering the precise words used.) This transparency has limits, however, and it should not be forgotten that there is a sense in which the objects to which we refer are themselves shaped to different degrees by the networks of terms we use to describe them. Thus for example the object-domain of a given science is ordered and integrated by the gradually developing language of the science itself, so that, as Polanyi shows, creative breakthroughs in science may in the end come down to a scientist's having coined a peculiarly apt expression for some given phenomenon. This power of language to shape objects holds not only for each science taken as a whole, but also for each scientist's individual grasp of the science as he learns to 'see' the objects with which it deals. Thus Polanyi points to the way in which, when novice radiologists are attending lectures on how to interpret radiographs, what they *see* is to a large extent dependent on what they hear the expert *say*; yet the meaningfulness of the latter is itself at the same time dependent on the novices' gradually developing capacity to see appropriate structures in the radiographs before them. As Polanyi points out however, it is here not so much individual words that are important, but rather the general structures to which these words relate and which

they may indeed have helped to crystallise. This is seen in the fact that the words may be forgotten — for example after a skilled practitioner has become used to working in a new language — while the capacity to pick out the relevant structures survives unimpaired.

5. Natural vs. Artificial Intelligence

Both Merleau-Ponty and Polanyi see what might be called discursive or theoretical intelligence as resting necessarily on a seedbed of practical knowledge and perceptual judgment. Perhaps the most interesting recent illustration of the failure, or at least one-sidedness, of purely discursive conceptions of knowledge is provided by recent work in the field of artificial intelligence. For one can use the insights and suggestions of Merleau-Ponty and Polanyi, as also of Wittgenstein and Heidegger, to show that computer models based on a purely discursive conception of what human knowledge is, may be incapable of coming close to simulating those achievements of human beings which involve the taking account of a wealth of interdependent contextual clues in spontaneously adaptive behaviour. Certainly the artificial intelligence community is aware of the need to do justice in their models to these aspects of human experience. Already Turing in his essay "Intelligent Machinery" written in the late 1940s had pointed out that the simulation of developed human cognitive performances would be achieved only with the construction of a machine capable not merely of interacting directly with human beings and with the surrounding world but also of learning from this interaction. There is a big question, however, as to whether the necessary interplay across the entire range of experience could ever be achieved. For the concrete experiments actually carried out in the field of artificial intelligence, for all their successes in specific, well-delimited fields, have revealed what seem to be difficulties of principle in taking the computer beyond the realm of what is formally specifiable in any given sphere. The machine seems rather to be cut off from that back-

ground of experience which lends broader contextual relevance and immediate behavioural adaptability to the things we do or see or say.

It is especially the American philosopher Hubert Dreyfus who has sought to draw attention to the limitations of computer models in relation to the achievements of practical human intelligence. In his recent *Mind over Machine*,⁷ written together with Stuart E. Dreyfus, there is presented a taxonomy of *levels* of human skill, against which the achievements of computer models can be gauged.

The first level of human skill, according to Dreyfus and Dreyfus, is that of the *novice*, that is to say, someone who has learned a collection of context-free rules which he then allows to govern his step-by-step behaviour. The novice is unable to pick out global features of the objects with which he is working (there is a sense, indeed, in which he does not yet see these objects), and he has no sense of an overall task.

The second level is that of the *advanced beginner*, someone who has learned both situational and context-free rules, so that he is able to recognise global features (the bark of a particular dog, the face of a particular patient), though he is not yet able to say how he achieves this.

Level three is that of *competence*, where the beginner, having begun to be constrained by the fact that he has acquired too many rules, not all of which can be put into practice at once, has succeeded in internalising a network of hierarchical procedures enabling him to bring some strategic order to his rule-following behaviour. Competence therefore implies the ability to recognise what is important and to unify a constellation of separate elements within a single overall plan.

The fourth level is that of *proficiency*, which signifies the presence of the new dimension of involvement: the practitioner is no longer confined to a fixed stock of rule-governed responses in relation to a fixed stock of stereotypical situations; rather he is now so intimately bound to his environment and to the instruments with which he works that he can spontaneously recognise entire constellations of situations as wholes of different

sorts, in such a way as to call forth immediately appropriately adaptive behavioural responses.

The fifth level, finally, is that of the *expert*, of the practitioner who is in the possession of what Dreyfus and Dreyfus call 'deep situational understanding', someone whose involvement has reached the point where he has *become one with* his car, his plane, his chessboard, his violin, his audience, or what you will. The expert does not, in normal circumstances, solve problems or follow rules or make decisions; rather, he simply does what normally works and his fluid performance depends upon the absence of planning and conscious reflection. He is possessed, that is to say, of *know-how* of the very highest degree.

6. Discipline and Tradition

The reader might now have some idea as to what is meant by 'practical knowledge' as this term is used in the present work. Many of our critical remarks in the above have been directed at one or other form of what Ryle calls the 'intellectualist doctrine', and before concluding it may be useful to look once more at Ryle's account this doctrine in his paper of 1945.

The intellectualist, according to Ryle, holds:

- (1) that Intelligence is a special faculty, the exercises of which are . . . specific internal acts of thinking, namely, the operations of considering propositions;
- (2) that practical activities merit their titles 'intelligent', 'clever', and the rest only because they are accompanied by some such internal acts of considering propositions.⁸

Much of Ryle's essay is devoted to a linguistic analysis of terms such as 'intelligent', 'clever', 'skilful', etc., as a means of showing that the given predicates relate not to any special inner faculty but are rather applied directly to

the performances of the relevant actions. Intelligence, Ryle wants to insist, is manifested in our actions quite regardless of any inner intellectual processes by which these actions might be accompanied. But when is the performance of an action an intelligent performance? When, Ryle tells us, it manifests itself to us as being governed by principles, rules, canons — whether or not these latter are capable of being explicitly articulated by the subject himself. The propounding of principles and rules is in fact itself 'just another special activity, which can itself be judiciously or injudiciously performed'.

So far, so much in line with our deliberations above, though we have seen that talk of 'following rules' may be out of place when we are dealing with the 'fluid performance' of the expert. Ryle's account neglects, however, that dimension of our intelligent behaviour which is marked by our use of words and phrases from the vocabulary of feeling. He neglects, in other words, the sense in which intelligent behaviour will involve and give rise to responses that are in different ways emotionally charged. Thus he ignores also the fact that such emotional responses may be indispensable to the successful execution of the relevant actions. The most interesting feature of Ryle's account for our present purposes, however, is that it leads him to a revisionary analysis of the notion of 'discipline'. This term, Ryle tells us,

covers two widely disparate processes, namely, habituation and education, or drill and training. A circus seal can be drilled or 'conditioned' into the performance of complicated tricks, much as the recruit is drilled to march and slope arms. Drill results in the production of automatisms, i.e. performances which can be done perfectly without exercising intelligence. This is habituation, the formation of blind habits. But education or training produces not blind habits but intelligent powers . . . Drill dispenses with intelligence, training enlarges it.⁹

Ryle sees further that 'discipline' relates not merely to the process of training but also to the results of this

process, to the 'skills', 'competences' or 'intelligent powers' which are acquired by the individual subject of training and which he is then able to exercise in his future actions. What is not here acknowledged is that 'discipline' also has a social meaning: it signifies the common system of principles and rules or of ways of acting which different members of society may acquire. Thus we speak of the 'discipline' which is a certain science, or a special method of painting. It is above all this social dimension of intelligent behaviour to which Ryle's analysis does less than justice. There is a sense, indeed, in which even discipline as process is itself already a social phenomenon. Thus disciplinary actions do not come out of nowhere: the trainer or drill-master behaves as he does in relation to his subjects because certain customs, rites or usages are rooted in the society to which he and they belong, granting him a certain limited authority over those with whom he deals. Further, reflection shows that the results of this process of training, too, are social objects, in spite of the fact that they inhere in each case in some one individual subject. For the subject acquires not merely the abstract capacity to perform in such a way that his actions are manifested as being in accordance with given principles and rules: he acquires also the capacity to do things as his fellows do, and as his ancestors may have done in the past, to do things in virtue of which he may become part of a certain elect group within society, perhaps to do things in such a way that he himself will acquire a certain authority of his own.

A discipline will, therefore, share in the history of the culture or society in which it is manifested. It will constitute — when taken together with the rules or principles, social groupings, customs and methods of training, and all that hangs together therewith — a *tradition* of a certain sort. Individuals acquiring the discipline may do so in such a way that they think of themselves not merely as being in possession of a certain new capacity or skill, but as contributing to the maintenance of the traditions and institutions of the discipline itself. An understanding of practical knowledge, of that knowledge which is manifested in intelligent or judicious behaviour, will therefore

— and this is perhaps the principal lesson of Wittgenstein's philosophy — involve a new sort of understanding of society and of the rules, customs and institutions maintained within it.

Notes

1. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. XLVI, 1945/46, 1-16, as repr. in vol. II of Ryle's *Collected Papers*, London: Hutchinson, 1971, 212-225. See also ch. 2 of *The Concept of Mind*, London: Hutchinson, 1949.

2. It seems to have been Dewey who introduced the opposition between knowing how and knowing that into the modern philosophical literature. Thus in his *Human Nature and Conduct* Dewey identifies *knowledge how* with habitual and instinctive knowledge, as contrasted with *knowledge that* things are thus and so, which 'involves reflection and conscious appreciation'. It is, he tells us, 'a commonplace that the more suavely efficient a habit the more unconsciously it operates. Only a hitch in its workings occasions emotion and provokes thought.' This, as Dewey points out, may lead some to view consciousness 'as a kind of disease, since we have no consciousness of bodily or mental organs as long as they work at ease and in perfect health.' See *Human Nature and Conduct. An Introduction to Social Psychology*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1922, esp. p. 178.

3. See Ehrenfels' *System der Werttheorie*, as repr. in vol. I of his *Philosophische Schriften*, Munich and Vienna: Philosophia, 1982, esp. p. 372.

4. *La Structure du Comportement*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1941; Eng. trans. as *The Structure of Behaviour*, London: Methuen, 1965.

5. See especially Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge. Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958. Polanyi's thinking has been for a long time familiar to philosophers of science, but it has received little attention from philosophers interested in the wider aspects of knowledge and action.

6. Here I run together two notions developed by Polanyi himself at different times. 'Personal knowledge' is used above all to bring out the element of commitment on the part of the scientist to his as yet unknown, but approaching, discovery. 'Tacit knowledge' relates rather to the scientist's skills; see his *The Tacit Dimension*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

7. *Mind over Machine. The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer*, New York: Free Press, 1986.

8. "Knowing How and Knowing That", p. 212 of the reprint.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Tradition and Practical Knowledge

J. C. Nyiri

1. Preamble¹

The first task of this chapter is to indicate how the topic of practical knowledge might involve, or why it should involve, an analysis of the notion of tradition. Such an indication is in fact not difficult to give. After all, both practical knowledge and knowledge embedded in tradition are kinds of knowledge that seem to lie outside the domain of reflection or reasoning; both presuppose an epistemological subject whose activity encompasses more than the life of pure cognition — a subject to whose make-up there belong essentially traits other than the purely mental. No wonder, then, that philosophers with an eye for the dimension of practice in knowledge will usually not fail to draw attention also to the special ways in which that dimension is transmitted: to ways of custom, to institutions of handing down, that is: to traditions.

Thus Ryle stresses that learning *how* is different from learning *that*: the former involves, as the latter does not, inculcation,² i.e. persistent repetition, impressing itself upon the subject. Thus also Michael Polanyi, after having argued that the rules of scientific discovery are no more than 'rules of art', goes on to point out that, since 'an art cannot be precisely defined, it can be transmitted only by examples of the practice which embodies it'.³ Science,

he writes at another place, 'is operated by the skill of the scientist',⁴ by a skill that, again, can be passed on only by example. But to learn by example is to submit to authority:

By watching the master and emulating his efforts in the presence of his example, the apprentice unconsciously picks up the rules of the art, including those which are not explicitly known to the master himself. These hidden rules can be assimilated only by a person who surrenders himself to that extent uncritically to the imitation of another,

— that is, by a person who is willing to 'submit to tradition'.⁵ Oakeshott, too, points out that the coherence of scientific activity does not 'lie in a body of principles or rules to be observed by the scientist, a "scientific method"'. That coherence, he stresses, lies 'in the way the scientist goes about his investigation, in the traditions of scientific inquiry'.⁶ And one of the main claims of T. S. Kuhn is of course that we have too long ignored the manner in which knowledge of nature can be tacitly embodied in whole experiences without intervening abstraction of criteria or generalisations. Those experiences are presented to us during education and professional initiation by a generation which already knows what they are exemplars of.⁷

Even Feyerabend, having, in *Science in a Free Society*, once more made his peace with Wittgenstein, writes of 'standards or rules' we could not use were they not 'well integrated parts of a rather complex and in places quite opaque practice or tradition'.⁸ As to Wittgenstein himself, one need recall only the central role his arguments played in turning into a philosophical issue the idea of knowledge embedded in, or constituted by, practice. When G. H. von Wright, interpreting Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*, coined the notion of 'pre-knowledge', knowledge that is not propositional but rather a matter of *praxis*,⁹ the profession was quick to point out that the appropriate term here was not 'pre-' knowledge, but, precisely, *practical knowledge*.¹⁰ And I would like to underline that in those arguments of Wittgenstein in which the idea of practical knowledge essentially figures, the concept of tradition,

too, almost always crops up, expressed by terms like *Gepflogenheit*, *Gebrauch*, *Institution*, *Lebensform*, *Autorität*, and so on.¹¹

2. The Infinite Regress

My point of departure is, then, roughly this: since practical knowledge encompasses, or serves as a foundation for much of what we know, and since such knowledge appears to be tacit, non-propositional, and indeed inarticulable,¹² it follows that channels of communication other than explicit discourse have indispensable functions to fulfil. Traditions represent just such channels.

That this initial position leads immediately to a whole family of difficulties is clear. The first such difficulty is presented by the notion of practical knowledge itself, which seems on occasion precisely not to require any social context of transmission. Take skills, for example. Clearly skills are, or embody, practical knowledge; but not all skills presuppose a social context. Thus cycling, one of Polanyi's favourite examples,¹³ involves a vast amount of tacit knowledge, in the sense that the mathematical description of what happens at every moment as one adjusts the curvature of one's bicycle's path in proportion to the ratio of one's imbalance over the square of one's speed is of course unknown to the cyclist, and would not help him in his performance even were it known. But I don't see what is, in principle, inarticulable about this knowledge; and I certainly cannot recall anything like a state of apprenticeship when learning to ride my first bicycle. I saw what other people were doing, but I did not learn by imitating them, I learnt by constantly falling, and then sometimes not falling, off. It seems there are *technical skills* — like cycling — and *social skills* — like speaking, or counting — and the former do not presuppose a tradition in the immediate sense in which the latter do. Or take medical diagnosis, another of Polanyi's examples. Unless a doctor can recognise a certain symptom, for example the accentuation of the second sound of the

pulmonary artery, it is no use his reading descriptions of syndromes in which this symptom occurs.

He must personally know that symptom and he can learn this only by repeatedly being given cases for auscultation in which the symptom is authoritatively known to be present, side by side with other cases in which it is authoritatively known to be absent, until he has fully realized the difference between them and can demonstrate his knowledge practically to the satisfaction of an expert.¹⁴

It was similar or related observations that led Ludwik Fleck in the early 1930s to his traditionalist, pre-Kuhnian theory of science. Thus in his explanations of the Wassermann reaction, Fleck points out that, since there is no unified theory of the underlying syndrome, different laboratories have developed somewhat different quantitative procedures to detect it; still, however, 'the experienced eye or the "serological touch"' — *das 'serologische Fühlen'* — proves 'much more important than calculation'.¹⁵ The field of serology, Fleck writes, 'is a little world of its own and therefore can no more be fully described in words than any other field of science'.¹⁶

It is however a fact that important areas of medical diagnosis are today conducted by computer programs, and it would seem strange to speak of 'personal knowledge' or 'touch' with respect to a piece of software. Yet these programs are of course based on the knowledge of experienced human experts, and it is in fact quite a problem to unearth that knowledge in software-digestible form. One becomes an expert not simply by absorbing explicit knowledge of the type found in textbooks, but through experience, that is, through repeated trials, 'failing, succeeding, wasting time and effort, . . . getting a feel for a problem, learning when to go by the book and when to break the rules'.¹⁷ Human experts thereby gradually absorb 'a repertory of working rules of thumb, or "heuristics", that, combined with book knowledge, make them expert practitioners'.¹⁸ This practical, heuristic knowledge, as attempts to simulate it on the machine have shown, is 'hardest to get at because experts — or anyone

else — rarely have the self-awareness to recognize what it is. So it must be mined out of their heads painstakingly, one jewel at a time'.¹⁹

But now, practical knowledge as here described does not seem to possess any philosophically interesting characteristics at all, and it is quite disturbing to realise that the faculty of judgment, the ability to subsume particular instances under given rules and to apply such rules, can be imparted to a suitable machine at all, at least in certain cases. For the machine is of course lacking in that social context which seemed so essential for this kind of acquisition.

The problem that confronts us here was recognised by Kant, for whom the application of rules seemed to embody a vicious sort of circularity. Kant starts out from the idea that understanding in general is a matter of rules. Judgment, more particularly, is the faculty of subsuming under rules, of distinguishing whether something instantiates a given rule. But how, now, could it be possible to formulate applicable 'rules for judgment'. For clearly we could judge on the basis of such rules only by means of other rules, and these, too, would demand guidance from judgment. Thus it appears that, 'though understanding is capable of being instructed, and of being equipped with rules, judgment is a peculiar talent which can be practised only, and cannot be taught. It is the specific quality of so-called mother-wit'.²⁰ Its absence is just what is ordinarily called stupidity, for which, according to Kant, there is no remedy:

A physician, a judge, or a ruler may have at his command many excellent pathological, legal, or political rules, even to the degree that he may become a profound teacher of them, and yet, none the less, may easily stumble in their application. For, although admirable in understanding, he may be wanting in natural power of judgment. He may comprehend the universal *in abstracto*, and yet not be able to distinguish whether a case *in concreto* comes under it. Or the error may be due to his not having received, through examples and actual practice, adequate training for this particular act of judgment. Such

sharpening of the judgment is indeed the one great benefit of examples.²¹

Ryle, too, stresses that *stupidity* is not the same as mere lack of knowledge, pointing out that 'if, for any operation to be intelligently executed, a prior theoretical operation had first to be performed and performed intelligently, it would be a logical impossibility for anyone ever to break the circle'.²² And Polanyi has pointed out that: 'The application of rules must always rely ultimately on acts not determined by rule'.²³

Hayek has drawn from this same idea an important conclusion concerning restraints on the transmission of knowledge. There will always, he tells us, 'be some rules governing a mind which that mind in its then prevailing state cannot communicate'. Even if the mind were to acquire the capacity of communicating these rules, 'this would presuppose that it had acquired further higher rules which make the communication of the former possible but which themselves will still be incommunicable'.²⁴ Yet it is exactly this infinite regress argument, seemingly so central to all philosophising about practical knowledge — and of course also to Wittgenstein's later philosophy²⁵ — which somehow loses its magic once the nature of the knowledge built into non-human expert systems has been considered.

Or take the case of Ryle's 'well-trained sailor boy', who 'can both tie complex knots and discern whether someone else is tying them correctly or incorrectly, deftly or clumsily. But he is probably incapable of the difficult task of describing in words how the knots should be tied'.²⁶ Knots are more easily tied than explained, but the boy's presumed inability to do the latter does not seem to carry a philosophical message. He might be unable to explain *anything*. Or a detailed terminology of knots could be developed, helped by which the boy would have no difficulties at all in describing and criticising. Of course the usual way to explain tying knots is through pictures rather than through words. And here one should perhaps say that, though knowledge conveyed through pictures might be non-propositional, it does not therefore

necessarily follow that it is practical, i.e. non-theoretical, in the sense of the present volume.

3. Traditions and Rationality

It might be useful, at this stage, to distinguish between two positions with regard to the issue of practical knowledge. According to the first, this knowledge is a *practical abbreviation* within the texture or flow of knowledge as such; a device of paramount pragmatic importance perhaps, but not something whose discovery should basically transform our epistemological convictions. According to the second position, there is a layer or dimension of practical knowledge which could in no sense be dissolved into knowledge of a propositional sort. Or perhaps — and this would be a stronger version of the same position — there is a hard layer of practical knowledge which serves as the bedrock upon which *all* knowledge rests. Or indeed — to formulate a yet stronger version — all theoretical knowledge represents but an articulating, a spelling out, of a knowledge which is invariably reducible to practice. Philosophers like Wittgenstein, Oakeshott, or Kuhn, clearly hold some version of the second position; but Ryle, too, flatly states that 'theorising is one practice amongst others'.²⁷

Now each of these positions has its counterpart within the theory of traditions. Let us distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* traditions, and say that secondary traditions contain and convey, in an abbreviated and often emotionally coloured form, information which could in principle, though perhaps only with a loss of convenience, be communicated in a purely discursive fashion. The information embedded in primary traditions on the other hand cannot be separated from the way in which it is handed down, or rather it can be thus separated only within a context different in kind from that in which these traditions were originally functioning.

In the case of secondary traditions, in other words, it is possible that they be dissolved in such a way that the activity whose transmission they serve be not essentially impaired. Primary traditions, in contrast, are such that the dissolution of the tradition brings with it of necessity the dissolution of the relevant knowledge. The thesis to the effect that there *are* primary traditions, a thesis to which the present essay subscribes, I shall call the *strong traditionalist thesis*, and contrast it with the *weak traditionalist thesis* which denies the existence of primary traditions but recognises the existence, and usefulness, of secondary ones. The position denying this usefulness might then properly be called *anti-traditionalist*. I take the hard-core view of practical knowledge to imply, and be implied by, the strong traditionalist thesis. In what follows I shall, very briefly, call attention to some of the issues bearing on this thesis; before doing that, however, I should like to touch upon two other, closely related topics.

The first is rationality. Reason and tradition are usually conceived of as opposed,²⁸ and even traditionalist arguments are often enough phrased in such a way as to maintain this opposition. The power of the irrational — or of the arational — is stressed, along with the importance of traditions as creating a dimension of coherence in the non-rational realm, as bringing, through their very irrationality, cohesion into society. It is in this sense that Karl Popper, quite a traditionalist in his way, writes: 'What we call social life can exist only if we can know, and can have confidence, that there are things and events which must be so and cannot be otherwise. — It is here that the part played by tradition in our lives becomes understandable.' The social world, if it is to be inhabitable at all, must contain 'a great number of regularities to which we can adjust ourselves', regularities whose mere existence may be 'more important than their peculiar merits or demerits. They are needed as regularities, and therefore handed on as traditions, whether or not they are in other respects rational or necessary or good or beautiful or what you will.'²⁹

If the strong traditionalist thesis holds, however, then this almost utilitarian way of putting things may be misleading. For strong traditionalism implies that reason itself

is ultimately grounded in traditions, or, as Oakeshott eloquently puts it: 'Rationality' just is 'the certificate we give to any conduct which can maintain a place in the flow of sympathy, the coherence of activity, which composes a way of living'.³⁰ Hence it will not do to regard rationality, as Feyerabend does, as 'one tradition among many rather than a standard to which traditions must conform'.³¹ This would still amount to an unjustifiable picking out of rationality as some one single tradition, as if there were some fixed set of criteria of what is rational, independently of the domain to which they were applied. Oakeshott, I think, comes closer to finding a more adequate formulation when he writes that 'no conduct, no action or series of actions, can be "rational" or "irrational" out of relation to the idiom of activity to which they belong' and goes on to state that 'an activity as a whole (science, cooking, historical investigation, politics or poetry) cannot be said either to be "rational" or "irrational" unless we conceive all idioms of activity to be embraced in a single universe of activity'.³²

But the author who, in my opinion, really pointed the way here, even if for 60 years no one seems to have embarked upon it, was Maurice Halbwachs, in his *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.³³ 'Reason,' Halbwachs wrote, 'is actually a striving to raise oneself from a narrower to a broader tradition, into which latter the memories not merely of one class, but those of all groups will fit. . . . Reason faces tradition as a broader society faces a narrower one.'³⁴ The tradition capable of absorbing a variety of other traditions, or the tradition that emerges as an amalgam of various particular ones, will then possess, or amount to, what might be called *relative rationality*; and of course all rationality is relative, at least in the sense that a 'maximum' of rationality seems impossible to conceive.

The second topic I feel should be touched upon in the present context is the relation between traditionalism and the philosophy of mind. It seems to me that the strong traditionalist thesis is simply incompatible with what is usually called mentalism or intellectualism: the view of an autonomous, sovereign mind, of a mind intimately acquainted with, and freely operating upon, its own con-

tents (images, concepts, and the like), a mind for which language, in particular, is a mere instrument of communication, an external vehicle expressing, and indeed guided by, inner thought-processes.

Wittgenstein and Ryle are of course well-known critics of this view, but their arguments are seldom taken notice of by traditionalist writers, generally insensitive to the epistemological presuppositions and implications of their position. Two notable exceptions were Edmund Burke and T. S. Eliot, both of whom did indeed realise these implications. In his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot wrote:

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways... The emotion of art is impersonal.³⁵

And as to Burke, he not only had a theory of traditions, but in fact the rudiments of a theory of meaning to match the former. Examining the common notion, according to which words 'affect the mind by raising in it ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand', Burke does 'not find that once in twenty times' any such idea or picture is formed, and indeed when it is, 'there is most commonly a particular effort of the imagination for that purpose'. Burke gives here a charming example. Suppose, he writes,

we were to read a passage to this effect: 'The river Danube rises in a moist and mountainous soil in the heart of Germany, where, winding to and fro, it waters several principalities, until, turning into Austria, and laving the walls of Vienna, it passes into Hungary; there with a vast flood, augmented by the Save and the Drave, it quits Christendom, and rolling on the barbarous countries which border on Tartary, it enters by many mouths into the Black Sea.' In this description

many things are mentioned, as mountains, rivers, cities, the sea, &c. But let anybody examine himself, and see whether he has had impressed on his imagination any pictures of a river, mountain, watery soil, Germany, &c. Indeed it is impossible, in the rapidity and quick succession of words in conversation, to have ideas both of the sound of the word, and of the thing represented; . . . nor is it necessary that we should.³⁶

In the ordinary course of conversation, Burke concludes, 'we are sufficiently understood without raising any images of the things concerning which we speak.'³⁷ This is, clearly, an approach to meaning which does not presuppose the mentalist view; it is compatible with the idea of language as an essentially social institution; it is, in particular, compatible with the strong traditionalist thesis outlined above.

4. Authority, Convention, Custom, Prejudice

Returning now to a brief examination of this thesis itself, we have to take into account, first of all, that the term 'tradition' is surrounded by a family of related terms. This family would include terms like 'authority', 'convention', 'custom', 'disposition', 'habit', 'institution', 'mentality', 'mores', 'norm', 'paradigm', 'practice', 'prejudice', 'rule', 'skill', 'style', 'taste', 'technique'. The interconnections within this family are far from unequivocal, the meanings of most of the terms vary and overlap. Clearly, both a survey of connotations and a list of stipulations is called for.

For our present purposes, however, we shall have to confine ourselves to setting forth the details of certain specific cases. Consider, first of all, the term 'authority'. Here, according to Halbwachs, it is traditions which do the job of conferring authority upon certain roles and persons.³⁸ Polanyi, on the other hand, seems to suggest that the converse is true, i.e., as he puts it, that it is

only by 'a *previous act of affiliation*', by a 'combined action of authority and trust', that the assimilation of basic traditions will become possible at all.³⁹ It is at this point that we meet the philosophy of Wittgenstein. The role played by authority in Wittgenstein's work needs no special mention here. Indeed Wittgenstein notoriously goes so far as to suggest that one 'must recognize certain authorities in order to make judgments at all',⁴⁰ and seems to underline the parallel between authority and tradition when declaring: 'Tradition is not something a man can learn; not a thread he can pick up when he feels like it; any more than a man can choose his own ancestors.'⁴¹

Or take the term 'convention'. For Hume and for Burke this notion was allied with, not opposed to, the notion of tradition. As Wilkins puts it:

Social conventions such as rules for the acquisition and transmission of property are artificial in the sense of being man-made, but given man's social nature and the mutual dependence of men there is a sense in which they are natural as well. The important thing for understanding both Hume and Burke is their general refusal to equate artificial with arbitrary.⁴²

In the rather different context of the philosophy of science, Fleck, too, strives to show that in the connotation of the term 'convention' the element of arbitrariness has no primary role to play. He stresses 'how little conventions, which from the point of view of logic may seem equally possible, are in fact felt to be of equal value'.⁴³ The supposed 'epistemological choice' is in fact much rather historically and culturally dependent, so that the convention is constrained on all sides by what has gone before. And Arnold Hauser, in the domain of the philosophy of art, draws a close terminological parallel between convention and tradition. 'Spontaneity and convention, originality and tradition' are, he writes,

inseparable from each other. The process of artistic creation is not one in which spontaneous personal experiences become communicable and accessible only

through conventional forms, but one in which the experiences to be depicted move from the outset along conventionally regulated lines. . . . Artistic expression comes about not in spite of, but thanks to, the resistance which convention offers to it.⁴⁴

Clearly, Hauser is a strict traditionalist as far as the issue of artistic creativity goes. But it is the term 'convention', not the term 'tradition', that carries the weight of Hauser's argument. The connotations of 'convention' are however no less blurred than those of 'tradition'. And here, most modern authors would seem to agree with Halbwichs, for whom convention means the same as *free agreement*.⁴⁵

Or consider, again, the next term on our list, 'custom'. It is a term extremely rich in meanings. Burton Leiser in his book on the subject lists at least nine main ones, ranging from mere *habits*, through sanctioned *regulations*, to so-called *constitutive rules*, rules which, by their very definition, could not be broken.⁴⁶ Before turning now to traditions proper, let me select one more term from our list of related notions, namely the term 'prejudice'. It was in connection with this term that Burke formulated one of his most often-quoted passages. We do not, he wrote, cast away all our old prejudices. Rather:

we cherish them to a very considerable degree; and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices . . . Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, (and they seldom fail,) they think it more wise to continue with the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, skeptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his

habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.⁴⁷

Burke's reluctance to be left with nothing but 'naked reason' is a reluctance characteristic of the strong traditionalist attitude; but note also the concluding reference to 'just' prejudice, with its implication that not all prejudices are just. And it is of course the idea of the unjust, the malign, prejudice which constitutes the generally accepted meaning of this term. It is in this sense that Ernst Mach could speak of 'the fetters of inherited prejudice',⁴⁸ or of the 'terrible power' of what we call — as the translation puts it — 'prejudgment or prejudice', i.e. 'habitual judgment, applied to a new case without antecedent tests'.⁴⁹ But even Mach, definitely no traditionalist, concedes that without certain 'fixed habitudes of thought'⁵⁰ new problems would not become perceivable at all. 'No one could exist intellectually,' Mach writes,

If he had to form judgments on every passing experience, instead of allowing himself to be controlled by the judgments he has already formed. . . . On prejudices, that is, on habitual judgments not tested in every case to which they are applied, reposes a goodly portion of the thought and work of the natural scientist. On prejudices reposes most of the conduct of society. With the sudden disappearance of prejudice society would hopelessly dissolve.⁵¹

It was in this spirit that Robert Musil, himself the author of a dissertation on the philosophy of Mach, pointed out that man, in his potentialities, plans, and emotions, 'must first of all be hedged in by prejudices, traditions, difficulties and limitations of every kind, like a lunatic in his strait-jacket, and only then will whatever he is capable of bringing forth perhaps have some value, solidity and permanence'.⁵²

5. In Defence of Strong Traditionalism

Of the term 'tradition', the *OED* provides some excellent definitions. Tradition, it says, is the 'action of handing over (some- thing material) to another; delivery, transfer'. It is the delivery, '*esp.* oral delivery, of information or instruction'. It is the 'act of transmitting or handing down or fact of being handed down, from one to another, or from generation to generation; transmission of statements, beliefs, rules, customs, or the like, *esp.* by word of mouth, or by practice without writing'. It is, also, that 'which is thus handed down; a statement, belief, or practice transmitted (*esp.* orally) from generation to generation'. 'More vaguely', the *OED* goes on, a tradition is a 'long established and generally accepted custom, or method of procedure, having almost the force of a law; an immemorial usage'.

Clearly these explications, however apt, do not solve our theoretical problems, partly since the explanatory terms they employ — 'handing down', 'rule', 'custom', 'practice', 'law' — themselves stand in need of elucidation, and partly because, as I tried to show in the foregoing, a host of yet other notions would seem to be of relevance here. Obviously, a nominal explication of the concept of tradition, though necessary, is not sufficient.⁵³ Rather more useful are certain particular definitions, like for example the one Hobsbawm gives of 'invented' traditions, which are taken to mean '[1] a set of practices, [2] normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and [3] of a ritual or symbolic nature, which [4] seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which [5] automatically implies continuity with the past'.⁵⁴ Useful, too, are explications such as those given by J. G. A. Pocock, who is concerned with traditions as a matter of the handing on of those ways of acting which contribute to our membership in a given society.

In its simplest form a tradition must thus be thought of as an indefinite series of repetitions of an action, which on each occasion is performed on the assumption that it has been performed before; its performance is authorised — though the nature of authorisation may vary widely — by the knowledge, or the assumption, of previous performance. In the pure state, as it were, such a tradition is without a conceivable beginning; each performance presupposes a previous performance, in infinite regress. Furthermore, it may well be that it is the assumption, rather than the factual information, of previous performance that is operative.⁵⁵

Still, what we need is not so much definitions as much rather a detailed examination of the ways in which traditions in all their forms and varieties function at the different levels and in the different spheres of social life, and all the ways in which traditions relate to such general phenomena of social life as spontaneous orders, deviance and normality, creativity, learning, group behaviour, and so on. Also the issue of so-called national or ethnic traditions, as well as the culture/civilisation contrast would merit special attention.

Here there exists already a substantial body of important research upon which one can draw. And I think much of that research directly supports the strong traditionalist thesis as formulated above. Thus with all the recent stress on linguistic universals and on the biological foundations of language, there has not survived in the literature any serious attempt to question the existence of essential layers of language culturally structured and traditionally transmitted. Noam Chomsky's oddly impoverished notion of linguistic creativity,⁵⁶ a creativity determined by genetic inheritance and following inborn patterns, has become a curio of the past. In a 1982 study Slobin and Bever could once more revert to Bloomfield's classic dictum: 'We speak . . . by certain well-practiced schemes, — sentence-skeletons that require but the variation of a few words from utterance to utterance', and point to the language-specific nature and broad contextual setting of 'schema-development'.⁵⁷

With respect to science, the role of traditions is an issue which, due to the Popper-Oakeshott controversy,⁵⁸ and especially to the controversy surrounding Kuhn's work,⁵⁹ has recently received ample attention. Important here is David Hollinger's observation that Kuhn has in fact applied to the history of science the conventional historiographic view of the part played by traditions in politics, arts, and the life of society in general.⁶⁰ Thus 'Kuhn's notion of the "paradigm", his most celebrated and maligned term', as Hollinger writes,

embodies the sense that activities are defined and controlled by tradition, and that tradition consists of a set of devices, or principles, that have proven their ability to order the experience of a given social constituency.⁶¹

And how does it carry out this function? By providing the community with the capacity to distinguish one activity from another and by setting priorities among those activities — so that the members of the community will tend to perform those activities which serve to consolidate the community itself. 'Tradition, then, is socially grounded, and its function is that of organization'; and to the extent that its constituent organising devices 'have enough flexibility to sustain them through successive, contingent experiences: to the extent that a tradition can expand and adapt, like the English common law, it is that much more likely to retain its constituency'.⁶²

As Hollinger also points out, in different communities — of which the community of modern-day natural scientists is only one specific kind — the role played by traditions may vary widely. Kuhn himself has written an essay in which he draws attention to the particular way traditions function in art, as contrasted with science. In art — but not in science — Kuhn emphasises, a tradition might be dead yet its products still living. Or, again, 'though resistance to innovation is a characteristic common to both art and science, posthumous recognition recurs with regularity only in the arts.'⁶³ Also, even though artists 'can and sometimes do voluntarily undertake dramatic changes in style on one or more occasions during

their lives',⁶⁴ still, 'most artists begin by painting in the style of their masters'⁶⁵ — and this is not an incidental fact.

Mention has been made above of the traditionalist theory of art of Arnold Hauser. Again and again Hauser emphasises that: 'Every artist expresses himself in the language of his predecessors, his models, and his teachers', so that 'every newly created work owes more to other works than to the invention and experience of its creator'.⁶⁶ Wittgenstein, too, expresses a view of this sort when he says that 'every composer changed the rules, but the variation was very slight; not all the rules were changed. The music was still good by a great many of the old rules'.⁶⁷ According to Robert Musil, even the spontaneity of an artist is inconceivable without handed-down forms and concepts: it is those very handed-down forms that become a source of originality in the creative process.⁶⁸ We have already heard Hauser insisting that conventional forms of expression themselves help to create the content of what will be expressed. Hence, even though it is true that 'expression always moves on well-worn tracks, still, the tracks multiply and bifurcate as they are being traveled'.⁶⁹ A related position has been developed, perhaps surprisingly, by Karl Popper, who sees the canonisation of Church melodies, i.e. certain restrictions on musical usage, as having produced the conditions against which counterpoint could develop. 'It was the established *cantus firmus* which provided the framework, the order, the regularity that made possible inventive freedom without chaos.'⁷⁰

It is however in theories of law, politics, and of social life in general — theories in which such apparently tradition-independent categories as truth and beauty never really played a role — that the idea of an order imposed by mere traditions has always had its strongest appeal. The works of Carl Menger, inaugurator of the Austrian School of Economics, might convey a suggestion of the unlikely parallels here obtaining between Anglo-Saxon and Austro-German thought. Thus consider the way in which Menger, in his *Investigations into the Method of the Social Sciences*, exploits ideas derived from Burke. Burke was, as Menger himself puts it, 'probably the first,

who, trained for it by the spirit of English jurisprudence, emphasized with full awareness the significance of the organic structures of social life and the partly unintended origin of these'.⁷¹ Burke taught that numerous institutions of his country

were not the result of positive legislation or of the conscious common will of society directed toward establishing these, but the unintended result of historical development. He first taught that what existed and had stood the test, what had developed historically, was again to be respected, in contrast to the projects of immature desire for innovation. Here-with he made the first breach in the one-sided rationalism and pragmatism of the Anglo-French Age of Enlightenment.⁷²

There is, Menger maintains, a 'subconscious wisdom' manifested in those institutions that come about organically; and the meddlesome advocates of reform 'would do well less to trust their own insight and energy than to leave the reshaping of society to the "historical process of development"'.⁷³ In a similar spirit, today's leading exponent of the Austrian School, F. A. von Hayek, stresses that 'since we owe the order of our society to a tradition of rules which we only imperfectly understand, *all progress must be based on tradition*'.⁷⁴ But the grand old man of contemporary German philosophy, Hans-Georg Gadamer, too, realises that the ordering of life through the rules of law and morality always amounts to more than the application of general principles. Thus Gadamer sees our knowledge of law and morality as being 'always supplemented — indeed almost productively determined — by the individual case. The judge does not merely apply the law *in concrete*; he contributes through his judgment to the unfolding of the law itself'.⁷⁵ And in the domain of legal theory, too, the ideas of the later Wittgenstein have provided new impetus. Thus it was partly under Wittgenstein's influence that H. L. A. Hart developed his conception of law as a combination of 'primary' and 'secondary' social rules. Hart's primary rules seem to be a proper subclass of the primary traditions we

described above. They are customs supported by strong social pressure, coming into being through 'the slow process of growth, whereby courses of conduct once thought optional become first habitual or usual, and then obligatory'.⁷⁶ Without their prior existence, no legal system could be built up at all.

These ideas have relevance, too, in the sphere of education, where anyone guided by a sense for primary traditions will soon find fault with many of the prevailing orthodoxies of the present day. Here again, the writings of T. S. Kuhn have shed new light on certain crucial problems. For Kuhn, with his truly revolutionary notion of normal science, underscores the need for rigid traditions within particular scientific groups if coherent scientific work is to be possible at all.⁷⁷ This view has immediate consequences for educational theory. As Kuhn has pointed out, scientific progress is, at least in the basic sciences, not achieved by 'liberal' education, by encouraging 'divergent' thinking.⁷⁸ And one can add that, at the elementary level, all learning seems to require a measure of external rigidity. Wittgenstein's later philosophy did much to lay bare the reasons for this, and it is significant that it was his work on an elementary spelling book, his *Wörterbuch für Volksschulen* of 1926, which served as the immediate prelude to that philosophy.⁷⁹ In spelling, as in elementary mathematics, methods whose advantages are today finally beginning to emerge from a number of educational surveys and reports.⁸⁰ Wittgenstein's work in this field is of relevance, too, in relation to the concept of deviance, where our theoretical attitudes are in many ways bound up with those on education. Thus it is to be expected that an awareness of the essential role that is played by more or less rigid traditions in human communities will, again, preclude the acceptance of the radically permissive views that have too often held sway in the recent past.⁸¹

The very conviction that only a social fabric entirely destroyed can be devoid of traditional elements will however enable one also to see through the claims of an excessive traditionalism. For it will enable one to recognise also the virtues and the inevitability of invented

traditions, and thereby to withstand the romantic yearning for bonds derived from the past. Nationalism on the one hand, and the attacks on contemporary 'civilisation' in the name of some more authentic 'culture' on the other, are two notable instances of an excessive traditionalist ideology. National divisions and nationalist sentiments are invariably much more the result of specific types of material conditions affecting the living.⁸² Yet nationalist ideology as often as not forfeits the politico-economic present while focusing on an imagined past. Similarly, the foe of 'civilisation', while yearning for the fictitious warmth of an age that never existed, is blind to the real traditions of his society, to the actual form of life that surrounds him. A seldom-quoted remark by Wittgenstein seems to be appropriate here. 'It is very remarkable,' he wrote in 1946, 'that we should be inclined to think of civilization — houses, trees, cars, etc. — as separating man from his origins, from what is lofty and eternal, etc. Our civilized environment, along with its trees and plants, strikes us then as though it were cheaply wrapped in cellophane and isolated from everything great, from God, as it were. That is a remarkable picture that intrudes upon us.'⁸³

Notes

1. Thanks are due to the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, under whose auspices the ideas in this paper were brought to fruition in their present form.
2. Ryle 1949, p. 59.
3. Polanyi 1964, p. 14. The cited passage is taken from the Introduction, but similar passages occur also in the main body of the text, e.g. on pp. 42f. and 76.
4. Polanyi 1958, p. 49.

5. Ibid., p. 53. Similar formulations can be found also in Ziman 1968, e.g. on pp. 7 and 10:

The fact is that scientific investigation . . . is a practical art. It is not learnt out of books, but by imitation and experience . . . The young scientist does not study formal logic, but he learns by imitation and experience a number of conventions that embody strong social relationships.

6. Oakeshott 1962, pp. 102f. The passage is taken from the essay "Rational Conduct" of 1950.

7. Kuhn 1970, p. 275. This seems also to be the idea taken up by David Bloor when he writes:

predicates are learnt on the basis of a finite number of instances. These are provided by teachers or authorities who must simultaneously inform and control the behaviour of the learner. The learner's task is to acquire a sense of the similarity between the cases to which he is exposed as instances of a given concept. His sense of similarity and difference must be matched to those of other language users. This involves grasping the *conventions* which are involved in the judgements about similarity and difference. (Bloor 1981, p. 88)

The parallels (and differences) between Oakeshott and Kuhn are illuminatingly brought out in an essay by M. D. King of 1971. Kuhn, King writes,

states emphatically that the term 'paradigm' denotes not a world-view but a specific example of actual scientific practice which serves as a model for a research community and implicitly defines the legitimate problems and methods of a research field for successive generations of practitioners . . . Faithfulness to the traditions which spring from paradigms or sets of paradigms is the hallmark of genuine 'science'. To break faith with established tradition is to risk being labelled a crank, a charlatan, or being made an 'outlaw'. — A sociologist reading Kuhn's attack on scientific

rationalism can hardly fail to be struck by how closely it resembles Oakeshott's famous onslaught against political rationalism; Kuhn's science like Oakeshott's politics is subject to authority of concrete traditions rather than that of abstract 'reason'. Both are seen as practical activities that, to use Oakeshott's distinction, involve not merely technical knowledge (or technique) which 'is susceptible of formulation in rules, principles, directions, and maxims' and which may therefore be learned from a book and thereafter 'applied', but also practical knowledge which cannot be reduced to rules, cannot be written down and therefore 'can neither be taught nor learned, but only imparted.'

(The Oakeshott reference is to his essay "Rationalism in Politics" of 1947.)

8. Feyerabend 1978, p. 26.

9. Von Wright 1982, p. 178.

10. Cf. Haller 1982, p. 184.

11. The crucial passages are *Philosophical Investigations*, I, 85, 198-208, 239-42.

12. This is how Plato seems to have conceived the matter: see the reconstruction in Wieland 1982, esp. p. 254: 'Of course knowledge of this kind' — e.g. the expert knowledge possessed by craftsmen — 'will be transmitted always only through a process of instruction and practice. It will never be capable of being transferred like an object. It is paradigmatic of the knowledge of the craftsman that he who possesses it cannot distance himself from it . . . It cannot be objectified, because — as a happy metaphor of Plato's has it — it is as it were grown into the action itself.'

13. *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 49f.

14. Ibid., pp. 54f.

15. Fleck 1935, p. 72 (p. 53 of translation). Incidentally, the notion of practical knowledge is, in *modern* literature, foreshadowed in the work of Max Scheler, who presumably had some, direct or indirect, influence on Fleck (cf. Fleck 1935, p. 64, n. 29). As Scheler wrote in his "Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik" of 1913:

There is something like 'practical' obeying and 'disobeying' of laws, but not of laws which 'control' natural acting as natural laws control, in the sense that natural acting would conform 'to' them in an objective manner. The laws that we have in mind are not at all given as laws (in a form of perception, of 'being conscious of . . .'); they are *experienced* as fulfilled or broken in the execution of acting. And it is only in these experiences that they are given. In this sense the acting artist is 'controlled' by the aesthetic laws of his art without 'applying' them; nor does he realize their fulfillment or violation only in the effect, i.e., in the work of art produced. In this sense, too, it belongs to the essence of the 'crime' that he who breaks laws experiences himself as breaking them while acting; these are laws with which he reckons in *practice*, whether he or others are concerned, without having to have the slightest *knowledge* of such laws, and without having to have 'thought' about them (pp. 141f. of the translation).

The notion approximated here is of course *not* the 'practical-technical intelligence' described by Scheler in his 1980, esp. p. 79.

16. Ibid.

17. Feigenbaum and McCorduck 1984, p. 67.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 82.

20. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A132-4.

21. Ibid.

22. *The Concept of Mind*, pp. 29f.

23. *Science, Faith and Society*, p. 14.

24. Hayek 1967, p. 62.

25. See, e.g., *Philosophical Investigations*, I, 82-6 and 198ff.

26. *The Concept of Mind*, p. 56.

27. Ibid., p.26. — Similarly Feyerabend: 'What is called "reason" and "practice" are . . . two different types of practice' (1978, p. 26). Also Arnold Gehlen, even if on the basis of some rather crude arguments: 'Human knowledge is . . . almost to be defined as a phase of action' (1940, p. 52).

28. See e.g. the discussion in Coleman, "Is There Reason in Tradition?" (1968), cf. esp. pp. 242ff.

29. Popper 1948, pp. 130f.

30. *Rationalism in Politics*, p. 109. Recently the same point was made by Oswald Schwemmer. One participates, writes Schwemmer, in the '*Handlungskultur*', i.e. in the universally available forms of activity of a given group or society; and by the very possibility of such participation the rational character of those forms is established: 'the capacity of he who acts of being able to act in a way intelligible to others . . . thereby lends his actions an elementary rationality'. (Schwemmer 1984, p. 191)

31. *Science in a Free Society*, p. 7.

32. *Rationalism in Politics*, p. 102.

33. In Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*, a book which amply stresses the significance of the 'pretheoretical level' of knowledge in society (e.g. on p. 65), mention is made of Halbwachs' category of 'col-

lective memory' (ibid., p. 202) - but not of his combining 'memory' and 'tradition' with *reason*.

34. Quoted from the German edition, pp. 348f. and 383. Halbwachs' suggestion actually represents a third way between the usual alternatives of either equating rationality with an attitude having some unique, standard structural characteristics, an attitude marred only by false logic, traditions, and emotions; or by accepting as rational any views or positions that are felt by the groups or persons holding them to be appropriate under the obtaining circumstances. These are the two alternatives called - rather misleadingly - the "*traditionelle Rationalitätskonzeption*" and the '*anti-traditionalistisches Rationalitätskonzept*' by Karl Acham, in his essay of 1984.

35. The essay was first published in 1917. Quoted from Eliot 1960, pp. 56-9.

36. From Burke's "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1756/7), pp. 246-52.

37. Ibid.

38. Halbwachs, *Das Gedächtnis*, p. 355.

39. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 207f.

40. *On Certainty*, 161, cf. also 493.

41. Wittgenstein 1980, p. 76.

42. Wilkins 1967, p. 61. A similar opposition between the artificial and the arbitrary is defended by Hayek in his "Three Sources of Human Values" (appendix to Hayek 1979).

43. Fleck 1935, p. 9.

44. Hauser 1951, pp. 28, 30, 21.

45. Halbwachs contrasts the 'purely conventional' with the 'purely traditional' (*Das Gedächtnis*, p. 389).

46. Leiser 1969, pp. 7-47.

47. Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France" (1790), pp. 346f.

48. Mach 1943, p. 214.

49. Ibid., p. 232.

50. Ibid., p. 227.

51. Ibid., p. 232.

52. *The Man Without Qualities*, Vol. I, p. 52.

53. This is especially so if it actually fails to rise above, or indeed falls below, the dictionary level, as when Edward Shils writes:

Tradition means many things. In its barest, most elementary sense, it means simply a *traditum*; it is anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present. It makes no statement about what is handed down or in what particular combination or whether it is a physical object or a cultural construction; it says nothing about how long it has been handed down or in what manner . . . The degree of rational deliberation which has entered into its creation, presentation, and reception likewise has nothing to do with whether it is a tradition. . . . Tradition - that which is handed down - includes material objects, beliefs about all sorts of things, images of persons and events, practices and institutions. It includes buildings, monuments, landscapes, sculptures, paintings, books, tools, machines, . . . practices and institutions made up of human actions. (Shils 1981, p. 12.)

54. Hobsbawm 1983, p. 1.

55. Pocock, pp. 209 and 212.
56. Cf. e.g. Sampson 1979, pp. 7 and 105.
57. Slobin and Bever 1982, esp. pp. 229 and 253.
58. See Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics*, and Popper's paper of 1948.
59. See esp. the Gutting and Lakatos-Musgrave volumes (see Kuhn 1970), as well as Kuhn 1977.
60. Hollinger 1980, pp. 196ff.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., pp. 197f.
63. "Comment on the Relations of Science and Art", in Kuhn 1977, pp. 346 and 348.
64. Ibid., p. 349.
65. Ibid.
66. *The Sociology of Art*, pp. 30f.
67. Wittgenstein 1967, p. 6. A similar thesis, incidentally, lies at the root of Arnold Schoenberg's conception of musical development and is echoed also in the paper by Smith, below.
68. There are concepts, Musil writes in 1934, which for the poet constitute

the concepts which he has inherited, with whose help he has painstakingly consolidated his personal self. He does not even need to be in agreement with them all, he can strive to change them, yet he will still remain tied to them all much more than he is tied to the ground on which he walks. The poet is not only the expression of a momentary state of his soul — even

should it be one that will introduce a new epoch. What he hands down is not decades but millenia old. (Musil 1978, p. 1250.)

Or, as he put in an essay of 1931, even the most independent writer does not produce anything 'which could not be shown to be almost without remainder dependent upon what has been handed down, both in form and in content'. Thus: 'One can only speak of originality where there is a tradition also.' (Ibid., p. 1207) The connection between creativity and underlying traditions is explored in greater detail in Grassl and Smith 1986.

69. *The Sociology of Art*, pp. 31 and 21.
70. Popper 1976, p. 58.
71. Menger 1883, p. 173. Menger's ideas in this connection were inspired also by the work of Carl von Savigny, chief representative of the German historical school of legal theory.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 91.
74. Hayek 1979, p. 167.
75. Gadamer 1965, p. 35.
76. Hart 1963, p. 90.
77. See ch.III of his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and also the paper "The Essential Tension: Tradition and Innovation in Scientific Research" (1959), in his 1977.
78. "The Essential Tension", pp. 226ff.
79. 'Only a dictionary,' wrote Wittgenstein in his Preface, 'makes it possible to hold the student completely responsible for the spelling of what he has written because it

furnishes him with reliable measures for finding and correcting his mistakes, provided he has a mind to do so.' Wittgenstein 1977, p. XXXI.

80. Cf. e.g. Bennett 1976. Current West-German perceptions are especially instructive. There, in the early 1970s, it was declared that 'broadening of linguistic competence' should supplant 'training in the norms of "standard German"' in general and the 'learning of orthography' in particular. The results, as the progressive weekly *Spiegel* tells us, are by now catastrophic. Standard German was seen by the proponents of reform as the language of a certain class and as having been employed by this class as a means for the stabilisation of the existing structure of society. The effect of their reforms, however, has been that the ability of young Germans to write correctly, to read, and indeed to express themselves, has deteriorated drastically. And what sort of democracy is this, asks the *Spiegel*, where citizens are not capable of articulating their views? (Issue of 9 July 1984.)

81. 'What makes an individual a member of society and gives him claims is that he obeys its rules', writes F. A. von Hayek. 'Wholly contradictory views may give him rights in other societies but not in ours. For the science of anthropology all cultures or morals may be equally good (though I doubt that this is true), but we maintain our society by treating others as less so.' (Hayek 1979, p. 172)

82. 'Instead of being automatically united by a shared history, men . . . cannot share the historical events through which they live, unless they are already in some sense united.' (Deutsch 1953, p. 5.) On some important material determinants giving rise to feelings of nationalism see also Gellner 1964.

83. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 50.

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Theory and Practice: The Point of Contact

Roderick M. Chisholm

1. Endeavour

What follows is a highly theoretical discussion of the point of contact between theory and practice. My hope is to describe these things clearly and precisely and with the use of as few undefined terms as possible.

Theory and practice come together when a person's intentional attitudes determine the way he acts upon the world. Our 'theory' is constituted by the beliefs that we have, and our 'practice' by our endeavours. Endeavour, like believing and judging, is an intentional act or attitude, and it exhibits all those features commonly associated with intentionality.

An example of endeavour is expressed by the following locution:

S endeavours to bring it about that so-and-so.

An alternative is:

S endeavours to be such that so-and-so.

The phrase replacing 'so-and-so' may be said to describe the *content* of the endeavour. This content may be expressed in such well-formed sentences as 'there is peace

in the world' and 'the concert begins'. It may also be expressed in a sentence containing a pronoun that refers back to the original subject S, as in 'S endeavours to bring it about that he is understood by his audience.'

There are two ways of looking upon the content of endeavour — what is expressed by 'so-and-so' in the above locutions. These reflect different conceptions of intentionality.

(1) One may say that the content of endeavour is a *proposition* which the subject S endeavours to *make true*. Those who speak this way would say that, if I am trying to find the person who stole my automobile, then the content of my endeavour is the proposition I would express by saying 'I find the person who stole my automobile'. This way of looking at endeavour therefore presupposes that there *are* propositions expressed by first-person sentences.

(2) According to the alternative conception of the content of endeavour, the content is, not a proposition that one endeavours to make true, but a *property* that one endeavours to *have*. Our example would now be put by saying that I endeavour to have the property of being a person who finds the one who stole his automobile. (Of course, the thief, if there is one, may also be such that I am endeavouring to bring it about that *he* has a certain property — say, that of being caught. But, according to this second way of viewing intentionality, my relationship to the thief may be put somewhat as follows: 'There is just one person who stole my automobile and I am endeavouring to have the property of being a person such that the one who stole his automobile is caught.') We need not decide which of these two conceptions of intentionality is correct, but I will assume that *one* of them is correct. There are other, more impressive ways of characterising the content of an intentional attitude, but, so far as I have been able to see, they do not in fact add anything to the two accounts just described.

If I am looking for the one who stole my automobile and if you are the one who stole it, then you might be

said to be the *transcendent object* of my endeavour. At any rate, this is the kind of terminology that has been used by some of the members of the Brentano school. If we talk this way, we must note that the transcendent object is different from the content of the endeavour and that my relation to the transcendent object is different from my relation to the content. But my relation to the object is, in a certain sense, *determined by* the nature of the content. This determination is quite straightforward and should be apparent from our example. The example tells us that, for a certain property that only one thing can have at a time and for a certain relation, I am endeavouring to get into that relation with the thing that has that property. The property is that of being the sole person who stole my automobile and the relation is that of finding. So if you are the person who has this property, then you are the transcendent object of my endeavour.

2. Judging

To understand the intentionality of endeavour we should compare it with that of judging, or believing. We may single out the *content* of judging as we have done in the case of endeavour, and we may note that some acts of judgment have *transcendent objects* and others not. If we say that the endeavour is 'directed upon' its transcendent object, then we should not say that it is, in the same sense, 'directed upon' its content. There are two ways of looking at the content of judging: either it is a *proposition* that one *accepts*; or it is a *property* that one attributes to oneself.

If I believe you to be a thief, then you are the transcendent object of my belief and the content of my belief will be partially fulfilled by you. If believing is a matter of accepting a proposition, then the proposition that I accept will imply, with respect to some property that only you have, that the thing that has that property is a thief.

Or if believing is a matter of directly attributing properties to oneself, then the property I attribute to myself will imply, with respect to a relation that only you bear to me, that the thing that bears that relation to me is a thief (that is to say, the property is necessarily such that a thief bears that relation to whatever has the property).

3. The Object of Endeavour

Suppose that I try to stir up difficulties between you and your neighbour. We may, but need not, say that in such a case my endeavour has *two* transcendent objects. We could say that that aggregate, sum or *collectivum*, which is you and your neighbour, is the transcendent object of my endeavour.

An endeavour need not have a transcendent object. It could be that no one stole my automobile; possibly I never had one. In such a case, shall we say, all the same, that it has an intentionally inexistent '*immanent object*'? The introduction of this concept serves no purpose whatever and only makes philosophical trouble. I think, therefore, we can afford to dispense with it. We could also, of course, dispense with the concept of a transcendent object and this might prevent us from making certain errors. But I have spoken of a transcendent object in order to bring out the fact that endeavour may be *directed upon* an existent thing — it may be *de re*. (If you are the thief and if I am looking for the thief, then there exists a certain *x* which is such that I am endeavouring to find *x*.)

An endeavour may also be said, in a certain sense, to have *too many* transcendent objects. Suppose I mistakenly believe that the person who stole my automobile is the person I met on the street last night. If one person is the one who stole my automobile and *another* person is the one I met on the street, then, if I successfully lay a trap for my transcendent object, I may get more than I had bargained for. I may catch *two* persons instead of one.

There is also the case where the endeavour *has* a transcendent object but fails to make contact with it. This

possibility brings us, finally, to the problem of the contact between theory and practice.

4. The Problem of Contact

A person's theory makes practical contact with an object if the person makes an *immediate attempt* upon that object. What, then, is an immediate attempt *upon* an object? Perhaps one will say that, if you are the transcendent object of my endeavour and if my endeavour has certain *effects* upon you, then I have made an attempt upon you. But this is too simple. I may sound an alarm in the endeavour to find you and this may wake you up; but from the fact that my endeavour has affected you in this way, it does not follow that I have made an attempt upon you. If I make an attempt upon you, then some of the effects that my act has upon you are in some sense intended. To see that this is so, we must focus upon still another feature of the content of endeavour.

Consider the concept of a *basic endeavour*. Normally raising one's arm involves a basic endeavour. This means that, when you raise your arm, you endeavour to bring it about that your arm goes up, but you don't endeavour to bring about some *other* thing that, in turn, will bring it about that your arm goes up.¹

One makes an immediate attempt upon a thing *y* if one makes a basic endeavour in order to affect *y* but not in order to bring about some *other* thing which will affect *y*. If I have deliberately kicked you, then I have made an immediate attempt upon you. But if I have thrown a stone at you, then I have made an immediate attempt, not upon you, but upon the stone.

Immediate attempts, like other endeavours, may have too many transcendent objects. Consider the following situation. At dusk I see you and I also see a tree; I take you to be the tree that I see and I take the tree to be the person that I see. Suppose, now, I believe that the person I see is the thief. If what we have just said about believing is true, it will follow, not only that *you* are

such that I believe you to be the thief, but also that the *tree* is such that I believe *it* to be the thief. For the tree is such that I believe it to be the person that I see, and I believe that the person that I see is the thief. (Strictly the consequence in question will not follow unless we assume that I am clever enough to put two and two together and thus to conclude that the person who stole my automobile *is* the person who stole my automobile. I ask you to assume this.)

Now we have a problem. The problem has led at least one philosopher to *deny* that 'actions directed upon concrete objects are explainable in part by beliefs directed upon those objects'.² Here, then, we have a scepticism about the possibility of applying theory to practice.

Suppose I make an immediate attempt to grasp the person who stole my automobile. On which thing will I make the attempt — you or the tree? It will not do to say merely that I will make my attempt upon the thing that I believe to be the thief. For my belief has too many transcendent objects. Both you and the tree are thought by me to be the thief. To decide which of the two transcendent objects is to be the object of my immediate attempt, we must consider certain further relations between these objects and the content of my endeavour.

These further relations pertain to the way in which the person *identifies* the things which are the objects of his endeavour. Hence perception is involved. Some philosophers would stop here and say that the rest is obvious. But the rest is by no means obvious. Just *how* is perception involved? In our example, I perceive both you and the tree. How, then, is any particular one of these things singled out?

An object of perception is singled out as being *the* thing that is *appearing* to one in a certain way. *What* way, then? There are, after all, indefinitely many accurate and unique descriptions of the way in which any particular thing appears to one at any particular time. But most of these will not be known to the perceiver. The way of appearing by means of which one singles out the object of perception is that way of appearing which is *self-presenting* to the perceiver. It is a way of being appeared to which is necessarily such that, for any

subject *x*, if *x* is appeared to in that way and if *x* considers the question whether he is appeared to in that way, then it is *evident* to *x* that he is appeared to in that way.

Now, I think, we can say how the content of endeavour and the ways in which one is appeared to may assure us, with respect to any particular thing, that that thing will be the object of an immediate attempt. I suggest the following principle:

For every *x*, if (i) *x* is the thing that is appearing H to S, (ii) being appeared H to is self-presenting, and (iii) S makes a basic endeavour to have the property of being such that the thing that is now appearing H to him be a thing that he A's, then S makes an immediate attempt to A *x*.

Suppose that the tree, but not you, is the thing that appears to me to be moving. And suppose also that I make a basic endeavour to be such that the thing that I grasp is the thing that appears to me to be moving. Then I will make an attempt upon the tree and not upon you. And if my endeavour is successful, its theoretical content will have made contact with reality.

This is the way in which theory first meets up with practice.

Notes

1. The following two definitions give us a more precise statement:

S endeavours to bring it about that *y* has the property of being F, and does so *in order that* *z* will have the property of being G =Df S endeavours to bring it about (i) that *y* is F and (ii) that his endeavour that *y* be F will contribute causally to *z* being G.

S makes a basic endeavour to F =Df S endeavours to be F; and there is nothing that S endeavours to do in order that he have the property of being F.

In making a basic endeavour, then, one adopts an end but no means to that end.

2. See Baker 1983, p. 363.

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Rechtsgefühl and the Rule of Law

Roger Scruton

*Nicht das Rechtsgefühl [erzeugt] das Recht
. . . sondern das Recht das Rechtsgefühl.
(R. von Jhering, Der Zweck im Recht).*

1. Preamble

Erwin Riezler, writing in 1925, distinguished three ideas expressed by the word 'Rechtsgefühl':

1. The feeling for what the law is (*Gefühl für das, was Recht ist*);
2. The feeling for what the law ought to be (*Gefühl für das, was Recht sein soll*);
3. The feeling that only what is in accordance with law (*das dem Recht Entsprechende*) should happen.¹

In translating 'Recht' as 'law' I have, of course, considerably narrowed Riezler's meaning. Even so, what I have said does not make clear sense to an English reader, who is likely to be puzzled, not only by the idea of law expressed in those three descriptions, but also by Riezler's insensitivity to the distinction between 'feeling for' and 'feeling that', the second of which, unlike the first, denotes a 'propositional attitude'. Nor does Riezler's subsequent discussion, couched in the discredited terms of introspectionist psychology, do anything to reassure the sceptical reader that something identifiable and important

is meant by *Rechtsgefühl* — that this is not just another of those ubiquitous *Gefühle* with which the German genius for legend has encumbered the world, a close cousin of *Genossensgefühl*, *Heimatsgefühl*, *Sprachgefühl* and the *Gefühl* that my academic status depends upon my drivelling on about *Gefühle*.

At various stages in his discussion, however, Riezler compares the German jurist's *Rechtsgefühl* to the 'sense of justice' described by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and also to the 'instinct' for 'natural justice', which Ulpian unphilosophically attributes to the entire animal kingdom.² He is helped in this by the well-known ambiguities of the word '*Recht*', which spans 'right', 'law' and 'justice' as these are known to English speakers. I do not blame Riezler for exploiting these ambiguities, any more than I blame him for linking *Rechtsgefühl* with the sense of justice. On the contrary, it seems to me that the German word '*Recht*' is not as misleading as it at first seems, and that if it refers to so many separable things, it is perhaps because these things are, in the last analysis, not truly separate. Riezler may also be right in his assumption, that a study of *Rechtsgefühl* will lead us to see a connection between the sense of justice and the operation of law.

Nevertheless, the sceptical flourish with which this paper begins must be completed. Let it be said, therefore, that to an English speaker the distinction between law and justice is not merely apparent: it is flagrant. Unless we are talking of 'natural law' (whose very existence is doubtful), it is clear that law is one thing, and justice another. Not only are there unjust laws; there is also lawless justice. The existence of law may generate a 'sense of justice', as Jhering's remark suggests; or laws and the sense of justice may be mutually dependent, as Riezler himself prefers to argue:³ but these suggestions are far from obvious.

2. Defining Law

Definitions of law depend upon the purpose of the definer. The sociologist, wishing to explain social behaviour, sees law as a system of causes; the jurist, wishing to understand legal argument, sees it as a system of reasons. Part of the appeal of legal positivism — at least in the forms bequeathed to us by Bentham, Austin and Kelsen⁴ — is that it presents us with a theory of law that is useful equally to the sociologist and to the jurist: a theory which shows how a reason might also be a cause. To describe 'command' as the fundamental ingredient in a legal system, is to suggest both an explanation of legal behaviour, and a theory of judicial argument. The judge, according to the positivist, is working out and applying the consequences of general commands. One question which troubles the philosopher is, who issues those commands, and for what purpose? For only if we know the purpose can we discuss the rationality of an act.

The purpose of an action must be sharply distinguished from the 'function' assigned to it by the sociologist. Many human activities have 'functions' in the sociologist's sense, even if they have no purpose (love, for example). Furthermore, the sociologist might assign a 'function' to an inherently purposeful activity without thereby *identifying* the purpose. For example, a sociologist might describe law as an instrument of 'social control' (such, for example, is Weber's theory). 'Social control' is not a purpose that a judge either has or ought to have. But that does not imply the falsehood of the sociologist's analysis, which concerns not individual intentions but social results.

As a matter of fact, the Weberian theory is most implausible. 'Social control' may sound like a description of the function of criminal law, but it seems hardly apt as a description of the law of contract or the law of tort. In these areas — and indeed throughout civil law — adjudication has the effect of resolving conflict — and if it also 'controls' people, it is only *because* it resolves the conflicts that would otherwise divide them. Again, 'resolution of conflict' does not describe the judge's intention: but it is an apt description of his long term effect. Indeed, it is

arguable that this resolution of conflict is a primary function of the law — at least, in those cases where sovereignty is not in doubt and where peace prevails. (And there is no reason to suppose that law retains its normal function in times of war, or in the aftermath of conquest.) In what follows, therefore, I shall consider the operation of law in the resolution of conflict, and I shall attempt to describe the precious artefact known as the 'rule of law' or *Rechtsstaat*. I shall then return to the subject of *Rechtsgefühl*, and offer certain tentative conclusions concerning its nature and importance.

Conflict may occur between individuals, between corporations, between individuals and corporations, or between either and the state. (I use the term 'corporation' loosely, to cover any body that performs collective actions which are subject to adjudication.) When a conflict is brought before the law it is resolved by the decision of a judge (who may again be an individual or a corporate body). This is the first important feature of law, and one which distinguishes it from war (the other most frequently used procedure for the resolution of conflict). In war the two parties marshal their forces, and contend by force for the outcome. Of course, there is also a law of war: but it is a law which operates only when law itself has failed. The dispute is then no longer before a judge, but solely between the parties.

Even when there is no trial of strength or violent confrontation, the procedure for settling a conflict may be nearer to war than to adjudication. Thus if one party is so strong that it would be foolish to resist him, he will dictate the outcome of any conflict. But this does not mean that his will is law: it means rather that law need have no place in his dealings.

The existence of a 'judge' is by no means distinctive of law. Various other procedures also involve the intervention of a third party: conciliation, for example, or 'good offices' in International Law. Moreover, the decision of the third party may be decisive — as in 'arbitration' — without the procedure thereby becoming part of law. It is, however, a principle of English law that, when a third party is in the sovereign position enjoyed by an arbitrator, his decision must satisfy the formal requirements of

'natural justice' (used here as a technical term of administrative law). Should these requirements not be satisfied, then the decision will be set aside by a court of law. (If arbitration sometimes is mistaken for adjudication, it is partly because of this possibility of appeal to law.) In order for a procedure to have the character of law, certain other conditions must be satisfied. First, there must be an application of general rules, specifying 'jural interests', in the sense made familiar by Hohfeld.⁵ These rules must define the rights, liabilities, privileges, duties and immunities of those who are subject to the judge's jurisdiction.

Secondly, the decision of the judge must be binding. It must have the character not of a recommendation but of a command. Whether the command may also be *enforced* is a separate question, although it is reasonable to suppose that 'voluntary law' is an unusual kind of law, and one that depends upon very special circumstances for its application. In the normal case, the judge's authority is also a form of power, bestowed by the state which upholds his judgment.

3. Procedural Constraints

Here, then, is a first, minimal description of a legal process: the application to human conflict of rules defining 'jural interests', by a judge whose decision is binding on the parties and in the normal case enforceable against them. There are also certain procedural constraints which are widely understood to be intrinsic to the administration of justice, and which are certainly fundamental to the 'rule of law'. Three in particular should be mentioned:

(1) *Judicial independence*. The judge should be guided in his judgment only by the facts of the case and the law which he applies to them, and must therefore be independent of the parties. There are very few legal systems in the modern world which satisfy this condition. In most modern states the judge has ceased to provide an effect-

ive barrier between the individual citizen and the state. Often the citizen comes before him as the subject of a 'political trial', and the judge is instructed by the prosecution as to the verdict which he must, on pain of dismissal, deliver.

Some purists argue that a procedure in which the judge is controlled by one of the parties cannot be called law. However, we should be less concerned by the word 'law' than by the facts that it is used to denote. And there are clearly many distinctions to be made: within the limits laid down by the prosecution, the judge may still make real legal distinctions, even when the final outcome is largely predetermined. It is perhaps best to say that a trial in which the judge is not independent is a travesty of justice, although it may on occasion be a genuine application of the law.

Judicial independence may be diminished in a variety of ways, and is clearly never more than a matter of degree. Judges frequently have financial interests, and personal connections, which make it difficult for them to separate themselves from the outcome of a case. In English law the presence of such interests and connections is always a ground for appeal against a verdict, on grounds of 'natural justice' (again used in its technical sense, to denote a set of common law rules with a precise and long-established application in administrative law). Socialists sometimes argue that judicial independence, under 'capitalist' conditions, can never be achieved, since the judges will always have a *class* interest which aligns them with a certain party to politically decisive conflicts. To assess such a claim is extremely difficult: often it is presented as a tautology, which can be overthrown by no empirical evidence. If, however, what is meant is that judges will show a marked disposition to settle disputes in favour of the 'middle class' and against members of the 'working class', then, not only has this claim yet to be established,⁶ but it is not at all clear what would follow from it, should it be true.

I place this 'rule of judicial independence' first, not only because of its crucial importance in the theory of government, but also because it is the decisive factor in

the genesis of *Rechtsgefühl*. Whether or not there can be systems of law without judicial independence, there certainly can be neither respect for the law, nor a guarantee of justice, if citizens have no prior assurance that their case will be judged on its merits.

(2) *Evidence*. Intimately connected with the idea of impartiality, and indeed not really separable from it, is the idea of truth. In many languages the words for truth and justice are etymologically connected: the adjectives '*juste*', '*right*' and '*recht*' can be used to convey either notion, and in Slavonic languages the connection is even more explicit. ('*Pravda*' denotes truth, '*právo*' right or law, and some such abstraction as '*spravedlnost*' justice.) The instinct that led Kant towards truth telling as the primary example of the categorical imperative is by no means the least of his moral insights. The prime instance of injustice is a verdict based on a falsehood — as when a man is imprisoned for a crime that he did not commit, or a person loses his rights on grounds that do not apply to him. The second decisive feature of judicial procedure is therefore the disinterested search for the truth. We might call this the 'rule of evidence', although its implications range more widely than the concept of evidence employed in legal writings.

(3) *Legality*. Of equal importance to the rule of evidence is the rule that law should be properly formulated, and the citizen properly forewarned. H. L. A. Hart refers in this connection to certain principles of 'legality', which the legislator ought to follow or try to follow in the enunciation of laws.⁷ Laws, he argues, should be i) general, with no arbitrarily defined exemptions; ii) free from ambiguities and obscurities; iii) publicly promulgated, so that those subject to their jurisdiction can be reasonably expected to know of their existence; and iv) not retrospective.

Each of those conditions raises difficulties of its own. i) clearly raises the problems encountered by Hare's theory of the 'universalisability' of moral judgments, and in particular the problem of triviality: how are we to prevent

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Each of those conditions raises difficulties of its own. i) clearly raises the problems encountered by Hare's theory of the 'universalisability' of moral judgments, and in particular the problem of triviality: how are we to prevent

the condition being satisfied by any law whatsoever, however arbitrary its conception, provided only that it be suitably worded? ii) is no clearer, and no easier to apply, than the ideas of 'ambiguity' and 'obscurity' employed in its formulation. iii) (a favourite principle of John Locke's) may seem marginally more clear; and likewise iv). However, on one interpretation of judicial procedure, laws are not, and cannot be, determinately known in advance of their application, and every decision of a 'hard case' involves legislation which is inherently retrospective. (The second of those claims, if not the first, is hotly disputed by Ronald Dworkin.)⁸ In which case, how are iii) and iv) to be satisfied? Even if we leave aside the 'hard cases', it is undeniable that, in almost every legal system, retrospective legislation occurs, and must occur if society is not to be undermined by disloyal litigation. (In Britain, for example, fiscal legislation acts retrospectively, from the time of the first presentation of the budget proposals, and before Parliamentary approval has made these proposals into law. It is obvious why this rule should be adopted.)⁹ Moreover, common law, which remains the basis of our own (English) legal system, has the character, not of a public pronouncement, but of a slow judicial discovery.

Notwithstanding those and other difficulties, it seems difficult to deny the intuitive plausibility of Hart's conditions, or of conditions true to the spirit of those laid down by Hart. We feel that there is a norm of generality and precision to which law ought to conform, if it is not to become an instrument of arbitrary coercion. We feel that secret laws (of the kind that existed in Nazi Germany and in Stalin's Russia) are grossly defective, and that retrospective legislation (as opposed to retrospective interpretation) is acceptable only in special cases, which must be openly discussed, publicly justified, and properly announced. No doubt other conditions could be added to those offered by Hart,¹⁰ and no doubt Hart is unduly influenced by a conception of legislation, and insufficiently sensitive to the workings of the common law. But the further question arises as to why we should expect law to conform to a 'rule of legality' in the first place? It seems to me that a very good answer is contained in

the sociological premise from which my discussion began. If law is really to have the effect of resolving, rather than creating, conflict, then it should be as certain and predictable as possible. Secret laws are evidently a *source* of social conflict, and could never be used in its cure: the same goes for retrospective laws, and for laws which arbitrarily divide the populace into those who must obey them and those who need not.

We may, then, enunciate three ground-rules of legal procedure: the rule of judicial independence, whose aim is impartiality; the rule of evidence, whose aim is truth; and the rule of legality, whose aim is to establish the existence of jural interests prior to the act which encroaches upon them.

Some wish to argue that 'representation' is a necessary part of adequate legal procedure. The pervasive existence of representation certainly changes the character of the law, in making every party to a conflict an expert in its adjudication; none the less, it is not a necessary feature of the adjudication itself. In some systems — the Shari'a, for example — representation is the exception rather than the rule, and in any case need not have the form of an intervention by experts. Exactly what role should be played by representation in the 'rule of law' is therefore a question that I shall leave unanswered.

4. Law and Rule

The three ground-rules do not suffice to characterise the nature of law. Something must also be said about the nature of the laws themselves, as these are applied in court. A first attempt at classification would distinguish custom, rule and principle. Custom is not a part of the law, although it may serve as a guideline interpreting ambiguous statutes and decisions. Rule is the essence of the law, while principle is an additional component — a reference beyond the prescribed rules, to a body of constitutional, political or even moral rights and duties,

which some (notably Dworkin) wish to make part of the law itself. (Dworkin wavers between saying that principle *is* part of the law, in England and the US say, and saying that it ought to be. He also wavers in his description of principle, and in particular in his interpretation of the word 'political': a political right tends to mean 'a representation of the law as it would be if it were entirely in the control of the *New York Review of Books*'. I shall not be able to discuss Dworkin in detail, but I shall have more to say in due course about principles.)¹¹

Most people would agree that the third component principle is not an essential, even if it is a desirable, element in all judicial procedure. And the correct attitude to custom is surely to say that, whatever its final importance, it owes its life to the rules and takes its meaning from the fact that it arises in the application of the rules. (Thus there can be rules without customs, but not legal customs in the absence of legal rules.) The idea that principles are so important stems in part from the existence in Western systems of law of a procedure of appeal: in other words, they are a reflection in thought of the existence in fact of a 'higher court'. To cut a long story short, it is the rules alone that are essential.

A legal rule does not have to be written. Nor does it have to be fully known to the judge. In a British court, the judge is guided by the doctrine of precedent, according to which the rule is embodied in the precedents, but not necessarily explicitly stated there. (This is so, at least, if Parliament has not legislated on the issue.) The common law doctrine of precedent still applies, and when the barrister argues that the judge ought to *distinguish* the present case, he is arguing for a particular interpretation of the precedent, according to which the rule upon which it was decided does not apply to the present instance.

As I briefly remarked, there is a conflict in the offing between the common law doctrine of precedent and the third of our ground-rules: the rule of legality. For if the law is not known to the judge — if he too has to discover it in the course of adjudication — how could it have been known to the ignorant layman who stands before him? However, it should not be thought that this conflict is pe-

culiar to common law. Every serious legal system has a similar problem — which will be called a problem of *interpretation*. Even if the law is all written down in statutes (or, if not written down, then recorded in some other way, as in the memorised verse-forms used by our Saxon ancestors and by the cities of ancient Greece), it still must be interpreted. And that too may require a great deliberation in the light of the particular facts of the particular case. The question 'Is this murder?', or 'Is this negligence?' will exercise the minds of judges under whatever legal system, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the ideal of a publicly enunciated and publicly certain law is no more than an ideal.

The essential features of a legal rule are consistency, applicability, and relevance. A rule is *consistent* if it is always applied in the same way: i.e. so as to yield the same outcome on the same facts. Whatever difficulties that last sentence may contain (and all readers of Wittgenstein will be familiar with them)¹² are difficulties peculiar not to law, but to the idea of consistency. A rule is *applicable* if there are actual situations, occurring in the normal course of the given society, when it might be invoked. (A system of rules governing the breeding of chimeras and the navigation of the stars would not be a system of law.) A rule is *relevant* if the situation to which it applies is an actual or potential source of human conflict. Criminal law contains a paradigm of legal relevance, since its central core derives directly from the moral sense of man — the sense that murder, robbery, fraud, rape and violence cannot go unavenged. In other words, criminal law records a natural desire for retribution, and if the law does not provide that retribution, the offended party will. Civil law involves the resolution of more recondite difficulties: such as the division of property, and the recompense for injury. But again it provides a solution to a problem in which one party is in fundamental conflict with the other.

5. Law and the Sense of Justice

Hume argued that, if we could but abstract from all our interests, and look impartially, and with complete understanding, on the deeds of men, we should agree in our judgment as to what was right and what was wrong, since we should be guided only by that universal sentiment of benevolence which is common to all. Hume's thought is tantamount to the following: even in the absence of legal rules, we can put ourselves in the position of a judge, and attempt to obey the ground-rules of adjudication. And then we shall agree in our judgments as to what is right and wrong. I shall define the 'sense of justice' as the disposition to carry out this thought experiment, and to be guided by its result: the disposition to put oneself in an adjudicative position, whether or not the matter in question is governed by law. More metaphysical versions of Hume's thought are available — notably Kant's theory that the rational being is compelled by reason to put himself in an adjudicative position, and that when he does so his thought issues automatically in laws that are universally binding. It is not necessary to go so far as Kant in order to recognise that law is as much the product as the producer of the 'sense of justice'.

Modern social and political thinkers are frequently misled by a false image of the law — an image that has been prevalent since the eighteenth century but which is at variance with the historical experience of Europe. According to this image, the business of the judge is to *apply* law, not to make it, and law itself stems from the legislative decisions of a sovereign body. The rules are issued in the form of commands, which express the 'will of the sovereign' in explicit and generalised form. It is obvious from a first glance at the history of European law that this image totally misrepresents the way in which our laws have developed. Not only the Common Law of England, but Roman Law and the codified systems of Europe have their ultimate origins in judicial decisions, rather than in legislative chambers. The criminal law, and the root laws of the civil code, derive from long traditions of decision-making which took place without the

benefit (or, to be more accurate, without the curse) of sovereign legislation. At some point almost every code can be traced back to certain core conceptions which have judicial precedent as their sole and sufficient authority. And rules which are applied through courts that have no anchorage in historical precedent are open to marked defects, some of which I discuss below. But we should bear closely in mind the distinction — emphasised to great effect by Hayek¹³ — between law and legislation, and should recognise, too, that legislation is not, and cannot be, the basis of a legal system, nor can it generate, of its own accord, a rule of law.

The above sketch is very inadequate, but it gives us some idea as to what a legal system is (even if it does not quite justify the word 'system'). It should be obvious that the sense of justice as I have defined it has nothing to do with the conception of distributive justice elaborately specified by Rawls,¹⁴ (or rather, it has in common only the basic idea of impartiality). A sense of justice is manifest, not in some thought experiment designed to tell us how the total product of a society should be distributed among its members, but in the habit of looking upon individual transactions and conflicts impartially, and with an eye to the truth. I have tentatively suggested that there is a continuity between this disposition and judicial procedure under a rule of law.

6. Personality

There are two further important features of the rule of law, as this has developed in European civilisation, which I shall call 'personality' and 'concretion'. My discussion of these features will be directed in part against the tradition in sociological thought, represented most powerfully by Weber, which sees law as a paradigm of 'abstract and impersonal' relations between sovereign and subject.

The work of von Gierke in Germany and of Maitland in England made abundantly clear that the politics of

European nations cannot really be understood without reference to ideas of collective liability and collective right.¹⁵ Collective agency is recognised by Roman Law (with its doctrine of the corporate *persona*¹⁶), by the *Genossenschaftsrecht* of medieval Germany, by Canon Law, and by the brilliant and baffling English law of trusts, which manages to give legal reality to collective agents without treating them as corporate 'persons' in the sense of Roman Law. All those legal systems acknowledge more or less explicitly that the features of individual human beings whereby we are moved to praise and blame them, to accord to them rights and liabilities, to oppose them and to ally ourselves with them, can be displayed by collective entities. A university, a trading company, a club, an institution, the state itself — all can be so structured as to possess legal rights and liabilities, and are so structured in many systems of law. (It should be noted that the term 'university' is borrowed from the '*universitas*' of Roman Law, which denotes the principal form of civil association bearing corporate personality.) A trading company, for example, can perform actions: these actions reflect decisions made on its behalf, which are themselves rationally based. People are affected by these actions, and their rights and privileges may be safeguarded or threatened by them. A company has rights in law — it can own things, buy things and sell them; it may possess rights of way and usufruct, rights of light, air, water, rights of representation, and so on. It also possesses liabilities. (It is a general principal that you don't have rights without having liabilities towards those who must respect them.) Indeed, all the categories of 'jural interest' seem to apply as readily to corporations as they apply to individual men and women.

A great amount of ink has been spilled over the question whether the corporate person is 'fiction' or 'reality'. Von Gierke endowed the *Genossenschaft* with dignity, value and moral identity beyond the reach of any individual. In reaction, jurists have tended to set corporations to one side, as derivative, artificial — even delusory. This attempt seems to me to be wholly misguided. Not only is it legal nonsense (the rights and liabilities of corporations being attributable, as a rule, to no individual person); it is

also moral nonsense. The idea of a corporation corresponds to an independent moral reality. Associations are the indispensable object of human allegiance, the archetype of all the wider loyalties from which society is generated and upon which the state and its jurisdiction depend. Even if there were no legal idea of collective identity, there would still be a moral idea. And until the moral idea is given legal reality it remains outside the deliberations through which our bonds are fortified and our conflicts resolved.

Collectives may act rightly or wrongly. Without a law that can hold them to account, and force upon them costs that are greater than the benefit of wrongdoing, we can have no protection against their power. And without a law that can establish and protect their interests, collective agents are at the mercy of fraud, theft and vandalism. A law of collective agency both protects association and at the same time limits its power. Through the operation of this law associations become institutions, and fleeting ambitions become sources of life, confidence and value.

The greatest of all collective agents — the state — is not only a person in International Law, but also a moral person, whose relations to us are of ever greater concern as its power increases. A legal system that lacks the conceptual apparatus whereby the personality of the state can be represented, cannot provide a rule of law. English law has a certain difficulty in this matter, and prefers to speak not of the 'state' but of the 'crown'. It describes the crown, in language of lamentable obscurity, as a 'corporation sole' — i.e. a corporation which at any one time has at most one member.¹⁷ Nevertheless, however unsatisfactory this device, its intention is clear: to separate the collective agency of the state from the individual will of the monarch, and to subject the former to adjudication. In other words, the purpose is to subject the state to its own law, and to make it no better than an equal when it is challenged by the individual plaintiff.

If there is to be a rule of law, then legal personality (or its equivalent) must be assigned to the real sources of collective agency, and not to the facades through which they disguise their actions. The large powers and interests that operate in society must be made *directly* answerable

for their actions. If such powers remain unanswerable, while being the principal agents behind the state, then we might reasonably say that government has become 'impersonal'. The most important example of impersonal government is that of the one-party totalitarian state, under which the principal agent of change — the Party — possesses no answerability at all, and usually makes this quite clear by defining itself in terms of its 'leading' role. While totalitarian systems of law recognise corporations of a kind — such as universities and even trading companies — these are for the most part facades: crucial decisions are invariably made on their behalf by the ruling Party which, while acting through them, escapes any liability for the conflicts that they cause. In such circumstances, not only is the state above the law, but all major forms of collective action are likewise unjudiciable. This is a paradigm of what I mean by 'impersonal' government, and to the extent that government becomes impersonal, to that extent do the main social conflicts become irresolvable through law, and to that extent does the rule of law break down. What seems like law is really (to parody Clausewitz) war by other means.

A bureaucracy may be either personal or impersonal in the above sense. In both cases commands are carried out by officers appointed to specific functions. Yet in one case the officers can be controlled only from a point above them in the hierarchy of power: in the other case they can be controlled from a point below, through the intermediary of law. (Even in the hands of the underdog, law should be an instrument, not of influence, but of control, to use the sociologist's well-worn distinction.)

As I have indicated, English law has to a great extent stood aloof from the Roman law of corporations, tolerating the proliferation of unincorporated associations, whose actions, rights and liabilities it has nevertheless been able to adjudicate through the law of trusts: The device of the trust depends in its turn upon the dual nature of English law, with the system of 'equity' (close to the philosopher's 'natural justice') always taking precedence over the system of law. Legal systems that do not enjoy such sophisticated concepts may compel associations to incorporate, so that collective action will not escape

the net of adjudication. Or they may develop other conceptions — such as the Islamic *waqf* — through which to create rights and liabilities that are vested in no individual person. (Each method has its own drawbacks, that of the *waqf* being that it permits assets to endure perpetually without any individual having judiciable rights in them. This has been one of the major sources of disaster in the Islamic law of property, although there are also successful *awqaf* — such as the *aflaj* (water courses) of Oman — which could be easily administered in no other way.)

The importance of these devices is twofold. First, as I have indicated, they give legal enactment to an independent moral idea; secondly, they are an indispensable protection against conspiratorial power. The moral idea of the person is easy to grasp — although less easy to analyse. Clubs, societies, towns, guilds, unions, associations, churches, firms and nations — all have, in varying degrees, a moral personality in the eyes of those who deal with them. They have will, agency, responsibility, life and reason, and, as for their flesh and blood, we ourselves provide it. They are the objects of interpersonal attitudes — of love, hatred, admiration, contempt, affection, anger, gratitude, resentment, even of grief. To admit such facts is not to engage in outrageous metaphysics. It is simply to notice the world as it is. The *Genossenschaft* has a real existence, and a real moral presence, independently of the law which bestows upon it the status of a person or a trust. (If you doubt this, then you should turn again to the greatest of all dramatic representations of the *Genossenschaft* — Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*. You will then see how much the individual human personality is enhanced and enriched by its encounter with the moral personality of free association.)

By endowing associations with jural interests, the law extends its protection to an independently valued social organism, and one which already *has* those interests, or their moral equivalent, in the hearts and minds of those who encounter it. This process of protection is an essential part of the law's conflict-resolving function. It is a means whereby the state places itself at the disposal of spontaneous social order, so as to endorse and ratify it.¹⁸

Civil society, according to Hegel, owes its character to the corporations, and it is by the abundance of free association, according to Tocqueville, that the emerging society of America had limited the power of government.¹⁹ Such views are immensely controversial. But we should surely not be surprised by the hostility that revolutionary governments — which gain power by conspiracy and maintain it by force — have shown towards the autonomous institutions of civil society, or by the seemingly inexorable logic whereby such governments have one by one destroyed the private clubs, schools, charities, guilds and autonomous trade unions which seemed to generate powers that they could not control. (Nor is the tendency new. The Revolutionary Government of France issued a declaration on August 18th 1792, announcing that 'a state that is truly free ought not to suffer within its heart any corporation, not even such as, being dedicated to public instruction, have merited well of the fatherland.' This was the prelude to one of the harshest acts of expropriation that had yet been conducted in the name of law.)

By the same token, we can see the value of personal law in eliminating conspiracy. In totalitarian states, where the Party, despite being principal collective agent, has only a defective legal personality, conspiracy remains an immovable component of public life. Even in states which abhor conspiratorial government, and which do their best to make every collective agent answerable before the law, large collectives will naturally try to bend the law in their own direction, and even to secure legislative immunities.²⁰ Under personal legality, all agents — the individual, the corporation, even the state itself — come before the law as equals, entitled to equal consideration and equal respect. The law of collective personality is therefore an indispensable part of the rule of law. If we wish to use the word 'personal' of a form of government, then we should do far better justice to the idea conveyed by it if we use it to describe, not the charismatic leadership of a warrior chieftain, but precisely that complex of jural interests that our own systems of law have established in response to the perceived realities of human association.

7. Concretion

The second important feature of our legal systems to which I should like to draw attention is the feature of 'concretion'. It is perhaps useful to explain this term by means of an example. Consider section 203 of the Czechoslovak criminal code. This tells us that those who 'consistently shirk honest employment and allow themselves to be kept by somebody, or acquire the means of existence in some other wicked manner are liable to punishment'. (All systems of 'socialist law' include such a provision, sometimes known as the 'anti-parasite' law.) Nowhere does the Czechoslovak law define what 'honest' employment is, what 'consistently' means, or what is a 'wicked' manner. Nor is there a tradition of recorded adjudication that could settle the matter, since judges have neither the power nor the independence to create binding precedents.²¹ The law is crucially indeterminate — 'abstract' if you like — and can therefore serve (as is of course intended) as an instrument of arbitrary control in the hands of the state. It seems to me that much 'socialist law' is in that sense abstract, and that its abstractness arises partly because the judiciary has lost its independence. The 'concretion' of a law comes, not from the law itself, but from its application in the courts, in which the concrete circumstances of human conflict are allowed to determine the meaning of its terms (or, if you like, to determine the true nature of the law.)

This requirement of legal concretion was rightly emphasised, and interestingly described, by Hegel, in *The Philosophy of Right*:

Amongst the rights of the subjective consciousness are not only the publication of the laws . . . but also the possibility of ascertaining the actualisation of the law in a particular case (the course of the proceedings, the legal argument, etc.) — i.e. the publicity of judicial proceedings. The reason for this is that a trial is implicitly an event of universal validity, and although

the particular content of the action affects the interests of the parties alone, its content, i.e. the right at issue and the judgment thereon, affects the interests of everybody.²²

Hegel was hostile to common law, partly on the ground already mentioned, that it gives legislative capacities of an unforeseeable kind to the judge.²³ Nevertheless, the fact remains that the prime example of concrete law is common law, founded in the doctrines of precedent and *stare decisis*. Its rules are precisely not abstract but *abstracted* from concrete decisions. The common law is an instance of a *tradition*, in which rational solutions emerge from the constant confrontation between human desire and recalcitrant reality. The principle governing such a law is no different from that which governs the law of a sovereign exercising a personal right of appeal. Indeed, it is understood in English law that the sovereign's personal adjudication is exercised precisely *through* the courts, and in particular through the Court of Chancery, which, although it has been a Weberian 'office' since at least the twelfth century, is bound in the last instance only by precedents of its own. (And it is from the peculiar adjudication of the Court of Chancery that our law of equity and trusts derives.)

An interesting corollary can now be drawn, concerning Weber's idea of 'legal-rational' legitimacy. It seems to me that a legal system that is impersonal, and which operates only through abstract laws, is precisely *not rational at all*. The prime feature of rational action is its subjection to correction in the light of the facts. In collective endeavours, rationality emerges by the resolution of contending interests, and the emergence of a common pursuit that will secure the agreement, in so far as possible, of interested parties. Collective rationality is a *process*, and law is one of its instances. (Some, for example Hayek, argue that the market is another instance: but there is no need to accept this appealing idea, in order to agree with my conclusions.) The process of rational conflict-solving is possible, however, only if the most powerful interests (those which are the greatest generators of injustice and conflict) are answerable to the law (i.e. only if there is

personal government); and only if the law itself is answerable to the facts — to the concrete circumstances of adjudication. In other words, where there is impersonality and abstraction, there is a failure of collective rationality. Nothing can then be corrected. Indeed, you will find that, in such circumstances, the person who attempts to voice an opposing view is invariably silenced, lest the smooth functioning of the mechanism be jeopardised by his protests. The failure of rationality consists in the liquidation of the dissenting voice.

8. Summary

Let us return now to our previous analysis of law. It can be seen, I hope, that impersonality and abstraction are corruptions of the legal process. They are corruptions precisely because they let the greater powers through the net of adjudication, while leaving unprotected the spontaneous associations in which our life and happiness reside. A central function of law — the resolution of conflict by adjudication — is then thwarted. Law cannot, in these circumstances, provide the preventative to war. (Martial law is appropriately called, in Polish as in French, a 'state of war'.) Our sketch of an analysis of law therefore implies that a legal record (in which concrete determinations are given to the interpretation of the rules), and a wide concept of corporate right and liability are essential to the true operation of law. We may therefore summarise our paradigm of law in the following terms. Law requires:

- (1) The placing of conflicts before a judge.
- (2) The application of rules defining jural interests.
- (3) The acceptance of the judge's decision as binding, and (in the normal case) as enforceable by a sovereign power.

(4) Obedience to the three fundamental ground-rules of adjudication:

- i) the rule of judicial independence;
- ii) the rule of evidence;
- iii) the rule of legality.

(5) The use of rules which are

- i) consistent;
- ii) applicable;
- iii) relevant.

(6) The adoption of a system which is

- i) personal;
- ii) concrete.

The description is cumbersome; it is not a complete definition but an attempt to identify an institution in terms of one of its most important functions, and with a view to the explanation and evaluation of its effects. I hope I have given some grounds for thinking that the problem to which law, like war, addresses itself — the problem of human conflict — is better served by a legal system as I have defined it than by any of the more obvious alternatives.

9. Natural Law and *Rechtsgefühl*

It remains now to say something about the two problems which concerned me at the outset: first, the place of 'morality', 'principle', 'natural law', 'political rights' and so on, in the operation of a legal system; secondly, the nature, extent and meaning of *Rechtsgefühl*. These are, in fact, different aspects of a single problem.

There is a tendency in jurisprudence to think of natural law as Grotius thinks of it: a system of rules which are exactly like positive laws in form, and differ

from them only in this: that their content can be justified by appeal to reason, without reference to the sovereign power. Roughly, they are laws which are, in Kant's sense, *a priori* valid. It is a step forward to recognise that all actual appeals to natural law are not appeals to *law*, but to something else which overrides it. Dworkin talks in this context of 'principle', although he would probably not endorse the description 'natural law' to refer to his principles. He prefers, instead, to speak of 'political rights', secured perhaps by a constitution, or at any rate, widely accepted as structural features of the body politic, which can be invoked in court in order to say: *this* cannot be done. For Dworkin, these principles get invoked for the most part in 'hard cases', where the law is indeterminate or in conflict with itself. Presumably, however, they could be invoked elsewhere, in order to throw out a law which conflicted with them.

Both views — the traditional natural rights view, and the Dworkinian invocation of extra-systemic 'principles' — suppose that, in the course of adjudication, something else, beyond the rules, might be sensibly appealed to, and perhaps ought to be appealed to, if the resulting judgment is to have full title to our obedience. But why? What is it about a legal system, as I have so far described it, that requires completion in this way, and why is it a good thing so to complete it? If what is meant is that the law should conform to our moral sense, then that goes without saying. But the 'should' there is moral, not legal.

I propose instead another view of the 'natural laws' and 'principles' that seem to lie dormant within adjudication. I suggest that these are really shadows cast by the procedure of adjudication itself. They are not independently existing laws which may be applied like any other. They are, rather, the procedures themselves, transformed into principles. Thus, we may talk of the 'right to a fair trial'; but we do not mean by this some separate legally defined right that might be added to a system of adjudication so as to make a real difference to it. We simply refer to a consequence of the system itself. Without the 'right to a fair trial' there is no law. In the same way, we can speak of all the following as 'rights':

- the right to impartial judgement (4, i);
- the right to the truth, and all that is entailed in that (4, ii);
- the right to do what no law forbids (4, iii);
- the right to be treated equally for an equal offence (5, i);
- the duty of corporations to answer for their acts (6, i).

It is possible in this way to denote a schema of formal rights, corresponding to many of the 'natural rights' that have been traditionally recognised.²⁴ The important point, however, is that these rights are secured *automatically* by any genuine rule of law, as a consequence of legal procedure. Conversely, they cannot be protected without the creation of such a procedure. Genuine law and natural law may be no more separable than are a man and his shadow.

If we now return to Hume's 'genealogy' of the sense of justice, we can begin to describe the fundamental contours of *Rechtsgefühl*. Someone for whom adjudication is the prime manner in which conflicts are resolved places himself when witnessing conflict in the position of the impartial judge. In doing so, he envisages, in his innermost sentiments, a procedure for resolving the conflict, which will conform to the demands of law. He will automatically think in terms of the 'rights' and 'liabilities' of the parties, and he will identify the parties according to an intuitive notion of personality which will be receptive to ideas of corporate right and corporate liability. He will be motivated to recognise certain 'formal' or 'natural rights', and above all the *right to truth*, as the basic principles from which his reasoning departs. And he will be constantly comparing cases, trying to reconcile his judgement in this case with his judgement in another. If Hume is right, then the disposition to adopt the judicial posture is essentially common to human beings, and constitutes a fundamental part of their ability to sympathise. And if the conditions of legal order, as I have described them, exist,

then *Rechtsgefühl* will develop spontaneously. One might go further, and say that, without this feeling, men would not be able to achieve what it is most important for them to achieve: a vision of the social world that is through and through personal, concrete, informed by a sense of right and liability. *Pace* Weber, it is precisely law, properly understood, that educates us to that perception, and through law we are presented with an idea of legitimacy that is personal, responsible and of immediate application to the self. It is true that we can easily lose sight of this 'personality'. For law can become cumbersome, overborne with written statutes and minute observances: like any human activity, it can be corrupted and turned against itself. But it is a virtue of law, that its faults are merely human.

Notes

1. Riezler 1969, pp. 7f.
2. Ulpian, fr. 1, section 3 D. *de iust. et iure* 1, 1. Austin rightly scorns the idea of a law of justice acknowledged even by animals as 'this most foolish conceit': Austin 1911, p. 210.
3. Riezler 1969, p. 42.
4. Bentham 1789; Austin 1911; Kelsen 1942.
5. Hohfeld 1923, ch. 1.
6. For evidence of judicial impartiality in the matter of 'workers' rights', see O'Higgins and Partington 1969.
7. See, for example, 'Problems of the Philosophy of Law', in Hart 1983, p. 114.

8. For example at several places in Dworkin 1978.
9. There are other far more dubious cases, however. Consider the case of *Burmah Oil Co. v. Lord Advocate*, (1965) A.C.75, in which a claim for war damage compensation was set aside by the courts, on the grounds that if it were upheld, many similar claims could also be made, and the public finances would be ruined.
10. See the eight conditions given by Fuller 1964, and identified (rather strangely) as the 'morality' implicit in law.
11. See Dworkin 1978 and 1986, and Scruton 1984, ch. 3, and 1987, in which I discuss Dworkin's views at greater length.
12. I refer to Wittgenstein's celebrated arguments concerning 'following a rule' in Wittgenstein 1953, part 1, and Wittgenstein 1954.
13. See Hayek 1973, ch. 4.
14. Rawls 1971.
15. O. von Gierke, *Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* (a fragment of this work has been translated and introduced by Maitland 1900). See also Maitland's 'Trust and Corporation' in Fisher ed. 1911, vol. 3.
16. The Roman Law doctrine is much more complicated than it is often represented to be. See Duff 1938, in which it is argued that Roman Law precisely does *not* make the philosophical distinction often attributed to it, between *person* and *human being*.
17. On the difficulties presented by this idea see Maitland, 'The Corporation Sole', in Fisher, *op. cit.*
18. For a sketch of the political significance of this, see Scruton 1984, ch. 8, 'The Autonomous Institution'.

19. Hegel 1942; Tocqueville 1835.
20. Such immunities, granted to trade unions by the British Parliament in 1906, have led to considerable doubt as to the nature and extent of trade union liabilities. It seems, nevertheless, that a trade union, though an 'unincorporated association', may be sued at common law in its own name: *Bonson v. Musicians' Union* (1956) A.C.104. On the issue of the legal identity of the trade union, see the excellent discussion in Ross M. Martin 1958.
21. This is made clear by Act 36 of 26 February 1964 — 'Concerning the Organisations and Election of the Judiciary' — as amended by Act 29 of 27 February 1968, Act 175 of 20 December 1968, Act 156 of 17 December 1969, and Act 29 of 5 April 1978, section 24 of which ('the basic duties of judges') includes the provision that judges shall interpret statutes and other legal regulations 'in the interest of the working people' — this interest being itself determined in practice by Party decree. Such legal records as there are, therefore, can have no binding authority, since no merely *legal* process can determine what is meant, from day to day, by 'the interests of the working people'. See also Danis 1980, p. 165: 'Judicial independence does not mean that a judge may arbitrarily assert his own, subjective opinion. It is an independence which at the same time involves the judge's dependence on the socialist legal system which expresses the will of the ruling working class.' In other words the law is not determined by judicial reasoning, but by an extralegal, metaphysical entity — 'the will of the ruling working class' — whose concrete embodiment in the world of mortals is all too familiar under another name.
22. Hegel 1942, para. 224.
23. *Ibid.*, para. 211, note.
24. This view approximates to that advanced by Hart 1955.

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Meaning and Rules

Eva Picardi

*Denn eben, wo Begriffe fehlen,
Da stellt eine Regel zur rechten
Zeit sich ein.*

1. Knowledge of Meaning

The topic I wish to discuss is 'knowledge' in the sense in which this notion occurs in ascriptions of propositional knowledge, where these ascriptions are based on linguistic utterances made in their natural settings. The relevant utterances belong to the assertoric type, i.e. they are utterances of declarative sentences issued with assertoric force. I shall deal with the following three questions:

- (1) What type of theoretical knowledge, if any, does the understanding of sentence-meaning consist in?
- (2) How is this understanding of meaning related to the complex abilities people display in their use of language, in suiting, as it were, the linguistic force to the words and the words to the world?
- (3) To what extent, if any, is the connection between knowledge of the meaning of a sentence (the proposition expressed by it) and the ability to use it illuminated by

seeing the latter as due to a form of *tacit knowledge* of rules governing the application of the component words of the sentence in question?

By 'tacit knowledge' I mean a type of knowledge which, even though it can somehow be manifested, need not, and in many cases cannot be articulated *linguistically* (as is the case with many practical abilities of a non-linguistic type). This qualification is intended to rule out the notion of 'cognising' a system of rules (a grammar), where cognising is conceived as an inaccessible mental process or state — an idea which has been in vogue with grammarians of the generative-transformational school.¹ With respect to the grammarians' alleged rules (in contrast to the rules tacit knowledge of which can in our sense become manifest) the notion of tacit guidance is too weak to play the desired explanatory role.² However, if the idea of being guided by a rule *can* be elucidated by a theory which enables us to understand or invites us to improve a practice of ours, then there is no reason to resist the explanation offered by that theory. The account of our inferential practice given by a Gentzen-style explanation of the meanings of the logical constants seems to be a case in point.³

Few philosophers would nowadays claim that in giving an account of our practice of speaking a language any appeal to cognitive notions, such as 'grasping the meaning', 'seeing the point', 'accepting as correct', 'realising the bearing of', 'responding appropriately to', etc., can be dispensed with. Many, however, would maintain that these notions become relevant only at the pragmatic level or at the level of performance, where we are faced with the problem of accounting for the use of language and the quirks and twists encountered in the utterances of individual speakers. But these elements remain, so to speak, inert, for the relevant questions about meaning can be answered e.g. by employing the notions of truth, satisfaction, primitive denotation, or, perhaps, by means of a soberly modalised version of these notions. As one of the main points of using language is to convey relevant information to an audience by means of sentences held or believed to be true and perspicuously formulated, it is

supposed to follow that the employment of cognitive notions will be confined to the spelling out of conversational implicatures, presuppositions, implications, and whatever else attaches to a sentence, not in virtue of the meaning of its component words and the way they are put together, but in virtue of our uttering it e.g. in a certain context with a certain audience-directed intention and in accordance with a rough estimate of the audience's epistemic expectations.

It will then be the main task of an approach which sees cognitive notions as merely secondary to offer an explanation of what 'relevant information', 'sentence held true', 'perspicuous formulation', etc. mean, by appealing to nothing but the results yielded by a theory of truth-conditions. A programme of this type has been advocated and defended by Donald Davidson. It is not as if Davidson believed that the above-mentioned cognitive notions were irrelevant. As a matter of fact, in his theory they play the role of unanalysed primitives, used but not mentioned. Thus even in Davidson's austere framework it will still make sense to say that understanding a language is related to theoretical knowledge, though not with knowledge of what individual sentences mean but (for reasons connected with Davidson's holism) with knowledge of *entire theories*.

Before proceeding to discuss the questions raised at the beginning of this paper, I want to mention a very general and radical objection that might be levelled against the view to be defended here, that knowledge of meaning has a lot to do with knowledge proper. The objector will emphasise first of all that any appeal to the notion of knowledge proper — no matter whether this is construed as justified true belief or as evident judgment or as true belief produced by an appropriate causal chain — contains an implicit reference to the notion of truth. This reference emerges, he will argue, in two natural assumptions regarding certain ways of manifesting knowledge: (a) that an explicit knowledge-claim carries with it a truth-claim, and (b) that in which our alleged knowledge consists involves knowing a way of verifying, justifying, supporting the claim that the proposition in question is true, and hence being able to back the correctness of the assertion made

by means of a sentence intended to express that proposition. Thus applying the notion of knowledge proper to meaning will, if successful, not only assimilate understanding the meaning of a sentence to knowing the proposition it expresses; it will also establish a close connection between meaning, truth, and ways of attaining and manifesting knowledge. Now, however, our objector will insist that such an account of meaning will be badly incomplete. For it will, according to our objector, disregard the dependence of our understanding meaning on our ability to use language to produce effects of non-cognitive types, and he will make much of the perlocutionary element in our use of language (as for example when we produce by linguistic means fright, amusement, or even certain quasi-hypnotic states in an audience). Further, he will stress that in this perlocutionary use of language the sharing of information, and hence the notion of truth, will play no role.

A related line of attack upon the connection between meaning and knowledge suggested above is the following. We often speak, for example, of *understanding* a poem, or a piece of music, or a work of art; and yet it is hard to see what sort of theoretical (much less propositional) knowledge could be said to be involved in this kind of understanding. Moreover, the type of situation here alluded to is one where it is difficult to see whether the requirement of 'manifestability' of understanding is fulfilled.⁴ The trouble is that there seem to be no generally applicable criteria for crediting people with an understanding, or lack of understanding, of a work of art. Thus the notion of understanding here appears to be very remote from what is generally meant by 'knowledge' in the strict sense.

To this objection, however, we may reply by pointing out that the problem here is not so much one of criteria of 'manifestation', but rather a problem concerning the peculiar notion of understanding alluded to in the case in point. In the case of ordinary uses of language the question of what 'understanding' consists in can be quite perspicuously and clearly reformulated as a question about what to count as a manifestation of such understanding. And here we have plenty of criteria: we can give explanations of meaning, synonyms, antonyms, paraphrases, trans-

lations into different languages, we can produce examples of applications of the word in question, point out links between sentences containing that word and sentences that can be 'inferred' from them (in a loose sense of inferring including, for instance, lexical inferences). Thus understanding is not a matter of all or nothing; it typically comes in degrees, and this may lead to certain types of puzzle, but it does not mean that a wedge can be driven between the notions of understanding and of knowing the meaning of an expression, nor that no criteria can be specified where we are dealing with a manifest case of understanding an expression.

As regards the more general objection, it will surely not do to deny the existence of the perlocutionary uses of language mentioned; I do not wish to suggest that all understanding of meaning can be reduced to the true-false dimension, nor that propositional knowledge can be reduced to the dimension of verifiability-falsifiability. Speaking a language requires a number of complex skills, and to be sure some of these skills are designed to serve ends very remote from the Augustinian characterisation of the point of language as '*ut doceamus et commemoremus*'. Still, as to explanations of meaning and understanding meaning, it seems preferable to start from uses of language which are basic in an obvious way — ostensive definitions, statements of recognition and re-identification — and these uses do have a dimension of truth and falsehood. Moreover, it seems difficult to see how perlocutionary effects can be caused independently of what is generally regarded as the meaning of the relevant expressions. Finally, there is no way of giving a general and systematic survey of perlocutionary effects, and thus we cannot hope to arrive at a tenable characterisation of meaning (and of understanding meaning) by starting from perlocutionary uses alone.

2. Meaning, Belief and Interpretation

In Davidson's, as in Quine's, account, knowledge of a language is compared to knowledge of a scientific theory. Let us follow their lead and consider the corpus of sentences of a language held true at a certain time;⁵ there is nothing amiss in regarding this body of sentences as articulating a picture of the world which is largely correct (on the plausible assumption that, as Davidson puts it, 'much of what is agreed must be true if some of what is agreed is false').⁶ A rather indirect construal of this body of knowledge is offered by Davidson's theory of radical interpretation.⁷ This theory does not even purport to explain what it is that speakers actually know or understand and what it is that enables them to assent to or dissent from given utterances, but only what information needs to be imparted to a potential interpreter so that he will be able to speak the language. In the framework of such a theory assent and dissent are supposed to suffice as behavioural data to allow the radical interpreter to start off on his enterprise; for he is not interested in questions concerning that substantial knowledge which the linguistic performances of the natives can be seen as manifestations of. By contrast, a theory dealing with the question of how understanding manifests itself in the use of language will choose as its data linguistic acts more specific than assent and dissent; among these, assertions in the strong sense will play an important role, since they are linguistic acts which speakers usually volunteer and regarding which questions as to grounds and justifications have real substance, whereas mere assenting does not normally commit a speaker to such an extent that he would be expected to feel obliged to answer that kind of question.

There is of course a sharp contrast between holding a sentence true and its being true, and this contrast is indeed emphasised by Davidson. Yet sentence-meaning and belief must be related, for my holding a given sentence true depends on my grasp of its meaning on the one hand and my judgment as to its semantic value on the other. 'A speaker who holds a sentence to be true on an occasion does so in part because of what he means, or would mean,

by an utterance of that sentence, and in part because of what he believes'.⁸ The contrast between sentence-meaning and belief is implicitly appealed to when we are explaining to a speaker the source of a mistake of his by pointing out that he has an imperfect grasp of what the words used mean or an incorrect understanding of how things are. We say that he either misunderstands the meaning of an expression or falsely believes that things stand in the way suggested by his sentence. This use of the concept of belief — that is, when it is employed to 'take up the slack between objective truth and the held true' —⁹ is, according to Davidson, at the basis of all our attempts at trying to interpret the speech of our fellow human beings. If in a community language were used in such a way that it would not be possible to tell which of two speakers who disagree on the truth value of a given sentence was right for the reason that in their community it was admissible to understand words in different and somehow unaccountable ways, we should find it difficult to make any sense of what they were doing in their use of language. Indeed we should be reluctant to describe it as being in any sense an *activity*, as something that was carried out with a view to the satisfaction of certain desires on the basis of certain beliefs.

It would, however, be rash to conclude that smoothness of communication is of itself a guarantee that whenever people agree with each other — no matter whether this agreement manifests itself in explicit assent or tacit acceptance — we shall be able to sort out the following two components, viz. what the sentence *means to them* because of the other things they know and believe, and the objective meaning of the sentence, i.e. what it *says* independently of its being a possible object of belief or knowledge for them. That conclusion would be particularly rash, if we thought — as Davidson no doubt does — that some version of Quine's indeterminacy thesis needed to be taken into account.¹⁰ Quine's claim, in this context, is that as soon as we abandon the safe region of stimulus meaning and observation sentences, it becomes increasingly difficult to sort out meaning from belief and an increasingly tricky problem to tell whether agreement and disagreement are due to our ways of understanding and

misunderstanding the meaning of our sentences or to our sentences' being such that their meaning is objectively underdetermined by the empirical data. In fact, Quine explicitly rejects the idea of a sharp line between meaning and belief; according to him, meaning is what can be gleaned from an intersection of idiolects. Davidson, on the other hand, thinks that such a line *can* be drawn, though not in a unique way. Moreover, it is a consequence of his holistic standpoint that it does not make sense to ask which piece of knowledge or which belief a specific utterance purports to convey. Radical interpretation, like a scientific theory, is subject to holistic constraints, and the relevant 'optimum fit' is between the totality of T-sentences¹¹ and the available evidence concerning sentences held true by the native speakers in question.¹²

Here, however, we shall need more and finer distinctions than that between meaning and belief. What must sharply be distinguished are the following:

the *content of a sentence* (e.g. that John met Bill in Chicago last week),

the *ways of establishing it*,

the *information* that it conveys to different speakers on the basis of what they know already and are willing to believe.

Information is not, in my opinion, part of meaning proper. As regards the notion of content, it is natural to wonder whether the content of a sentence given in terms of truth-conditions exhausts all that we may want to say about knowledge of meaning.¹³ For even if a sharp distinction is made between the content of a sentence and the ways of establishing it as correct, we may still argue that, in order to account for the ability to use a sentence appropriately, essential appeal has to be made to knowledge of *how* to establish its truth or of what counts as a way of establishing it as true. Moreover, the question will arise whether, among the ways of establishing a sentence as true, some may perhaps count as more primitive, more fundamental than others.¹⁴ (Knowing certain ways of

establishing a sentence as true may, of course, involve information available in the community as a whole but not to each and every speaker of the language of the community. Nevertheless, we shall want to make a distinction between knowing the meaning of a sentence like 'The water is boiling' and knowing all or some of the scientific information possibly relevant to such a sentence.)

Now, a theory constructed along Quinean or Davidsonian lines will offer an account of the 'interanimation of sentences'¹⁵ and of the mechanism whereby further pieces of knowledge can be gathered from knowledge of the content of a sentence (as given by its truth-conditions). For example, from 'Bill met John at the conference in Chicago' I can infer that there is someone whom Bill met, that this event took place in the past, etc. Moreover, I may fit the (possibly new) information conveyed by that sentence into my system of beliefs and make guesses such as: 'So Bill preferred the Chicago conference to the London conference, and hence did not meet Jack, etc.' Plainly such guesses cannot be accounted for by a theory of radical interpretation; they are what Ramsey calls beliefs 'of the primary sort', and such beliefs constitute 'a map of neighbouring space by which we steer. It remains such a map however much we complicate it or fill in details. But if we professedly extend it to infinity, it is no longer a map; we cannot take it in or steer by it. Our journey is over before we need its remoter parts.'¹⁶ Thus, even if a speaker's beliefs and the speaker's meanings of the sentences he uses are systematically related to objective sentence-meanings, they do not belong to the latter. Obviously knowledge of objective meaning also involves awareness of entailments such as 'If Bill met John, then John met Bill', which can be accounted for in terms of lexical inference, i.e. by referring to our knowledge of the fact that 'meet' (unlike 'see') expresses a symmetric relation.

However, there seems to be a reference to the tacit exercise of skills such as the inferential abilities exemplified by inductive, deductive, and lexical reasoning also in Davidson's account of that type of theoretical knowledge which is implicit in knowledge of the meaning of a sentence.¹⁷ For in order to articulate the theoretical know-

ledge which is implicit in knowing the meaning of a sentence, we cannot help appealing to a form of tacit knowledge of *how* to unravel the relevant entailments. For such unravelling to be possible we must, moreover, assume that meaning is somehow 'stable', that words do not change their use: the use of a word must be in harmony with its meaning, it must as it were be 'responsible' to its meaning. (More on the notion of harmony in section 4. below.)

3. Recognitional Capacities

Wittgenstein, in his *Notebooks*, wonders whether we should try to 'find an expression . . . for HOW MUCH a proposition says' (p. 54). But even independently of the somewhat austere framework of the early Wittgenstein one may speculate about this idea, and then it becomes clear that a measure of how much a sentence says would also be a measure of how much one is expected to understand in order to be credited with full mastery of its sense. Here 'full mastery' means being able to use it correctly and/or recognise it as true under appropriate circumstances (no matter whether on a given occasion we, by accident, make mistakes in this regard). The 'appropriate circumstances' are those that we have been taught to regard as appropriate and are commonly regarded as appropriate, or at least relevant, to establishing the correctness of the claim in question; and this may involve sensory experience, methods of verification, calculation, measurement, and, in general, the exercise of certain recognitional abilities of varying degrees of sophistication.

In the context of propositional knowledge the word 'recognition' can be taken either in a strong or in a weak sense. In the weak sense it signifies acceptance or acknowledgement of the truth of a proposition as something a speaker may express on the basis of mere hearsay, or of the testimony of some expert. In the strong sense it means that one has exercised one's own recognitional abilities

(perceptual faculties, acquired techniques of measuring or calculating, etc.) in order to find out whether the circumstances verifying the assertion in question are given.

That there is a genuine difference between two types of linguistic act corresponding to these two ways of understanding 'recognition' can be seen when one notices that the act corresponding to the weak sense of 'recognition' can be called an act of assertion only in an attenuated sense: it shades off into what may be regarded as the separate act of assenting. Paradigmatic cases of assenting and asserting are quite obviously connected with different degrees of knowledge on the part of the speaker, but it is very difficult to spell out what amount of knowledge is necessary to turn an affirmative utterance — an expression of assent — into an assertion proper and what lack of knowledge would disqualify an utterance from counting as a genuine assertion.

The difference at issue here may become clearer by considering the familiar — and frequently frustrating — experience of reading e.g. a comment in the financial pages of a newspaper or a musicologist's account of a piece of music we have listened to. It may be that inwardly we assent to what we read, but when it comes to expressing our assent we may well wonder what basis there is for our doing so. Not only are we at a loss to describe a possible method of verification of the statement in question — we should probably not be able to recognise a verifying circumstance even if confronted with it. But worse is yet to come. Once we have started wondering what right we have to assent to, or even assert, statements based on knowledge we do not possess, we may then go on to ask ourselves whether we have fully understood their meaning. Now, a lot has been said about the problems involved in this type of situation, which clearly reflects the 'linguistic division of labour'.¹⁸ We should not, however, regard such cases as normal, for in most everyday situations expert knowledge of the more esoteric kind plays no significant role, and the relevant knowledge of most speakers can for our purposes be regarded as equal. It is plausible to suggest that an account of our understanding a language contain a substantive reference to speakers' recognitional capacities, which chiefly consist

in means and methods of verifying statements containing expressions of whose meaning we have an implicit grasp.

'True' and 'false' are words that are used to elucidate what we mean by 'proposition'. As Wittgenstein has pointed out in the *Investigations* (cf. I, 136), they belong to the kind of things we tend to say about propositions but must not be regarded as defining their essence. It is not as if, within a given set of sentences, one could simply discriminate those suited for statement-making and then go on to inquire under which conditions they would turn out to be justifiably assertible in virtue of their meanings and our recognitional capacities on the one hand and of how things are on the other. We start, instead, from the observation that people engage in the activities of asserting, refusing to assert, assenting, dissenting, asking questions, giving grounds, expressing opinions on the strength and appropriateness of these grounds, stating deductive arguments, etc., and armed with these data we then ask ourselves whether there is a notion or a set of kindred notions broad enough for being used to redescribe their linguistic performance in reason-giving terms and to form a conception of the content and significance of what they say.

It is natural to regard the acts of assenting, dissenting, etc. as expressions of understanding and, in the case of the linguistic act of assertion, as expressions of knowledge. The naturalness of this assumption resides in this: that understanding manifests itself in the ability to form correct judgments under appropriate circumstances and in the capacity to utter some of these judgments in the form of assertions in contexts which are thought to be theoretically relevant or practically useful or conversationally appropriate. It is therefore natural to think that a significant insight in the content of these utterances can be gained if, instead of asking 'Which are the (possibly recognition-transcendent) truth-conditions of sentences used to make assertions?', we ask questions such as 'What beliefs (or knowledge) do these assertions purport to articulate?' 'How is it *generally* possible to attain the beliefs (or types of knowledge) manifested on this particular occasion by this particular speaker?', 'Which

features of our behaviour can be seen as connected with our having certain beliefs?’

4. The Harmony between Meaning and Rules

It is no doubt possible to understand the meaning of a sentence without knowing its truth value; it suffices to know which possibilities it rules out and which possibilities it allows. Yet once we know a route that leads to establishing its truth value (no matter whether we ourselves are capable of following that route), we command a better grasp of the meanings of its component words, and it is in virtue of this fuller understanding that we may be able to form a judgment. But is it legitimate to explain the ability we display when, say, making a correct perceptual judgment, performing a calculation, seeing certain features instantiated in a given pattern, etc., as issuing, at least in part, from a fuller grasp of the meanings of the words we use, as if these meanings enshrined the possibilities of application?

Frege suggests that this notion of ‘enshrining’ or ‘containing’ can be understood in terms of the metaphor of plant and seed (Frege 1884, sec. 88; 1903, sec. 147). In the second volume of the *Grundgesetze* he writes that we ‘hope to be able to develop the whole wealth of objects and functions treated of in mathematics out of the germ [*Keim*] of . . . eight functions’.¹⁹ And in *Grundlagen* he says apropos of his notion of analyticity that the conclusions which, in arithmetic, extend our knowledge ‘are contained in the definitions, but as plants are contained in their seeds, not as beams are contained in a house’.²⁰ The justification of this claim requires both the construction of a formal system and a viable explanation of what it is for a (simple or complex) sign to have a *Bedeutung* and of that which gives ‘life’ to a sign,²¹ viz. its sense. The first task was fulfilled in *Begriffsschrift* and completed in the *Grundgesetze*.

Of course, if the interest of Frege’s considerations were confined to the philosophy of mathematics or a

theory of deductive inference, they would be of little relevance in the present context. But, as a matter of fact, they contain a profound and elaborate theory of meaning, and thus contribute to fulfilling the second task mentioned in the previous paragraph. This theory became the object of Wittgenstein’s sustained criticism and thus the starting-point from which he began to develop his own conceptions of meaning. The point at issue is the above-mentioned notion of ‘harmony’ (cf. end of section 2. above); this notion is much wider than that of analyticity and is intended to apply to the whole of language. The question is, roughly speaking, whether it is legitimate to say that the *uses* we make of a given word in all kinds of context have to be in accordance with the main features of its meaning as exemplified in a privileged type of context. Further questions concern the desirability and reality of this kind of harmony.

In his vitriolic attack on Hermann Schubert’s account of the extension of the number-system Frege outlines several of the themes later discussed in the *Grundgesetze*²² and gives a compendious statement of his views on the connections between sense, rules, and *Bedeutung* (reference):

So the string of signs is supposed to be assigned a sense, and it is supposed to follow from this sense that the string may be manipulated according to certain rules. This is clear enough: the rules according to which the string is to be manipulated depend on the sense of the signs. Nothing could be simpler, except that it is diametrically opposed to a certain formalist doctrine according to which signs have no sense, or at least need not have a sense, but are to be conceived as similar to chess figures, where the rules of manipulation can be established quite arbitrarily and irrespective of a sense. . . The domain of objects is itself governed by certain laws, and it is clear enough how these laws are mirrored in the form of rules regulating the use of the corresponding signs.²³

Technically the ‘mirroring’ alluded to in this quotation is achieved by laying down the semantic interpretation of the

above-mentioned eight functions which contain all further developments — as in a seed.²⁴

Sentences have sense; they express thoughts; their truth depends *both* on the meaning of the individual words occurring in them *and* on that which makes them true in reality. When using a word for making new statements we must not disrupt the extant fund of sentences held true in which that word occurs. In the case of a formal system the rules and definitions which we may introduce must be in harmony with the original sense conferred upon our words by the statements already accepted as true (e.g. axioms). The rules which govern the employment of number-words must be in agreement with their *sense*, say, as *Anzahlen* (cardinal numbers) or *Masszahlen* (measures) respectively: for sense is our only way of articulating our knowledge of the *laws* that reign in the realm of numbers.

This conception leads to the well-known point that there has to be harmony between rules which govern the handling of connectives in derivations and the meaning of connectives as given, say, by their truth-functional explanation. The idea is familiar: it was illustrated by Prior (1960) and commented on by Belnap (1962). Suppose we wished to introduce the propositional connective 'tonk' by laying down the following rules governing its introduction and elimination:

tonk I	A	B
	A tonk B	A tonk B
tonk E	A tonk B	A tonk B
	A	B

Then we can prove by means of a simple derivation that any two propositions are logically equivalent.²⁵ The moral drawn by Prior is that not any rule would do: rules have to be in harmony with our semantic intuitions, e.g. as laid down by means of truth tables. Belnap remarks that the

new connective does not yield a 'conservative extension' of our previous calculus, where an extension counts as conservative if it does not generate new theorems containing only the 'old' constants. Using Dummett's (1973a) terminology we may say that there is no harmony between the grounds for asserting 'A tonk B' and the consequences we draw from it.

There is another, interestingly similar case, mentioned by Belnap, viz. 'Peano's operation' ?, which is defined in the following way:

$$\frac{a}{-} \text{ ? } \frac{c}{-} =df. \frac{a + c}{b + d}$$

Here we can say that this rule would immediately allow us to prove a contradiction or, to take a more general example from Kleene, that the function $(p, q) \circ (r, s) = (p + r, q + s)$ 'is a perfectly well defined operation (function) on fractions which does not induce an operation on rationals'.²⁶ The moral is that (not even) in logic can we make up the rules as we go along, whether or not Frege's suggestive picture of the harmony between rules and the senses of expressions whose use is governed by these rules is accepted. Perhaps in order to bring out this type of harmony Frege, in his essay "Compound Thoughts" ("Gedankengefüge"), supplements his account of truth-functionally defined connectives with a hint as to their inferential role. But as Frege does not see the point of proving uniqueness (i.e. that rules characterise exactly *one* connective), his remarks have only heuristic significance.

Wittgenstein's attack on the conception outlined above is essentially an attack on the assumption that there is 'harmony' between meanings and rules. Take for instance the following passage on negation from the *Investigations*:

There cannot be a question whether these or other rules are the correct ones for use of 'not'. (I mean, whether they accord with its meaning.) For without

these rules the word has as yet no meaning; and if we change the rules, it now has another meaning (or none), and in that case we may just as well change the word too.²⁷

Wittgenstein's attitude towards the problems surrounding the concept 'rule' is ambivalent. In the passage quoted above he seems to argue in favour of the theory Frege so vehemently opposed in *Grundgesetze*, viz. the theory of arithmetic as a game of chess. On the other hand, we know that he disagreed with Hilbert's formalist philosophy of mathematics, which according to Wittgenstein's view reduced mathematical reasoning to formal manipulations. Kreisel²⁹ calls Wittgenstein's philosophy a 'philosophy of rules and proofs'; it seems to me, however, that on closer scrutiny Wittgenstein's arguments against meaning-platonism apply just as well to rule-platonism.²⁹ Besides, we should be wary of saying that understanding meaning is a matter of rule-following. There are, to be sure, certain practices whose essence consists in following rules (e.g. calculations, drawing diagrams according to explicit instructions, etc.) but these are practices of limited scope: only of cases where a rule is actually 'involved' in a calculation can we really say that they are cases of rule-following;³⁰ a rule 'does not act at a distance'.³¹ As I do not see any direct connection between meaning and rule-following in the sense specified above, I think that to talk of 'rules of meaning' is to stretch that notion in an illegitimate way.³²

Wittgenstein criticises the idea that meaning guides us along invisible rails and tells us which extensions of meaning are compatible with our initial stipulations or pre-existing practices and which are not;³³ he criticises the view that *use*, or application, flows from meaning, or from some canonical example of its application. Meaning is that which we seem to understand 'mit einem Schlag'; use extends in time; if meaning = use, are not these two images in conflict? Our earlier steps do not determine our later steps, at best they influence them. At each step we need a new decision, but as there are no obvious grounds determining which decision is to be taken, it follows that what we do is arbitrarily giving or withholding assent to

a new application of the word. Is this really the picture that Wittgenstein is suggesting that we embrace? And, if so, which consequences are we to draw as far as 'knowledge of meaning' is concerned?

Wittgenstein's criticism of the conception described above has several facets. It may be read as the claim that we have a wrong theory of our practice: we credit ourselves with knowledge we do not possess and/or misconstrue the knowledge which we do possess. However, Wittgenstein is often interpreted as suggesting the view that we possess no peculiarly *linguistic* knowledge that enables us to take part in the speaking of language. Speaking a language is so interwoven with other practices, forms of life, techniques that it is hopeless to disentangle what belongs to knowledge of meaning from what belongs to something else. Thus, according to this way of reading Wittgenstein, there could be drawn no distinction between the content of a sentence, the information it conveys to different speakers, and ways of establishing it as true. I think that this sort of interpretation of Wittgenstein is to be rejected.

Wittgenstein insists that all ascriptions of knowledge of meaning have to be anchored in external criteria (*Investigations*, I, 269, 305-9). That is, we are bound to form a wrong conception of the meanings of our words if, say, in explaining our use of the word 'remember' we appeal to an 'inner process' for which the word is supposed to stand (305). In section 2, above, we interpreted this requirement as having the consequence that a manifestation of such understanding consists in the ability to form correct judgments under appropriate circumstances and in the capacity to utter some of these judgments in the form of assertions in contexts which are thought to be either theoretically relevant or practically useful or conversationally appropriate. When giving an improved account of how understanding manifests itself in behaviour we shall very probably appeal to the relevant *recognition abilities*. The dictum 'I recognise a proof when confronted with one' can be applied outside the province of mathematics. We often use similar locutions in other contexts. We say that we can recognise a face, a smile, a way of walking when we

see it. We have practical abilities which cannot be articulated linguistically.

In trying to give an explanation of meaning we may find ourselves in a position similar to that in which we want to express how to exercise a practical skill. The difficulties involved in this are hinted at by Wittgenstein when he writes, 'When we want to describe the use of a word, — isn't it like wanting to make a portrait of a face? I see it clearly; the expression of these features is well known to me; and if I had to paint it I shouldn't know where to begin'.³⁴

Wittgenstein usually appeals to recognitional capacities in contexts where he asks questions such as whether or not a new specimen falls within a given familiar pattern. Now, in order to throw light on the notion of harmony and its possible connection with our recognitional capacities, I shall mention a few examples that could be seen as calling in question some of our previous claims. Some of these examples actually occur in Wittgenstein while some are my own invention. I shall then elaborate on a very simple example.

Does the word 'planet' as it occurs in Kepler's law of planetary motion (before 1630) acquire a new meaning in 1791 (discovery of Uranus), in 1846 (discovery of Neptune), in 1930 (discovery of Pluto)?

Answer: No. For the law is to be taken 'in intension'; unlike contingent generalisations, it licenses subjunctive conditionals such as 'If a tenth planet were discovered, it would obey Kepler's Law'. Frege would say: It does not speak of heavenly bodies but of concepts; we may understand the proposition expressed without knowing the name of a single planet.

Does the expression 'polygon constructible with ruler and compasses' acquire a different meaning in 1801 when Gauss comes up with the formula which tells us which the regular polygons are?

Answer: the meaning does not change; yet the relevant procedures and techniques are, surely, different, and the

problem, once solved, becomes uninteresting. Thus the answer is a qualified No.

Does the number-word 'five' have a different meaning for the tribe which counts '1, 2, 3, 4, 5' from the meaning it has for us?

Answer: Yes, our 'arithmetics' would obviously be different, and it would show in our practices as well: that set of numbers is not closed under addition.³⁵

Does the number 2 when used as an *Anzahl* ('2 chairs') have a different meaning from the number 2 when used as a *Masszahl* ('2 metres long')?

Both Frege and Wittgenstein answer Yes. Many would say that they can be shown to be 'equivalent' in a technical sense of the term.³⁶

In which sense can our techniques of measuring (e.g. weighing) be said to differ from those of a tribe where wood is sold by the lengths of the piles, leaving their heights out of account? Are they the same up to a point and then start to differ?³⁷

I should say that the techniques were different from the start, but it requires some argument to show that this is the case.³⁸

Do the meanings of $\&$, \vee , \rightarrow , etc., change when we add the quantifiers, thereby extending our calculus?

The answer is No: the quantifiers conservatively extend the calculus.

Now, let us consider a simple case. Doubts might arise about whether a certain piece of furniture can still be called a chair. Neither an alleged mental 'template' of a chair nor a functional characterisation of a piece of furniture of this sort will here be of any avail. It will be better to see our judgment as the outcome of a different way of looking at things, viz. of our attempt at fitting

the object in question into a pattern of continuous gradations. It will be more adequate to reformulate our judgment, for example in the following way: 'Well, given that *this* is called a chair, and *that* too, we may also call *that* object over there a chair.' What gives my judgment its point is, so to speak, an underlying structure of comparatives. Perhaps a comparison with colour words is appropriate here: although we may be in doubt as to the criteria for, say, 'pink' and hesitate to apply the word to a given specimen, we may on various occasions formulate such conditionals as 'If you call this pink, you have to call this other specimen pink too'. That such conditionals may have a well-determined sense, even though the colour words themselves are vague, shows that what gives these conditionals a point is the underlying structure of comparatives and its appropriateness to (some) cases of colour words. Similar considerations may suggest a clue to the understanding of vagueness and the structure of overt comparatives and superlatives.

Many of Wittgenstein's remarks that belong in this context are meant to show that our actual decisions about whether or not to apply a certain word are not to be seen as issuing from the recognition of necessary and sufficient conditions which a certain type of object is supposed to satisfy,³⁹ but from our capacity to fit things into patterns, which involves our ability to be struck by certain similarities while not responding to others. It may happen that only in a given context do certain aspects or patterns become salient, while in other contexts they remain absent. This is exemplified by many of the experiments described by Gestalt psychologists and referred to by Wittgenstein in his later work. The examples mentioned above, on the other hand, lack this feature: to be sure, we can gain important structural insight by, say, constructing the real numbers out of the natural ones (or the other way around) or by comparing the expressive powers of different languages. But I do not think that this situation is similar to that in which, say, one half of a grey ring appears lighter on being seen against a black background than the other half, which is seen against a white background. And it is because of this dissimilarity that many *mathematical* or *logical* examples given by Wittgenstein in

order to engender doubts about sameness of meaning and to make us aware of the tension between the meaning of a word and its rule-governed application seem to fall wide of the mark. This is not to deny that these examples can be of heuristic significance, at least in the sense of reminding us of how little we know about our recognitional abilities.

But what have these recognitional abilities got to do with knowledge of meaning? Could we not just say: These are brute facts of our natural history ('the frog's eyes differ from man's eyes, etc.')? Is it a fact of our natural history that our vocabulary for describing smells is so poor (*Investigations*, I, 610)? I do not know. However, before yielding to this 'naturalistic' temptation and handing over our philosophical problems to psychologists, biologists, etc., we'd better have a closer look at the matter. And a first step, I have argued, is to try to express our question more precisely: How does the mention of recognitional capacities enter into an explanation of our knowledge of meaning? In sum, it is not as if (e.g. in applying a given concept to new instances) we were free at every step: it is simply that our 'bondage' is not that imposed on us by a rule, or a decision-procedure, or a picture, but the far more insidious one imposed on us by the practice of exercising our recognitional abilities.⁴⁰

Notes

1. Cf. Chomsky 1976, pp. 164f.: 'Let us say that if a speaker knows the language L then he *cognizes* L. Furthermore, he cognizes the linguistic facts that he knows (in any uncontroversial sense of "know") and he cognizes the principles and rules of his internalized grammar, both those that might be brought to awareness and those that are forever hidden from consciousness.'

2. For a discussion of the distinction between rules 'fitting, overtly guiding, and implicitly guiding speakers' behaviour', cf. Quine 1972, pp. 440-6.
3. The questions are (a) whether or to what extent an account along such lines can cover further aspects of meaning, and (b) exactly which features of knowledge of meaning the notion of rule-guidance can be supposed to explain.
4. The requirement that propositional knowledge be manifestable is a regulative principle of the anti-realist account of meaning given by Michael Dummett (1976, 1978). This requirement is connected to a further principle concerning sentences with recognition-transcendent truth-conditions (e.g. counterfactual conditionals, sentences with undecidable predicates, quantified sentences whose quantifiers range over infinite or unsurveyable domains, sentences in the past tense): if such sentences are understood at all, they are not understood in any way analogous with our relatively uncontroversial way of understanding observation sentences. Our understanding of the former type of sentences does not consist in our apprehending what it would be like for them to be *barely* true under conditions in principle inaccessible to our recognitional capacities, conditions to which the manifestation requirement cannot be applied (cf. Dummett 1976, pp. 89ff.). For it is an unintelligible claim to say that we could grasp a truth-condition whose obtaining we are in principle unable to recognise. According to Dummett, our understanding of such sentences does not consist in grasping their truth-conditions, but in our knowledge of the conditions which would warrant their assertion. Assertibility-conditions (of which verifiability-conditions are a special case) do not obtain undetectably. It is, however, not possible to give a uniform statement of these conditions, and consequently the notion of warranted assertibility lacks many of the advantages of the classical notion of truth. For a discussion of the requirement of manifestability, cf. Prawitz 1977; Wright 1980; Edgington 1984.

5. The attitude of holding a sentence true plays a central role in the activity of radical interpretation (see note 7) as this is envisaged by Davidson: 'A good place to begin is with the attitude of holding a sentence true, of accepting it as true. This is, of course, a belief, but it is a single attitude applicable to all sentences, and so does not ask us to be able to make finely discriminated distinctions among beliefs. It is an attitude an interpreter may plausibly be taken to be able to identify before he can interpret, since he may know that a person intends to express a truth in uttering a sentence without having any idea *what* truth.' (Davidson 1984, p. 135.)
6. Davidson 1984, p. 200.
7. Davidson discusses radical interpretation mainly with reference to a situation where one person tries to understand the utterances of a speaker of a foreign language by means of a theory fulfilling certain formal and empirical conditions. However, the problems involved in radical interpretation are also present in the case of trying to understand a speaker of one's own language, only less obviously so. According to Davidson, 'All understanding of the speech of another involves radical interpretation' (1984, p. 125). The term 'radical interpretation' itself is of course 'meant to suggest strong kinship with Quine's "radical translation". Kinship is not identity, however, and "interpretation" in place of "translation" marks one of the differences: a greater emphasis on the explicitly semantical in the former' (ibid., p. 126n.). For a general appraisal of the aims and claims of Davidson's programme of radical interpretation, cf. Lepore 1982.
8. Davidson 1984, p. 142.
9. Davidson 1984, p. 170.
10. Quine's indeterminacy thesis is a thesis about the indeterminacy of *translation*. In the following passage it is stated in very general terms: '. . . rival systems of analytical hypotheses can fit the totality of speech behaviour to perfection, and can fit the totality of dispositions to

speech behaviour as well, and still specify mutually incompatible translations of countless sentences insusceptible of independent control' (1960, p. 72). Davidson repeatedly affirms that he accepts the indeterminacy thesis; but at the same time he points out that his approach will narrow the range of indeterminacy as compared with what Quine considers possible. Davidson's reasons for believing this are (1) that his theory reads more quantificational structure into the language that is to be interpreted, and (2) that he (Davidson) applies the principle of charity (according to which 'assertions startlingly false on the face of them are likely to turn on hidden differences of language', Quine 1960, p. 59) in a more general way than Quine.

11. Cf. Davidson 1984, p. 130: 'A theory of interpretation for an object language may then be viewed as the result of the merger of a structurally revealing theory of interpretation for a known language, and a system of translation from the unknown language into the known. The merger makes all reference to the known language otiose . . . We have such theories, I suggest, in theories of truth of the kind Tarski first showed how to give (cf. Tarski, "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages"). What characterizes a theory of truth in Tarski's style is that it entails, for every sentence *s* of the object language, a sentence of the form:

s is true (in the object language) if and only if *p*.

Instances of the form (which we shall call T-sentences) are obtained by replacing "*s*" by a canonical description of *s*, and "*p*" by a translation of *s*.'

12. Cf. Davidson, 1984, p. 139.

13. Dummett 1976; Wright 1976.

14. Cf. Dummett 1973 and 1973a; Prawitz 1977, 1978.

15. Quine 1960, pp. 9ff.

16. Ramsey 1978, p. 134. Cf. Davidson 1984, p. 279.

17. In the austere account offered by Davidson the 'skills' alluded to are those of the radical interpreter and not those of the foreign people whose language he is trying to understand.

18. Putnam 1975, pp. 228f. The hypothesis of the division of linguistic labour is meant to explain the fact that every language 'possesses at least some terms whose associated "criteria" are known only to a subset of the speakers who acquire the terms, and whose use by the other speakers depends upon a structured cooperation between them and the speakers in the relevant subsets' (ibid., p. 228). Consequently an 'average' speaker who acquires a term subject to the division of labour does not thereby acquire anything that fixes the term's extension (p. 229).

19. Trans. Geach and Black 1960, p. 181.

20. Trans. Austin 1953, p. 101.

21. Cf. Wittgenstein 1969, p. 4.

22. Vol. II, sections 138-55.

23. Frege 1984, p. 263. Cf. 1903, sections 110, 158, and the following passage: 'The gulf between arithmetical formulas and their applications would not be bridged. In order to bridge it, it is necessary that formulas express a sense and that the rules be grounded in the reference of the signs. The end must be knowledge and it must determine everything that happens' (sec. 92, trans. Geach and Black, p. 188).

24. Cf. *Grundgesetze*, vol. I, sec. 31.

25. Cf. Sundholm 1986.

26. Kleene 1967, p. 161.

27. *Investigations*, p. 147 (b). To me Wittgenstein's remarks on the meaning of logical constants, and especially of negation, are singularly unenlightening. Of course, it is a matter of stipulation which type of negation we admit in a logical system: but these different types of 'negation' have different justifications; for instance, they hang together with different conceptions of falsity, for which linguistic usage gives us but little guidance. Moreover, we can gain insight by making a comparison between the different expressive powers of languages with different types of negation. But here we are dealing with a difficult problem and should not simply say that we can choose between different stipulations. If such stipulations are to have any point at all, they must be answerable to some informal notion whose strength and consequences we may want to investigate.

28. Cf. Kreisel 1978.

29. Cf. Baker and Hacker 1984.

30. Wittgenstein 1969, pp. 12f.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

32. I should not have dwelt on this point, had not the way from scepticism about rules to meaning-scepticism been so persuasively paved by Kripke (1981). What Wittgenstein really thought about the issue of rule-following is clearly expressed in section 81 of the *Investigations*: 'in philosophy we often *compare* the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language *must* be playing such a game . . . All this, however, can only appear in the right light when one has attained greater clarity about the concepts of understanding, meaning, and thinking, for it will then also become clear what can mislead us (and did mislead me) to think that if anyone utters a sentence and *means* or *understands* it he is operating a calculus according to definite rules.' (Translation corrected.) For a critical discussion of Kripke's interpretation see Goldfarb 1984.

33. Cf. *Investigations*, I, 218.

34. Wittgenstein 1980, sec. 944. Cf. the parallel passages in *Investigations*, I, 228-235, where understanding something is compared to perceiving a physiognomy. It is a pity that the translator has failed to bring out the simile intended by Wittgenstein when he uses '*Gesicht*', '*Zug*', '*Physiognomie*', a type of simile reminiscent of certain elements of Goethe's morphological thought (cf. Schulte 1984).

35. Cf. Wittgenstein 1953, I, 555.

36. Cf. Frege 1903, sec. 155; Wittgenstein 1953, I, 553; Kleene 1967, sec. 30; Binmore 1980, ch. 10.

37. Wittgenstein 1974, I, sections 143-150.

38. Cf. Picardi 1981, pp. 234-41.

39. Cf. Baker and Hacker on *Merkmal* definitions, 1980, pp. 381ff. *et passim*.

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On the Feeling for Language and its Epistemic Value

Rudolf Haller

1. Feelings as Bearers of Knowledge?

The title of my essay presupposes that there is such a thing as 'feeling for language', i.e. that there exists what, in German, is much more naturally and commonly referred to as *Sprachgefühl*. If this assumption is justified, then the question arises what this 'feeling for language' is or ought to be, and how we ought properly to describe it and to distinguish it from other feelings. Only when this has been done will it become clear how one might begin to answer the question as to the value — and in particular the epistemic value — of the phenomenon in question. For it is clear that it is not settled from the start that feelings in general and the feeling for language in particular can in any sense be seen as bearers of knowledge.

If we start out from the widest conception of what 'feelings' are, then this expression relates to all states of pleasure and displeasure and to the transitions between such states. However, as everyone knows, our ordinary language is not so easily able to support us in this simplification, since in using it we readily run together the vocabulary of sensibility (or indeed of sensation) with that of feeling proper. Thus we call a man 'sentimental' who is imbued with certain sorts of feelings; we say that another man is 'insensitive' or that his sensibilities have been wounded (for example by an insult). On the other hand

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we also commonly say that this or that stuff *feels* 'raw', that one *feels* that the water is cold — just as we say that one feels ill, or sad.

Thus we see that it is not initially clear that we can begin our inquiries by assuming any classificatory differentiation of feelings and sensations, or indeed of feelings and phenomena of interest or preference, since these are evidently blurred together in linguistic usage. As we know, however, we can and should attempt in our philosophical analyses to provide more clarity and perspicuity than is available at the start.

2. On the Nature of Feelings

It is an old question whether feelings extend beyond the two poles of pleasure and displeasure by which they are initially determined. But quite apart from the question whether such a primitive opposition is sufficient to comprehend the spread of feelings (or whether it should be replaced by that between *love* and *hate* or by some other pair of opposites, or indeed by some quite different, more elaborate scale), and indeed quite apart from the various possible contrasts and oppositions which one might mention here, there is also the following question: do feelings reside within themselves or do they extend, directly or indirectly, into other regions of basic human attitudes such as sensation, presentation, judgment or volition? And if so, how do they hang together with these other modes of activity of the human mind? In the treatment of the functions of language expressions of feelings are usually little investigated. The reason for this is that of course taken strictly there is hardly any particular class of expressions which could be assigned specifically to the realm of feeling. Certainly the hearer learns something about the speaker from what he hears, something that is not explicitly the object of what the speaker says. But this happens so to speak through his speaking-behaviour, through changes in the characteristic flow of his speech

and through variations in the choice and intensity of, say, evaluative expressions. Yet it could be deduced also from other factors, as especially from the mimicry and gestures of the speaker. These remarks themselves draw attention to the fact that expressions of feeling are often bound up with other, often more predominant forms of expression in such a way that feelings themselves may penetrate even to the level of the most basic of human attitudes, so that a distillation or abstraction of what pertains to feeling has something artificial about it. There is, I believe, no doubt at all that our attitudes of feeling can control and dominate all our other attitudes, and this even against our express volition. Thus the disposition, the mood, in which we find ourselves can give flight to our thinking and willing, but it can also serve to paralyse them. Indeed — as Waismann once correctly remarked — the whole world can become changed in its feeling tone from major to minor and vice versa.¹

I take it for granted here, then, that feelings are complex psychological formations and that we should not presume from the start that we are able without further ado to extract them from their connections to presentations and judgments. Having gained a little clarity about this question, now, it will be easier to cope with the problem of our putative 'feeling for language', or at least with one aspect of this problem, which is of course all that I can handle in the framework of the present essay.

I started out by employing the somewhat hackneyed and over-general concepts of pleasure and displeasure in order to characterise the spread of feelings; this was only because the states of pleasure and displeasure do seem to cover both the poles and the range with which we have to deal. They designate of themselves the acceptance or rejection of an object which stirs our emotions. The same range has been marked out also by means of the concepts of *joy* and *sorrow* or (in the case of Brentano) *love* and *hate*. In each of these cases one is still using expressions of a certain sort of *position-taking* — either of acceptance or rejection — bound up with emotional states or stirrings of our selves. And this means only that in the meaning of the basic classes of psychic phenomena it is apparently

difficult to go beyond the most general, at least without doing harm to the matter in hand.

In the tradition of modern philosophy such emotional stirrings have been awarded the character of intentionality, of directedness, being no different in this respect from the intellectual attitudes of thinking, perceiving, believing, presuming, judging, and so on. We take pleasure *in* something, we are moved, touched, stirred, shocked, revolted, insulted, disgusted *by* something whose existence we explicitly presuppose or at least assume or hypothesise. Now of course one might want to see this directedness as a trivial implication of the fact that all psychic events are directed; yet there are cases where doubts arise in this regard. Do we not have the Kierkegaardian distinction between fear and anguish, the latter being described as an objectless mood, the former as a directed emotion? And have not others erected philosophical edifices on this distinction? I will not however go into this matter here.

What is nonetheless common to all feelings is that they are not localised, they have no seat in the body, even though their forms of expression — that which Wittgenstein calls observable behaviour — are intimately interwoven with our bodily movements, with mimicry and gesture. When someone suffers, then one sees in him that this is so, and when someone is full of hate, then good will is not to be seen in his eyes. That is why — as someone said — the human being is the best picture of the human soul. It is only a primitive reading of this fact to suppose that every emotion must be bound up with such a picture. But it remains an interesting case when it is not.

Something else that is peculiar to our feelings is their temporal character, their duration. They have a beginning and an end. The delight which the piece of music calls forth will thereafter subside; the rage which I experience will first break out and then blow over. One falls into a depression and then succeeds in freeing oneself therefrom. The beginning and the ending of feelings is *not*, however, like the occurrence of presentations, in our power. We can call forth in consciousness arbitrary presentations, produce them at will; we cannot bring forth arbitrary attitudes of feeling and emotion. Feelings are in this

regard more like sensations than intellectual phenomena or phenomena of will.

These brief and incomplete remarks about feelings and emotions will not in the least suffice to describe or classify them adequately, or indeed to determine the conditions of their occurring and becoming known. But still, they provide us with a framework within which we can understand what is meant when one is talking about those kinds of attitude which bear their names.

3. Sprachgefühl: The Feeling for Language

Among the stirrings of the emotions, now — and this is required by the presupposition of our title — there is one kind of feeling that is properly to be called *Sprachgefühl* or feeling for language. This phenomenon appears in the same series of object-related feelings as religious feeling, feeling for justice, musical feeling, and so on. It is here substantivised as a disposition: it is assumed to be something that is habitually present when we are in doubt as to which form of an expression is appropriate or which expression is fitting but are able to refer back to no explicit rule in order to judge what is correct or apposite. I must not embark here on an investigation of those varieties of object-relatedness by means of which we analyse for example moral, religious or musical feeling, although contrasts and affinities with other zones of feeling would be useful for a determination of the character and achievements of the feeling for language. For the questions which I see as providing a more authentic key to the understanding of this feeling are the following: Is this so-called feeling for language a productive guiding force which determines our linguistic behaviour, makes it follow the rules of language? Does it represent a manner of knowing how, in the given case, one is to decide between linguistic alternatives? Does it merely accompany our linguistic activity with the nuances of pleasure and displeasure,

or does it intrude upon or mesh with this activity in some deeper sense?

It seems that most philosophers and psychologists of language are at one in the view that the feeling for language represents neither a special form of knowledge rooted in inborn schemata, nor a sub-class of the feelings themselves, to be set alongside, say, loving and hating, joy and pain and other, similar cases.² What, then, is it? It will be useful at least briefly to call to mind the various phenomena referred to under the heading 'feeling for language' in order to establish to what extent attitudes of feeling toward linguistic events do or do not possess a cognitive value. In essence one understands by the feeling for language an intuitive certainty or sureness of touch resulting from talent, experience and analogising that is manifested in dealing with language, both in linguistic action and in the evaluation of what is linguistically right and proper.

It seems, therefore, that there belongs to the feeling for language an evaluative mechanism which distinguishes between the "correct" and the "incorrect", just as it distinguishes between the appropriate and the inappropriate, the apposite and the inapposite, and so on.

One might now be inclined to award to feeling a rational structure, to see it as the realisation of a relation-pattern, considering it as an abstraction of a type or pattern of events which are themselves relational.³ It would lead us too far afield to show why the analysis in terms of the theory of objects is to be preferred to a view of this sort. The main reason however lies in this: that intentionality itself does not require an analysis, for this would bring no simplification.

Thus for example we say of a person whose judgment about the rhythm of a language melody is unerring, that he must dispose over a good feeling for language if he notices a departure which eludes the listener who is less sensitive. We call into question the sureness of someone's feeling for language if he cannot keep to the style of his speech, resorts to cliché and second-hand formulations in places which draw attention to themselves. I am not, be it noted, referring here to the primarily aesthetic considerations which manifest themselves in certain related modes of

attention. I am referring, rather, to the ordinary sureness that is involved in a correct use of words, though I certainly do not deny that it is difficult to draw any boundary between an aesthetically motivated preference for some expression or turn of speech in a text completed or in process of being produced, and a preference that is ascribed to the feeling for language. Which of several possible synonyms is to be preferred in a given context — whether one says 'couch' or 'divan', 'field' or 'meadow' and in a thousand other cases which could serve here as examples — this may well be decided by the feeling for language. But whether this is accompanied or guided by an aesthetically significant feeling for style, this is something that has to remain open. It must remain open because we do quite often respond to the poet's use of language with the evaluative reaction that it reveals either a special feeling for language or no such feeling at all. I do not however wish to abolish or to render irrelevant the distinction between judgments of taste and expressions of feeling, but merely to underline the fact that there exist transitional cases which forbid any clear sort of boundary. The instinctive — that is to say feeling-induced — resistance to a particular turn of phrase on the one hand, and the judgment of taste in regard to the very same expression on the other hand, are not therefore to be kept apart through any sort of criterion.

The examples mentioned are not essentially distinct from that case which some amongst us know best from our own activity, that is the case where we revise a spoken or written text, be this our own or someone else's. What was said, was said; what was written, was written, and now one asks: how could it have been said better? what would have been better written? I do not at all want to go through the various possibilities which can constitute the reason for a proposal for revision. What will first be noticed, what first catches our eye, are grammatical errors and weaknesses, syntactical inconsistencies and the wide field of inappropriate uses of expressions and linguistic forms. If we supply examples of the different possibilities here, then it will become clear that we have to do with proposals which often cross the boundaries between feeling and intellect. Thus it is not

seldom that we *notice* that a rule has been broken, as when a plurality of subjects of a sentence are coordinated with a singular verb, or a verb that is appropriate to one sort of predication is applied to mutually incompatible subjects. This noticing may take place because of some explicit perception of the breaking of a rule, for example in that the absence of the plural in the first case is consciously apprehended from the start. Or it may happen (as one says) 'purely instinctively', as a matter of feeling. One of the characteristic features of immediate apprehension is that the object of noticing is individuated and grasped as such: one knows what it is, what has attracted one's attention, and one therefore knows also what it is that one has grasped. Not so in the case of the purely instinctive reaction which is our present concern. Certainly there is something that we feel. But what it is remains often indeterminate, is not individuated by the feeling in question. One is oneself somehow affected and made unsure, one has a suspicion that something is not quite right in what is being said — even though one may thereby understand it perfectly well, and perhaps also lend it one's agreement. But the fact that one cannot say by what it is that one is affected, what it is that has made one insecure — at least not when one first becomes aware of the feeling — points to a source which is itself not already a cognitive attitude. This is, if you like, the prime example of that instinct through which we ourselves sense that something is not quite right, that serves our own particular interest. It is comparable to the situation in which we hear a piece of music and suddenly, in place of the expected continuation of the melody, some note, dissonant or not, causes us (as we say) pain. If in this last example it is our musical feeling that is affected and perhaps injured, so in the former example it is our feeling for language. We become aware of some property or state of affairs without it being the case that we had made any judgments in this regard. It is not merely that we experience our feeling as one of being touched or injured; we become aware also of something that has produced or caused it in this and this way. When, however, we look for this cause of our feeling, we do not as yet know what precisely it is. Indeed it is not infrequently difficult for

us to say what it is that has disturbed or touched us, since it appears — perhaps is — quite indeterminate. But this implies that there are transition-cases or, as one says, different intensities and degrees of determinateness. As in regard to many other sorts of psychic attitude, so also here, it is the extremes, the two opposite poles of a spectrum of cases, which are clear, but not the intervening field itself. This is why there are no sharp boundaries but only transitions; this is why there is even in the extreme case no certainty in the identification of the object. And this is why, also, a distinction put forward in his day by Meinong seems not to be very useful for our present case.

Meinong drew the distinction between what he called knowledge-feelings (*Wissensgefühle*, *Urteilsgefühle*) on the one hand and value-feelings (*Wertgefühle*) on the other, whereby we are to understand by the former such feelings as refer to cognitive attitudes as these come to expression in judgments of knowledge and conviction, and by the latter feelings which refer essentially to values, of oneself or of other persons or things.⁴ Meinong is, in contrast to Theodor Lipps, concerned to show that for example the feeling of joy on receipt of a gift is based upon a certain judgment as its presupposition, so that without this judgment the joy would not exist. This he contrasts with the case of pleasure associated with, say, sensations of smell, where no intellectual act of forming judgments need be involved. I do not wish to deny that not only mere presentations without judgments but also all forms of judgments can give rise to emotional reactions. But that it should follow from this that there would be special classes of 'presentation-feelings' and 'judgment-feelings' does not seem to me to have been established. For if the emotions in question are likewise directed, or at least could be so directed, then the assumption seems reasonable that they are correlated with their object or object-complex even when there is lacking any judgment in regard to the latter. Granted that there is an important grain of truth in Meinong's theory — namely that there are feelings built up on the basis of judgments and of knowledge — I cannot accept that in the cases mentioned so far a judgment of whatever sort would serve as the basis of an emotion. Thus for example in regard to Meinong's example of the

pleasure at a gift, I cannot accept that the judgment concerning the existence of the gift yields the basis of my pleasure, is what serves to give me pleasure. It seems to me much rather to be clear that it is the feeling itself which first causes us to ask after the nature of that object thanks to which we have the given feeling. Certainly however I wish to agree with Meinong (and his student Witasek⁵) that emotions are often stirred through the noticing of a fact, something which expresses itself or at least allows itself to be expressed in the form of a judgment. The feeling of repugnance that is awakened in us when we perceive a crime has as its presupposition that a judgment presents to us the case which disturbs us. Aesthetically parallel examples make clear to us that this presupposition must also be fulfilled in imagination if the aesthetic object is not merely to 'please' us, but also excite us, take hold of us. In the aesthetically relevant case, therefore, the assumption, which is here a fictitious or make-believe judgment, will constitute the presupposition of the emotional reaction.

4. The Normative Power of the Feeling for Language

Let us now return to our initial question whether the feeling for language can serve as bearer or source of knowledge. After what has been said it might appear that even though this feeling refers us with greater or lesser clarity and intensity to an object, it is still such as to serve only as a preliminary to the properly cognitive attitudes of belief, presumption, doubt and finally of knowing — as intention serves as the preliminary to action. Clearly, however, this order of progression is by no means essential, if the object of the attitude is already presupposed. The fact that my feelings are stirred by a specific turn of phrase does not imply that I will, whether before or after, adopt also a cognitive attitude. It may be that a cognitive dimension is included already in the former, or indeed that the whole matter is forgotten once the feeling has

passed away. It is the unnoticed transition that causes difficulties here, as in its own day did the *petites perceptions* of Leibniz. *We sense in unnoticed manner that which is worthy of being noticed*: this is the point. And it is a quite different question how our attitudes become coloured, affected or indeed called forth thereby. But just as the unnoticed perception does not achieve nothing just because it is unnoticed, so the 'unnoticed' noticing of our feeling can become articulated in the form of a judgment, even though it does not itself *eo ipso* acquire the status of a cognitive attitude.

It is Heinrich von Kleist who has examined in an almost classic manner this case in his small treatise "On the Step-by-Step Composition of our Thoughts while Speaking":

because I have a dark presentation which stands in some sort of distant connection with what I am seeking, my mind, once I have boldly made a start, under the necessity now of finding for this beginning some conclusion, stamps my confused presentation with full clarity while speaking proceeds, in such a way that the thought, to my astonishment, is completed with the arrival of the full stop.⁶

In this text phenomenological description gets its due: the expression I am trying to convey is guided by my episodic emotional reaction — the latter becomes the guiding mover of my thought — *without* it being the case that the individual steps would follow any articulated intention. Rather it is simply that feeling to a certain extent drives the building up of the sentence, as though it were the conscious expression of that thought which in fact only comes into existence through our use of language. But however much feeling is involved in our noticing of differences, still it is not a substitute for cognitive production. Much rather does it constrain our thinking in the form of speech, without our knowing how this happens. The capacity to notice differences will be expected just as much from the connoisseur as from the creators, the powerful speakers, the poets, the literary enthusiasts. In these cases however the phenomenon takes on its more subtle forms.

How, then, does the primitive form appear? With this question we are called upon to change our perspective. For if we ask after the simple form in which a feeling for language makes itself felt, then we shall not be allowed to leave the learning of language out of account. I do not here wish to go into the question — intimately associated with our present concerns — as to the nature of following a rule', which is just as essential to the learning of language as to the learning of all practical skills, the use of tools, participation in games, the practice of custom and habits in general. It is at this point that one may recall the Wittgensteinian assertion as to the intimacy of knowledge, skill and technique, in which remark I want here to draw attention only to that mastery (at any given stage) which *shows* the knowledge that has been acquired.⁷

The primitive form of the feeling for language shows itself in the sureness of the use of those forms with which we are entirely familiar, in the use in familiar situations of the learned store of language, however small this may be. Here it is sufficient to recognise what is the same as the same in order not to lose the feeling of familiarity. This surety in use is the ground of our practical knowledge of language, the capacity, gained in our dealings with other human beings not only to express the distinctions laid down in language but also to detect these distinctions when employed by others. But the feeling that we develop is not any sort of accompaniment to our activity of speaking or hearing a language. It is much rather a sort of watchman who sits up and takes notice only when something worthy of attention has taken place or threatens to do so. It is more like a warning-sign than a shadow which follows us in our use.

Perhaps the comparison with our dealings with the alternating character of the illusory figures treated by the Gestalt psychologists will here serve us better than the usual reference to 'following rules'. It is often only with the *change* in a Gestalt that we notice what our familiarity has concealed from us hitherto. For one would normally be tempted to suppose that what is familiar to us would also call forth in us a special feeling. But the opposite is the case. A stirring of emotion makes itself felt only when that with which we are familiar *alters*, or when we have

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altered ourselves and notice anew what has become habitual, ourselves included. This means that — contrary to the usual opinion — while our feeling for language certainly has its ground in what is familiar, in certainty and sureness, in the mastery of use, it is not itself a feeling which makes its appearance in relation to this ground. The increasing sureness of one's hold, one's mastery, of action, serves much rather to suppress the feeling which then appears anew only with some alteration, in order to announce itself and thereby draw attention to the fact that it has noticed the change in question. It is in this function that it has a cognitive value. But it would be peculiar to want to be aware of such a value in the natural execution of our ordinary actions.

If this attempt at description should be accurate at least in its broad outlines, then it will follow that the feeling for language cannot be brought forward in order to explain 'following a rule of language'. And if one still sees it or wants to see it as performing this function, then such a view would explain nothing more than is implied by the phenomenon itself. There is no special 'feeling for rules' when we follow rules in our action or, as one says, are guided by the rules themselves. And there certainly is no feeling for language to which we could ascribe the knowledge of the rules, for — as has often been said — we normally follow rules *blindly*, that is without noticing the rules, nor even the fact that our actions are governed by rules at all.

Notes

1. See F. Waismann, *Wille und Motiv. Zwei Abhandlungen über Ethik und Handlungstheorie*, ed. by J. Schulte, Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983, pp. 86ff.

2. Cf. the survey in F. Kainz, *Psychologie der Sprache*, Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1967, pp. 301ff.

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3. See H. Fay Nissenbaum, *Emotion and Focus*, Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 1985.

4. A. Meinong, "Über Urteilsgefühle, was sie sind und was sie nicht sind" (1905), as repr. in Meinong's *Gesamtausgabe* (Graz 1969), Vol. I, pp. 577-614.

5. See S. Witasek, *Grundlinien der Psychologie*, Leipzig: Meiner, 1908, pp. 326f.

6. Heinrich von Kleist, "Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden", *Werke*, in 6 parts, ed. by H. Gilow *et al.*, 2nd revised edition, Berlin: Bong, n.d., Part 5, p. 34.

7. Cf. J. Schulte's contribution to this volume.

Remarks on Sprachgefühl

Joachim Schulte

Strange things can happen when noun is wed to noun: *Schadenfreude*, for example, is a very special kind of *Freude*, and cupboard-love is not at all what you would normally call 'love'. Bearing this in mind we may wonder whether similarly strange things result from combining 'Sprache' and 'Gefühl' by speaking of 'Sprachgefühl', an expression which, after all, has a certain currency in ordinary and less ordinary German. And, as we shall immediately realise, 'Gefühl' in 'Sprachgefühl' does not indicate a *Gefühl* in its most common or garden sense, i.e. it does not allude to feelings, or emotions, such as anger or indignation, jealousy or sadness; it is a kind of *Gefühl* which, as the dictionary warns us, lacks the possibility of being spoken of in the plural. Thus, while anger, jealousy, etc. can be said to be *Gefühle* (in the plural), there is nothing of which it could be claimed that it is one of various *Sprachgefühle*. The reason for this is not that there are no instances of *Sprachgefühl*, but rather that the *Gefühl* in 'Sprachgefühl' is not of the same kind as, say, anger or sadness. There are no stabs or pangs of *Sprachgefühl*, and we cannot say that we are overwhelmed by *Sprachgefühl* or that we have a *Sprachgefühl* which makes us shiver. What we can say, however, is that we are overwhelmed or amazed by the *Sprachgefühl* exhibited by Stefan George's translations, or that the lack of *Sprachgefühl* manifested by Hermann Lotze's prose makes

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us shiver. But, of course, this does not mean that there is any internal relation between *Sprachgefühl* and amazement, dismay, or any other emotion in the proper sense.

These last examples indicate some of the typical things we tend to say when speaking of *Sprachgefühl* or attributing *Sprachgefühl* to a certain person. *Sprachgefühl* is something a person has or lacks; it is something he may possess to a higher or lower degree, something he may have developed to an impressive degree of excellence or hardly at all. In this respect *Sprachgefühl* resembles some of our natural faculties, at least to a certain extent. A man either has or lacks the sense of smell; he either has or lacks the faculty of taste. He may be able to smell or taste more or less well, and he may have developed his senses of smell and taste to a higher or lower degree.

But there is an obvious difference between these natural faculties on the one hand and *Sprachgefühl* on the other. The senses of smell and taste are faculties we are endowed with by nature, and if a man has no sense of smell it is not his or any other person's fault; he simply is an unfortunate fellow (even though there are certain circumstances in which he may jolly well be considered more fortunate than the rest of us). The presence or absence of *Sprachgefühl*, on the other hand, does to some extent depend on an individual's efforts and on his environment; there are situations in which it is natural to say that somebody's lack of *Sprachgefühl* is his own fault or the fault of his education. However, it cannot be denied that even here nature plays an important part; there are people who simply are naturally clever at using words in surprisingly suitable or subtle ways; it does not cost them any effort to find the most adequate turn of phrase in the right situation; that is, they display a certain form of *Mutterwitz*, a gift or talent which we may envy but cannot acquire or imitate.

But now we must ask, what is this capacity called *Sprachgefühl* so effortlessly exercised by the naturally gifted and less easily or not at all displayed by the less talented? Is the *Sprachgefühl* of the gifted man the same ability, or sensibility, as the *Sprachgefühl* exhibited by the man who has to toil in order to reach similar results? Can we make any helpful distinctions between kinds or

types of *Sprachgefühl*, or does this expression indicate a conglomerate of capacities, tendencies, and responses which will ultimately resist analysis?

Now, I think that there are at least two main types of uses of the expression '*Sprachgefühl*' that can be distinguished. The first type comprises those cases in which we *appeal* or *point to* our *Sprachgefühl* in order to justify or account for a certain choice of words, a certain grammatical construction, etc. The second type is exemplified by those cases in which we *exercise* or *apply* our *Sprachgefühl* in order to find the appropriate expression or choose the most suitable construction. To be sure, this rough and ready distinction between appealing or pointing to and exercising or applying one's *Sprachgefühl* is by no means completely satisfactory. But it will help me to give a brief outline of the first type of case in order to get it out of the way and then to get down to the second type, which is the one that seems not only more interesting but also more puzzling.

The first type of case, i.e. the type of case where I appeal to my *Sprachgefühl*, or linguistic intuitions, comprises a number of last ditch moves, that is, answers or justifications given in situations where I know of no further possibility to which I could have recourse. Asked why I use a certain expression in a certain way I may answer that this is the way I have heard it used by others, that this is the way I have seen it used in books by eminent writers, that this is the way I have been taught to use it, that this is the way it is used in my dialect, and so on. What *these* answers have in common is that they give a reason and implicitly admit the possibility of my having got something wrong. If however I reply that I have used a given expression in a given way because that is how it ought to be used according to my *Sprachgefühl*, I refuse to give a good reason and may also be suggesting that the question of right or wrong does not arise. This does not mean that no conceivable reason could be given — on the contrary, it may mean that I could cite so many examples or precedents that it would simply not be worth my bothering to do so. In short, this way of appealing to my *Sprachgefühl* is a means of telling my interlocutor that I do not intend to give any further justification for my usage, pos-

sibly because I am absolutely sure of its appropriateness, or possibly because I fail to see that there is anything at issue in the case in question.

These two cases, however, are importantly different. I may be absolutely sure, for example, that the word 'contingent' means something like 'arbitrary' and I may have used the word in this sense all my life; but still, I am mistaken, and by various means my interlocutor will succeed in pointing this out to me. And then I may say that my *Sprachgefühl* has misled me, which, however, is not much more than a fancy way of admitting that I have made a mistake. But the second case (where according to my *Sprachgefühl* there simply is nothing to be discussed) is generally of a different nature. Let us take a German example. The weather is hot, I have been walking for three hours, and now I feel thirsty. I say, 'Ich will ein Glas Bier' but my interlocutor suggests that it would be more appropriate to say, 'Ich *möchte* ein Glas Bier'. Being a polite person I shall not tell him to go to hell but say that according to my *Sprachgefühl* (and to present intents and purposes) my sentence is perfectly appropriate. And that amounts to saying that (besides my considering it rather cheeky of my companion that he tries to correct my German) I simply do not think that it matters a straw whether I say '*will*' or '*möchte*'; according to my *Sprachgefühl* the question of appropriateness or inappropriateness, of correctness or incorrectness, just does not arise in this context.

But there are situations of a different kind, where it does matter whether, e.g., '*will*' or '*möchte*' is used, and these are cases where we *exercise* or *apply* our *Sprachgefühl*. An obvious — and probably oversimplified — case is that in which I am writing a story and trying to put the appropriate words into the mouth of a certain character. If this character were a hard-boiled ruffian, for example, it would go against my *Sprachgefühl* to choose the words 'Ich *möchte* ein Glas Bier', whereas, if the character in my story were a cultivated, sweet-tempered person, I could not, according to my *Sprachgefühl*, make him say 'Ich *will* ein Glas Bier'. Similarly, if in reading a story we encountered the ruffian saying 'ich *möchte*', we should say that the author showed a deplorable lack of *Sprachgefühl*; and if a reader of that

passage did not react in the same way as us we should judge that his *Sprachgefühl* was insufficiently developed.

Thus an example of what I mean by 'exercising' or 'applying' one's *Sprachgefühl* is this activity of finding the appropriate word or appreciating that the appropriate, or else an inappropriate, word has been chosen. There are, to be sure, many different ways of looking for or appreciating the appropriate word, many different types of situation where we apply our *Sprachgefühl* in one of these ways, and I do not know if there is, or can be, a useful principle of distinguishing these ways and situations. I shall none the less mention two types of case of what seem to me different applications of *Sprachgefühl* and see whether anything instructive can be gleaned from them. For convenience I shall label them. The first one will be called a case of *choosing words* and the second one a case of *radical formulation*. About choosing words the following can be said:

The fact that one speaks of the *appropriate word* does not show the existence of a something that [comes before our mind, and which is, as it were, the exact picture we want to use here]. One is inclined, rather, to speak of this picture-like something just because one can find a word appropriate; because one often chooses between words as between similar but not identical pictures; because pictures are often used instead of words; or to illustrate words; and so on.

And now I shall give a quotation apropos of radical formulation:

What happens . . . when we have something we want to say and cannot, and then find the words for? What does formulation bring off? . . . To find a description in this case is to identify a feature of the matter at hand and thereby to grasp its contour, to get a proper view of it . . . contrast [this] with another kind of case where I am looking for words: for instance, where I seek the word in a foreign language, already having it in English; or where I seek the technical term for a feature of some engine or plant, or the terrain, which I can quite

well identify with some adequate description . . . These are very different from the cases where I am seeking a language to identify how I feel, or to make clear just how it looks, or to define just what it was that was peculiar about her behaviour. Finding language in these latter cases is a matter of articulating what I sense, and therefore of getting a more articulated view of the matter. It is success in this effort . . . that I want to call formulation. In the translation or technical term case, it is not true to say that I do not know what I am looking for until I find it. But in cases of genuine formulation, we only know afterwards what we are trying to identify.

Now, if your *Sprachgefühl* has not been misled by the translation, you will no doubt have recognised the first of these quotations (the one concerning the case of choosing words) as coming from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.¹ The second quotation (the case of radical formulation) is taken from a piece by Charles Taylor entitled "Theories of Meaning".²

The case of choosing words is familiar and not difficult to illustrate. For example, I wish to characterise a certain person (it does not matter whether real or fictitious). I want to find the most characteristic adjective, and what comes to my mind are the words 'imposing', 'dignified', 'proud', 'venerable'.³ My choice will depend on what has already been said — and possibly on what will be said — about the person in question. If I choose the word 'venerable' and the person characterised does not really turn out to be venerable or does not in the context supplied appear to be venerable, then I have chosen the wrong or an inappropriate word. This need not be like the case where from a number of photographs I choose the picture of a person who is not the one I intended. More likely it is similar to choosing a picture which is not characteristic, such as picking out a photograph of a notoriously solemn-looking person which happens to show him wearing an ironic sneer. Here this is not a fitting picture; it does not agree with the other things we know about the person portrayed. The man whose *Sprachgefühl* fails him in an analogous manner could be compared to a bespoke tailor

who produces a suit which looks as if it were made for a man slightly different from the one it was intended for. And just as we can tell the tailor where he went wrong, so we can point out to the speaker who has chosen the wrong word that his description does not fit the subject of his portrait, that his characterisation is somehow incongruous, even if we ourselves are not in a position to supply the right word.

Now, is it possible in a similar fashion to correct the man who finds the words for something which he is at first not able to express? Can we criticise a person who succeeds in radically formulating a previously nameless experience, feeling, or sensation? One difficulty here is that Taylor's description of this case is too general and that he does not give a well-described example of what he intends. Wittgenstein, in one of his discussions of looking for and finding '*das treffende Wort*' mentions a case in point. He says that there are conditions under which one might speak of a 'feeling of the unreality of one's surroundings', and he continues:

This feeling I have had once, and many have it before the onset of mental illness. Everything seems somehow not *real*: but not as if one *saw* things unclear or blurred; everything looks quite as usual. And how do I know that another has felt what I have? Because he uses the same words as I find appropriate.⁴

It is, incidentally, interesting that Wittgenstein here proposes our agreement about the appropriateness of an unusual expression as a criterion of the presence of a certain feeling or mental state. This, however, does not concern our present problem. We must ask why Wittgenstein employs the word 'unreality', and he explains:

I choose it because of its meaning. But I surely did not learn to use the word to mean: *a feeling*. No; but I learned to use it with a particular meaning and now I use it spontaneously like *this*. One might say — though it may mislead — : When I have learnt the word in its ordinary meaning, then I choose *that* meaning as a simile for my feeling. But of course what is in question

here is not a simile, not a comparison of the feeling with something else.⁵

One way in which the idea of the simile may be misleading is this: that it suggests the possibility of a comparison, either between an original and its portrait or between various possible characterisations in order to find out whether one of them agrees with or fits a given item better than the others. The case of radical formulation — this very peculiar exercise of our *Sprachgefühl* — is of a different nature, and I think that Wittgenstein indicates wherein its peculiarity lies:

The fact is simply that I use a word, the bearer of another technique, as the expression of a feeling. I use it in a new way. And wherein consists this new use? Well, one thing is that I *say*: I have a 'feeling of unreality' — after I have, of course, learnt the use of the word 'feeling' in the ordinary way.⁶

Radical formulation is not simply a matter of coining a new term for an independently identifiable kind of entity, nor is it a matter of employing an old term in an unusual way so as to create a striking image or simile. Radical formulation involves establishing a new use in its full (Wittgensteinian) sense, and to succeed in this does not merely depend on whether other people find my expression adequate. Radical formulation is bound up with changes — e.g. extensions or corrections — of some of our previous practices, and these practices are not necessarily just linguistic ones. It is this practical aspect of radical formulation which is entirely overlooked by Charles Taylor, who makes it appear as if it were all a matter of identifying the right sort of entity by means of the right expression and who by stressing the subjective side of exercising *Sprachgefühl* and neglecting its practical context and consequences runs the risk of thinking in terms of the misleading analogy (censured by Wittgenstein) according to which 'searching for the appropriate expression' is comparable 'to the efforts of someone who is trying to make an exact copy of a line that only he can see'.⁷

Radical formulation needs *practical* success if it is to succeed at all. For this reason genuine cases of radical formulation will not be frequent, nor will a radical formulation be corrigible or criticisable in the same way as a particular choice of words. If you think of striking or ingenious formulations such as Trollope's speaking of 'the tenth Muse, who now governs the periodical press' or Oscar Wilde's definition of the fox-hunting English gentleman as 'the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable' or Frank Sinatra's 'I mortgaged all my castles in the air', you are still merely confronted with clever choices of words, even though they have, or could have, become as proverbial as Wittgenstein's fly in the fly-bottle. Paradigmatic examples of radical formulation are, for instance, many of Freud's often rather mechanistic images, such as '*Verdrängung*', '*Traumarbeit*', '*Verdichtung*', or Wittgenstein's notion of '*Sprachspiel*'. These are expressions whose use is bound up with a determinate practice of classifying, identifying, and treating certain phenomena, and in these cases one could say, as Taylor does, that only when the formulation has been found do we know what we have been trying to identify.

In cases of radical formulation it makes little sense to criticise or try to correct the words chosen; if for some reason I do not find these expressions apt or useful I can abstain from using them, but there is no point in proposing a 'more appropriate' word. The examples alluded to by Taylor, on the other hand, do not seem to be of this kind. He mentions 'cases where I am seeking a language to identify how I feel, or to make clear just how it looks, or to define just what it was that was peculiar about her behaviour'. But surely those are not situations where we 'only know afterwards what we are trying to identify'. Maybe we do not immediately know what to say and hesitate because we are going through our repertoire of expressions trying to find the most appropriate one; and in all likelihood we shall come up with something pretty hackneyed or, at best, with rather laboured similes, such as 'She was as cute as a washtub', 'She had a mouth like wilted lettuce', 'He was high enough to have snow on him'.⁸ Formulations of this type can be criticised and improved, and a man can show the excellence of his

Sprachgefühl by choosing words that are difficult or practically impossible to improve on.

Of course, also the ability to choose the appropriate word is connected with our practices. A word is, as Wittgenstein says in a passage quoted above, a bearer of a certain technique. And our ability to choose the appropriate word hinges on our having mastered the techniques connected with a wide range of words. Choosing the appropriate word is itself a technique which can to some extent be taught and learned by extending our repertoire of expressions, images, comparisons and improving our skill in choosing the right item from this repertoire. But as I have said, some people are more talented than others, and this means that, however hard we try, not all of us will often succeed in finding an expression which hits the nail on the head. We can train our *Sprachgefühl* but it may still be dull or mislead us. In this respect *Sprachgefühl* is like the sense of taste for instance. Virtually all of us are able to distinguish sweet wine from sour wine, but in order to tell the difference between two vintages of the same wine or between two wines from neighbouring vineyards you may need a good palate and a lot of practice. However, in order to *describe* these differences you will also need a good deal of *Sprachgefühl*.

Notes

1. Anscombe's translation (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), p. 54.
2. Reprinted in *Human Agency and Language, Philosophical Papers*, vol. I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 257f.
3. Wittgenstein, *ibid.*

Remarks on Sprachgefühl

4. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, sec. 125.

5. Ibid.

6. Sec. 126. This passage is, up to a point, strikingly reminiscent of Davidson's discussion of what metaphors mean (*Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, pp. 245ff.). Davidson argues that it is a novel or surprising use of certain words with their ordinary, literal, meanings which can make us see things in a new light. This similarity, however, cannot obliterate the fundamental difference between Wittgenstein's and Davidson's conceptions of meaning proper: while Davidson would not countenance Wittgenstein's notion of a word as bearer of a certain technique, Davidson's idea of meaning as completely severed from use is of course totally incompatible with Wittgenstein's conception of meaning.

7. Sec. 580.

8. From *The Notebooks of Raymond Chandler*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976, p. 64.

Poetry and Nationalism

Johan Wrede

1. Introduction

Poetry could perhaps be described as a qualified presentation,¹ by means of language, of fictitious or real events or objects intended to bring about imaginative experience. This description applies, I would think, also to literary art in general. Poetry is in addition characterised by more obvious formal, quasimusical qualities, such as alliteration, rhyme, rhythm, etc., which directly influence our perception or experiencing of the text. This is what is often meant when poetry is said to have a texture tighter than that of prose.

I do not intend to produce any arguments for the correctness of this description, but I would in any case consider it a good approximation, in many ways reasonably close to a tradition of aesthetic definitions of literary art. My main reason for making experience — '*Erlebnis*' in Moritz Schlick's sense — so prominent in my description of literary art and poetry, is that we seem to regard the first hand experience of poetry, and of literary works of art in general, as a *sine qua non* of any informed discussion of a particular piece of poetry or literature. Anybody who would venture to discuss a literary work, and poetry in

particular, without having read that work, would be considered as being not quite serious.²

Nationalism, again, is an ideology. I am less certain about what to say about ideologies, but in any case those clusters of convictions or beliefs about supposedly ideal goals of human endeavour we call ideologies, seem to depend strongly on their factual ability to attract the commitment of followers. An ideology not supported by commitment is reduced to a mere belief or programme. Commitment, again, is an aesthetic concept, i.e. it requires first-hand experience on the part of the subject.

I have taken up nationalism here, because it is a concrete example of an ideology promoting group cohesion. Followers of nationalist ideologies will share certain beliefs concerning common honorific traits of all, or most, or of the worthy members of their national group. Such traits relate for example to the possession of a common language, a common culture, a common history, common goals and a common spirit unifying the nation concerned. They seem to be aesthetically relevant because group attitudes and group experience, by which I understand an experience that most members of a group consider themselves to have had and the value of which they believe themselves to agree about, would seem to be in a number of ways constitutive not only of a group identity or of overtly shared attitudes but to a certain extent also of more subtle phenomena such as inclinations of taste and habits of mind. Of particular aesthetic interest are of course such inclinations and values as are referred to in talking about art, tradition and taste. It should be noted, however, that this is by no means a permanently stable or easily delineated area. Moral, religious, social and political values attributed to a literary work, may or may not acquire aesthetic and artistic relevance, depending on whether they do, in a particular case, make a real aesthetic or artistic difference.

So much to begin with as to my understanding of the concepts of poetry and nationalism.

In this paper I intend (1) to make some comments on poetic achievement and on what sort of skill or competence such achievement requires, and (2) to launch a hypothesis as to the relation of poetry and group experience.

After these declarations, let me take a step back to a concrete example.

2. A Nationalist Poet

Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804-1877), the national poet of Finland, wrote in Swedish and therefore became a national poet also of Sweden. His most important work, as far as nationalism is concerned, is a cycle of heroic poems *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* (The Tales of Ensign Stål) published in two parts in 1848 and 1860. This work was a product of the high tide of nineteenth century nationalism as this had manifested itself e.g. in other parts of Europe, and indeed Runeberg can be considered a somewhat later counterpart to Poland's Adam Mickiewicz or Hungary's Sándor Petöfi.

Runeberg's suite of poems deals with real and fictitious situations from the fateful 'Finnish war' between Russia and Sweden in 1808-9, a war which ended in the annexation of Finland to the Russian Empire. Politically, Runeberg's cycle had a profound effect, stirring both Finnish and — in Sweden — Swedish nationalism. As a piece of poetry it was a major innovation in Swedish literature. Its literary ancestry is comparatively obvious. Runeberg slightly modified formal elements typical of political poetry of the previous century³ and combined these with a realistic narrative, to a remarkable extent resembling the technique used in the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. The *Weltanschauung* and patriotic feeling expressed in the poems are founded on the Romanticist idealism and Romanticist philosophy familiar to the educated reader of those days. This created an exceedingly effective poetic idiom and style, in which Runeberg was able to present vivid, dramatic and morally convincing portraits of real and fictitious heroes of the Finnish war, rendering, as contemporary critics noted, not the 'outer', but the 'inner' aspects of the war. The assumption of his

Contemporaries was that as a poet Runeberg had an especially privileged vantage point from which to understand and interpret the national spirit of the Finnish people. There can be no doubt that Runeberg himself shared this view.

The literary and political impact in Finland and in Sweden of *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* was unprecedented. No single literary work had ever had a comparable success. It was sold in tens and hundreds of thousands of copies, and reprinted year by year in new editions. It is obvious, however, that Swedish and Finnish nationalists, though emotionally presumably moved in much the same way, must have found rather different reasons for their enthusiasm, depending on the quite different conditions in the two countries at the time.

The Finnish national anthem, 'Vårt land', written in Swedish by Runeberg and published separately two years earlier, was reprinted as an epigraph to *Fänrik Ståls Sägner*. It may be worth mentioning that this song — which was very soon translated into Finnish — remains the national anthem of Finland. For several decades it was also used as a Swedish national anthem. An Estonian adaptation of it, 'Mu isamaa', became the national anthem of the Estonian republic established after World War I. In Estonia, 'Mu isamaa' is still sung as a manifestation of national feeling by Estonians not unaffected by the prospect of soon dwindling into a minority in their own country.

Runeberg's work was therefore not only successful in attaining those goals of Finnish nationalism which the poet clearly had in mind; adopted or adapted in different ways in two neighbouring countries it proved to be just the right kind of poetry for nationalist purposes in general. In Finland it served, and continued to serve, as a source of national self-understanding and of strength and determination during all subsequent critical periods in the history of the country. During the Finnish Winter War in 1939-40 *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* was the best selling literary work in Finland. Only after World War II did the impact of the work seem to come to an end — Nationalism, for a number of obvious reasons, having lost its attractions to the public, at least for a time.

However, my task here is not that of the literary historian and I do not intend to go into details about Runeberg or *Fänrik Ståls Sägner*. Rather, I want to contribute in a more philosophical way to the theme of poetic competence, of the poetical skill and knowledge of the poet.

3. Does the Poet Know What He is Doing?

To what extent can the poet be said to be intelligently in charge of the creative process? A work such as *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* would seem, on the one hand, to need a good deal of deliberate effort, awareness of literary tradition and literary workmanship. In addition, the author must be assumed to have at least some knowledge about political conditions and some sense of the values operative in the relevant ideological field. On the other hand however it is a logical fact that in order to say that someone has created something, e.g. that a poet has written a poem and not just copied it, he must be assumed not to have known the product of his creative writing from the outset. Yet to do something, not knowing what one is doing, unless it be a matter of sheer reflex or accident, appears to be a queer kind of action, probably quite inexplicable to the agent himself.

Now many poets inform us that they indeed do not know what they are doing, and this suggests that poetic creation might require a causal explanation, one which leaves out of account any conscious contribution of the poet. This again however would run contrary to our intuitions. Everyone would agree that great poetry is a source of great insight into human feeling and experience, particularly into the vital experiences of human life. Stressing this point — and perhaps overstressing it — one might feel tempted to say that all poetry is in fact aimed at creating imaginative experience. This may seem dubious, since there is much first rate poetry that deals with what appears to be cognitive rather than emotive subject-matter. Thus there is excellent poetry, for example by Baudelaire, Rilke

particular, without having read that work, would be considered as being not quite serious.²

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or T. S. Eliot, that could be described as meta-poetry. My point is not, however, that all poetry is primarily expressive, but rather that literary art aims at creating in the reader not only an understanding of what is presented, but also an experience (*Erlebnis*) of the presentation itself. Some poets, like Runeberg, have written poetry of the greatest importance in the introduction of new values and in the preservation of morals in their society, even poetry that was crucial to the preservation of the society itself. Are we really to believe that such highly influential poetry, which could not be but a very carefully deliberated product of poetic effort, could be accomplished without the poet's full understanding? To that extent the temptation some have felt (including some philosophers, following Plato's suggestion in his *Ion*) to talk about the writing of poetry as an inspired process, becomes understandable. In the Romanticist era, when nationalist poetry played such an important role, the generally accepted doctrine was, indeed, that poetry was inspired. But obviously it would be ridiculous to conclude from the intentional indeterminacy of what has been invented, discovered, created, accomplished or attained, that intelligently deliberated acts could not help us invent, discover, create, accomplish or attain the goal of our endeavour.

Professor Chisholm in his essay in this volume makes use of the term 'basic endeavour'. Perhaps philosophers, who have been puzzled by the open-endedness or indeterminacy of creative acts, have simply been tied to the assumption that all endeavours are indeed 'basic endeavours' or reducible thereto. Once, however, we see that creative acts are instrumental solutions to various endeavours, there seems to be little need for puzzlement.

Poetic invention, when properly conceived would have to be like any other form of invention not a single act, but an extended process; it is a combination of a series of purposeful acts of the poet (such as deciding whether to use or to avoid rhyme in a certain poem) with such elements as are given to the poet, either for example by some happy coincidence (such as the sudden appearance of a helicopter which provides him with a striking image he just then happens to be in need of) or — and this seems to me particularly interesting — with elements of

which the poet cannot know whether they in fact occur irrespective of his will or not. (Consider, for example, the sudden invention of a nickname, the sudden realisation of the aptness of a description, a metaphor, and so on, which may involve accepting a novel attitude to the person or object being described.) We are often uncertain about the extent to which our attitudes are in our control. Given that we are the persons we are, we could not sincerely change an attitude of dislike into one of admiration by sheer exercise of will. Such change would normally seem to require either a fundamental alteration in our personality or a total revision of our assessment of the relevant facts. But we could nevertheless (at least sometimes) imagine what it might mean to admire something we now dislike, or what it might mean to be another person, a person very unlike ourself. A poet will certainly be in need of this kind of imaginative flexibility. Some of the greatest authors, dramatists and poets of all times are indeed considered great precisely because of their insight into the most varied depths of human character.

Yet, of course, our attitudes or feelings — particularly if they touch upon issues of moral or aesthetic concern — cannot be totally unrelated to our character, our judgment, our wishes and hopes concerning the values that should prevail. This again, I would think, decides or may decide how the poet deals with the presentation of his subject-matter.

4. Poetic Achievement and Poetic Competence

To achieve something is to overcome obstacles or to adjust to constraints in the course of purposeful action. To write a good or excellent poem are examples of poetic achievement. But there are any number of kinds of poems, and excellence in a poem is not decided by its degree of conformity with any one ideal. In a certain sense, a poet does not and could not, when setting himself to work, preconceive all the features his work will exhibit when

completed. Ryle made the point that 'it is always significant, though not, of course, always true, to ascribe a success partly or wholly to luck'.⁴ There seems to be no reliable way to determine in every case the extent to which luck has been responsible for any given success. But Ryle calls attention to the fact that by investigating the agent's record of success in similar undertakings we are in a better position to decide whether we should describe the event as an achievement of a competent agent or merely as a display of good luck.

Poetic competence is displayed by the poet who is on the whole successful in writing poems and who is able to discard what is not good in his works. But what particular skills will such competence require? Poems are certainly very diverse and the skills of the poet much more diversified than, say, the skills required of a good marksman. To hit the bull's eye will each time require basically the same skills. The poet's trade, in contrast, will require the agent always to do something in a certain sense unique. One of the most characteristic traits of poetry, as of art as a whole, is that the completed work should embody an achievement which was in a certain sense *never achieved before*.

One can paint any number of madonnas, and Fra Angelico's Madonna of Humility could be copied any number of times, but it could never be created again. One could improve on a poem, or write a new version of it, but one cannot, strictly speaking, create the same poem twice. The completed poem is the embodiment of the achievement of the poet's efforts. And, we must add, his achievement in these and these historical circumstances. There is therefore no limit to the number of abilities and skills that may be useful to the poet and, at the same time, it is quite impossible to state which particular acts and performances the writing of even one unwritten poem would require. There could not be a theory about how to write a particular poem. This is something the poet himself must find out about in each phase of the process of creation of his work.

The poem should be, if not the best of all poems, then at least a good poem, one of the best possible to write in the circumstances given to the poet. The restraints or

limitations the poet will have either to overcome or to adjust to, will be in his culture, in the range of social, political and moral rules of that time and place, in the language he is using, in the degree of his mastery of that language, in his own education and, perhaps, in his character. The poet will have to say what he thinks is important to say, as well as anyone could, given the actual circumstances. The web of interwoven conditions may be so tight, however, that one may well ask if anyone could ever be aware of them all. And indeed it seems that poets find their way, at least as far as their means of expression are concerned, by a process of trial and error. Which of the limiting conditions should be overcome or adjusted to? To the inexperienced poet it may be a question of adjusting to his inexperience itself, to improve on his command of language and knowledge of poetic traditions, and so on. To the poet living in a repressive society the censorship imposed by the authorities may be what should be overcome. This explains why limitations and obstacles to the poet's work — like censorship — may in fact turn out to be a source of important creative impulses.

5. Expectations, Intentions and Achievement

A literary work is a communication to the reader. It is a matter of debate whether the reader communicates (through the text) with the poet and his intentions, or simply with the text itself, the text being interpreted according to some given expectations or standards.

Because of this dialectical set up it seems clear that the poet has to meet various expectations directed on his work. Some of the expectations will be of an artistic kind, others might well be described as matters of taste, morals or politics. The artistic expectations are, as Arthur Danto has suggested, formulated by the so-called art world. In the case of literature and poetry they are formed predominantly by the critics. If we are to believe in an institutional theory of art, the test of an

accomplished achievement or success is the approbation of the art world.

Now, obviously, if the poet and his audience share the same kinds of artistic expectations (and perhaps a number of other expectations that shade into these), then the poet's endeavours will largely coincide with the interpretations of his readers, and public success will be more or less guaranteed. But the expectations of the public may be and indeed often are at odds with those of the poet. Not every poem will — for this reason — succeed in every society or in every group. In writing a poem, therefore, the poet will knowingly or unknowingly make a decision about which groups or ideologies or tastes he is to associate with and which he is to dissociate from. In either case, the author should be supposed to be able to affect the awareness and experience of his audience.

Theorists of art have drawn a distinction here between artistic and aesthetic factors in the experience of art, i.e. between those factors relating more directly to the work itself (for example to the mastery of technique that is manifest within it), and those factors relation to our experience of the work. For various reasons, now it may be convenient to distinguish further between artistic and aesthetic expectations on the one hand and for example moral, religious, political and other ideological expectations on the other. I am nevertheless strongly inclined to think that these two groups of expectations are not autonomous. Thus it is obvious that artistic and even aesthetic judgment is strongly influenced by ideological considerations and in addition by all sorts of phenomena affecting evaluation and choice in a society, by politics, by degree of commercialisation, and so on.

What I want to suggest by these observations is that both the artistic and aesthetic and the non-artistic and non-aesthetic horizons of the poet's society make a difference to the poet's work, a difference which will be more or less palpable depending on the nature of his text. There is a dialectical relation between the expectations in the society and the artist's intentions. What I do *not* mean to say, however, is that ideological value coincides or corresponds to artistic or aesthetic value. It is, naturally, possible for a conservative critic to find a revolutionary

poem excellent. Some of the most important conditions for literary achievement are set by the expectations directed purely at the text. Acclaim of the text, on the other hand, may be strongly fortuitous and cannot of itself serve as criterion of artistic achievement. But since achievement can not be decided by vote, how is it to be decided? A perennial question in literary criticism is the question as to what, if any, is the importance which should be ascribed to the intention of a poet in the interpretation and evaluation of his works. This question also has some relevance to our judgment of the nature or extent of his achievement in a given work.

One ground for commending a literary work would be to say that it is good because it achieves precisely what the author intended or strived to achieve. This seems however to be a somewhat secondary virtue. For the poem is good, one will surely say, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to what the poet set out to accomplish.

On the other hand, to eliminate the poet's intention entirely seems no less odd. It will always be possible to produce, in one way or another, sequences of words which have in varying degrees been determined by chance, and to call them poems.⁵ It will also remain a possibility that the efforts of critics and readers to ascribe significance to such random products can be of some aesthetic significance. Aesthetic interest can, as we know, be directed to any object. Then, however, it would seem that it is the critic or the reader, not the poet, who enjoys the status of creator.

The poet who eliminates intelligent choice directed at attaining some goal, however vaguely imagined, also eliminates the possibility of his own success or failure. In such a case, any sequence of words would do just as well as any other, as far as the poet is concerned. 'Poems' of this sort can be written, but they are of no relevance to the question of poetic achievement.

It is vitally different, however, when the poet does not leave everything to chance but rather discards by choice what does not satisfy his judgment. By his act of choice the poet has endorsed the results of chance and other interfering factors, even his own mistakes, as serving his own ultimate purpose.⁶

Why should we take so much interest in such post-factual endorsement of the poet? Is it because the act of endorsement is itself a sign of his recognition of or insight into his own achievement? Do we require from poetry not only that it is there, but also that it has been written by somebody, at least in the sense that the person from whom it has issued has considered it worthwhile to set it forth into the world? Do we think that poetry must have a purpose, and therefore that it requires a poet whose intentions would give it this purpose? Is it essential that it not only be capable of being put to some purpose — which any reader could decide for himself — but also that it be *made with* some purpose?

The last question needs a lengthier answer,⁷ but I think that the remaining questions should, indeed, be answered in the positive. We pay attention to the achievement of the poet precisely because it is an achievement.

It would seem that we require that the poet choose his goal judiciously and that he execute it well. We sometimes judge that some attempt to write a certain poem should not have been made at all. Again that decision cannot be made by means of a general theory. Whether the poet has made a reasonable choice or not is something which has to be judged on the merits of each particular case, reflecting the circumstances within which given decisions were made. This again means that the poet's choice will be determined at least in part by his personality and by the values or hierarchies of values which he entertains.

There are, therefore, reasons to characterise poems as personal, national or even human documents.

6. The Poet's Work

We have established that the poet, if he is to have any possibility of success at all, will have to settle for a task or goal which will have to be in one way or another dia-

lectical with regard to the artistic and aesthetic values of the society. That goal will not, of course, be the completed poem itself, but rather, for example, the function he intends the poem to perform. Once a goal has been set, the poet will be in a position to use it as a guide in choosing among all the possible means which he may become aware of at each successive stage. Such awareness will be brought about by his experience, his imagination, his memory, his knowledge of other poetry performing similar functions and so on.

Normally the poet has time on his hands. This means that if he so chooses he can resort to even very lengthy trial and error experiments in creating a poem. The poet thus has every possibility to improve on (or to spoil) his work. The inexperienced poet might well need to commit a great many errors before he finds a satisfactory solution. The more experienced poet may be able to conduct his experiments along a more systematic path. He will have the privilege of observing which changes and which kinds of changes in his manuscript take him closest to his goal. He will then be able to adjust the nature of his next trial accordingly. Whether he has come closer to his goal or not is of course a matter he will have to decide on the basis of his judgment, which again, he is in a position to refine through training in the course of his career. One would however expect that such judgment, unless it is to lead our poet astray, would have always to encompass at least the mastery of the language in which he writes, language being the medium of his work. This mastery need not be measured in terms of correct use of language, but rather in terms of *imaginative* use, such use that will vividly suggest to the reader precisely the nuances of attitude and point of view, the images, the spirit, the mood, the feelings, the situations, which the poet wants to convey.

Linguistic competence of this kind is, I suppose, part of what is in German called *Sprachgefühl*. This expression, which as far as I know can be translated directly into all of the Scandinavian languages, does not translate well into English. That a poet has or shows such 'feeling' for a given language can be 'sensed', e.g. in his accurate use of the nuances of the language. It is thus the name of a

capacity to use a language imaginatively and accurately, an ability to discern which expression will take one closest to one's goal and bring about the wanted result, and this will involve, among other things, the coining of metaphors or images.

Metaphor is usually described as the application of a word or phrase to an object or concept it does not literally denote. Thus metaphor is all too easily thought of as a roundabout way of expression or as a complicated and enigmatic way of saying what could in fact be said in a more direct and obvious fashion. Now, it is hard to deny that there are examples of purely enigmatic or decorative use of metaphor in poetry. Yet it appears to me quite unwarranted to think of metaphor as a decorative deviation from literal meaning. On the contrary, the coining of metaphors serves the purpose of expressing a point of view of the perceiver or an aspect of what is perceived more precisely and accurately and indeed more vividly than any familiar lexical expression might convey. The force of the metaphor is that it is intentionally directed at its object in such a way that it betrays from what point of view. The assertion that 'ordinary language is the graveyard of metaphors' is itself an excellent metaphor. But it is no roundabout way of making an important linguistic observation. On the contrary it is an elegant abbreviation of what would have to be spelled out in a very lengthy way if we were restricted to the use of literal forms. Thus the graveyard-metaphor is not giving us an exhaustive analysis or account of the nature of the metaphor and its gradual stiffening into the *rigor mortis* of a lexical expression. It may even be taken to mean that every linguistic expression was a metaphor before it faded into lexicality. Be that as it may, the satisfactory philosophical explanation of the metaphor is a tough question. My point here is that metaphor, far from being simply decorative or enigmatic, is an excellent tool for many philosophical hypotheses, in that it reveals — even to its own inventor, who will find himself aided by his metaphor — a possible angle or frame of reference from which to approach its object.

I want to agree, in other words, with those who think that metaphors function to clarify rather than to obscure

their object, and that metaphor activates rather than sedates the reader. An expression that requires an interpretative effort from the reader first of all appears more vivid and expressive than the simple standard expression. But first of all, it does contain real information, and even when the coinage is literally unheard of, the communication of this information is still somehow accomplished, chiefly by contextual means. That kind of linguistic competence which consists in being able to find the words expressing the fresh aspect without endangering understanding, but instead enhancing it, gives an excellent example of *Sprachgefühl*.

I want to suggest, then, that the gift or skill of imaginatively mastering language — as is shown for example in the case of the metaphor — is a central resource of the wisdom and wit that we find in poetry and in literary art in general.

There is no need here to enter into a discussion of the innumerable problems of literary style. There is one such problem, however, namely that of language as expressive of (group) identity and personal style, that is of importance in our present context. One may be tempted to think that the master of a language could use that language completely at his own will, leaving nothing to chance or to other intervening factors. Every expression, every finished sentence would be exactly what he wanted it to be, nothing more, nothing less. But that is clearly not the case. I have already mentioned the dialectical relation to expectations. Every speech act means more than it actually says. There are the constraints of style, which seem also in part to be constraints of identity and evaluations of the group or the speaker himself. Poets, being the individuals they are and belonging to the groups they belong to, will normally express themselves in their own personal style, in their dialect, their sociolect, etc., and not only, if at all, in the standard language. Conforming to those various standards or deviating from them, when his aims so require, is part of the poet's job. Using a particular language, a particular sociolect or dialect, does not, needless to say, commit anyone to specific views, convictions, etc. But nevertheless it will affect the speaker's ability to analyse events which occur around him and to express his

ideas, views and convictions, much in the way suggested by George Orwell with his notion of "newspeak". To that extent a person's language and his style of speech does some of his thinking for him.

There are also other ways in which factors not a part of the poet's conscious intentions play an important part in his poetic invention. The poet's first aim may be that of mere improvisation, and indeed the poet can be assumed in every case to work at least to some extent by faltering steps and improvisations. It may appear as a philosophically uninteresting observation that the creative process of the poet may be a long and troublesome one, involving a series of rejections of both goals and means of execution. All these successive rejections and alterations are, we may feel tempted to think, quite incidental acts preceding the moment when the poet finally (a) decides what he is going to do and (b) carries that decision to its conclusion. Yet this is, I think, a misleading way of viewing the process in question, a process from which a clear intentional focus seems to be missing. This process is philosophically interesting because it involves the idea that, at least in some cases, there will come a certain point in a misty and reckless process of writing when it will dawn upon the author that he is on the verge of accomplishing, or has indeed already accomplished, something he did not, until then, know he was in search of. This is in many ways perplexing and may sound as just an ironic way of saying that the poet has not really accomplished anything at all, but has merely happened to produce a sequence of words that now seem to him to pass as a poem. But even in such a perplexing case the author is no parrot. He was clearly trying to accomplish something, even though he did not understand what it was. It is precisely his accomplishing it that makes him understand it. One could imagine a poet trying for example to express a feeling or mood by which he is himself affected. Only when he succeeds in expressing it (in giving it poetic form) does he understand or discover or recognise the feeling, which he has been unable to focus until then. Giving a linguistic expression to a hazily perceived idea has suddenly given it perceptible form. I am quite aware that this is a metaphorical way of

speaking about what is actually taking place, and that the phenomenon itself remains still unexplained. Perhaps the metaphor of 'point of view' employed above would take us further, the suggestion being that we have to do here with a matter of 'seeing as', with something that has to do with the perspective of the perceiver or with a special aspect of the perceived, so that something in the direction of a Gestalt-psychological explanation would be required. Here, however, I shall have to leave this question open.

7. Intersubjectivity and Nationalism

In every society capable of producing any form of literature, either oral or written, including such genres as riddles and children's tales, there seems to prevail, if not a conscious conviction then at least a tacit confidence that the sharing in these texts is of great importance both to the society as a whole and to those who are brought together in the experience of the works in question. This is a value over and above the value the text may have as entertainment. Certain scholarly studies of children's tales⁸ suggest that such tales contain in a symbolic, veiled form warnings and rules (concerning e.g. sexual behaviour) of utmost importance to children's social adjustment, preparing them for the moral practices within the society in which the tales are told. Indeed, the tales exhibit an amazing degree of *Zweckmässigkeit* in relation to such practical educational functions. This is not the place to venture an explanation of the psychological processes involved in the working of these messages, but I think one could assume that individuals can be, and indeed very often are, 'conditioned' to adopt values and tastes by being exposed to them.

Bearing these observations in mind, it may seem less odd to suppose that e.g. children's tales with their various didactic effects have come into being without the conscious intent to further these particular educational goals.

Rather, delight in the story, the wish to create a fascinating, tantalising experience in the listeners, may have directed the narrators of myths and children's tales to search for plots, themes and subject-matter felt to be somehow conducive to profound experience. These, inevitably, will frequently be found in subject-matter related to the important events of life, events which also tend to be socially sanctioned in one way or another. It is, I would think, the artistic advantageousness of such socially or existentially 'urgent' subject-matter — its capacity to thrill and excite the audience — rather than the educational ambition or social interest, that accounts for its high frequency of occurrence in literature in general.

Such literary communication may or may not further group cohesion. In order to bring about such cohesion mere similarity is not enough. What is required is some degree of first person recognition of the fact, if it is a fact, or some degree of belief, that the subject himself does resemble or sympathise with other individuals of a group in respects regarded as identifying by himself. This would involve, for example, dimensions of identification such as religious creed, moral views, political conviction, native language or nationality, and so on.

This is perhaps the place where I can finally approach the theme of nationalism. Let me be provocative enough to suggest that there is indeed some truth in the idea that language is a form of thought and a form of feeling, as many philosophers from Vico to Cassirer and Susanne Langer have in various ways suggested. Recall the example given above of the poet who only after completing a poem detects what feeling it is about. So, too, it seems that the formulation of an apt description in a language we know can make us see or recognise a feeling we may or may not have had before.

The really fascinating thing is that such poetic expression can enable us to imagine a feeling, and in that sense to have it, to experience it for ourselves. Whether imagining a feeling is the same thing as having the feeling is a philosophical question I will not venture to answer. There would seem to be both important similarities and important differences between the two.⁹ But what I think could not be doubted is that such imaginative exercise of feeling has

real effects on our perception of the feeling exercised. It would seem to be a plain historical fact, demonstrated time and again in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that, after reading the poetry of their national poet, people have at least considered themselves to have found a common, intersubjective feeling, mood or spirit.

If there is some truth in the hypothesis of the ability of linguistic expression to make feelings 'visible', interesting further hypotheses seem to arise. It would seem that speakers of the same language, immersed in the same cultural traditions, sharing the same history, exposed to the same literature and poetry, might develop not only their common language and their common ways of life, but also common patterns of thought and common habits of feeling. It would also seem that poetry would be ideally suited for the communication and even for the forming of converging intersubjective feelings, attitudes, etc., within such a group.

As the case of *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* seems to indicate, poetry is a powerful means for the propagation of what we may call national spirit or patriotic feeling. It is simply a fact that we tend to think of poetry as very strongly characterised by feeling, emotion, experience of value, personal involvement and the like. One only has to take a look in any dictionary to discover that in descriptions of 'poetry', expressions like 'spirit', 'lofty thought' or 'impassioned feeling' are almost invariably used.¹⁰ Also in literary theory the view has been often and forcefully advocated that the expression of mood, spirit, attitude, feeling, etc., is essential to poetry, especially to lyric poetry.¹¹ It may well be that the placing of the experiencing of the intentional object of a text in focus — as is typical in the case of the metaphor and also in the case of every predominantly aesthetic approach to a text — is part of the reason why expressionist and emotional theories of literature have been so forceful. Here I want to go further and suggest that art, and not least literature and poetry, are in fact institutions which have managed to establish themselves precisely because they serve the intersubjective exchange of feelings and emotions, thereby, also, providing patterns and models for our emotional experience. Imaginative literature is a test-ground for our

feelings and for our application of them to the circumstances of our lives. In the case of nationalist and patriotic poetry, the expression of feeling certainly seems to be a central feature, without which such poetry would be difficult to conceive. One of the main concerns of any nationalist poet of the nineteenth century must have been with the question how patriotic spirit or feeling should be best presented or 'expressed' in his work.

For Runeberg, as for his contemporary supporters and reviewers, this problem was a question of writing the kind of poetry that would give an ideal expression of national spirit. But in what sense could the poet be said to have specific knowledge of the attitude, spirit or feeling he was supposed to express? Perhaps the best answer would be that he was able to present imaginative examples of that attitude, examples which were immediately recognised by the public and which would for a long time serve as a codification of the national spirit of his native land.

There can be no doubt that Runeberg was himself convinced that he had himself detected, by his own experience and observations of the life of the Finnish peasantry, the ideal national character of the Finnish people. He quite explicitly sought in his *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* to show or uncover the ideal spirit of the Finnish nation as it had been manifested — or should have been manifested — in various episodes of the Finnish War of 1808-9.

If we say that *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* expresses Finnish nationalism we do not, of course, imagine Finnish nationalism as a particular, identifiable *kind of feeling* (distinct, as a feeling, from Swedish or German or Austrian nationalism). Nor do we imagine that this feeling could be sought for within the work as we might seek out a certain colour in a painting. Rather we think of the text as expressing a number of positive patriotic statements, heroic attitudes, admiration of certain kinds of actions, affection for traditional ceremonies and behaviour or for the beauty of Finland's nature, etc., which readers would identify as the kind of things a Finnish patriot might spontaneously think or say.

National spirit or feeling will have to be represented or expressed by the episodes within the poem. A reader who

is confronted with the text, should, if the goal is attained, exclaim: 'Yes, this it is!' somewhat as if he had been listening to a piece of music and exclaimed 'yes, such is sorrow!' or 'such is joy!' He should in other words be able to recognise by the episodes offered to him something he may not have realised before. Accepting or cherishing feelings that are declared to be the feelings of a particular group means associating with that group, accepting the identity of that group (and this too, by the way, can be a very powerful feeling).

If we are born free of habits and attitudes, we certainly acquire them within groups and societies to the degree that we accept the ways and habits, the language or languages, the specific values, morals and attitudes of those with whom we live. Poetry is an institution which will produce models of experience. *This* is how such and such situations in life could be experienced by people who are like this. *This* is what it would mean to live under those and those circumstances. *This* is how you too would (and should) feel, were that to happen to you.

It seems reasonable to suppose that very strong, very basic human needs, such as self-preservation, self-confidence, self-esteem and even self-identification, can normally be met only in interaction with other individuals within a group. One cannot understand oneself, one's feelings, one's psychological reactions, save by comparison with others, nor can one understand others save by comparison with oneself. This does not mean that one should imitate others — there are many cases where one rather discovers the contrast between others and oneself. Real life situations give us ample opportunity to form such comparisons and to learn from them. We are not, however, confined to them, but can use our imagination to construe similar yet differing situations and thus to 'test out' how it would feel, what it would mean to us, or to somebody sufficiently similar to us, to experience a situation we have not experienced in real life. We may be, and normally are — at least when not in a state of sleep or hypnosis — able consciously to control our imagination, to direct it to experimental tasks of the given sort. Philosophers are well acquainted with this imaginative procedure, only

they more often imagine what one might say or think or believe, rather than what one would experience or feel.

My concluding remark will be, then, that the pleasure of imagination and the importance and usefulness of coming to know oneself and others through imagination is quite sufficient grounds for declaring poetry to be a social institution for the development of one's identity in such a way as to encompass also the furthering of one's understanding of what group, or class, or culture — or nation — one has, or has not, become part of. Very few of us, I believe, would rest perfectly content with a predestination to share, unreflectingly, in a system of values, tastes, attitudes, feelings, prejudices and beliefs of the various groups into which we have voluntarily or involuntarily come to be enrolled. Poetry can be a means of indoctrination, but poetry can also help us to see what choices we might face. Our imagination, in other words, may give us clues as to what our lives could be.

Notes

1. In literary criticism it is more common to talk of 'representation' or 'expression' or even 'evocation' of a feeling, mood or spirit. The term 'presentation' has been used by Susanne K. Langer in *Philosophy in a New Key* and in *Feeling and Form*. When I use this word however it need not be interpreted in the Langerian sense. I find the term convenient, since it does not prejudge the question how presentation takes place. 'Expression' seems to invite an expressionist theory of presentation and 'representation' again seems to imply some kind of mimesis-theory.

2. I have argued this point more fully in my paper "Reading as Experience" (1983).

3. Most of the 34 poems in the cycle are written in a series of different variations of the political metre *par*

préférence of the eighteenth century, that of the Scottish ballad, which was propagated in Europe through the Scottish ballad *Chevy Chase* — Runeberg, incidentally had translated that poem into Swedish. This iambic metre was extensively used in political poetry, in Germany by Gleim, in Switzerland by Lavater, in Hungary by Petöfi, in Poland by Mickiewicz, in Sweden by Lidner. The Hungarian national anthem, and Lavater's *Schweizerlieder*, which directly or indirectly seem to have been known to Runeberg, all use the metre of the Scottish ballad. Runeberg's much freer use of iambic metre, in combination with the semi-realistic narrative technique of Walter Scott, created a new poetic idiom from two well known but hitherto separate literary devices.

4. *The Concept of Mind*, ch. 5, section 5, "Achievements".

5. One may ask in what sense anyone could be said to have written such poems. Should we say that the random method itself, not the poet, has created the poems? Or should we say that such purposeless sequences of words are not poems at all until the critic or reader has made them into poems by putting them to some use in the literary world? There is a strong temptation in favour of the latter. One should however bear in mind that the writing of seemingly purposeless (e.g. random) poetry, may have a purpose, most likely that of provocation — and unless the institution of art itself is to prove pointless, then the artist himself must be assumed to have some sort of purpose.

6. To say that someone acts on purpose does of course not grant that the agent also acts intelligently. We can act on purpose yet fail to act purposefully. This can be due to some mistaken belief but also due to the fact that the agent has a purpose but lacks any idea about how to bring it about. He may be desperately trying 'just anything' to see how things will turn out.

7. See my paper "The Action Aspect of Art" (1980).

8. E.g. Bettelheim 1976.

9. See Smith 1986 for a discussion of this issue.

10. In the Random House *Dictionary of the English Language* for example POETRY is given as 1. the art of writing poems, 2. literary work in metrical form, 3. prose with poetic qualities, 4. poetic qualities however manifested, 5. poetic spirit or feeling. There is also an interesting commentary on the synonym *verse*: 'Poetry, verse agree in referring to the work of a poet. The difference between POETRY and VERSE is usually the difference between substance and form. POETRY is lofty thought or impassioned feeling expressed in imaginative words. VERSE is any expression in words that conforms to accepted metrical rules and structure.' The ordinary reader generally, I think, assumes that poetry is the same thing as verse. He imagines that the formal quality of verse in itself accounts for the lyric effect, i.e. the reflection or display of emotions and feelings that seems somehow embedded in the poetic text. Also the everyday use of the contrastive expressions 'poetic' versus 'prosaic' in many European languages indicates that this habit of thought is deeply rooted in our culture. But clearly there are not only poetic poems or verses, some are highly prosaic, and prose is not always just prosaic but sometimes highly poetic.

11. Cf. e.g. E. Staiger, *Grundbegriffe der Poetik*, and Wolfgang Kayser, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk*.

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Practices of Art

Barry Smith

However far the work of art may form a world inherently harmonious and complete, still, as an actual single object, it exists not *for itself*, but *for us*, for a public which sees and enjoys it, [so that] every work of art is a dialogue with everyone who confronts it. . . . At certain epochs [however] the public may be corrupted by a highly praised 'culture', that is by having put into its head the perverse opinions and follies of critics and connoisseurs (Hegel, *Aesthetics*, pp. 264f., 1184).

1. Action and Ontology¹

Works of art, as we shall here conceive them, are the products of deliberate or intentional activity on the part of human beings manifesting certain kinds of competence or skill. Certainly there are aesthetically pleasing objects existing independently of human creative activity. But an object — an arrangement of shells or leaves, let us say — which came into existence by accident and which did not serve as the basis for any shaping or forming activity by any human being would not be a work of art, however many superficial similarities it might bear to other objects commonly accepted as such.

This chapter is a study of the essential interwovenness of objects and actions in the world of art, an investigation of the conditions which objects must satisfy if they are

to be works of art and which actions must satisfy if they are to yield artistic objects. It is an essentialistic investigation, in the sense that it attempts to describe the essences or structures of the various entities — things and states, processes and events, acts and actions — configured together within the cultural world, starting out from the view that we might best understand such entities by examining first of all the most simple or typical cases. More abstruse or complex cases may then be understood by reflecting on the various possible deformations or extrapolations of the cases already considered.

In a number of respects our investigations will parallel much of what goes on in the writings of Hegel and Marx and the ideas set out below in fact evolved out of a comparison between certain aspects of the Marxist and phenomenological approaches to social and cultural formations.² Both Marxists and phenomenologists are concerned to understand the structures of the social world in terms of the interconnections between different segments of reality; that is, they are concerned with the objects themselves in contrast, for example, to analytic philosophers, who are concerned in the first place with the analysis of certain kinds of language. Phenomenology and Marxism differ, of course, in their views as to the nature of the privileged entities in terms of which descriptions should be formulated. Thus phenomenologists tend to assume that the structures of individual human consciousness manifest a peculiar intelligibility, and that the structures of social and cultural reality should be accounted for, as far as possible, in terms of the relations they bear to the individual subject. (Phenomenology has thus inspired the 'micro-sociology' of Alfred Schütz and his successors.) Marxists, on the other hand, believe that the historically existing structures of what they call 'social action' are uniquely intelligible.³ Hence the Marxists' descriptions of individual consciousness are themselves presented within a framework which assumes that social action is somehow basic, so that Marxist social theory amounts always to one or other form of collectivism.

Within the specific field of aesthetic phenomena, Marxism has often been associated with an action-theoretic approach, an approach which sees the essence of such

phenomena as lying not in special sorts of objects but in the specific nature of the things artists and audiences do in certain sorts of context. This approach, which is not exclusive to the tradition of Marxian aesthetics,⁴ is commonly held to be at odds with an essentialistic approach of the sort defended here. Essentialism is seen as dictating a too narrow methodology, restricted to the description of what is static and substantial, where the concern with action and with artistic practice (or 'praxis') is seen as making possible a broader, more dynamic treatment of the matters in hand. The essentialist is not however restricted in his ontology to static categories like those of substance or thing. He can argue that actions, too, and even those much more complex and diaphanous entities which are the competences and practices on which they rest, are no less capable of treatment in essentialistic and ontological terms than are the products to which they give rise. Indeed a certain symmetry between actions on the one hand and objects on the other will make itself felt throughout the present essay.

Art works are dependent, now, not only upon the actions of their creators, but also upon certain correlated activities of an appropriately receptive audience. A shell, or a leaf, or a relic of some lost civilisation, existing in a world lacking every tendency toward appreciative evaluation, would be simply a shell, or a leaf, or a lump of stone. It would lack those intentional qualities which mark off works of art from other, more humdrum varieties of worldly furniture.

What, precisely, is the nature of this two-fold relation between a work of art and its creator and audience? It seems, first of all, that the two arms of the relation are importantly different. The work of art depends upon the artist only for its *coming into existence*. Once created it achieves a certain self-sufficiency, which allows it to float free and enjoy a life of its own, to which the artist may make no noticeable contribution. The first arm, which is thus in place only transiently, we shall refer to as the relation of *ontological source*,⁵ and we shall say that an object *a* has its *ontological source* in a second object *b* wherever *a* is such that, in virtue of its essence

or material structure, it could not have begun to exist unless *b* also existed.

The second arm of the relation, in contrast, is more properly a matter of *dependence* in the sense that, as we shall see, the work of art is such as to owe its *continuing to exist* to the activities of the audience. We shall say, accordingly, that an object *a* is *dependent* upon a second object *b* wherever *a* is such that, in virtue of its essence or material structure, it cannot continue to exist unless *b* exists.

We need to go further however: for both source and dependence as here defined would embrace also cases reflecting certain merely ephemeral properties of the things involved, cases we want here to have excluded. Consider, for example, the relation between a husband and his wife. Certainly the husband is such that, as a matter of necessity, he cannot continue to exist *as such* unless his wife exists. This is however purely a reflection of certain analytic relations among the relevant concepts. In the present context we shall require the defined relations to reflect intrinsic properties of the things themselves. Accordingly we shall insist that *a* shall be dependent on or have its source in *b* only in those cases where *a* is sensitive in its material structure to changes in the material structure of *b*. (In the sense, for example, in which an act of visual perception is sensitive to certain changes in the objects perceived.) The work of art is thus not merely dependent on the artist in the analytic sense that it owes its status as a work of art to the fact that it had an origin of this general sort. Rather, the detailed material constitution of the work reflects precise and specific actions of the artist. Similarly, the work is not dependent upon an audience for its continuing to exist in the merely analytic sense that, should all audiences cease to exist, then it, too, would go out of existence as a work of art (reverting to the status of a mere lump of stone). The work will much rather manifest a sensitivity in the qualities which it comes to possess as a work of art to even subtle changes in the constitution or in the habits of its audience.⁶

The relation of dependence so defined may be either one-sided, where *a* is dependent upon *b* but not conversely;

or reciprocal, where objects are dependent upon each other.⁷ Wherever an object *a* is dependent upon some other object *b*, all objects which share the material structure of *a* — that is all objects of the same kind or essence as *a* — will manifest a dependence upon some object similar in kind to *b*. This insight has been used in recent years as the basis for a series of fruitful empirical hypotheses in a number of areas, above all in linguistics⁸ and in various branches of psychology.⁹ The kinds exhibited by the objects which constitute the subject-matters of these disciplines are for example *phoneme, word, sentence, colour, tone, interval, emotion*, all of which are in a certain sense natural or intelligible. What is most important however is that this intelligibility is manifested not only by what might be called the standard or prototypical instances of these kinds, but also by their various non-standard instances. A mottled white, an out of tune middle C, a nonsense word like 'slithy', an objectless fear, and so on, are each such as to involve an intelligible departure from the standard or prototypical instances of the kinds in question.¹⁰ The fact that even the non-standard instances of intelligible kinds are themselves intelligible makes it possible to establish more than merely tentative, empirical laws as to the range of deviations which they may exhibit (as nonsense words are governed by quite precise laws e.g. as to pronunciation and spelling). Indeed, recent advances in psychology are beginning to suggest that the opposition between standard and non-standard instances of intelligible kinds may have a central and hitherto unsuspected role to play in our empirical understanding of the nature of human cognition.¹¹

2. The Structures of Human Work

Here we are concerned specifically with the standard and non-standard instances of action-kinds and object-kinds manifested within the world of art. A useful starting point for our inquiries is provided by the description of the

phenomenon of human work that is to be found in Book I of Marx's *Kapital*. Here Marx distinguishes six distinct kinds of 'moment' or 'element' involved in human work,¹² which he designates as follows:

- (i) the worker,
 - (ii) the materials upon which he works,
 - (iii) the instruments with which he works,
 - (iv) his actions as a worker,
 - (v) the goal toward which he works,
- and
- (vi) the product of his work (the new form which is acquired by (ii)).

Each of these elements is, as a matter of necessity, indispensable, Marx now goes on to argue, if work is to exist at all. The indispensability of (i) follows from the fact that work is, of its nature, a deliberate or intentional process. Work exists only where the processes of inanimate nature are to a greater or lesser extent steered or directed by an individual human being.¹³

(ii) is indispensable in virtue of the fact that purely mental activity, though it may constitute an essential preparatory phase of certain types of human work, functions as a part of the working process only to the extent that it issues forth in some determinate alteration in the world of material nature.¹⁴

From this we can infer that (iii) — which Marx defines as 'any thing or complex of things which the worker interposes between himself and the object of his work, and which serves as the director of his activity upon that object' — is also indispensable.¹⁵ Taken in a wider sense, the instruments of work include 'all objectual conditions that are required for the process of work to take place', including the earth itself, with its gradually evolving network of streets and roads, canals and railway lines, and all other means of communication, including human language.¹⁶ The level of development of these external

conditions provides one measure of the development of man himself.

The indispensability of (iv) follows similarly, though only if we recognise, with Marx, that the worker may for example employ his own hands as the instrument of the working process — and become himself transformed thereby.

The absence of (v) reduces work to mere activity, that is: to the level of mere interaction with inanimate nature: work is, in Marx's terms, not an isolated action, but an enduring complex of exertion and will, directed towards the realisation of some given end.¹⁷

Finally (vi) — the new form that is acquired by (ii) — is also indispensable.¹⁸ For a process of work must issue forth in some product, even though this product need not match precisely the idea in the mind of the worker on initiation of the working process. Marx himself identifies the end-product of work as a material thing, 'a stuff of nature which, by having its form changed has been appropriated to human needs', in virtue of the fact that 'work has bound itself to its object'.¹⁹ We might therefore conceive Marx's 'end-product' as something like the *sum* of materials and newly acquired form.

It is clear, therefore, that these six elements do not exist merely side by side; rather, they interpenetrate or intervolve each other in such a way that each is sensitive, in its material structure, to changes (to 'transformations' in the Marxist jargon) in the remaining elements. It is only in the context of that total structure which is the working process that there can exist, for example, instances of the kinds *working instrument*, or *goal* or *product of work*.

This allows us to make sense of Marx's claim — which derives from Hegel — that the worker himself is changed 'in his essence' by his actions as a worker.²⁰ Work is, from the Marxist perspective, *anthropogenic*. The worker is shaped by his actions (and thereby also by the materials with which he works) into a new object, only partially coincident with the old. It is important to see how central are these ideas to Marx's entire dialectical conception of human development. The latter rests essentially on the idea that man is capable of being subjected to a whole

series of essential or qualitative transformations, as the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly.²¹

The actions of the worker are dependent, too, upon the instruments used, upon the material worked and upon the specific goal of the given working process. Actions directed towards distinct goals are distinct actions, even though, from the point of view of an external observer, they may be physically indistinguishable. For action is not merely physical behaviour: it depends necessarily upon a background of beliefs and intentions, as also upon a wider surrounding context. Finally the goal of the working process — as a complex of beliefs and intentions on the part of a given individual subject — is itself of such a kind that it cannot exist unless that individual subject also exists.

We may summarise the results of our discussion in the form of a diagram (a snapshot of the relations obtaining between these given elements), somewhat as follows:

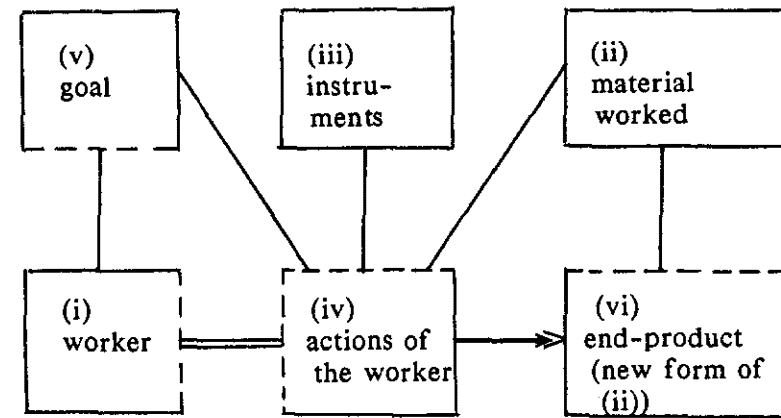


Figure 1: The Basic Structure of Human Work

The solid frames surrounding (ii) and (iii) signify that we have to do here with independent objects (objects which do not depend on other things in order to exist). Broken frames signify dependent objects, and the single and double links connecting such frames to the walls of neighbouring frames signify dependence relations, which are respectively one-sided or reciprocal. The double-headed arrow connecting (iv) to (vi) represents the relation of ontological source.

It is possible to read off from a diagram of this kind propositions expressing the relations of source and dependence which bind together the objects pictured. Thus for example the end-product of the working process owes the source of its existence to the actions of the worker. Such propositions may express, first of all, the relations actually obtaining between the different elements of some given process of work. But since what is true of any actually existing goal or end-product is no less true of all objects which share the same material structure, it is possible to read off from the diagram also general propositions concerning corresponding essences or kinds. The truth of such propositions — which are for example of the form: 'any instance of kind *A* depends upon (or has its source in) some instance of the kind *B*' — is then not conditional upon the existence of particular instances of the kinds in question.

But the diagram allows us to account further for the distinctions between standard and non-standard instances of the corresponding kinds: any object recognisable as a potential element in the total structure is, as it exists outside this total structure, a non-standard instance of the relevant kind. Thus a redundant machine, or a piece of flint which has not yet been extracted from the earth, are examples of non-standard instances of the kind *working instrument*; unrealisable goals, or goals which issue in no efforts towards realisation, are non-standard instances of the kind, *working goal*, and so on.

These remarks make clear that Figure 1 is in a certain sense incomplete. Thus it takes only negligible account of the time-structure of human work (it ignores the fact that the instruments of work may themselves undergo changes — be used up — as a result of the process of work). And

most of all it ignores those further elements with which work is inextricably associated, above all the elements of consumption. As Marx puts it in the *Grundrisse*:

The product receives its last finishing touches in consumption. A railroad on which no one rides, which is consequently not used up, not consumed, is only a potential railroad and not a real one. Without production, no consumption; but, on the other hand, *without consumption, no production*; since production would then be without a purpose . . . the product first becomes a real product in consumption; e.g. a garment becomes a real garment only through the act of being worn; a dwelling which is not inhabited is really no dwelling; consequently, a product, as distinguished from a mere natural object . . . first *becomes* a product in consumption. Consumption gives the product the finishing touch by annihilating it, since the result of production is a product, not as the material embodiment of activity but only as an object for the active subject.²²

Some of the mentioned simplifications will be rectified in the course of what follows. The account summarised in Figure 1 will however serve as a provisional basis for our investigations of the place and structure of human work in the specific field of art.

3. Practice and Competence

Work is, in all its dimensions, capable of cumulation. As Marx recognised, not only the instruments and the materials involved in any given process of work but also the worker himself are typically the end-products of previous work. A worker has normally served as material of *processes of training*, through which he has become transformed by the work of others.²³ What is interesting is that we can conceive this process of working on others as a

special case of human work in general, as conceived within the terms of the theory sketched above.

Note, first of all, that all articulate human activity and indeed human maturity in general is dependent upon processes of training of the given kind. These processes may on the one hand be individual in that they are directed toward one single person who is their subject. On the other hand however they must in every case be also in a certain sense social. Certainly it is possible for an individual to train *himself* for some specific end, by using his own body as the material of work — it is this we have in mind when we talk of someone *working himself into* a given culture, discipline or institution. Yet even such self-training must involve others, if not directly, then at least indirectly. For training consists in the attempt — which may be more or less successful — to instill in the individual who is its subject a competence which he himself does not possess. An entirely private process of training, one which did not draw, for example, on manuals or textbooks which had been produced by others, would therefore presuppose that the competence to be instilled was somehow already in the possession of the individual in whom it was to be instilled, and this reduces the idea of such a process to absurdity.

The process of self-training is social also in the sense that its goal will involve — in normal circumstances — the intention on the part of the individual in question to insert himself into some actually existing system of shared rules or practices — to put himself into a position where the correctness or incorrectness of his actions will be capable of being established by others. A private activity which lacked this second moment would not be a process of training in the proper sense, however many superficial similarities it might bear to, for example, processes of learning by rote. Faced with an individual who persisted in such an activity, who insisted that he was training himself, but whose actions were incapable of being understood in terms of any system of publicly shareable rules, we should find it impossible to classify these actions in normal terms at all, but would be tempted, rather, to talk in terms of madness. As Marx writes:

Man is in the most literal sense of the word a *zoon politikon*, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society. Production by isolated individuals outside society — something which might happen as an exception to a civilized man who by accident got into the wilderness and already potentially possessed within himself the forces of society — is as great an absurdity as the idea of the development of language without individuals living together and talking to one another.²⁴

A process of training is successful if it gives rise in the individual who is its subject to a competence which is, at least in part, identical in its structure to already existing competences on the part of other members of society. Qualitatively similar competences which are possessed by distinct individuals within a society and which are such as to share common historical origins are competences *in* a single practice (for example a language or a system of table-manners). There are of course cases where there is a division of labour in the maintenance of a given practice, so that different groups of individuals manifest qualitatively different though complementary competences for example in virtue of their different levels of authority. In any case however it can be affirmed that, while a given *competence* is in every case the competence of some specific individual (the competences possessed by distinct individuals may be at most similar but never identical), one and the same *practice* is capable of being shared by an arbitrarily large number of individuals. Practices are, in this sense, intrinsically social objects. A given practice depends for its existence upon a group of individuals whose interactions maintain in being the relevant competences. It exists only to the extent that there are individuals in society who share similar competences and maintain these competences in mutual interaction, for example by responding in appropriate ways when the practice is seen to have been flouted. Thus the same processes of training and of critical interaction which typically give rise to linguistic and social competence in the individual provide a foundation for the existence of the associated practices in society as a whole.

Here the two moments of goal and instrument of work have, for the sake of simplicity, been ignored. The core of this diagram — items (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi) — is in other respects identical to the diagram above of human work in general. It contains, however, the two additional elements of *practice* and *established competences*, elements which form the indispensable background of the processes of training here considered. These processes are in the first place mediately dependent upon the practices which they sustain. But there are dependence relations also in the converse direction (from (viii) to (iv) via (i) and via (vii) and (i)). For just as, in Marx's original discussion, the individual worker is shaped, in his nature, by his actions as a worker, so also here: individuals are shaped by their activities in training and criticising others. The practice itself is therefore mediately dependent upon the associated processes of training, and hence it will exhibit a sensitivity in its structure to changes in these processes (as the grammatical structure of the English language has in part evolved as a result of changes in the standards and methods of training people in its use).

In addition to the relation of generic dependence there is a second novel feature of the source-dependence diagram above. The end-product of the process of training, a newly established competence on the part of some specific individual, differs from the end-product of the more mundane processes of work considered above in that it is not an object that is able, once created, to exist independently of the process which created it. The new competence is itself dependent for its continued existence upon elements of the process to which it owes the source of this existence. We shall find in what follows that the presence of both these features is characteristic of all structures exhibited in the world of art. It is the (generic or non-generic) dependence of cultural phenomena on associated mental acts to which reference is made when such phenomena are referred to as 'purely intentional objects'.²⁶

4. Art Work

Practice and competence are, I now wish to argue, essential moments of the process of artistic creation. There are, certainly, isolated instances of works of art that have been produced by accident, or by work on the part of an individual isolated from the public institutions of art and from all training in technique. Such objects may even serve as inspiratory forces in the subsequent development of artistic forms; but then the given objects are, until they are taken up by others and inserted into the social world of artistic practices, non-standard instances of the kind *work of art*. They become works of art in the strict sense and acquire their capacity to exert an influence upon other artists only where an appropriate background of competence and practice begins to be provided for them.

The true test of the thesis here defended is provided by instances of radically creative art which generate entirely new forms. How can a theory which conceives a background of established competence and practice as an indispensable presupposition of artistic creation acknowledge the existence of entirely original artistic forms? This question will be confronted in the sections that follow. Here we shall consider only those products of human work which are, from the standpoint of their genesis, standard instances of the kind *work of art* (instances of what we might call 'normal art'): novels, paintings, works of symphonic music, consciously and deliberately produced to a more or less determinate pattern by an individual working against a background of accepted rules and techniques.²⁷ The individual in question is someone who has acquired a competence in the practices of his chosen medium. In the case of the novelist, for example, these practices are most conspicuously of a linguistic nature. But they may consist also in attitudes relating to the sustained exertion of will and technique (the attitudes of the craftsman). More generally, we can say that the artist's total competence is acquired, at least in part, through processes of training involving others: it rests first of all upon association with teachers, critics and audiences, but then also upon asso-

It follows from all this, however, that not every practice imaginable in principle can in fact become established in a human culture. Practices are capable of becoming established only if they are consistent with the biological and psychological make-up of human beings, and only if they satisfy those higher level essential laws which flow from the structures of work, inculcation, and correction. A newly initiated practice imposed by authority which did not meet these conditions must gradually mutate into some more complex but also less artificial practice, in ways which are perhaps not capable of being recognised by its instigators.

The interconnections, now, between (a) individual competences (both those already existing and those being acquired), (b) social practices, and (c) processes of training, are relations of source and dependence which reflect the connections between corresponding moments of human work as set forth above.

Practices and established competences are reciprocally dependent on each other. A competence in a given practice cannot, of course, exist, unless the practice itself also exists. And a practice can exist only to the extent that relevant competences are established amongst, and are manifested in the interactions of, individuals in society. Note, however, that there is an important difference between the two arms of this reciprocal dependence relation. A practice does not depend for its existence upon the existence of any specific individual competence (and therefore, *a fortiori*, it does not depend upon those individual competences which are in process of being instilled at any given time). A practice depends, rather, only upon competences and their bearers *taken in general*. (Practices are therefore not affected by the fact that individuals manifest the corresponding competences to differing degrees.) This generic dependence of practice on competence, a type of dependence relation not so far considered, may be elucidated, crudely, as follows.²⁵ We shall say that an object *a* is *generically dependent* upon a population *b* of objects (which may be changing, by increments, over time), whenever *a* cannot exist unless successive sub-groups *b_i* of *b* also exist, *a* being sensitive, in its material

structure, to changes in the material structures of the members of the successive *b_i*.

We may express these interconnections in a suitably amended version of Figure 1 above, employing an inverted single arrow (' \leftarrow ') to symbolise the relation of generic dependence:

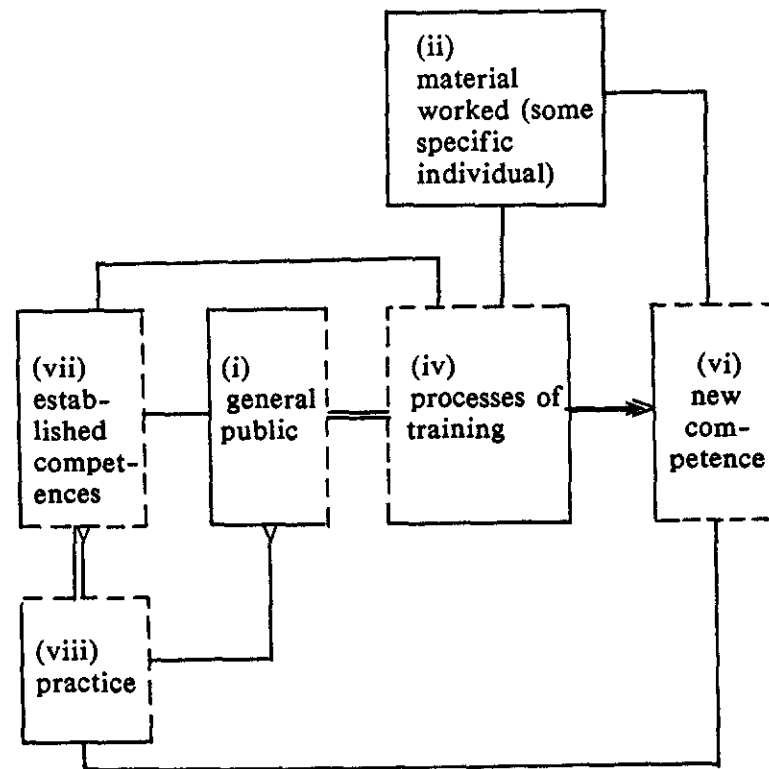


Figure 2: The Production of Competence

ciation with other artists and with the products of their work.

What applies to the *creator* of genetically standard instances of works of art, to the artist working within a framework of established practices, applies also to the members of his *audience*. The capacity of the reader to appreciate a novel as a work of art, no less than the capacities of the writer, depends upon the acceptance of shared practices of an appropriate sort. A manifested competence in the given practices is a necessary presupposition of someone's counting as a member of the literary audience. These practices, and the associated competences, are sustained by a never-ending process of self-training on the part of the audience as a whole, by a process of work, whose instruments are existing works of literature and whose materials are the individual members of the audience themselves.²⁹

Because the receptive practices of the audience will, of necessity, reflect the structures of actually existing works of art, and because the creative practices of the artist will be sensitive, at least in part, to the practices shared in common by the members of his audience, it will follow that these two sets of practices are reciprocally dependent on each other. Each is to some degree sensitive in its internal structure to changes in the structure of the other. Both sets of practices are, in their turn, generically dependent upon the totality of individuals in whose behaviour and competences they are manifested. These individuals constitute what we shall call the *general public* (for some given art, within some given culture or society). The audience within this public is that ever-changing group of individuals who have acquired, to differing degrees, the relevant receptive competences, and who manifest these competences in their appreciative association with specific works of art. But the general public comprehends also artists: individuals who have acquired relevant creative competences and who manifest these competences with varying degrees of success in the production of works of art.²⁹

What, then, is the structure of the process of artistic creation for genetically standard works of art? Here again, it is useful to return to our original description

of the structure of work in general. We can distinguish, as before, six interconnected elements:

- (i) the individual artist,
- (ii) the material upon which he works,³⁰
- (iii) the instruments of his work,
- (iv) his creative actions as an artist,
- (v) the goal of these actions,
- (vi) their end-product (the new form that is acquired by (i)).

These elements are connected by relations of source and dependence precisely as in Figure 1 above. Where we are dealing with genetically standard instances of works of art, we must recognise also at least the following additional elements:

- (vii) the specific individual competence of the artist (which has its source in prior processes of training) — it is upon these competences that both the specific goal of the given process of work and also the creative actions of the artist will depend.

This competence will in turn reflect:

- (viii) practices which the artist shares in common with his fellow artists.

We are assuming that the end-product of a given process of artistic production is in fact a work of art.³¹ But of course it is not within the power of the artist himself to determine that the product of his activities shall be anything more than, say, a lump of stone. That this end-product should be *art* would seem to depend upon certain qualities of the relevant audience. Imagine, for example, a piece of chiselled stone, produced for private (devotional) purposes by an individual living in isolation from other

essentially social phenomena, connected by relations of generic dependence. The work of art itself can be seen to straddle the boundary between what is individual and what is social. On the one hand it may be a specific individual thing (for example a lump of stone). On the other hand, however, in virtue of its dependence (as a work of art) upon appropriate audience practices (upon a tendency existing in society toward appropriate kinds of receptive appreciation), it must also be an intrinsically social phenomena, and in the case of music and literature this intrinsically social nature is clearly manifested in the fact that here the work itself is an *abstractum* which can be identified with no specific individual object.

5. The Problem of Creativity

In offering a description of the creative process which places so central an emphasis upon training, competence and practice, we may be accused of having propounded an exaggeratedly conservative theory of art. This emphasis upon the essential role of practice (of tradition, observance, respect) seems, however, to be unavoidable where we are dealing with what we have called genetically standard instances of works of art, with works of art produced according to accepted patterns by artists who take for granted established standards and techniques. But what account is to be given of exceptional works of art, of those products of truly creative activity which overturn existing standards and, by instituting new patterns and techniques, serve as the motor of artistic development?

There are, as we have already had occasion to mention, isolated instances of works or forms of art which have been brought into existence in part by accident. Innovations generated by accident raise no difficulties for the conservative theory: here society itself constitutes the filtering mechanism which determines the sorts of accidental innovation which will be allowed to survive and to

exert an influence upon subsequent developments in practice and technique.

What, however, of those cases where it is impossible to assert that an innovation is merely the result of accident? The history of art bears witness to the existence of individuals who seem to manifest a power or capacity to initiate new forms or styles, and to carry their audiences and fellow artists with them to such a degree that, through their influence, a succession of novel practices comes to be established. Here, surely, it is the individual, and not society as a whole, who serves as filter through which innovation flows.

The problem of providing an account of what might be called radical creativity must be faced by every theory which would wish to draw attention to the essentially social nature of the phenomena of art. It is particularly pressing for conservative or traditionalistic theories of the type sketched above, for the insistence upon the determining role of practices, i.e. of entities inextricably social in nature, may seem in the end to be capable of being supported without reservation only in relation to works of art which are such as to exhibit no trace of originality whatsoever. Theories of this kind, it could then be argued, would have ignored precisely what is essential to the artistic process.

How, then, are we to give an account of artistic innovation or originality, of the capacity of exceptional individuals to initiate new artistic forms or techniques or to produce works of art which are exceptional in some relevant respect? It would be straining credibility to assert that such individuals are extraordinary only in the sense that they had served as the point of convergence for a whole series of innovatory accidents. It would, on the other hand, be to seek refuge in irrationality to talk instead of the given individuals as manifesting peculiar, not further explicable qualities of 'genius' or 'inspiration'. This would be to abandon the project of a *theory* of creativity.

Such considerations have given rise to the attempt to construct psychological theories of the artistic process, to conceptions of the creative artist as an individual who has a capacity to *think out for himself* new standards and

rules, to instill in himself novel competences and to manifest these competences in his creation of works of art, independently of any background of established practices. Such conceptions lead, when taken to extremes, to the denial of any social conception of art. For if the individual artist is conceived as having the capacity to think out new artistic forms for himself, then it would begin to appear as though the present or future acceptance of his creative efforts on the part of society as a whole were nothing more than a dispensable trimming to his activities. To grant to the artist this independent power of creation would seem to imply that innovatory works of art may still exist, *as works of art*, even in the face of total apathy, or antipathy, on the part of all actual or possible audiences. This would imply a complete inversion of the dependence relations between the individual and social moments of the process of artistic creation as set forth above. The social moments are no longer the governors of the artistic process, but are reduced to the status of mere epiphenomena.

It may be thought that since the two sorts of doctrine were developed initially to deal with two different sets of case, there must be room in a total theory for elements of both. Psychologistic (individualistic) intuitions could be brought into play to deal with those artistic processes which seem to manifest a breaking free from established practices, where the individual artist is apparently striding forward in advance of his audience; conservative (social) intuitions to deal with processes which are essentially reproductive of existing styles, where the artist is working in such a way as to accommodate himself to the tastes and competences of his audience.

For all its superficial attractiveness, however, there are serious difficulties with an eclectic theory of this kind. For how are we to account within its terms for the mechanisms which establish, for any given instance of extraordinary or innovatory activity on the part of some professing artist, that the products of this activity are innovatory *art*, and not, in the terms of our discussion above, mere lumps of stone (or mere manifestations of aggression or pique)? Some innovations do indeed prove to be of such a nature that they are able to call forth

corresponding practices from society as a whole. But this is just to say that they do, at some stage, satisfy the requirements of the conservative theory. The proponents of extreme forms of psychologism may be prepared to issue a blanket acknowledgment of *all* products of innovatory activity as works of art, simply because they appear novel or strange, and doctrines of this kind are reflected in many currently popular conceptions of the artist as essentially a rebel or baiter of society. Against these 'perverse opinions and follies', however, the proponent of the conservative doctrine must once more have the last word: for only some products of innovatory activity will — at some point in the future — manifest a capacity to call forth associated practices in society as a whole, will become, that is to say, accepted in the *practice* of society as works of art (and the condition that an object be accepted in the practice of society is, of course, considerably stronger than the condition that it be, say, hung in a gallery).

The proponent of extreme psychologism is prepared to reject any distinction between true and false innovation, and therefore he is prepared also to erase the distinction between the truly creative artist and the rebel or deviant. One might, however, be tempted to suppose that a less extreme eclectic theory can be developed, a theory which would rescue the distinction between truly artistic creation and spurious innovation by offering a substantive account of this distinction, for example by providing a specification in psychological terms of the different kinds of attitudes or processes of thought which are the accompaniments of creative activity. But is it really possible to distinguish true from false innovation by reference to a distinction among kinds of mental states or processes? The desire merely to provoke may after all, in isolated instances, give rise to truly creative art, and there is no guarantee that the intention to produce creative art will lead to anything more than the production of lumps of stone.

More careful reflection suggests, in fact, that to seek a criterion of innovation in any objectively determinable feature of the processes of thought of individual artists must be a fruitless enterprise. These processes are accessible, at best, through autobiographical reports whose

reliability is incapable of being independently established. And even the evidence that is provided by such reports suggests that what goes on in the artist's mind during the process of creation is at most connected only loosely to his productive actions. But how could this be otherwise? For if these actions are to lead to the production of works of art which are, in the strict sense, innovatory, then it seems difficult to imagine how their creation could have been the result of any *articulate* process of thinking out beforehand. For such thinking must itself, by the arguments advanced above, depend upon a background of already existing practices,³⁴ and thus the products to which it may give rise cannot be innovatory, but at best the realisation of forms and structures that are already latent in these existing practices. Society, once again, asserts its authority over the claims of the individual artist.

The only remaining alternative for the proponent of a psychologistic conception is to assert that the mental processes which accompany creative activity are essentially *inarticulate*.³⁵ To adopt such a view, however, is to abandon the attempt to provide a substantive theory of the nature of innovatory activity. For its appeal to the notion of inarticulate thinking, like the appeals of earlier, romantic philosophers to the notions of genius or inspiration, leads us back once more into the realm of the inexplicable.

6. Outlines of a Theory

Can we, then, develop a more adequate version of the conservative theory, which — while acknowledging the central determining role of practice and tradition in the world of art — is nevertheless able to recognise some creative power in the exceptional individual? Is it possible, that is to say, to develop a substantive theory of individual creativity which does not appeal to spurious powers of reason, or to a spurious freedom, of the individual artist?

A still provisional starting point for such a theory may be formulated as follows: the creative individual is not someone who has an extraordinary capacity somehow to think out new forms or practices for himself; he is, rather, someone who is able to immerse himself in an existing practice — or be immersed by his master — to an extraordinary degree. An account of this kind brings us back once more to our comparison of the artist with the craftsman. It stresses the importance of those kinds of rigorous processes of training which endow the creative artist with a total competence in his medium, and presents a view of radical creativity as the achievement of an individual who manifests an exceptional tractability in relation to a given practice, to the extent that he is able to move within it with perfect (thoughtless) ease and so tease out its hitherto unforeseen possibilities.³⁶ All human beings are, it would seem, born with a tractability of this kind in relation to the rudimentary practices of ordinary language, but some infants would seem to manifest the same tractability also in relation to the practices of, say, music or chess or mathematics.

This provisional theory offers an account only of that kind of artistic creativity which consists in drawing out the possibilities of an already existing practice (in bringing to consummation a form or style already established in the work of others). Products of creative activity of this kind are not, of course, truly novel at all. The truly creative artist is normally conceived not as an individual who brings to perfection the work of others; he is, rather, someone who himself initiates forms and practices hitherto unrecognised. Thus he works ahead of, and not in the wake of, the relevant public. We should not, however, be misled into exaggerating the differences between these two kinds of creative activity. As the arguments above were designed to show, even the products of truly innovatory activity cannot be entirely alien to already existing practices. They must embody a latent tendency to call forth that *work* on the part of an audience which would give rise — at some point in the future — to corresponding appreciative reactions. And we can reasonably suppose that an audience will manifest a willingness to undergo the processes of self-training which would be necessary to

come to terms with such products only if it recognises something in them which would justify such expenditure of effort. An object which was, in all aesthetically relevant respects, entirely alien to existing audiences, could embody no tendency to call forth appreciative reactions, and it would be inexplicable how an object of this kind could become accepted as a work of art.

Truly creative activity — where it is not a matter of accident — must therefore reflect existing practices. How, then, is it possible that it should bear the mark of innovation? This paradox might, perhaps, be resolved along the following lines: the truly creative artist is, again, an artist who has been able to immerse himself in existing practices to the extent that they have become plastic in his hands. His creativity consists, however, not in the fact that he has drawn out hitherto unforeseen possibilities of these practices; it consists, rather, in the fact that he has been able to immerse himself in disparate systems of practices in such a way that, through his productive activities, practices hitherto alien have become *fused together*.³⁷ This revised account of creativity is able to reconcile the possibility of truly innovatory activity with a commitment to the dependence of all artistic processes upon corresponding socially established competences: an audience is able to bring itself to a position where it can appreciate innovatory works of art, because these works have themselves been created against a background of practices with at least some of which its members are familiar.

The revised theory is able to do justice to the fact that the creative individual seems in almost every case to have no explicit awareness of the nature or root of his innovation. One may argue, indeed, that a fusion of practices of the given kind, if it is to give rise to successful works of art embodying styles or forms which are truly novel, could not, in the relevant respects, be the intended result of any deliberate process of thinking out on the part of the artist in question. The necessary processes of thinking could exist only to the extent that the relevant fusion of practices had taken place already. Thus there is no higher level of practice-independent 'pure reason' which would enable practices to be compared and contrasted, their

fusibility to be established by means of some kind of rational process of calculation.³⁸ The truly creative artist is indeed typically someone who is so completely immersed in his medium that he may remain unaware of the fact that a process of fusion, and the initiation of a novel practice, has taken place at all.

It is worth stressing, finally, that the revised theory — in marked contrast to psychological theories of the type mentioned above — admits of an empirical evaluation. Thus it would be possible, by investigating a range of particular examples of artistic creativity — and perhaps also by looking at similar phenomena in, for example, the sphere of economic innovation or scientific theorising — to establish the extent to which creativity, where it is not simply a matter of accident, does in fact reflect the fusion of practices in which the individual in question has been immersed. The consideration of, for example, the creativity of the late Habsburg Empire,³⁹ or of the influence of Japanese art upon Western painters, of the role of Italian forms in the music of the German baroque, or of Lessing's fusion of Greek and native German dramatic forms, to choose just a few examples at random, suggests not merely that the theory would receive some considerable degree of support from such inquiries, but also that the very process of putting the theory to the test in this way may throw new and interesting light on the phenomena investigated.

Notes

1. Thanks are due to Lydia Goehr, Ed Swiderski and Johan Wrede for valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. As concerns phenomenology, the ideas presented are derived from the work of the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden, whose investigations of the stratified structures

exhibited by works of art have in recent years become increasingly familiar to writers on aesthetics. I have paid particular attention also however to Ingarden's purely philosophical writings, especially to his *The Controversy over the Existence of the World* (1964/5), a treatise on ontology in very much the same essentialistic vein as is adopted in the present paper. As concerns Marxism — a term here employed in the loosest possible sense — my account has been influenced not only by a very limited reading of Marx himself, but also by Ingarden's Marxist critics in Poland and by the works of the Italian Marxist philosopher Ferruccio Rossi-Landi.

3. On the role of this assumption in the thinking of the later Wittgenstein, see Rossi-Landi 1981, sec. 3f.

4. See e.g. Wrede 1980.

5. This terminology is derived from the first volume of Ingarden 1964/5, vol. I, sec. 13.

6. A human being, similarly, is sensitive in his internal constitution to variations in environmental conditions relating to climate, diet, and so on. See Ingarden 1964/5, vol. I, sec. 15, vol. II/2, pp. 53f. and sec. 62.

7. Similarly they may be either single-rayed, where an object is dependent for its existence on precisely one other object, or multi-rayed, where an object is simultaneously dependent upon a manifold or plurality of other objects. These and related distinctions are discussed in detail by Husserl in his third Logical Investigation. Cf. also the papers by Mulligan, Simons, Smith and aggregates thereof, in the list of references below.

8. One thinks here particularly of Jakobson, Bühler and the Prague School: see e.g. Holenstein 1975, 1975a and 1979, though similar ideas have been propounded also more recently by proponents of linguistic and cognitive universals. Note that talk of essences or kinds and of essential or material structures can be granted varying degrees of ontological credence. Thus it need not be un-

derstood as involving any commitment to entities existing in some Platonic realm in addition to the specific individual objects which are their instances; it may for example be taken as a shorthand device for talk about the similarities or affinities which obtain between objects taken purely as individuals.

9. See the survey in Holenstein 1986.

10. This holds also in relation to many of the structures studied in other human sciences, such as economics or jurisprudence: see Smith 1986a and the references there given.

11. Cf. above all the works of E. Rosch and her associates. For the use of the opposition between standard and non-standard instances in linguistics see e.g. Hudson 1984 (discussions of the "selective inheritance principle"). The basic idea goes back at least as far as Aristotle. For some discussion of related ideas in more recent philosophy see Wolterstorff's account of properties 'normative and non-normative within a kind' (1980), and Ingarden's discussions of 'borderline cases' (1931, ch. 12 and 1976).

12. Marx 1975, pp. 193ff. Cf. also Rossi-Landi 1975, 2.3.2 *et passim*. A moment is, in the terminology introduced above, a dependent part. The use of the terminology of *Momente* and of the theory of dependence relations which join *Momente* together in different kinds of wholes is one further point of contact between Hegel and Marx on the one hand and the early phenomenological tradition on the other.

13. Marx 1975, p. 192.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 194f.

16. The conception of human language as an instrument of certain kinds of human work is defended in Rossi-Landi 1975.

17. Marx 1975, pp. 194f.
18. Again, it must be borne in mind that we are at this stage dealing always with standard instances of the kinds in question.
19. Marx 1975, p. 195.
20. Ibid., p. 192.
21. See Sowell, p. 14 *et passim*, for a useful discussion of this aspect of Marx's thought.
22. 1971, p. 24. Compare also Marx 1975, p. 198.
23. Cf. Marx 1975, pp. 196f.; Rossi-Landi 1975, especially 2.3.2.
24. 1971, p. 18.
25. Generic dependence is in some respects a generalisation of the multi-rayed dependence introduced in note 7 above. A related notion of generic dependence is discussed in Simons 1982.
26. See e.g. the discussion of derived and non-derived purely intentional objects in Ingarden 1931, esp. pp. 126f. of trans.
27. Because Ingarden, in his aesthetic writings, concentrates almost always on such genetically standard works of art, it has often been supposed that his theory is unable to account satisfactorily for innovatory forms (see e.g. Lissa 1975). This is, however, to misunderstand the more general philosophical background to Ingarden's views. His concentration on standard cases derives simply from the fact that the non-standard case can be understood only against the background of a prior understanding of the standard cases. Thus it is in relation to the latter that the ontological peculiarities of works of art, and of in-

tentional objects in general, must first of all be established.

28. The instruments of this process will include also, for example, works of criticism and of literary history, courses of lectures on literary theory, and so on. Ingarden's extensive writings on literary concretisation and on the 'life' of the literary work (see e.g. 1931, ch. 13) consist, in effect, in a discussion of these systems of mutual interdependence between literary work and literary audience.
29. For the sake of simplicity we shall ignore further aspects of the complex institutional structure and subdivisions of this general public. Thus we shall ignore, for example, the special roles of critics, teachers, publishers, gallery owners and so on.
30. It is not always clear what this material is: consider, for example, the case of literature. (Rossi-Landi would have argued that it is here language itself that is the material worked.)
31. More precisely: that the new form which comes to be possessed by the materials of this process is the form of something which can properly count as a work of art.
32. It should be noted that we are not committing ourselves to the stronger claim, characteristic of the subjectivist current in much recent philosophy of art, that a work of art exists only to the extent that it is the object of specific appreciative reactions on the part of some individual member of the relevant audience. Ingarden sees the literary work as a complex but unified structure, dependent for its existence upon but not reducible to certain tendencies towards appreciative reaction on the part of its readership (1931, sections 18 and 64ff.). The subjectivist, on the other hand, sees the work itself as being reborn in each successive reading. Thus he rejects the very idea of a literary work as a common pole of the responses of its readers. There exist, he argues, only the various readings which each successive subject creates for

himself. It is a consequence of Ingarden's view that a given reading may be more or less right or wrong, more or less correct or incorrect, according to the degree to which it succeeds in concretising structures latent in the work itself. One principal task of the literary theorist consists, on this view, in the rigorous statement of the criteria by which the degree of correctness of a given reading may be established. From the standpoint of subjectivism, in contrast, each reading is as good (or as bad) as any other, and the search for publicly acceptable criteria of correctness is misconceived.

33. This diagram may be compared to the diagram of the structure of action provided by Nordenstam in his 1978, p. 71. Nordenstam's views on these matters seem to coincide in some respects with those presented here; they are however formulated within the framework of the later Wittgensteinian philosophy, rather than in the vocabulary of Husserl and Ingarden; thus they dispense with all varieties of essentialism, talking instead of 'family resemblances'.

34. Aesthetic concepts cannot be attributed to those who are known to lack the relevant skills: cf. Nordenstam 1980, 1981.

35. Views of this kind are nowadays popularly formulated in the vocabulary of psychoanalysis.

36. The associated competence becomes, in effect, a part of his physiology. See Smith 1986a, Grassl and Smith 1986.

37. I owe this account of creativity to J. C. Nyiri, whose formulation in turn has its roots in ideas put forward by Wittgenstein and by the Hungarian art historian Arnold Hauser. Note that the conception of creativity as a matter of the fusion of disparate practices is to be distinguished from views of creativity as consisting merely in the bringing together of hitherto separate elements and forms. See, on this, the discussion in Grassl and Smith (1986) of the opposition between what we there call the 'crude diversity theory' and the 'parallel reference system theory'.

38. Hence one cannot agree with Wrede when he suggests that 'The inventive or creative activity of the artist or author does not in any significant way differ from that of any problem solver, a philosopher, an engineer, or a carpenter' (1980, p. 140). Wrede seems to defend a view of this sort also in section 6 of his paper in the present volume, though it now seems to play a less important role in his general conception of the creative process. Note that a similar running together of two quite different sorts of phenomena — calculation, and what one might call instantaneous perception — is manifested also in many writings on the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in economics. A more adequate theory of entrepreneurial perception has however been put forward by the economists of the Austrian school, most persuasively by Israel Kirzner (1979).

39. See the arguments in Grassl and Smith 1986.

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