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# STUDIES IN THE DISSOLUTION OF CLASSICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE  
IN AN AGE OF  
SOCIOLOGICAL REASON AND HISTORICAL METHOD



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## SUMMARY

What is the relation between philosophical analysis and sociological method? Sociology has traditionally looked to Philosophy to provide either an indubitable epistemic foundation for its practices or alternatively to legislate invariant criteria of scientificity which might guide the social sciences in questions of methodology. But has Philosophy itself such an autonomy from the developing knowledge domains of the different sciences, natural and social? A structural analysis of philosophic discourse in the twentieth century reveals as a key element of recent philosophical thought a central anthropologism. This study traces the rupture in philosophic thought which has occurred with the dissolution and collapse of classical epistemology and the emergence in turn of a radically new mode of philosophizing based on a recognition of the centrality of social reality to ontological judgement and epistemological critique. Just as the analytic epistemology of the seventeenth century can be seen as an accommodation by Philosophy to the emergence and development of the empirical natural sciences, so the appearance of 'conversational' epistemology can be viewed as Philosophy's attempt to think the implications for the nature of knowledge-in-general of the emergence and subsequent development of the social sciences at the end of the nineteenth century. The key theoretical instance which demarcates classical epistemology from the anthropologistic philosophy since the 1920's is its inability to accommodate the category of intersubjectivity successfully within its epistemological structure. Contemporary philosophy, phenomenological, analytical, pragmatist and marxist, is forced to grapple with the new awareness of man's essential sociality. This has profound implications for epistemology. The question of the relationship of philosophical analysis to sociological method must be re-addressed in the light of the revealed epistemic proximity of the two disciplines. What sort of philosophical critique, we ask, is possible and appropriate in an age of sociological reason and historical method?

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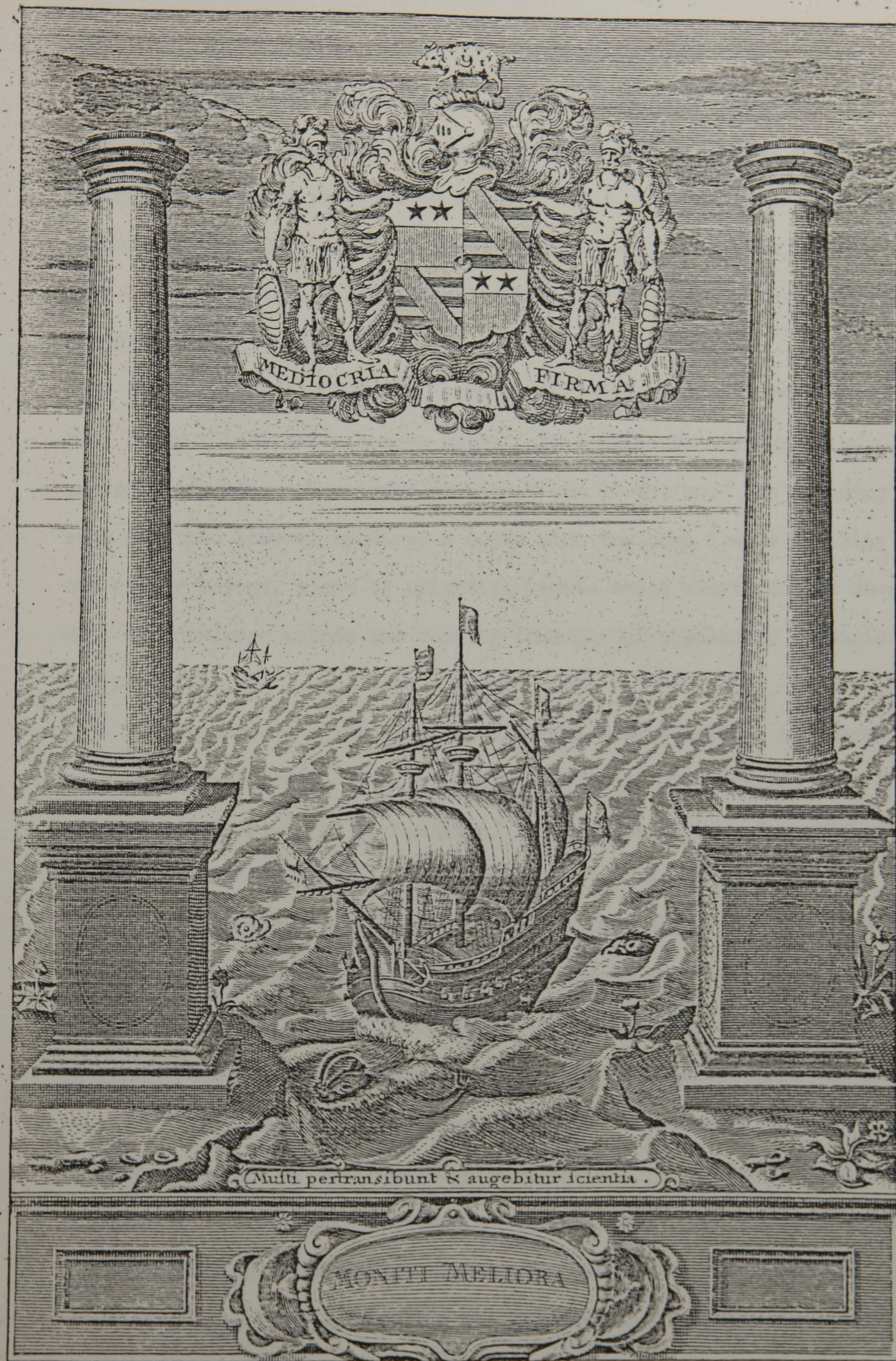
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## INTRODUCTION

"Many will cross and knowledge will be expanded". This plate (Fig. 1) appears at the head of Francis Bacon's *Novum Organon*. It represents the voyage of the fragile ark of science, guided by the navigational skills provided by the new "real philosophy" or empirical method, beyond the limits of classical learning, symbolized in this case by the Pillars of Hercules, the imagined terrestrial limit of the Classical Greek world.<sup>1</sup>

Bacon announces that the founding of "real studies", real because they study things and not mere words, alone promises a progressive augmentation of our knowledge of matter and invention. The founding of such a method however requires a break with the past i.e. a breaking out of, or beyond, a set of epistemic limits which constrain the development of knowledge within the choking tendrils of scholastic rhetoric and tradition.

Philosophy, as a set of methodological reflections on the basis and epistemological implications of the new science, will preside over this rupture. Philosophy is a vigilance. It is pledged to safeguard and strengthen the "proficiency and advancement of learning, divine and human", promised by real studies. Bacon's philosophy confronts the Aristotelian tradition at the historical moment that marks its final dissolution. For him, it represents a decaying carcass, a stranded leviathan, washed ashore and left behind by the tide of time. It is an obstacle. Its continued presence is a source of putrefaction, a malignance within active knowledge acquisition. It is the origin he believes of the various "distempers" which attack real learning in his age. Natural philosophy must shatter the bewitching dominance of Scholasticism which has ossified the Aristotelian heritage in a welter of disputational rhetoric.

In the new organon of Bacon, classical epistemology is prescribed

a definite function, if not actually given a specific form. It becomes concerned with the underwriting of guarantees for natural science; a search for the certainty of a method. Classical epistemology emerges as a response to the development of natural science in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; that is its engagement. This epistemic terrain, demarcated by the necessity to think the implications of the appearance of natural science, experimental and theoretical, for the conditions of possibility and structure of knowledge per se, is that upon which Hobbes and Descartes, Locke and Leibnitz, and Kant find themselves. In my structural exploration of classical epistemology I have attempted to sketch some of the major discursive dimensions of this terrain. I have invoked the notion of "egologicism" to graphicize the essential structure of this discourse.

Classical epistemology, a prococious offspring of an emerging bourgeois culture, has at its foundations an a-social conception of self, language and cognition - the epistemological absoluteness of the ego is dyadically related to the objectivity of the world-as-phenomena. Each is a mirror reflection of the other. This subject-object problematic forbids any real epistemological consideration of the phenomenon of inter-subjectivity. Positivist Sociology, as explicated by Durkheim is the sorry heir to systematic oversight of the epistemological implications of social reality.

My examination of classical epistemology and its egological structure is prosecuted by an analysis of the theories of signification and cognition, at play in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In particular I examine the ideal language schemes which so preoccupied the philosophers and scientists of this period. In these plans for a universal character we witness the utopian yet concrete expression of that distinctive series of intermingling themes and philosophies of signification, cognition and mind which indeed characterizes egological epistemology. This invaluable textual resource is explored (all too schematically) in chapters two and

three. What, I feel, a critical reading of these schemes and the other texts of the classical epistemologists reveal is the high degree of continuity within classical discourse, a unity undisturbed by the post facto attribution of the labels "empiricism" and "rationalism" to the differing dynamics within egologicism.

In the fourth chapter the role of Kant is examined as the concrete agent of synthesise of the two philosophic traditions. Again however, the historical and structural conditions for this explicit attempt at synthesis are given in the very unconscious unities already at play in and between these traditions i.e. in egological discourse itself. Kant articulates in his critical epistemology a transcendental grounding for epistemic egoism. The place of scientific rationality is determined within the coordinates of human knowledge and purpose, as circumscribed by bourgeois individualism. The measure of scientific objectivity become the subject itself; not the concrete, human, socially and historically located subject but the transcendental self, an ideal surrogate. In the course of his critique Kant sketches the limits of egological discourse itself. These limits will remain intact and unbreached effectively for almost a century.

Since the end of the nineteenth century however, the limits of philosophical discourse, that is what can be said in a particular period intelligibly and what remains necessarily unsaid, unsayable, have been increasingly challenged. Classical epistemology in the egological mode comes under fire. That structure of philosophic discourse which is heralded by Bacon and Descartes methodological prescriptions, given its definitive<sup>form</sup> by Kant and which Hegel struggles in vain to surpass, is itself in dissolution. In Husserl's work we divine that acute sense of panic which is the effect of bourgeois rationalism's perception of its own immanent collapse but simultaneous inability to cross beyond its own egological limits and think the terms of the new socially reflexive

philosophy. Wittgenstein too, in his earlier work struggles to defend European rationality by imprisoning it within an egological theory of representation established as early as the seventeenth century.

The nineteenth century saw the emergence and development of a new mode of knowledge - the social sciences. With the development of the sciences of History, Linguistics and Political Economy, and lastly the emergence of that fledgling discipline we now know as Sociology, Philosophy was again forced to redefine itself. And, just as in the seventeenth century the emergence of a radically new mode of acquiring knowledge viz. the empirical natural sciences led to a theoretical reflection on the conditions for gaining and validating knowledge in general, so similarly, in the nineteenth century, the development of the social sciences became the occasion and indeed condition for a rethinking, by Philosophy, of the general form of our knowing. The site and stake of philosophy in the twentieth century has been this rupture in knowledge produced by the unsolicited emergence of the social sciences.

(But where, we may ask, is the new organon?)

Indeed, the major trend in twentieth century philosophising in the four major traditions, Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy, phenomenology, marxism and pragmatism, has been a departure from egological modes of theorizing which begin from the asserted primacy of the cognizing ego and givenness of the world-as-object, and a corresponding convergence on a philosophic universe of discourse characterized by an emergent interest in the social construction of reality.

The terrain where-upon this convergence in philosophic thought occurs since the 1920's, I have called the "conversational paradigm". The metaphor of the conversation serves to highlight the determining characteristic of this thought, namely its opposition to the epistemic egoism of Classical epistemology and the new stress on language and social life as constitutive dimensions of ~~epistemology~~ **epistemology**. The metaphor peculiar to

egologicism of cognition-as-guided-vision is replaced by a model which lays stress on the mediating role of human dialogue and interaction in man's cognitive appropriation of the world-as-object. In addition, the metaphor indicates, if only obliquely, the limitations of the philosophical revolution of the twenties; the impartial rupture from the subject-object problematic of egological discourse; the particular epistemic effects of the cloying residues of egologicism, namely the appearance of a personalistic philosophical anthropology which comes to dominate the thought of the period.

The second half of the 1920's is the crucial period here. For the first time a theoretical reflection on the centrality of social process and communicational practice becomes central to epistemology.

However Philosophy has continued to successfully evade its responsibility to think through the implications of its frightening proximity to the social sciences. This it has been able to do by employing a number of differing tactics. Firstly, in its positivist phase, it attempted to replace the enquiry into the theoretical implications of the specific contiguity of Philosophy and Sociology with the prescriptive activity of legislating invariant criteria of scientificity which Sociology and the other social sciences must follow if they are to be deemed scientific. These criteria in turn are generated by philosophers of science from an idealized reading and hypostatization of the methods of certain of the physical sciences.

Alternatively Philosophy, ignorant of the historical fact so acutely grasped by Bacon, that specific sciences always precede and surpass their philosophical critiques, attempts to establish an apodictic foundation for the social sciences in philosophy itself. Husserl attempts to do precisely this.

More recently, analytic philosophy in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, having abandoned its foundational pretensions has conceived of the

relationship between the disciplines of Sociology and Philosophy as one in which a second order activity, Philosophy, non-substantive, rather analytic in character, concerns itself with the analysis of the methodological assumptions and conceptual "logic" of a first order practice Sociology. This movement differs from the earlier prescriptive relationship fostered under positivism, in that in post-Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy, the logic of sociological explanation and theorizing is not merely subjected to the withering criticism of philosophy, but actually reduced in toto to a philosophical analysis of the conceptual structures and linguistic usages prevalent in a particular cultural "form of life". Sociology is construed as misbegotten epistemology. This is Winch's project.

Contemporaneously Continental philosophy, committed and restless as ever in the post-war period, attempted this reduction by proclaiming with a heightened sense of moral indignation, the essential centrality of philosophical anthropology to social science; measurement and logic must give way to "man", it preached. History and social structure became merely the phenomenal shell, the muted shadow, of man's development as human essence. The sciences of History and Political Economy are replaced by a phenomenology of inter-personal relations which plots the invariant and contentless structure of such interaction.

With the advent of Critical Social Theory and Structuralism, and the revival in Marxist philosophy as a meta-theory of philosophical knowledge, it has been increasingly difficult for philosophers to evade their reflexive responsibilities. The relation of Philosophy and social science can remain unthought no longer.

These three approaches share a concern (if they share nothing else) with a critique of attempts to explain a philosopher's "mistakes" and "problems" by questioning his individual consciousness on some standard of eternal verification. Instead, they insist on treating the author



as an agent within a discourse and set of social relations of knowledge production, which render that agent as theorizer indeed possible. The concern becomes to objectively reconstruct, by historical and semiological analysis, the essential forms of his or her discourse, erecting in them a definite structure and intrinsic meaning, and plotting their specific existential base.

Similarly I have attempted to show in this work that many of the traditional problems which have occupied and still bewitch bourgeois philosophy viz. that of the possibility of our knowledge of other minds; of the "meaning of meaning"; of the search for a radical and indubitable foundation for our knowledge are in fact non-problems generated from the discursive structure of an outmoded structure of thought. A "solution" to these "problems" must be sought outside the discursive structure which they themselves so adequately characterize.

However this essay is not a work of theoretical exposition of either Critical Theory or Structuralism or indeed of recent Marxist epistemology (though it is certainly indebted in its method and stance to each of these three methodological approaches). Rather, it is a return to the scene of a rupture i.e. a return to that pervading discontinuity in the fabric of European knowledge which marks the appearance of the historical, cultural and social sciences. It is an attempt to trace the effects of this rupture in a particular region of theoretical discourse - Philosophy. The conversational paradigm which appears in the 1920's is Philosophy's slow and reluctant accommodation to the appearance of a mode of knowledge which in describing its object, necessarily refers to the conditions of its own existence.

But, we return to the scene of this rupture precisely to illustrate the discursive foundations of Philosophy in the twentieth century. Only by so doing can the question - "What sort of philosophical method is

possible and appropriate in an age of sociological reason and historical method?" be approached intelligibly and indeed asked at all. The discovery of the emergence and development of sociology as a central tenet in philosophic theorizing in the twentieth century, albeit refracted and obscured in the viscous density of philosophical discourse itself, throws a radically new light on the question of the relationship between Philosophy and Social Science. For if as I have attempted to show, philosophic method and social theory have a common epistemic foundation, forged by social science if only later explicitly articulated by philosophy, then claims for the specificity of Philosophy can no longer rest on the asserted formal and conceptual nature of philosophical analysis as opposed to the substantive empirical approach of Sociology. Nor can they rely on Philosophy's pretensions with dealing with a formal ontology of being human i.e. a philosophical anthropology as distinct from the social sciences empirical accounts of historical process, social structure and personality. The former grounds for Philosophy's pretensions are inadmissible, for analytical philosophy has, in its conversational phase, abandoned the rigid distinctions between conceptual and empirical issues, analytic and synthetic conditions. All of these are recognized as being quite inapplicable to a conventionalist approach to language and meaning. The latter condemns Philosophy to moralism, anti-scientism and irrationalism and still paradoxically remains dependent, even in its illusions, on its epistemic proximity to the social sciences. This it cannot exorcize.

The fundamental issue of the specificity of philosophic method in an age of sociological reason and historical method is re-addressed in the final chapter of the work. Here I address the central "problem" of the relativism which seems to haunt any historical epistemology which confronts the absolutisms of traditional philosophy of scientific method with a sociologistic scepticism. The central problem within philosophy in the conversational mode has, I would argue, become how to theorize

certain social relations as constitutive of scientific practice, but maintain a non-reductive and hence non-relativistic account of their relationship. The problem is more properly seen as one of having adequate theories of history, of scientific production and of language. A properly materialist epistemology will I argue, draw on each of these three areas. Increasingly a materialist epistemology is emerging as a tentative synthesis between a concrete history of scientific practices and a semiotic study of scientific and other theoretical discourses. This synthesis is accomplished within the theoretical ambit of historical materialism, the historical science of social formations and their determining modes of production. Hopefully this study may contribute to that synthesis.

Chapters five and six, and indeed seven and eight return directly to the scene of the rupture. After pausing at the beginning of chapter five, to trace in schematic form some of the major structural unities and differences which define egologicism, I attempt to give some textual content to the analysis of discontinuities between egological and conversational discourse. This is done by sketching the work of a number of authors each of whom theorize at the very interface of these two discourses; in the slip-stream of that discontinuity. Wittgenstein and Husserl explore the limits of egologicism but from within, the ~~latter~~ in his inevitable return to that "wonder of wonders" transcendental subjectivity. The ~~former~~ does so in his critique of pure language, the Tractatus. Alternatively, Durkheim and Sartre find themselves, almost unwillingly, outside of the apodicticity of egological discourse. Each confronts the centrality of the social as a constitutive dimension of being and knowing, but each remains trapped by the residues of egologicism and in particular the choking tendrils of the subject-object problematic. Each remains incorrigibly petit-bourgeois.

It is however chronologically much earlier in the precocious theorizing

of Marx and Nietzsche, the one critically reflecting on the sciences of History and Political Economy, the other on that of Philology that we get the clearest glimpse in the nineteenth century of the possibility of a reflexive philosophy. In the depth and fervour of their critique of classical epistemology, so different and yet so alarmingly similar, we witness a radically new and fundamentally materialist set of philosophical practices. Durkheim and "Sociology" trapped within a positivism, itself a residue of classical epistemology are unable to offer such a trenchant critique of bourgeois culture and philosophy. They remain flanked and trapped by the antinomies of egologicism.

What we have in these chapters (6, 7, 8) is not a comprehensive history of philosophical thought in the second half of the nineteenth century but a series of structural snapshots of the dissolution of Classical epistemology and the emergence of a socially and historically reflexive Philosophy. Alligned alongside the earlier sketches of the emergence and formation of classical epistemology given in the first chapters, they permit some indication of the discontinuities which have structured modern philosophy.

To give a sharper focus to my analysis of the dissolution of classical epistemology and the emergence of conversational paradigm as the philosophical accommodation to the appearance of the social sciences, I have treated in some depth a segment of a particular philosophical tradition - phenomenology. Here in the of the texts of Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty we can witness, in the debate between transcendental and existential phenomenology, the epistemic effects, of dissolution and emergence, of discontinuity and residue, involved in the stormy passage beyond egological discourse to the conversational paradigm. Simultaneously we glance over our shoulders at a series of strikingly parallel developments taking place in the 1920's in the pragmatist (Mead and Dewey) Anglo-saxon (Wittgenstein) and Marxist

traditions (Volosinov). We can in the comparison get some small measure of this crucial period in the redefinition of modern thought. This period in which the philosophy of language, mind and science is rethought from the fundamental starting point of social process and communicational practice.

In the final and necessarily lengthy chapter I return to my initial preoccupation of chapter one with philosophical method. What is the appropriate form of philosophical method in an age of sociological reason and historical method?

Hopefully having revealed the discursive terrain on which philosophy is wittingly or unwittingly conducted via an analysis of the conversational paradigm, the terms in which this question must be posed will be more obvious. If as I would argue, Philosophy since the 1920's has been a reluctant thinking-through of the implications, epistemological, moral and political of man's fundamental sociality and historicity, then the poverty of analytical philosophy's pretensions vis a vis Sociology should perhaps be apparent.

The practice of social science, precedes, surpasses and constantly informs its philosophical critique.

But what manner of epistemological critique or intervention can philosophy mount with regards the social sciences?

Surely science is not immune to philosophical critique?

I believe these perplexing questions can best be answered by examining the role of philosophical reflection and critique within the sciences of History and Revolutionary Politics. Within the traditional Marxist concerns about the relationship of theory to practice, that is revolutionary theory to the political practice of the Worker's movements, the question can at least be pinned down, and the issue of Philosophy's relevance given some determinate content.

Sadly however, even within the Marxist intellectual tradition, the status of philosophy and its stake in the defence of Marxism, as a set

of historical, economical and political sciences, has been obscured by a new scholasticism; obscured by those, to quote Bacon, who

"hunt more after words than matter; and more after the choiceness of phrase, and the round and clear compositions of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgement."2

This new scholasticism, the degeneracy of Marxism as a living theoretical and politically active tradition, must grasp itself as a political and cultural effect, i.e. as a tragic sublimation of the intellectual's political impotence in the labour and socialist movement in Europe today. It represents in all its theoretical pomp and circumstance an obscurantist refuge and a crucial failure of nerve on the part of the contemporary socialist intellectual. Where are those who dare to think?

## FOOTNOTES

1. That Bacon should have chosen this nautical analogy is no mere coincidence. He took an active part in planning and administering the colonial and plundering exploits of the English State at the start of the seventeenth century and personally drew up an extensive plan for the colonization of the province of Connaught in Ireland. The expansion of English influence and control, both military and economic, was the material background of these voyages of discovery. The rapid development of State sponsored commercial capitalism provided the material context for the 'freeing of the human spirit' entailed in both the new science and navigations.
2. Francis Bacon: Of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human, Collected Works, Vol. 1, London, 1765, p.15.

## CHAPTER ONE

### QUESTIONS OF METHOD

"Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation the connection of the social and political structure with production."

*Marx: German Ideology*



In this essay my aim is not to write a comprehensive history of traditional i.e. egological epistemology from its emergence in the classical period to its final dissolution in the phenomenological and irrationalist philosophies of the end of the nineteenth century. Empiricist histories of philosophical ideas provide us with a resource but not a method. Rather, the aim is to delineate the common structure underlying this epistemic history; a structure of a discursive nature, which conditions the developmental changes in classical epistemology and constrains them within a limiting terrain. This patterning of classical epistemology takes the form of an unfolding in historical time of an essential synchrony - the structure of egological discourse. This unfolding however does not follow the simple teleological path of an increasingly refined reason. Neither does it correspond to the methodical progression of logical implication and axiomatic architectonic. Its major dynamic occurs rather off stage in the realm of historic materiality. These changes of real historical moment will be articulated in the re-patterning of the discursive structure of philosophical knowledge.

As Althusser has noted:

"the whole history of Western philosophy" (what I have called egological philosophy) "is dominated not by the 'problem of knowledge', but by the ideological solution, i.e. the solution imposed in advance by practical, religious, ethical and political 'interests' foreign to the reality of the knowledge, which this 'problem' had to receive."<sup>1</sup> R.C., p. 53.

The philosophical question or set of questions around which classical epistemology is organized, is in fact pre-empted by its historically required ideological answer. The problem is formulated to allow a solution essentially dictated by ideological exigencies and interests outside of the process of knowledge. The philosophical question recognizes itself in its ideologically mirrored answer. This ideological answer is represented in and through the specific form of epistemological discourse, just as in a play, action taking

place off stage is represented by the narrative and expressive activities of the actors and by means of a variety of formal devices becomes central to the ongoing plot of the play. That is to say these historical material changes are represented, and not merely reflected, in epistemological discourse. They remain refracted through the specific and formal properties of this philosophical discourse.

The structural history of classical epistemology, i.e. the history of a structure, its emergence, development and dissolution and its theoretical effects is part of a larger area of study. It is only within the wider historical and structural analysis of bourgeois culture at large and individualism as a key moment within this, that the relationship of the historical-material and philosophic discourse can be traced concretely. As Adorno and Goldman have noted the abstruse egological structure of traditional epistemology becomes more intelligible as a product of its time when placed alongside the other major theoretical emanations of bourgeois individualism, namely the political philosophy of social contract and classical political economy. These constellations of bourgeois theoretical reflection, to which we might add the practical discourses of child centered pedagogy and utilitarian jurisprudence, are illuminated from a common source that lies beyond them in the very objective market structure of capitalist society.

And yet, despite the brilliant insights of Marx and after him Adorno, Goldman, and Korsch, a sociology of bourgeois culture, and in particular of bourgeois philosophical knowledge, remains to be written. Marx after his early philosophical phase clearly had other more pressing preoccupations. Adorno who noted that

"the generality of the transcendental subject is that of the functional context of society, of a whole that coalesces from individual spontaneities and qualities, delimits them in turn by the levelling barter principle and virtually deletes them as helplessly dependent on the whole."<sup>2</sup>

was unable to develop this insight. The relationship between the appearance

and centrality of the category of the transcendental subject in traditional epistemology and the universal domination of mankind by the exchange value under capitalism is hinted at in 'Negative Dialectics' but remains unexplored.

Adorno notes:

"The process of abstraction - which philosophy transfigures, and which it ascribes to the knowing subject alone - is taking place in the factual barter society."<sup>3</sup>

But in the end he recoils from the implications of such an analysis.

Dialectics he declares is not a Sociology of Knowledge. The relationship of the two remains unexplored and Critical Theory strives to inherit, in a dialectical but seamless continuity, classical thought.

Goldman in turns tells us that

"It was thus inevitable that the development of a market economy, starting as early as the thirteenth century should progressively transform western thought."<sup>4</sup>

and again

"It seems self-evident that there is a close relation between the development of the market economy, in which every individual appears as the autonomous source of his decisions and actions, and the evolution of these different philosophical visions of the world, all of which treat the individual's consciousness as the absolute origin of his knowledge and action."<sup>5</sup>

Goldman's sketch for a structural analysis of enlightenment philosophy and its materialist foundations remains a cameo. The archaeology of classical thought remains unexplored, despite an attempt to plot what he calls the "inner structure of movement" which lies beyond the division of the movement into separate currents in the consciousness of the enlightenment philosophers. This structure becomes in fact defined as the contrasting and negative image of dialectical materialist thought rather than being investigated <sup>in terms</sup> of its own internal density and processual moments. In turn the relationship between theoretical discourse and material life remains unexplored, both substantively in an account of this historical period and also as a represent-

ative relation which must be thought at the level of theory if materialist epistemology is to be refined. Goldman like Adorno seems more at home in the field of Sociology of Art and Culture than in that of a Sociology of Philosophical Knowledge. Both of them seem reluctant to bring the relativising impetus of the sociology of knowledge to bear in the analysis of philosophical and epistemological thought. For both of them, dialectic materialist thought is the heir to enlightenment philosophy. They are reluctant to despoil the objectivity and truth of this heritage.

And besides, epistemological discourse is obtusely abstract and all but opaque to its historical and material foundations. However within a Sociology of Culture the representative nexus between material life and symbolic practice, so obscured by the abstract and formal refractory structure of epistemology, is rendered indefinitely more apparent by the very expressivity of art and literature and by its iconic form.

More recently Marxist theory of knowledge has further retreated from the task of a materialist sociology of philosophical knowledge. Althusser reacting against earlier supposedly cruder and reductionist theory of ideology, which see philosophy and theoretical ideology in general as a mere expressive epiphenomenon of economic forces, accredits 'theoretical practice' with a high degree of 'specificity' and 'autonomy' with regards other instances of the social formation. In so doing he makes a virtue out of our ignorance of the concrete and conjunctural relations between philosophical knowledge and material life. Or perhaps, he just acknowledges, however obliquely, the difficulty of the task.

Althusser turns instead to the description of the internal structuration of philosophical knowledge and to the theorization of the concepts necessary in such a description. 'Science' is characterized in terms of the metaphor of production. Scientific practice is seen as a complex of definite processes

of production of knowledge, the unifying principle of which is a common conceptual field and set of discrete methods. This metaphor serves to challenge the whole atomistic and abstracted conception of knowledge. In turn, it stresses, although it neither demarcates nor delineates, the historical, epistemic and indeed institutional and technological situatedness of scientific practice. These factors are held to condition the very possibility of that practice. He notes:

"the 'thought' we are discussing here is not a faculty of a transcendental subject or absolute consciousness confronted by the real world as matter; nor is this thought a faculty of a psychological subject, although human individuals are its agents. This thought is the historically constituted system of an apparatus of thought, founded on and articulated to natural and social reality. It is defined by the system of real conditions which make it, if I dare use the phrase, a determinate mode of production of knowledges. As such, it is constituted by a structure which combines the type of object (raw material) on which it labours, the theoretical means of production available (its theory, its method and its technique, experimental or otherwise) and the historical relations (both theoretical, ideological and social) in which it produces."<sup>6</sup>

The key concept at work in Althusser's epistemology is that of problematic. The problematic is a structuration of concepts around a few key terms which may be absent from the actual discourse they condition, but are present in the very range of questions and enquiries delimited within a theoretical discourse. Problematics like all structures have determinate boundaries and are divided from each other by an epistemological break which incommensurably divides them from other bodies of theory. The term, unlike the concept of a paradigm, with which it is often equated, stresses that structurations of knowledge are not merely the ossified product of scientific practice but rather the active mechanism by which scientific practice operates and hence are the epistemic conditions of that practice. We must, argues Althusser, understand how this specific machine operates and its conditions of existence.

However, Althusser's epistemological intervention remains, as in the case

of most materialist epistemology to date, a mere proglomenon to the as yet untackled substantive study of scientific and philosophic knowledge practices and their relationship to other social practices, economic, political and ideological at a specific historical conjuncture. Only the latter type of study, it might be argued, can realise the grand designs of Althusser's critique of traditional epistemology and search for the basis of a materialist epistemology. Pregnant with promise Marxist epistemology wallows, with speculative pleasure, in its own anticipation - incorrigibly philosophical. It remains an intervention.

In practice Althusser distills his essential epistemology from a single source, namely a 'symptomatic reading' of Marx's own texts.<sup>7</sup> Whether a general criteria of scientificity and set of tools for the structural analysis of theoretical discourse can be forged from an analysis of such a specific and highly idiosyncratic corpus of intellectual work must remain doubtful. However Althusser, a good rationalist at heart, turns his back on the empirical content of a materialist history of sciences and philosophy; the baby goes out with the empiricist bathwater. His major concern becomes the search for a unilateral distinction, of a patently non-materialist form, between science and ideology. The analysis of an epistemological break in Marx's own theorizing, which was Althusser's point of departure, becomes part of a general philosophical enquiry, of a decidedly rationalist and universalistic nature, into the conditions for any discourse in general achieving the status of scientificity. What begins as an exercise in a materialist analysis of the conditions of existence of a specific discourse, namely Marx's political economy, is inflated in a speculative and idealistic manner to produce the gross insubstantiality of a formal and universalistic epistemological theory. The structural analysis of Marx's theoretical discourse is expected to provide the basis for a single and absolute opposition of science and ideology. Althusser believes

he needs to establish and defend this opposition in its absolute form in order to establish indubitably the scientificity of Marxism. The 'symptomatic reading' of Marx becomes the occasion for the construction of a general and abstract concept of science and for the explication of an a-historical relationship between science and ideology. Indeed Althusser goes as far as to deny ideology the right to a history. In true rationalist fashion he ascribes to ideology a formal essence which is trans-historical.<sup>8</sup>

In turn this general concept of science and non-historical conception of scientificity is employed to validate the scientificity of Marxist theory. Althusser constructs, through his reading of Marx, a general concept of science. Marxism as a special case is then remeasured against this criteria of scientificity and can be judged to fall within the fold of scientific respectability. We smell the cartesian rat of a damning circularity.

Materialist epistemology and the structural analysis of knowledge becomes reduced to the search for the formal demarcation of science and ideology. The two problematics addressed by Althusser are those which demarcate science and ideology. The structural analysis of philosophy and classical epistemology in particular, is confined to a few remnants on the subject-object opposition as being the basic form of epistemology in this period (Althusser calls this polarity the empiricist conception of knowledge). The structure identified is located within the general and non-historical problematic of ideology. The major motivation of the analysis becomes the damning of classical philosophy as ideology and the establishment of the mature Marx's scientificity by the demonstration of his epistemic distance from this philosophic structuration. The possibility of a concrete and conjunctural structural analysis of philosophical knowledge and its historical and material conditions of existence is sacrificed in the dream of the absolute.

For Althusser's contemporaries Lecourt,<sup>9</sup> Clavelin<sup>10</sup> and Foucault<sup>11</sup> this sacrifice is too much. Each in their own way has come to believe that within the circumscribing materiality of history it is possible to analyse the structural systematicity and discursive objectivity of discrete systems of scientific knowledge and philosophic theory. Increasingly a materialist epistemology is emerging as a tentative synthesis between a concrete history of scientific practices and a semiotic study of scientific and other theoretical discourses. This synthesis is accomplished within the theoretical ambit of historical materialism, the historical science of social formations and their determining modes of production.

The moments of this synthesis as yet retain their identity. The science of history and the theory of semiotics, the epistemic grounding of these moments, retain their specific methods and perspectives. With the development of a theory of semiotics i.e. a theory of discursive practice, originally derivative of the science of linguistics but increasingly differentiating itself as it develops its own specific concepts and methods, it has become possible to theoretise the specificity and relative autonomy of the production of knowledges.

For Michel Foucault an adequate history of scientific and philosophical knowledges must involve both the study of discursive relations and dependencies and of non-discursive or material relations involving the whole play of economic, political and social changes. Yet Foucault is aware that it is an easier task to isolate the criteria of formation which "permits us to individualize a discourse such as political economy or general grammar"<sup>12</sup> and of transformation which define "the conditions which have been effective together at a very precise moment of time, in order that its objects, its operations, its concepts and its theoretical options could be formed,"<sup>13</sup> than to establish the criteria of correlation that not only situate an individualized discourse among other types of discourse (e.g. classical epistemology



amongst political economy, social philosophy, pedagogy) but in "the non-discursive context in which it functions (institutions, social relations, economic and political conjuncture)." <sup>14</sup>

Foucault's project, as Sartre caustically commented, is "to introduce discontinuity and the constraint of a system into the history of mind." Discourses such as political economy or general grammar can be individualized not on the basis of the unity of an object, nor because of possessing a formal structure or an internal conceptual coherence; nor because they follow a fundamental philosophical choice. Rather, discourses gain their discrete identity from rules of formation which form and link their specific objects, concepts, methods and theoretical options in a specific system or 'play of dependencies'. Foucault wishes to substitute this notion of structural determination, "the whole play of dependencies", for the primary and linear notion of determination invoked in the concept of cause. Like Althusser he is concerned with the specificity of various sectors of historical reality economic, scientific, institutional, of popular ideology. He recognises in historical study "an ever increasing number of strata, and the need to distinguish them, the specificity of their time and chronologies, types of events at quite different levels, individualization of different series" <sup>15</sup>. He sees the central problem of historical research as constituting these series, fixing their boundaries and revealing the structural relations specific to them and the law of transformation governing these and beyond this describing the relations between these different strata or series of historical reality. This latter task, the constituting of "series of series" or tables of interrelated sectors of historical reality, Foucault sees as the major one of what he calls 'general history'. Such a history must "determine what form of relation may be legitimately described between these different series; what vertical system they are capable of forming; what interplay of correlation and

dominance exists between them."<sup>15</sup> He criticizes classical history for attempting to give a total description of historical reality which explains all phenomena by reference to a central dominating principle, meaning or cause. A general history on the contrary by suspending the search for a single prime cause, principle or telos of historical change "would deploy the space of a dispersion" within which sectors of historical reality could be described in their concrete inter-relations. He hopes that by "suspending the indefinitely extended privilege of the cause", to "render apparent the polymorphous cluster of correlations."<sup>16</sup>

Such a suspension however does not remove the obligation to concretely describe and effectively theoretise the relations, correlative and determinative, between the discursive and non-discursive or material. It in fact increases the obligation to do so. Foucault acknowledges that the discontinuity he seeks as the organizing demarcation of knowledges is "a play of specific transformations different from another (each one having its conditions, its rules, its level) and linked among themselves to schemes of dependence."<sup>17</sup> He distinguishes within this play of dependencies, three different types or levels of systemic interplay.

1. 'Intra-discursive dependencies' are those between the theoretical objects, operations and concepts of a single discursive formation; the grammatical network which in linking these elements together in a particular manner renders a specific discourse possible. The structural analysis of classical theories of language portrayed schematically on p 114, is made at this level.
2. 'Interdiscursive dependencies' are those between different discursive formations. Foucault gives as examples of these relations the correlations between natural history, economics and grammar and theory of representation that he traces in "The Order of Things".<sup>18</sup> The relations between traditional epistemology and the classical theory of representation plotted in chapters two and three of this work would also fall under this heading.
3. 'Extra discursive dependencies' are those between transformations within discourse and structural changes or transformations which have been produced beyond discourse in the material world. As examples of these relations he gives the correlations studied in 'Madness and Civilization'<sup>19</sup> and in 'The Birth of the Clinic'<sup>20</sup> between medical discourse and the play of economic, political and

social changes which defines the institutional context within which medical and penal practice operates in this period. With the exception of a few conjectural comments about the pragmatic motives of universal language planners, no such extra discursive dependencies are traced in my text. Nor can they be traced in our current state of knowledge about the historical and conjunctural relations between bourgeois culture and in particular, science and philosophy, and material life within the capitalist social formation. Moreover as Althusser's theory of levels and asserted autonomy of theoretical practice implicitly acknowledges, they cannot even be thought at the level of theory.

Although Foucault addresses himself to these extradiscursive dependencies in the two books on medical discourse in the course of a concrete historical analysis of changing conceptions of madness and clinical practice, he is unable to theorise these relations in his methodological reflections. Foucault's work although it involves an unacknowledged historical and hermeneutic methodological dimension alongside the structuralist component strives to achieve a degree of formalization of specific discourses. In so doing he must of necessity, invoke and explicate general principles of formal analysis which can be applied to any discourse whatsoever. Just as with structuralist method, with which his work uneasily co-exists, he is forced to refine from the raw materials of his substantive discursive studies a set of formal principles of analysis, in order to rescue the history of ideas from a crass empiricism.

Foucault believes that his archaeology of knowledge can free the empiricist history of science and ideas from its uncertain methodological status. It can demarcate the domain of the historical study of knowledges. It can define the nature of its investigative object. And it can clarify the relationship between this slice of historical knowledge and other areas of historical analysis. In place of the uncertainties and inconsistencies of traditional history of ideas, Foucault wishes to substitute the analysis of discourse itself, "in its condition of formation, in the series of its modifications, and in the play of its dependencies and correlations."<sup>21</sup> From the methodological standpoint of an archaeology of knowledge, discourse for

the first time would "appear in a describable relationship with the ensemble of other practices".<sup>22</sup> However to defend the validity of this substitution Foucault is forced to explicate at some length and with a burdening degree of generality and formalization, the methodological basis of his contextual method. This too easily drives his beleaguered methodological craft into the sheltered haven of a purely discursive and even solely semiotic analysis. For it is in the realm of the intra or inter-discursive that the operations of transformation, implication and correlation addressed by his archaeology, can achieve their highest degree of theorization.

Indeed he is able to achieve a degree of formalization of transformations and dependancies at the purely discursive level. This discursive field and its relations he defines as having a specific status not reducible to the order of linguistic construction or of formal axiomatic systems. The discursive field is constituted by

"the difference between what one could say correctly at one period (according to the rules of grammar and those of logic) and what is actually said."<sup>23</sup>

This is to say the discursive field demarcates the limits and forms of what he expressed and understood in a specific domain at a particular period. The model of linguistic study with its distinction between langue and parole, structure and utterance serves to illustrate the relationship between discursive field and statement. But Foucault stresses that although analogous, what he is analysing in discourse is not merely a system of language. The laws of existence of statements "the conditions of their singular emergence" are not merely semiotic. He insists that his archaeological enquiry is not concerned with codes nor with formal rules of construction between discursive events or statements and between statements and other previous or simultaneous non-discursive events. The rules of formation he seeks are to account for the actual historical existence of statements and not merely for their formal possibility within the rules of grammar which govern the linguistically

possible. The 'statement' for Foucault is not merely a linguistic proposition governed by a determinate syntax and having a definite referent, it also, and primarily, is a historically located event whose specific conditions of existence can be sought. Archaeology addresses itself to the complex totality of events correlated to a set of statements or archive in a specific period. It seeks in discourse its multiple conditions of existence. Yet if the archaeology is not to founder on the methodological indeterminacy of a general history and dissipate itself in the specificity and particularity of the conjunctural relationships between knowledge and other social, economic and ideological practices, then its theoretical reflections seemingly must centre on the purely discursive. With the shining example of a fully fledged science of linguistics at hand and the possibility of a general science of semiotic in the offing, the concentration of the theoretical focus of the new discipline on the purely discursive seems justified.

At the intra-discursive level<sup>24</sup> he points to two different types of transformation:

- (1) Those that occur within the overall structure of a given discursive formation. These he calls 'derivations', in so far as these involve logical or quasi logical structural changes within a given structure, which represent the unfolding of the formation guided by its own internal 'logical' dynamic. Amongst these logical and structural transformations he lists changes by deduction or implication, changes by generalization, changes by limitation, changes by exclusion and inclusion. All of these have a quasi-logical nature and are conceived of as the syntactical rules of transformation which 'generate' the specific epistemic development of a particular discursive formation. As quasi logical they can bear some measure of formalization,
- (2) Foucault distinguishes secondly those structural changes which affect the discursive formation themselves as a whole. These changes "of a type superior to the preceeding ones" (11) he calls "mutations" indicating that these transformations are total changes in the discursive areas themselves. Of particular interest is the displacement of the boundaries which define the choice of objects, methods and theoretical options within a discursive formation. Other important changes he isolates are the role of the subject as a constitutive category in the discourse and in the functioning of language with respect to

objects within the formation. The changes in the discursive formation of phenomenological philosophy traced at some length in the succeeding chapters would fall under Foucault's heading of 'mutations'.

As well as these two types of transformations at the intra-discursive level, he characterizes another type of transformation which operates at the level of inter-discursive dependencies. These transformations in turn are of a type 'superior' to the two previous others listed (1) and (2). [The notion of superiority invoked here by Foucault is far from clear. We can only assume he means more important in their structural consequences and hence in their explanatory significance. Foucault in common with structuralist theory in general tends to ontologize explanatory categories and confuse the real object with the object of structuralist knowledge production.] They are changes which "affect simultaneously several discursive formations". Foucault introduces the term 'episteme' to refer to constellations of discourses which their mode of being and determinate structure render possible within a wider epistemic field. He stresses the episteme is not "a sort of grand underlying theory" rather he sees it as "a space of dispersion" or open field of discursive relationships within which particular formations, mathematics, biology, etc., develop their specific structure and have their individual histories. The episteme he declares "is not a general stage of reason" akin to a *Weltanschauung*, rather "it is a complex relationship of successive displacements".<sup>25</sup> It is a simultaneous play of dependencies and transformations between discrete discursive formations within a common but open epistemic field indicated in turn by these specific relationships but not contained by them. It is in other words neither the lowest common denominator of these formations nor their highest multiple, but rather the terrain within which they have their being. The structuration of philosophical knowledge plotted in this study and referred to as egological and conversational discourses could be classified as regional instances of different epistemes.

This third type of discursive change peculiar to the episteme itself Foucault refers to as 'redistribution'. He outlines several different forms of 'epistemic redistributions'. Amongst these are the reversal of the hierarchical order obtaining between several discursive formations. The example he gives is the reversal of hierarchical order in the nineteenth century between the analysis of language and biology. In this study the new primacy afforded to Sociology and particularly Sociology of Knowledge vis-a-vis Philosophy, in the conversational paradigm would serve as another illustration of this redistributive transformation. Another form of redistribution is the change in the nature of the directional role afforded to a specific discursive formation, at a particular time, within a certain episteme. In the twentieth century in the conversational paradigm there is a "metaphorical importation" of a certain number of key concepts of Sociology into the discourse of other areas e.g. social interaction, institution, culture, socialization.

Foucault insists that his intention is not to establish an exhaustive typology of these transformations, derivations, mutations and redistributions but to "offer as the content of the monotonous and empty concept of "change" a play of specified modifications."<sup>26</sup> His aim in his archaeology of knowledge, which he hopes can replace the empiricist history of "ideas" or of "sciences", is not merely to give a formal list of types of structural transformations in knowledges but to offer a descriptive analysis of the different transformations occurring in specific discursive formations at particular historical periods.

And yet Foucault is able to achieve a high level of formalization of the transformational dynamics conditioning the possibility and development of theoretical discourses. He is indeed forced to do so if he is to illustrate to us, the specificity and indeed superiority of his "archaeology" vis-a-vis

the empiricist history of ideas. To establish this specificity and superiority he must engage the history of ideas not only in metaphysical debate (about the role of the cognitive subject and of categories of teleology and causality in the history of knowledges) but also in a debate about method. To do so he must, in a post facto manner, explicate the methodological basis of his own work in various substantive areas of scientific discourse. It seems unlikely that the substantive studies are an application of a methodology the principles of which are formulated in 'The Archaeology of Knowledge'. It is much more likely that L'archeologie represents a retrospective attempt to explicate a systematic methodology to cover a set of independent contextual procedures. For instance it is not at all certain that Foucault is employing the same methodological tools when he, on the one hand, describes changes in social institutions (the birth of the clinic or appearance of the modern prison) and when he plots the transformations taking place at the level of systematic or theoretical discourse. The methodology contextually employed in the analysis of statements i.e. discursive objects is not immediately relevant to the historical and conjunctural analysis of fully material institutions such as prisons and the asylum. The latter social realities are not in essence changes between ways of speaking and of enunciating knowledge but more fundamentally changes in social and institutional practices which condition the emergence of new and quite decidedly material things.

However despite some success in the formalization of the structural and transformational process at play in the appearance and development of scientific discourses, Foucault is unable or unwilling to introduce this same measure of formalization or theorisation into the realm of extradiscursive dependencies. These extradiscursive dependencies, the indelible imprint of material life on discourse, are studied in their discrete specificity



and conjunctural concreteness in 'Madness and Civilization' and in 'The Birth of the Clinic'. Indeed in his latest substantive study on punishment,<sup>27</sup> his materialist and historical interests become uppermost amongst his interests. He sees the grasping of the nature of extra-discursive dependencies as being the key to understanding the basis of power relations in modern society. Yet, he defines history i.e. the adequate history of ideas and their social milieu, as not only the descriptive analysis of these transformations but also as their structural theorization. But when he attempts to theoretise these extra-discursive dependencies, with the tools of semiotic analysis, he comes unstuck.

Or does he? In truth he shrinks from the task, as well he might. The substantive study in which he achieves the most formalized 'structuralist' analysis of a set of discursive formations and in which he tackles the most abstract knowledge domains, namely 'The Order of Things' is precisely the one in which there is no real mention of extra-discursive transformations and dependencies. Conversely the studies with greatest historical and contextual research and plotting of specific conjunctural and extra-discursive dependencies (often they strike us as almost recounted coincidences) are those with the lowest degree of formalization of the discursive structures and transformations at work viz the two studies of medical discourse. Foucault in his own strategy of analysis seems to implicitly acknowledge the contrasting and indeed conflicting methodological demands of, on the one hand, the structural analysis of knowledge as a series of sign systems and, on the other, the materialist science of history. The former strives for generality and for the formalization of discursive relations which entails their reduction to an essential synchrony. Change must be telescoped into the simultaneity of transformation within a structure or mutation of it. The latter however although in its method it may depart from an a priori theoretical vision of an

economy determinant in the last instance, soon gets drawn into the particularity of history and committed to the substantive and descriptive analysis of specific historical conjunctures and dynamics. Structure, must be elastically stretched into historical time and given body in historical particularity.

In Foucault's archaeology the tension between semiotic enquiry and general history remains. The former moment remains centred on a dynamic which leads it to strive for a measure of generalization and formalization in its method. A general history, on the other hand, retains its concern with the particular, concrete and conjunctural. Foucault's project can be seen as the search for a synthesis of these two moments. This he seeks within the ambit of a materialist history of knowledges of a non-reductionist type. He speaks of "opening up the field of a general history in which one could describe the singularity of practices, the play of their relations, the form of their dependencies."<sup>28</sup> Furthermore "it is in the space of this general history that the historical analysis of discursive practices could be circumscribed as a discipline."<sup>29</sup> The concept of general history invoked here remains unclear. Foucault has rejected the totalising and a prioristic economic or idealist reductions of a global history, but with no adequate theory of history to take its place he is unable to theorize the terms of the relation between a structural history of knowledge and the general history which would be its condition. In turn he is unable or unwilling to theorize the terms that could facilitate a synthesis of semiotic and historical method.

Foucault seems to recognize the difficulty in achieving this theorization. The problem is not approached thematically in his work but rather is addressed elliptically in the context of his substantive studies of particular discursive formations and their material dependencies. Foucault's project and his method becomes increasingly a substantive, historical one. The relations and

dependencies he seeks to trace between discursive and material practices (whether economic, political or ideological) are more and more historically specific and conjunctural ones and not the incidental empirical reassurances sought by a global history (whether idealist or economistic in form) self assured about its own truth. Nor are these relations the abstract and eternal ones sought by Althusserian structuralist epistemology or philosophy of signification.

For Foucault the methodological synthesis of discursive and historical analysis and the emergence of a theoretically coherent and self-sufficient archaeology of knowledge will be forged by substantive studies rather than by abstract reflection.

Moreover Foucault's substantive studies remain, despite the structural theoretical anticipation motivating his work, interpretative and sadly conjectural, as indeed the best work in the Marxist tradition has been. His work like that of Lukács, Adorno and Goldman before him, owes as much to the sensitivity and insight of its author than to any coherence or adequacy of method.

Foucault's thematic attempt at an explicit methodological synthesis of semiotic and historical analysis in an archaeology which addresses itself to the structural interplay of discursive and material practices clearly fails. It is doubtful whether the method explicated in the theoretically reflexive texts (primarily "The Archaeology of Knowledge") is actually employed in the substantive studies. What is the archaeological method without Foucault's analytical insight, encyclopaedic knowledge, and rationalist sophistication? Has he founded the basis of a new discipline with a distinctive method which will survive him as an autonomous set of tools of analysis? The substantive studies do throw light on the concrete interplay of discursive and material practices at a specific historical conjuncture. They do suggest

a new way of writing history sensitive both to the structural properties of knowledge discourses and to the material context of their production. However, they do not permit any general theorization of this interplay of dependencies within a given social formation. Foucault is not offering us a systematic sociology of bourgeois culture.

However Foucault has in his work demarcated a new area of study - the historical and structural analysis of knowledge domains. His archaeological project involves a clear perception of the need for a historical analysis of the multiple conditions of existence, material and discursive, of epistemic formations and of the need to think at the level of theory the terms of this methodology. His work however also recognizes, if only implicitly, the difficulties in focusing on the interplay of discursive and materialist dependencies and in forging a new historical methodology composed of semiotic and historical materialist elements. His substantive studies themselves display in their differing foci of interest and dissimilar contextual methodologies the still autonomous directions of the semiotic and historical study of knowledge. Those studies which achieve a degree of formalization of inter and intra discursive relations, leave untouched the relation of these structures to material practices (The Order of Things is not a Sociology of Bourgeois intellectual thought). Conversely, those studies which sensitively address the particularity of the extra discursive dependencies of specific discourses do not serve as a structural formalization of those discourses and their systems of formation.

Foucault continues to develop the two moments of a materialist epistemology, the discursive and the historical, alongside each other. He bows to our inevitable lack of substantive historical knowledge and of theoretical tools, at the present time, to forge the methodological basis of an adequate Sociology of bourgeois intellectual culture. The archaeology remains an anticipation.

In the meantime I would argue following Foucault's example that we need more studies of both sorts - the concrete-historical and the structural-discursive.

The study reported here is of the latter type. Its theoretical object is that discursive domain first demarcated by Althusser and defined with greater methodological clarity by Foucault.<sup>30</sup> However this demarcation and the defense of the specificity of the discursive as a theoretical object does not remove in any way the necessity for a comprehensive historical and sociological analysis, of a materialist nature, of bourgeois intellectual culture in general and classical epistemology in particular. My own study concentrates on a macro-analysis of the discursive structure of classical epistemology and its dissolution in an age of sociological reason.

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the original motive for this study was my dissatisfaction as a philosopher trained in the analytic tradition, and interested in sociological theory, with the dismal lack of critical self reflection in Anglo-Saxon philosophy. In particular I was concerned with its unwillingness to trace the methodological implications for philosophy of the new contiguity of philosophic method and social theory since the 1930's. It was this dissatisfaction with a philosophical tradition unconscious of its own domain assumptions in a period of supposedly philosophical revolution (ordinary language philosophy) and uncognizant of the historical density and situatedness of philosophic method that led me (and a generation of other philosophy students who educated themselves) in the first instance to look beyond the analytic tradition to its contemporary continental counterparts. (Phenomenology, marxism and critical theory). These continental schools despite their terminological obscurantism seemed at least to exist in a situation of fruitful symbiosis with the social sciences.

However what my comparative studies seemed to indicate increasingly to me was a series of continuities at the 'deepest level' (the notion of discursive structure was not yet available to me) between the traditions of ordinary language philosophy, existential phenomenology, pragmatist and neo-marxist philosophy since the 1920's. These continuities seemed to be based on the newly ascribed centrality of a sociologically informed conception of man, language and science in philosophical reasoning. This system of continuities based on a pervading sociologistic influence on the content of philosophic analysis seemed in turn to sharply contrast with the rigidly individualist form of a classical epistemology which stretched from Descartes to Husserl and the young Wittgenstein. In fact these continuities were defined as a system by that contrast and by the incommensurability of the philosophic visions involved.<sup>32</sup>

This perception of a historically situated rupture in classical epistemology led in turn to a new interest on my part in the historical and structural

analysis of systems of philosophical thought, and for a search for the theoretical and methodological tools with which to tackle such a study.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore it was clear that such studies could no longer be simply relegated to the specialized area of the history of ideas safely isolated from epistemology, the heartland of philosophical knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Rather it seemed that historical and cultural studies of systems of philosophical ideas, in so far as they introduced the dynamism, flux and density of historical process and the specificity and relativity of cultural forms into the eternal immutable world of philosophical ideas, had a direct import for issues about philosophical method, for epistemology and for the philosophies of science and signification. Clearly philosophic method in an age of sociological reason and historical method must examine its foundations, theoretical and material, historical and structural.

This essay represents an attempt to introduce analytic philosophic method to the joys of critical self reflection, of a structuralist nature, from a materialist perspective.

As such, the structural analysis of the egological and conversational paradigms plotted here is motivated by a desire to inform and intervene in current epistemological practice, rather than to give an exhaustive account of the rules of formation and transformation of these discursive fields or on the other hand to provide an accurate descriptive chronology of the development of epistemology from Descartes to the present day. The topics chosen for in depth substantive analysis, (a) the ideal language schemes of the classical period and (b) the phenomenological movement in the twentieth century, are resources which facilitate the plotting of the deeper discursive structures at play during this entire historico-epistemic period. The choice of topics is in one sense arbitrary. Quite obviously these movements are only two moments in the history of western epistemological

thought and we could as easily have chosen other important ones e.g. Viennese positivism or the hermeneutic historicism of Dilthey<sup>2</sup>, Rickert and the Marburg neo-Kantians. The essays on Kant and Marx and Nietzsche as well as the general comments on analytic and Marxist philosophy since the 1920's do try to broaden the base of the structural analysis of the egological and conversational paradigms. In another sense however, the choice of textual topics is not arbitrary. These moments, the utopias of the universal language planners and Husserl's shattered dream of an apodictic gnoseology, display in their clearest form the essential structures at play in egological and conversational discourse. Furthermore these moments are not merely illustrative, an expression of these structural forms, they are to be understood as the concrete effect of the interplay of these discursive structures and their material dependencies.

Philosophical movements, schools, individuals, texts, and theories are in the end not the theoretical object of our analysis. They in themselves do not define the underlying structures of continuity and discontinuity at play in a specific historical period. They are themselves conditioned in their very possibility by these discursive deep structures. Their unity as a set of statements is provided not by their conscious organization by various scholars into theory, text, school or movement but by the discursive field within which they have their meaning and displacement. One is led, as Foucault has concluded "to the project of a pure description of discursive events as the horizon for the search for the unities that form within it."<sup>35</sup>

The theories, texts and movements studied, constitute for our structural analysis a cross section or sample of a population of discursive statements or events distributed in the space of a particular epistemic field indicated, but not exhausted, by these statements. The discursive events studied here, the emergence of the conversational paradigm in philosophical discourse in the 1920's represents a regional instance or effect of a series of more



profound discursive transformations which have heralded the rupture from classical thought and the emergence of the modern episteme.

Of course much philosophical work must be done to clear the conceptual rubble which stands in the way of our thinking the terms of an adequate materialist epistemology. This means of course the critique of traditional epistemology, its naive positivism and its teleology. It means the expurgating of the outmoded categories of that epistemology - the subject - object *gnosology*, the a-historical conception of scientific practice and of systems of verification, and the atomistic and accumulative model of scientific knowledge. It also means as Althusser and Foucault suggested the critique of reductionist theories of ideology and the creation of the conceptual tools with which to theorize and substantively analyse the specificity of the epistemic and its articulation with other material practices.

In turn it necessitates a rethinking of the relationship between philosophy and history.<sup>36</sup> One of the consequences of this is the restoring of the centrality of the history of ideas, now of a structuralist and non teleological form, after its recent suppression by both analytical and phenomenological philosophy. A philosopher's "mistakes" and "problems" can no longer be simply *evaluated* theoretical propositions on some standard of timeless verification.

The conditions of production of philosophical knowledge cannot be traced to the isolated consciousness of an unlocated thinker, nor to the invariant conventions of scientific practice and procedures of verification of an ideal (and a-historical) 'community' of scientific investigators. The structures, discursive and material, which determine the possibility of philosophical formulations (problems, issues or solutions) lie beyond the 'constitutive consciousnesses of individuals and beyond the rubrics of positivist philosophy of science.

Materialist epistemology seeks to objectively reconstruct, both

historically and semiotically, the structures of discourse and their conditions of existence, epistemic and material, which have conditioned philosopher's 'problems' and 'mistakes'.

Philosophical problems are then to be seen as the effects of epistemic structures rather than as the muses or tribulations of individual philosophers. This point is illustrated at some length in my consideration of the problem of 'other minds' as flowing directly from the egological structure of classical epistemology. Many of the mutations which take place in the nineteenth century in classical epistemology from Hegel's dialectical excesses to Husserl's transcendental reveries represent an attempt to grapple with the solipsistic consequences of egological epistemology but within the terms of that discourse. Their philosophical problem becomes the containment of a problem. Similarly in the twentieth century in an age of sociological reason, the major philosophical problem perhaps has been that of the relativism of truth and knowledge. This problem both in its epistemological and moral dimension has been thrown up by the new precedence of the social and historical in philosophical thought.

Philosophical problems are then conditioned by the structure of the discourse within which they are formulated. The structure of this discourse demarcates the limits of what can be said intelligible within a theoretical domain - the boundaries of philosophic sense in a given historico-epistemic period.

However there is another mode of effectivity of structures at the discursive level which can be isolated. The understanding of its operation can illuminate the nature of many philosophical problems. This is best referred to as the 'problem of residue'. Philosophical problems are not only overdetermined by the historically specific discourse within which they are located, (I locate in this study two such discourses, the egological and conversational) they are also conditioned by terminological and indeed con-

ceptual residues from other preceeding discourses.

In a period where both Anglo-Saxon philosophy of science (Kuhn,<sup>37</sup> Feyerabend<sup>38</sup>) and French epistemology of science (Bachelard,<sup>39</sup> Canguilhem<sup>40</sup> and Foucault) stress the discontinuities within scientific theory, we should not loose sight of the accumulative, and residual continuities between 'paradigms' or 'discourses'. The desire to oppose teleological and 'progressive accumulative' accounts of the historical development of 'science' should not lead to an a priori rejection of the possibility of continuity between discourses in toto. The issue of continuity between discourses, its measure and its mode, is an empirical and theoretical issue to be settled by substantive historical and discursive analysis. For as Althusser's concept of problematic reminds us the discontinuities between discourses are essentially those of structural reorganization and rearrangement of often the same terms around a few changed key concepts. As Althusser points out the discontinuities between Ricardo's and Marx's labour theories of value are of this form. Similarly the rupture between transcendental and existential phenomenology traced here is of a form where certain basic terms are continuous in both bodies of theory (subject, object, self, intentionality, consciousness) yet these terms derive a new meaning in their novel configuration within the existential rupture with traditional phenomenology, around a set of new key concepts (the other, historicity, existence, the concrete).

A set of terms may then exist in continuity between a number of historically divided and theoretically incommensurable discourses. These terms however can only obtain their definitive meaning in a specific period within the structural configuration of one particular discourse. In other words only within the structures of a specific discursive field can they become concepts fully endowed with sense and operative in knowledge production.

On the other hand, terms inherited by a discourse from a preceeding one embody a certain residual meaning which has its origin not in the conceptual configuration of the contemporary discourse but *in* that of its predecessor.

Specific epistemic effects can be traced within a philosophic discourse as the result of carrying over the terms and categories of the previous supplanted discourse in a situation where new concepts and terms to think the required relations are not readily at hand. This problem of residue is illustrated in this study in the tribulation of analytic philosophy of language (since the 1930's) coming to terms with its conversational or socio-epistemological basis. The foundations and form of linguistic analysis moves from an 'ideal language project' i.e. an egological notion of language analysis as the establishment of a logico-syntactic framework and universal object language, to the descriptive analysis of the use of ordinary language in social context but the terminology and concepts of positivist theory are carried over in the surface discourse of ordinary language philosophy. Here these residues make mischief. They sow confusion in for example the hopelessly confused notion of an 'informal logical' structure of ordinary language. Similarly Marx, as Althusser has reminded us, constantly has to grapple with the residue of the Hegelian idealist problematic in his own materialist discourse, a problem not solved by a sudden ( self-conscious) epistemological break with his 'erstwhile philosophical consciousness'.

These modes of effectivity of epistemic structure, namely that of synchronous overdetermination and that of residue operate essentially below the level of consciousness of individual philosophers or the schools and traditions to which they adhere.

This study aims to address these epistemic structures and their modes of effectivity both substantively, in the empirical analysis of classical

epistemology and its dissolution, and also analytically, in a theoretical reflection which might illuminate the foundations of philosophic method in an age of sociological reason.

FOOTNOTES

1. Louis Althusser: Reading Capital, New Left Books, 1973, p.53.
2. Theodore Adorno: Negative Dialectics, Heineman, 1972, p.178.
3. Ibid., p.178.
4. Lucian Goldman: The Philosophy of the Enlightenment: The Christian Burgess and the Enlightenment, R.K.P., 1973, p.18.
5. Ibid., p.20.
6. Althusser, op. cit., p. 41.
7. He does in passing mention the development of Greek Mathematics and the emergence of the modern science of Chemistry, comparing Marx's introduction of the concept of labour-power to replace Smith and Ricardo's term labour with Priestley's introduction of "oxygen" in the place of "phlogiston". However no detailed conjunctural and discursive analysis of these domains is given. Reading Capital, op. cit., passim.
8. "If I am able to put forward the project of a theory of ideology in general, and if this theory really is one of the elements on which theories of ideologies depend, that entails an apparently paradoxical proposition which I shall express in the following terms: ideology has no history." Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, New Left Books, 1971, p. 123-173.
9. Dominique Lecourt: Marxism and Epistemology, trans. Ben Brewster, New Left Books, 1975.
10. Maurice Clavelin: The Natural Philosophy of Galileo: Essay on the Origins and Formation of Classical Mechanics, Cambridge, M.I.T. press.
11. Michel Foucault: The Archaeology of Knowledge, Tavistock, 1972.
12. Michel Foucault interview, "Reponse a une question", Esprit 1968, translated and reprinted in Ideology and Consciousness, No. 3, Spring 1978. 29.
13. Ibid., p. 10.
14. Ibid., p. 10.
15. Archaeology of Knowledge, op. cit., p.8.
16. Reponse, op. cit., p. 13
17. Ibid., p. 13.
18. Foucault: The Order of Things, Tavistock, 1970.
19. Foucault: Madness and Civilization, Tavistock, 1967.

20. Foucault: The Birth of the Clinic, Tavistock, 1973.
21. Reponse, op. cit., p. 19.
22. Ibid., p. 19.
23. Ibid., p. 18.
24. The term 'level' may be unfaithful to Foucault's intention as he is most reluctant to hierarchically order these types of relations in an a priori manner.
25. Reponse, op. cit., p. 10
26. Ibid., p. 13.
27. Foucault: Discipline and Punish, Tavistock, 1978.
28. Reponse, p. 19.
29. Ibid., p. 19.
30. "Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements such a system of dispersion, whenever between objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations) we will say, for the sake of convenience that we are dealing with a discursive formation." Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 38.
32. For us students of analytical philosophy the first conceptual tools available to theorize this disjunction were those provided by Kuhn in his paradigmatic view of scientific change.
33. The historical innocence of English analytic philosophers makes them particularly vulnerable to the lure of recent French epistemology despite the conceptual obscurantism of the latter.
34. The History of Philosophy as taught in English University departments of philosophy is a particularly unhistorical affair. Philosophical ideas are wrenched from their social and political contexts of production and shredded in the mincing machine of analytical criticism.
35. Response, p. 19.
36. Gaston Bachelard was perhaps the first in the modern period to rethink this relationship at the theoretical level in terms of a historical epistemology. As Belibar reports, for Bachelard, "History of sciences is possible only as the application of an epistemological theory. And seeing that such a dialectic is shown only, as we have seen, in the singularity of its realisations, seeing that the sole achievement

of dealing with it 'in general' would have the immediate effect of reversing it into speculation, it is very necessary that in its turn epistemology be constituted with historical problems and examples as its starting point without thereby becoming purely and simply merged with history of sciences." Etienne Balibar: From Bachelard to Althusser: the concept of 'epistemological break', Economy and Society, Vol. 7, No. 3, August, 1978.

37. Thomas Kuhn: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago University Press, 1970.
38. Paul Feyerabend: Against Method, New Left Books, 1975.
39. Gaston Bachelard: The philosophical dialectic of the concepts of relativity in Schilpp, P.A. (ed.), Albert Einstein, Philosopher-Scientist, Evanston, Illinois, Library of Living Philosophers.
40. G. Canguilhem: Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences, Paris, 1968.



## CHAPTER TWO

CLASSICAL THOUGHT, EGOLOGICISM AND THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

(PART I)

## CHAP. II.

*Instances of this Real Character in the Lords Prayer and the Creed.*

For the better explaining of what hath been before delivered concerning a Real Character, it will be necessary to give some Example and Instance of it, which I shall do in the *Lords Prayer* and the *Creed*: First setting each of them down after such a manner as they are ordinarily to be written. Then the Characters at a greater distance from one another, for the more convenient figuring and interlining of them. And lastly, a Particular Explication of each Character out of the Philosophical Tables, with a Verbal Interpretation of them in the Margin.

*The Lords Prayer.*

Our Parent who art in Heaven, Thy Name be Hallowed, Thy  
Kingdome come, Thy Will be done, so in Earth as in Heaven, Give  
to us on this day our bread expedient and forgive us our trespasses as  
we forgive them who trespass against us, and lead us not into  
temptation, but deliver us from evil, for the Kingdome and the  
Power and the Glory is thine, for ever and ever, Amen. So be it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Our	Parent	who	art	in	Heaven,	Thy	Name	be	Hallowed,	Thy
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Kingdome	come,	Thy	Will	be	done,	so	in	Earth	as	in
27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
Give	to	us	on	this	day	our	bread	expedient	and	forgive
44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
we	forgive	them	who	trespass	against	us,	and	lead	us	not
59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
temptation,	but	deliver	us	from	evil,	for	the	Kingdome	and	the
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	
Power	and	the	Glory	is	thine,	for	ever	and	ever,	Amen.
										So
										be
										it.

PART I

Traditionally the history of philosophical ideas has demarcated the classical period, stretching from the enlightenment to the onset of romanticism into the competing schools of rationalism and empiricism. The development of modern philosophy is schematised as the tale of the careers of these two schools; their differences, conflict, interaction and synthesis. However the language of their texts, the actual rhetoric of Descartes, Locke, Leibnitz and Hume speaks to us of a submerged unity at the level of discursive structure more than of a fundamental difference. Structural analysis of thought must plunge beneath the surface ripples and disturbance on the shimmering surface of classical thought to the murky depths whose currents and eddys, though hidden from immediate sight, remain determinant of that thought in the first and last instance. In the deep structure of ego-logicism we have located precisely such a current, operative in classical thought, but never rendered thematic. In our treatment of the notion of self in classical philosophy, whether in the rationalist empiricist or critical idealist traditions, we have located a unity - epistemic egoism; i.e. the abstraction of the process of the production of knowledge from its social context and its reduction to the cognitive gaze of a solitary, if absolute, cognizing agent towards an objectified and represented world.

The topic of language also affords us an excellent resource to plot the discursive structure of the egological paradigm. This structure is not given directly in the self-understanding of classical philosophy but rather is a condition of its very possibility. Moreover, the resonances of this structure still echo today in our philosophical thought on self, cognition and language, replaced in their centrality by a sociologistic ontology but retaining a residual effectivity and directional pull.

The study of language in the years considered here 1630-1800 was conducted before the emergence of a discrete science of linguistics. The question

of language, to which the ablest philosophical minds of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries addressed themselves, was not merely a matter of investigating the syntax, inflectional forms, phonology and etymology of particular languages. Rather, it involved questions of wider significance, issues about the relationship of language and thought, of sign systems and the pursuit of knowledge; issues about the origins of our ideas and of language as an institution; issues indeed about the role of an improved language in fostering human communication, religious toleration and political enlightenment. As Hans Arsleff tells us:

"Before the middle of the nineteenth century, language study was a mixture of philosophy and philology, and its history must be written in those terms."<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy which occupied Locke and the founding members of the Royal Society, Mersenne, Descartes and the grammarians of Port Royal, Leibnitz, and later Condillace, Turgot, de Gerando and the Ideologues was properly philosophical in its scale, aims and method. As such this discourse shares, as we shall see, the structural features of classical philosophy in general. The history of linguistics having freed itself from a positivist-telological reading of the history of science in which "all earlier study of language is seen as a rather malicious conspiracy against the future and the present enlightenment, and history gains attention only as a sort of inverted self-flattery,"<sup>2</sup> is free to deepen its analysis by supplementing an empirical history of ideas with a rigorous archeology of philosophical knowledge.

Such an archaeology must address itself to the specific structural role of the classical theory of representation and language in the maintenance and development of the ego-logical edifice. It must investigate the crucial mediative role of the binary-correspondence theory of the sign and accompanying conception of the 'translational' relationship between language and thought, in linking the constitutive categories of classical bourgeois philosophy -

absolute cognitive subjectivity and reified ontological objectivity. Since Descartes' metaphysical reflections, which rightly are held to mark a rupture with post Renaissance thought and the onset of philosophical modernity, reality becomes defined for the first time as the objectivity of a representation. Truth in turn is grasped as residing in the clarity and distinctness of our ideas, and as the certainty of representation. The structure of representation unfolds at one end to an objectified world of things. Ideally our signs are completely transparent to this world, they deliver us to it. Representation unfolds at the other end, of course, to the subject itself. The cognitive self is the site of the representational nexus of signs and the world in so far as its consciousness is the point of origin and organization of our ideas. Moreover its agency is the basis of the certitude of our representations and hence of the objectivity of the world itself. The patterned objectivity of the world derives that objectivity no longer from its own brute facticity but rather from its clear and distinct representation by and for the cognitive subject. This representation is given in and through the analytic activity of the subject and by means of the very grids of analysis which can decompose thought into its constituent parts, with their evident simplicity and certitude, and combine these again in a rational calculus to generate the complexity of the experiential world. By means of the analytic grid of signs, representation can achieve clarity and distinctness, and can in fact represent. By means of analysis and its significations, i.e. both original signs and a calculus of their rational combination, the world as objective being can be explicated.

"He who would impose names on reasonable things must first introduce into that Chaos the form, beauty and order of an ideal world existing in the mind, by a sort of logical creation."<sup>3</sup>

Signs in turn are the means by which analysis can proceed, and by which thought can be coded, decomposed, combined and communicated. Language then is the vehicle of analysis, a pure instrument allowing thought to appear to

itself as ordered and certain. M. Foucault writes of classical thought:

"The constitution of the sign is thus inseparable from analysis. Indeed, it is the result of it, since without analysis the sign could become apparent. But it also is the instrument of analysis, since once defined and isolated it can be applied to further impressions; and in relation to them it plays the role of a grid, as it were. Because the mind analyses, the sign appears. Because the mind has signs at its disposal, analysis never ceases."<sup>4</sup>

In the epistemic discourse which is ego-logical thought, the category of analysis, as the condition and limit of representation, binds together the constitutive subject and object poles of that discourse. Although these poles reciprocally sustain each other within ego-logical discourse, they do pull in opposing directions and the possible gulf in the relationship of cognitive self and objective world constantly threatens. Analysis so far as it involves a characterization of thought as consisting of the operations of a universal mind performed upon ideas, whether simple or complex, in which signs are employed, ties representation to universal features of the mind organised in cognitive self-hood. On the other hand analysis as the highest expression of universal reason and the condition of clarity, distinctness, and certainty, underwrites and guarantees the objectivity of representation; its very representativity. Because of the power and certainty (an axiomatic certainty) of analysis, the object of representation, that which appears in and through representation, can now claim the highest ontological status. It can claim to be objectively what is.

The category of analysis, embodying both cognitive process and instrument i.e. the analytic grid or calculus of signs, moulds classical thought into the Janus figure of ego-logical thought. Ricoeur captures this moment of creation.

"It is at this point - where the problem of certainty and representation coincide, that the cogito appears. ( ) with objectivity there arises subjectivity, in the sense that this certain Being of the object is the counterpart of the position of the subject. Thus, we have at the same time, the position of the subject, and the proposition of representation."<sup>5</sup>

Accompanying and expressing at the level of metaphor this ascending constellation of absolute subjectivity, analytic representation and objectified world, is the notion of cognition as vision. The knowledge process is graphicized as a guided searching vision of an attending subject. The world in turn, is seen as a picture, ontologically distinct and removed from the seeing subject, but objectively there to be seen. Representation, signs and their language moreover facilitate this seeing. They are perfectly transparent to what they represent as the microscope or reportary grid is to what it can render visible and can order.

Our major concern in this work is to trace the rupture in European philosophic thought in the twentieth century which occurs when the structural basis of philosophical knowledge moves from an egological discourse to a discourse organized around the epistemological primacy of man's sociality viz. a conversational discourse. However our analysis of the ego-logical episteme might also usefully be prosecuted by its comparison with its preceeding epistemic formation and by an analysis of the epistemic rupture between these two incommensurable discourses. Such an analysis however is beyond the scope of this present work. Fortunately however, this has already been attempted in the area of language study which particularly interests us by Michel Foucault in his monumental study of the structure of classical thought 'The order of things'. A brief summary of Foucault's analysis of pre-classical or Renaissance thought would serve to illuminate the central problems and responses of the emerging ego-logical paradigm and hence help us to dissect its structure and limits.

(ii) The Emergence of the Classical Theory of Representation and its Epistemic Foundations

Foucault reports that language appears to the sixteenth century not as an arbitrary system of signs, rationally combined, as it is to be perceived by both rationalists and empiricists in the seventeenth century. Rather, language appears as part of the world it represents. He writes -

"The great metaphor of the book that one opens, that one pores over and reads in order to know nature, is merely the reverse and invisible side of another transference and a much deeper one, which forces language to reside in the world among the plants, the herbs, the stones and the animals."<sup>6</sup>

That is for the medievals and post-renaissance thinkers the names of things were lodged in the very things they designated. Signs functioned as ciphers to interpret Being. They could function as such only in so far as they possessed similitude with respect to what they designated. The power of designation lay in the form of similitude and hence the archetype of the sign was the natural sign, in which that resemblance of signifier and signified clearly demonstrated itself. Within the form of similitude the intermediary link between signifier and signified, their conjuncture and the major condition of knowledge, was interpretation.

"Knowledge therefore consisted in relating one form of language to another form of language; in restoring the great plain of words and things; in making everything speak. The function proper to knowledge is not merely seeing or demonstrating but interpreting."<sup>7</sup>

For the medievals language is a prehistoric and natural system of signs spoken in things, a vast web of resemblances at one with the great chain of being. However with the emergence of the classical episteme, with its egological structure, "the profound kinship of language with the world was thus dissolved."

Language's intimate link in this great chain of being and murmuring resemblances is broken. . . .

The classical episteme is heralded by the Cartesian critique of resemblance and by the Hobbesian profound distrust of ordinary language and the linguistic sophistry of the schoolmen.

For Descartes,

"Whenever men notice some similarity between two things they are wont to ascribe to each, even in those respects in which the two differ, what they have found to be true of the other."<sup>8</sup>

and for Hobbes,



"For words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatsoever, if but a man."<sup>9</sup>

Both the critique of resemblance and the growing sense of unease in the vagaries of ordinary language appear with the emergence the new organizing principle of representation and knowledge in the classical episteme — analysis. The analytic method had of course its origin in the mathematical science of geometry so admired by Hobbes and Descartes, in the extension of this axiomatic method to algebra and calculus, and in the application of analytical calculi in the formalization of classical mechanics. However analysis as a mode of being of knowledge during the classical period pervades much deeper into the terrain of general thought. Descartes specification of philosophic method as consisting —

"entirely in the order and disposition of the objects towards which our mental vision must be directed if we would find out any truth. We shall comply with it exactly if we reduce involved and obscure propositions step by step to those that are simpler, and then starting with the intuitive apprehension of all those that are absolutely simple, attempt to ascend to the knowledge of all others by precisely similar steps."<sup>10</sup>

tokens the emerging centrality and universality of analysis in the structuration of classical knowledge in general. To distinguish between this general and fundamental trend in the classical episteme and more transient attempt to apply an analytical-mechanical model to certain fields of knowledge such as physiology or to mathematicize specific areas of existing empirical knowledge e.g. astronomy, Foucault invokes the term mathesis to refer to this search for a universal science of measurement and order. There is a search for a universal calculus through which ideas, language and the very world of things could be decomposed into their elementary and clear and distinct forms and the relations between these primary elements firmly established, their combination represented, and order imposed upon the flux of the experiential world. This search for a universal science of order, through which knowledge can be

analysed, ordered and eventually axiomatised, was to fire Descartes 'Rules' and 'principles'. It was equally as present in Locke and Hume's enquiries into the genetic structure of human cognition. For the scientists and philosophers of the Royal Society it was a guiding ideal. For Leibnitz such a science with its appropriate character or nomenclature was the prime instrument of thought and would lead man with the inexorability of mathematical logic to absolute truth.

The emergence of analysis as the organizational mode of classical knowledge, gives rise to a search for objective systemicity in knowledge, a geometric architectonic of knowledge. This itself in turn is intimately related to the location of cognitive process and certitude in the agency of a solitary if absolute epistemic subjectivity. However in this egological framework things and the words become separated from one another in the rupture of the subject. As Koyré has noted, western thought since Descartes has become characterized by its anthropocentrism. In egological discourse however, man is conceptualized as transcendental cognizer rather than as an embodied agent in a concrete social and historical context. Accordingly, man as a language user becomes a rent in the unity of language and the world. As a disembodied and individualized agent of pure cognition, man as an analytic subject, confronts the materiality of the world and language. Analysis draws language into the disembodied realm of immateriality, the *res cognitans* that man has become. Classical philosophy of language both reflects this abstraction and reduction of man and reinforces it. The ideal universal language becomes the correlate of the absolutised cognitive ego, its syntax the universal structures of that mind and its character the mapping of that mind's universal ideas.

Foucault's analysis captures the emergence of these dualisms which appear in knowledge. Language once one with the world is sucked, in the move

towards cognitive subjectivity, into the realm of *res cogitans*; its reality, its meaning is located there. Its relationship to *res extensa*, the world of things becomes problematic. In turn, the organic corporeal nature of language i.e. its very languageness becomes obscured.

For both empiricists and rationalists thought consists in operations performed upon ideas. Ideas whether they derive from sensation or are given in intuition are classified as either simple or complex. All complex ideas are in principle reducible to simples through analytic practice.

Hume notes:

"First when we analyse our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment."<sup>11</sup>

The meanings of words are functions of the simple or complex ideas for which they stand as names. The underlying structure of language reflects the universal and atomistic structure of thought and its combinations. Within this model the formal or grammatical properties of language are devices for establishing a word order which facilitates an ordered representation of thought and its structure. Grammar has no autonomous semantic function, and language has no being save that of being the pure representation of thought. A word 'means' the idea it denotes and correspondingly a grammatical sentence "is merely a succession of such meanings so ordered as to represent a rational succession of ideas."<sup>12</sup> As Stephen Land has shown<sup>13</sup> there is a structural relationship between the

- (1) atomistic features of this model of language in which the meaning of ordinary language statements is seen to be a function of the meanings of the individual words of which they are comprised and its
- (2) reductionist tendency to reduce words to their function in the denotation of ideas and deny any semantic function and autonomy to syntax. Language becomes the mere translation and coding of thought. This translational function becomes, in the classical period, the essence of language, an ability -

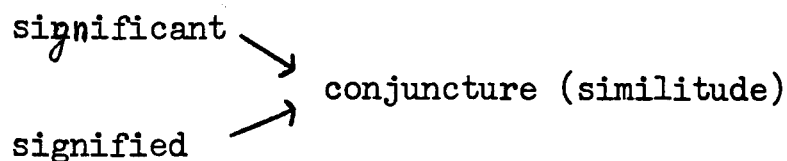
"to use these sounds as signs of internal conceptions, and to make them stand as marks for the ideas within his own mind, whereby

they might be made known to others, and the thoughts of men's mind be conveyed from one to another."<sup>14</sup>

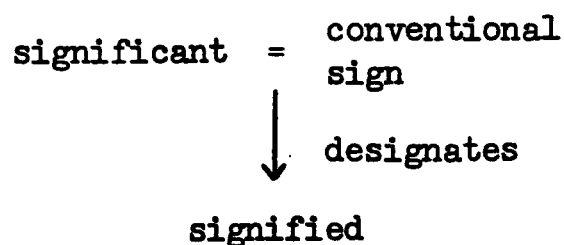
Within this translational model, signs take on their essentially binary form later formalized by de Saussure.

On the one hand, words lose their traditional intimacy with things with the emergence of the cognitive mediation of the analytic subject. On the other hand, in the search for a symbolic logic of pure representation which can again penetrate to the heart of things, the very organic and corporeal nature of language itself becomes obscured and obliterated. Language becomes pure function and ceases to have an autonomous being.

The system of signs dominant during the post-renaissance period is essentially ternary. The significant and signified are linked through the intermediary form of similitude. It is in this conjuncture that the power of signification lies.



However as we have said the Classical period is heralded by the Cartesian critique of resemblance and by the empiricist profound distrust of ordinary language and scholastic rhetoric. Both the attack on similitude and the new stress on the arbitrary and purely conventional basis of language undermine the post-renaissance organization of the sign. Analysis dissolves the form of similitude and the characterization of the sign as natural. From the seventeenth century we see the emergence of a binary system of signs in which the significant directly designates the signified.



This relationship is most clearly visible in the translation model of language

dominant at the time. This model characterized by its atomistic and reductionist approach to meaning, shapes language and the theory of representation to the contours of the epistemological dualism of egological thought. Words and language are conceived of as a pure representation, a translation of thought and particular ideas. Ideas themselves stand in binary opposition to the material world of things and with varying degrees of clarity and distinctness represent that world. The secondary binary organization of the linguistic sign is over-determined by the initial dualism of cognizing subject and objective world and the primary representational relationship of ideas and reality. Within this primary representational relationship of ideas and material reality, and its binary organizational form, rooted in the fundamental dualisms of egological thought, develops the notion of the linguistic sign, character or word, as the translational or secondary representation of thought to its object. Language is grasped as pure transparency representing directly thoughts own appropriation of the world of things which it gains by means of the agency of the analytic, cognitive subject.

However with the dissolution of the post-renaissance ternary organisation of signs based on the conjuncture of significant and signified, in the similitude of sign and its object, the relationship of signification itself becomes essentially problematic. The problem of meaning emerges. Analysis, the mode of intellectual cognition in the classical episteme, which is itself born of the upsurge of the absolute cognizing subject, gives rise to the recurrent problems of egological philosophy of language centered around the relationship of language and the world. These problems in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cluster around the twin themes of the relation between thought and language and that between language and society. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century they center on a renewed interest in the relationship between the theory of language and scientific method, meaning and

verification; problems whose framing within the grammar of egological discourse prevents their solution.

The relationship between analysis and the sign, i.e. between a theory of mind and a philosophy of language, a relationship which is central to egological thought will be traced at some length in the following pages.

Two major forms of this relationship can be isolated.

- (1) Firstly, the sign system of ordinary language as the reflection of the universal properties of the mind. This assumption runs as a central core throughout egological philosophy of language. We shall examine two key traditions in which it is paramount - that of Universal Grammar in the rationalist camp and that of the search for Origins which came to dominate empiricist studies. These two traditions depart from a common axis which portrays all minds as sharing fundamental and universal structural or organizational characteristics which are translated directly in the form and function of language.
- (2) Secondly the sign and language as the instrument of analysis and knowledge, the establishment of order in ideational space. In the first instance our interest is in the ideal language project initiated by both rationalist and empiricist thinkers by the middle of the seventeenth century. In these universal language schemes, the gravitational centre of egological philosophy of language, ordinary language is abandoned as a tool for scientific and philosophical analysis in favour of a rigorously constructed analytic language, an *ars characteristica*. In the second instance our attention focuses on the epistemic effect of the prolonged search for a perfected analytic language - namely a rethinking of the relationship between thought and language. This is first present in the troubled deliberations of the Ideologues on the role of signs in thinking. With the increasing weight being given to the constitutive function of language with regard to thought the previous purity of linguistic representation becomes clouded as language emerges with an autonomy and organic density which marks the slow erosion and dissolution of the classical theory of representation. Beginning with Herder and Monboddo and developing under the nineteenth century romantics, there is a livening reinterest in the diversity of natural languages. The view appears that each language bears with it a distinct *weltanschauung* and that language differences can lead to differences in mental processes. In the sociologicistic relativism and philosophical scepticism of the romantics, language-as-being is reborn.

However, whether language, characterized in the form of universal grammar, nativist or empiricist in its genesis, is regarded as the reflection of thought or whether language studies regard the major task as the construction of a

rational ideal language to serve as a tool of analysis of thought, the central fact remains that the relationship of meaning between significant and signified has become problematic. This is manifested in this very search for a theory of representation. There is a search for the very certainty of the relationship between words and objects which had previously been shattered, in its renaissance form, by the new epistemic commitment of language theorists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the ideal language project. The beginning of the search for a universal character with a philosophical or conceptual foundation is heralded by the contemporary crisis in the theory of representation indicated by the critique of resemblance and distrust of scholastic rhetoric. The renaissance organization of the sign had crumbled, eroded by the new centrality of analytic cognition. For now on Language, if it is to represent, must conform in its character and syntax, to the principles of analysis. In turn the construction of universal language schemes becomes the vehicle by which the emergent classical theory of representation can be demarcated and explicated. The ideal language project both demarcates egological thought's rupture from the renaissance episteme and indicates the groping search for a new theory of representation to replace this. This search is to lead to an abstraction of language from its situated social context and a simultaneous reduction of language and meaning to the pure functional representivity of another realm of experience - the cognitive experience and agency of the analytic subject. The task of language becomes to represent the autonomous ideas and experience of the cogito in an ordered grid of universal denotations which can "in the last analysis deliver us from language by delivering us to things."

This ideal of a language of pure representivity is to haunt European philosophic thought from Leibnitz to Wittgenstein. Its spell will not be broken (and then only partially) until the structure of egological discourse

itself begins to crumble under the sociologicistic assault of the conversational paradigm.

Yet paradoxically for the early egological theorists, although analysis had broken the bond between words and things through its dissolution of conjuncture and the hierarchy of analogies, this did not immediately present itself in the consciousness of the period as the problem of signification as it did to egological thought in the nineteenth century. The problem of how signs have meaning, for which an answer might be sought in the nineteenth century by recourse to the signifying intentionality of transcendental consciousness, as in Husserl's case, or in the psychologism of Saussure, or in the logism of Frege and Russell, is not in fact for the seventeenth century a consciously grasped problem. For the early classicists signs presented themselves as transparent to that which they signified and as containing this relationship as the essence of them. As Merleau Ponty says,

"The word possesses no virtue of its own; there is no power hidden in it. It is a pure sign standing for a pure signification. The person speaking is coding his thought. He replaces his thought with a visible or sonorous pattern which is nothing but sounds in air or ink spots on the paper. Thought understands itself and is self-sufficient."<sup>15</sup>

Thought organized around cognitive subjectivity is assured of its own reflexivity and intelligibility. Language merely represents thought externally as thought represents itself internally in the cognitive agency of the subject.

Thus in a curious way for egological thought language as being ceases to exist. Its essence always lies beyond itself in what it represents. It becomes pure representation and as such reducible in its meaning to the realm it represents whether this be ideas or states of affairs. As such the 'problem' of signification which is increasingly in the nineteenth century to haunt egological philosophy of language is in the seventeenth century still obscured by the very held transparency of signs. In the



classical period language is conceived of as pure representation perfectly transparent to its object of representation. As a system of arbitrary signs it can be abstracted from its situated social context, reduced and systematized to a logical form so that it can more adequately represent the syntax of mental process. The search for logical form which has its genesis in the structure of the mind may be conducted in terms of the enunciation of principles of Universal Grammar. It may be explicated in terms of the construction of an ideal combinatory language, the ars characteristica. On the other hand it may be seen to involve a search for the primal origins of language in man's basic cognitive processes. These three major directions of classical philosophy of language however depart from a common axis - the egological. They depart from three common axioms.

- (1) That the underlying structure of language reflects the universal structure of thought.
- (2) That the universal structure of thought is organized around cognitive self-hood.
- (3) That the link between words and things, signs and signified is mediated in and through the ideational experience of the cognitive subject.

Language then for the classical period becomes abstracted from its own materiality as a historically formed, human, means of communication. In turn it becomes anchored to an autonomous and primary realm of mind whose ideational structure and content it is its task to represent. It becomes subject to the general programme of mathesis - the reduction of things into their simplest elements and then the demonstration of how these may be combined to generate the perceived complexity of things. From now on egological thought is to be inspired with the vision of an ideal transparent language which is capable of naming what is arbitrary and also representing that set to complex operations which generates all possible combinations of simples. The ideal transparent language is to become the vehicle for a pure analysis of thought and the world.

Analysis in general, like algebra in particular, it was recognized, operated through and was rendered possible by a system of signs. Leibnitz indicates his interest in a universal science of order, and recognition of the centrality of a universal language to facilitate such an analysis.

"Algebra which we rightly hold in such esteem, is only a part of this general device. Yet algebra accomplished this much - that we cannot err even if we wish and that truth can be grasped as if pictured on paper with the aid of a machine. I have come to understand that everything of this kind which algebra proves is only due to a higher science, which I now usually call a combinatorial characteristic."16

This 'higher science', hinted at by Leibnitz, a general science of order in the realm of ideas, words and things is to be the determinate form of classical thought for the next one hundred and fifty years. Central to this analytical project, and seen by classical thought as a condition of it, is the search for a universal characteristic. This alone among languages can represent univocally our elementary ideas and their combination in the complexity of material life. From Mersenne and Descartes to the Ideologues and Monboddo in England, the dream of an ideal universal language perfectly transparent to the world of ordered ideas and things haunted western thought. Perhaps no other philosophical ideal has ever held such tremendous sway over so many first rate minds, philosophers and scientists, empiricists and rationalists, at any other period in modern thought, than this dream.

These dreamers of the absolute indicate the supreme confidence of the scientific and analytic rationality of the period. Robert Boyle writes to Samuel Hartlib in 1647.

"Since our arithmetical characters are understood by all the nations of Europe, the same way, though every several people express that comprehension with its own particular language I conceive no impossibility that opposes the doing that in words, that we see already done in numbers."17

Leibnitz in turn displays an optimism with regards the possibility of a universal language scheme that stretches our credulity.

"Nothing more is necessary to establish the characteristic which I am attempting, at least to a point sufficient to build the grammar of this wonderful language and a dictionary for the most frequent cases, or what amounts to the same thing, nothing is more necessary to set up the characteristic number for all ideas than to develop a philosophical and mathematical course of studies, as it is called, based on a certain new method which I can set forth, and containing nothing more difficult than other courses of study, or more remote from use and understanding, or more alien to the usual way of writing. Nor would it require more work than is already being spent on a number of courses, or encyclopedias as they are called. I think that a few selected men could finish the matter in five years. It would take them only to however, to work out by an infallible calculus the doctrines most useful for life, that is, those of morality and metaphysics."<sup>18</sup>

But these hopes and dreams are not those of cranks or mystics. These dreamers when listed present a catalogue of the finest and most respected scientific minds of the 17th and 18th centuries, Descartes, Mersenne and Leibnitz, of course, but also in England, Newton, Seth Ward, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, Christopher Wren. And in the eighteenth century Condillac Destutt de Tracy, Maine de Biran but also Turgot and Adam Smith.

That the search for a universal language should be such a cause celebre within classical thought is symptomatic.

### (iii) The Ideal Language Project

The planning and construction of universal language schemes had been a constant pre-occupation with savants throughout the seventeenth century many years before the combinatorial and philosophical schemes of Leibnitz and the members and associates of the Royal Society (John Wilkins, George Dalgarno, Seth Ward, Francis Lodwick). Indeed there were various material motives which induced men to search for a universal language which might serve as an international means of communication. This period marks a rapid extension of commercial capitalism in Europe and a corresponding expansion of trade and communication between merchants of various countries. Again with the constant development of colonialism as a world force, trade



# AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE ART OF TEACHING, AND THE CHARACTER, AND THE RATIONAL LANGUAGE.

This Design has been numbered as one of the chief *Desiderata* of Learning, and much longed for by the Learned, both of the present and former Ages, witness hereunto the renowned Lord *Verulam*, the learned Doctor *Harv*, *D. Petrus*, Mr *Comenius*, Mr. *Jacobus*, with many others. High thoughts of advantage towards the advancement of all the parts of Humane Literature, and a more universal encrease of Knowledge, have been conceived from the discovery hereof; several attempts have been to this effect, but as yet without success or issue. I hope it shall appear from the following general Assertions, the truth whereof shall hereafter be demonstrated in particulars, that this present Undertaking shall be able to reach the production of all those desirable Fruits and Advantages to the World, which ever by any have been apprehended of it: Provided that, it being now ripe, and come to the birth, the cherishing care of the Supreme Authorities, and Universities of this Commonwealth (whom chiefly it doth concern) do tender its safe delivery, with suitable Encouragements to the exigency of the Affair; For if it be preserved from Injuries in its Birth, it will immediately thereafter be able both to nurse and arme it self against all prejudices, and will, as its nature requires, not onely spread it self, but carry along with it the fame and names of its first Patrons, over the whole World, to remain in an honorable remembrance to Posterity.

1. This Character shall immediately represent things, and not the sounds of Words, and therefore universal, and equally applicable to all Languages. 2. The Art hereof, shall not rest onely in a dumb Character, but by the same Rules it shall be made effable, in distinct and dearticulate sounds. 3. Which does chiefly commend the Art (though I know it will exceed the beleif of many) both the Character and Language shall be perfectly attainable by any of ordinary capacity and diligence, in less then a moneths time, so that two of quite different Languages may be made to understand one another, either in Writing or Speaking, within the said space. 4. This Character shall go far beyond all received Brachygraphy, for contraction and speed in Writing. 5. Whereas it is scarce known that Brachygraphy hath been improved in any Language but the English, this shall be equally practicable and useful in all Languages. 6. This Character shall be more accommodated for an emphatick delivery of real Truths, and the grounds and precepts of Arts and Sciences, then any other Language; this will be easily apprehended by those, who are versed in late Mathematical Writers, who have begun to follow this way, by expressing words of frequent use with real Characters; and that partly because it works a more real and lively apprehension of the thing treated of, and partly for compendiousness of delivery. 7. The Grammatical Rules of this Art, shall be few, plain, and easie, obvious to every capacity, because they shall be altogether grounded upon Nature and Reason, without any irregularities or exceptions (which Nature and Reason abhors) without any superfluity of univocations, or ambiguity of equivocations. 8. The construction and Phrasiology of this Character and Language, shall be such as Nature and Reason requires, and not to follow the impertinency, and non-sence of phrase of Languages; but to deliver Truth in plain and downright terms. 9. The true pronounciation and accent of this Language shall be easily attainable by the people of all Nations. 10. There shall be no occasion of error, or mistake in the Orthography of this Language; for the Writing shall be perfectly conformable to the speaking, and *à contra*. 11. This Character shall be a ready way, and a singular mean, to convey Knowledge to deaf and dumb people (which is a secret of Learning heretofore not discovered) and it is conceived upon good ground that a deaf man might be taught to communicate in this Character, in the sixth part of the time that any other man could learn a foreign Language. 12. From the method and contrivance of this Design can be discovered, a more easie way of the Art of Memory then any commonly known. 13. From it may be drawn an exceeding useful *Parvus*, whereby to enter the study of any Language. 14. It shall be a singular help to Discourse, affording variety of apposite words and epithets, and shall make a man understand his own Language, or any other he is Master of, more fully then he did, and shall teach him to distinguish betwixt Phrase and Sence. 15. All these things being made out, it cannot be denied, but that it will prove the most comprehensive, and advantageous peece of Knowledge that ever was received in Schools, for the education of Youth; for they shall be so far from losing of precious time in acquiring this Art, that by following the method and practice thereof, they shall redeem the half of that time, which others lose either in the study of Languages, or Philosophy, and besides have the practice of this Art, *gratis*, and by way of *over-plus*. If those whom it concerns, will mind the education of Youth, and Publick good so far as to make it practical this way; undoubtedly, the world will in a short time reap more plentiful fruits of it, then now can be apprehended. For 16. It may by Gods blessing be a great help for propagating the Gospel; and if neglected by reformed States and Churches, will certainly be improved by the Jesuites to that end. 17. It may be of singular use to civilize barbarous Nations, destitute even of the first elements of Literature. 18. It may unite the Nations of the World, by a more familiar and frequent intercourse and commerce, the chief hinderance whereof is the diversity and difficulty of Languages. 19. Arts and Sciences may flourish more every where, not onely because of the easiness of this Key of Language, whereby to enter them; but also because the method of this invention, discovers a way of abbreviating and facilitating all other parts of Learning. From these brief Assertions, I leave it to every intelligent Reader to answer that great question to himself proposed to new Designs, *viz. Curioso?* Here I do profess that my main intent in publishing this Paper was to try if any would appear to own publick good, and the advancement of Learning so far, as to bring this design upon the Stage of a publick trial: For besides the testimony of several of the most eminent Doctors of both the Universities ready to be produced; I hope to rational men the thing shall be a sufficient testimony to it self. Any who desires the knowledge of this Art, or further satisfaction in those Proposals, may learn where to finde the Author, at the center of all useful and solid Learning, Mr *Samuel Hartlib* house, near Charing-Cross over against Angel Court.

By *Geo. Dalgarno*.



and communication with Africa and Asia was also expanding. In the absence of any international means of communication merchants were forced to study a multiplicity of foreign languages, not only the common national languages of Europe but also Eastern languages whose grammar and lexicon remained largely undocumented. Within this context there began a serious search for a character which if universally adopted as the means of commercial communication would lessen the difficulties of foreign language learning. Cave Beck whose own universal language scheme 'The Universal Character, by which All the Nations in the World may Understand One Anothers Conceptions, Reading Out of One Common Writing Their Own Mother Tongues' was published in London in 1657 noted that such a character would be of commercial use.

"This last Century of years much hath been the discourse and expectation of learned men, concerning the finding out of a Universal Character, which if happily contrived, so as to avoid all Equivocal words, Anomalous variations and superfluous Synonomas ( ) would such advantage mankind in their civil commerce and be a singular means of propagating all sorts of learning and true Religion in the world."<sup>19</sup>

With a pragmatism characteristic of the philosophising of the period he noted that such a language would,

"save the charges of hiring Interpreters."<sup>20</sup>

Beck in the former passage indicates two other prevalent motivations operative in the search for a universal language - religious and educational zeal. Besides serving the linguistic requirements of missionaries, a universal character was sought to enable communication between the various refugees who had fled the religious persecutions in Europe and who might find the acquisition of a multiplicity of vernacular languages cumbersome. Two of the most enthusiastic proponents of the universal character were indeed such religious refugees. Jan Comenius, the Moravian philosopher, educationalist and wanderer, visited Paris, the Netherlands, and London propagating the virtues of such a character. His influence on the Fellows of

the Royal Society may have been decisive in orienting these thinkers towards a more properly philosophical universal character based on a prior ordering of concepts according to genus, species and difference, as envisaged by Descartes and Mersenne. Francis Lodwick although bi-lingual himself, was born of religious refugee parents, fled from Brabant in the wake of the Duke of Alva persecutions. Lodwick though neither a university academic nor a full member of the Royal Society (he was a merchant by trade) was to be in the forefront of English schemes for a philosophical language. He was perhaps the first in England to argue that the form of any universal character designed to solve problems of communication, would have to involve a systematic classification and symbolisation of concepts i.e. a properly philosophical language guided by the principles of analysis.

Throughout the seventeenth century there had been a general decline in the use of Latin as a universal language. In England and Germany it was largely for religious reasons that both divine and secular writers choose to use the vernacular for the first time. In particular the Puritans in England campaigned against the learning and use of Latin as a general means of communication. Latin for them of course was intimately associated with the power of the Roman Catholic church. The focus of the Puritan campaign was education and in particular pedagogy.

Comenius, himself a considerable authority on language teaching as well as a leading exponent of the new realist philosophy and naturalistic pedagogy was to write -

"the only study of the Latin tongue....draines up above a quarter of a competent age: and if so large a space be wasted in the initiation of a meer verbalist; how many ages will be requisite to the perfection of a realist."21

Instead of the Latin based curriculum he urged that

"The study of languages, especially in youth, should be joined to that of objects, that our acquaintance with the objective world and with language, that is to say, our knowledge of facts and our power to express them may progress side by side."22

As this quote from Comenius shows the campaign against Latin as a possible universal language went deeper than merely Puritan prejudice and distrust. Latin was seen as the language of scholastic opaqueness, the medium of verbal sophistry and 'meer words'. That Hobbes, Locke, and Descartes chose to write in the vernacular with the resulting difficulties of dissemination and translation of their work is indicative of the change in intellectual life during this period. The scholastic learning of the universities was under attack from the new rationalism with its commitment to scientific and mathematical method and more generally to 'real studies'. A concomitant of this new interest in the world of things was, an 'aversion and contempt for the empty study of words'. The critique of Latin and scholasticism, its implicit metaphysic, was accompanied by the search for a more scientific medium of communication a 'real character'. From the middle of the seventeenth century there had been, particularly in England, a renewed concern with scientific nomenclature. There was a concerted attempt usually associated with the Royal Society to standardise nomenclature in various sciences which had previously been a matter for the idiosyncratic choices of individual scholars. Many of the English scientists among them Boyle, Ray and Petty felt that the study of reality was impeded by the complexity of the Latin inflectional system. In turn it was felt that Latin was a cumbersome medium for scientific communication between scholars of various countries. English Latin speakers were often at a disadvantage in conversation with European speakers as the Latin spoken in the country had developed a dialect not easily understood by European speakers. However the major rejection of Latin as a universal scientific language was largely due to it being seen to have embodied within it in a profound scholastic opaqueness.

In Latin and in ordinary language generally it was felt by realists that

"the basic qualities of things are not revealed either by the habit of speech or by the reciprocal harmony between things and names. For since their words are not exactly commensurate with things, they are unable to form concepts in exact fitness to the things (of which they speak). And so for all the noise of doctrines we scarcely advance an inch in the study of wisdom because we speak words, and not things."<sup>23</sup>

In the 'Via Lucis' Comenius proceeded to propose the invention of an ideal universal and philosophical language in which there were precisely as many names as objects which they denoted and in which each name would denote the qualities of its real referent. The search for a real character which would rescue thought from the obscurity of Latin and ordinary language by delivering it to the world of things soon captured the imagination of philosophers and scientists in England and on the Continent. Only such a philosophical language with its real character it was held, could solve the problems of ambiguity and imprecision which blunted the effectiveness of natural language as an instrument of scientific reason. This real character, first hinted at by Francis Bacon, viz. real in so far as it represented 'res' i.e. things, it was hoped would provide "a truer description of things as an easy and quick entrance to the things themselves."<sup>24</sup>

The new character was regarded as superior to both Latin and other existing vernacular languages. It was held that it would be simpler, more rational and systematic, briefer and thus easier to learn, master and employ than a cumbersome irregular Latin grammar. The real character it was also held, had a mnemonic value and hence its proclaimed importance in language learning and education generally.<sup>25</sup>

However the unabated enthusiasm of philosophers, scientists and educationalists in the 17th century for schemes of universal language, based on a real character which would represent directly objects in the world or ideas common to all men, involved more than a search for merely an alternative linguistic medium of communication. The search for a universal



philosophical language is, I have said, symptomatic. It is symptomatic of the radical discontinuity of classical thought with the knowledge of the medieval and post-renaissance age. This radical discontinuity is marked by the appearance of analysis as the new organizational basis for knowledge. The search for a universal philosophical language is a symptom of the crisis in the theory of representation brought about by this new mode of being of knowledge. This crisis is reflected in the critique of similitude and in the 17th century's profound distrust in the vagaries of ordinary language. With the universal language project classical philosophy articulates this crisis in its theory of representation. Indeed in these language schemes representation itself becomes an object of analysis. With the emergence of analysis, and its categorial structure of cognizing subject and reified object world, the naivety of the post renaissance sense of representation based on the endless chain of similitudes within the plenitude of being is rendered problematic. Analysis and cognitive self-hood have ruptured this plenitude. This rupture in turn gives rise to a search for a new basis for representation and language and for one compatible with and embodying the analytical organization of knowledge. Within the general science of mathesis and its application to linguistic representation in the universal language, a consciously formulated theory of representation appears for the first time. Analysis by making representation its object in turn makes its own epistemic principles of order and combination the very condition of representation. Language is idealized as pure representation, signs as transparent to what they represent and syntax as pure analysis. The 'languageness' of language, its organic being, is obliterated in this reduction of language to the pure function of analytic representation. The theory of linguistic representation appears, but only to be immediately dissolved by the demands of analytic reason. Within the analytic task that language must shoulder if it is in fact to adequately represent, language

has no being. It is pure function, pure transparency, unembodied signification. Such a system of signs in which each real character would stand for a primitive real object or simple idea and the combinatorial syntax of the language mirror the relations of simples in the experienced complexity of thought and the world, would in fact be a major instrument of scientific analysis. Leibnitz with characteristic optimism goes as far as to declare,

"that nothing more effective can be conceived for perfecting the human mind and that if this basis (*ars characteristica*) for philosophising is accepted, there will come a time and it will be soon, when we shall have as certain knowledge of God and the mind as we now have of figures and numbers and when the invention of machines will be no more difficult than the construction of geometric problems."<sup>26</sup>

With the application of a mathematically modelled combinatorial syntax to a character which directly in its symbols represented primitive ideas and objects, a universal language might be formed which could allow man to ascend to metaphysical and moral truth through the same inexorable logical steps followed in mathematical reason. The new reformed language would, Comenius believed, enable the

"discovery not only of language, but of thought, and, what is more of the truth of things themselves at the same time."<sup>27</sup>

From the middle of the seventeenth century universal language schemes, which up to that time had as much been motivated by the search for efficient memory devices, shorthands, and schemes for language translation, than by philosophical ideals, increasingly became guided by the analytic project of constructing a universal mathesis of thought, of language and of reality itself.

Descartes's famous letter to Mersenne<sup>28</sup> in which he criticizes the universal language scheme proposed by the latter for being insufficiently analytical and philosophical, marks the beginning of a period in which a universal language was expected not only to provide an improved set of conventions for representing by means of an improved character, but also

to mirror in its character and combinational syntax the very order inherent in ideas and the world. The universal language then, would have to capture in its symbols and syntax, the ordered classification of ideas and natural objects which science and philosophy, guided by the analytic method, could provide. In this way language itself could come to mirror the whole of human knowledge and furthermore function as a tool, a calculus of reason, for the axiomatic development of knowledge.

For Descartes and classical thought generally, language is representative only in so far as it is transparent to its object - ideas, the locus of a more primary form of representation. Ideas possess their own intrinsic and autonomous rational order, a mathesis which it is the task of language to divine and represent. However as Descartes realizes this is a demanding task and ordinary language in its current institutional form is often unequal to it. Often in ordinary language a certain opaqueness enters the representative link of signs and their objects to cloud the pure reflection of ideas which is the essence of representative signification -

"LXXIV on account of using language, we associate all our concepts with the words we use to express them, and commit them to memory only along with those words. Later on we remember the words more readily than the realities; and we hardly ever have such a distinct conception of any reality that we abstract it from any conception of words; most men's thoughts are concerned with words rather than realities. Any very often people assent to words they do not understand, because they think they did once, or think they got them from others who did understand them properly."<sup>29</sup>

Here Descartes expresses, very much along the lines of Hobbes before him and Locke after him, a profound distrust of ordinary language as a medium of representation. Ordinary language is not to be trusted because it possesses a certain autonomy with regards to the ideas it represents. Ordinary language shaped by and for common usage maintains a level of materiality which renders its signs somewhat opaque to that signified. Ordinary language easily becomes mere words with no clear designation.

For Descartes this opaqueness and threatening autonomy of ordinary language with regards ideas has its source in the very corporality of the language of everyday usage. The significations of ordinary language, Descartes argues, remain fixated with immediate sensory images rather than with designating abstract but clear and distinct ideas. Ordinary language then is not the embodiment of genuine thought i.e. analytic cognition, and thus cannot truly represent. It signifies merely *res extensa* the corporeal and sensible, experienced with immediacy but with no clarity or distinctiveness. Just as "many people cannot even now conceive of any substance but is imaginable, corporeal and sensible",<sup>30</sup> similarly ordinary language remains limited in its epistemic utility by the immediacy and superficiality of the images it seeks to embody in its significations. As such it remains opaque to its proper object - ideas, in all their analytical clarity and distinctness.

It is from this radical disjunction of image and idea, yet another dualism emerging in the wake of the eruption of the analytic subject, that the search for a language which will truly represent ideas, rather than merely embody confused, unanalysed images, begins. The ideal language project, in its rationalist mode, first mooted in Descartes's correspondence with Mersenne, departs from the analytical critique of imagery and distrust of ordinary language. It constitutes itself as the reassertion of analysis over analogous representation and mind over corporality. Moreover, the critique of imagery is fundamental more generally to the development of egological thought. For in its attack on sensationalism as a basis for representation and knowledge it creates an epistemic space for the theorization of the constructive and constitutive aspects of reflection and thought. This space recognized by Locke and also by Hume, even if only in his denial of it, in his attack on causal categories, will be filled by the critical idealism of Kant. This space is bounded at one extreme by a pole of absolute cognitive subjectivity. It is bounded at the other by the opposing pole of objective systemicity.

Leibnitz's philosophy of language centered on his ideal language project is not merely illustrative of this process of the development of a critique of reason, it is an essential moment in it.

Descartes rebukes the empiricists (in this case Hobbes) who

"will have the term idea mean only the images of material things, formed by means of corporeal phantasy."<sup>31</sup>

and affirms the reference of the term idea as "whatever the mind is directly aware of."<sup>32</sup> The mind is afforded a status as an analytic and reflecting subject over and above its function as the receiver of sense experience. Within 'thought' then is appearing the dualism of experiential and analytic subject, later formalized as empirical and transcendental ego. Similarly within primary representation is appearing the dualism of image and idea and within secondary representation the distinction of natural and ideal language. Leibnitz writes

"The thought of the ego which informs me of sensible objects, and of my own action resulting from there, adds something to the objects of the senses. To think a colour and to observe that one thinks it, are two very different thoughts, as different as the colour is from the ego which thinks it."<sup>33</sup>

That is to say for Leibnitz, the analytic subject is the perpetual commentator on sensory experience and it is only after this reflective comment that thought can form with all the clarity and distinctiveness of the idea. Leibnitz again notes

"If the idea were the form of thought it would come into existence and would cease with the actual thoughts which correspond to it; but being its object it might exist anterior to it and after thoughts."<sup>34</sup>

Ideas -- rather than the images of the receiving senses are the proper objects of the cognizing ego. Leibnitz goes as far as to rigidly distinguish between conceptual ideas and sensory based thought and in so doing prepares the way for the more radical distinctions of Kant and Critical Idealism.

"I distinguish only between ideas and thoughts, for we have always all pure or distinct ideas independently of the senses; but all thoughts always correspond to some sensation."<sup>35</sup>

Ideas then rather than mere thoughts i.e. images, are the primary representation of reality. Language if it is to be adequate i.e. function as pure representation must be transparent to ideas. But ordinary language like common man's cognition deals with images, the sensible. Thus what is required argues Leibnitz, is a form of secondary representation, a *character*, which can adequately represent ideas - a perfectly rational and universal character.

For Leibnitz the model for such a semiotic, which is both the product of analysis and in turn its tool, is mathematical calculus. He seeks a language "whose signs or characters would play the same role as the signs of arithmetic for numbers and those of algebra for quantities in general."<sup>36</sup> Truth in scientific propositions is to be attained as in mathematical or logical truth by the valid concatenation of signs in chains of deductive reasoning.

Ars characteristica is then

"the art of so forming and arranging characters, in so far as they refer to thoughts, that have among them those relations which the thoughts have among themselves: so that out of the ideas composing the idea expressing things, an expression of the things is composed out of characters of those things."<sup>37</sup>

The choice of characters for the universal language is arbitrary. A system of direct primal nomination is dismissed by Leibnitz, as it was eventually by Mersenne, as irrelevant to universal signification. In the ideal language, the representative correspondence of signifier and signified is primarily horizontal concerned with isomorphic combination; combinatorial syntax is given primacy over referential semantics.

"For even though characters as such are arbitrary, there is still in their application and connection something valid which is not arbitrary, namely a relationship which exists between them and things, and consequently, definite relations among all the different characters used to express the same things and this relationship, this connection, is the foundation of truth."<sup>38</sup>

The representative relationship of correspondence must then be horizontal.

Characters if they are to avoid the errors embodied in words must represent those primary elements which are clear and distinct, i.e. those analytical primitives or simple natures which are the basic building blocks of the rational archtechtonic of our ideas. Moreover the character must be capable of representing the combinations of these simples which generate the complexity of the experienced world of things. The characters do not directly designate concrete things, which are unclear notions, but rather the simples of which they are composed. In this way language can operate as a tool of knowledge to dissect and order reality.

"I only mean that characters must show, when they are used in demonstrations, some kind of connection, grouping and order which are also found in the object...."<sup>34</sup>

This ideal language will of course be a universal one. However, as we have already said, this universality is not due to it involving a primary origin in a pre-history of natural signification prior to the Tower of Babel. The signs and syntax of *ars characteristica* are an arbitrary heuristic shaped to function as the analysis and representation of thought. Philosophical language owes its universality to this efficacy. This universality then is rather a derivative of the primary universality of ideas. The task of *ars characteristica* is to assist in the analysis of complex things, indicating in what manner these complex objects are composed out of simple ideas. In so far as it functions as a tool of analysis this language can be applied to the combinative nature of any or all sets of things, anywhere, and its analysis will hold good for all men, then it is truly universal.

Language is to be constructed as an algorithm with which to calculate and thus analyse the complexity of the world. This view of language has something in common with the mystical art of combinations sought by the Lullists and Cabalists but it is given a radically new direction in Leibnitz's mathematicizing of this ancient art and his tying of *ars combinatoria* to natural scientific method. Leibnitz seeks a language which

can be the basis of "a rational philosophy with the same incomparable clarity as that of arithmetic."<sup>40</sup> Just as arithmetic has its numbers and operations, similarly this language will have its characters and syntax. The ideal language project will involve in its most rigorous form establishing the characteristic number for all ideas. In turn it will involve a refining of the grammar of this language so that the marvellous complexity of the world can be generated. This done the empirical claims of natural science can be tested for their truth value not merely by empirical experiment but as in the case of mathematical propositions by examining whether they are concatenated by valid reasoning i.e. in modern terminology they are well-formed-formulae.

As for the point of origin of these simple ideas, which it is language's task to represent, the locus of their being is for Leibnitz to be located in the cognition of an absolute ego. For Leibnitz this ego is indeed absolute for it itself is in a relationship of representation with God, the primary source of both being and representation. He writes

"It might be said that the soul itself is its own internal object, but it is in so far as it contains ideas or what corresponds to things; for the soul is a microcosm in which distinct ideas are a representation of God, and in which confused ideas are a representation of the universe."<sup>41</sup>

The soul or ego is then an isolated monad which accedes to a measure of universality and veracity in so far as its ideas are underwritten in their representativity by the good offices of the deity. For it is God alone who transcends the radical isolation of monads and whose divine and all-embracing cognition ensures that these autonomous and windowless substances can relate to the whole of which they are a part and thus to each other. Those monads which are rational souls or spirits are rescued from solipsism by the fact that their interiority is a living mirror or image of God and hence capable of reflecting God's knowledge



"spirits are also images of the divinity itself or if the author of nature, capable of knowing the system of the universe and of imitating it to some extent by means of archtectonic samples, each spirit being like a little divinity within its own sphere."<sup>42</sup>

Leibnitz is offering us here in the Monadology not only a theory of representation, based on theological premises but also a theory of inter-subjectivity. The 'city of God' with God ranging over the assemblage of all these isolated individuals in a relation "not merely of an inventor to his machine (as God is related to other creatures) but also that of a prince to his subjects and even father to his children"<sup>43</sup> becomes the model for understanding human society. An absolute subjectivity, guarantor of the world's objectivity becomes the condition of inter-subjectivity. Leibnitz's Monadology sketches in its most abstruse form the individualistic implications of egological thought. His abstract phantasy directly raises the problem of the solipsistic consequences of egological thought. He offers the only solution available within the grammar of egologicism - namely the postulation of an overarching transcendental subjectivity whose absolute-ness can underwrite inter-subjectivity, as it can guarantee the veracity of representation. Berkeley confronted with the same solipsistic implications of his thought invoked this same conceptual device - an omnipotent cognizer.

In early egological thought we witness the location of the fundamental point of origin of all representation and knowledge in a divine and absolute being who is invoked as a conceptual device to cope with particular damaging implications of the egological epistemological standpoint - the problems of solipsism and the objectivity and universality of scientific knowledge. In what is still an age of faith, this divine absolute being is clearly distinguished, in epistemological terms, from the cognitive ego or mind. The latter derives its epistemological efficacy from the former. In a succeeding age of increasingly secular humanism, divine intervention is squeezed out even of epistemological matters. The cognitive ego is increasingly thematized

as itself being transcendental and it inherits some of the cognitive attributes of the Deity. It now becomes the fundamental point of origin of non-sensory ideas, the primal source of signification and its consciousness the basis of the apodicticity in knowledge. In the idealist phenomenologies that arise in the nineteenth century, at its beginning that of Hegel's objective idealism, and, at its end in Husserl's transcendental epistemology, the solitary but absolute ego, through its intentional acts, constitutes the objective world as the correlate of its significations, just as God was seen to have created this best of all possible worlds. These epistemic transformations will take place in the emerging age of secular humanism. While the bourgeois pretender seizes the crown from the hands of the hapless pontiff and crowns himself, the old man of Königsberg will place man, or at least his transcendental surrogate, at the centre of the epistemological universe. And yet this anthropocentrism and emergent bourgeois individualism develop their egological form, with all its antinomies and tensions, from this theological structure.

For Leibnitz however, only God can be ascribed any cognitive autonomy. Language is a representation of ideas. These are in turn the object of the soul i.e. the cognizing and moral ego. This in turn, is a representation, in its form and content, of God. The essence of the ideal language and of representation in general is to express the divine nature of being, grasped clearly and distinctly by the 'rational soul' or analytic subject.

FOOTNOTES

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3. George Dalgarno: *Ars Signorum*, London, 1661. Menston fascimile reprint, 1968.
4. Michel Foucault: *The Order of Things*, Tavistock, 1970, Chapter 3, p.61.
5. Paul Ricoeur: *Heidegger and the Question of the Subject, Le Conflit des Interpretations*, Editions du Seuil, 1969, p.222-232.
6. M. Foucault, op. cit., p.35.
7. Ibid.
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11. Hume: *An Enquiry into Human Understanding*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd Edition, Oxford, 1902, p.19.
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13. Ibid.
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15. M. Merleau-Ponty. *Prose of the World*, North-Western University Press, 1973, p.7.
16. Leibnitz. *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, edit. L. Loemker, D. Reidel-Dordrecht, 1969, p.166.
17. Boyle. *Collected Work*, edit. T. Birch, London, 1744, Vol. I, p. xxxvii.
18. Leibnitz, op. cit. "On the General Characteristic" (1679).
19. Cave Beck. *Universal Character 1657* quoted in James Knowlson: *Universal Language Schemes in England and France 1600-1800*, University of Toronto Press, 1975, p.41.
20. Ibid.
21. Jan Comenius. *Janua linguarum reserata* (trans. T. Horne and J. Robotham). London 1652: Introduction to the Reader.

22. Ibid. See also Boyle, op. cit., Vol. I, xlix.
- 23.. Comenius, op. cit. Introduction to Reader.
24. Francis Lodwick. Of an Universall Reall Character, Transactions of Royal Society. Approved and abridged edition to 1700 edit. John Low Throp, London 1705, Vol. III, p.373-378.
25. Indeed all sorts of practical virtues were claimed for universal language schemes by their inventors and indeed the search for both memory devices, shorthands and secret codes for diplomatic communication were central motivations of the early planners.
26. Letter to Henry Oldenburg, op. cit.
27. Comenius: Via Lucis, trans. E.T. Campagnac, London, 1938. Liverpool University Press, p.191.
28. Descartes Letters. edit. A. Kenny, Oxford,U.P., 1970, p.3-6.
29. Descartes. Principles of Philosophy LXXIV in Haldane & Ross, op. cit.
30. Ibid.
31. Descartes. Objections and Replies, Fifth Objection in Haldane & Ross.
32. Ibid.
33. Leibnitz. On the Suprasensible Element in Knowledge, Philosophical Papers and Letters, op. cit.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. On the General Characteristic in Loemker, op. cit.
37. Ibid.
38. Dialogue, August 1677 in Loemker, op. cit.
39. Dialogue on the Connection between Things and Words (1677) in Leibnitz Selection, edit. Philip P. Wiener, Charles Schribner's Sons, New York, p.6.
40. Towards a Universal Characteristic (1677), ibid., p.17.
41. Monadology, 83 in Loemker, op. cit.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.

Transcend.	General		Animals	Exanguious		Action	Spiritual	
	Rel. mixed			Fish			Corporeal	
	Rel. of Action			Bird			Motion	
	Discourse			Beast			Operation	
	God		Parts	Peculiar		Relation	Oecon.	
	World			General			Possef.	
	Element			Magnitude			Provis.	
	Stone			Space			Civil	
Herb confid. accord. to the	Metal		Quantity	Measure			Judicial	
	Leaf			Power Nat.			Military	
	Flower			Habit			Naval	
	Seed-vessel			Manners			Ecclef.	
	Shrub		Quality	Quality sensible				
	Tree			Disease				

The Differences are to be affixed unto that end which is on the left side of the Character, according to this order;

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The Species should be affixed at the other end of the Character according to the like order.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

And whereas several of the Species of Vegetables and Animals, do according to this present constitution, amount to more than Nine, in such cases the number of them is to be distributed into two or three Nines, which may be distinguished from one another by doubling the stroke in some one or more parts of the Character; as suppose after this manner, If the first and most simple Character be made use of, the Species that are affixed to it, will belong to the first combination of Nine; if the other, they will belong according to the order of them, unto the second Combination.

Those Radicals which are paired to others upon account of *Opposition*, may be expressed by a Loop, or (o) at the left end of the Character, after this manner, o

Those that are paired upon the account of *Affinity*, are to be expressed by the like Mark at the other end of the Character, thus, o

The double Opposites of *Excess* or *Defect*, are to be described by the Transcendental points, denoting *Excess* or *Defect*, to be placed over the Character, as shall be shewed after.



*Adjectives* should be expressed by a *Hook* at the right end of the Character in  $\{ \text{Genus's or Differences, thus } \text{---} \}$

$\{ \text{Species } \text{---} \}$

*Adverbs* (being very near of kin to adjectives) may be expressed by a *Loop* in the same  $\{ \text{Genus's and Diff. } \text{---} \}$  place. In  $\{ \text{Species } \text{---} \}$

*Abstracts* may be expressed by a *Hook* at the left end of the Character. In  $\{ \text{Genus's } \text{---} \}$   
 $\{ \text{Differences and Species } \text{---} \}$

The *Active* and *Passive* voice may be expressed, one of them by a *Hook*, and the other by a *Loop*, at the left end of the Character, after this manner, in  $\{ \text{Genus's } \{ \text{Active } \text{---} \}$   
 $\{ \text{Passive } \text{---} \}$   
 $\{ \text{Differences or Species } \{ \text{Active } \text{---} \}$   
 $\{ \text{Passive } \text{---} \}$

The *Plural Number* may be expressed by a hook at the right end of the Character, after this manner, in  $\{ \text{Genus's and Differences } \text{---} \}$   
 $\{ \text{Species } \text{---} \}$

The Characters of the *Particles* should each of them be of a less figure, and capable of being varied to a threefold place. The *Grammatical Particles*, being applied to the sides of the Character, and the *Transcendental Particles* to the top of it.

These *Grammatical Particles* are here contrived to such a kind of distinct suitableness, so as each of the several kinds of them, hath a several kind of Character assigned to them.

1. The *Copula*, by the mark of ( ° )

2. *Pronouns*, by Points. ( . . . . . )

3. *Interjections* by upright Lines streight or hooked, ( | | | | )

4. *Prepositions*, by small curved Figures  $\{ \begin{matrix} \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \end{matrix} \}$

5. *Adverbs*, by a right angled Character  $\{ \begin{matrix} \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \end{matrix} \}$

6. *Conjunctions* by an acute angled Character  $\{ \begin{matrix} \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \end{matrix} \}$

7. *Articles* by two oblique Lines to be placed  $\{ \text{---} \}$  towards the top of the Character  $\{ \text{---} \}$

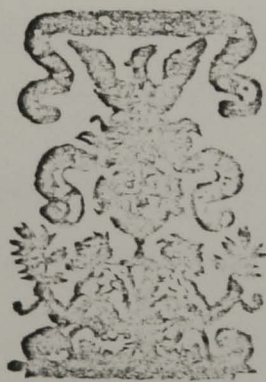
8. . . .

## CHAPTER THREE

CLASSICAL THOUGHT, EGOLOGICISM AND THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

(PART II)

AN  
ALPHABETICAL DICTIONARY,  
Wherein all  
ENGLISH WORDS  
According to their  
VARIOUS SIGNIFICATIONS,  
Are either referred to their Places in the  
PHILOSOPHICAL TABLES,  
Or explained by such Words as are in those  
TABLES.



LONDON,

Printed by J. M. for Samuel Gellibrand and  
John Martin, 1668.



## PART II

### i) Differences in Empiricist and Rationalist Approaches to Universal Language Planning and Synthesis in 18th Century Schemes

From the mid century an interest in universal language as a colloquial medium of intercourse was overtaken and submerged in the deeper interest in the construction of a sign system which would reflect accurately in its notation the facts of nature and the order of our ideas as discovered by 'true philosophy'. The search for a universal character is accompanied by a corresponding analysis and decomposition of ideas, (an intensional mathesis) and a differentiation, categorization and tabulation of things into ordered tables. Moreover, the establishment of these classifications of 'things and notions' according to their properties and their relations one with another, characterized under the schemata of genera, species and specific differences, was held to be a prior condition of the construction of an ideal universal grammar.

For the rationalists Mersenne, Descartes, the Grammarians of Port Royal and later Leibnitz, the emphasis was on the strict analysis and an ordered classification of ideas. The most important feature of the universal language was its calculus of order, the combinatorial characteristic. With a character being assigned to each clear and distinct simple idea, language could mirror the structure of thought and operate as an agent of its analysis. For the more empirically minded English planners Seth Ward, George Dalgarno and John Wilkins, the emphasis is placed more upon a categorization and tabulation of observational reality than on the art of combination based on abstract permutational and algebraic systems. Leibnitz was later to criticize the schemes of Dalgarno and Wilkins, as Descartes criticized Mersenne, for not being philosophical enough. That is for not carrying the principles of analysis and combination of concepts beyond the classification of the world of things by their observable features into genus, species and

difference, to an ordering and corresponding representation of the few simple and fundamental ideas whose combination generated all other complex notions. Only a language whose character and syntax could represent this combinatorial analysis of simples could function as a true instrument of axiomatic knowledge. There are differences between empiricist and rationalists on the proper scheme for a universal language, here expressed in terms of a differing emphasis on a real character and calculus of combinations as the core element of an ideal language and later articulated, in the eighteenth century, as the opposing but complimentary search for the original designation of words in nature and for the universal principles of association and combination of ideas and signs - the universal grammar. But these differences only mark a differentiation within a common epistemic space. They indicate a conflict merely within a greater unity of discursive formation.

Leibnitz reassures the empiricist committed to real studies:

"No one should fear that the contemplation of characters will lead us away from the things themselves; on the contrary, it leads us into the interior of things. For we often have confused notions today because the characters we use are badly arranged; but then, with the aid of characters, we will easily have the most distinct notions, for we will have at hand a mechanical thread of meditation, as it were, with whose aid we can very easily resolve any idea whatever into those of which it is composed."<sup>1</sup>

Only such an analytic and combinatorial language can free us from the ensnarement of ordinary language and the confused ideas it encourages, and deliver us directly to things -

"Since the analysis of concepts thus corresponds exactly to the analysis of a character, we need merely to see the characters in order to have adequate notions brought to our mind freely and without effort. We can hope for no greater aid than this in the perfection of the mind."<sup>2</sup>

Underlying both empiricist and rationalist views of language is this strictly functional view of language. This is itself predicated on the belief of the pre-eminence of real knowledge to which language as the

embodiment of 'analysis' at the level of conventional signification, can provide swift and easy access.

In John Wilkins 'Real Character and Philosophical Language',<sup>3</sup> to which contributions were made by a number of the members of the Royal Society,<sup>4</sup> the scheme not only involved a part on what Wilkins called the Universal Philosophy, namely tables of classification and analysis of things and ideas, and one on the real character, a sign system to represent these classifications, but also a section on philosophical or general grammar which could serve as a syntactical basis for the proposed character.

Wilkins, on the model of the Port-Royal grammar of the time, formulates an idea of General Grammar based not on conventional prescriptive grammars of particular languages but rather on a natural grammar which contains -

"all such Grounds and Rules, as do naturally and necessarily belong to the Philosophy of letters and speech in the General."  
 [ ] "the function of such a grammar will be to form the more simple notions classified in the tables into complex propositions."<sup>5</sup>

Cave Beck in England and Kircher in Europe were the last scholars of any standing to plan universal languages not based on the systematic classification and symbolisation of concepts guided by principles of analysis.<sup>6</sup> The philosophical tables of Dalgarno<sup>7</sup> and Wilkins, Mersenne and Descartes' arrangement of simple concepts and ordering of ideas, and Leibnitz's ratiocanative principles of analysis and synthesis, all share the assumption that the analysis and ordering of the object of representation, object or idea, is an absolute condition for a characteristic of pure representation.

Within the circumscribing field of mathesis as a universal science of order and combination which takes as its object, representation in the widest sense, begins the search for primitives and the original designation of words. However, this compliments rather than contradicts the construction of an

combinatorial calculus or syntax. For the ability of signs to represent nature and reality depends no longer on the resemblance of these signs to features of the natural world i.e. to their similitude with what they represent. In the classical theory of representation signs are arbitrarily chosen, and language grasped as a conventional system of signification.

For Hobbes the arbitrariness of speech and the general conventional nature of language is what distinguishes human signs from animal signals. Human language comes about through decision about conventions, for speech, like civil society, is an artificial construction, not a natural growth. It involves a linguistic contract -

"the order of numeral words is so appointed by the common consent of them who are of the same language as us (as it were by a certain contract necessary for human society)."8

Locke also writes

"Thus we may conceive how words, which were by nature so well adapted to that purpose, come to be made use by men as the signs of their ideas: not by any natural connection that there is between particular articulate sounds and certain ideas, for then there would be but one language amongst all men; but by a voluntary imposition whereby such a word is made arbitrarily the mark of such an idea."9

Even those like Mersenne and after him Condillac in the eighteenth century, who were attracted to the idea of the possible discovery in antiquity or in the archaeology of modern speech, of a primitive natural language that would signify immediately without convention, were forced to admit the impossibility of this dream.

"toutes les paroles étant indifferentes pour signifier tout ce que l'on veut, il n'y a que la seule volonté qui les puisse déterminer à signifier une chose plutôt qu'une autre. Quant aux différentes voix qui servent à expliquer les passions de l'ame, et les douleurs, elles sont aussi naturelles à l'homme qu'aux autres animaux: mais puisque les paroles sont artificielles, elles dependent de l'imagination, et de la volonté d'un chacun."10

After all, it is the very conventionality of language which allows of its rational improvement in the real character and universal language. The

paradox emerges that language can only regain its immediate link with things which it possessed naturally before the Tower of Babel, through this rational reconstruction. The notion of an original language which from the Creation of the confusion of tongues at Babel had been the single universal language in the world still exercised a fascination for the seventeenth century. That fascination was in part a longing for the spiritual unity held to exist in antiquity, a unity perceived to be sadly lacking in the religiously divided Europe of the seventeenth century. More importantly it was due to the orthodox belief that the original language of man was not only universal but had been able to signify in its natural characters the true nature of things. It was held that in this original language names had conveyed something of the essence of the things signified.

In the seventeenth century however it was believed that only a rational reconstruction of language on analytic lines could restore the representative link between words and things. Boyle in his letter to Hartlib notes

"If the design of the Real Character take effect, it will in good part make amends to mankind for what their pride lost them at the tower of Babel."<sup>11</sup>

In the imaginary commonwealths portrayed in English Puritan literature and in the strange discovered lands stumbled upon in seventeenth century French fictional voyages the reconstructed universal language is sketched as existing in its natural form.<sup>12</sup>

For the classical period then in contradistinction to the post-renaissance era, language is conventional and signs arbitrary in their constitution. The primal link between words and things can only be restored by the analytic representation a reconstructed universal character can afford. Leibnitz gets to the heart of the matter.

"Yet I notice that, if characters can be used for rationalisation, there is in them a kind of complex mutual relation or order which fits the things; if not in the single words at least in their combination and infection, although it even better if found in the single words themselves. Though it varies, this order somehow corresponds in all languages. This fact gives me hope of

escaping the difficulty. For although characters are arbitrary, their use and connection have something which is not arbitrary, namely a definite analogy between characters and things, and the relations which different characters expressing the same thing have to each other."<sup>13</sup>

It is in so far as signs in a language function as a grid of analysis to order reality, that words can regain their intimate connection with things. Leibnitz on the other hand also played with the possibility of the designing of a set of root characters which would emblematically represent their objects. However this notion, also mooted by Mersenne and Lodwick, totally rejected the idea that contemporary ordinary language had any 'natural' signification. While it was accepted that a language in which spoken sounds tokened things and ideas directly was the most perfect it was held that such a language would of necessity have to be invented and constructed on analytical lines. In this search for symbols which would denote the qualities of the thing signified onomatopoeic words held a particular fascination. These words were held to be partly natural and partly conventional and hence perhaps to hold the key in the relationship of the two orders which was seen as the essence of any adequate representational schema. Another tack was the search for radical words or substantives which in their very form bore the imprint of nature. Elias Ashmole, one of the earliest Fellows of the Royal Society and one who combined the callings of scientist and mystic, noted -

"we may consider that the useful radical words, if numbered, would not swell beyond our Memories fathom, specially if well ordered and digested by the judicious direction of an able and general Linguist; and such a one that rightly understands the first and true impressions, which Nature hath stamped upon the things they would have signified by the Form."<sup>14</sup>

In the eighteenth century this search for origins, i.e. for the original designation of words, was given a new impetus with the increasing influence of Lockean empiricism in language study. Locke's interest in the genesis of ideas by sensation was generalised by Condillac to the origin of language.

A literal base for language development was sought in an original sense data language. In the wild cries and primitive gestures of savage man were sought the foundation of a system of direct representation of things. In these 'cris naturel' which were held to give direct expression of man's wants, desires and fears were sought the origins of human signification. Human language it was claimed developed by means of metaphorical extension and generalisation from this primitive language of action and the emotions. For Condillac, Giambattista Vico and the English cleric Warburton, in early societies metaphor was the essential mechanism of linguistic growth. However in turn this structural role of metaphor in the formation and development of primitive natural language was seen as one of the reasons for the ambiguity and imprecision of contemporary vernaculars. For Blackwell like Warburton, the Original language is highly suspect -

"It is certain that the primitive parts of the Language reputed Original, are many of them rough, undeclined, impersonal Monosyllables; expressive commonly of the highest Passions, and most striking Objects that present themselves in solitary savage life.

From this Deduction, it is plain that any Language, formed as above described, must be full of metaphor; and that Metaphor of the boldest, daring and most natural kind: for Words taken wholly from rough Nature, and invested under some Passion, as Terror, Rage or Want (which readily extort sounds from men) would be expressive of that Fanaticism and Dread, which is incident to Creatures living wild and defenceless: We must imagine their Speech to be broken, unequal and boisterous; one Word or sound, according to its Analogy to different Ideas, would stand for them all; a Quality we often mistake for Strength and Expression, which is a real Defect."<sup>15</sup>

For Condillac too the origin of language is in a primordial non-arbitrary language of action and cries. However this language can exercise no active control over the mind. Its signs are merely involuntary reactions to psychological states. Perceptual thought likewise is tied to the immediacy of sensation. Such thought is instantaneous, without succession in time and without ratiocative order. It is only with the institution of a language

of arbitrary signs, that thought can be patterned, analysed and ordered in discourse. It is only in such an arbitrary language with a rationally reconstructed character and syntax of combinations, that thought can be decomposed into its constituent and elementary ideas and become knowledge. For Condillac speech is "une methode analytique", an essential condition of rational reflection,

"nous pouvons nous en rendre compte; nous pouvons par consequent, apprendre a conduire notre reflexion. Penser devient donc un art, et cet art est l'art de parler."<sup>16</sup>

For Condillac and after him the Ideologues, the search for origins of language remains motivated by the key forces in classical theory of representation - namely

- (a) the critique of contemporary ordinary language, and
- (b) the search for an ideal analytical language which can deliver thought to things. Through misplaced analogy and metaphor modern languages have become ambiguous, the initial resemblances of words and things have become blurred. Words no longer stand directly for ideas; a designation originally established in the language of action, but lost in the admixture and adulteration of modern European tongues. However this fracture can only be prepared by a rational reconstruction of arbitrary language. Only through an ideal philosophical language cognizant of the genetic principles of original language but following also the canons of analytical method can words again come to speak directly of ideas and things. Such a sign system would indicate not only the derivation of our ideas in sensation in a character of original designations but also facilitate the analysis of the combination of these simples in complex ideas. In Condillac's system 'simple sensations' replace the simple ideas of Descartes, Mersenne and Leibnitz as the analytical units whose combination and representation can provide a universal mathesis with which to explicate the nature of the world. In the eighteenth century the empiricist search for origins remains accompanied and indeed circumscribed by this project of a universal mathesis of signs.

As Foucault notes:

"To our eyes, this search for origins and this calculus of combinations appear incompatible, and we are only too ready to interpret them as an ambiguity in seventeenth and eighteenth century thought."<sup>17</sup>



We are too ready also to apply the labels empiricism and rationalism to this duality and see in it two radically distinct and conflicting modes of understanding. In reality however the design of a combinatorial calculus and the search for the 'elementary within a system that is artificial' compliment and sustain each other within a common project - the discovery/construction of an ideal universal analytical language. This language, through the constitution of tables of things and ideas, would represent the embodiment of existing knowledge. In turn as an ars combinatoria it would facilitate the development of knowledge. Within the grids of analysis which it is designed to represent, thought can be decomposed into its simplest elements and the genesis of these in animal sensation traced. Only a rationally constructed system of artificial symbols, a real character of primitives and their combination by a series of logical operations, could return language to its original direct relationship to things.

#### Early Egological Thought, Universal Grammar and Mind

As we have said for the classical period language is transparent to what it represents. For both the rationalists and empiricists, that which is represented is the universe of ideas or primary representations located in the dyadic interaction of a cognizing subject with an objectified world. Language as such is its function - the representation of representation. The locus of language as a sign system always lies beyond itself in the primary representation of thought. Its essence is defined by its function as the articulation of thought. As such its form is the reflection of the form of thought. And it is this form which lends significance to the actual content of spoken language. Universal grammar was the first of the three major directions of classical theory of language (the other two being *ars characteristica* and the empiricist search for origins) to postulate a

connection between language and thought. It held that discourse is the image of thought "La parole est un tableau de nos pensees." And as thought is governed by laws of reason, then discourse itself must embody and illustrate the laws of reason. The object of grammar is the enunciation of thought through its articulation in discourse.

That thought itself was primarily a representative domain and the primary representative one is clearly visible in this passage from Descartes' Third Meditation -

"For the representative mode of existence belongs to ideas from their very nature; and in the same way actual existence belongs to the causes of ideas, from their very nature - at least this is true of the first and principle causes. And though one idea may originate from another, an infinite regress here is impossible, we must at last get back to some primary idea whose cause as it were, an archetype, containing actually any reality whatever that occurs in the idea representatively...."<sup>18</sup>

Descartes in this passage adheres to a causal theory of representation. Hobbes likewise holds to a causal theory of representation, though to an empiricist version of it. For him, ideas, in the form of sensation and imagery, have a representative function with regards the things and states which give rise to them. This representative function is however circumscribed by the causal nexus of the sentient mind and the object world.

"That the said image or colour is but an apparition unto us of that notion, agitation or alteration, which the object worketh in the brain or spirits, or some internal substance of the head."<sup>19</sup>

For both rationalists and empiricists then ideas, native or sensate, have a primary representative function. This primacy has its roots in the postulated causal form of representation. Moreover this primary nexus of cognitive self and objectified world is the foundation for all further signification. Locke puts it so -

"Simple ideas, as has been shown, are only to be got by those impressions objects themselves make on our minds, by the proper inlets appointed to each sort. If they are not received this way, all the words in the world, made use of to explain or define any of their names, will never be able to produce in us the idea it stands for."<sup>20</sup>

Simple ideas are the primary form of representation and it is only when we have our minds stored with them and know the names for them, then we are in a condition to define and by definition to understand the names of complex ideas that are made up of them." Locke in this section of his essay attacks Descartes for confusing and conflating the idea of the cause of sensory experience with that experience itself. However throughout the text he registers agreement with the rationalists on one central issue - the representative nature of ideas. For both empiricists and rationalist ideas functioned so as to represent the objectified world to the cognitive subject. Words signify ideas and not things directly. For those things can only be known directly and with certainty via the cognitive agency of the thinking subject and through the ideas that subject has of them. For words are sounds arbitrarily chosen to stand for certain designata. However these objects of representation whether real objects, qualities or relations must be designata with which we are directly acquainted. And of course the only things we can know so intimately are of course our own ideas, whether originating from sense and reflection, or whether native. Language can itself only represent via the primary egological representative function of ideas. Locke reminds us,

"A man cannot make his own words the signs either of qualities in things, or of conceptions in the mind of another, whereof he has none in his own, for words, in their primary or immediate signification, stand for nothing but the ideas of him that uses them."21

For egological thought knowledge is only hinged to the world through the representative ideas the mind, organised in cognitive subjectivity, has of objects. Human knowledge of reality is mediated by the analytic subject's representative ideas of the world.

In each tradition language as a secondary form of representation, arbitrary and indirect, departs always from this primary relation of the epistemological subject and the world, within which it constitutes itself

as discourse. Within the structure of egological thought, a theory of language emerges predicated upon a particular philosophy of mind and self.

In the classical period before the emergence of a distinctive and thematic theory of signification, the measure of significance is representativity. Just as the science which analyses the structure of thought is logic, so that which analyses that of secondary representation is grammar. And just as logic is by its very nature universal, in so far as it strives to conjoin thought and reality, so grammar must be universal in so far as its task is the conjuncture of thought and discourse. General, or universal grammar then, is the analysis of linguistic representation, in so far as this is conceived of as a uniform and universal set of relations into which words can enter, these corresponding to the exigencies of thought. In the eighteenth century a further science will be added to the study of logic and general grammar - that of ideology. However this science of ideas, their origin and intensional structure, which in the hands of Destutt de Tracy, de Gerando and Maine de Biran, will address the inter-relation of signs and thought, will remain fixated by the ideal of language as a pure translation of thought. Ideology remains the legitimate and faithful child of the union of universal grammar and the empiricist search for origins.

#### (ii) General Grammar

However for the linguists of Port Royal, grammar cannot be just reduced to logic. The move towards a systematic application of a logic to the theory of language finds its beginning with Leibnitz. For the grammarians of Port Royal, grammar occupies an intermediate space between thought and the mere written or vocal signifier. Grammar is the mode of articulation of thought as it strives to express itself in discourse.

The grammarians task was seen as one of discovering the universal

principles of human thought that lie behind the apparent profusion of form of particular vernacular languages. If the grammarian employed a comparative method it was with the purpose of discovering the universal principles which undergirded all language, universal principles whose existence was guaranteed by the belief that human reason itself was universal. General grammar does not attempt to define the laws governing all languages by inductive generalization from the detailed study of various particular languages. Rather, each language is examined as an exemplification of the general structures by which thought is articulated. The universality of general grammar resides in the correspondence of its governing principles with the universal structure of our minds and the necessary combination of our ideas. Thus the fact that Latin and French are practically the only particular language that figure in the analysis is regarded as no great obstacle to the method. For other languages must in essence conform to the universal grammatical principles located in these languages in so far as these principles embody a common human mentality. As Horne Tooke was to comment - "it was general reasoning a priori that led me to the particular instances; not particular instances to the general reasoning."<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Beauzee commenting on the Port Royal Grammar published in 1660 wrote,

"Grammar, whose object is the enunciation of thought by means of the spoken or written word, admits two sorts of principles. The first are immutably true and universally applicable, they depend on the nature of thought itself, they follow its analysis and are merely its result; the second contain only a hypothetical truth which is dependant on the fortuitous, arbitrary and changeable conventions which have given rise to the different idioms. The first constitutes general grammar, whilst the second are the object of the various particular grammars.

GENERAL GRAMMAR is thus the reasoned science of the immutable and general principles of spoken or written language in any language whatsoever.

A PARTICULAR GRAMMAR is the art of applying the arbitrary and customary institutions of a particular language to the general principles of language, spoken or written.

GENERAL GRAMMAR is a science because it has no object other than the reasoned speculation of the general and immutable principles of language.

A PARTICULAR GRAMMAR is an art, because it is concerned with the practical application of the arbitrary and customary institutions of a particular language to the general principles of language.

The science of grammar is anterior to all languages because its principles suppose only the possibility of (actual) languages and because they are the same as those which direct man as a creature of reason in his intellectual operations; in a word, their truth is eternal.

The art of grammar, on the contrary, is subsequent to (actual) languages because the uses of language must exist before they can be artificially related to the general principles of language and because the analogous system of which this art consists can only be the result of observation made from these pre-existing uses."<sup>23</sup>

This rigid distinction between general and particular grammar is of course predicated upon the Cartesian philosophy of mind. General grammar is the essence of significant symbolization in that it is the enunciation of thought; its forms those of the primary mode of representation; its generality and immutability that of the absolute and, hence universal cognizing ego.

The linguistic principles explicated in Claude Lancelot's and Antoine Arnauld's "Grammaire generale et raisonnee", despite a concern for the underlying mental structure of language, do not address themselves to a concrete analysis of syntax. The major object of the *Grammaire* is the rational explanation of parts of speech and grammatical categories such as tense, gender and case. The syntactical properties of particular languages are not themselves seen as having any semantic function. These merely serve to bring words conveniently together in a semantic order which is determined by more fundamental and universal structures of discourse. Grammatical categories must be governed by the laws of the mind, for language is the creation of the mind. Thus each part of speech functions with a special purpose within this rational archtectonic. Pronouns, for example, are rationally explained as having been invented in order to save repeating the

same noun when it occurred several times in the same context. But no account is given of the specific form of pronoun insertion in particular languages and the accompanying rules of person, case and gender agreement. These features of the 'invention' of pronouns are regarded as merely incidental to their rational function.

Universal grammar because it approaches language from the standpoint of its inherent rationality involves no conception of a historical and developmental dimension to language. The governing principles of universal rationality commit language to an absolute and eternal synchrony. Drawn into the a-temporality of *res cogitans*, the historical and development characteristics of language are committed to the realm of the purely accidental together with the other irregularities and redundancies which lead to the vagaries of particular grammars and languages.

For Port Royal Grammar the various functions of language are determined by the three basic operations of the mind - conception, judgement and reason. The operations of conception and judgement are expressed in the nature of the categories of grammar and embodied with content in the proposition. The third operation of reason is performed logically on whole propositions as a syllogistic process.

The essence of grammar then is entirely located in the realm of *res cogitans*. Indeed the rigid distinction between General and Particular grammar replicates the fundamental dualisms of Cartesian philosophy and egological thought generally. Similarly the rigid distinction between human language and animal sign systems replicates the rigid demarcations of the dualistic ontology of the period.

For language is not mere characters or sounds, which it was recognized do vary nationally and regionally and which are subject to various accidents, rather language in its essence as pure representativity is a 'deep structure' of articulated thought. Without this cognitive and creative foundation in

universal cognition organized around the knowing subject, words would sink back into the wild cries of animal communication. Descartes notes -

"For it is a very remarkable thing that there are no men so dull and stupid, not even lunatics, that they cannot arrange various words and form a sentence to make their thoughts understood, but no other animal however perfect or well bred, can do the like. This does not come from their lacking organs; for magpies and parrots can utter words like ourselves, and yet they cannot talk like us, that is with any sign of being aware of what they say. And we must not confuse words with natural movements, the expression of emotion which can be imitated by machines."24

Again for Locke and the empiricists, human language is radically different from animal signing, and this difference resides in its cognitive component and translational function with regards the realm of ideas which is afforded a primary and autonomous status.

"Man, therefore, had by nature his organs so fashioned as to be fit to frame articulate sounds, which we call words. But this was not enough to produce language; for parrots and several other birds will be taught to make articulate sounds distinct enough, which yet by no means are capable of language.

Besides articulate sounds, therefore, it was further necessary that he should be able to use sounds as signs of internal conception, and to make them stand as marks for the ideas within his own mind, whereby they might be made known to others, and the thoughts of men's minds be conveyed from one to another."25

Human language is radically distinct from animal signing in that it is not only expressive but also representative. It alone can represent, in an arbitrary manner, thought - the defining characteristic of man. In turn natural language's differentiating specificity as a sign system is a proof of man's radically specific mentality vis-a-vis animals.

The core of this rational 'deep structure' of language is the elementary proposition. This is in essence the first murmuring in discourse of judgement, one of the three major operations of the mind. The proposition represents in its form and content the manner in which concepts are combined in judgement. As such it is the root source of significance within discourse, its essential and most elementary form. If removed or reduced it would



restore discourse to the dislocated gestures of animality; there would be a dissolution of significance and a rupture between sign and signified, just as ideas robbed of their representative and referential function would turn back on themselves, in the infinite regress to solipsism Descartes feared.

The proposition is then the discursive expression of the judgement, which itself is the principle operation of the mind. The essence of the proposition is that it affirms via the verb what it represents in the judgement. As such it establishes that correspondence with thought which is at the heart of classical theories of representation. Verbs are analyzed as functioning as a copula between subject and predicate (the other two major elements of the proposition) asserting an existential judgement. As such, the key verb from which all others are derived is that which asserts an existential judgement - the verb to be. Port Royal Grammar affords this verb substantive *être* a particular autonomy. It is the only true verb which by its union with adjectival ideas creates all other verbs. The verb with its root in the substantive 'to be' affirms a relationship between subject and predicate and hence represents cognitive judgement. As such the verb is the necessary condition for language to represent. The verb as copula establishes within the proposition the relationship of attribution which links the predicate to its subject. At the same time through affirmation it establishes the representative link between this internal structure and the very structure of thought captured in the judgement. The correspondence then is not the vertical point by point, word to thing atomistic correspondence of a theory of designation and the noun. It is rather a horizontal correspondence akin to an isomorphism, combinative rather than nominative, and necessarily so if language is to function as analysis and unfold as knowledge. For language structured in and through the proposition,

must be capable of making statements about the world. This it can only do if it can represent the cognitive judgements of the epistemic subject. The analytic task of language is to express these analytic judgements, to impose order on space and not merely name the contingently associated elements of the universe. Hobbes notes,

"In every proposition three things are to be considered viz the two names which are subject and the predicate, and their copulation; both which names raise in our mind the thought of one and the same thing; but the copulation makes us think of the cause for which those names were imposed on that thing."<sup>26</sup>

Empiricists as well as rationalists demanded that language must not only name but explicate the cause of attribution. Language must be harnessed to the twin principles of the structural organization of classical knowledge - analysis and order.

## (ii) Intensional Mathesis

Again, the correspondence of discourse and thought must be combinative and isomorphic rather than atomistic and nominative. Language if it consisted of merely the atomistic designation of particulars would lose its generality and analytic power before the multiplicity of the proper noun; it would dissipate its power to represent.

Locke whose theory of language tends to a more nominative and atomistic form than that of the Port Royal grammarians is clearly aware of the problem. Despite an empiricist ontology which stresses the primacy of particulars he notes that 'The far greatest part of words that make all languages are general terms.'<sup>27</sup> Moreover he adduces reasons for this occurrence; reasons which demonstrate the extent of the common ground he shared with rationalist philosophy of language.

"First, it is impossible that every particular thing should have a distinct peculiar name. For, the signification and use of words depending on that connexion which the mind makes between its ideas and the sounds it uses as signs of them, it is necessary, in the application of names to things, that the mind should have distinct ideas of the things, and retain also the particular name that

belongs to everyone, with its peculiar appropriation to that idea. But it is beyond the power of human capacity to frame and retain distinct ideas of all the particular things we meet with."<sup>28</sup>

Language if it is to represent adequately must conform to the structuration of ideas. The infinite designation of particulars, even if it were possible, would, Locke notes, be useless.

"because it would not serve to the chief end of language. Men would in vain heap up names of particular things, that would not serve them to communicate their thoughts."<sup>29</sup>

For Locke the most important dynamic at work in thought is that of generalization and analysis. Language as a system of secondary representation must also embody this dynamic in its system of signification, if it is to function as a tool of knowledge. He argues,

"yet a distinct name for every particular thing would not be of any great use for the improvement of knowledge, which, though founded in particular things, enlarges itself by general views, to which things reduced into sorts, under general names, are properly subservient."<sup>30</sup>

Similarly for Descartes, language if it is to represent adequately, must reflect in its combinative structure the general and analytic features of thought. For Descartes as for his correspondent on the subject of universal language scheme Mersenne, the model for such a combinative structure was that of mathematical calculus. Any invented language would have to involve "the establishment of order among all the thoughts which can enter the human mind, in the same way as there is one established naturally among numbers."<sup>31</sup> The power of language to represent resides in its transparency to the structure of ideation. The construction of an ideal language Descartes believed would depend on the existence of a "true Philosophy" which could order and classify thought into its simples and their combinations. Language would map this archtectonic of all possible basic concepts and their combinations. As such its structure must be capable of mirroring the general and analytic features of conceptual thought.

The 'proposition' then is the basic discursive unit capable of capturing the analytic density of thought. As a linguistic assertion it embodies in its form a cognitive judgement involving general concepts. Analysis unfolds in discourse in and through the proposition.

The proposition is the essential object of general grammar. Moreover it is to remain the primary focus of linguistic analysis throughout the development and erosion of the egological paradigm. This centrality is threatened with the development of nineteenth century romanticism which seeks to harness language to national 'genius' and poetic expression. However it gains new life with the emergence of logical positivism and it is not formally challenged within this analytic tradition until the socio-logic assault of John Austin and Wittgenstein. The career of the proposition as the central category of linguistic analysis charts the development and erosion of the translational theory of language which characterizes egological thought. This centrality is not effectively displaced until the relationship of language and mind is rethought from the conversational standpoint.

However for the grammarians of Port Royal and their followers, a proposition is not a sentence. Its generality and its representative power is not that of actual historical contingent linguistic utterance rather, as we have seen, it is derived from its intimate correspondence to, and reflection of thought. In essence the proposition is implicit only in discourse. It is not expressed directly there in the concrete form of language, only represented in the mind. The proposition must be given substance and issue forth fully clothed into ordinary language. It must be transformed into the particular sentence of natural languages if these are to function as a public medium for the communication of ideas. Language, for ego-logical thought, is precisely this articulation or translation of thought into a public medium for communication. It is this translational

function which gives human language its specificity, and words their sense. This function is the limit of the sense of words for man. As Locke tells us "Their signification, in his use of them, is limited to his ideas, and they can be signs of nothing else."<sup>32</sup>

The purpose of the syntax of ordinary language is to facilitate this translational function, to allow thought to body forth. The study of syntax and linguistic form centres around this problem of articulation.

Two distinct approaches can again be traced to this problem of articulation. These can be categorized under the general headings outlined above - combinative and nominative.

- (a) The former seeks to relate propositions to sentences by a transformation of the structure of the former to produce the latter in all the variety of different languages.

Chomsky summarizes this approach -

"A sentence has an inner mental aspect (a deep structure that conveys its meaning) and an outer, physical aspect as a sound sequence. Its surface analysis into phrases may not indicate the significant connections of the deep structure by any formal mark or by the actual arrangement of words. The deep structure is however represented in the mind as the physical utterance is produced. The deep structure consists of a system of propositions, organized in various ways. The elementary propositions that constitute the deep structure are of the subject-predicate form with simple subjects and predicates (i.e. categories instead of more complex phrases). Many of these elementary objects can be independently realised as sentences. It is not true, in general that the elementary judgements constituting the deep structure are affirmed when the sentence that it underlies is produced. To actually produce a sentence from the deep structure that conveys the thought that it expresses, it is necessary to apply rules of transformation that rearrange, replace, or delete items of the sentence. Some of these are obligatory, further ones optional. Thus Dieu qui est invisible a cree le monde qui est visible is distinguished from its paraphrase, Dieu invisible a cree le monde visible, by an optional deletion operation, but the transformation that substitutes a relative pronoun for the noun and proposes the pronoun is obligatory."<sup>33</sup>

Chomsky in his sketch of Port Royal grammar may be too ready to read into this corpus his own transformational linguistic problematic and dissect the grammar with his own well worn conceptual tools. However this portrayal of Grammaire General captures the essence of that movement. The elementary proposition is the bearer of meaning in language in so far as it is the first

murmuring in discourse of judgement, the primary operation of the mind. The relationship between the elementary proposition and the sentence in which it is embedded is one of transformation of form. It is a pure syntactical transformation that produces the various significances available in natural language. However in line with the general translational nature of General Grammar this transformational syntax is denied any specific semantic function. Meaning is entirely on the side of mind and is buried in the structure of the proposition and its designation of basic ideas. As we have said for General Grammar and the classical theory of language, grammatical categories were considered as reflections of mental faculties and regarded as of semantic significance only in so far as they embodied mental structures. The function of the formal structures of language is to represent the ordering and succession of ideas. The essence of grammar is exhausted in this function of the mind's combination of simple ideas into complex ones and their rational connection in asserted judgements. However this combinative-representative function of grammar is regarded as a fundamental aspect of language even if it is given a secondary place to the nominative-representative function of the designation of ideas. Even Locke who adopts the most atomistic and purely nominative approach to language is forced to note ( ) in his discussion of Particles,

"Besides words which are names of ideas in the mind, there are a great many others that are made use of to signify the connection that the mind gives to ideas or propositions, one with another. The mind, in communicating its thoughts to others, does not only need signs of the ideas it has then before it, but others also to show or intimate some particular action of its own at that time relating to those ideas."<sup>34</sup>

Locke follows Hobbes and Arnauld and Lancelot in the belief that verbs function in propositions as a copula between subject and predicate affirming a cognitive judgement and that all verbs have their basis in the existential substantive to be - "is and is not are the general marks of the mind, affirming or denying."<sup>35</sup>

#### (b) Primacy of the Noun

The latter approach, the nominative, pursues the relation of correspondence with thought by an articulation of the content of the proposition to produce the sentence. Central to this is a theory of the noun and designation. The proposition is not merely a structure mirroring the form of judgement but opens out into a content, the elements of which, nouns and their adjectives designate the content of primary representation - ideas. For the classical period and indeed within egological thought generally, the essence of language is its ability to name. Discourse can only express the content of ideation because sentences are made up of words that name and hence classify and order that content. The noun is then for egological thought the primary grammatical category. It was generally assumed by both rationalists and empiricists that the primary purpose of language was to name or signify ideas. Thus it was argued that if the invention of one part of speech proceeded others then this original part of speech must have been the noun.

Moreover the asserted primacy of the substantive noun was accompanied by a search for the hidden nominal function held to lie buried in connectives, conjunctions and prepositions. These particles as Locke commented refer not to particular ideas of objects but rather to "the connection that the mind gives to ideas or propositions one with another."<sup>36</sup> Similarly the grammarians of Port Royal argued that particles must have a certain representative content, since they indicate the manner "in which objects are linked together, and in which they are connected in our representations."<sup>37</sup> Instead of nouns "they have taken the place of those gestures by which men indicated them or simulated their connections and their succession."<sup>38</sup> Hence these words too are dormant names whose object of reference analysis can uncover.

For Locke the noun is basic because it alone speaks of the origin of language in primitive acts of designation of sensory experiences.

"And I doubt not, but if we could trace them to their sources, we should find, in all Languages, the Names, which stand for Things that fall under our Senses, to have had their first rise from sensible Ideas. By which we may give some kind of guess, what kind of Notions they were, and whence derived, which filled their Minds, who were the first Beginners of Languages; and how Nature, even in the naming of Things, unawares suggested to Men the Originals and Principles of all their knowledge, whilst, to give Names, that might make known to others any Operations they felt in themselves, or any other Ideas, that came not under their Senses, they were fain to borrow Words from ordinary known Ideas of Sensation, by that means to make others the more easily to conceive these Operations they experimented in themselves, which made no outward sensible Appearances; and then when they had got known and agreed Names, to signify those internal Operations of their own Minds, they were sufficiently furnished to make known by Words, all their other Ideas; since they could consist of nothing, but either of outward sensible perceptions, or of the inward Operations of their Minds about them."<sup>39</sup>

Locke here tentatively sketches a theory of the origin of language and the basis of signification which will be taken up in the eighteenth century by Condillac and developed so that the search for origins later becomes synonymous with the explication of the theory of signification. The distant origin of language is sought in the *primaeval* period when signs functioned as pure representation. The noun is the basic building block in Locke's genetic nominalist theory of language and the means by which nature, mediated by the cognitive agency of the epistemic subject, speaks to us.

And yet, as we have seen, Locke is wary of the multiplicity of the proper noun and the myriad of particulars in the world. Language must function as a tool of analysis and knowledge. Hence in its significations it must strive for generality and classification. General names are then the most important type of noun because they designate general ideas. In this way "one word was made to mark a multitude of particular existences."<sup>40</sup>

Within the classical theory of language, in general, the theory of designation and the noun aims to avoid the endless multiplicity of things and names. Designation is primarily taxonomic a relation of representation between a noun which functions as a designating genus to a species of particular ideas.

Thus on the one hand there emerges around the egological structure of classical thought a preliminary sketch for a structural semantics. For both rationalism and empiricism, despite the ideational atomism of the latter, language as a taxonomy of names must map the pre-existing and autonomous structure of thought. Thought can be analysed into its basic elements simple natures or ideas, which can be grasped clearly and distinctly. It can then be conjoined to form complex ideas. The semantic component of language if it is to achieve the ideal of pure representativity, must map the contours of this ideational landscape. For language if it is to represent, must correspond to the structure of a thought which is sufficient unto itself.

"Since all (except proper) names are general, and so stand not particularly for this or that thing, but for sorts and ranks of things, it will be necessary to consider in the next place what the sorts and kinds or, if you rather like the Latin names, what the species and genera of things are, wherein they consist, and how they come to be made. These being (as they ought) well looked into, we shall the better come to find the right use of words, the natural advantages and defects of language, and the remedies that ought to be used, to avoid the inconveniences of obscurity or uncertainty in the signification of words, without which it is impossible to discourse with any clearness or order concerning knowledge, which, being conversant about propositions, and those most commonly universal ones, has greater connection with words than perhaps is expected."<sup>41</sup>

Locke may have had in his mind here the classificatory schemes of the members of the Royal Society and the systems of real characters based on these schemes. The entire order of ideas, from simple elements to complex combinations must be covered by a corresponding grid of language which signifies the various levels and points of formation of this intensional mathesis. Descartes summarises the demands made on the theory of designation and the noun by the governing principles of this analytical and binary



theory of representation. A philosophical language must depend on the True Philosophy.

"Car il est impossible autrement de denommer toutes les pensees des hommes, et de les mettre par ordre, ny seulement de les distinguer en sorte qu'elles soient claires et simples, qui est a mon advis le plus grand secret qu'on puisse avoir pour acquerir la bonne science. Et si quelqu'un avait bien explique quelles sont les idees simples qui sont en l'imagination des hommes, desquelles se compose tout a qu'ils pensent, et que cela fust receu par tout le mond, j'oserais esperer ensuite une langue universelle fort aisee a aprendre a prononcer, et a ecrire, et ce qui est le principal, qui aiderait au jugement, luy representant si distinctement toutes choses, qu'il luy serait presque impossible de se tromper."<sup>42</sup>

The search for a nominative taxonomy or structural semantic which can map the intensional mathesis uncovered by 'true Philosophy' is most easily witnessed in the universal characters and ideal language projects based on a priori ordering and classification of concepts. The schemes of Wilkins and Dalgarno and to a lesser extent Lodwick are based on such a philosophical language. In Wilkins tables, the drawing up of which was contributed to by several members of the Royal Society, objects and ideas are categorized into forty classes or broadly based genera groups to which names are assigned. These 'genera' consist of both transcendentals categorized on an Aristotelian basis ('substance quantity, quality, action and relation') and groups categorized according to divisions in the natural world (metal, herb, fish, etc.). Each genus is then subdivided into groups called 'differences'. To each genus is assigned, as we have said, a name in the form of a real character. Differences are represented by a modification to the real character designating the genus. The difference in turn is subdivided into 'species' and the latter represented by an alternative set of modifications of the genus character stem. Wilkins' symbolization facilitates the representation of some 4,000 separate items both natural objects and forces, and abstract concepts. By the addition of a series of hooks and loops to the basic characters and their species and difference

modifications Wilkins denotes adjectival and adverbial forms, plural and affinity, or opposition. In this way each sign both directly represents and defines a particular idea or object and indicates its connection with other related concepts and things. Each modification of the basic characters demarcates a more specific category of ideas and objects and leads eventually to particulars. Wilkins real character clearly then represents an attempt to realize the ideal of a nominative system of signification which can map the structure of thought through the creation of a vocabulary of signs based on a structural semantic.

(iv) Knowledge and Being

However the tying of designation and the noun to an intensional mathesis must be accompanied by an attempt to root that realm of ideas in the world and thus forge a direct link between words and things. In the eighteenth century, with the increasing influence of Lockean empiricism, this is to mean the prolonged search for the origins of designation in primitive man's ideational activity. However in the seventeenth century, for the rationalist grammarians of Port Royal, the demand is that ideas must be related not only internally to each other but also have extension to the real world. Port Royal grammar, infused with the spirit of Cartesian realism, draws a clear distinction between the intension and extension of an idea.

"The comprehension (intension) of an idea is the constituent parts which make up the idea, none of which can be removed without destroying the idea. For example the idea of a triangle is made up of the idea of having three sides, the idea of having three angles and the idea of having angles whose sum is equal to two right angles and so on.

The extension of an idea is the objects to which the word expressing the idea can be applied. The objects which belong to the extension of an idea are called the inferiors of that idea, which with respect to them is called the superior. Thus the general idea of a triangle has in its extension triangles of all kinds whatsoever."<sup>43</sup>

Here, over two hundred years before Frege, egological thought finds it necessary to distinguish between sense and reference in order to defend the binary form of the sign, the translational theory of language, and the correspondence theory of truth. Egological thought demands of language that primarily it should name and refer; this referential capacity is the basis of languages' representativity. Anything which clouds the transparency of language to what it names, and threatens the representative nexus of words and things must be guarded against. For classical thought this means denying the historicity and materiality of language; particular languages, their grammar and histories are ignored and attention focussed on general grammar and the universal and rational deep structure of language; in turn, the formal syntactical properties are denied any semantic function; the function of language is reduced to that of pure nomination.

Hence within the intensional mathesis of thought there is a growing interest not only in the origins of designation, which might throw light on the primal link of words and things, but also an interest in the importance of those ideas called substantives. These elements of thought, though reducible to constituent more simple ones for the purposes of knowledge, represent bodies as they are experienced as a whole in material extension. Descartes, despite the primacy he gives to analytic method distinguishes its object from reality as experienced -

"In the first place we must think differently when we regard things from the point of view of our knowledge and when we are talking about them as they are in reality." The object of analysis may have epistemological primacy, due to its clarity and distinctiveness, but that of experience has the more central place in representation. He notes -

"I can see no inequality among ideas taken merely as certain states of consciousness, all of them seem to originate from myself in the same way; but in so far as one represents one object and another another, there are obviously great differences. For indubitably, the ideas that manifest substances to me are something more, have, so to say, a greater amount of representatives, reality, than those which merely represent states or accidents."<sup>44</sup>

And just as at the level of primary representation one can distinguish substantive ideas similarly at the level of secondary or linguistic representation one can distinguish between nouns which designate these substances and adjectival nouns which designate accidents or states. For general grammar "words that signify things are called substantival nouns such as earth, sun. Those that signify manners, while at the same time indicating the subject with which the manner agree, are called adjectival nouns such as good, just, round."<sup>45</sup>

The status of the substantive and the concept of substance becomes the Achilles heel of early classical philosophy in the ego-logical mode. Confronted with these categories and the scholastic realism which underwrites them, the limitations of classical epistemology become apparent. The duality of knowledge and being, hinted at by Descartes and developed by Locke as a theme in his discussion of nominal and real essence, threatens the very nature of representation. For representation, idea or word, must be faithful to what it represents, things or ideas, yet conform to the structures of analysis. But the eruption of the analytic subject on the surface of knowledge production shatters the original similitude of sign and signified. It replaces the hierarchy of analogies with the grids of analytic order of both the classification of concepts and of their representation in the symbolic calculus of an ideal rational language.

Ego-logical thought is committed by the logic of its own discourse to turn its back on being, in favour of knowledge, and to reorganise ontology around the new primacy of the cogito. Similarly representation must take this epistemological turn and found itself on the central mediation of the cognitive subject and its ideational and analytic activity. In turn the scholastic doctrine and substance must be excoriated from classical epistemology.

Locke attempts to do this. He clearly saw Descartes continued use

of the category as an unnecessary and confusing residue from scholastic thought. Locke clearly distinguishes between the real essence and nominal essence of a thing. By real essence he means "that real constitution of anything, which is the foundation of all those properties that are combined in and are constantly found to co-exist."<sup>46</sup> These real essences for Locke err on the side of being and are unknowable, for only their appearances are manifest to us in sense perception. Moreover as Locke points out, when we use the term essence, generally we are not doing so in reference to these unknowable entities, but rather in reference to the classifications under which we order reality. "That essence" he tells us, "in the ordinary use of the word, relates to sorts and that it is considered in particular beings no further than as they are ranked into sorts."<sup>47</sup> It is in other words a nominal essence. Moreover substances are classified and sorted into categories not on the basis of their real essence, as this ontological information is not available but rather by their nominal essences.

"For it is that alone that the name, which is the mark of the sort, signifies. It is impossible therefore that anything should determine the sorts of things which we rank under general names but that idea which that name is designed as a mark for, which is that, as has been shown, which we call the nominal essence."<sup>48</sup>

Locke tightens the tresses that bind the classical theory of representation within the structure of egologicism. The essence of a thing becomes de facto the general idea under which it can be classified in the analytic activity of the subject. It is this general idea or nominal essence which is designated by the noun substantive. The noun substantive does not designate essential attributes of substance independent of the mind. Rather it designates the mind's representative ideas of things and the classifications the analytic subject, in reflection, imposes upon its experience. Substance and the substantive are no longer ontologically given but now fairly and squarely on the side of knowledge. For Locke argues, we classify and name

substances by their nominal and not by their real essence, and this nominal essence is the product of the analytic agency of the mind. It is to the mind we must look if we are to understand the notion of essence, and not to nature. Though "nature makes many particular things, which do agree one with another in many sensible qualities, and probably too in their internal frame and constitution." However, "it is men who, taking occasion from the qualities they find united in them and wherein they observe often several individuals to agree, range them into sorts, in order to their naming, for the convenience of comprehensive signs; under which individuals, according to their conformity to this or that abstract idea, come to be ranked as under ensigns: so that this is of the blue, that the red regiment; this is a man, that a drill; and in this, I think, consists the whole business of genus and species."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, it is to mind that we must look if we are to grasp the functioning of language. For the task of language is to represent the ordered classification of things. This, only the mind can afford. The noun substantive as name does not then reach out directly to nature and designate particular real substances (if it were to do so it would lose its power of generality) rather it designates an important node in the intensional mathesis produced by the cognitive agency of the solitary if absolute epistemic self. Language then is a secondary form of representation which because it is arbitrary in its character, can have no direct link with the world of things. However due to its institutional and possible rational character it can adequately represent those ideas which analyze and order the flux of material experience. Its ability to represent is always circumscribed by this primary relation of the epistemological subject and the world. It is only within this primary epistemological relation that it constitutes itself as discourse. For it is only within this ideational correspondence that it can lose its own materiality,

historical density and autonomous expressivity and become pure representation.

Yet, when ego-logical thought turns its back on being, both of substance and of language, although it solves the immediate problems of its own coherence as dictated by the twin principles of analysis and order, it opens up a vast new problem - the relation of knowledge and being. This problem of course is later to crystalize within critical idealism as that of the relationship of cognitive system and nature. But not before it had first appeared in the cogitation of the ideologues in the form of the thorny question of the relationship of signs and thought.

Ego-logical thought having centred knowledge on the solitary subject and its indubitable agency, is faced with a pressing problem - namely to assess the contribution of our cognitive and representational apparatus in the constitution of an objective world experience by us.

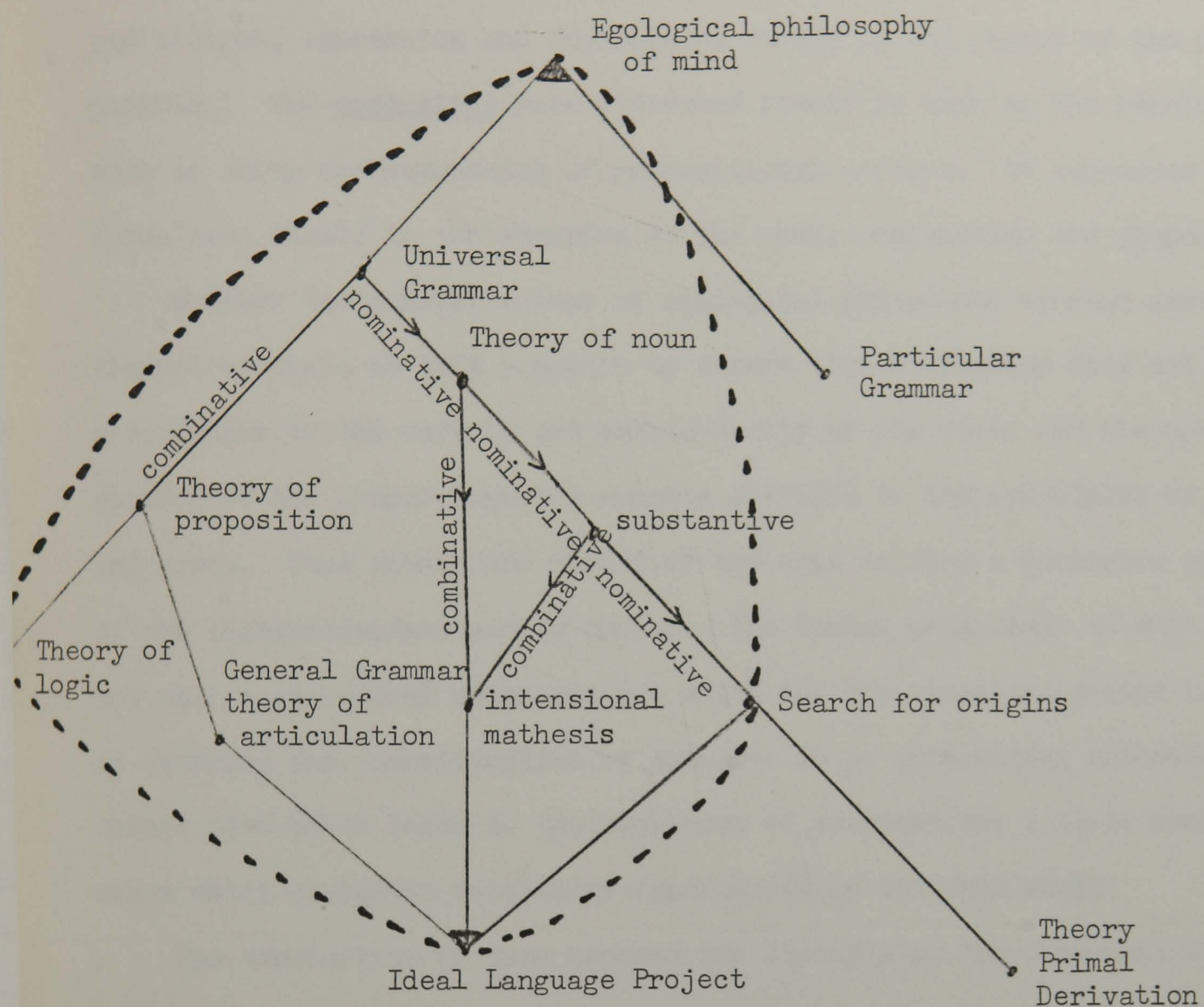
(v) Egologicism and the Structure of  
Classical Theory of Language

The structure of the classical theory of language can now be represented schematically and its relationship to the ego-logical philosophy of mind within egological discourse traced.

The egological philosophy of mind with its thematized dualism of universal mind and contingent world gives rise to the rigid distinction between and consequent strong classification and framing of, General and Particular Grammar. The detailed study of vernacular grammar for their own sake is not developed in any depth, for such an activity can make no real sense within the parameters of egological thought with its universal theory of mind and translational conception of linguistic representation.

Within Universal Grammar, which is conceived of as the structural articulation of thought in discourse, the correspondence between discourse

PLATE 7: Schematic  
Representation of  
Structure of the  
Classical Theory of  
Language.





and thought is sought through two contrasting paths. The combinative addresses itself to the horizontal correspondence of form between language and thought, expressing and formalizing itself in the theory of the proposition. The nominative path addresses itself in turn to the vertical word to thing correspondence of propositional content. It expresses and formalizes itself in the theories of the noun, conjunction and preposition.

However the general axioms of egological philosophy of mind assert themselves again at this juncture to ensure that nomination does not entail a surrender to the variety and particularity of the world and the multiplicity of the proper noun, but remains faithful to the principles of analysis and order. Thus within the theory of the noun we find a recursive application of the combinative/nominative choice. The former path leads to what we would now call a structural semantics but which for the classical period involved an ordering and classification of concepts in an intensional mathesis. The latter path which leads to the isolation of substantives - those naming signs which designate substances experienced in the real world.

The substantive in turn becomes the lynchpin of the classical system of representation and the focus between the opposing tendencies of the classical theory - the construction of a calculus of semantic combinations and the search for the origins of language and the primitive designations of the linguistic system. The substantive with one face directed towards the internal structure of ideas and the other directed towards the real world of substance and particulars, becomes the focal point where classical thought attempts to reconcile its differences and address itself to the emerging problems of the relationship of knowledge and being. Two paths open out from the substantive. These reflect these tensions within the classical theory. The combinative direction links the substantive firmly to the plotting of an intensional mathesis. The substantive becomes merely

a mode in this structure of ideas, reducible to simpler terms but in its form designating a particular and useful classification of things. The nominative direction, on the other hand, in its pursuit of an initial designative link between the noun and the things it names, commits classical thought to the search for origins.

The search for origins for its part may attempt to drive classical theory further in a nominative and genetic direction towards a theory of primal derivation which descends below the level of individual words and indeed syllables in the pursuit of a rudimentary form of nomination conditioned by man's original contact with nature and his fellow man. This direction inevitably carries itself beyond the limit of egological discourse into a consideration of etymological questions which drag the pristine thought of the classical period into the mire of historical accident and cultural specificity. These conditions of discourse cannot be thought within egologicism. However the major direction which the search for origins in fact takes, is not a step towards embodying history and culture in language but rather towards throwing light on the conditions necessary for the contemporary manufacture of an ideal philosophical language.

Similarly the other developments within the structure of classical theory are motivated by, and in turn lead to, the search for an ideal language. The theory of the proposition and judgement is developed in the direction of a logic. Yet increasingly throughout the eighteenth century grammar is afforded an autonomy and specificity vis-a-vis logic. The grammatical theory of articulation (or general grammar) in turn becomes a major contributing influence on universal language schemes.

Likewise true philosophy's search for an ordered classification of ideas, in an intensional mathesis which can be clearly represented by a combinatorial characteristic becomes another of the foundations of the

Ideal Language Project. The various directions of classical theory of language, general grammar, ars combinatoria and the search for origins, converge then in the project of an ideal philosophical language of pure representation. The egological philosophy of mind and its correlate the Ideal Language Project become the two poles of a discursive field within which the possibilities and developments of the classical theory of language occur.

Egologism is then the epistemic condition for the possibility of the classical theory of representation. This theory with its binary specification of the sign, translational view of the relationship of language and mind and motivating ideal of a perfected character transparent to the cogitation of a universal cognitive subject, draws its constitutive elements from egological discourse and traces its possibilities within the parameters of this system of thought.

FOOTNOTES

1. Leibnitz. Letter to Walter Von Tschirnhaus, 1678 in Loemker, op. cit.
2. Ibid.
3. John Wilkins. An Essay Towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language (1668). Menston Reprint 1968.
4. Both Wilkins schemes and the earlier ones of Seth Ward and George Dalgarno were co-operative ones involving a number of eminent Oxford and later Royal Society scholars. The Royal Society set up a committee on 7th December 1664 to improve the English language for 'philosophical purposes' and Wilkins was invited by the committee to draw up a scheme for presentation to the Society. The naturalist Francis Willoughby, the botanist John Ray and Robert Hooke supplied the most up-to-date scientific information to aid Wilkins in drawing up the tables of naturalistic classification. William Lloyd assisted by drawing up the dictionary of words and symbols to be used in the scheme, while Francis Lodwick and William Holder helped in elaborating the phonetic basis of the language. In later years despite a certain loss of interest in Wilkins scheme by the Royal Society as a body, Wallis and Hooke actually used the character for scientific purposes of classification and description.
5. Wilkins, op. cit., part III, p.297.
6. See Knowlson, op. cit., Chapter 3.
7. George Dalgarno. Ars signorum, vulgo character universali et lingua philosophica, London 1661, facsimile reprint, Menston 1968, English Linguistics 1500-1800, No. 116.
8. Thomas Hobbes. De Cive. on Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society, Molesworth edition, Vol. 2, p.303.
9. John Locke, op. cit., Vol. 2, Chapter II.
10. Marin Mersenne. Harmonie universelle (1636), 47, 65, quoted in Knowlson, op. cit., p.67.
11. Robert Boyle. Letter to Hartlib (March 1647), Collected Works, op. cit.
12. See Cornelius, P. Languages in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century Imaginary Voyages, Geneva, 1965.
13. Leibnitz. Dialogue, August 1677 in Loemker, op. cit.
14. Elias Ashmole. Fasciculus chemicus, London 1650; Prolegomena, p.28. Ashmole's scheme seeks "Forms and Characters"       "agreeing as near to the natural quality and conception of the thing they are to signify might be". Ashmole's autobiographical notes and correspondence and other contemporary sources relating to his life and work have been edited by C.H. Josten, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1966. This collection provides an excellent resource of source material for the period of the emergence of the Royal Society.

15. Thomas Blackwell: Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, 2nd Edition, London 1736, quoted in Land, op. cit.
16. Condillac. Oeuvres, I, 4036, quoted in Aarsleff, op. cit., p.24.
17. Michel Foucault, op. cit., p.62.
18. Descartes. Meditations, Anscombe edition, p.82.
19. Hobbes. Human Nature or the Fundamental Elements of Policy, Molesworth edition, Vol. IV, p.4.
20. Locke. Enquiry, op. cit., p.29.
21. Ibid., p.12.
22. Horne Tooke. Divisions of Purley (1786), edit. Richard Taylor 1860, London, I, p.130-133.
23. Nicholas Beauzee. Grammaire generale ou exposition raisonnee des elements necessaire du langage, Paris, 1767, 1819 revised edition, Preface p.5-6; this section trans. Laurence Bell.
24. Descartes. Discourse on Method, Haldane & Ross, p. 116-117.
25. Locke, op. cit., p.9.
26. Hobbes. Elements of Philosophy, Part I, Logic, Molesworth edition, Vol. I, p.31.
27. Locke, op. cit., p.15.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Descartes. Letter to Mersenne of 20th November 1629 in Philosophical Letters, edit. Anthony Kenny, op. cit.
32. Locke, op. cit., p.15.
33. N. Chomsky. Cartesian Linguistics, op. cit.
34. Locke, op. cit., p.72.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Logic of Port Royal. La Logique ou l'art de penser, (Arnauld, A. possibly). Paris, 1671 edition.
38. Batteux. Nouvel examen du pre juge de l'inversion, pp.23-4; quoted in Foucault, op. cit., p. 101.
39. Locke, op. cit., p.10.
40. Ibid.

- 41. Ibid., p.11.
- 42. Descartes. Letter to Mersenne, 20th November 1629 in Oeuvres de Descartes, edit. Adam & Tannery, Paris, 1897, Vol. I, p.76.
- 43. Logic of Port-Royal, English trans. J. Dickoff and P. James, Bobbs Merrill, Indianapolis, 1964, p.51.
- 44. Descartes. Meditations. Anscombe edition, p.80.
- 45. Lancelot, C. and Arnauld, A. General and Rational Grammar, English trans. 1753, Menston reprint 1968, p.25.
- 46. Locke, op. cit., p.45.
- 47. Ibid.
- 48. Ibid.
- 49. Ibid.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE STRUCTURE OF KANT'S PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE

"The Cogito is not an innocent statement."

*Adorno: Negative Dialectics*

(I) Kant and the two epistemological traditions

The elevation of the cognizing subject to the absolute status of a solitary epistemological self, a monad from which the world can be unfolded, has its origins in Descartes egologicism. For Descartes the certainty of the self expressed in the cogito becomes the axiomatic foundation of all knowledge of the world given a little help from God as guarantor, of the veracity of ego's ideas. Moreover the empirical tradition is not fundamentally different in its egological approach to epistemology. In the latter, the epistemological direction is reversed and sense receiving subject rather than an idea generating subject is the basis of the epistemological enquiry. The metaphors and psychologies change; Descartes geometry with his innate genius is replaced by Locke's tabula rasa. The conception that knowledge and truth, possessing an objective and an absolute status respectively, can be approached and grasped by a cognizing ego through the correspondence of its ideas with a real world, remains however common to both.

In the egoism which is the fundamental dynamic in Hobbes and Locke's social philosophies we catch a glimpse of the ideological underpinnings of egological thought. We witness early bourgeois life in earnest self reflection.

Kant emerges as the inheritor of the two philosophic traditions and as their synthesizer. Moreover it is in his critical philosophy that we find the most rigorous explication of the principle of epistemic egoism, its transcendental grounding, and its location as foundation of the coherence of our world of sensory experience and ultimately of scientific objectivity and truth.

In Kant's transcendental idealism the empiricist and rationalist traditions come together, not in a mist of ~~ec~~lecticism but in a genuine attempt at coherent



synthesis. Paradoxically Kant achieves this synthesis and systematically interrelates the two sources of knowledge, sensation and thought which are the respective objects of empiricist and rationalist epistemologies, by showing the radical diversity of sense and thought. For Kant unlike Descartes and Locke there are two distinct sources of human knowledge - sensibility and understanding. Earlier epistemology had tended to confuse and conflate these, motivated by either empiricist or rationalist reductionist aims. In both Descartes and Locke the notion of 'idea' conflates sensory experience and intellectual process, assimilating one to another: the directional pull depending on the rationalist or empiricist point of departure. However from the outset Kant clearly distinguishes between the two sources of knowledge. Through sense, objects are given to us, but through understanding they are thought. Sensibility is the source of our raw data about the objective external world. Sensibility is the point of contact with the brute facticity of the real world. It is Kant believes caused by the external substance, the "thing in itself", which is the ground of its sensory appearances. However this raw data given in sensory experience is processed and operated on by understanding - a cognitive faculty not given in experience.

"Objects are given to us by means of sensibility and it alone yields us intuitions; they are thought through the understanding, and from the understanding arise concepts".<sup>1</sup>

The two aspects of cognition are then radically diverse and distinct, yet they are interrelated. Objective knowledge is rendered possible precisely in this interrelation and inter-dependence.

"To neither of these powers may a preference be given over the other. Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind".<sup>2</sup>

To utilise the computer analogy again, raw data must be processed and organized, but the processing algorithms must have data to process and operate upon. The correct functioning of the computer as on artificial intelligence requires that data input and algorithm operation operate in conjunction.

For Kant it is only in the union of sensibility and understanding that objective knowledge is possible:

"Understanding and sensibility, with us, can determine objects only when they are employed in conjunction. When we separate them, we have intuitions without concepts or concepts without intuitions - in both cases, representatives which we are not in a position to apply to any determinate object".<sup>3</sup>

To employ the concepts of understanding without reference to sensory data i.e. non-empirically or transcendently, in a searching for a non-experiential content is invalid. Such attempts generate the antinomies and whirl logs of metaphysics. On the other hand raw sensory experience alone, can yield no knowledge. It alone, is a manifold of contingency and flux, without form, without even discrete objects and related events.

"The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise. But that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of the other; rather it is

a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other".<sup>4</sup>

In Kant then, the fundamental diversity and opposition of subject and the world, characteristic of egologicism is replicated in the radical diversity of our sources of knowledge. The one is located in the conceptual cognition of a transcendental subjectivity. The other points via sensibility to the external world of substance. Yet in this diversity and opposition there is a fundamental interrelating within cognition itself. Within subjectivity itself, is established the conditions of valid objecivity.<sup>5</sup> Within man as an absolute cognitive agent is inbuilt a fundamental orientation to the world. It is however an orientation uninformed by the fundamentality of man's orientation to his fellow man, society and history.<sup>6</sup>

For Kant then, there are two elements in knowledge, sensory experience and thought. Both elements are modes of consciousness of cognizing selves. However these modes of consciousness and the selves around which they gain their identity must be clearly distinguished. In sensation we are passive receivers of sensory experience which is given to us from an external source. However in thought we actively operate on the content of our sensory<sup>5</sup> experience to give it form, discrete identity, and eventually in scientific explanation - a causal explanation.

Thus for Kant even our naive experience of the world given in sensation, is structured by cognitive elements not given in the manifold of sense, only through which the world impinges upon us. Every object we perceive is in space and time, but these structures are not contingently given in experience. Rather they are the prior condition for perceiving any object

what-so-ever. They are the universal and prior forms of external sensibility. The status of these universal and necessary forms of sensation Kant thinks can be best clarified by examining clearly judgements embodying one of them, space, in a specific area of knowledge which takes space and spatial figures as its object: geometry.<sup>7</sup> Kant attempts to show that all geometrical knowledge consists of universal and necessary judgements about space. The propositions of geometry he argues are clearly formal ones which can be arrived at without the sensory reference to particular triangles, circles, parallel lines in the real world. On the other hand however, they are not merely analytical propositions whose truth is given internal to them in the meaning of their own terms. No amount of analysis of the idea of a straight line will yield the knowledge that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. The meaning of the term straight line will not yield the conclusion of the proposition as it would in an analytic proposition. The proposition holds by virtue of its reference to states of affairs in real or imaginary space and not merely by the meaning of its own terms.

But if these universal and necessary propositions flow neither from our sensory experience of the spatial world nor from the meaning of the terms in them, then what is their basis? How are they possible? How are synthetic a priori propositions possible?<sup>8</sup>

This question is not for Kant of a form which demands an exhaustive enquiry into the conditions of possibility and of existence of that body of concepts through which we synthesise experience but which are not given in individual experience. Such existential enquiries into the possibility of the categories of the intellect and forms of sensibility would not begin until the sociality of the self, cognition and language had been grasped as a determining factor in man's representational activities. Kant's searching

question to which he and his time can only give a metaphysical reply coupled in terms of the cognitive activity of an absolute subjectivity, would not be readdressed until almost one hundred years later. It was so by Marx, Durkheim and Nietzsche, with varying degrees of explicitness but from the common perspective of the emerging sociologicistic interpretation of language and cognition.

For Kant however and the egological thought of his period, the question "How are synthetic a priori concepts possible?" i.e. how is it possible to have and use concepts which are above sensory experience, in the sense of not being derived from it, yet contain more than the empty tautology of analytic statements is a question solely about the origin and cognitive function of these for the subject of cognition. Egologicism can enquire no further.

Kant's answer of course is that the mystery of the origin of these concepts is to be understood precisely in terms of the revealing of their function as synthesisers of the raw data of sensory experience.<sup>q.</sup> For this process of synthesis is the primary function of the understanding. Synthetic a priori concepts are the tools which enable this process of:

"Putting different representations together and of grasping what is manifold in them in one act of knowledge". For Kant concepts are essentially to be understood in terms of their function in cognition; they enable us to make judgements of sensory synthesis and intellectual understanding. As such Kant stresses not the propositional nature of concepts, i.e. that they in combination in propositions make assertions of a discursive nature, rather he stresses the activity aspect of concepts. Concepts have their being in the judgemental activity in which they are employed. His epistemology

explains what concepts are by explaining their operation and function in judgements. Judgements for Kant are not represented as statements in a discourse, as they were to be later interpreted by neo-positivism, rather they<sup>are</sup> grasped as the activity of a cognizing subject. They are invariably located at a transcendental subject pole. The notion of cognitivity activity as the fundamental reading of 'concept' is itself tainted with the perceptual metaphor of cognition characteristic of egologicism. Activity is read as a visual act engaged in by a gazing subject. It is in no way conceived of as an interplay of discursive practices. Representation has no independent discursive existence from the representing subject.

Concepts then are to be understood in terms of their function in judgement. Judgements in turn have their origin in the transcendental subjectivity of the absolute cognitive ego.

Take for example Kant's account of our concept of space already alluded to above. For Kant space is the very condition of the appearance to us of external objects. It is impossible to conceive of an object existing except in space. Yet we can imagine space without there being an object in it or occupying it. Therefore argues Kant our cognition of space and its concept, is not given in the world of sensibility but is the prior condition of our cognition of objects. But as our cognition of external objects is perhaps the most fundamental form of experience, and certainly it is the objective experience on which natural science depends, then the cognition of space, and the concept by means of which this judgement is possible, is the condition of all external experience and prior (logically) to it. Space, then is not something external to us passively received through the senses. Rather, it is a synthesising form of our minds.<sup>10</sup> Nor is space as a concept merely an

item in a discourse related semiotically to other concepts and deriving its meaning from this interplay of discursive relations. This understanding of the nature of concepts and representation is a modern one unknown in a period when language had no density and concepts no autonomy from the cognizing self.

It is the human mind, its identity ensured by a transcendental ego, which spaces things. Things do not impose space upon our minds. Concepts and their discursive structure also cannot mediate between the mind and the world, for concepts are the cognizing self in operation. The concept of space and also that of time, which Kant shows is the other universal and necessary form of sensation, is grasped as essentially a judgemental activity. Hence it is to be traced to the cognitivity activity of a transcendental ego.<sup>11</sup>

The 'origin' then of the synthetic a priori forms of sensibility and also, as Kant proceeds to show of the categories of the intellect is the nature of the human mind itself. The origin and 'possibility' of the categories is the mind's own cognitive activity as a transcendental source and absolute subjectivity.

In analytic philosophy's reading of Kant the philosopher in his rumination on the foundations of geometry is pictured as 'discovering' the existence of synthetic a priori concepts. It is as a result of this substantive discovery that the doctrines of the categories and forms of sensibility were developed as an explanatory framework for his 'discovery'. In this reading Kant is presented as what analytic philosophy would like to claim him as - a good empiricist - and hence suitable source of paternity.

However clearly as we shall see the 'fact' of synthetic a priori judgements

and the explanatory framework of transcendental idealism are a response to the fundamental ontological problem in egologicism - the relationship of ego and the world, of isolated subjectivity and objective facticity. With Kant, egological philosophy takes an anthropomorphic turn. No longer will the Deity be called upon to bridge the ontological gap between cognising subject and world. For Kant man himself, as a cognitive agent, has a fundamental orientation to the objective world. It is because the minds we have actually are as they are, that we do in fact experience the world objectively as we do.

Thus subjectivity and objectivity become logically related in the very structures of consciousness. Man himself is the condition of objectivity. But for Kant and the egological discourse which conditions his texts, it is not man as an embodied and socially and historically situated agent who is the condition of this objectivity. Rather its condition is the universal and necessary cognitive judgement of an absolute subjectivity. This transcendental subjectivity becomes, as we shall see, the supreme agent of cognition and guarantor of objectivity. Since Kant's transcendental deduction the dichotomy of subject and object has been the abstract form of all our knowledge. Subject and object become polar opposites, structurally related only in so far as the form of thought of the cognizing subjectivity is the form of the object and the source of all scientific objectivity.

Subsequently of course the naturalistic basis of Kant doctrine of the categories would be eroded. Post quantum physics dispensed with the concept of causality with little heart searching. Developments in the mathematical descriptions of space and time have displayed a theoretical pluralism which



undermined Kant's hypostatizing of Euclidian geometry. The sciences' own theoretical and methodological development have driven a cart and horse through Kant's archaic table of categories. Scientific theory and methodology has since Kant forged its own epistemological path. Kant remains the last philosophical figure with an intimate concern for the theory of scientific knowledge and method who attributes to philosophy a sovereign role in relation to science. As Habermas has shown:

"The critique of knowledge was still conceived in reference to a system of cognitive faculties that included practical reason and reflective judgement as naturally as critique itself, that is a theoretical reason that can dialectically ascertain not only its limits but also its own idea. The comprehensive rationality of reason that becomes transparent to itself has not yet shrunk to a set of methodological principles".<sup>12.</sup>

After Kant the analysis of science as a form of knowledge is increasingly replaced by philosophy of sciences' restricted and prescriptive and understanding of scientific methodology. This restricts itself to the 'pseudo-normative regulation of established research'.<sup>13.</sup>

Philosophy meanwhile having taken the transcendental turn and grasped the nettle of subjectivity retreats into the interiority of pure thought - to reason estranged from the world. The epistemological project of early egologicism is replaced with the phenomenological self reflection of mind.

And yet even this divergence and the radical diversity of transcendental epistemology and positivist philosophy of scientific methodology is traced within a common epistemic domain. The form of knowledge represented in each area remains structured around the submerged subject-object axis of egologicism. The metaphor of perception continues for both accounts to dominate the

representation of cognition. As such the knowledge process demands in its form an isolated subject as its agent and a verified world as its object. Positivism will overlay the perceptual metaphor with its emerging interest in instrumental control. Phenomenology will impute to the perceiving subject a constituting intentionality. Both however explicate their theories of knowledge within the common parameters of egologicism. For both the objectivity of phenomena, whether naively given in the real world or the product of a transcendental subjectivity, will take epistemological precedence over the phenomenon of intersubjectivity.

(ii) Kant and the Self

The chief characteristic of Kant's thought in the transcendental deduction of the logical conditions, or forms of objective experience is the idea that we conceive of all our experience as unified, as connected as interrelated, in so far as we conceive of the whole realm of objective 'scientific' knowledge as the experience of a transcendental self or ego whose forms of 'sensibility', time and space, and whose categories of the intellect act on that same ego's experience to form the sort of objective judgements we call scientific. The transcendental deduction reveals the knowable world, the world of empirical science, as the realm of the possible experience of this transcendental self which is the form of any possible objective experience. This sole absolute ego to which we refer any objective experience is not a substantive, a knowable metaphysical entity but merely a formal condition or presupposition of a critical epistemology. For Kant then there is an intimate connection between the isolation of a transcendental self in or behind experience and the possibility of objective knowledge. This pure ego is the ultimate grounds of possibility of scientific objectivity.

Let us outline in further detail the centrality of the pure epistemological self in Kant's critical philosophy. One of the cornerstones of Kant's critical philosophy is his sharp distinction between the sensory and intellectual aspects of cognition. The senses passively receive a manifold of representations which are unconnected (hence Hume's diatribe in causality). Since intuition is merely the passive reception of sense-data, the combination of a manifold to produce a knowledge of objects cannot be given with the manifold. Thus for Kant the unification of sense-impressions is an act of the understanding, furthermore, without this synthetic unification of a manifold it is impossible to know objects qua objects, as discrete particulars we can form objective judgements about.

If a manifold of sense-data is combined into an object by the synthesizing activity of an understanding then it must be an object thought by the same consciousness as that consciousness to which the sense-data is given. Thus the possibility of knowing objects qua objects rests on the possibility of the faculties of sensibility and understanding being united in a single consciousness. It presupposes a unity of thought and perception in a single self-conscious subject.<sup>14</sup> This relation between the manifold of sense-data and the subject Kant refers to as 'Synthetical Unity of Pure Apperception'<sup>15</sup> and expresses the basic idea that any thought or sense content must belong to a common pure subject, that their interaction in forming objective knowledge must be in a single consciousness.<sup>16</sup> This transcendental ego is a formal condition for objective experience. The 'I think' must be capable, Kant says of accompanying all our representations, there can be no it without an I, no object with a (pure) subject:

"The 'I think' must accompany all my representations, for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought, in other

words, the representation would either be impossible, or at least be, in relation to me, nothing".<sup>17.</sup> This epistemological ego does not exist sensibly for consciousness but rather is the condition for the unity of consciousness, the unity of sensibility and understanding:

"But this representation, I think, is an act of spontaneity; that is to say, it cannot be regarded as belonging to mere sensibility. I call pure apperception, in order to distinguish it from empirical; a primitive apperception, because it is a self-consciousness which, whilst it gives birth to the representations. It is in all acts of consciousness one and the same, and unaccompanied by it, no representation can exist for me".<sup>18.</sup>

It is important to note that Kant distinguishes the ego of pure apperception from the empirical ego which is an object of thought, the former is not given in experience but is the very condition of objective experience, it is a transcendental ego. The empirical ego is a phenomena, the object of study of psychology, the pure ego is no phenomenon it is the absolute knower .

"I do not know myself through being conscious of myself as thinking, but only when I am conscious of the intuition of myself as being in various particular states. The object is not the consciousness of the determining self, but only that of the determinable self, that is, of my inner intuition".<sup>19.</sup>

The determining self who is the agent of all our judgements is not then in our experience but the transcendental condition of that experience, the limit of my world. The determining self is the boundary condition of the world. It is only the determinable self or empirical ego which is the object or topic of our judgements.

It follows then that we can have no knowledge of this transcendental or determining self. For it is a non-substantive formal condition of all cognition and not an object of knowledge. It is 'merely' a transcendental condition of objective experience.

"Consciousness is, indeed, that which alone makes all representations to be thoughts, and in it therefore all our perceptions must be found; but beyond this logical meaning of the 'I', we have no knowledge of the subject in itself".<sup>20.</sup> From this Kant argues the 'I think' with its transcendental form can never be the object of knowledge of rational psychology. Descartes 'cogito', the self and its states which remain with certitude when our belief in the world is subjected to methodical doubt, and which rational psychology claims as its privileged object of knowledge, is never the virtual subject of cognition, merely that's subject's object. The Cartesian cogito is an empirical ego, a known identity of mental states, which presupposes a pure subject of knowledge as the formal condition of its appearance. Kant argues that rational psychology confuses and conflates these distinct selves.

"The unity of consciousness, which underlies the categories is here mistaken for an intuition of the subject as object, and the category of substance is then applied to it. But this unity is only unity in thought, by which alone no object is given, and to which, therefore, the category of substance, which always presupposes a given intuition, cannot be applied.<sup>21.</sup> Consequently, this subject cannot be known".

Kant then rigidly distinguishes the Cartesian cogito from his own concept of the 'I think' which accompanies all representation. The former Kant argues is an empirical ego, a set of mental states and object in and for consciousness possessing, as in Descartes' idea of the self, a specific

substance. The latter however is the hidden subject which is presupposed in the Cartesian experiential ego so that in fact it might become an object of knowledge. Kant probes here the fundamental flaw of Cartesian egology. Descartes indubitable self-hood which is to be the axiomatic foundation of all certain knowledge, itself presupposes a reflective act as the condition for the appearance of the cogito. And as such it in fact presupposes a reflecting agent to whom the cogito appears in reflection. This reflecting agent for Kant is represented as the 'I think', a transcendental subjectivity.<sup>22</sup>

Within the philosophical grammar of egologicism, the absolutising of the cognitive ego and its transcendental turn is the only conceptual means available for addressing the fundamental ontological problem of reflection. The self appears as an object in consciousness but presupposes a subject of consciousness. This subject is not however given in consciousness, it is its condition for objective cognition. What then is the origin of this transcendental reflection? Kant can only address the problem from the standpoint of the isolated but absolute self-consciousness of pure apperception and not from the situatedness of the ego in a transcendent social and historical world of concrete others. As such Kant drives critical epistemology in its search for apodictic universality into the recesses of egology, into the corner pockets of transcendental subjectivity.<sup>23</sup>

It will require a radically different philosophical optic, provided by a sociologically informed epistemology, to restore the self to the real material world. Only with the advent of the sociological realism implicit in a materialist epistemology did it become possible to grasp that the constitutive medium of the empirical self is that real world, its social relations and human social interactions. The Kantian transcendental condition for the appearance of the self-as-known will be replaced, as we shall see, by

the concrete analysis of the role of the other, social interaction, and social relations in the emergence of self-identity.

Kant however trapped in the discourse of his time cannot think this 'conversational' solution to the ontological problem of reflection. He can only drive the isolated self back on itself in a strategic withdrawal to the surer defences of an absolute cognizing subjectivity. From this strengthened egological rampart the material world can again be surveyed, confronted and thought.

The transcendental turn of critical epistemology is of course a symptom of egology's unthinking of the social materiality of intersubjectivity. This unthinking will lead philosophy in the nineteenth century into a rambling maze with no exit to the real world.

However in this sealed discourse, which struggles with itself, within its own limits, 'intersubjectivity' will in fact be present. But only in its haunting absence. This present absence will condition the form of egologism as it struggles to appropriate the material world.

### (iii) Objectivity, the transcendental ego, and inter-subjectivity

In Kant the intimate connection between the theoretical device of a transcendental ego and the promise of objectivity is plotted through the exploitation of a recurrent series of distinctions - pure and empirical apperception, judgements of experience and judgements of perception, empirical consciousness of intuition and consciousness in general. The possibility of a "pure science of Nature" the chief characteristic of which is the universality and necessity of its laws i.e. they are judgements which hold good not only

for us but for everybody, requires as its epistemological foundation a more powerful subject than that of the sense receiving empirical ego of the empiricists. What is required is a transcendental subject of absolute status possessing, not merely empirical consciousness whose 'reality' is psychological and hence subjective but 'consciousness in general' whose 'reality' is transcendental and objective.

"The condition of universal validity (and hence objective validity as Kant accepts these as equivalent terms) of empirical judgements never rests upon empirical, or in short, sensuous conditions, but upon a pure concept of the understanding."<sup>24</sup>

and again:

"Quite another judgement is required before perception can become (objective) experience. The given intuition must be subsumed under a concept which determines the form of judging in general relatively to the intuition, connects empirical consciousness of intuition in consciousness in general and thereby procures universal validity for empirical judgements."<sup>25</sup>

The objectivity of judgements then depends on representations being referred to and united in 'consciousness in general'. Though Kant is anxious not to reify the notion of 'consciousness in general' into group mind or an absolute or divine mind, explicating the idea of a transcendental consciousness in terms of the rules of synthesis for any consciousness whatever, it is clear that in Kants system the intersubjectivity of scientific judgements rests not on an investigation of man's sociality nor the relationship of man's sociality to epistemological practice, but rather on a recourse to the notion of an absolute recognizing self. Judgements are intersubjective because they are objective (the latter being a more powerful



concept for Kant) and objective in so far as they are referred to an absolute transcendental consciousness.

However it is clear that Kant's transcendental analytic is the major epistemic source of the idea of an absolute epistemological self central to nineteenth century German Idealism. This is so precisely because the absolutizing of the transcendental ego is the only conceptual means of dealing with the phenomena of intersubjectivity and of constituting the objectivity of phenomena. Intersubjectivity can only be explicated in terms of that universal objectivity which has its condition and origin in the cognitive activity of an absolute consciousness.

The objectivity of phenomena takes epistemological precedence over the phenomena of intersubjectivity.

Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' banishes the 'determining' self from the concrete experiential world. For the first time in egological philosophy there appears a clear demarcation between psychology, whether rational or empiricist, and critical epistemology. Kant consciously demarcates their discrete objects and distinguishes their appropriate methodologies. This parsimony is conditioned by its effectivity.

Kant stands deliberately against the dominant historical tradition in egological thought in which the sciences of philosophy and psychology, if they are demarcated at all are still seen as addressing themselves to the same object domain - consciousness. Within this epistemological tradition the two epistemic areas have been confused and conflated. Kant had become aware that the conflation and the psychological reductionism prevalent

particularly in the empiricist tradition, had led to a sensualism. In Hume's hands this clearly, in turn, gave rise to scepticism. For, if all cognition both personal and scientific is limited to the sensory experience and reflection of an empirical ego, then the structured and objective cognition of Newtonian science centered on spatial, temporal and causal interpretation of empirical contingency becomes impossible.

The concept of causality becomes the theoretical site for the manifestation of the underlying and recurrent structural crisis of egologicism. The crisis itself runs much deeper. There is an essential ontological problem of the gap between the subject and object poles of egologicism; between the concepts of self and the world. Neither rationalism nor empiricism can relate individual consciousness to the physical world in such a way that it can give a secure epistemological foundation for scientific practice.

Scientific practice as conceived in philosophical reflection in this age of mechanistic explanation requires judgement of causal necessity and of universal validity. These can not be found in the sensory experience of an empirical ego.

As we have seen Kant's 'solution' to this crisis in egological thought was to focus on the trans-empirical element in all knowledge. Through his transcendental deduction he traces the source of our structured and objective cognition of the world to the very structure of our minds. The world given in sensibility appears as a flux of contingency, its objectivity is rather given in the judgements which cognition formally organized in transcendental self-hood makes prior to sensory experience. These synthetic a priori

judgements, the primary and pre-experiential organizational framework of cognition, in turn structures both our perceptual experience and its interpretation and explanation in scientific discourse. Kant's "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy, relocates the source of scientific objectivity in the subjects cognitive activity and in the validity of this. No longer was objective judgement and scientific truth that which is translucent in its correspondence to an external objective reality. Rather, that which is objectively real owes that objectivity to the valid cognitive judgement which conditioned it. Within this radically new theory of representation our ideas are not the dull copies of objects and states in the real world, but rather in essence the activity and tools of cognitive functioning of an absolute subjectivity. The world has been anchored to the subject.

The result of Kant's 'revolution' is to tilt the egological see-saw dangerously towards the subject pole. It is because of this imbalance in the axis of egological epistemology that he is forced to distinguish so rigidly between the transcendental ego with its sure consciousness and the empirical ego with its sensible experience. For empiricists like Berkeley, it was not necessary to invoke the notion of a transcendental subjectivity. The immanence and contingency of the empirical ego's experience could be compensated for by the omnipotent cognition of God. Again as we have seen for Descartes, God is a transcendent epistemological presence both source and guarantee of the clarity and distinctness of our ideas. God underwrites *res cogitans*. For Leibnitz he ensures the intersubjectivity of isolated monads. Here there is no necessity for a transcendental ego to guarantee the validity of the empirical self's cognition. God suffices.

With Locke's sensationalism and Hume's subsequent development of this

to its sceptical conclusions, egological philosophy was becoming increasingly secularized and anthropomorphized. This tendency had of course always been present in egologicism since Descartes had centered his epistemological universe on the cogito and ruptured the plenum of being of earth, water, fire and air, spirits, creatures and Deity, characteristic of medieval thought. In the works of Descartes, Berkeley and Leibnitz we witness the residue of that scholastic tradition. But now for them God is invoked to restore the vent in the plenum of being caused by the appearance of the sensate and reflective self; a self which shatters the unity of being, but which remains trapped in its own immanence.

With Kant this anthropomorphic tendency increases. God is no longer called upon to lend his weight to supporting the egological epistemic edifice. Finalism and teleology have been banished from natural philosophy's explanatory schema in favour of mechanistic explanation. The philosophic task Kant sees as validating the interpretative and explanatory basis of scientific cognition by reference not to the attributes of the deity but rather to the properties of the human mind. However as we have said, if the mind is to do the epistemological work required of it by Kant, namely to function as the source of the universal and objective judgements characteristic of natural science, then it requires a principle of unity and a foundation more powerful than the sense receiving empirical ego of the empiricists. What is required is a little of the epistemological omnipotence formerly credited to the Deity. What is required is a transcendental subject of absolute status; the divinely omnipotent in man - a transcendental ego. For Kant the ontological gap between subject and the world is to be bridged by building into man as a cognizer a pure consciousness, whose identity is traced to a transcendental ego and which is revelatory of being. Man in so far as he partakes in

transcendental self-hood has a positive orientation and objectively valid cognition of the world. For Kant this pure consciousness was the source of the form of universal and valid cognition. Its synthetic transcendental categories of the intellect and forms of sensibility however act on the matter of sensibility, the so-called manifold of sense. Kant like Aristotle from whom he largely derives his list of transcendental categories, clearly distinguishes between the form and content of experience. The forms of knowledge, which alone can guarantee objectively valid and universal judgement, are the products of our minds and derive from nothing external. However the given factor or matter of knowledge, sensation, which is shaped by the forms of sensibility and categories of the intellect, does have an external source. Kant believed there must be an external cause of our sensation. A thing in itself, the ground or cause of appearances, is thus postulated. There must be, he argues, a transcendental object which underlies appearances. Kant's mechanism seems to drive him into the position of searching for an external cause for our sensation. Every event must have a cause so he must postulate the existence of an existent which is the origin of sensory qualities. Just as this epistemology drives his critique towards an absolutized subject pole, so his crude ontology in its craving to be anchored in the crude facticity of the world pulls egology towards a reified object pole.

Kant struggles to avoid the tension which the introduction of the thing-in-itself has wrought in his critique. But in this concept he has postulated the existence of things which are 'real in themselves'. That is, their reality in no depends on our structured knowledge of them. Despite the fact that they are more than mere representations, they cannot however be known.

The limits which Kant sets for valid knowledge render his own notion of things with reality in themselves as a senseless notion.

26.

Kant is aware of the contradiction. He is anxious not to substantivize this 'thing in itself', explicating the notion not in terms of an essence within an object's appearances but rather as a formal ground or condition underlying appearances.

27.

"The transcendental object which underlies appearance is not matter but an unknown ground of the appearances which supply to us the empirical concept of matter". The emphasis is on the causal role of the thing in itself, rather than on its nature as an existent. That nature of course is unknowable anyway. But even this causal attribution is nonsense. The thing in itself cannot be the cause of appearances because 'cause' is a category of our minds, and categories do not apply to the thing in itself. This is outside experience which the limit of applicability of our categories. Moreover to say that the 'thing in itself' is 'real in itself' is to apply the category of existence to it. This again in Kant's critical epistemology is quite inadmissible. The whole notion of an unknowable existent is completely self-contradictory within Kant's 'system'.

And yet this self-contradiction tokens an even more fundamental tension within the epistemic structure of egologicism. Since Descartes, philosophy in its search for the apodictic had become primarily an epistemological project. This project had sought its certitude in the examination of individual cognition and self-consciousness. Visual perception provided the dominant metaphor for modelling the process of cognition. Perception is seen as a faculty located in an individual subject of cognition directed in an immediated focus on a world of objects. As such, it serves as an image for

a theory of cognition which represents knowledge as the experience, empirical or rational, of a self of an external given world. Knowledge is the privileged perception of a subject who 'sees' the essential attributes of the real world.

However in this epistemological orientation, knowledge appropriates the world only through the cognition of the individual self. Scepticism, the negative image of the egological search for certainty, always threatens. The brute facticity of the world threatens to elude the limited immanent consciousness of the cognizing self. The very identity of this self is threatened in the immanence and contingency of consciousness. Even within the definitive epistemological direction taken by egological philosophy, there remains the silent longing for the unity of scholastic ontology, for the plenum of being.

In Kant's transcendental idealism the contradictions, come to a head. His critique addresses itself to the fundamental ontological gap within egologism between the subject and the world. This gap is the effect of the appearance in the plenum of being of a solitary cognizing self which in its analysis draws the world around it and organizes it in its consciousness, yet captures only aspects, instances, of that chain of being. The critique promises a solution in locating in the mind itself, organized transcendental self-hood, the objective orientation to the world. Within the nature of cognition itself, is sought the basis of man's appropriation of the external world.

And yet paradoxically the very conditions of this crucial mediation of self and world within consciousness lie outside of consciousness, beyond

knowledge. They are, the formal conditions of transcendental subjectivity, the 'I think', and transcendental objectivity, the 'thing in itself'. Both for Kant are necessary conditions for knowledge, but themselves unknowable. Both are beyond the limits of the egological world, yet determine it in its very possibility.

The 'I think', is the grounds of transcendental cognition while the 'thing in itself' that of appearances. Each however is now beyond the limits of what can be known and sensibly talked about within egological thought. Determining subject and real object are forced to the outer edges of philosophical knowledge; at once absent in the critical sense of that discourse, yet present as its very condition. Forced off the stage they silently wait in the wings. The plot and its remaining characters however, still remain orchestrated around them and their forced absence.

Kant's transcendental deduction leads then to an even more extreme form of dualism than the Cartesian ontology. Mind and the world are conjoined within consciousness but only to be segregated finally and totally in so far as their determining poles are pushed beyond possible knowledge and excluded totally from the world. Kant bequeathes philosophy a discourse in which transcendental subjectivity and transcendental objectivity confront each other in a totalising stance. Each strives to annex the world of conscious experience and destroy the other as a transcendent pole of determination of the world. Egological thought is unable since Kant to relate self and objectivity materially within the world. Each pole seeks a transcendental grounding in absolute subjectivity or brute facticity outside of material experience. In fact it is forced to do so in so far as experience is centered on and limited to the consciousness of an individual self. In



this rarified non-social grasping of self, cognition, and reality, the world must be unpacked from the individuated monad, whether spiritual or substantial. The sources of the unity of conscious experience and self-hood, of the universality of scientific cognition and inter-subjectivity of truth and of the objectivity of phenomena must be located in the essence of these monads. The phenomenon of inter-subjectivity remains a derived and not a constituting aspect of reality.

Thus unwittingly Kant re-opens the door to dualism. But now it is to a dualism of absolute polar opposites unmediated by knowledge. The mediation of self and world, subject and object is no longer possible within the concrete world. Instead the self organized in an absolute transcendental subjectivity must annex the world, incorporate it within its privileged consciousness, and destroy its transcendence. Or the world, an estranged and inert set of objects and states, must engulf the conscious self, annihilating it in its brute facticity. The former option is developed in a phenomenology of mind, the latter in a positivist theory of scientific method embracing a phenomenalist epistemology.

Objective idealism inherits Kant's transcendental dualism. The objective remove of the world and its brute facticity which had almost been subdued by reason, escapes in Kant's doctrine of the 'thing in itself' to confront the subject yet again. Yet now the escape is total. The thing in itself, that which is the cause of sensation but which is not given in it, is an unknowable substance. It is not in space and time, it in itself cannot be sensed, the categories cannot be applied to it. It is completely  
28.  
unknowable for it is entirely inconceivable. Kant bequeathed to his philosophic successors this dualistic conundrum; a conceptual fabric

woven despite all the genius of its craftsman from the warp and weft of egologicism and constrained within its antinomies. In hindsight we smile at Kant's confidence that his critique represents a solution to the epistemological problems of egologicism.

"I have found a way of guarding against all those errors which have hitherto set reason, in its empirical employment, at variance with itself. I have not evaded its questions by pleading the insufficiency of human reason. On the contrary, I have specified these questions exhaustively, according to principles; and after locating the point at which, through misunderstanding, reason comes into conflict with itself, I have solved them to its complete satisfaction". 29.

Paradoxically Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' which was to serve as a prolegomena to any future metaphysic and to act as a purgative to casuistry and speculation, was itself to give rise to a renewed upsurge of metaphysical speculation. For the German idealism which succeeded Kant was to conceive of its task as tackling the legacy of egological problems Kant had left behind him. This task, as we shall see is precisely the one Husserl sees himself addressing.

Moreover German idealism's assault on the absolute, its search for the identity of reason and experience and unity of subject and object was to be tackled with the very implements of ascent manufactured by Kant himself. The objective idealism of Hegel, Fichte and Schelling seized on the ideas of universality and necessity as properties of the a priori cognition of a transcendental ego. The conception of a 'thing in itself' on the other hand was seen as being self-contradictory and quite gratuitous. Accordingly it is quickly dismissed. However the removal of this object polarity, which cannot exist validly within Kant epistemology but which is credited with a determining function, produces specific effects on the

structure of critical idealism.

For Kant the forms of objective knowledge, space, time and the categories of the intellect are the product of our minds and not derived from the external world. However this idealism is tempered by Kant's argument that these forms can only validly operate on sensibilia. The given factor of knowledge, its matter which is formed by the empty categories is sensation. This has however an external source. However, as we have seen, the postulation of an external source of sensation, a thing in itself is self-contradictory and untenable within Kant's epistemology. German idealism was 'forced' to the conclusion that the given matter of knowledge does not come from any external source. It is argued that this matter like its form is also the product of mind. Thus the whole object of knowledge and correspondingly the whole universe itself is a product of mind, albeit an absolute spirit.

The subject is freed to rampage within the parameters of egological discourse and runs amok. Experience is no longer grounded in an external world. Instead just like the forms, experience itself is seen to be a product of the mind. Reality itself, in toto, is a mere correlate of an absolute mind. The subject cut adrift from its fragile egological grounding in the refractory objectivity of the natural world, devours the world in an orgy of absolute idealism. The scenario for this drama has followed a pre-given script. Its characters and plot, and its text, are formed from the determining elements of an egological discourse.

It is only in hindsight from another standpoint, within another discourse and way of representing the world, that we can appreciate the intrigues, machinations and permeations of possible plot at play in this

drama. It is only from a conversational perspective conditioned by a social theory of cognition and being, that we can now trace the shifting balance of the egological axis as its fulcrum moves one way or another, towards object or subject pole.

(iv) CONCLUSIONS

In post Kantian German idealism we witness the elevation of the cognizing subject to the absolute status of a solitary but universal a-social epistemological self. This absolute agent transcends both the phenomenal and social worlds.

This conception of a pure ego or self, with an absolute status in turn has a number of important implications for the structure of egolog-icism.

- (a) It leads to objectivist-realist notions of knowledge and truth which reify both. For what is known a priori by the pure ego is true for all, for its experience is absolute. The coherence of our experience is as it is by virtue of the fact that it is to be defined as the experience of one transcendental ego. This ego is not merely the intellectual observer of the moment but the egological pole of all objective experience. In so far as we as individuals are conscious, possess objective knowledge and seek truth, we do so in virtue of the fact that this single unity is the same for all men. The principle of the transcendental ego provides the basis of the rationale of objectivity in phenomena, and of a truth transcendent of human inter-subjectivity and interest.
- (b) It leads to an absolutism which neglects the social foundations of the self, 'knowledge' and 'truth'. In a transcendental egology, the notion of the absoluteness of the ego, is the only conceptual means of bridging the gap between ego s and of dealing with the phenomena of intersubjectivity. Such an absolutism leads to an idealism like Hegel's, where the epistemological self takes the form of the world spirit in an effort to deal with the sociality of consciousness. In the idealisms of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel the concept of the transcendental self becomes that of the absolute. The impoverished transcendental ego must be so enriched so as to become not merely individual but social. Given the primacy of the concept of a pure ego in critical philosophy; post Kantian idealism must engage in somersaults not to mention dialectical processes to come to terms with sociality. It does eventually in Hegel's weighty system, but as an idealism still centered on an absolute self, albeit reliant on others for its self-consciousness. In this system truth as the end of, and knowledge as the means of, the dialectical process of self-realizations of spirit, remain absolute.

- (c) It leads to the emergence of the problem of how we can have knowledge of others. We shall see how Husserl's adoption of the transcendental/empirical ego distinction leads to the problem of solipsism. Suffice it to say here that for those who deny the possibility of a pure ego and assert the sociality of the self, solipsism does not present itself as a problem.

Kantian critical philosophy, and as we shall see Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, seek to approach our knowledge of reality from the perspective of a solitary if absolute cognizing subject. As such, they ignore the status of the mind as a social consciousness situated in the materiality of history.

The major aim of this study is to document how subsequent philosophic movements which emerged from the ruins of egological philosophy, whether in its phenomenological or positivist-phenomenalist form, converge on a common point. They converge on a common acceptance on the essentially social nature of self, cognition and language and pursue their disparities from a standpoint which denies the primacy of epistemic egoism and asserts instead the primacy of an inter-subjective approach to reality and knowledge. The subsequent philosophic movements of existential phenomenology, marxism, pragmatism and ordinary language philosophy, all abandon the egological pursuit of the radical and apodictic for the concrete and social. They converge on what I have called a conversational paradigm for the analysis of self, language and cognition. A new discourse appears within which the topics of self, cognition and language are addressed. The unifying principle of this philosophic discourse is a sociological realism.

The concept of self is one of those key notions in the history of philosophy whose 'progress' if studied closely reveals the deep structural shifts and ruptures in philosophic discourse. Its changes of meaning token fundamental breaks in the continuity of philosophic discourse. Though

philosophy represents itself as a process of continual accumulation and refinement of conceptual apparatus, willing only to accept its own self-conscious demarcations into schools and traditions, in the changing meaning of its concepts we clearly can witness a series of discursive ruptures below the level of consciousness and reflection operative in philosophy itself. Classical philosophy by which I mean philosophy in the egological mode cannot stand the idea of a theory of its discursive practice outside its own conscious analytic activities. It reacts to this idea with the same vehemence as a humanist to the probing investigations of psycho-analysis. It abhors being reminded of the existence of its own unconscious.

Nor can it facilitate such a theory of discursive practice which might render explicit the conditions of possibility, epistemic, ideological and material, of its own texts. The egological paradigm is bounded by a theory of representation which can accredit no autonomy to the structures of representation itself. Language for classical philosophy, organized around its egological problematic, has no being, in itself. It is exhausted by its representative function. The dominant theory of representation embodies an ideal of a language perfectly transparent to the world of things. The word has no being of its own, discourse no autonomy. It exists only as a pure sign coding the pre-given thought of a thinking subject directed at a signified objective world of things. Thought understands itself. In language it is merely rendered visible for other thinking subjects. Language is the perfect instrument of thought, in so far as it is perfectly transparent to the signified world of things.

Within egological philosophy as we shall see language has no organic

life. It is completely harnessed to the pre-given primacy of the cognitive activities of the subject (empiricist or rational) as it attempts to grasp the objective facticity of the world in a knowing act. Thus for classical philosophy a theory of discourse which can address the organic life of language practice, its history its material and ideological conditions of possibility is entirely unthinkable. For language can have no autonomy, no history, life or agency separate from that of the solitary but absolute cognizing subject. Semiology is here entirely subsumed by critical epistemology.

In the pure representativity of language which is immediately present to consciousness, discourse can have no structure except that derived directly from the mind (a universal grammar) or fabricated by the mind as an instrument of knowledge (*ars characteristica*). As such classical philosophy can have no conception of discursive analysis which focuses on the interplay between what is said in discourse and what remains unsaid but determinant. It cannot grasp in its axiology of knowledge, boundary conditions of its own situated intelligibility. Conditions which are absent from discourse but condition its very possibility.

Nor will the radical reflection of a phenomenological kind remedy this oversight. For this radical enquiry into the foundations of various discourse can never lead beyond its own starting point - the transcendental subject. Yet the conditions of possibility of discourse are not given in consciousness. They are before and beyond the consciousness they afford. They are conditions given in the materiality, a social and historical materiality, of the world and communicational practice.



The conditions of discourse are not simply theoretical. For theoretical practice is like any other level of human practice, a socially and historically situated activity. Language and theoretical practice are then social activities. To claim so is not merely to engage in a ritualistic gene-flection to their obvious inter-subjectivity but rather to think through the implications of that essential sociality - at the level of epistemological method and ontological commitment. The thinking on and over this ground, with all its initial fragility and frequent relapse to egological security, is what characterizes philosophy in the twentieth century.

And yet, social and historical conditions do not exhaust the objective conditions of existence of particular discourses. To reduce discursive relations to social and historical ones would again be to obliterate the autonomy of language with its specific materiality. Language again would become as with egological semiotics transparent to the world. Though now the world would be that of social and historical structure and process, rather than world of mentalities or inert objects and states of affairs. Moreover such a reduction would for a conversationalist philosophy of discursive practice be quite self-defeating. For having reduced all theoretical practice in one relativising thrust, to the epi-phenomenal articulation of social and historical materiality, it would be unable to underwrite the validity of its own knowledge practices in analysing that materiality. Such a reduction would be self-defeating. The central problem within epistemology in the conversational mode has become how to theorize certain social relations as constitutive of science and other discursive practices but maintain a non-reductive and hence non-relativist account of their relationship.

Historical conditions do not exhaust the objective conditions of possibility of particular sciences and other discursive practices. Theoretical practice has a degree of autonomy with regards the material determinants of historical process. Which is merely to say that it is specifically theoretical practice with its own distinguishing characteristics and not economic or political practice. It is governed then by epistemic dynamics and structures which cannot be reduced to those of other levels of social formation - economy, polity etc. As such epistemology must draw on the resource of a theory of discourse. That is an objective analysis which can formalize the structure of thought systems in their distinct systematicities. Kuhn's unclear notion of a 'paradigm' is inadequate as an analysis of the structuration of scientific knowledges. It must be replaced by a rigorous semiotic study of specific areas of discourse.

Thus our analysis of classical philosophy as a discrete discourse which we have named the *egological* is made from another epistemic position - the conversational. This discourse provides a vantage point from which to survey classical philosophy as an articulation within a specific discursive system. More particularly this discourse with its central focus on the sociality of self, cognition and language embodies a theory of representation which can facilitate an adequate theory of discourse. Epistemology then, both method and critique, is internal to these two discourses the *egological* and conversational. Discourse analysis such as we now can practice is only possible in so far as with the destruction of the subject-object axis, perceptual metaphor of perception, and of the reciprocal sym<sup>m</sup>etry between an absolutized subjectivity and reified

objectivity, a sociologically informed philosophical practice has recast the theory or representation - in a materialist mode.

It is precisely in a concept like 'self' that we can 'see', from our current epistemic standpoint and with the help of the analytic methods it affords, the mutations and ruptures in philosophy as a theory of representation. It is precisely because of the egological structure of classical philosophic discourse that debates about the self are so central to clarifying the limits of that discourse as set by the theory of representativity.

The debate about the status of the self, its transcendentalism or sociality is the focal point for an underlying rupture within philosophic thought and the appearance of a radically new theory of representation of a materialist type. Debate on the self is by implication a debate on the status of knowledge and truth; on its absoluteness and objectivity or its material and intersubjective nature. A transcendental idealism such as Kant's (or for that matter Hegel's or Husserl's) has at its core an egological conception of self underwritten in turn by an egological theory of representation.

An assault on the transcendentality and absoluteness of the self, from the material standpoint, is also an assault on the claimed transcendental universality of knowledge and truth. The solitary but absolute epistemological self is a central pillar supporting the magnificent edifice of egologism. Its removal in the sociologistic assault renders the entire structure of egological discourse highly unstable.

In turn, as we shall see, the sociological realism central to the four dominant traditions of this century existential-phenomenology, pragmatism, ordinary language philosophy and marxism has at its core, a social or conversational theory of the self.

FOOTNOTES

1. **Emmanuel Kant: Critique of Pure Reason**, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, MacMillan, edit. 1973, B33, p.65.
2. Ibid., B75, p.93.
3. Ibid., B314, p.274.
4. Ibid., B76, p.93.
5. "What we have meant to say is that all our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance, that the things which we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them as being, nor their relations so constituted in themselves as they appear to us, and that if the subject, or even only the subjective constitution of the senses in general, be removed, the whole constitution and all the relations of objects in space and time, nay space and time would vanish." B59, p.82.
6. Kant explicitly attacks, in his Preface to the Second Edition of the Critique, any sociologistic approach to understanding the structure of thought such "antropological chapters", on "prejudices their causes and remedies could only arise from their ignorance of the peculiar nature of logical science," P. i.e. its formal and purely formal character.
7. Kant calls the science of all principles of a priori sensibility the transcendental aesthetic. He aims to first isolate sensibility as a cognitive act distinct from intellectual judgement, and then plot the a priori forms which are employed to structure sensation.
8. B19, p.55.
9. "Here, then, in pure a priori intuitions, space and time, we have one of the factors required for solution of the general problem of transcendental philosophy: how are synthetic a priori judgements possible?" B73, p.90.
10. "Space is nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility under which alone outer intuition is possible for us." B42, p.71.  
  
"The synthetic unity of consciousness is therefore, an objective condition of all knowledge. It is not merely a condition that I myself require in knowing an object, but is a condition under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me." B138, p.156.
11. These conditions of space and time "are originally inherent in the subject." B60, p.83.
12. Jurgen Habermas: **Knowledge and Human Interests**, Heineman, 1972, p.3.
13. Ibid., p.4.
14. "The objective unity of all empirical consciousnesses in one consciousness, that of original apperception, is thus the necessary condition of all possible perception." A123, p.145.

15. Meiklejohn notes in his translation of the Critique "apperception simply means consciousness. But it has been considered to employ this term, not only because Kant saw fit to have another word besides Bewusstseyn, but because the term consciousness denotes a state and apperception an act of the ego; and from this alone the superiority of the latter is apparent."
16. "The abiding and unchanging 'I' (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them." Kemp Smith, A123, p.146.
17. B131, p.152.
18. B132, p.153.
19. B407, p.368.
20. A250, p.334.
21. B421, 422, p.377.
22. "Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = x. It is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them we cannot have any concept whatsoever, but can only revolve in a perpetual circle, since any judgement upon it has already made use of its representation." B404, p.331
23. "Through observation and analysis of appearances we penetrate to nature's inner recesses, and no one can say how far this knowledge may in time extend. But with all this knowledge and even if the whole of nature were revealed to us, we should never be able to answer those transcendental questions which go beyond nature. The reason of this is that it is not given to us to observe our own mind with any other intuition than that of inner sense; and that it is yet precisely in the mind that the secret of the source of our sensibility is located." B334, p.287. It is increasingly to the mind and the mind as prima causa that German Idealism, after Kant, looks.
24. Kant: Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics, edit. Lewis White Beck, Bobbs-Merrill, 1950, p.46.
25. Ibid., p.48.
26. "At the very outset, however, we come upon an ambiguity which may occasion serious misapprehension. The understanding, when it entitles an object in a (certain) relation mere phenomenon, at the same time forms, apart from that relation, a representation of an object in itself, and so comes to represent itself as also being able to form concepts of such object. ( ) and so it misled into treating the entirely indeterminate concept of an intelligible entity, namely, of a something in general outside our sensibility, as being a determinate concept of an entity that allows of being known in a certain (purely intelligible) manner by means of the understanding." B367, p.267-268. Critique, B367, p.267-268.
27. Ibid., A250, p.268.
28. "The object to which I relate appearance in general is the transcendent object, that is, the completely indeterminate thought of something in

general." A253, p.271. Kant distinguished this object from the 'nouemenon' "for I know nothing of what it is in itself, and have no concept of it save as merely the object of a sensible intuition in general, and so as being one and the same for all appearances. I cannot think it through any category, for a category is valid only for empirical intuition as bringing it under a concept of object in general." A253, p.271.

29. Ibid., Axi, p.9 and 10.

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE PHENOMENON OF INTER-SUBJECTIVITY

AND

THE OBJECTIVITY OF PHENOMENA

"To know what these conceptions which we have not made ourselves are really made of, it does not suffice to interrogate our own consciousnesses; we must look outside of ourselves, it is history we must observe, there is a whole science which must be formed, a complex science which can advance but slowly and by collective labour, ....."

*Durkheim: Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*



THE PHENOMENON OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND  
THE OBJECTIVITY OF PHENOMENA

Kant emerges, as we have said, as the inheritor of the two major philosophic traditions within egological thought, the empirical and the rationalist. He is the historical agent of their synthesis. His critical philosophy maps the outer limits of a discourse within which empiricist and rationalist moments can be situated. His transcendental analysis delineates, with a precision and finality hitherto unachieved, the limiting structure of this egological discourse. It isolates the major conceptual elements of this structure; the dyadic opposition of absolute subjectivity and reified transcendental object; the location of the source of objectivity in that subject's activity; and the reduction of the human subject to the absolute but impotent transcendental surrogate. The interaction of man and the world, natural or social, is reduced to the mediation within critical idealist epistemology of transcendental cognizer and objectified world. Within this egological structure, which orders the world around the cognitive gaze of the absolute subject, there can be no real difference between empiricist or rationalist positions. Kant announces to us

"The transcendental idealist is an empirical realist."

Having dissolved the fundamental Cartesian opposition of subject and object by a Copernican turn which locates the objectivity of the object in an expanded and exalted subjectivity, egological philosophy moves inevitably towards its identitarian conclusion. For, having located the objectivity and positivity of things in the subject's cognitive activity, it is obvious that we should conclude, as did Hegel, that the object is the subject. The object's material intransigence which Kant reluctantly

acknowledges in his paradoxical notion of a 'thing in itself' is declared a taboo for the subject. Eventually this negative resistance of the object is incorporated within the subject as an estranged aspect of that subject's identity. The externality of the natural world becomes the negative image of the ideal world, - spirit in self estrangement. The materiality of the social and historical world is reduced to the progress of an absolute historical subject. In Hegel's hands Kant's transcendental subjectivity extends its agency beyond the purely epistemological to the arenas of history and politics. Absolute spirit finds its highest stage of historical embodiment and progress for Hegel in the Prussian autocratic State.

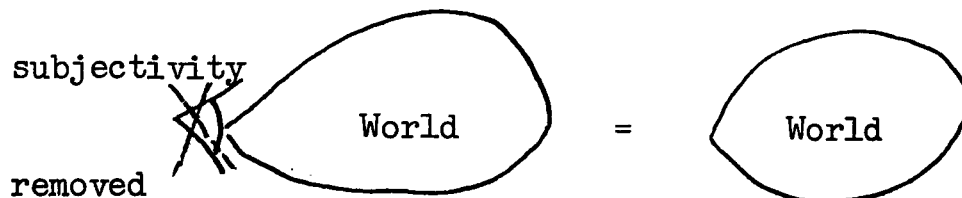
However the gross inflation of the transcendental subject is accompanied by a corresponding emasculating of the active and constitutive role of the empirical subject, the historically situated human being. As Adorno noted "The centristic identity of the I is acquired at the expense of what idealism will then attribute to it."<sup>1</sup> The subject is increasingly smitten with the paralysis of idealist retreat from the material world. To achieve the status of pure functionality ascribed to it by critical epistemology, able to confront the materiality of the world and reduce it to the passivity of a Kantian object, the subject becomes reduced to just its categorial performance. It becomes merely its pure function and is diluted to the point of 'mere universality' in order to validate its judgements as objective for all subjects. In cutting itself loose from the material object world it drifts from its own sense of being, its materiality. It shrinks to a being of abstract reason and concrete impotence. The dyadic axis of egological thought becomes inherently unstable and threatens to disintegrate as each pole defines the other as a moment of itself. This disintegration is obvious in the case of German Idealist philosophy where subjectivity having dissolved the materiality of the world in its categorial gaze

simultaneously affirms the subject as the one and only absolute substance which contains the object as an element or moment within it.<sup>2</sup> However it is just as present in the positivistic reification of the object world and nihilation of subjective aspects of cognition before the brute facticity of the world.<sup>3</sup>

The egological paradigm is characterised by a dualistic ontology, subjects and objects. The dualism is only mediated by a recourse to epistemological premises. For rationalism this involved the retreat to the sanctity of a solitary epistemological self, in whose absoluteness the objectivity of the experienced world finds its origin. For empiricism the subject is enveloped by the world, in so far as it is a sense receiving self. We see in transcendental phenomenology and in phenomenism, respectively, the logical development of rationalism and empiricism, a reduction of ontology to epistemology. However this reduction remains predicated on a dualistic ontology, so that the central problematic of the paradigm becomes the pursuit of absolute grounds for our knowledge, the pursuit of objectivity and universality. Thus critical rationalism locates the basis of the objectivity, universality of our knowledge, in the cognitive activity of an absolute transcendental ego. Empiricism on the other hand seeks that basis in the correspondence of our ideas with an external reality, the objectivity somehow is in the world. The logical conclusions of either doctrine are the same. Either one's theorising can move to the subject pole or the object pole. In the case of the former, empiricism will result in an idealism, a subjective idealism like Berkeley's. Rationalism will result also in an idealism but as its reduction is transcendental not psychologistic, it will be an objective idealism such as Hegel's. On the other hand, a move towards the object pole will herald for empiricism an objective realism remarkably similar to the rationalist objective idealism, and for rationalism a subjective realism of the same

epistemological character as subjective idealism. Or to put this in a different way the philosophic theory that is produced within empiricism by lopping off the subjectivity of the epistemological observer (i) is also that produced by rationalism by reducing the objective world to the cognitive activity of a supreme subject; each produces a world without concrete man. Both positivism, the methodology based on objective realism,

(i)



(ii)



and transcendentalism, the mystic based on objective idealism, are dehumanising, they banish man as a concrete subject from the world.

Within egological philosophical discourse the central concern becomes the pursuit of the grounds of objectivity (what Husserl was later to call the apodictic) via the phenomenological cross-examination of the subject and its consciousness. Epistemological enquiry after Kant increasingly reduces objectivity, the hall-mark of scientific rationality, to the subject's cognitive activity. For transcendental idealism, which culminates in Husserl's methodological prescriptions, the epistemological subject is a pure one, transcendent with regards the mundane world yet trapped in its immanence. For the naturalistic empiricism which finds its clearest expression in Mach's sensationalism and its neo-positivist development, the subject's consciousness is exhausted by its empirical sensations. Sensationalism however, despite the claim that its data is derived immediately from the object, constitutes the cognitive process as one of abstraction by the subject of

material or data from the object. This sensory data is then processed by the subject and organized into a set of objectively valid results by the process of scientific cognition. Later positivists were to address themselves to the process by which immediate subjective experience or data could be transformed into the inter-subjectively valid judgements of science. Having denied themselves recourse to the transcendental turn preferred by Idealism they explicated, as a seemingly viable alternative, the basis of an ideal logico-philosophical language.

(i) Wittgenstein's 'Positivism'

Positivist epistemology directs its attention to the construction of an ideal language which in its undefined descriptive terms refers only to objects of direct experience and states of affairs empirically given and verifiable, and the syntax of which, modelled as it is on formal logic, allows the production of only well-formed-formulae possessing a definite truth function. By restricting the form of this artificial language to a strictly referential semantic and rigorous extensional logical syntax, it was thought possible to create a language with sufficient constraints to prevent the expression of metaphysical statements within it. The aim became to explicate standards of linguistic precision and parsimony derived from a philosophical analysis of the norms held to govern the development of mathematics and physical science and in particular the form of their propositions.

Viennese positivism had added to the classical empiricist principle of direct acquaintance as the foundation of knowledge, the demands for inter-subjective verification of scientific propositions. This it did with little or no perception of the contrasting epistemological foundations of these principles (the former based on the empirical ego's perception, the latter on the conventions of a community of investigators). Moreover it supplemented these with a new concern for the reform of language.

This latter project it was hoped could also reconcile the subjective foundation of knowledge in sensory experience, with its intersubjective verification.

There emerges in positivist circles at the beginning of the twentieth century a profound distrust in natural language as an instrument of philosophic method which is strangely akin to that unease we witnessed in philosophic thought in the seventeenth century; a coincidence which is symptomatic of an underlying epistemic unity. For neo-positivism, the fact that natural languages allow the formation of sentences of an unclear or meaningless type which are perfectly permissible within the rules of natural grammar, indicates the inadequacy of grammatical syntax as the rules of formation of a scientific language. However if grammatical syntax is replaced with a logical order within which questions of linguistic meaning are reduced to those of referential truth conditions of basic propositions and to questions of the transmission of truth functions in formal systems, then pseudo statements which have an acceptable grammatical form but no real meaning, would not arise. Again the dream is familiar. We have encountered it before in the Leibnitzian search for a *mathesis universalis*.

In the early work of Wittgenstein as represented in his *Tractatus*,<sup>4</sup> we witness empiricism struggling to overcome the immanence of the sensate self. Language or rather an ideal language, is afforded a direct representative relationship with the world unmediated by the empirical ego. Wittgenstein like his contemporary Husserl is resolute in his opposition to the psychologism which had become so central to empiricist epistemology. However like Husserl he can only deliver his critique of psychologism and the reductionism and relativism implied by it, from the transcendental standpoint. In the wake of their assault on primacy of the empirical ego comes their joint retreat to the transcendental

limits of a philosophical or transcendental ego.

Analytical philosophers today in their analysis of the Tractatus tend to ignore Wittgenstein's metaphysical remarks on the philosophical self. Anxious to legitimise their own current methodological predilections, they selectively approach his early work.<sup>5</sup> And, concerned to assert a continuity between his early and later work (an interpretation which belies their own ignorance of the discursive foundations of current ordinary language philosophy) they focus precisely on those elements of the early work which, superficially at least, present us with such a continuity - the new centrality of language to cognition, the concern with unearthing the rules governing the possibility of meaning in language.<sup>6</sup> As such they are unable to grasp Wittgenstein's early work as the end (a glorious finale) rather than the beginning of a philosophic tradition. Accordingly they fail to evaluate the depth of the rupture which occurs when Wittgenstein having explored from within, the very limits of egological philosophy in the course of his critique of pure language, breaks from that problematic in an anthropological turn which seeks a conversational basis for the analysis of language, self and cognition.

Wittgenstein's rupture with the egological problematic, and logical empiricism in particular, is of course the appearance in analytical philosophical rumination of a much deeper fracture in European philosophical thought. The second half of the 1920's sees not only Wittgenstein moving towards socio-interactional approach to language analysis (meaning as use) but parallel and seemingly independent similar developments in Mead's symbolic interactionist approach to language and the self in the Pragmatist tradition (Mind, Self and Society, 1925), in Volosinov's rethinking in the Marxist tradition of the possibility of a materialist theory of language (Marxism and the Philosophy of Language 1927) and in Heidegger's growing concern with language as a constituting element of man's being.

The closeness in interests and similarity in theme in these seminal theorists is simply astonishing and at first inspection inexplicable. Here lies a watershed in the development of European philosophy of which we know little.

All we can say in our present state of historical knowledge about the period is that this convergence of interest and theme represents not a common point of arrival or shared novel platform but rather a common rejection of a philosophic discourse perceived to be outmoded - the ego-logical. The failure of ordinary language philosophers to perceive this rupture again reflects their unconsciousness of the sociologicistic foundations of their current philosophical practices. I shall return to this issue in the final chapter of this work.

The Tractatus involves the application of a set of formal or symbolic logical tools to the analysis of the conditions for a language having meaning. Chief amongst these logical tools is the so called Thesis of Extensionality. Wittgenstein's sentential logic derived from developments in the theory of truth functions allows complex sentences to be constructed out of elementary propositions by means of formal connectives. The virtue of Wittgenstein's logic is that following Scheffler's proof he can derive even these connectives (of conjunction, disjunction, implication, etc.) from the basic logical operation of negation.

Wittgenstein applies the Thesis of Extensionality to language in order to devine beneath the vagaries of ordinary language and its grammatical forms an ideal pictorial language infused with the scientist's love for things rather than mere words. Complex propositions are always truth functions of more basic ones. However these elementary propositions, if language is to say anything material, must directly refer to or picture states of affairs in the world. Logic itself produces only tautologies and can tell us nothing about the world. The meaning of propositions must be ultimately in the reference of their constituent elementary propositions. He argues after the tradition of *Ars combinatoria* -



"It is obvious that the analysis of propositions must bring us to elementary propositions which consist of names in immediate combination."<sup>7</sup>

and again -

"The proposition is a truth function of elementary propositions (The elementary proposition is a truth function of itself)."<sup>8</sup>

For Wittgenstein we picture facts to ourselves via the medium or sign-ificatory system of language. Indeed as he says

"We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc. as a projection of a possible situation."<sup>9</sup>

The sense of a proposition then lies in the possibility of it picturing a state of affairs or configuration of facts in the real world.

"A proposition is a picture of reality.  
A proposition is a model of reality as we imagine it."<sup>10</sup>

However propositions of an intentional form which ascribe states or dispositions to psychological subjects

e.g. John believes that it is raining

do not picture or directly refer to states of affairs, i.e. configuration of facts about relations of objects in space and time. But argues Wittgenstein this pictorial correspondence circumscribes the real meaning of propositions. In the intentional proposition above whereas the latter phrase or proposition "it is raining" certainly indicates a state of affairs which may or may not exist in the world and whose existence can be empirically verified, the first phrase or proposition 'referring' to a psychological disposition of John, a psychological agent, cannot be verified. No object or state of affairs can be isolated in the world, by properly scientific means, which corresponds to a belief or psychological disposition. Thus argues Wittgenstein psychological states or agents cannot be referred to meaningfully in language. Statements which do include such reference are thus, in principle, meaningless.

Their form however can be reduced to their underlying real propositional structure which removes any reference to an empirical subject.

This subjective ascription is replaced with a comment on the meaning of the sentence sign. That is, he admits that in intentional propositions such as 'A believes that P is the case' it indeed looks as if the proposition P stands in some sort of relation to an object A, in the form of an empirical subject. However he insists that this superficial form and the psychologism in the theory of knowledge to which it can lead, must be replaced by a deeper analysis of the proposition in terms of constituent terms which will allow of no such psychological entities.

He asserts -

"It is clear, however that 'A believes that P', 'A has the thought P' and 'A says P' are of the form '"P" says P'; and this does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects."<sup>11</sup>

Language, its combinatorial syntax covered by a extensional logic, is reduced in its semantic component to its capacity to depict a world of facts. This depicting faculty of language does not recognize a special kind of fact - the realm of psychological dispositions, in which a subject as an element of a fact has a relationship to a state of affairs which is also part of that factual situation as e.g. in the proposition

[ (John) (believes) (that it is raining) ]

Wittgenstein nowhere explicitly subjects intentional statements to the verification principle and indeed his objections to psychologism seem to go deeper than mere positivist doubts about the scientificity of psychology. It is as a result of his decomposition of intentional propositions to self-referring statements still governed by the referential semantics of the elementary proposition's pictorial correspondence that he concludes:

"This shows too that there is no such thing as the soul - the subject, etc. - as is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day."<sup>12</sup>

His objections like those of Frege who lambasted the early work of Husserl on the foundations of mathematics for its psychologism, reside rather in a logical argument for the necessary universe of discourse and order in the world that must obtain if language is to in fact *be* representative. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that Wittgenstein's severing of psychology from philosophy proper led to an enquiry into the conditions for establishing the scientificity of psychology. This in turn led to the application of physicalistic criteria of inter-subjective verification, the demand for physical observable entities to be the proper object of a scientific psychology, and accordingly a behaviourist theory of mind. Later analytical philosophy, struggling to reconcile the subjective dimension of primary experience with the inter-subjective requirements of the verification principle, sought a resolution of this tension in a formally constructed scientific language in which the basic descriptive terms refer to a behaviouristic interpretation of basic experience.<sup>13</sup> The empirical control of constructed ideal languages is catered for by an objectivist description of verbal behaviour.

Wittgenstein's work lies outside this major trend in logical empiricism associated with the work of Carnap and later Nagel<sup>14</sup> and Goodman.<sup>15</sup> For him it would seem the Tractatus is the end of a philosophical era not the beginning. Nowhere in his early work do we see him clearly embracing the verification principle. His notion of the elementary proposition is not presented in terms of observational statements as logical empiricism would interpret it. Such psychologism as I have already suggested was particularly uncongenial to Wittgenstein coming as he did from a German logico-philosophical tradition more than wary of such reductionism. For Wittgenstein the existence of elementary propositions, the basic building blocks of a language that could represent the world, is asserted on purely logical grounds. That is he argued

that the character of inference and indeed of meaning itself demands that there should be elementary propositions. The logical character of sense demands that simple names and simple objects should be the elements of representation. Only with these elements is it possible to establish definite meaning, and hence for Wittgenstein, sense at all. For Wittgenstein representation must have this strict binary-correspondence form of sign-name and basic object if it is to allow the speaking of sense, "what can be said at all" the author tells us, "can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence."<sup>16</sup>

Wittgenstein sets logical limits to what must be the elements of representation, as Leibnitz in the Monadology (to which the Tractatus bears more than a passing resemblance) sets logical limits to basic ontology within egological discourse. Wittgenstein lies at the end of that great tradition which stretches from Leibnitz, through the Ideologues to Frege and Russell which seeks an ideal combinatorial language which can deliver the mind to the world of things. This tradition recognizes the arbitrary nature of human language but seeks to uncover behind the conventions of language use an inner logic of combination intrinsic to the nature of signification itself. We can note with amazement the similarity of Wittgenstein's judgement -

"Although there is something arbitrary in our notations, this much is not arbitrary - that when we have determined one thing arbitrarily, something else is necessarily the case (this derives from the essence of notation)".<sup>17</sup>

with Leibnitz conclusions in his "Dialogue on the Connection between Things and Words." (See page 7b.) The Tractatus represents the last great attempt to sketch the form of this project within the structure of egological discourse. The book attempts to explore the limits of egological thought through an analysis of the logical or transcendental conditions which would have to obtain if the binary correspondence theory of representation, so central to egologicism, is to hold. It is a last

exploration of the epistemic terrain of egological discourse before it implodes finally and irrevocably.

By recourse to an ideal language based on a strict referential semantic and sentential logical syntax, Wittgenstein short circuits the empirical ego - objective datum relation of classical empiricism. Now the object gives itself up to scientific cognition directly through a language which depicts states of affairs in the world and not the psychological dispositions of an empirical subject. The empirical ego and its immanence had become an embarrassment for positivism, but an unavoidable one. For German non-positivist philosophy whether in its neo-Kantian or Phenomenological traditions the major concern becomes the search for<sup>a</sup> more sure epistemological foundation than the immanence of the empirical or psychological self. Both "Wittgenstein" and "Husserl" in their separate and distinctive ways are the culmination of this search which is conducted within the already fragmenting structure of egological discourse. Their work marks its final dissolution.

In Wittgenstein's early work the unity of experience is no longer sought in the empirical subject, as in classical empiricism, but in a language which represents configuration of facts in the world. Language's or rather the ideal language's facility to name the elemental and represent the structure of the complex in the world becomes the new principle of synthesis. The object world of scientific cognition and communication becomes that pictured in and through pure language.

Indeed for Wittgenstein language, in its universal form as a structural depiction or mapping of the objective world of things, becomes in turn the limits of my world. Wittgenstein reworks the Schopenhauerian theme of the 'world as idea' and of my categorial cognition as being its limit, within his new concern for language. In so far as language in its representative form maps the world for me then it indeed becomes the limits of my world. The world is apprehended by me in and through

a language with a universal form. This language is the condition and the limit of the world appearing to me in thought i.e. as idea.

Thought is no longer the 'property' of an empirical ego, 'located' in the psychological subject's mind. Instead thought is the correct functioning of pure language

"A propositional sign, applied and thought out, is a thought.  
A thought is a proposition with a sense."<sup>18</sup>

However this decentering of cognition is for Wittgenstein only a midpoint a reduction on the way to the isolation of a transcendental organization of cognition centered on an absolute self. He notes -

"there really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way. What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world'."<sup>19</sup>

The subject to which pure language gives this understanding is not an empirical one representable in language (Wittgenstein has shown this to be a linguistic illusion), rather it is a transcendental one at the limits of my world.

"The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world."<sup>20</sup>

The decision about the sense or nonsense of propositions is not left to the psychological judgement of the empirical subject nor as yet entrusted to a community of speakers playing various language games governed by distinct rules related to specific social forms of life, but rather to the judgements of the transcendental subject of ideal language. These judgements show themselves in the logical form of the sentences.

The Tractatus can be seen as a critique of pure language which runs parallel to Kant's earlier transcendental deductions and which remains confined within the same limits. Though to be sure like Kant, Wittgenstein explores the very limits of egological discourse and in particular the binary theory of representation.

The origin of the synthesis of the manifold of experience is now language itself. Wittgenstein pushes Kant's categorial analysis back

a further step to the very language and logical structure which afford the cognitive appropriation of the world by the subject. Pure language with its logical form provides the structural scaffolding of our cognition rather than the categories of sensation and the intellect.<sup>21</sup>

Wittgenstein's position in the *Tractatus* seems somewhat similar to Cassirer's neo-Kantian philosophy of symbolic forms.<sup>22</sup> Each lays a similar stress on language as the synthetic condition of cognition. However neither thinker, despite taking a new interest in language as a transcendental condition of objective cognition, breaks with the egologicism of the critical idealist tradition. For Wittgenstein objective cognition is now seen to rest on language, but on a pure language transparent to a world of independent facts and which legitimates the possibility of a transcendental subject. Wittgenstein's transcendental analysis of semantics ends up postulating, as with Kant, the existence of a transcendental self as the limit of the world-as-idea. Having assailed the empirical subject, and with no access to the resource of a social self and communicational activity as the principle of cognitive unity, he is forced by his own transcendental logic to invoke a subject of pure language structurally equivalent to Kant's ego of pure apperception.

And yet this subject is a nothingness. It has neither agency nor potency. Its being shrinks to the non-existence of a mere limit. Sartre was later to sketch the metaphysics of this transcendental realism. Wittgenstein could only note that:

"Solipsism when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it."<sup>23</sup>

With Wittgenstein positivism has turned full circle and returned to the identitarian fold. Reversing Kant's route Wittgenstein declares that the empirical realist is a transcendental idealist.

The new concern of positivism with language as a scientific tool, and Wittgenstein's own grasp of the epistemic finitude bestowed by linguistic structures are insufficient developments in themselves to take the young philosopher beyond the limits of an egological epistemology: though they certainly take him very close. These new concerns remain undeveloped insights. The full meaning of the linguistic structures of understanding did not and could not appear to Wittgenstein until he had abandoned the empiricist problematic, taken the anthropological turn and begun the reinvestigation of the semantic properties of ordinary language.

## (ii) Positivism and Sociologicism

Husserl accurately saw the continuities and identities in egological epistemology. He claims not only the rationalists Descartes and Kant as his phenomenological predecessors but also Berkeley and Hume.

However, despite their common points of departure, empiricism and idealism arrive at the same paradoxes by different routes. Each tradition sees itself as seeking radically different origins for scientific objectivity. For Kant and critical idealism, as we have seen the grounds of the objectivity of phenomena are traced to the cognitive activity, in its categorial form, of an absolute transcendental ego. Objectivity is in essence constituted. Kant's treatment of the objectivity of phenomena is conducted in his transcendental analysis of the grounds of universality and objectivity of judgements. Similarly as we shall see, for Husserl, the truth or falsity of propositions is reduced to the validity or invalidity, of an act of judging or of what Husserl calls 'intentionality.' The apodictic givenness of the object he believes can be completely established within the structure of the cognitive act itself.

For the empiricists however the conclusion that objectivity is subjectively constituted is unpalatable. Its defining quality is rather



its independence from the cognitive activity of the ego. Empiricism is however reluctantly forced to admit the mediation of the sensate ego as the only valid access to the world of objects. The hope is somehow that the ego will be swallowed up by the brute facticity of the world and accurately deliver, in its sensory experience, that world to scientific cognition. The objectivity is somehow massively there in the world. But, on the other hand, epistemological empiricism if it is not to condemn itself to the scepticism which results from making the immanence *of* the empirical subject the limit of cognition, must either invoke a deity as a foil to the sensate self's solipsism or settle for an uncertain vacillation between nominalism and the naeue realism applauded by Dr. Johnson and later G.E. Moore. Positivism after Frege, as we have seen, seeks to combine these last two possibilities and demand that language should accurately reflect in its propositions, states of affairs in the given world. Alongside positivism flourish those philosophies which promise a metaphysics of the object, organicism, vitalism, Durkheimian sociology and lastly existentialism. For these as for positivism, objectivity resides somewhere internal to the world, external to man in objects of cognition.

It is useful to distinguish between these two conceptions of objectivity viz. (a) objectivity as a property of judgements, (b) objectivity as a property of objects of cognition, in order to trace the dispersions within egological thought which occur around the rival schools of phenomenology and positivism. These dispersions however, as I have suggested, follow a structural symmetry in their divergence.

Moreover the above distinction aids our understanding of

- (1) the epistemic origin of the conception of objectivity, characteristic of positivistic sociology. This movement I will argue, regards objectivity as a property of the objects of scientific cognition, in this case the facticity of society.

- (2) Secondly it helps us grasp why positivistic sociology, the first formal expression of sociologism, though a moment in the transition to conversational discourse, is so unwittingly. It fails to reflect theoretically on its rupture with egological discourse and is incapable of evaluating the positivism it so readily embraces; a positivism which is a metaphysical residue of a previous epistemic formation.
- (3) Lastly we can understand to some degree why the critique of positivism as metaphysics emerged, and sociologism established itself as the discursive foundation of a new philosophical paradigm not within sociology itself, but rather in a philosophical discourse. This discourse departs from an assault on the notion of transcendental ego or absolute spirit but remains concerned with objectivity as a constituted phenomena. Scientific objectivity is no longer seen as the accomplishment of a transcendental ego through its intentional acts or as simply given in the externality of the object but rather theorized as the product of a series of materially based social and communicational practices which found any science.

That positivist Sociology indeed regarded objectivity as a property of the object of cognition of the sociologist is amply confirmed in Durkheim's methodological directive to treat social facts as things.<sup>24</sup> The objectivity is somehow in the world, the empirically given social world. Particularly, it is in the characteristics of externality and coerciveness Durkheim ascribes to society. For <sup>the</sup> naive empiricist the objectivity of phenomena resides in their externality to human consciousness and influence. For empiricism this brute externality is the only prop against the slow slide to idealism entailed by the immanence of the sensate subjects' immediate experience. Similarly for Durkheim the objectivity of social structure and hence of the science which makes it its object, resides in its externality to human cognition and indeed action. It resides as Gouldner has caustically commented in its inhumanity.<sup>25</sup> For the natural scientist the externality and resistance are of a world from which man is supposedly absent and which stand in abstentia of human agency. The social scientist's externality and coerciveness are features of a world in which man is very much present and in which man stands against man, or class against class. As such, Durkheim's objectivist methodology is

predicated not on a novel materialist epistemology, as it might be, but rather on a resigned recognition of man's historically situated condition of alienation. The jargon of positivist objectivity expresses the fetishization of social relations within the capitalist social formation.

A fundamental epistemological enquiry which departs from a recognition of the centrality of social reality to the 'objective world' and to the scientific practices which try to comprehend it, eludes Durkheim. His embracing of a variant of the objectivity of social science which by confusing and conflating the thought object of Sociology, the distinctively social, and the real object it addresses, concrete social relations, ends up reifying both social relations and scientific practice. The desired properties of one privileged scientific object (the material extended objects of mechanistic natural science) are then read into social relations themselves - they are seen as things.

Durkheim's confusion is characteristic of an empiricism which as Althusser reminds us, constantly confuses and conflates the knowledge or theoretical object of a science and its real object, that is the concrete sector of reality it addresses.<sup>26</sup> Empiricism makes a virtue out of this confusion under the name of realism. In an age of mechanistic Physics this confusion is understandable enough.

In the post-quantum era of autonomous theorizing it is impossible to maintain. The effect of this confusion for the social sciences<sup>of</sup> this confusion has been - the fetishization of social relations in sociological theory -, have been disastrous. Blindfolded by its positivist metaphysic, Sociology became incapable of the degree of theoretical reflexivity which could allow it to play its full part in the dissolution of egological thought and subsequent emergence of an epistemology sociologized. Sociology was seemingly taken by surprise by its own arrival. It simply

did not grasp the import of the discovery or rather rediscovery of the social and historical nature of human reality. It did not grasp the essential restructuration of knowledge taking place around the emergence of the new epistemological centrality of man as a concrete embodied and socially situated agent. For as Foucault has reminded us "the threshold of our modernity is situated not by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called man." It was left to Marx and Nietzsche to isolate the form of this 'empirico-transcendental doublet' in their analysis of the formative role of labour (material production) and language in the human species. And the task fell originally to them, to connect the philosophical task with a radical reflection on man's finitude as an agent within historically located systems of production and language. It is in the reflective analysis of this concrete mode of human being, circumscribed by labour and language, that a philosophical foundation for the objectivity of knowledge has been sought. Neither Durkheim's methodological prescriptions nor the Neo-Kantian reflections of Weber<sup>27</sup> and Simmel<sup>28</sup>, which represent classical Sociology at its most philosophically reflective, managed to trace the full implication of the sociologistic standpoint for our thinking in the areas of epistemology and the theory of scientific knowledges. Durkheim's search for a 'third way' beyond empiricism and idealism,<sup>29</sup> Simmel's Kantian inspired enquiry into the synthetic categories of sociality, and Weber's attempt to think the relationship between the positive natural sciences and the hermeneutic cultural sciences, all indicate a lively philosophical interest within classical Sociology. However none of these enquiries despite their novel tone and proclamations of the necessity of a rethinking of classical philosophical questions in the light of the emergence of sociological science, were capable of breaking fully with the egological problematic and in particular its positivist variant.

Their embracing of the positivist metaphysic, in an attempt to establish the scientificity of the sociological enterprise, effectively blinkered them to the radical philosophical import of the new ontological primacy of the social.

In Durkheim's case, as we have seen, the importation of positivism into the structure of sociological reason leads to a reification of social relations and a fetishization of scientific objectivity which underwrites sociological method with a deeply conservative political ideology of social order.

His work is motivated with the desire to replace the idols history has corrupted with a new object of worship and principle of stasis and order - society, a reality *sui generis*. He searches for the principles of social order in an age of revolution. And this search also informs his epistemology. He gladly embraces the positivist metaphysics of the object, with its thesis of an intrinsic order and coherence in the object world.

Although the Absolute has been partly relativised in the functionalist analysis of society and culture, it retains its supra-individual qualities. It remains a reality '*sui generis*', a jealous God and objective facticity above the individual confronting and coercing him. Durkheim doesn't nihilate Kant, he merely stands him on his head and transfers the objectivity of the transcendental categories, epistemological and moral, to the collective consciousness and its functional structure. This becomes a reified inter-subjective ego. Thus Durkheim's moral order account of social synthesis does not accept the nihilistic implications of the conversational terrain it has entered unwittingly. It shrinks from what Foucault has called an '*analytic of finitude*'.<sup>30</sup> Instead it merely relocates the rationale of scientific and moral objectivity, previously found at the transcendental egological level, at the reified societal level.

To be fair to Durkheim it should be noted that in his later work viz. "Elementary Forms of Religious Life" - he develops his interest in the constitutive aspects of objective knowledge in his attempt to account for the development of spatial and temporal classifications among non-literate peoples. He suggests that the basic forms of space and time in such societies closely reflect the social organisation of the society in question. However even this analysis of judgements and the origin of their 'objectivity' remains predicated on the postulate of the given objectivity of the social order as the object of scientific cognition. For the individual, (and it is the categorical organisation of the empirical not transcendental ego Durkheim is analysing), possesses the faculty of objective judgement only in so far as he is a fully socialised member of the social order. The objectivity of his judgements is derived from that of society, (a reality sui generis) in so far as he is a structural isomorphism of the former. As such it is not socially constituted but a merely internalised object world, interiorized via the socialisation process. The reification of society is accompanied by an account of the individual as a personality system structurally isomorphic with the social system of which he is a part. The personality in its non-egotistic form is conceived as an internalized representation (an interiorized social being) of the social system.

Durkheimian positivism engages in an investigation of social process but fails to achieve the reflective moment and to realise the ontological primacy of the concretely inter-subjectivity. Thus it generates, as a result of the residues of egological epistemic structure within it, a series of new dichotomies at the ontological level - individual and society, egotistical and social being. Durkheim fails to come to terms with the individualism of either classical political economy or that of classical egological epistemology. On the other hand, unable or unwilling to radically evaluate the epistemological implications of his own sociologism and think the terms of Sociology's

discrete scientificity, Durkheim remains trapped within the positivist fetish of the object. He clings to the apron strings of empiricist respectability. His sociologism shatters the tyranny of the transcendental subjectivity of idealism but replaces it with that of the object, or internalized object, (society in man). The constitutive power of the ego is lost. Durkheim's homo sociologicus inherits the impotence of 'L'homme machine' of French materialist philosophy. As Merleau-Ponty notes, Durkheim, "although he energetically called attention to the study of the social, he may have stripped it of its most interesting features by advising that it be treated "like a thing"."

It was Durkheim's genius to realize the eminent sociality of the synthetic categories of the intellect. He traces the course of their supposed necessity and universality to the nature of society as a set of collective representations which expresses communal realities and sentiments. He never in fact develops his anthropology of knowledge towards a consideration of the structure of thought and knowledge in advanced literate societies. However he sees his analysis of primitive representations as clearly indicating the social determinants of the structure of all cognition. Hence he sees the emergence of a sociological theory of knowledge as promising to plot a mediating course between empiricism and idealism. However, the infinite possibilities entailed by sociological realism and the emergence of an epistemology sociologized, slip from Durkheim in so far as he remains naively fixated with the object and under the sway of positivism. Durkheim indeed stands Kant on his head. But he proceeds to a positivism uninformed by the radical implications of that inversion. In so doing he preserves the kernel of egological idealism - the subject-object couplet. Both at the intuitive level and at the methodological Durkheim replaces the old Kantian dualism of subject and object with the new dualism of individual and society. Coercion replaces logical necessity. A doctrine of social

order replaces that of natural coherence and order.

Since Kant's transcendental deduction the absolute dichotomy of subject and object has been the abstract form of all 'knowledge' within egological discourse. Subject and object becomes polar opposites, structurally inter-connected in so far as the form of thought centered on a constituting subjectivity is the form of the object and the source of all objectivity. The fundamental problematic of the Kantian revision of empiricism is expressed, as we have noted, in the question "How are synthetic a priori judgements possible?" That is, how is it possible to have and use concepts which are above sensory experience, in the sense of not being derived from it, yet contain more than the empty tautology of analytic statements.

Durkheim attempts to answer this question by indicating the social origin of the collective categories and representations of primitive people. Collective representations like other social forms are more than the sum of individual experiences, yet are binding on the individual and his percepts. They are thus prior to individual experience logically and ontogenetically yet condition and structure that experience. As they are capable of change they have a clearly synthetic status. However Durkheim fails to proceed to ask the next obvious question later posed by Simmel - "How is society possible?"<sup>31</sup> He does not go beyond an acknowledgement of the social origins of the categories of the intellect to an enquiry of the social constitution of these. Durkheim's positivism prevents him from such an enquiry. Social structure and culture is a given, the necessary given facticity which ensures the objectivity and scientificity of sociology. For Durkheim to render problematic that facticity is to throw sociological method into chaos and subject it to the threat of psychological reductionism or worse, philosophical idealism. The objectivity of phenomena must take epistemological precedence over the phenomenon of inter-subjectivity. Durkheim is unwilling to trace



the radical implications of his sociological theory of knowledge for an understanding of all scientific practice, natural and social, and for the meaning of the terms 'objectivity', 'truth', and 'knowledge'.

Nietzsche takes Durkheim's sociologism the necessary step nearer which shifts the analysis of the grounds of objectivity from a transcendental to a socio-relational footing. In doing so he takes sociology more seriously than Durkheim, who is reluctant to apply his anthropology of knowledge reflexively to positivist science itself and Sociology in particular. Nietzsche rephrases the Kantian question and asks "Why is the belief in such judgements (synthetic a priori) necessary?"<sup>32</sup> The concern becomes, given the apparent 'necessity' of the categories which dominate all our intellectual life to including our scientific discourse, to enquire after the source of this necessity. Durkheim was unwilling to bring the relativising impetus of his anthropology of knowledge to bear on sociological science itself and the positivist categories which undergird it. Nietzsche realised, in a way that only Marx before him had grasped, that social theory could no longer expect an outmoded philosophy to provide its epistemological foundations. For social theory the phenomenon of inter-subjectivity must take epistemological precedence over the objectivity of phenomena. Synthetic a priori judgements must be believed necessary just in order that the entire conceptual structure we have may be preserved. They represent, as Quine has called it, a web of public belief. They are immune from doubt only in so far as they have this fundamental position within socially constituted conceptual schemes. However in so far as they are merely conventions supporting other more expendable cognitive conventions, they are cultural and theoretico-ideological imperatives not transcendental categories.

The formal details of this sociologically informed epistemology were to be worked out much later by the neo-pragmatists - the attack on the analytic/synthetic distinction, the denial of theory independent

observation and facts, the rejection of atomistic and progressive model of scientific verification, accumulation and change.<sup>33</sup>

More recently a historical and structuralist dimension has been added to this formal critique of positivist and dogmatic empiricist epistemology in the work of Kuhn, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and of Canguilhem, Foucault and ~~Lecourt~~ in the continental.

The writings of the latter theorists have taken the historical and structural analysis of scientific knowledges beyond the teleological historicism of weltanschauung philosophy. In turn like its more formalistic neo-pragmatist equivalent, (which it now must surely illuminate with a historical method and perspective so lacking in evolutionary pragmatism) it has rethought the categories of traditional epistemology - the subject-object axis, the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions and a priori and a posteriori truth, the concepts of synthesis and the transcendental. In turn it demands their replacement with others that do take cognizance of the historicity of knowledge structures and the sociality of scientific activity. It searches for categories which can represent the historical density of, and in the end, discontinuity in, the structuration of knowledge; a search for the structurally necessary within an essential historical contingency; a search for the transcendental limits of semio-logical possibility within a given period. Foucault with characteristic incisiveness, has given the name the 'historical a priori' to this novel epistemological category - the self evident ground or condition (and limit) of our thought in a specific historical period, which is itself correlated with other historical processes.

However the basic insights which rendered these developments possible remain those of Marx and Nietzsche. They precociously wrestled social theory free from its stranglehold by egological philosophy in its idealist or positivist variants. Marx's theory of labour as social praxis

and Nietzsche's reflections on language and mentality are perhaps the first appearances in philosophical knowledge of that new mode of theorizing based on a recognition of the precedence of historical and sociological reason which we have designated the conversational episteme.

FOOTNOTES

1. Theodore Adorno. Negative Dialectics, Heineman, p. 176.
2. For a critical review of this development in German Idealism see J. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Heineman, 1972, Chapter 1.
3. The trenchant opposition to all forms of psychologism in positivist epistemology from Frege to Wittgenstein's Tractatus in an index of the identitarian impulse in empiricist thought.
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. Pears and McGuinness, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961.
5. In particular see Elizabeth Anscombe's, An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus, Hutchinson, 1959.
6. e.g. David Pears, Wittgenstein, Fontana, Modern Masters series.
7. Wittgenstein, op. cit., 4.221, p. 59.
8. Ibid., 5, p. 73.
9. Ibid., 3.11, p.21.
10. Ibid., 4.01, p.37.
11. Ibid., 5.542, p. 109.
12. Ibid., 5.5421, p.109.
13. Rudolph Carnap. "Testability and Meaning", Phil.Sci., 3:419-471 (1936) and 4:1-40 (1937).  
and  
Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology, Revue Internationale de Philosophie (Brussels) 4:20-40 (1950).
14. Ernest Nagel. The Structure of Science, R.K.P., 1961.
15. Nelson Goodman. The Structure of Appearance, Cambridge, Mass., 1951.
16. Wittgenstein, op. cit., Author's Preface, p.3.
17. Ibid., 3.342, p.33.
18. Ibid., 4 and 4.001, p.35.
19. Ibid., 5.641, p.117.
20. Ibid., 5.632, p.117.
21. He notes "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world", 5 6, p.117.
22. Ernst Cassirer. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Yale University Press, 1955.

23. Wittgenstein, op. cit., 5.64, p.117.
24. Emile Durkheim. Rules of Sociological Method, Free Press, New York, 1964.
25. Alvin Gouldner. The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology, New York, Basic Books, 1970.
26. Louis Althusser. Reading Capital, New Left Books, 1973.
27. Max Weber. The Methodology of the Social Sciences, Free Press, Chicago, 1949.
28. George Simmel. "How is Society Possible?" in The Sociology of George Simmel, edit. Kurt. H. Wolff, Free Press, 1950.
29. The notion of a 'third way' in epistemology between empiricism and idealism is explicitly addressed in the "Elementary Forms of Religious Life" (trans. Swain, Free Press, Glencoe, 1948). However this theme clearly animates the earlier methodological work.
30. Michel Foucault. The Order of Things, Tavistock, 1974.
31. Simmel, op. cit.
32. Fredrich Nietzsche. Beyond Good and Evil, trans. Helen Zimmern, Allen & Unwin, 1967, p.18.
33. See W.V. Quine. Two Dogmas of Empiricism in "from a logical point of view", Harper & Row, 1963.

## CHAPTER SIX

MARX AND NIETZSCHE'S MATERIALISM

Marx's philosophical reflections on the sciences of history and political economy and Nietzsche's on that of philology demarcate the emerging variants of conversational discourse. Both are concerned with the social constitution of the objective human world and with the self-generative acts of the human species which are the constitutive elements of that world. For Nietzsche it is in the processes of communication and the structure of language that we are to grasp the world as an objective realm of human practice.

(i) Marx

For Marx however the social constitution of the objective world has its origins in socially organized labour. As early as his Theses on Feuerbach<sup>1</sup> Marx had steered a novel course between the Scylla of transcendental idealism and the Charybdis of naturalistic or deterministic materialism. He founds a radically new epistemology based on the centrality of human practical activity. The mediation of the human subject and the natural object, the nexus sought by classical epistemology, is now seen to occur by means of the system of social labour. In turn the new centrality afforded to human productive life, and the social relations under which it is organized, challenges the rigid demarcation of reality into a subjective-consciousness realm and an objective - material realm so typical of classical epistemology whether in its dualist or identitarian moments.

Here already in this Theses on Feuerbach Marx's motive in speaking of man as an objective practico-social being is, as Habermas reminds us<sup>2</sup>, not merely anthropological but primarily epistemological. Objective reality is for Marx, no longer to be comprehended as a brute facticity ontologically in oppositi

to the subject, as it was in all previous deterministic materialism. Instead, it is to be grasped in the form of sensuous human activity.<sup>3</sup> This practical action has a subjective aspect. It is conducted freely by human subjects albeit within a definite system of social organization in turn historically located. It has also however an objective aspect, for this praxis carried out by sensuous, objective beings shapes the world as objective for us. Reality appears to the human subject as objective in and through his labour on the world<sup>4</sup>. Marx continues to use the organizational categories of Kantian critical epistemology, subject, object, synthesis, but gives their meaning a radical twist within his materialist epistemology. The egological problematic disintegrates under this pressure. And the previous duality and fundamental idealism of the subject-object couplet is dissolved in the materialist rupture.

The epistemological subject of objective constitution or synthesis is no longer an absolutised and isolated transcendental consciousness but instead the sensuous, human-species which reproduces its human life under natural and historically given conditions, by means of its socially organized labour. 'Synthesis', for Marx, takes place in the medium of concrete human practice and labour in particular, rather than in abstract cognition as postulated by critical idealism. Labour becomes for Marx not only a fundamental anthropological category but also an epistemological one. For human labour replaces the pure activity of an abstract consciousness as synthesiser of the manifold of sensory experience and as the epistemological basis of the objectivity of phenomena. In Marx's conversational theory the phenomenon of inter-subjectivity,



grasped as material production, takes epistemological precedence over the objectivity of phenomena.

By the time he composed his theses on Feuerbach Marx had already moved beyond the philosophical anthropology of the Paris manuscripts<sup>5</sup> which were still largely influenced by the Feuerbachian naturalist problematic. The earlier manuscripts conceptualized inter-subjectivity in terms of a species subject that exists in and through its productive life -

'For labour, life activity, productive life itself, appears to man in the first place merely as a means of satisfying a need - the need to maintain physical existence. Yet the productive life is the life of the species. It is life engendering life. The whole character of a species - its species character - is contained in the character of its life activity;'6.

The conception of inter-subjectivity employed here, though stressing the active and practical dimension of human subjectivity and of man's species being, remains essentialist, anthropological and fundamentally a-historical<sup>7</sup>. The objective world created by man's labour, through which nature appears as his work and his reality, is still here seen as the objectification of an essential being possessed by man as a species. Although this process of objectification is seen to occur in a historical dimension, - the self generation of the species through history - the human essence or species being is still viewed as beyond history, an undetermined essence. This essence or 'species' being' has not yet been conceived of as historically formed and specific, 'the ensemble of social relations', as it becomes known in the sixth thesis on Feuerbach.

8

The theses on Feuerbach and the German Ideology render the concept of intersubjectivity as a central epistemological category.

Inter-subjectivity is no longer conceived in terms of species being but rather as human practical activity<sup>9</sup>. The object world is no longer the objectification of a universal human essence but concretely constituted by man's historically located and determined praxis. The notion of 'Man' is then an abstraction and often when employed by philosophy, a mystification. Marx attacks German idealism for dealing with the metaphysical category, "Man" instead of 'real historical man'.<sup>10</sup>

Productive life, he argues, is carried out by historically different sorts of men at different periods who have specific needs, characteristics and material problems. These needs, characteristics and problems which define what man is in a specific period are determined by the objective historical conditions under which men live, and by the social relations through which they organize their interaction with nature in material production.

"This sum of productive forces capital funds and social forms" argues Marx "which every individual and generation finds in existence as something given, is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as 'substance', and 'essence of man', and what they have deified and attacked,"<sup>11</sup>.

Accordingly 'consciousness' loses its centrality as the prime concept in epistemology, as the prima causa of egologicism. By 1859 in his contribution to the Critique of Political Economy<sup>12</sup> Marx was able to conclude with a finality, that,

'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness'.<sup>13</sup>

However clearly it was his earlier materialist insights in historiography, plotted in the German Ideology, and the tracing of the implications of a materialist approach to history for epistemology that provided the foundation for the triumphant certainty of the Preface. In the earlier work he insists that

'Consciousness is therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all'.<sup>14</sup>

As such consciousness itself must be treated historically, as materially conditioned, as an effect. Indeed only after considering the historical evolution of man as a social being formed by a productive life which both provides the means for the satisfaction of human needs and in turn generates new needs and social relations in the development of the productive forces of social labour, can we locate the emergence of consciousness.

'From the start the "spirit" is afflicted with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men'.<sup>15</sup>

It is in understanding the role of language as a form of social activity in the formation of consciousness that we can concretely grasp the sociality of consciousness and finally jettison the eschatological centrality of consciousness to epistemology. Marx's precocious insights on language and consciousness are to lie buried and dormant in materialist thought for eighty years until they are set free by Volosinov<sup>16</sup> in the 1920's and eventually developed into a materialist

psychology of cognitive development by Vygotsky<sup>17</sup>.

The conception of inter-subjectivity as social praxis is intermediate between the earlier anthropological notion of species being and the later rendering of the inter-subjective in terms of the economic and social categories of material production.<sup>18</sup>

In the mature work, the notion of social praxis is narrowed down to that of productive labour within a determinate mode of economic production. The concept becomes part of the larger theoretical configuration of a materialist political economy. Its philosophical nuances become redundant. However as the Introduction to the Grundrisse shows,<sup>19</sup> the epistemological and methodological foundations of social science in general and political economy in particular remain a central concern of the mature Marx. He retains a lively interest in settling old scores with philosophical idealism and with gauging his relationship to the Hegelian dialectical method as a means of clarifying the nature of a properly materialist dialectic. He strives to extract the positivist aspects of Hegel's dialectic 'It must be turned right side up again if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell'.<sup>20</sup> The phenomenon of inter-subjectivity in turn loses its previous epistemological focus. Instead it is explicated in terms of the determinate structure of material production and in particular, in terms of the social relations under which is organized in a specific system of socialized labour, in a particular historical period, becomes the form of inter-subjectivity which provides the basis of the 'synthesis' of man and the natural world.

'When we consider bourgeois society in the long view and as a whole, then the final

result of the process of social production always appears as the society itself i.e. the human being itself in its social relations. Everything that has a fixed, such as the product etc. appears as merely a moment, a vanishing moment, in this movement. The direct production process itself here appears only as a moment. The conditions and objectifications of the process are themselves equally moments of it, and its only subjects are the individuals, but individuals in mutual relationships, which they equally reproduce and produce anew. The constant process of their own movement, in which they renew themselves even as they renew the world of wealth they create'.<sup>21</sup>

For Marx, work in any historically given society always takes the form of social labour. And it is through such socially organized labour that humans appropriate natural reality and render it objective for them. Thus the theoretical basis for the inter-subjective epistemological mediation of the subject man and the natural world as object is the mode of economic production and the social relations of production which structure it.

'The starting point naturally, is individuals producing in society - and therefore the socially determined production of individuals'.<sup>22</sup> In his critique of classical political economy Marx lambasts the Robinson Crusoe conceptions of human labour 'The individual and isolated hunter and fisherman, with whom Smith and Ricardo begin'.<sup>23</sup>

He sees this extreme individualism in eighteenth century economic theory as an ideological effect of that historical period 'Only in the eighteenth century in "civil society", do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes as external necessity'.<sup>23</sup> Marx demands that political economy must depart from an epistemological acceptance of the priority

of a concrete inter-subjectivity or sociality centered on material production. 'Production by an isolated individual outside society', he insists ' - is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other'.<sup>25</sup>

Marx's critique of individualism in political economy is indebted to his earlier epistemological critique of idealism delivered in the middle period of his work (1846-1857). In his early critique of German classical philosophy and Hegel's dialectical idealism in particular, Marx had forged theoretical tools of great use in the later economic studies. In the course of his philosophical critique Marx had explicated the starting point of a materialist epistemology and the outlines of a new methodology for the historical sciences. A new centrality had been afforded to the material and productive life of concrete human subjects in historical development.

Indeed it is perhaps because of these philosophical roots and the perceived need to free social science from these choking tendrils, that Marx's critique of political economy as a social theory is so much more trenchant, and in the end theoretically radical and methodologically convincing, than Durkheim's attacks in his Division of Labour on the individualism and social contractualism of Spencer's laissez-faire sociology.

However Marx's later work clearly develops and refines the critique of idealist philosophy whether in its transcendental or naturalist variants. It does so by clarifying the notion of inter-subjectivity so centrally at play in his early theorising and by knitting it together with a powerful

battery of other economic and historiographic concepts in a comprehensive political economy, with a firm methodological basis. The transformation of Marx's basic sociologicistic insight from a precocious speculation within a philosophical anthropology (inter-subjectivity as 'species being') to constituting a central theoretical pillar of a materialist political economy (inter-subjectivity as social relations of production) marks the emergence of a radically new organization of social scientific and philosophic knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

An epistemic groundwork is been being laid here which demarcates the appropriate direction for the human sciences to follow if they are to achieve scientificity, and which opens up a theoretical horizon of almost limitless possibilities.



(ii) Nietzsche

Nietzsche's rupture from egological thought is in its own way as radical as that of Marx and yet at the same time more bewildering due to its unsystematic and idiosyncratic form. It is on the basis of a philosophical reflection on language as a social activity and limit to cognition, rather than on labour and its social structure that Nietzsche mounts his assault on classical metaphysics and its egological structure.

Nietzsche the young Professor of Philology, was heir to a German tradition of linguistic study which since the beginning of the nineteenth century had, at the methodological level, broken with the absolute rationalism of classical 'linguistics', and embraced a historico-organic method of research. German scholars in particular came to understand that language was in a state of constant flux and that it had a history which could illuminate the study of its genesis, development, and differentiation. The insight that 'history' applied to things other than wars, dynasties and states was a radically new one and one that demarcates the scientific and philosophic discourses of the nineteenth century from the rationalist and mechanistic organization of knowledge in the classical period.

As early as 1814 Rask<sup>27</sup> had emphasised the necessity of methodically examining the total structure of a language rather than isolated elements and in particular words as atomistic units of meaning. He stresses the comparative analysis of grammar in a historical dimension. Similarly Grimm a few years later formally announces the break with the

classical mode of analysis and its absolute rationalism.

'I am hostile to notions of universal logic in grammar. They apparently lend themselves to exactness and solidarity of definition but impede observation, which is to me the soul of linguistic science'.<sup>28</sup>

However we should not in a a fortiori manner over stress the discontinuity between the epistemic base of the historico-organic research method of the nineteenth century and that of the classical period.

Comparative and historical method remains motivated by the central themes of the old discourse. There is here a question of residue. Chief amongst these residual themes is a continued search for origins and for a primal language which displays its pattern of representation more clearly than modern forms.

Not only does Bopp (1833)<sup>29</sup> attempt an analysis of the composition of words, but, after isolating the inflectional elements, he attempts to trace them back eventually to their original form and meaning. This takes the familiar form of a search for some form of the existential verb 'to be' behind that of other verbs. Similarly for Schleicher, Hegel's disciple, the comparative method was motivated by a search for a primitive or original language. He accepted that this might not be the first language of mankind, there was he acknowledged no way of ascertaining that, however the search was on for the oldest ancestor of a given family of languages. The discovery of an original Indo-European language, the abiding interest of nineteenth century comparative linguistics was motivated by a metaphysical urge residually inherited from the classical episteme. The method of comparative analysis yields as its analyandum a dialect free mother language, abstracted as a lowest common denominator

from the compared series of related languages. For if such a language is reconstructed only from samenesses in linguistic structure it will possess no variants. Each language of the family is thus seen to 'bear independent witness' to the forms of the parent. Correspondences among the related language, i.e., their common features, verify the existence and form of the postulated parent language. Beneath this thinly disguised methodological circularity lies that same profound metaphysical desire to isolate the primal sign (which in its very form reveals the essence of representation) found in classical philosophy of language.

Nietzsche is, as I have said, the inheritor of a German philological tradition that is hesitatingly and painfully (a pain only mitigated by a certain positivistic optimism) breaking from the metaphysical surities of the classical period. The break occurs largely at the level of method, viz the move towards the historico-comparative method and recognition of the systemic organic nature of language. The deeper epistemic structure of this new method remains, as we have seen, adulterated with metaphysical residues of the previous episteme.

Nietzsche becomes the first philologist to engage in a radical philosophical reflection on the new historicism of linguistic method and to come to terms with these egological residues. Instead of the true, rational, orderly, permanent or benign universe, of classical thought he offers us 'change, becoming, plurality, opposition, contradiction and war'.<sup>30</sup> To think unhistorically he cites as the 'age old custom among philosophers'.<sup>31</sup> He demands, in a way not too dissimilar from Marx, that thought and in particular

philosophical discourse must come to grips with the centrality of History to Being. Only the nineteenth century he believes has recognized the 'faculty' of historical understanding" 'as its sixth sense'. This 'historical sense' he defines as

'the capacity for divining quickly the order of rank of the valuations according to which a people, a community, or an individual has lived, the "divining instinct" for the relation of the authority of the valuations to the authority of the operating forces'.<sup>32</sup>

Nietzsche in his reflections on historical understanding which finds expression in his genealogy of morals gropes towards a Sociology of Knowledge which would have traumatic consequences for classical epistemology, involving as it would a total revolution in our thinking about logic, science and morality.

But where to start?

Nietzsche however, gives us little positive direction how philosophy is to be reconstituted after its break with classical thought. His preferred philosophical tool is the hammer rather than the trowel and mortar of the Kantian system builder. Nietzsche abjures such systematising, interpreting it as a psychological craving for some final ontological security.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover he declines to see his task as the systematic critique by refutation of philosophical claims. For as he claims, to refute one system is not often to accept explicitly or implicitly another. He confines his critique of classical philosophy to an undermining of its claims,<sup>34</sup>

A central technique in this destructive assault is an interpretation of philosophical themes and problems as the effect of linguistic structures. This approach has to us

in a post-Wittgensteinian philosophical age, a distinctively modern ring about it. However for Nietzsche, to afford a central primacy to language in the consideration of philosophical problems has a series of profound implications which extend way beyond the limits of possible innovations in the surface level techniques of philosophical analysis. The acceptance of the primacy of language entails for him, the necessity of grasping the sociality of consciousness and the historical origins and determinations of our thought, including of course that realm we regard as so sacred, inviolable and immutable - our morality.<sup>35</sup> Indeed it means a rethinking of the nature of science in a situation whence scientific 'truth' is seen to have pragmatic and historical dimensions and scientific theories an interpretative rather than explanatory form. Language then allows us a way in, or rather out of the maze of egological metaphysics.

Armed with the scimitar of a reflexive philology Nietzsche goes straight for the jugular vein of egologism - the subject-object couplet and conception of the objectivity of phenomena based on this structure. For Nietzsche the idea of a philosophical subject behind thought occupying a radically different realm from the material world is an illusion. But it is an understandable illusion. For it is to be understood as a consequence of the very subject-predicate grammatical form of Indo-European languages. 'One believed in the soul as one believed in grammar and the grammatical subject. We used to say that "I" is the condition "think", the predicate which conditions - thinking, being an activity for which a subject, as cause, must be thought!'.<sup>36</sup>

day. This continuity of tradition based on a common egological structure he traces to the very grammatical form of Indo-European language.

'The wonderful family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophising is easily enough explained. In fact, where there is affinity of language, owing to the common philosophy of grammar - I mean owing to the unconscious domination and guidance of similar grammatical functions - it cannot but be that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and succession of philosophical systems; just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world interpretation.'<sup>39</sup>

It is the spell of these grammatical functions, themselves the product of forms of social life, that so infuses classical epistemology and sends it on its egological course. For from the concept of the cognitive self is derived, argues Nietzsche, the other pole of the egological equation, the reified object or thing in itself. Or to be more accurate these two concepts, absolute subject and reified object are dyadic mirror reflections of each other.

'Reason believes in the ego, in the ego as substance, as a being, and projects this belief in ego-substance onto all things. It first creates thereby the concept of a thing ... Being, which is construed as cause, is thought into things, and shoved under them: the concept of 'being' follows and is derived from the concept of the ego'.<sup>40</sup>

From the ascription of an ego to consciousness and substantivization and privatization of thought into a separate realm, *res cogitans*, comes that impetus to substantivize and objectivize our experience and cast it in an ontological mould radically distinct and autonomous from human concrete life. The organizational principle of *res extensa*, its intrinsic order or objectivity must be internal.

For Nietzsche the ascription of a transcendental subject, 'the synthetic term I' to consciousness and its contents is to be interpreted as a metaphysical consequence or generalisation from a linguistic habit. He unpacks the hidden assumptions embodied in the Cartesian axiom cogito ergo sum, which announces that in consciousness itself selfhood can be grasped with immediate certainty. He insists the cogito is not such a simple and innocent statement, for it simple assumes too much -

'When I analyse the process that is expressed in the sentence "I think", I find a whole series of daring assertions, the argumentative proof of which would be difficult, perhaps impossible: for instance, that it is I who thinks, that there necessarily must be something that thinks, that thinking is an activity and operation on the part of a being who is thought of as a cause, that there is an "ego", and finally, that it is already determined what is to be designated by thinking - that I know what thinking is'.<sup>37</sup>

Nietzsche insists that this 'one', the 'famous old ego' is merely a supposition or assertion and not by any means an immediate phenomenological certainty. The ego belongs to an interpretation of the process of thinking and not to the process itself. It is then an inference which follows the conventions of a particular grammar. Thinking is understood as an activity, and because according to our grammar every activity requires an agency that acts, we conclude that there must exist an agent or ego in or behind the thinking process.<sup>38</sup> This inference and the related one postulating an autonomous world of facts or things in themselves which can be apprehended in an unsullied way by the interpretative structures of human cognition, Nietzsche sees as the core of a classical Socratic epistemology which stretches from the Greeks to his present

to itself - a substance or thing in itself. This in a parallel way to the soul organizes a realm from which man as a concrete cognitive agent is necessarily absent, trapped as he is in *res cogitans*.

We can, Nietzsche believes, within the labyrinths of metaphysics reverse the direction of our illusions within this egological equation. The self as a concept within this egological discourse, can be seen as derived from the physicalist conception of matter as organized in indestructable, impenetrable atoms. Though this concept has lost its major currency in physics it 'still leads a dangerous after life in places where no one suspects'. The notion that the soul is something indestructible, indivisible and eternal has been a central Christian doctrine. Nietzsche demands this myth be expelled from science. The monadology which lurks beneath the surface of both our physics and our psychological and cultural sciences, so that each comes to mirror the other in a mutual reflection of their common atomism, must be shattered.

With the assault on one pole of the egological dyad the whole structure of this discourse becomes unstable. First the notion of causality falls. For Nietzsche the concept of causality has its roots in a belief in a subject who effects objects. Causality he sees like Hume as a human interpretation of a situation of contingency between two events and not as an event or entity which itself occurs in nature. He insists 'One should make use of "cause" and "effect" as pure concepts only, that is to say, as conventional fictions for the purposes of designation and communication, not for explanation.



It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, reciprocity, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive and purpose. And if this sign world is thought into things as though they were something in themselves, we act once again as we have always done - mythologically'.<sup>41</sup> Thus the category of cause is not in the world. But neither is it a category of the intellect, synthetic and a priori, as Kant saw it. It is rather a human communicational convention with an historical and linguistic basis through which we interpret and make sense of the world in a certain way. The concept of cause like the other so called categories of the intellect must be grasped as what they in fact really are, namely an invention of 'signs and formulas, with the help of which we may reduce the swirling complexity to a purposeful, useful scheme'.<sup>42</sup> He proceeds to undermine the transcendental basis of Kants categorial analysis with a pragmatist and sociologicistic analysis of our conceptual architectonic which clearly prefigures the recent work of Quine and Rescher and proceeds from a more radical epistemological stance than the reluctant coherence theories of the latter philosophers. He demands that -

'it is high time to replace the Kantian question 'how are synthetic judgements a priori possible?' with another question; 'why is belief in such judgements necessary?' - that is to say it is time to grasp that for the purpose of preserving beings such as ourselves, such judgements must be believed to be true; although they might of course still be false judgements! Or more clearly, crudely and basically: synthetic judgements a priori should not 'be possible' at all: we have no right to them, in our mouths they are nothing but false judgements. But belief in their truth is, of course, necessary as foreground belief and ocular evidence belonging to the perspective optics of life'.

Kants naïveté consists in taking an anthropocentric cognitive idiosyncrasy, shaped by biology and society, as the measure of the objectivity of things. For Nietzsche the categorial synthesis and accomplished objectivity of phenomena must be seen as in essence as a signficatory dimension of the phenomenon of inter-subjectivity.

After the uncovering of the myth of the subject and the subsequent collapse of the concept of causality and its transcendental-categorial fortification the rout of the egological camp is unavoidable. Nietzsche rampages through the structure of egological discourse. Its cherished beliefs fall in a domino fashion before him. He declares -

'If we no longer believe in the effecting subject, the belief in the effecting thing collapses, as well as the reciprocal action of cause and effect between those phenomena that we call things.

The thing in itself (ding an sich) also collapses; - for this is basically the conception of the Subject-in-itself. Once we understand that the subject is an invention, the opposition between thing in itself and appearance becomes untenable - so the concept of appearance collapses.

When the subject is given up, so is the object it works upon. If we give up the belief in subject and object, then the concept of substance goes too - and as a consequence, all those other modifications e.g. material, 'mental', hypothetical entities, the eternity and immutability of substance, etc. We are free from substantialism'.<sup>44</sup>

To free philosophy from substantialism and the 'huge stupidity' of the belief in the concept of subject and predicate, becomes Nietzsche's task. With the erosion of the subject-object axis further sacred beliefs of egological epistemology face the philosophical hammer of Nietzsche's iconoclasm.

The holy of holies, our concept of man himself comes under fire. For just as our world conceptions like cause, effect, substance, the object in itself, the subject for itself are anthropological projections and interpretations and not things, similarly 'man' as a concept is derived from this erroneously reified discourse and can be seen 'himself' as an anthropomorphic projection. Like the self, ego or soul, the 'man' of philosophical anthropology is an inferred entity. He is a residuum or substance posited in a speculative way as constituting the organizing pole or agent of material social life. Nietzsche's philosophical psychology like Marx's materialist conception of history has clearly gone beyond the popular philosophical anthropology of the period. The new recognition by Marx and Nietzsche of the organic determination of human life and consciousness by the material objectivities of labour, life and language spells the death of man as a monadic absolute substance. Nietzsche announces 'God is dead'. However parodying the transformative method of the great philosophical anthropologist Feuerbach, he is in fact declaring the end of man. God is dead, substance, soul and ego are myths, agency and teleology illusions. Humanity is trapped in the finitude of material life and the human essence dissolves in the flux of history and life.

Again with the undermining of the concept of substance and the related notions of causality, explanation and absolute truth the philosophy of science must be rethought.

Nietzsche argues in a precocious anticipation of post-quantum philosophy of science that the role of scientific theory in the natural, as well as the social sciences is interpretative rather than explanatory. The notion that scientific

theory is primarily explanatory, he holds, has been due to the dominance of our belief in the concept of causality and the postulated symmetry of explanation and prediction which is derived from this belief. It is also due, he claims, to a naive belief in the senses, which common sense believes can deliver us impartially to the facts and truth of a situation. He rails against this crude empiricism

'It is perhaps just dawning on five or six minds that natural philosophy is only a world-exposition and world-arrangement (according to us, if I may say so!) and not a world explanation; but in so far as it is based on belief in the senses, it is regarded as more, and for a long time to come must be regarded as more - namely, as an explanation. It has eyes and fingers of its own: this operates fascinatingly, persuasively and convincingly upon an age with fundamentally plebian tastes. What is clear, what is "explained"? Only that which can be seen and felt - one must pursue every problem thus far'.<sup>45</sup>

His critique of empiricism and indeed its ideological twin, transcendentalism, remains polemical and speculative, daring and iconoclastic, but unsystematic and formally undeveloped. However my concern here is not with evaluating the coherence or veracity of his portentous claims. Let history do that. Rather it is in treating Nietzsche's inspired madness as we must approach Marx's work in this study, as a symptom, an index, of a subterranean rift occurring in Western philosophical thought. This rupture with the classical episteme and its egological problematic effects a radical discontinuity between this traditional gñology and an epistemology which departs from the new centrality of man's material life, in its concrete historicity and constitutive sociality. Nietzsche and Marx theorize on one side of this chasm. They can sketch the limits of egologicism from the

outside - from the conversational standpoint. The young Wittgenstein and indeed Durkheim despite his own sociologism, can only trace towards these limits from within egological discourse itself. Philosophic thought in the twentieth century is an attempt to think the terms, theorize the concepts and categories, with which to grasp the import of this rupture, trace its implications for epistemology, ontology and ethics, and come to terms with egological discourse and its contemporary residues.

To return to Nietzsche: what, we may ask, is left, what holds after his genealogical analysis and subsequent undermining of the structure of egological discourse? What constructive insights has Nietzsche passed on to us 'new philosophers'. For as Nietzsche himself notes, it is 'no small indignity to philosophy to have it decreed, as is so welcome nowadays that "philosophy itself" is criticism and critical science - and nothing else whatever!'.<sup>46</sup>

Well, to be able to mount his critique of the substantialism which pervades egological discourse Nietzsche had to remove the major prop which supported the whole edifice. It was necessary to desubstantialize language itself: to expurge from the theory of signification the binary-correspondence form which sends us looking for a particular substantive object of reference for every word, and binds representation to the rock of the cognizing subject. These linguistic reflections in turn led him to reinterpretation of consciousness and the self, from the linguistic and hence social standpoint. Finally, a synthesis of the new historicism with a profound sociologistic scepticism which purged the former theme of its teleological tendencies, led to a sketch for a

materialist epistemology, albeit of a decidedly irrationalist character: Nietzsche's promised 'science of the origins of thought'.

Let us now quickly sketch these claims and in so doing perhaps knit together some of the topics earlier treated in this study, namely those of language, self and cognition.

Nietzsche saw his philosophical task as an attempt to dissolve the habitual hold on thought which the language we use imposes. In his discussion of the categories of the intellect as we have seen, he strives to trace the necessity of these forms to their central role in supporting the conceptual edifice through which we interpret the world. This structure in turn is largely forced upon us by the grammatical rules our language follow. For Nietzsche every word embodies a preconceived judgment and language as a whole, that is as a organic system of grammatical functions, captures and gives expression to particular world views. Language is the subterranean source of philosophical mythology. Through the intermediate medium of common sense, the unconscious metaphysics of language sediments itself in philosophical discourse proper.

Moreover our reflections on language, in the philosophy of grammar compound and reinforce these metaphysical confusions reflecting as they do the substantialization of signification itself.

The importance of language for the development of mankind and human knowledge lies of course in the fact that through our symbol system we can appropriate the concrete world -

'through language men erect a world of their

own alongside the real world, a position they hold to be so fixed that from it they hope to hoist the other world off its hinges and make themselves master of it'.<sup>47</sup>

However, argues Nietzsche, man no sooner creates language than he proceeds in his philosophy of language and epistemology to confuse and conflate language with the real world -

'Man really thought that in language he had knowledge of the world. The language-maker was not modest enough to realize that he had only given designations to things. Instead, he believed that he had expressed through words the highest knowledge of things'.<sup>48</sup>

This error involves an erroneous theory of representation which seeks as the referent of every sign a thing, substance or particular (what we call today the 'Fido' theory of meaning). We view representation as possessing essentially a binary structure in which signs derive their meaning from their direct correspondence with objects (real or ideal, but certainly substantial). Thus when we confront words and concepts, we assume that something substantial must exist as their referent. Our theory of representation forces upon us the fiction of a world of permanent objects, *causa sui*. He notes with exasperation -

'Language, at its origin, belongs to an age of the most rudimentary form of psychology. We enter a realm of gross fetishism when we become conscious of the fundamental presuppositions of the metaphysics of language or, in plain words, of reason ... I am afraid we shall not get rid of God until we get rid of grammar'.<sup>49</sup>

The doctrine of substance in general, and of thinking substance or 'ego' and material substance or 'thing in itself' in particular, owes its origins to this erroneous theory of representation. In turn this theory of the sign reflects and reproduces this epistemological doctrine. Classical

theory of knowledge is trapped within the 'mirror recognition structure' of our theory of representation. Our philosophy of language reflects in turn the structure of Indo-European language rather than fundamental eternal truths.

Language then, Nietzsche insists, is not governed by a system of representation which delivers us directly to a world of things. For 'things' themselves, that is identified and classified objects in the world are the product of the interpretative facilities language endows us with. Language then does not reveal or correspond to the truth rather it sustains illusions. It is an interpretative optic which always mediates and distorts our cognition of the world. Language is then essentially metaphorical. In its allusions it provides a necessary interpretative grid for ordering and hence, making sense of the world.

Nietzsche's philosophical reflections depart from a renewed interest by German philology during the nineteenth century with language as a natural organic system with a cultural specificity and historical origin. Language had ceased to be viewed as a pure calculi of representation transparent to the world, as indeed we have seen it was so grasped in the classical period. The grammar of a language is now held to have its own internal density. It has a historical background and specific culturally situated set of relations of similarity and difference with other languages (analysed in the comparative analysis of inflectional systems). It no longer merely reflects universal features of the mind organized in absolute cognitive selfhood. The word can now only represent by means of its place within a grammatical system whose organic density always intervenes between pure



sign and objective referent. It is of course this new pervading awareness of the organic density of language and the perception of its material effectivity in the structure of semantic significance, sharpened by the empirical discoveries of Rask, Bopp, Schlegel, that led to that profound distrust in ordinary language displayed by positivist thought at the turn of the twentieth century. Natural grammar, with its historical variations and cultural idiosyncracies was all but opaque to the structure of the world sought by either positivism or phenomenology. It could no longer be seen as the reflected structure or logic of a universal rationality nor the result of the dull imprint of a sensed world. The new organic life, objectivity and autonomous expressivity afforded to language by romantic philology threatened the binary-correspondence form of the sign, so central to egological discourse. Positivism began yet again the search for an improved or ideal syntax and language, based on logic, and on the formalization of the structure of signification within the limiting constraints of the positivist organization of knowledge; an ideal language to circumvent the opaqueness of ordinary language. The development of symbolic logic provided the model of a syntax of pure inference free from the mire of natural grammar. In turn the empiricist principle of verification gave the binary-correspondence conception of the sign a new lease of life. Once again the locus of language is placed outside of itself - in the reified world of positivist knowledge which it is its task to represent. The being of language is contracted to the point of a pure representation of a world known directly and pre-linguistically by science. Such a science is, as Wittgenstein grasped,

thoroughly egological in its epistemological structure.

Nietzsche more comprehensively divined the intimate structural relations between the classical theory of representation and the positivist image of science. Just as the metaphysical illusions of both physical science and speculative psychology could be traced to the form of our language, and the false ontologising it leads us into, so similarly the binary-correspondence theory of the sign and the positivist-empiricist conception of truth and knowledge can be traced to the same source.

In his philosophy of nihilism, Nietzsche, the 'old philologist', tackles both the egological theory of the sign and the corresponding positivist conception of science and knowledge. Indeed as Danto suggests his nihilism can be viewed as a highly dramatised rejection of the Correspondence Theory of truth which underlies both these epistemic structures.

Nietzsche accepts as fallacious the belief that there exists an objective structure and logic to the world independent to human cognitive and practical activity towards the material world. Similarly he rejects the notion of truth as a criteria postulating a necessary relationship of correspondence between a proposition and a factual state of affairs. Indeed he rejects both the view of language and of facticity implied in this correspondence theory.

For him as a philologist, language has its own organic life related to other aspects of human material life. Its signification represent the world not literally, but metaphorically in a structure at the one time subject to the vicissitudes of grammar and the pragmatic demands of life itself. Language

can never be transparent to its object of representation, formed as it is, as a system of signification at the interstices of culture and history, human need and grammatical idiosyncrasy. Language possesses a density and autonomous expressivity (Herder had invoked the notion of the 'genius' of a language, its cultural spirit) which prevents it from being purely literal. Like all metaphors the sentences of a language, models reality through an interpretation rather than through an exact pictorial isomorph. Through the metaphorical interpretation which language affords, common sense appropriates the world. The world of common sense which Nietzsche notes is also the bedrock of philosophy and natural science, (he prefigures Husserl's speculations on the Lebenswelt) has no independent facticity other than our collective fantasies.

'We have, through millenia, gazed into the world with blind inclinations, passions, and fears; with moral, religious and aesthetic demands; and have so walled in the bad manners of illogical thought that the world has become amazingly variegated, fearsome, rich in spirit and meaning. It has acquired colour, but we were the colorists. The human intellect has allowed the world of appearance to appear, and exported its erroneous presuppositions into reality'.<sup>50</sup>

It is in more modern terms, a socially constructed reality. Its facts, substantivized objects and forces are interpretative procedures by means of which we order the world.

Nor is science afforded any surer epistemological basis and privileged access to truth by Nietzsche. Its propositions, concepts and theories also remain interpretative. Its facts remained predicated on the selective perceptions of common sense. There is no immediate access to the natural world.

Only through the interpretative optic of the concepts of a science and their taken for granted common sense basis can we come to grips with reality. Accordingly objectivity resides neither in the privileged judgements of a transcendental observer nor in mere givenness of empirical objects of cognition but rather in a breadth of perspective. He warns:

'Let us, from now on, be on our guard against the hallowed philosopher's myth of a "pure, will-less, painless, time-less knower"; let us beware of the tentacles of such contradictory notions as "pure reason", "absolute knowledge" "absolute intelligence". All these concepts presuppose an eye such as no living being can imagine, an eye required to have no direction, to abrogate its active and interpretative powers - precisely those powers that alone make of seeing, seeing something. The more emotions we allow to speak in a given matter, the more different eyes we can put on in order to view a given spectacle, the more complete will be our conception of it, the greater our "objectivity".<sup>51</sup>

Here is a theory of perspectivism somewhat similar to that later popularized by Karl Mannheim, Nietzsche attacks the empiricist - ideology of cognition as the pure vision of a factual essence by a privileged absolute observer. He does so on the basis of his transformation of the classical theory of representation. He seeks to transform semiotics from the metaphysical search for an isomorphic relationship between words and things, mediated through the cognition of an absolute subject to instead, the science of human signifying activity. This involves for him a rejection of the classical idea of grammar and linguistic form as the reflection of universal mind. He regrets also the corresponding positivist notion of meaning as an entity or relationship existing in the world itself or in languages relationship to the world independent of human practical activity. Instead

he argues, linguistic forms and indeed scientific syntax, have the meaning they do because they are used by man. The guarantee of their validity is to be found only in their use. The meaning and value of every linguistic sign is embodied in the history and ethnography of the society in which it figures. This for Nietzsche is the true meaning of an empiricist theory of signification, not the vulgar sensationalism of Locke and Hume which remains thoroughly egological.<sup>52</sup>

With the transformation in the theory of representation goes, as we have seen, the expurging of the constitutive categories of the classical theory - the absolute signifying subject; the reified object world and the perfectly transparent sign. The triple foundations of the classical theory with their egological structure are revealed as fictions.

Moreover for Nietzsche consciousness itself, as a concept, must be purged of its egological taint. He strongly denies the central axiom of egologicism, namely, that we have immediate access to the workings of our own minds and have indubitable knowledge of ourselves as cognitive agents.<sup>52</sup> In fact like Sartre after him, he denies that our knowledge of ourselves is any more certain than our knowledge of others. It is only as Sartre would have said, more intimate.

Consciousness for Nietzsche does not define the essence of man as it did for Descartes. He believes that it developed late, as a faculty in the evolution of the human species. He is aware that many sensory-motor skills operate more effectively without the hesitating reflection, of self-consciousness. The functional and evolutionary explanation of the emergence of reflective consciousness, lies for Nietzsche, as it did for Marx, in a grasping of the

role of social life and communicational practices in the formation of consciousness.

Marx in his German Ideology insists

'Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into "relations" with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is therefore, from the beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist, at all'.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly for Nietzsche consciousness is to be understood not as an essential attribute of the individual qua individual but rather in terms of the relations between individuals. These social relations and the communicational practices which facilitate them predate individual consciousness and indeed are its condition.

'The fundamental mistake is to think of consciousness as an individual attribute, and the highest form of individual existence, rather than understanding it as a tool in the collective life'.<sup>55</sup>

Consciousness is then primarily a means of communication and has a conversational rather than egological ontological basis. 'It is developed in social intercourse and with regards to social interests'.<sup>56</sup>

The reflective capacities which egological epistemology ascribes implicitly to the cogito and which are the unexamined foundation of the Cartesian axiology must be grasped as the product of the social and communicational capacities of man. Reflective consciousness has a social rather than private and

transcendental origin.<sup>57</sup> Like Marx, Nietzsche sees the a-social individual postulated by enlightenment thought as the starting point of both epistemological and social theory, as a fiction and indeed an ideological conspiracy by bourgeois thought (he does not use these terms) against concrete human life. For Nietzsche the capacity for reflection and the appearance of the self as a knowledge object for consciousness are both dependent on the social attitude the individual adopts towards himself. Language facilitates this social attitude and develops it.. He notes in a perception which in a striking way anticipates George Herbert Mead's later observations -

'the development of language goes hand in hand with the development of consciousness It is only as a social animal that man becomes conscious of himself'.<sup>58</sup>

There is then no separate primary world of *res cogitans* as rationalism postulates. Nor any immediate experience as held by empiricism. Nor is there a language of private mentalistic concepts which refers to consciousness and its 'contents'. Both the psychical and physical world are talked about and thus formed as interpretative product, in a public communal language tied to human practical life. He states

'My motion is that consciousness does not belong to the individual existence of men, but to what is the community - and herd-nature and consequently that each of us, with the best will in the world of understanding himself as individually as possible, of "knowing himself" will always bring into consciousness the non individual and the average'.<sup>59</sup>

Danto draws our attention to the close harmony between Nietzsche's views on language and consciousness and those of contemporary analytical philosophy of language. Nietzsche's

critique of the egological formulation of consciousness and language circumscribes an area of discussion later addressed at some length in Wittgenstein's attack in his *philosophical Investigations*, on the possibility of a private language and in Strawson's 'discovery' of the sociality of the self in his analysis of the logical geography of our language of personal ascription<sup>60</sup>. Marx, of course, also anticipates the 'originality' of recent analytical philosophies claim to have revealed by 'logical analysis' the necessarily social nature of our language. He simply notes that production by an isolated individual outside society - 'is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other'.<sup>61</sup> Such 'harmonies', 'influences' or 'anticipations' indicate a profound structural continuity in Western philosophical thought in the twentieth century; an essentially sociologistic or conversational epistemic basis to philosophical thought, which emerges as philosophic method comes to term with sociological reason. Nietzsche's precocious insights, like those of Marx, are an early index of the deep changes taking place in the organization of our knowledge at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. Post-war analytical philosophy despite its pretensions of supreme originality (gained by an active suppression of the history of philosophy and social theory) is merely the effect of these deep structural changes.

Marx and Nietzsche's critical work indicates and gives expression for the first time to a rupture in the historical development of epistemology. Language, self and cognition



for so long explicated within an egological problematic which absolutised the self, reified the world, and nullified the autonomy of language and interpretative dimensions of cognition, now are to be viewed from the social standpoint as human, 'all too human', processes and accomplishments. Man could no longer be treated as a transcendental surrogate nor a natural object, a 'L'homme machine', but as a self-generating species formed within the finitude of material life.

Marx's speculations on language and consciousness and on the role of symbolic interaction in the development of the historical practice of social groups and classes remain undeveloped, to be explored by later theorists such as Lukacs and Goldman. Nietzsche's investigations of the form of concrete human life rarely proceed further than the curious vitalism invoked in his notion of a driving 'will to power' behind man; they await the appearance of a proper science of the psyche such as Freud was to develop. And yet each of them has broken from egological discourse in his own way. Each offers us a blinding critique of that discursive formation and reveals it as a fiction. Each grapples with the epistemic implications of the new centrality of sociality and material practice to understanding human reality.

FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Marx: Thesis on Feuerbach, Collected Works, Lawrence and Wishart, p.28-30.
2. Jurgen Habermas: Knowledge and Human Interests, Heineman, 1972, Chapter 2, p.26-28.
3. He writes in the first thesis on Feuerbach "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that they thing, reality, sensuousness is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not objectively." Marx, op. cit., p.28.
4. The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth i.e. the reality and power, the sidedness of this thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question. Marx, op. cit., p.28.
5. Karl Marx: The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 edit, Dirk Struik, New York, International Publishers, 1964.
6. Ibid., p.113.
7. Marx criticizes German philosophical criticism and by implication his own earlier work for its religiosity, for 'subsuming the allegedly dominant metaphysical political juridical, moral and other conceptions under the class of religious or theological conceptions; and similarly in pronouncing political, juridical, moral consciousness as religious or theological and the political, juridical, moral man - 'man' in the last resort - as religious'.  
: The German Ideology, edit., C.J. Arthur, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974, p.40.
8. See Econ. and Phil. Manuscripts, op. cit., Chapter 10. p.170
9. In German Ideology, Marx repeats his criticism of Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology first made in his thesis. Feuerbach 'still remains in the realm of theory and conceives of men not in their given social connection, not under their existing conditions of life, which, have made them what they are, he never arrives at the really existing action men, but stops at the abstraction 'man' and gets no further than recognizing the 'true individual corporeal man' emotionally i.e. he knows of no other 'human relationships' 'of man to man' than love and friendship, and even then idealised. He gives no criticism of the present conditions of life. Thus he never manages to conceive the sensuous world as the total living sensuous activity of the individuals composing it;' *ibid.*, p.63-64.
10. Ibid., p.62.
11. Ibid., p.59.

12. Karl Marx: Preface to the Critique of Political Economy in Selected Works, op. cit., p.182.
13. Ibid., Preface, p.182.
14. German Ideology, p.51.
15. Ibid., p.51.
16. V.N. Volosinov: Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, Seminar Press, 1966.
17. L.S. Vygotsky: Thought and Language, M.I.T. Press, 1962.
18. Though as the quotation above from the Ideology shows, (op. cit., 11), Marx had by 1846 already begun to concretize the notion of 'practical activity' by theorizing it in terms of the historically determinate social relations of economic production.
19. Karl Marx: Grundrisse, Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, edit., Martin Nicolaus, Penguin, 1973.
20. Marx: 1873 Preface to Vol. I, Capital, p.20.
21. Grundrisse, p.83.
22. Ibid., p.83.
23. Ibid., p.84.
24. Ibid., p.84.
25. Louis Althusser (For Marx, Vintage Books 1970) has plotted some of the dimensions of this transformation.
26. For an account of the development of German philology see Otto Jespersen: Language - Its nature, development and origin, Allen and Unwin, 1922, Chapter II.
27. Quoted in Jespersen, op. cit., p.42.
28. Vergleichende grammatik des sanskrit, send, armenischen, griechchen, lateinischen, litauischen, altslawischen, gotischen und deutschen.
29. Arthur C. Danto: Fredrich Nietzsche as philosopher, Macmillan, 1965, p.35.
30. Nietzsche: Human All too Human, trans. Helen Zimmern, London, 1919, p. 15.
31. Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil, edit and tran. Helen Zimmern, Allen and Unwin, 1967, p.224.
32. "The demand that one wants by all means that something should be firm (while an account of the ardour of this demand one is easier and more negligent about the demonstration of this certainty) - this, too, is still the demand for a support, a prop, in short, that instinct of weakness which, to be sure, does not create religious, metaphysical systems, and convictions of all kinds but - conserves them." The Gay Science, Gordon Press, 1974, Book 5, 347, p.288.

33. Besides as he notes 'It is certainly not the least charm of a theory that it is refutable; it is precisely thereby that it attracts the more subtle mind'. *Beyond Good and Evil*, op. cit., p.25.
34. Nietzsche in the place of the ethical absolutism of the classical tradition offers us a 'Genealogy of Morals' to enquire 'under what conditions did man construct the value judgements good and evil', *Genealogy*, op. cit., p.12.
35. Nietzsche: Nachlass quoted in Danto, op. cit., p.107.
36. Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*, 19, op. cit., p.27.
37. 'One thinks; but this "one" is previously the famous old "ego", is, to put it mildly only an assertion, and assuredly not an "immediate certainty" after all one has even gone too far with this "one thinks" - even the "one" contains an interpretation of the process, and does not belong to the process itself.' *Ibid.*, 17, p.24.
38. *Ibid.*, 20, p.29.
39. For an excellent account of Nietzsche's philosophical psychology see Danto, op. cit., Chapter 4.
40. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 21, Penguin edition, trans., Hollingdale, 1973, p.33.
41. *Ibid.*, passim.
42. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 11, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Penguin edit., 1973, p.24.
43. Nachlass quoted in Danto, op. cit., p.108.
44. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 14, Allen and Unwin, edit., p.21.
45. *Ibid.*, 210, p.151.
46. Nietzsche: *Human, All-too-Human*, op. cit., p.21.
47. *Ibid.*, p.
48. Nietzsche: *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Anthony Ludovici, London, 1911, p.21-22.
49. Nietzsche: *Human, All-too-Human*, op. cit., p.29.
50. Nietzsche: *Genealogy of Morals*, op. cit., p.255.
51. See *Beyond Good and Evil*, 20.
52. He notes: 'There are still harmless self-observers who believe that there are "immediate certainties"; for instance "I think" or as the superstition of Schopenhauer puts it "I will", as thought cognition here got hold of its object purely and simply as "the thing in itself", without any falsification taking place either on the part of the subject or the object'. *Ibid.*, 16, p.23.

53. Marx: German Ideology, op. cit., p.51.
54. Nietzsche: Nachlass quoted in Danto, op. cit., p.119.
55. Ibid.
56. As he notes 'Consciousness first becomes a problem for us when we begin to appreciate the degree to which it is dispensable.' For consciousness he argues, that is reflective consciousness, does not accompany most of our actions, thinking and willing. Such activity requires no self awareness and indeed the efficient performance of many routine and habitual activities is indeed threatened by such self awareness. See The Gay Science, op. cit., 354, p.299.
57. Ibid., p.299.
58. Ibid., p.299.
59. P.F. Strawson: Individuals, Methuen University Paperback, 1964, Chapter 3.
60. Marx: Grundrisse, op. cit., p.84.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PHILOSOPHY AS A RIGOROUS SCIENCE: HUSSERL AND THE CRISIS IN ECOLOGICAL THOUGHT

"To close your ears to even the best counter-argument once the decision has been taken: sign of a strong character. Thus an occasional will to stupidity."

*Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil*

(i) Husserl: main themes - a scientific basis for philosophy

The ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science<sup>1</sup> haunts Husserl's writings. He is acutely conscious of the rapid advances made by various of the natural sciences towards the twin epistemological ideals of a unified rigorous methodology and progressive accumulation of publicly validated results. He is also aware as an analyst of European culture, of the increasing domination of European thought at the turn of the twentieth century by the scientific *Weltanschauung*. The discipline of Philosophy, which Husserl wishes to give a firm foundation in his phenomenological method, is one in a state of acute crisis. Philosophy is seemingly threatened in its very existence by the rise of the positive sciences which have robbed it of much of its earlier prestige. Philosophy prostrates itself before science in facile imitation. Or worse, according to Husserl, it turns its back on this new rationality and returns to earlier idealist positions and irrationalities.

For Husserl however, philosophy will not attain the scientific status, which has so far eluded it in its long history, by a formal mimicry of the methodological *fiats* and theoretical practices of the natural sciences. It will do so rather by demarcating its own discrete methodology and specific object. Thus he argues, a scientific philosophy will not be found in the prevalent 'naturalism' or naive scientism of his day. This approach claims the status of a scientific philosophy merely by virtue of its proclamation of the need for a scientific base to philosophy. Such a base will it is hoped be provided by importing wholesale the principles and procedures of the successful natural sciences. Husserl stands in the face of this philosophical torrent which seeks to reduce epistemology to the

philosophy of scientific method.<sup>2</sup> For him the goal of a rigorous science of philosophy is in no way to be confused or conflated with a positivist philosophy of science which seeks to drag philosophical knowledge and method before a tribunal of idealized scientific practice.

Husserl identifies as the core of this naturalism, and the positivism which is its philosophical expression, the doctrine of physicalism; only that which is physical and hence capable of being experienced directly, is credited with reality. As a philosopher with a background in mathematics and logic, Husserl is well aware of the difficulties the physicalist thesis has in demarcating the existential status of mathematical and logical objects. Indeed he employs his knowledge of the structure and foundation of these formal sciences to both lambast the naive empiricism of positivist philosophy and to defend his own phenomenological science of ideal essences.<sup>3</sup>

The major object however of Husserl's assault on the naturalistic reduction of the philosophical task is the psychophysical psychology of his day as represented in the work of Wilhem Wundt. Much of Husserl's early work is directed at distinguishing the sciences of psychology and philosophy (in its phenomenological form). After the publication of 'Logical Investigations',<sup>4</sup> an examination of the intuitive foundations of formal logic, he had to defend phenomenology strenuously from the charge of psychologism<sup>5</sup> and from its frequent reduction to a sub-domain of empirical psychology. This charge particularly galled Husserl, as he had himself, in his earlier work, expended considerable time and effort in attacking the prevalent psychologicistic approach to logical and mathematical meta studies.



Husserl insists, as categorically as Kant before him, that phenomenology is 'as little identifiable with psychology as is geometry with natural science'. Like Kant he strives to rescue for epistemology a realm safe from the immanence and contingency of empirical experience. There is, he asserts a fundamental difference between psychology and phenomenological philosophy, which is in no way bridged by the fact that both deal with 'consciousness, with all types of experience, with acts and their correlates'. Though as he points out in exasperation, 'in view of the prevailing habits of thought, it demands no small effort to see this'.<sup>6</sup>

Husserl like Kant clearly perceived that egological philosophy (Husserl is the first to use the title egology for his philosophy) could only be freed from the solipsistic and sceptical consequences of the psychologistic empiricism of Berkeley and Hume by positing as the condition of objective cognition a pure or transcendental self. The isolation of this synthesising cognitive agent was more than compensated for by its postulated absolute and universal nature.

For Husserl the fundamental difference between phenomenology and psychology is not that they address different concrete objects. In fact they both treat of consciousness, though psychology attempts to reduce it to a series of parallel determining physical states of the body. Rather the difference is one of 'ways of looking at things'. Psychology 'looks at' consciousness and other psychic processes from within the 'natural standpoint'. That is from a philosophically unsophisticated stance which takes for granted many features of the reality addressed within it. Husserl traces our cognition

from this stance -

'I find continually present and standing over against me the one spatio-temporal fact world to which I myself belong, as do all other men found in it and related in the same way to it. This 'fact world', as the word already tells us, I find to be out there and also take it just as it gives itself to me as some thing that exists out there'.<sup>7</sup>

All natural science, including psychology, operates from within this natural standpoint, simply assuming that the material investigated, whether natural or psychic is simply given in the world, just there. Psychology like all natural sciences is 'naive in regard to its point of departure'. Its method is based on an implicit ontology which gives physical extended substance an absolute though unjustified existential pre-eminence. Psychology does not investigate the contents of consciousness in their own right - that is as intentional objects for consciousness, about which questions of material existence, independent of cognition, are irrelevant. It interprets the objects of consciousness through the naive realist grid of the natural standpoint; from the outside in. The objects of consciousness are not investigated as they appear in their essence to consciousness. Psychology, like all the sciences which operate from within the natural standpoint is a science of outer facts, of describable and contingent relations between material or psychic entities. In Wundt's hands indeed, as Husserl notes, the psychical is treated as a mere parallel epiphenomenon of the physical. Husserl regards this reductionism as a deplorable consequence of the spell of naturalism over the science of psychology.

However even non-reductionist psychology addresses itself to consciousness and its autonomous acts remain trapped within

the natural standpoint. For as an empirical science the psychical events it describes are still seen as belonging to nature and as belonging to an embodied or 'brute' consciousness. As Husserl notes:

'To eliminate the relation to nature would deprive the psychical of its character as an objectively and temporally determinable fact of nature, in short of its character as a psychological fact'.<sup>8</sup>

Psychology, in so far as its judgements involve the existential positing of a physical nature as part of a self-evident pre-datum to its own theorizing, remains within the natural standpoint.

A phenomenology of consciousness on the other hand does not deal with this empirical consciousness existentially situated in a material world. It deals with neither facts nor experience, nor with what is normally referred to as 'reality'. Phenomenology is concerned with pure consciousness, the consciousness of a transcendental ego which has been purified by means of the phenomenological procedure of methodological doubt (the *epoché*) and rid of its naturalistic and other mundane pre-suppositions. The theoretical object of this pure consciousness is the essential and necessary features of cognized phenomena. Phenomenological science is a science of non-empirical, ideal essences revealed or intuited by a pure consciousness whose cognitive vision is unhampered by the mask of mundane and naturalistic thought. Natural science, physical or psychical, in its empirical 'real' descriptions penetrates only the outer aspects of the phenomena it studies: Phenomenological science, with its philosophically refined vision, aims to penetrate to the heart of those phenomena given to consciousness. This it

promises to do not by an exhaustive empirical or even causal analysis of the phenomena studied but by an investigation of consciousness itself as the medium in which Being is revealed. Within the psychologistic logic of empiricism, phenomena, the object of positive science, can only exist vis a vis a sensing consciousness which perceives them. Thus it seems to Husserl as it did to Kant, that the grounds of objectivity of phenomena and universality of scientific cognition should be sought in the nature of human cognition itself. Husserl's phenomenology follows the prevailing and paradoxical trend in egological epistemology which reduces objectivity more and more to the activity of the subject. As Adorno has noted:

'Once the object becomes an object of cognition its physical side is spiritualized from the outset by translation into epistemology by a reduction of the sort which in the end, in general was methodologically prescribed by the phenomenology of Husserl'.<sup>10</sup>

After the phenomenological reduction the object indeed does become spiritualized. It becomes the intentional object constituted by and for a transcendental ego - the absolute subjective pole of all objectivity. The cognizing self in turn becomes, after the reduction, disembodied and privatized and even with its newly ascribed universality and absoluteness, rendered increasingly impotent in the real world. Phenomenology in its search for the apodictic attempts to expel the living and socially situated subject from consciousness and meaning production. It replaces it with an absolute consciousness to which the object world is revealed and upon which it ultimately is dependant for its objectivity. Husserl's evocation of a transcendental ego, as the absolute subject for which the world

has being, is the last and most elaborate attempt to master the object world from the standpoint of the subject and to deal with the consequences for epistemology of the systematic unthinking of the social being of the self.

For Husserl, objectivity is given only in the cognitive acts of a pure consciousness.<sup>11</sup> Validity is tied to transcendental subjectivity. The apodictic givenness of the object is to be completely established within the structure of the cognitive act itself. Whereas Descartes made the cogito an axiom, or indubitable principle, from which all other knowledge can be derived, Husserl treats the cogito as an active constituting agent and the cogitatum as the objective correlate of the cogito. Being is revealed in the very structure of our knowing acts or at least in our phenomenological reflection on these. The Husserlian ego claims the synthetic powers of Kant's 'I think' but rejects the formal limitations Kant places upon transcendental consciousness. Kant's categorial intellect does not advance beyond purely formal judgements. Moreover, Husserl believes the distinction between form and content has dualistic consequences - the postulation of a realm of being, the 'thing in itself' to which consciousness and hence knowledge can have no access. Husserl argues critical epistemology must drop its talk of things-in-themselves, since what things essentially are is adequately revealed in consciousness itself. The task of a transcendental phenomenology is the investigation of the manner in which phenomena appear to us in consciousness. This inevitably, for Husserl, is to be accomplished by a reflective analysis of the cognitive or intentional acts of an absolute or transcendental subject at the heart of consciousness. It is

to this ego that the world, as intentional phenomena, appears, in and through its meaning endowing acts. The world of objective being becomes the correlate (noema) of an absolute cognitive subject. It is posited through the meaning constituting (noesis) of this transcendental ego. Husserl writes

'the real world exists, but in respect of essence is relative to transcendental subjectivity, and in such a way that it can have its meaning as existing reality only as the intentional meaning product of a transcendental subjectivity. But that first attains its full meaning when the phenomenological disclosure of the transcendental ego is so far advanced that the experience of fellow subjects implicit in it has won its reduction to transcendental experience'.<sup>12</sup>

The objectivity of phenomena is guaranteed by the apodictic cognition of a transcendental subjectivity, rather than by its inter-subjective verification by a community of investigators. For the eidetic structures which Husserl defines as the object of valid cognition are revealed exclusively to pure consciousness. After the transcendental phenomenological reduction which for Husserl becomes the condition for an eidetic analysis, 'I am', notes Husserl, 'no longer a human ego in the universal existentially posited world, but exclusively a subject for which the world has being'.<sup>13</sup>

The world in its objective essence is to be grasped as unities of meaning constituted by a sense giving consciousness. The intentional object is no longer conceived as in Brentano's 'realism', as the pre-existing, extra-conscious referent to which the intending act refers, but as something given in and through the acts of consciousness themselves. Husserl attacks the objectivism of modern naturalistic philosophy which seeks

to locate the source of objectivity naively in the dull facticity of the world. He applauds Kant for having exposed this naivety and in his Copernican revolution placed man at the centre of cognition. However for both Kant and Husserl, it is not man as a practico-social agent, who is placed at the centre of objective cognition but his transcendental surrogate - pure consciousness. Husserl's man is a particularly bloodless, sexless, privatized spirit, 'a purely theoretical spectator', only rescued from solipsism by its theoretical inflation to an absolute pure spirit.

'The universality of the absolute spirit embraces all being in an absolute historicity, into which nature fits as a product of spirit'.<sup>14</sup>

Transcendental phenomenology stressed the need in its reductive method, to set aside questions of the material existence of the objects under investigation. The constitution of meaning replaces the concern with the existence or non-existence of objects. However the objectivism of positivist philosophy is replaced with the subjectivism of phenomenology. Neither philosophy grasps man objectively i.e. as a practico-social agent, as both subject and object of history. Both positivism and phenomenology form a symmetry of paradoxes within a common epistemic structure.

For Husserl the move away from the naively accepted natural world is accompanied by the corresponding move towards transcendental subjectivity. The transcendental ego, and the transcendental ego alone, becomes the agent of meaning constitution. For this pure subject is what is left, as an apodictically given essence, when the whole existent world,

including ourselves as embodied and socialized agents is bracketed and naive belief in its existence suspended. Husserl's anthropological turn remains constrained within the stranglehold of egological discourse.

Husserl adds to the egology of Cartesian rationalism the transcendental and constitutive dimension that Kant had given the cogito. For Descartes and Kant however the enquiry into the structure of cognition is motivated by the search for the conditions of possibility of the natural sciences. Kant locates, as we have seen, the objectivity of phenomena in the synthesizing judgements of the human mind. His major framework of analysis is provided by problems of objectivity and explanation which, as Hume had revealed faced the natural sciences in an age of empiricism. Descartes 'Discourse on Method' is primarily intended as an essay in the philosophy of natural scientific method.

However in the twentieth century, in the face of the onslaught from positivism, Husserl is able to achieve an explicit synthesis of the egological and transcendental themes and revive the flagging fortunes of egologism only by shifting the focus of the transcendental analytic from the epistemological foundations of the natural sciences to those of the human sciences. Whether Husserl is aware of it or not, the epistemic ground beneath him is shifting. Husserl despite his encyclopaedic pretensions has not the intimate experience of the natural sciences that Descartes or even Kant had. He writes within a German idealist tradition in which the rupture between the positive sciences and the Geisteswissenschaften is already a fait accompli dominating philosophical developments. Critical



philosophy driven before the chilling blasts of positivism is forced towards the terrain of anthropology or philosophy of human being. This path has already been roughly tramped by the historical and cultural sciences and given a crude form in the historicist and Weltanschauung reflections of these sciences. It had yet to find coherent philosophical expression. Husserl struggles to contain this anthropological turn within the limits of egologicism.

He recognizes the importance of 'history in the broadest sense for the philosopher' and the centrality of cultural enquiry for philosophy. But he seeks to subordinate these dimensions to a phenomenological theory of essences. This alone can provide an adequate foundation for the Geisteswissenschaften.<sup>15</sup> Husserl savagely attacks historicism's pretensions that it constitutes a theory of knowledge, albeit sceptical in form.

'The science of history, or simply empirical humanistic science in general, can of itself decide nothing, either in a positive or in a negative sense, as to whether a distinction is to be made between art as a cultural formation of valid art, between historical and valid law, and finally between historical and valid philosophy'.<sup>16</sup>

and

'Consequently, just as historical science can advance nothing relevant against the possibility of an absolute (i.e. scientific) metaphysics or any other philosophy'.<sup>17</sup>

However, despite his rejection of historical scepticism he remains unable to think through the implications of the development of a materialist i.e. non-historicist theory of history for epistemology. Fixated as he is with the transcendental constitution of being, he is incapable of reflecting philosophically on the production of knowledge

under discrete historically given conditions of existence, History remains always an external 'contextual' set of relations to the development of knowledge and not an intrinsic set of conditions for its actual production.

He accordingly looks to philosophy, as an absolute science to provide an apodictic foundation for an empirical discipline whose epistemological legitimation necessarily lies outside of itself. This is achieved by effectively reducing the science of history to its historicist ideological echo and by treating history as the philosophy of the spirit and its progress.

'the discovery of the common spirit is just as significant as the discovery of nature. In fact, a deeper penetration into the spirit offers the philosopher a more original and hence more fundamental research material than does penetration into nature. For the realm of phenomenology, as a theory of essence, extends immediately from the individual spirit over the whole area of the general spirit ( ) I would say that it is the phenomenological theory of essence alone that is capable of providing a foundation for a philosophy of the spirit'.<sup>18</sup>

Neither history nor sociality are to be given any autonomy by Husserl. They are to be roped to the cognitive activity of an absolute spirit, shorn of their materialist epistemological implications, and broken in under a strict phenomenological orthodoxy.

Husserl announces

'It is my conviction that intentional phenomenology has for the first time made spirit as spirit the field of systematic, scientific experience, thus effecting a total transformation of the task of knowledge'.<sup>19</sup>

What the historical and cultural sciences have lacked to date, argues Husserl, is this philosophical foundation. They have aped the naive objectivism of the natural sciences but

failed to generate a coherent groundwork for their multi-various methods. Moreover in their self-proclaimed demarcation from natural science and in their 'dispute for equal rights', they have failed to grasp that the cultural sciences address a more embracing reality than the natural sciences and indeed are a condition of the latter.

'The spirit and in fact only the spirit is a being in itself and for itself; it is autonomous and is capable of being handled in a genuinely rational, genuinely and thoroughly scientific way only in this autonomy. In regard to nature and scientific truth concerning it, however, the natural sciences give merely the appearance of having brought nature to a point where for itself it is rationally known. For true nature in its proper scientific sense is a product of the spirit that investigates nature, and thus the science of nature presupposes the science of spirit. The spirit is essentially qualified to exercise self-knowledge, and as scientific self-knowledge, and that over and over again'.<sup>20</sup>

Husserl in his rejection of naturalism seems to be moving towards an anthropologising of epistemology. However as in all philosophical anthropology (Husserl's has a distinct Hegelian flavour), man is conceived only in abstract, essentialist terms. Phenomenology promises us an analytic of human existence, but in fact reduces that being to the insubstantiality of a pure ego, - the theoretical observer. This ego, as spirit, is credited with an abstract universality. Husserl unlike Hegel gives us no account of the ontogenesis of this spirit. For Hegel the self-consciousness of spirit depends on its relation and interaction with the other, as metaphorically portrayed in the master-slave relation. For Husserl however, the ego is credited with immediate powers of reflection and self-consciousness. Absolute spirit is simply there, a necessary starting point for all philosophizing.

The other is always an object for the transcendental subject. Intersubjectivity is guaranteed by the pure universality of the ego. Even nature, itself, in its objective essence, is to be grasped as circumscribed by spirit. Only this egological attitude,

'brings about the successful institution of an absolutely autonomous science of spirit in the form of a consistent understanding of self. and of the world, as a spiritual accomplishment. Spirit is not looked upon here as part of nature of parallel to it; rather nature belongs to the sphere of spirit'.<sup>21</sup>

Only from this egological attitude, argues Husserl, can we approach an analytic of human being, unencumbered by the objectivist illusions which dominate both the cultural and natural sciences and which are the source 'of what has become for man an unbearable unclarity regarding his own existence and his infinite tasks'.<sup>22</sup>

Husserl has sensed that the new objectivity of history and sociality threaten the very being of 'man' as an essential category. Unlike Marx or Nietzsche, he can not give expression to this intuition and announce, as they do, the end of "man". Instead he resists these objectivities, the materiality of language, history and life within which man as such is formed. He retreats to the last defensive bastion of egological discourse the ego itself.<sup>23</sup> The ego must renounce the material world, and retreat into its own interiority, if man's essential being, stripped of its existential contingency is to be revealed to him, 'only if the spirit returns to itself from its naive exteriorization, clinging to itself and purely to itself, can it be adequate to itself'.<sup>24</sup>

Husserl's philosophical anthropology remains an effect

of his egological epistemology and not a challenge to it.

However, phenomenological philosophy after Husserl, quickly departed from the transcendental egological basis and anti-psychologistic stance Husserl strove to give it. The epistemological dimension of phenomenology soon became subordinate to the philosophical anthropological interest, and the transcendental investigations secondary to a concrete analytic of the mode of human being. Phenomenology as Foucault tells us, 'has never been able to exorcize the insidious kinship, its simultaneous promising and threatening proximity to the empirical analysis of man'.<sup>25</sup> Phenomenology after Husserl took the conversational turn; it breaks with Husserl's transcendental project to plot a philosophical anthropology of inter-personal relations and situations.

Its rupture from egological discourse, however, remains partial. It remains adulterated with the residues of Husserl's egologicism. The cogito becomes in the later phenomenology of Scheler, Heidegger, Sartre and Schutz, embodied, socialized, sexualized and historicized. Yet it strives to maintain itself as an autonomous organizational centre of being in the face of the pervading dull materiality of the unthought. It struggles to be, in this autonomy, 'adequate to itself'. The self of existential phenomenology distances itself from the other, from history, the unconscious and language. It strives to protect its own immanence. Confronted with the unthought it suffers nausea. This materiality is experienced as something which in its uncompromising resistance, otherness, to consciousness, challenges the primacy of the cogito. The epistemic individualism of egologicism is transmuted into the

isolated personalism of existentialism. However the structural dichotomy of subject and object is not breached by this replacement of the transcendental ego by the person trapped in his existential isolation. It appears only in different, more fantastic forms - as in Sartre's phenomenology of personal relations. Social phenomenology remains trapped within the residues of egologicism.

We have already plotted the dominant structure within egological epistemology, namely, the subject-object equation, in which a subject (transcendental or empirical), through a valid knowledge act, 'sees', 'grasps', or 'reveals', the essence of an object given to it in the medium of consciousness. Husserl introduces new terms to this equation, drawing from an egological tradition that stretches from Descartes to Kant and German idealism. The concept of intentionality serves to bind together the poles of the egological equation. In the later work this scholastic term is increasingly interpreted as the process of the transcendental constitution of the object as a unity of meaning. It serves as a teleological nexus to anchor the object in the constituting activity of the subject. Objectivity for Husserl finds its permanence and universality in the cognitive acts of a pure ego. As a result of the studied neglect of the inter-subjective dimension of scientific objectivity, this absolute subject becomes, in Husserl's theory, the sole and a priori condition for valid cognition. Its being becomes the overarching condition, like the Hegelian Spirit, for the objective cognition of any individual empirical subject.

The cognitive process and the activity of scientific enquiry continue to be synonymous for Husserl. Cognition is

understood, as in positivism, by means of a perceptual metaphor. The aim of phenomenological cognition becomes to guarantee knowledge of what is for consciousness. It seeks to make evident the contents of consciousness and by facilitating, through the phenomenological method of reduction the elimination of the contingent and merely factual in phenomena, to reveal for consciousness the essential attributes of the object. Husserl's critique of cognition is at the same time a theory of the constitution of being. The transcendental phenomenological analysis, having removed the naturalistic blinkers from our eyes, renders visible the valid constitution of the world as an objective meaning complex intended by a pure and absolute ego. Phenomenology recognizes consciousness as a 'self-contained system of being' and proceeds to offer us an analytic of it in its radical autonomy from the concrete world of concrete existence. And yet, Husserl himself as leader of the phenomenological movement, strongly desired that his philosophical project should be a co-operative and progressive enterprise. He hoped that his methodology would provide a rigorous, unified method for philosophy which would allow the contributions of other scholars. Through a unity of method, phenomenology could become, like any positive science, a shared and accumulative project, co-operatively carried out and developed by a community of scholars. That is, he tacitly recognizes that scientific activity is an inter-subjective practice. It is so with regard its method, for the adoption of a common unified depends on concrete communication of results, concepts and theories amongst philosophers. Husserl recognized that the scientificity of philosophy rested on its ability to be an

accumulation of completely verified propositions. In so far as these propositions must be verified by their justification before a tribunal of scientific peers then, the development of philosophy as a science will depend not only on the validity of phenomenological cognition for a solitary transcendental ego but also its justification for an inter-subjective scientific community governed by a unified method. There is of course a tension between the egological and implicit intersubjective requirements of valid scientific knowledge. Husserl is never able to resolve this tension within his transcendental framework, for his explicit philosophical method confines epistemology to the solipsistic level. The core acknowledged resource of his critical epistemology is the reflective powers of a solitary, if absolute ego. However Husserl is forced by the pressing need to provide a concrete universality for scientific knowledge and practice to deal with the inter-subjective dimension of scientific cognition. His actual concrete propaganda and programme of philosophical reform is based on the tacit acceptance of the possibility of inter-subjectivity in general and linguistic communication and concrete scientific practice in particular. The project of philosophical reform he preaches rests on these epistemic resources. They cannot, however, be theorized within the terms of his egology.

Transcendental phenomenology in its bracketing out of the concrete world of common sense, with its naturalistic underpinnings, reduces meaning, including the significance of linguistic signs, to the pure, intentional, meaning endowing acts of a single, albeit universal cognitive subject. It seeks



a primal point of origin for meaning behind language, its structures and the material context of communicational practices. It mirrors positivism in this systematic neglect of the being of language as a practico-social system of signs and practices. Whereas for positivism the meaning of a proposition is somehow in the world, or at least in the isomorphic relation of proposition and the world, for phenomenology linguistic meaning is seen as constituted in its essence by the signifying act and intentions of a transcendental ego; the one roots meaning originally in the object, the other in the subject. Both attempt to transcend the social and pragmatic basis of language and in doing so end up nihilating rather than clarifying the foundation of linguistic meaning. Moreover each strand of egological thought presupposes language and communication as a condition of their analysis, yet each in their abstraction and reductionism progressively erodes the practico-communicational foundation of signification.

Husserl in his search for the apodictic, suspends the thesis of the natural standpoint and puts in brackets of methodological doubt, the objectivity and facticity naively ascribed to the world. He seeks to replace this naive certainty with the indubitability of the transcendental judgement with its guaranteed noematic objectivity. However we may ask - is language i.e. ordinary language, to be treated as being inside or outside of the brackets placed around concrete life experience? If it is inside, then it falls with the rest of the contents of the Lebenswelt and in its uninvestigated state is not available as a tool of analysis with which to effect the phenomenological reduction. If it is exempt from the reduction, we may ask, why is it so exempt?

In fact Husserl naively assumes the existence of ordinary language as a condition of his phenomenological analysis. This is conducted and reported through the only means we have of describing personal experience - ordinary language. Language remains an unexplored presupposition of his phenomenological method. There is more to the cogito than meets the phenomenological eye.

Within egological discourse the systematic neglect of the sociality of consciousness led to the 'problem of other minds', as we shall see. Similarly a neglect of the eminent sociality of language leads to the 'problem of meaning', i.e. the problem of how linguistic utterances can have meaning. These problems are the theoretical cul de sacs into which egological discourse eventually leads philosophy.

The investigation of the common sense world and ordinary language once it had freed itself from both positivism and transcendentalism, and accepted the primacy of social process and communicative practice, became a pivotal one for the explication of the new epistemology we have called the conversational. For it was these areas, the common sense world and ordinary language, that became in the late 1920's and 30's, the major concern of the four philosophic traditions. Within phenomenology Heidegger placed language and communication at the heart of being human. Scheler and Schutz began the investigation of the Lebenswelt as socially constituted. In the pragmatist tradition Mead analysed the gesture and the role of language in the genesis of mind. Analytical philosophy in turn following the lead of Wittgenstein and John Austin, abandoned the logist project in favour of naturalistic description

of language use and its socio-contextual features. Within Marxism, Volosinov explicated for the first time, a materialist philosophy<sup>of</sup> language which firmly rooted the analysis of meaning within a sociologicistic perspective, while with the renewed interest in the Hegelian roots of Marx's thought, the world of common sense, meaning and ideology became central interests for Marxist theory, as the work of both Lukacs and Antonio Gramsci testify.

The radical reflection on these investigations, as modes of social enquiry, became the situation and condition for a critique of egological thought and for the initial tentative explication of a conversational epistemology.

(ii) Husserl and the transcendental ego

In his earlier work as represented by his 'Logical Investigations',<sup>26</sup> Husserl did not admit to any other ego other than the empirical ego. Moreover in his attack on psychologism in the philosophy of logic of his day, he rejected all theories which located epistemological judgements as the psychological acts of a subject at the centre of conscious experience. He argued that the implication of locating the theoretical foundation for the construction of logic in a psychology of knowledge, was a sceptical relativism which in turn undermined knowledge itself. However after the 'Investigations', Husserl's interests shifts from a descriptive phenomenology of logical signification to more general epistemological considerations. His concern becomes the elaboration of a transcendental philosophy. Phenomenology ceases to be the method of a limited epistemological enterprise in the philosophy of logic and becomes seen instead as the universal foundation of both philosophy and scientific method. Husserl in the face of the immanent dissolution of the classical organization of knowledge attempts to constrain epistemology within the decaying structure of egologicism. This effort involves a genuine metaphysical decision to both render problematic the naive ontological status of the world as commonly experienced (the transcendental reduction), and to advocate the primacy of a transcendental ego as the constituting agent of the sense and hence essential reality of the experienced world. The elements of formal ontology are to be regrouped and bound much more tightly to the subject - object axis.

In 'Ideas' (1913) Husserl introduces this manifestly

egological conception of consciousness. At the core of the 'first' philosophy he promises us, is the transcendental ego. This ego is after the phenomenological reduction, not transformed into a phenomenon which appear to consciousness and which is a candidate for methodological doubt. The pure ego is a phenomenological residue of reduction - an apodictic realm of being, exempt from the reduction. He states:

'But if I perform the phenomenological epoche, the whole world of the natural setting is suspended, and with it, "I, the man". The pure experience as act with its own proper essence then remains as residue. But I also see that the apprehension of the same as human experience, introduces various features which do not need to be there, and that on the other side no disconnecting can remove the form of the cogito and cancel the "pure" subject of the act. The "being directed towards", "the being busied with", "adopting an attitude", "undergoing or suffering from", has this of necessity wrapped in its very essence, that it is just something "from the Ego", or in the reverse direction "to the Ego"; and this Ego is the pure Ego, and no reduction can get any grip on it".<sup>27</sup>

In 'Ideas', acts of consciousness are not only directed towards objects (that teleological property of consciousness Brentano had described by the term intentionality) but also stem from a primary source - the pure transcendental ego. Objects of consciousness, whether my own body and empirical self, other persons or the spatio-temporal world, are to be interpreted as the products of the meaning constituting activity of the transcendental ego. This have merely intentional existence for this pure ego. An analysis of such objects leads inevitably to an analysis of the principles governing such constituting activity; from the object to the subject. Reality after the transcendental reduction becomes just.

'unities of meaning related to certain organisations

of a pure absolute consciousness which dispenses meaning in certain essentially fixed ways.'<sup>28</sup>

Husserl's task becomes the search for a presuppositionless science. This involves for him suspending belief in an external world i.e., in what he calls the thesis of the natural standpoint. This in turn will necessitate, he argues, a rejection of all theories e.g. Gallilean physics or psychophysical psychology which operate within this standpoint making implicit assumptions about the existence of a physical reality independent of ourselves and our meaning endowing capacities. His aim is to clarify what is involved in our relationship with an objective world through an analysis of the meaning structures of our experiences.

In an age of growing criticism of positivist metaphysics we have from our conversational perspective considerable sympathy with Husserl's attack on naive physicalism. There is something decidedly modern and progressive about Husserl's stress on seeing the objects of science as the product of our meaning endowing capacities rather than simply given in the external world. Husserl's phenomenology like all idealist epistemology stresses the active, constitutive dimension of human reality. However this insight remains constrained within the egological limits of idealism. Husserl's constituting agent is not man exercising his human material powers on nature in an act of intellectual labour and scientific production. Rather, it is the ethereal phantom of pure spirit or consciousness, organized in transcendental self-hood. The objectivity of phenomena becomes the spiritual accomplishment of the subject.

In 'Ideas' and even more strongly in the 'Cartesian

'Meditations' (1929) 'the world is not only "for me" but draws all of its being status from me". Husserl passes from a phenomenology "turned toward the object", (the phenomenology which raised Sartre from his philosophic slumber and sent him to Germany poste haste to study in 1935) to a phenomenology "turned toward the ego". His concern becomes the constituting activities of that transcendental ego. It is from this ego that the world is unfolded in transcendental constitution. The concept of intentionality is increasingly interpreted in an idealist fashion, in terms of the cognitive self-activity of the subject. Sartre later is to denounce this betrayal of phenomenology's earlier promise to be a science of objects. The major object of his attack will be Husserl's idealising of the concept of intentionality.

The latter type of phenomenology to which Husserl turns, a transcendental analytic, is in essence an epistemologically motivated theory. The anthropological interest and indeed the ontological in general, is subordinated to this epistemological concern. In this he reflects the precedence given to epistemology, over and above ontology or indeed ethics, within egological philosophic discourse. The concept of intentionality is interpreted as an epistemic process, hence attention is focused on the subject pole of intentional acts. Husserl's theory moves irrevocably towards a monadic idealism, it is, he claims 'universal Idealism worked out as a science'.<sup>29</sup>

For the later phenomenologists Scheler, Heidegger, Sartre and Schutz, phenomenology becomes on the contrary an ontologically motivated theory; it becomes the analytic of man's human being, a tool for philosophical anthropology.

For Sartre, the most persistent critic of Husserl, intentionality is conceived of as directional process pushing away from the subject to the world of objects. Above all it is a teleological process which distances the ego from material being and reveals it as a nothingness, as always other than the being it aims at. Intentionality is seen, by him, as the bearer of the power of negation. Because consciousness is intentional it is exhausted in aiming at the world of being. Always other than its objects, it is therefore a nothing. For Sartre with the ego desubstantialized and removed of its constitutive responsibilities, attention focuses on concrete man and his agency. As pure consciousness is a nothing, 'man', can be rescued from its egological tyranny and placed back in a concrete and social world. This change in phenomenological thinking, traced in the following chapter, involves more than an internal conceptual redefinition and development within phenomenological philosophy. It represents the surfacing in the discourse of phenomenological philosophy of a subterranean rupture in European thought centered on the new centrality of man, as a socially and historically formed agent, to the organization of our knowledge.

For Husserl however, struggling to be true to the egological mode of knowing, objects of consciousness are to be interpreted as the products of the constituting activity of the transcendental ego. The other, as person, and the spatio-temporal world have mere intentional being for a transcendental ego. They remain certain but secondary configurations of meaning invariantly constituted by that ego.

The transcendental ego performs then within the conceptual



machinery of Husserl's philosophy a dual role -

- a) it is the principle of the unity of consciousness; the Kantian principle reified and substantialized.
- b) it is the source of meaning endowment in the world as intended; the world in its sense, if not substance is the correlate of absolute consciousness.

'the whole being of the world consists in a certain meaning which pre-supposes absolute consciousness in the field from which meaning is derived'.<sup>30</sup>

The questions asked by phenomenologists after Husserl, are:

- i) Does in fact the principle of the unity of the self lie in pure consciousness? Does not the transcendental turn, condemn phenomenology to an inescapable solipsism? Why is it not the case that the identity of the self lies in the object world we live within and in our social interaction with other egos?
- ii) Could the world indeed be meaningful for a transcendental ego? Can there be private concepts, intuitions and indeed systems of signification?

These questions are prompted by a new concern with the situations, historical, social and corporeal of human existence the emergence within phenomenological thinking of a philosophical anthropology with a sociologicistic foundation.

Later phenomenology, in its existentialist and sociological phase, is to conclude that the transcendental ego is a conceptual illusion. In so far as the self does exist

it does so for a non-egological consciousness. It exists in the concrete world and is constituted not by a pure ego but rather by a set of real alter egos in social interaction. Similarly it asserts that the world gains its sense, not from a transcendental ego, but through the sociation and communicational practices of concrete human agents.

(iii) Consequences of transcendentalism - other minds?

The outcome of the execution of the radical transcendental reduction is the emergence of the transcendental ego with a pure and absolute status in the doctrine of constitution and the general doctrine of transcendental subjectivity. The isolation of the transcendental ego from its life world however, posed for Husserl the problem of solipsism. For, other egos are conceived only via the intentional acts of the pure subject. They are only objects for this transcendental ego and not grasped as constituting subjects themselves. That is they have no reality outside their status as intentional objects appearing for the consciousness of the pure ego. The absolute and pure nature of the transcendent ego renders the constitution of another constituting ego impossible. The other can never be grasped as a subject. Hence it is impossible to constitute inter-subjectivity and hence human sociation and indeed socialized scientific practice. Is then transcendental phenomenology the 'firm philosophic base' Schutz feels the social sciences require?

Confronted with this difficulty Husserl's phenomenology is drawn between two seemingly opposed requirements; on the one hand it must follow the reduction through to the end in the search for the apodictic and maintain its belief in the possibility of the constitution of 'the other' by the transcendental ego; on the other hand it must account for the specificity of our experience of the other, precisely as the experience of a subject other than I. As we have noted, for the transcendental ego all that exists is and must be a constituted product. Thus knowledge of others is always knowledge of others as objects. Ego's consciousness is not of

others as themselves constituting subjects forming a genuine transcendental inter-subjective community.

Husserl was painfully aware of this problem as his sustained application to it in the fifth Cartesian meditation shows.<sup>31</sup> The coherence of his theory demands that he be able to show how the ego does constitute the other. For the constitution of the world of nature and culture depends on the proven existence of alter egos as fellow constitutors. This objective realm is essentially a shared world which exists not only for me but also for you. He notes:

'It is this within the inter-subjectivity, which in the phenomenological reduction has reached empirical givenness on a transcendental level, and is thus itself transcendental, that the real world is constituted as "objective" as being there for everyone'.<sup>32</sup>

Having rejected the naive realism and objectivism of the natural standpoint, Husserl is forced to root the objectivity of phenomena in the phenomenon of inter-subjectivity. But constrained as he is by egological discourse he understands inter-subjectivity in transcendental terms. As such transcendental inter-subjectivity is guaranteed eventually in the absolute and universal nature of the pure ego, in and for itself. The 'transcendental society of ourselves' is to be unpacked from 'I, the transcendental, absolute I'.<sup>33</sup>

We can sense in his 'Cartesian Meditations' a fundamental tension in Husserl's later work - a progressive unfolding movement toward the concrete world of the Lebenswelt but on the other hand a subordinating of these developing investigations of concrete levels of experience and meaning to the regressive and analytic movement toward the original and apodictic. This contradiction plagued Husserl but he was never able to resolve it.

Even in his last works as in 'The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology'<sup>34</sup>, the move to an existential analysis of contemporary scientific rationality is subordinated to the transcendental motif. In this work, Husserl stresses the blindness of 'Science' to its common sense, taken for granted assumptions i.e., to the conceptual lifeworld which undergirds scientific reality and its standpoint but never itself becomes an object of scientific investigation. However this ethnographic critique of the epistemological status of European science is located finally at the level of transcendental subjectivism. Historical and cultural reality is seen in the end as the accomplishment of an absolute spirit.

Of course this contradiction and resulting tension within Husserl's theory occurs at a level where the problem is not explicitly grasped and illuminated by transcendental phenomenology. The tension is understood by us however as a structural effect of Husserl's attempt to theorize the intersubjective, with its emerging centrality to the organization of European thought, within the terms of egological discourse.

Like Wittgenstein he explores the limits of egological discourse, but from the inside. His thought reverberates, a recurring echo within the hollow shell of the rapidly imploding sphere of egological discourse. Desperate to find a point of escape, it bounces endlessly within these limits. Its path of projection constantly deflected by these limits, it is driven back into the interiority of the egological labyrinth.

It is left for Husserl's successors in the Phenomenological tradition to confront the basic contradictions in his transcendental position. Scheler, Heidegger, Sartre and Schutz plump for the concrete. Sartre leads the attack on the notion

of the transcendental ego. Scheler shifts attention to the social consciousness from which the individual's self-conscious later arises. Heidegger focuses on Being rather than knowledge and on Dasein, being human, in the world with others. Schutz concerns himself not with transcendental constitution but with the social construction of realities. Merleau-Ponty anchors the cogito within the materiality of the body and language.

But this movement towards the concrete is also a movement towards the realisation of the essentially social nature of the self. It involves a locating at the heart of the self of a fundamental dialectic with the other and a grasping that the negation self-other is an internal and conversational negation and not an external negation as monadic idealism and indeed pluralistic realism believe. The interaction of self and other has an equalizing reciprocity that can no longer be comprehended through the subject-object schema of egological discourse. The departure from the egological schema is heralded by a grasping within Phenomenological thought, and indeed contemporaneously within Pragmatist and Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy of the conceptual complementarity of the 'problems' of 'personal identity' and 'other minds'.

Thus for Sartre

(1) I can only grasp myself objectively, through being an object for another. I grasp myself in and through the look of the other.

(2) I can only realize my own subjectivity by grasping that I am other than an alterego, by negation of the other as a subject.

Similarly for Scheler, originally I am conjoined with others

in an undifferentiated psychic stream. Only later, does my concept of individuated self arise from this basic social consciousness. Accordingly my perception of other selves is no less direct than that of our own selves. We have a direct hermeneutical access to social consciousness and within this equal access to our own and other selves. He asserts that the relation between man and his fellow-men is not just a factual one but that our every concept of man presupposes society. That is, society is an ontological condition of human being, and this condition obtains quite independently of the factual existence of a concrete ego within a concrete social world. Sociality is then a 'transcendental' condition of our concept of man.

Schutz in his later work (e.g. Thesis of Alter Ego)<sup>35</sup> becomes more and more attracted to Mead's social-pragmatist conception of the self. For Mead, the self appears for consciousness as an object, but pre-supposes a subject (The Kantian condition). The subject which constitutes the self, to which the self is an intended object is a subject outside the consciousness of ego. But it is not a transcendental one. Rather, that subject is an alter ego. This is to say the notion of a reflective self assumes the postulate of an alter ego. 'The mechanism of introspection is therefore given' announces Mead, 'in the social attitude which man necessarily assumes towards himself'.<sup>36\*</sup>

Thus for Mead

(1) an individual can only know himself as an object through taking the role of the other.

(2) an individual can only realize himself as a self-conscious

subject through action towards others and towards himself.

We can detect a convergence in phenomenological pragmatist, and indeed analytical philosophy towards locating as the essence of self-consciousness, a dialectical relationship, a conversation, between ego and alter. This convergence deserves to be investigated by a structural analysis of the philosophical knowledge of this period. Undoubtedly it throws a new light on the epistemic relation between philosophy and sociological theory since the 1920's. Once we grasp the sociologistic foundation of modern philosophical thought in the four major traditions then clearly, the demarcation between the two disciplines must be rethought. And, unlike Winch's reductive and dismissive analysis of sociology as wayward philosophy, this theoretical reflection on the sociologistic foundation of modern philosophy must inform philosophical practice as well as comment on it.



(iv) Husserl on 'other minds'

Husserl in the fifth Cartesian Meditation does indeed seek to tackle the problem of solipsism which his transcendental reduction inexorably leads phenomenology into. He is of course fully aware of the problem at the outset of his Meditations

He asks

'When I, the meditating I reduce myself to my absolute transcendental ego by phenomenological epoche do I not become solus ipse; and do I not remain that, as long as I carry on a consistent self-explication under the name of phenomenology'.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover he is fully aware of the importance of an adequate theory to explain intersubjectivity. For him -

'... it soon becomes evident, that the range of such a theory is much greater than at first seems, that it constitutes to the founding of a transcendental theory of the objective world, and, indeed, to the founding of such a theory in every respect, notably as regards objective nature. The existence-sense of the world and of Nature in particular, as Objective nature, includes after all thereness-for-everyone. This is always cointended wherever we speak of objective actuality. In addition, objects with 'spiritual' predicates belong to the experienced world. These objects, in respect of their origin and sense, refers us to subjects, usually other subjects, and their actively constituting intentionality. Thus it is the case of all cultural objects (books, tools, works of any kind and so forth) which moreover carry with them at the same time the experimental sense of thereness-for-everyone (that is, everyone belonging'.<sup>38</sup>

Thus it is quite clear that Husserl recognized that transcendental phenomenology can only fulfill its claims to be a universal science if it can indeed solve the 'problem' of 'other minds'.

Husserl's strategy to 'solve' this 'problem' is to argue for the constitution of the other by analogical inference from my own being; the other as another 'me'. The other, he argues, is drawn from the sense of my own sphere of oneness, me.

He believes one must first give sense to that sphere of me and mine in order to give sense to the other and to the world of the other -

'In this pre-eminent intentionality there becomes constituted for me the new existence sense that goes beyond my monadic very-ownness; there becomes constituted an ego, not an 'I myself' but as mirrored in my Ego, in my monad. The second ego, however, is not simply there and strictly presented; rather is he constituted as 'alter ego' - the ego indicated as one moment by this expression being I myself in my ownness'.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the other's body is 'grasped' as an analogue of my own,

'Since, in this Nature and this world, my animate organism is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism (a functioning organ), the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, must have derived this sense by an apperceptive transfer from my animate organism...'<sup>40</sup>

The perceived characteristics of the other's body are paired with mine and by analogizising transfer, the other's body is grasped in its sense as one of a type like mine. Similarly the other's psyche is grasped by analogy with my own empirical ego. His actions, appearances and behaviour become interpreted as indexes of his psychic states just as my behaviour is of mine. To this cognitive process of making the other 'co-present' with myself through analogical apperception Husserl gives the title 'appresentation'. The grasping of the other by appresentation has, Husserl asserts its own style of verification and its own hermeneutic.

'I do not apperceive the other ego simply as a duplicated of myself and accordingly as having my original sphere or one completely like mine rather, as we find on closer examination, I apperceive him as having spatial modes of appearance like those I should have if I should go over there and be where he is.'<sup>41</sup>

That is to say verifiable accessibility to the other depends

on my adoption of what Schutz was later to call a 'reciprocity' of perspectives' vis a vis the other.<sup>42</sup>

Husserl's analysis of the transcendental ego's constitution of the alter ego by appresentation may serve as an interesting insight into how we as empirical egos make sense, in concrete life, of other's actions. It may, although this was not Husserl's intention, be a useful approach to the analysis of interpersonal interaction. Indeed, it is from these insights that Schutz and the Ethnomethodologists respectively, take off in an *verstehende Soziologie*, once Husserl's transcendentalism has been quietly dropped. However the postulation of such cognitive processes such as appresentation by analogising transfer, and reciprocity of standpoints does not qualify, within the strictures of a pure transcendental analysis, as a 'solution' to the 'problem' of intersubjectivity.

The reasons for this are two fold and related.

(1) Even if we accept Husserl's account of the constitution of the other by appresentation as credible, a second problem as serious emerges. The other is constituted only as an object for the transcendental ego, and not as a constituting subject himself. Hence inter-subjectivity as such is not in fact constituted.

(2) Secondly Husserl's analysis, and indeed egological philosophy of mind in general assumes that I can grasp my own ego, identify it, have knowledge of it, ascribe predicates to it, before I can grasp the other and predicate him. It assumes the primacy of self knowledge, as immediate and indubitable. Yet despite its proclaimed radicalness, it does not enquire into the conditions of possibility of reflection itself. It does not

validate the particular use of language it invokes - namely a private language referring to private states of consciousness; nor can it. Classical epistemology claims to take nothing for granted except ~~the~~ pure activity of radically doubting. However in reality its apodictic project is founded on a critical reflecting consciousness that in truth is the result of an ontogenetic process, a social process, of self-formation. Critical reflection and the refined language of mental introspection are the end points and highest development of this ontogenetic process and not ~~its~~ primitive starting point. The critical reflection posited by egological philosophy is as Habermas reminds us, 'the beneficiary of a stage of reflection that it does not admit and therefore also cannot legitimate'.<sup>43</sup> Later phenomenology, and indeed pragmaticist and analytic thought, having taken the sociologistic turn, reverses the direction of constitution and grasps the self as a social-product. A radical reflection on language and cognition, from the conversational standpoint leads to a grasping of the derivative nature of self-ascription, consciousness and knowledge. As Strawson in his descriptive metaphysics is to write 'one can ascribe states of consciousness to oneself only if one can ascribe them to others'.<sup>44</sup> Strawson is merely formalising, in the ~~new~~ discourse of analytical philosophy, the rupture with egologicism already accomplished by Mead, Wittgenstein, Volosinov ~~and~~, and the existential phenomenologists by the end of the 1920's.

What demarcates these theorists from classical philosophy of mind is their 'decision' to treat the self from a socio-  
interactional standpoint rather than from a transcendental or  
psychologistic egological position. In other words for these

theorists the notion of an individual, as a reflectively conscious being, a self-ascribing being who can converse with itself, only makes philosophic sense when located as a derived subset of ego - alter conversations.

As Merleau-Ponty asks

'I make the other in my own image but how can there be for me an image of myself'.<sup>45</sup>

Descartes 'cogito', Leibnitz's 'monad', Kant's 'I think', Husserl's 'transcendental ego' and indeed Wittgenstein's 'philosophical self', all rest on the characteristic of the self to be reflexive. However, as we have said, none of these thinkers, structured as their enquiries are by egological discourse, asks (or can ask) what the logical and material conditions for such a reflexivity indeed are. Reflexivity as a phenomenon remains outside the scope of their transcendental investigations. In so far as it is addressed, it is as a mere given attribute essentially bestowed upon subjectivity, and not as the end product of a process of self-formation.

For Husserl phenomenological method proceeds entirely through acts of reflection and this ability to reflect is for him unproblematical -

'Living in the cogito we have not got the cogitatio consciously before us as an intentional object, but it can at any time become this; to its essence belongs in principle the possibility of a reflexive directing of the mental glance towards itself, naturally in the form of a new cogitatio and by way of a simply apprehension!'.<sup>46</sup>

This phenomenological knowledge can only be attained from stepping back from the lived durée, in an act of reflection. Husserl believes that it is possible to isolate in the ontological structure of reflection essentially two aspects of the ego embodied in the one cognition - I, now the observer and I,

there the person who is observed. For conversational discourse this bifurcation of reflection is traced to the external communication of two discrete cognizing individuals and the material structures which condition this. However for monadic idealism no such explanation is possible. It becomes necessary to posit as Fink, Husserl's disciple does, that 'reflection on the transcendental ego, itself implies a third ego, a reflecting spectator that looks upon the believing in the world, in the actuality of its living operation without co-operating in it'.<sup>47</sup> But if we uncover a third transcendental ego, a theoretical transcendental ego, a theoretical spectator, then why not a fourth and a fifth? It becomes clear that monadic idealism in coping with the phenomena of reflexivity lands itself in a position of infinite regress.

The insight, of the theorists in the 1920's who broke from the egological problematic was that the phenomena of reflexivity can only be adequately grasped from the social or conversational standpoint.

'How can an individual get outside himself', (experientially) asks Mead in, 'Mind, Self and Society', 'in such a way as to become an object to himself?'

This he concludes,

'is to be found by referring to the process of social conduct or activity in which the given person or individual is implicated'.<sup>48</sup>

More starkly Sartre declares, 'I am an other'.<sup>49</sup> A conversational philosophy of mind demands that we must abandon the asymmetry of the I - other relationship, which results from monadic idealism's absolutising, of the subject, in favour of the 'objectifying equalization' implied by the dialectical reciprocity involved in communicational interaction. 'It is

equalization', writes Ricoeur 'in the sense that reciprocity abolished the privilege of the single ego, and it is an objectification in the sense that this reciprocity brings it about that there are only others, I am an other among others'.<sup>50</sup>

The self appears in consciousness as an object, in an act of reflection. Such an act pre-supposes a subject. However this subject is never present to consciousness. For the conversational theory the subject which constitutes the self. to which the self is an intended object, is a subject outside of the consciousness of ego. It is not, however a transcendental one, rather the subject is a 'real' alter ego, This is to say the notion of a reflective self assumes the posulate of an alter ego. Reflection is given in and through man's social attitude to himself. The other is no longer merely, an object for me as absolute pure ego-

'He is', insists Sartre, 'the excentric limit which contributes to the constitution of my being'.<sup>51</sup>

We can represent the respective postulates concerning ego-alter relations with the egological and conversational philosophy of mind.

For Husserl and egologicism

$Am A \rightarrow A m B$

A = ego

B = alter

m = model

$\rightarrow$  = condition of

i.e. Ego's model or knowledge of alter is derived from my knowledge of my own ego by means of analogous inference.

For the conversational theory of self

$(AmB) \text{ and } (BmA) \rightarrow AmA$

i.e. The social interaction of ego and alter is antecedent to ego's self-conscious and a condition of it. This proposition can be decomposed into three related postulates

(A)  $AmB \rightarrow AmA$

One can ascribe predicates to, or have a model of, one's self, only if one can ascribe predicates to, have models of others. Strawson has outlined the basic logical form of this implication -

(1) I can only ascribe predicates to myself on the basis of identification and reidentification of some thing or object to which they can be ascribed - look to the object

(2) that thing which is identified is a person, an other. For, only an object which has a body as well as a mind is a candidate for reidentification - the object is in the world.

(3) thus by using the personal pronoun one draws along with it the 'entire conceptual scheme' for the use of ascriptive language'. In short one presupposes the concept of a person, of an embodied, cognizing other. 'The concept of a person is logically prior to that of an individual consciousness'.<sup>52</sup> - the object is another.

(B)  $BmA \rightarrow AmA$

Furthermore the condition of my being able to grasp myself as an object and ascribe predicates to myself as a person, is that I can adopt a social attitude to myself. I am able to do this by taking the role of the other vis a vis myself. The other, both as particular and concrete, and as a generalized social attitude is the subject to whom I appear and as such the condition of my emergent self-consciousness and objectivity.

(C)  $Am (BmA) \rightarrow AmA$

My primal relationship to the other is not that he is an object for me (with all the difficulties this epistemic relationship raises for the constitution of intersubjectivity),



but rather that I am an object for him. My self identity is mediated through the other's (particular or generalized) perception of me. The other's appearing as an object of knowledge for me is a secondary relation to the ontological relation of my being for others.

These three propositions, (A), (B), (C), demarcate the articulated specificity of the conversational philosophy of mind and theory of the self. This theoretical set of statements or discursive events marks the appearance, in philosophic discourse, of that profound reorganization of the mode of being of knowledge based on the centrality of the social. It is these discursive events, dispersed across the four major European traditions of philosophy that effectively individualizes philosophy since the 1920's and demarcates it from egological epistemology.

1. Edmund Husserl: Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man. Trans. Quentin Lauer, Harper Torchbooks, 1965.
2. He condemns 'the wide spread tendency to look upon positive science as the only strict science and to recognize as scientific philosophy only one that is based on this sort of science'. Philosophy as rigorous Science. *ibid.* p. 83.
3. See e.g. Formal and Transcendental Logic. Halle Niemeyer 1929.
4. Husserl: Logische Untersuchungen Vol. 1 (1900) Vol. II 1901.
5. Frege was his most important critic on this issue - see H. Spiegelberg - The Phenomenological Movement, Martinus Nijhoff. The Hague 1971 Vol. 1 chap. III. for an account of the correspondence with Frege.
6. Husserl: Ideas, translated Boyce Gibson, Allen and Unwin 1931 Introduction p. 421.
7. *ibid.* p. 106.
8. Husserl: Philosophy as Rigorous Science *opp. cit.* p. 86.
9. 'As over against this psychological "phenomenology", pure or transcendental phenomenology will be established not as a science of facts, but as a science of essential Being (as "eidetic" Science); a science which aims exclusively at establishing "knowledge of essences" and absolutely no "facts".' Ideas p. 44.
10. Theodore Adorno: Negative Dialectics, Heineman 1972 p. 192.
11. 'To what extent, however, that every consciousness is "consciousness-of", the essential study of consciousness includes also that of consciousness - meaning and consciousness - objectivity as such'. Philosophy as Rigorous Science *opp. cit.* p. 90.
12. Ideas p. 17.
13. *ibid.* p. 14.
14. The Crisis of European Man *opp. cit.* p. 191.
15. Philosophy as Rigorous Science p. 129.
16. *ibid.* p. 126.
17. *ibid.* p. 127.
18. *ibid.* p. 129.
19. *ibid.* p. 190.

20. *ibid.* p. 189.
21. *ibid.*, p. 190.
22. *ibid.* p. 189.
23. 'Whether we like it or not, whether (for whatever prejudices) it may sound monstrous or not, this )the "I am") is the fundamental fact to which I have to stand up, which as a philosopher, I must never blink for a moment. For philosophical children this may be the dark corner haunted by the spectres of solipsism or even of psychologism and relativism. The true philosopher, instead of running away from them, will prefer to illuminate the dark corner'. Formal and Transcendental Logic p. 209 quoted in Speigelberg *opp. cit.*
24. The Crisis p. 189.
25. Foucault - Order of Things *opp. cit.* p. 326.
26. *op. cit.*
27. Ideas *op. cit.* p. 233.
28. *ibid.* p. 168.
29. Ideas p. 120.
30. *ibid.* p. 169.
31. Husserl: Cartesian Meditations trans. Dorion Cairns, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1970.
32. Ideas *op. cit.* p. 22.
33. *ibid.* p. 21.
34. Husserl: Die Krisis der europä<sup>h</sup>ischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Parts I and II, 1936.
35. Alfred Schutz: Collected Papers I Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1967, p. 172-176.
36. George Herbert Mead: The Social Self.
37. Husserl: Cartesian Meditations *opp. cit.* p. 89.
38. *ibid.* p. 92.
39. *ibid.* p. 94.
40. *ibid.* p. 110.
41. *ibid.* p. 117.
42. A. Schutz: Collected Papers I, *op. cit.* p. 11-13.

43. Habermas: Knowledge and Human Interests opp. cit. p. 13.
44. P. Strawson: Individuals Oxford U.P. chap. 3. p.100.
45. Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Prose of the World, Heineman 1974 chap. 3. p 134.
46. Husserl: Ideas opp. cit. p. 123.
47. Eugen Fink: Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserl in der gegenwertigen Kritik, Kantstudien XXXVIII (1933) p. 319-383.
48. George Herbert Mead: Mind, Self and Society edit Charles Morris, University of Chicago Press, 1934, p. 138.
49. Jean Paul Sartre: Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel Barnes, Methuen 1969, passim.
50. Paul Ricoeur: Husserl: an Analysis of his Phenomenology, Northwestern U.P. 1967
51. Sartre, opp. cit. Part III chap. I. passim.
52. Strawson opp. cit. chap. III p.103.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE BREAK FROM EGOLOGICISM

CHAPTER 8

This conversational philosophy of mind and self is accompanied and sustained by a radically new way of viewing language and of conceiving the relation between the linguistic and the cognitive. The concrete phenomenology of inter-personal relations sketched by Sartre is soon guided by Merleau-Ponty, working in the same tradition, towards a theorization of the role of language as the condition of possibility of both social relations and ordered thought. Mead, Voloshinov, and Wittgenstein, from the very start made their analysis of linguistic behaviour the occasion for that series of radical reflections on mind, self and society which we have demarcated as conversational discourse.

Heidegger writing in a later period in his philosophic life when language is in the forefront of his ontological considerations seizes upon the metaphor. In the midst of a review of a poem by Holderlin he declares -

"We - mankind - are a conversation. The being of men is founded in language. But this only becomes actual in conversation. Nevertheless the latter is not merely a manner in which language is put into effect, rather it is only as conversation that language is essential. What we usually mean by language, namely, a stock of words and syntactical rules, is only a threshold of language. But now what is meant by 'a conversation'? Plainly, the act of speaking with others about something. Then speaking also brings about the process of coming together."<sup>1</sup>

Sartre, although he has broken irrevocably from Husserl's egologism, remains fixated with the terms of that discourse despite having dispensed with its conceptual foundation. His phenomenology of inter-personal relations challenges the epistemological primacy and ontological absoluteness of the cognitive ego, but it continues to be theorized in terms of the subject-object nexus of egological discourse. There is in his early work an insufficient and inadequate characterization of the

social relations which provide both the form and content of ego-alter inter-action. He continues to rework the egological central metaphor of cognition and consciousness, as vision. In his analysis of the look in 'Being and Nothingness' he reverses the direction of the intentionality involved, investigating the ontological structure of the experience of being looked at. This concrete phenomenology of inter-personal relations effectively challenges the egologicistic conception of self. However it replaces it with a philosophical anthropology of the person; the existential isolated person. A vast epistemic space which has opened up with the breaking through the barriers of egologicism, is prematurely foreclosed and saturated with the dense vapours of metaphysics. Sartre's existentialism remains a residue.

For Mead, Volosinov, Wittgenstein and later Merleau-Ponty, the theorization of the social cannot be restricted to a phenomenology of inter-personal relations. Such relations they see as only possible within the medium of a pre-existing set of communicational and other social practices. The "other" is no longer seen merely as my opponent in a necessary struggle between ego and alter, between assertive subjectivity and threatening objectivity. Rather 'he' is seen as a generalized social milieu only with regards which, can I in fact develop as a fully human person: 'he' is a generalized other. The dyadic ego-alter form is retained in the work of these theorists but at a metaphorical level. Increasingly the generalized other, as an abstract metaphysical term is replaced by a detailed concern with the role of language and social convention as rule guided practices, in the formation of human consciousness and identity. Philosophy gives way to science.

(i) Sartre - the transcendental ego

For Kant, as we have seen, the 'I' is the formal structure of consciousness; the transcendental unity of pure apperception is a

necessary condition of objective experience. Husserl reifies this formal 'I'. Intentional objects are seen to exist as meaning complexes dependent upon the constituting activity of the transcendental ego in his epistemology.

The young Sartre enthralled with the claim of phenomenology to investigate objects in their own right, reacted harshly against Husserl's transcendental turn. Husserl's later affirmation of a transcendental ego behind consciousness, seemed to him to involve a betrayal of the original and central phenomenological doctrine of intentionality, with its realist orientation. It appeared to Sartre as a retreat from a conception of consciousness as always turned outward towards its objects, to a monadic idealism which no longer investigated objects in their own right but regarded them as dependent on the constituting activities of a transcendental ego. As such this was a sorry departure from an ontologically motivated theory in which the concept of intentionality is the philosophic means of thrusting man back in the 'real world'. Phenomenology had become instead an epistemologically motivated theory in which intentionality, as a concept, is represented as an ideal world-creating process. Within this interpretation man as a concrete existent in a real world is subverted and replaced by a transcendental 'pure' consciousness. This abstracted self becomes the source and guarantor of the objectivity or sense of that constituted world.

Sartre rails against Husserl's final, spirited defence of egologicism. His early work in the phenomenological tradition<sup>2</sup> is fired with the conviction that phenomenology must be rescued from its transcendental turn and saved from idealism. Sartre demands that phenomenology treat of the concrete and the social (in this demand he follows Scheler and Heidegger). However, he attempts to theorize these existential and social dimensions within the available terms of a phenomenology rooted in egologicism. This contradiction, the effect of a discursive residue is to



plague Sartre's work right up to the 'Critique de <sup>la</sup> Raison Dialectique'<sup>3</sup>; a difficulty in accommodating the materiality of history and society within his personalism, his inability to accept the facticity of the unconscious whether at the level of the psyche or of linguistic structure. His personalistic philosophical anthropology, itself a residue of the subject-object couplet of egologicism, pervades his work right up to his more recent adoption of a Marxist position.

For the early Sartre the existential reform of phenomenology required -

- (i) a return to what he regards as the original doctrine of intentionality. Consciousness is consciousness of something, it is directed towards objects whether physical or psychical; both the outer world and my ego are objects.

A reassertion of the directional nature of intentionality leads, Sartre believes, to:

- (ii) a rejection of the notion of the transcendental ego. The ego is not the owner of consciousness, it is the object of consciousness. The intentional nature of consciousness means for Sartre there can be no ego 'in' or 'behind' consciousness only an object for consciousness.

Sartre by an examination of the concept of intentionality arrives at his non-personal theory of consciousness. This in turn leads him to question -

- (iii) the status of the ego. If it is an object of consciousness what is its nature as object? Eventually he identifies the I as the transcendent object of the reflexive intentional act. It is not the producer of that act, it is its product. It is not a subject behind reflection but rather only appears at the reflective level as a post-facto construction of an otherwise impersonal consciousness.

An understanding of the post-reflective status of the I leads Sartre to -

- (iv) deny the role of the transcendental ego as principle of unity of consciousness and assert the primacy, of the concrete and social instead. He argues that 'I think' can accompany our representations, as Kant says, but only because it appears on a foundation of

unity which it did not help to create. For Sartre this principle of unity must be found in the material world of which we are conscious, the world of physical being and significant others.

Sartre attempts by subjecting the concepts of phenomenological philosophy to a rigorous cross-examination to break out of the egological constraints which Husserl too readily accepted. He begins a reworking of the key Husserlian concepts of 'intentionality', 'ego', 'object' and 'consciousness', within the new conversational problematic. Indeed the structure of both the "Transcendence of the Ego" and "Being and Nothingness"<sup>4</sup> is derived from a rethinking of the key concept of intentionality. Sartre seems to be undermining egologicism from the inside; a slow erosion of the conceptual foundations of this discourse rather than a sudden violent rupture or revolution. In truth what we are witnessing in his existential phenomenology is the refraction, through the conceptual opaqueness of philosophical anthropology, of the profound changes in the organisation of our knowledge which were taking place at the turn of the twentieth century. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology represents one of the last bastions of egological discourse; a last attempt, in the face of the new materialism, to constrain philosophical discourse within the egological structure of classical epistemology. Sartre, on the other hand tunnels his way out of these defensive labyrinths. He explores the limits of egologicism but from the outside. However to breach the ramparts of egologicism from within, he has to move a lot of earth. His tools of philosophical analysis become moulded by this task, and his exploration of conversational discourse shaped and indeed constrained by his early labours.

The starting point of his critique of transcendental phenomenology is his destruction of the concept of the ego-as-essence. He begins with the notion of intentionality.

To be conscious is to be conscious of something. Consciousness

is directed towards the world of being. Moreover it exhausts itself in aiming at that world. It is always other than the intended objects it aims at. It is then the negation, the absolute otherness of the plenum of being towards which it is directed. It is nothingness.

Consciousness then, has no contents, no substance, it is

"simply a spontaneity, a sheer activity transcending towards objects." ( ) "intentionality means that for consciousness there is no being outside of that precise obligation to be a revealing intuition of something."<sup>5</sup>

There is, reasons Sartre, no transcendental ego which fashions the contents of consciousness into intended objects. Consciousness has no contents, it is nothing. Consciousness contains no ego 'in' or 'behind' it, nor any kind of substantial content at all. It reveals itself to be rather a nothingness, a void which realizes itself purely in its intentional direction outwards to the world of being.

Furthermore because consciousness is a void directed outwards it cannot be separated from the concrete existent world by any process of transcendental bracketing as Husserl attempted in his epoche. You cannot, Sartre argues, isolate nothing. The existent world cannot be bracketed out, for beyond these brackets is the nothingness of a consciousness totally incomplete in itself.

"reduction to consciousness would be an annihilation of consciousness."<sup>6</sup>

Consciousness is then irremediably in the concrete, existent world. It derives its peculiar state of being for itself, in terms of it being the negation of the existent world.

For Sartre the ego is not a part of the original structure of consciousness. Consciousness has no essential structure. The ego is constructed rather by consciousness, existing only for consciousness as an object in a world of experienced objects.

"The ego" he tells us, "is not the owner of consciousness; it is the object of consciousness," and "I is another."<sup>7</sup> The introduction

by Husserl of a transcendental ego into consciousness is, believes Sartre, catastrophic. It tears consciousness from itself and involves phenomenology in a retreat to a monadology, rather than in a direct occupation with human existence in its concrete relation to the world.<sup>8</sup> It is precisely this relation to a world shared with others and communally experienced that is the major theme of the emerging conversational discourse. Sartre approaches this theme elliptically via his critique of essentialism in phenomenological philosophy of mind and self.

He asks - if the ego exists as an object for consciousness, what is the nature of that consciousness? Surely an object pre-supposes a subject? Sartre replies emphatically no! The ego, he argues, appears to a consciousness which is impersonal. Indeed all acts of consciousness are impersonal in that a subject confronted by the objects of consciousness is not aware of his ego or of his ego's intervention in his activities. The experiencing consciousness is immersed in the world. It is directed to it in an engrossing engagement. No distinction is experienced between it and its world, for it is nothing outside of its aiming at the world. Sartre distinguishes then between pre-reflective and reflective consciousness. The former is the primary relationship of man to the world. It is a non-egological, impersonal spontaneity, prior to the actualization of the ego. Sartre credits the spontaneous conscious activity of man with a new importance. In doing so he is following Nietzsche's attack on the primacy of the rational reflective cognizer of classical epistemology. He was also no doubt influenced by the various philosophies of life prevalent at this time, which in their own way challenged the egocentric rationalism of the classical tradition.

Pre-reflective consciousness, he argues, involves self-consciousness directly, though not consciousness of self -

"consciousness is consciousness of itself. That is to say the type of existence of consciousness is to be conscious of itself, it has no need of reflective consciousness in order to exist."<sup>9</sup>

Reflective consciousness, on the other hand, involves the direction of pre-reflective 'lived' consciousness towards a reflected-upon, dead consciousness. It is through this art of reflection that ego appears as a "transcendent object effecting the permanent synthesis of the psychic."<sup>10</sup> By means of the unifying act of reflection, each new experiential state becomes fastened to the concrete totality - me. However the reflection upon any particular state or act, always involves an unreflective act of grasping which if it itself is to be grasped, involves another lived act of grasping. As he notes:

"my reflecting consciousness does not take itself for an object when I effect the cogito, what it affirms concerns the reflected consciousness."<sup>11</sup>

In other words the consciousness which declares cogito! - is precisely not the consciousness that cogitates. Descartes, Sartre argues, following Nietzsche, asserted too much in his cogito ergo sum. All he has a right to assert is the existence of thought.

"The certain content of the pseudo cogito is not 'I have consciousness of this chair' but 'there is consciousness of this chair'."<sup>12</sup> For Sartre the 'I' too, must fall before the stroke of the phenomenological reduction. His enquiry into the structure of reflection penetrates to the very heart of phenomenological enquiry in the egological mode. His demand for an investigation of the genetic conditions for epistemological reflection carries him beyond the limits of that discourse. He challenges the epistemological primacy of the 'cogito' and the entire classical tradition which installed the cognizing ego to the position of supreme and absolute sovereignty in the organization of knowledge. He argues:

"reflection has no kind of primacy over the consciousness reflected-on. It is not reflection which reveals the consciousness reflected-on. It is not reflection which

reveals the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the non-reflective consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito."<sup>13</sup>

However constrained as he is in the residues of egological discourse, he is unable, as yet, to challenge the ontological primacy of the subject. His ontological critique of the primacy of the cogito, goes someway towards the dissolution of the subject-object axis as kernel of classical philosophy. But, the move to making phenomenology a philosophical anthropology, evident not only in Sartre's work but also in that of Scheler and Heidegger, although it promises us a concrete analysis of human existence constrains that analysis with the metaphysical limits of the "person", i.e. the existential or ontological subject.

To recap. For Sartre it is on the reflected level that the ego is constituted and on the pre-reflective level that impersonality has its place. The appropriation of the ego has then no immediate certainty.

"When I run after a street car, when I look at the time, when I am involved in contemplating a portrait, there is no I. There is consciousness of the street car having to be overtaken .... and non-positional consciousness of consciousness."<sup>14</sup>

If the attitude of reflection is not adopted the ego does not appear. This ego, of which the I and the me are but two aspects, the I, as unity of actions and the me as unity of states and of qualities, is a product of our situated conscious experience. The proper meaning of Kant's claim that the "I think" must be capable of accompanying all our representations, is, Sartre believes, not, that there is a transcendental ego of necessity behind our objective experience, but rather that this "I think" refers to the possibility of reflection on lived experience and consequent appearance, in an act of recollection, of the I.

Each 'I' of a reflected-upon present, in turn becomes incorporated into the 'me' of a later state of the self. Each appropriated

consciousness is conjoined to previously grasped consciousnesses and hence the 'me' constituted as sedimentation of such reflective experiences. In so far as the 'I' can be conjoined to any ongoing experience by an act of reflection, it has an appearance of spontaneity and productiveness in comparison with the residual totality of the me. "The ego" he notes, "is always surpassed by what it produces".<sup>15</sup> However what spontaneity the 'I' appears to have (Sartre refers to it as a pseudo-spontaneity, a semblance) it has by virtue of its relationship to that 'true source of spontaneity', pre-reflective consciousness. The tendency to conceive of the 'I' as a real source of spontaneity and productivity, still manifest in Mead's 'Mind, Self and Society',<sup>16</sup> as an unfortunate egological residue, is thoroughly attacked by Sartre. He brilliantly sketches the form of this illusion which seeks a causal subject behind consciousness and action -

"The ego is a virtual locus of unity, and consciousness constitutes it in a direction contrary to that actually taken by the production: really consciousnesses are first, through these are constituted states; and then through the latter the ego is constituted. But, as the order is reversed by a consciousness which imprisons itself in the world in order to flee from itself, consciousnesses are given as emanating from states, and states are produced by the ego. It follows that consciousness projects its own spontaneity into the ego-object in order to confer on the ego the creative power which is absolutely necessary to it. But this spontaneity, represented and hypostatized in an object, becomes a degraded and bastard spontaneity which magically preserves its creative power even while becoming passive. Whence the profound irrationality of the notion of an ego."<sup>17</sup>

The 'I' is, Sartre argues the object of consciousness, not its subject. Rather than the I serving as the principle of the unity of consciousness as Kant, Husserl and egological epistemology would have it, it is consciousness embodied in the concrete social world which makes possible the unity of the ego. The 'I' is an existent, it gives itself as transcendent not as transcendental vis a vis consciousness.

The unity of pre-reflective consciousness is to be found, claims Sartre, directly in the world at which it aims. In so far as

consciousness is a nothingness, it needs no principle of unity to govern its active engagement with the world. It unifies itself merely by transcending itself, by escaping from itself to the world of being. And it is in that world of being that the unity of consciousness is to be found -

"The unity of a thousand active consciousnesses by which I have added, do add and shall add two and two to make four is the transcendent object two and two make four."<sup>18</sup>

It is then in the material world that the unity of the consciousnesses is to be found.

The ego or I is then an unnecessary principle of unity. Consequently functionalist arguments for the existence of a transcendental ego, such as the transcendental deductions of Kant and Husserl are fallacious. The I is not originally given in consciousness, it only appears on the basis of a reflective intentional act which renders it thematic as an object other than immediate consciousness. I is an other. Sartre's account of the status of the 'I' is logically little different from Strawson's attack on the notion of a pure ego as a primitive concept and his assertion of the 'logical primacy' of the concept of a person. Strawson writes -

"So, then the word 'I' never refers to this the pure subject. But this does not mean, as the no-ownership theorist must think, that 'I' in some cases does not refer at all. It refers because I am a person among others; and the predicates which would, per impossible belong to the pure subject if it could be referred to, belong, properly to the person to which 'I' refer."<sup>19</sup>

Ordinary Language philosophy directs its attention to the logic of the language of personal ascription rather than to a phenomenology of inter-personal relations but its analysis is illuminated by the same sociologistic critique of egological philosophy of mind, self and language.

'I' then is an other, and can only be grasped or predicates attached to it, in so far as it is a transcendent psycho-physical object like other persons to which we ascribe motives, states, actions and



qualities. 'I' is a person. Sartre notes -

"If the I becomes a transcendent it participates in all the vicissitudes of the world."<sup>20</sup>

Amongst these we might note, though Sartre does not explore this realm, is the grammar of the language we use. Indeed as we have seen Nietzsche, whose work stands as an unexplored bridge between existentialist and linguistic philosophy, traces the substantivising and subjectivising of the 'I' into a notion of the soul or ego, to the subject-predicate form of the grammar of the Ural-Altaic linguistic group.

However the I, once it has been pulled out from the murky depths of consciousness and thrust into the real world, is clearly a peculiar sort of object. For as Sartre says the ego is given as an object but unlike the case of 'non intimate' objects we can not stand back from it and succeed in taking a truly external viewpoint for the "me accompanies us in this withdrawal." Sartre raises the central question that cannot be framed with the egological problematic without threatening its very existence - What are the genetic conditions for reflective consciousness, and for the emergence of the self as intended object?

He argues, adopting a clear conversational perspective, that the only ego that can achieve that external optic with regards me, is an alter ego.<sup>21</sup> Only for an other do I become a truly externally grasped object. Thus Sartre reasons I can only appropriate my own ego through the perspective of the other. It follows therefore that the discovery of my own existence is in fact no more certain than that of the other, for the mode of discovery of my own ego is through the other. Without the mediation of the other the 'I' would not appear in reflection, indeed reflection itself would be impossible. Thus at the very heart of the cogito, now understood as a conversational accomplishment, we must locate the other as the condition of that reflection -

"The reflective ekstasis is found on the path to a more radical ekstasis - the being for others."<sup>22</sup>

For Sartre the sociality of the self is uncovered even at the level of the cogito.

This account of the reflective self as a dialectical conversation derivative of ego-alter social interaction is first sketched by Sartre in "The Transcendence of the Ego" but finds its fullest expression in "Being and Nothingness".<sup>23</sup>

In the earlier essay Sartre had already concluded that this dialectical or conversational conception of the self provides the only possible refutation of solipsism. If as in egological epistemology, we conceive of the ego as the original structure of consciousness then an assymetry emerges between ego and alter. The other is always constituted only as an object for the cognitive subject. But, if the ego becomes a transcendent, it loses its privileged status as a constituting agent. I become for myself an other and as Sartre insists "my I, in effect, is no more certain for consciousness than the I of other men. It is only more intimate."<sup>24</sup>

Sartre stipulates that a 'solution' to the 'problem' of other minds will have as its major condition a conception of the negation ego-alter as an internal and not external relation. That is to say the relation of myself and an other is a dialectical reciprocity or objectifying equalization by which each of the two elements continually constitutes and reconstitutes itself as a moment in an ongoing conversational process. As an ego I assert my own subjectivity by denying that I am the other, and at the same time grasp myself, in my objectivity, in my being for an other. This internal structure of the self involving a necessary relation with the other as constitutive of my self-conscious being, Sartre calls being-for-others. This is a structure of my being irrevocably mediated by the other. Accordingly

my fundamental relationship to the other is not one of knowledge, with all the difficulties this raises within egological discourse in attempting to constitute the relationship between epistemological selves each of which claims absolute epistemic supremacy. It is instead a relation of being. Each of us, I and the other, locked in a given interpersonal relationship, is constitutive of what the other is.

I am an object, an ego, in a world for others. I grasp myself as an object not by means of the facility of a superordinate transcendental ego but as an object for the concrete other as subject. It is precisely this fundamental ontological relationship, being for an other, that a subjective idealism cannot handle. Within transcendental idealism the condition for objective experience is the transcendental subject's activity as organizer of consciousness into a connected system of representations. The other cannot organize our experience, such is <sup>the</sup> principle of pure apperception, he is an aspect of that synthesised experience.

However what Sartre points out to us is that the fundamental nature of our experience of the other is that he and not I, is at the centre of organization of our experience of him -

"I construct him as an object but the regulative principle lies in his subjectivity."<sup>25</sup>

Sartre analyses what is ontologically involved in our experience of the other in his phenomenological investigation of 'the look'. His investigation of the intentional structure of visual interpersonal interaction both constitutes a concrete phenomenological analysis of an aspect of everyday personal experience and at the same time serves as a metaphor to illuminate the essential ontological relation between myself as ego and others.

When the other appears in my vision, he is an object for me of course but one who I perceive as having a relation to the world about me which is independent of me. In my vision I gather the world about

me as my world, appearing for me and regulated by me. The other though he is an object in my perceived world, is also making a claim on a world which before his appearance was bound solely to me. Now the objects in this world are also related to him. He has established relations with the world which are beyond my control. Thus notes Sartre an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me.

"Everything is in place; everything still exists for me; but everything is traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object. The appearance of the other in the world corresponds therefore to a fixed sliding of the whole universe, to a decentralization of the world which undermines the centralization which I am simultaneously effecting."<sup>26</sup>

However as yet the other is still an object for me defined within my world though I perceive him as having his own definition of the world which threatens to drain my world of its being. However the other looks up and looks at me. I am looked at. I see him but as a look looking at me-as-object. My world becomes profoundly more decentralized.

"All these instrumental things in the midst of which I am, now turn towards the other a face which on principle escapes me. Thus I am my Ego for the Other in the midst of a world which flows toward the other ( ) the flight is without limit, it is lost externally; the world flows out of the world and I flow outside myself. The Other's look takes me beyond my being in this world and puts me in the midst of the world which is at once this world and beyond this world."<sup>27</sup>

Thus concludes Sartre the unreflective consciousness does not grasp the other directly nor as its cognitive or perceptual object. The other as a person is apprehended by me in so far as I am an object for the other. It is in his look at me, rather than in my gaze at him as object, than I discover him as a person in his subjectivity. And, it is in his look and the consciousness of being looked at, that I apprehend myself as an object. "The look" he concludes "which the eyes (of the Other) manifest, no matter what kind of eyes they are is a pure reference to myself."<sup>28</sup>

## (ii) Sartre on Other Minds

It is clear that Sartre's existential phenomenology does not face

the same difficulties as Husserl in philosophically justifying the possibility of the existence of other minds. For Sartre the ego is a constituted object for an otherwise impersonal consciousness. It is an object in the world and as such it has no logical primacy over other egos. Thus it cannot assume an absolute status which renders the existence of other egos and the world in general dependent on it. My access to my own ego is neither immediate nor certain.

Sartre insists that there is no question of giving a strict proof of the existence of others. That existence is something which is given directly to us as a facet of our own being. The existence of others in fact is a condition of my being what I am. The bracketing out of the existence of others as an exercise in a transcendental epoche is ruled out of order by Sartre.<sup>29</sup> There can be no reduction to an essential ego, for consciousness is a nothingness. We are doomed to live in the concrete world with others. There can indeed be no reduction by such a transcendental ego. The very possibility of reflection itself is the other, as condition of my ekstasis. Sartre's task becomes to analyse how and why the pseudo problem of "other minds" arose in philosophical literature. This he does by locating the problem as the effect of the grammar of egological discourse. It is when the conversational or dialectical nature of the self is ignored by philosophers who abandon the consideration of the concrete and social in pursuit of the radical and apodictic, that this aberration occurs he argues.

Sartre diagnoses the failure of Husserl to constitute intersubjectivity. He locates three basic premises he feels lie at the bottom of all idealist theories of the other.

1. They postulate other persons in terms of the other, that is a self which is not myself.
2. This negation is seen as an external negation i.e. it is conceived of as an ideal or real space which separates discrete subjects. This negation becomes the condition for the isolation of monads.

3. The other and myself are only connected through the medium of cognition. Because Husserl has reduced being to a set of ideal meanings, the only connection he has been able to establish between my being and that of the other is one of knowledge.

Sartre locates at the very core of the cogito itself a dialectical relationship with the other. This interpersonal relation is ontologically prior to my own conversation with myself in reflection. This conversation is the condition of the emergence of myself as an objective being.

He writes:

"Thus the cogito itself can not be a point of departure for philosophy; in fact it can be born only in consequence of my appearance for myself as an individual, and this appearance is conditioned by the recognition of the Other. The problem of the Other should not be posited in terms of the cogito; on the contrary, the existence of the Other renders the cogito possible as the abstract moment when the self is apprehended as an object."<sup>30</sup>

It is this conversational theory of the self which is the point of convergence of the seminal theorists in the Phenomenological, Pragmatist, Analytic and Marxist traditions, who in the 1920's broke finally from egologicism towards a radically social theory of being human. Mead writing during the same years as Sartre's early essays arrives at a parallel set of conclusions about the nature of self-consciousness.

"When the response of the other becomes an essential part in the experience or conduct of the individual, when taking the attitude of the other becomes an essential part in his behaviour - then the individual appears in his own experience, as a self, and until this happens he does not appear as a self."<sup>31</sup>

For Sartre the fundamental inter-personality of self-consciousness is revealed in the immediacy of the visual interchange rather than in the "conversation of gestures" where Mead, Volosinov and indeed Merleau-Ponty locate it. Sartre despite his claims for the primacy of ontology fails to break with the cognitivism of earlier egological phenomenologies of inter-subjectivity. True the ego's gaze is reflected and returned to him in the look of the other, but the analysis of the phenomena of being 'looked at' portrays a contentless medium of social interaction in

which all social relations are reduced to the perennial struggle between subjects.

The other's look is, Sartre asserts, the necessary condition of my objectivity. And yet for Sartre it is also the destruction of all objectivity for me. The appearance of the other as subject has destroyed my capacity to make of the whole world an object. My fundamental relation to the other is not that he is an object for me but rather, that I am an object for him. Moreover the other in his subjectivity can never be given to me as an object of knowledge, as Husserl sought. Such an epistemic relation would necessarily make of him an object. In turn this would destroy my own objectivity, in so far as it rests on my being for another subject. "The other cannot be the meaning of my objectivity", writes Sartre for, "he is the concrete, transcending condition of it."<sup>32</sup> The other is experienced in his subjectivity (and hence inter-subjectivity made possible) in so far as I become an object for him and experience myself as such. It follows then in so far as the other appears to me as a subject in and through my own objectness before him, that my making an object of the other, either epistemologically or emotionally, must be a secondary moment to my initial ontological relationship of being-for-him.

Sartre has overturned the ego-centricity of classical epistemology and challenged the primacy of the solitary if absolute cognizing self. However he has not broken out of the subject-object conceptual problematic. He has merely inverted this dyad, giving precedence now to the object, and adopting a position as a transcendental realist. As yet, he is incapable of theorising inter-subjectivity and sociality beyond the subject-object form. Social relations are still conceptualized as being constituted within the essential structure of consciousness, although now human ontology has passed from its epistemological phase under egologicism to a more concrete philosophical anthropology. The other, although given

ontological precedence over my being reflectively for myself, is still conceptualized as the subject; as the subject which reduces everything within its gaze to an object including me and my subjectivity.

In his theory of the emotions Sartre sketches the implications of this ontic structure for interpersonal relations. I, confronted with the other's threatening presence, attempt to regain my subjectivity by causing the other to appear before me as a 'degraded presence', as a mere object. My objectification of the other is a defensive reaction to my nakedness before the other as an object. Trapped within the subject-object couplet, social relations appear as essentially a perennial struggle between master and slave, self and other. Sadism and masochism become the normal forms of human emotional practice. Sociology in turn becomes reduced to a phenomenology of inter-personal relations.

Sartre's early work, despite the challenge it mounts to the idealist ego-centrism of Husserl's phenomenology, inherits the terrible residue of that philosophy - the subject-object form. He assaults Husserl's monadology but remains trapped within the residues of egologicism, inescapably metaphysical, incorrigibly philosophical.

### (iii) Merleau-Ponty and the Generalized Other

Sartre by making my being-for-others a fundamental mode of my being-in-the-world challenges the monadological structure of transcendental phenomenology and breaks from the egological problematic in his assertion of a conversational or dialectical theory of the self. However he does so partially and incompletely. He remains unable to conceptualize social relations except in the metaphysical terms of the personal interaction of ego and concrete other. The almost limitless possibilities of a thoroughly materialist theory of being human are foreclosed prematurely. His embracing of a philosophical anthropology, albeit in its nominally anti-humanist, existential form, inhibits, any serious study of the historically specific form and content of social relations. It prevents



any radically rethinking of the import for epistemology of the essential sociality of man and historicity of knowledge. In turn, existential phenomenology substitutes itself in the place of an adequate sociological and historical science; all social relations become reduced to interpersonal ones; intersubjectivity and sociality become confused and conflated and the latter reduced to the intentional structure of the former; a phenomenology of interpersonal relations replaces the sciences of History and Sociology. Philosophy after the initial threatening challenge of the social sciences, incorporates and emasculates their novel vision in a philosophic anthropology and regains some of its former composure - at science's expense.

Merleau-Ponty although operating within the same phenomenological tradition as Sartre, and who had to also come to terms with the same egological residue, is much more conversant with developments in the social sciences and their import for philosophic method and theory, than the young Sartre of the late twenties and thirties.<sup>33</sup> From the outset his philosophical project attempts to give some independent substance to the conversational theory of mind, self and language and to settle accounts with classical epistemology and its egological structure for once and for all. His critique of this discourse is far reaching. He attacks the asserted primacy of the pure epistemological ego and at the same time subverts the theory of representation and perception which underwrites classical epistemology. The starting point of this critique is the achilles heel of egological discourse - my knowledge of the existence of other.

He approaches the question of inter-subjectivity from a consideration of arguments for the existence of others by analogy. Husserl, as we have seen, attempts in the fifth Cartesian Meditation to constitute the other by analogizing transfer. However as Sartre points out his argument is based on the fallacious assumption that knowledge of my own existence has some sort of logical priority over knowledge of the other. Merleau-Ponty

accepts the Sartrean critique of ego-centrism and also refuses to treat self-other relations from the standpoint of the epistemological perspective alone. For him this entails ceasing to theorize these relations in terms of the phenomenological category of intentionality. He does not believe this fundamentally epistemological category with its egological basis can somehow be given an ontological twist or interpretation as Sartre attempts. He notes -

"Positing another person as an other myself is not as a matter of fact possible if it is consciousness which must do it. To be conscious is to constitute, so that I cannot be conscious of another person, since that would involve constituting him as constituting, and as constituting in respect to the very act through which I constitute him. This difficulty of principle, posited as a limit at the beginning of the fifth Cartesian Meditation is nowhere eliminated. Husserl disregards it."<sup>34</sup>

Any solution of the problem of other minds, he concludes can only be given by ceasing to approach the issue from the optic of a pure consciousness and instead investigating the nature of concrete corporeal and semiotic interaction between embodied and speaking egos.

Merleau-Ponty begins his analysis of our perception of the other with the traditional assertion of all arguments by analogy - namely, that I make the other in my own image. But he continues on to ask the central question which challenges the ego-centrism typical of traditional analogy arguments - "but how can there be an image of myself." That is like Sartre he identifies the central problem of self-knowledge as the achieving of an "outside view upon this totality I am."<sup>35</sup> In raising the enquiry into the genetic conditions for the emergence of reflection to the forefront of philosophic awareness he clearly breaks with the ego-centrism of classical epistemology as Sartre, Mead and Wittgenstein also did. Whereas for Sartre the conditions of this ekstasis are traced directly to my being (an object) for a concrete other and inter-subjectivity reduced accordingly to immediate, conscious interpersonal relations, for Merleau-Ponty, Mead and Wittgenstein it is to language and social behaviour in general that we must look if we are to

theorize inter-subjectivity adequately.

By 1925 Mead had already noted in his 'Mind, Self and Society' -

"I know of no other form of behaviour than the linguistic in which the individual is an object to himself."<sup>36</sup>

Unlike Mead, Wittgenstein and indeed Volosinov

Merleau-

Ponty does not begin with language or a consideration of gestural exchange. As a phenomenologist his starting point remains consciousness and its structure. He re-examines the cogito from the conversational standpoint asking - how can the other appear as my image yet as not me? The other's existence is given. It is a fact of my existence in the world, as Sartre has shown, but how in fact can I perceive him as I do i.e. like me but not me? The problem becomes one for Merleau-Ponty of explaining how "there is a myself which is other".

He grasps that the 'solution' of the 'problem' of the other is to be unveiled at the level of the cogito itself. The relation of the cogito to concrete human life must be explored and "man" rather than his transcendental surrogate restored to a central place in philosophical theory. He redirects attention away from the other and back to the cogito -

"As we have said we shall never understand how it is that another can appear to us: what is before us is an object. We must understand that the problem does not lie there but is to understand how I can make myself into two, how I can decentralize myself."<sup>37</sup>

What is sought then are the conditions of reflexivity. The essential philosophical problem of self-hood or self-consciousness can only be solved by reference to the social relations which constitute consciousness as directed cognition. Mead too asks, as we have seen, this basic question -

"How can an individual get outside himself experientially in such a way as to become an object to himself."<sup>38</sup>

He replies, as does Merleau-Ponty and the other conversational theorists

"its solution is to be found by referring to the process of social conduct or activity in which the given person or individual is implicated."

For these theorists the cogito is not the primal point of origin of objective cognition but rather the end product of an ontogenetic

communicational process which is its condition. Thus as Volosinov writes -

- . "the individual consciousness not only cannot be used to explain anything but on the contrary, is itself in need of explanation from the vantage point of the social, ideological realm."39

Sartre sees the necessary conditions for my achieving an objective distance with regards myself residing in my being for an immediately present concrete other, who directly confronts my consciousness. This relationship he gives a graphic form in his phenomenological analysis of 'the look'. He remains as we have said trapped within the subject-object couplet in his specification of inter-subjectivity; social relations are still conceived as intentional relations of consciousness, or consciousnesses, and these relations although described as ontological rather than epistemological, are still theorized via the visual metaphor of egological epistemology.

However for Merleau-Ponty, social interaction is no longer forced into the phenomenological mould and theorized via the concept of intentional constitution in such a way that the starting point of a social phenomenology remains the cognitive subject as source of vision or object of it. He, like Sartre, eliminates the transcendental consciousness, arguing that the life-world is not constituted by consciousness but rather is the abiding context within which consciousness comes in contact with an already given world, and is formed. However unlike Sartre he attempts to theorize what is involved in this contact. In doing so he must trace the role of the inter-subjective in the constitution of consciousness. This leads him to a consideration of perception and language as the socialized medium within which self-other relations develop.

In so far as I and the other possess bodies which relate to a shared kinaesthetic field and share a common language, then there are material relations between myself and others which cannot be challenged by individual solipsistic doubts. The notion of a generalised other, an inter-subjective space, which mediates between myself and the other and which is constitutive of each of our being, Merleau-Ponty believes,

overcomes the solipsism phenomenological philosophy has implied in the past. The life world is grasped by him as the interpenetration of subject and object.

From the outset he displaces the centrality of the concept of intentionality from his presentation of phenomenology. He does so in order to effect a fundamental decentering of the philosophy of mind and self. The pure ego of classical epistemology is replaced by the embodied speaking subject which derives its mode of being from the material world, corporeal, cultural and historical, within which it is situated. Consciousness no longer thought of in intentional terms, can be grasped as institution rather than constitution. As such it is subject to the vicissitudes of culture and history. The knowing self is not a pure disembodied consciousness engrossed in a solitary contemplation of an object world revealed in and through this privileged cognitive vision. Rather, argues Merleau-Ponty, the world is given originally to us in the concrete corporeal and semiotic relations which we as embodied, speaking subjects have to it, and not in the cogito. Through my body and language I grasp myself objectively and in turn appropriate the object world for myself.

Neither perception nor speech, he argues, are merely the intentional acts of a pure consciousness.

Perception is for him, always the activity of an embodied being situated in the world. As such, its structure and operation is revelatory of the being of others and not restrictive of the other's being for me as the cognitive acts portrayed by a transcendental phenomenology of course are.

Merleau-Ponty in asserting the materiality of perception is not merely offering us an empirical psychological or even phenomenological analysis of a sensory process. He is challenging the entire egological theory of cognition which expresses itself in the metaphor of cognition

as vision. He argues that man as the object of phenomenological analysis is not to be reduced to a pure transcendental ego. The existential subject which dwells in a concrete world has a body which as a sensory modality is the "vehicle of our being in the world." Perception involves the whole body as both subject and object in the world, rather than just the abstracted and isolated mind. The world as perceived unfolds as a field relative to my physical activity within it. Consciousness always grasps its perceptual object from a specific perspective which is determined by my bodily position vis a vis the object.

My body is the vantage point from which I indeed can see the world as a series of configured objects, it -

"carves out within that plenum of the world in which concrete movement takes place a zone of reflection and subjectivity: it superimposes upon physical space a potential or human space."

Perception is then always a situated bodily activity and never a pure cognitive receptivity.<sup>40</sup>

Perception he insists must not be seen as an act of consciousness it must be grasped as a bodily activity and hence dissected as an intersubjective structure -

"Everything depends upon the fact that this table over which my glance now sweeps, probing its texture, does not belong to any 'space of consciousness' and inserts itself equally well into the circuit of other bodies. Everything depends, that is, upon the fact that our glances are not 'acts of consciousness' each of which claims an invariable priority, but openings of our flesh which are immediately filled by the universal flesh of the world."<sup>41</sup>

Merleau-Ponty stressing the corporality of vision, returns to Sartre's analysis of 'the look'. He notes, if the visual exchange with the other is treated as the confrontation of two 'I thinks', then the visual interchange looking - looked at, will appear to reflection as indeed a combat. Each ego "can believe itself the winner of the trial (for after all, if I think the other is thinking of me) there is still nothing there but one of my thoughts."<sup>42</sup> If perceptual exchange is understood in terms of the intentional structuring of consciousness, then the combat of glances

requires a victor.

"I look at him. He sees that I look at him. I see that he sees it. He sees that I see that he sees it. The analysis is endless; and if it were the measure of all things, glances would slip from one to another indefinitely - there would never be but a single cogito at a time."<sup>43</sup>

And indeed this is Sartre's problem - he acknowledges against Husserl, that the other is at the heart of my self appropriation. But, this other, experienced in a perceptual exchange, is still understood in terms of an egological theory of consciousness. It is an 'I think' and as such the negation of my being as centre of consciousness. However for Merleau-Ponty, perception must not be modelled on pure consciousness. In practice our glances do not rebound off each other in endless reflection as each partner seeks to subdue the other within the structure of his conscious constitution of the world-as-object. Rather, he argues, that in such exchanges we open ourselves up to a shared world and in our vision and movement affirm concretely the existence of that inter-subjective life world.

"Vision sketches out what is accomplished by desire when it pushes two 'thoughts' out toward that line of fire between them, that blazing surface where they seek fulfillment which will be identically the same for the two of them, as the sensible world is for everyone."<sup>44</sup>

Moreover as Merleau-Ponty points out, speech interrupts this being-together and carries it forward with a new impetus. It gives a new communicative content to the fascination of the visual and gestural confrontation.

The body then, asserts Merleau-Ponty, has a fundamental role in the possibility of inter-subjectivity. He declares,

"there would not be others or other minds for me if I did not have a body, and if they had no body, through which they slip into my field, multiplying it from within."<sup>45</sup>

This concern with the self as essentially embodied is paralleled later in Strawson's stress, within analytical philosophy, on the importance of physicalistic predicates for the identification of others and one's self.

Merleau-Ponty traces out the philosophical implications of the Gestalt theory of perception in a way not unlike that of Wittgenstein. The grasping of the active side of perception he believes, not only overcomes the classical alternatives between objective psychology and introspection but also challenges the whole classical theory of perception as pure cognition by an absolute but passive eye. The Gestalt approach reveals the visible world and the sphere of my motor projects as being each "total parts of the same Being". For my vision and my bodily action overlap in perception and,

"This extraordinary overlapping, which we never think about sufficiently, forbids us to conceive of vision as an operation of thought that would set up before our mind a picture or a representation of the world, a world of immanence and ideality."<sup>46</sup>

In his reflections on the nature of perception Merleau-Ponty prepares the ground for a far ranging assault on the classical theory of representation and the binary form of the sign. He makes his consideration of theories of painting from Descartes to the Impressionists, the occasion for rethinking from the conversational standpoint the metaphysics of vision.

"Vision" he insists, "is not the metamorphosis of things themselves into the sight of them; it is not a matter of things belonging simultaneously to the huge, real world and the small private world. It is a thinking that deciphers strictly the signs given within the body."<sup>47</sup>

He attacks the notion of perception as an inner representation or picturing of an already given outside state of affairs. Vision is he argues an active symbolic act of interpretation of perceptual signs and not the impression on or in the mind of an image. He notes that Descartes "Dioptric" epitomises the classical representational theory of perception, in which the visible, the image, must be constructed according to a 'model-in-thought'. The image or percept can as we have seen in Descartes metaphysic, be allowed no autonomy. It must always be subject to the overarching analytic scrutiny of the rational mind. The image as primarily object of knowledge is reduced to its status as unreal duplication of the



world of external things-in-themselves.

"In the world there is the thing itself, and outside this thing itself there is that other thing which is only reflected light rays and which happens to have an ordered correspondence with the real thing; there are two individuals then, bound together externally by causality."<sup>48</sup>

The nexus of image and object, just as that of sign and referent is located within the act of cognition itself, in the activity of the cognizing self. Both the binary theory of the sign and causal-correspondence notion of correspondence are circumscribed by this egological theory of representation. The word 'image' he believes, is in bad repute, "because we have thoughtlessly believed that a design was a tracing, a copy, a second thing, and that the mental image was such a design belonging to our private bric-a-brac."<sup>49</sup>

But perception, he argues, is not the pure gaze of an absolute and distanced subject on an object world already given and offering itself up, as it is in-itself, for this gaze. Perception always involves the interpenetration of subject and object. The world of course always retains its material objectivity and transcends our perspectival grasp of it. Yet, at the same it is only given to us in and through our perspectives on it and through these we humanize it and ourselves transcend it in its subjectivity. Subjectivity does not constitute the world, for it has only a 'precarious grasp upon the world'. Indeed this subjectivity only becomes reflective, a cogito, through its being in that material world i.e. through its articulation in speech and through its embodiment and subsequent perceptual and motor activity. It is through the body and language that I appropriate the world as a meaningful complex and it through the body and language that I can grasp my self in that world. It is originally through the body that I discover my being in the world as a subject-object relationship which invariably unfolds into a world with others.

In the sensory field of my body appear objects which are grasped

in relation to the embodied me. But amongst these objects is one which itself, as Sartre had first noted, has a relation to the objects in my perceptual field, and is seen by me as clearly having this relation - the other. When the other, notes Merleau-Ponty,

"in the midst of my objects begins to make gestures towards them to make use of them I cannot doubt for a moment that the world to which he is oriented is truly the same world that I perceive."<sup>50</sup>

For, if the other perceives something, and acts in relation to a configuration of objects, that something, those objects, must be my own world because it is my world that the other comes into being. Between myself and the other, Merleau-Ponty asserts, there is a common perceptual-kinaesthetic field. In so far as the other dwells in this common field and demonstrates this to me by acting within and reacting to this field as I do then, he is another me. He becomes an other me, yet not me, in so far as he partakes in our shared perceptual-gestural world. He is a generalized I. Because my body mediates between my cognitive self and the world and in my perceptual field is another being who I can perceive shares that field, I can generalize my corporeal relation to the world. The other is grasped as a generalized I. Merleau-Ponty notes -

"As long as it adheres to my body like the tunic of Nessus, the world exists not only for me but for everyone in it who makes gestures towards it."<sup>51</sup>

The very corporality of our being-in-the-world plunges us immediately into an existential relation with others. However, the corporal is just one dimension of our relation with others, which Merleau-Ponty seeks to address. As central to our concrete mode of being in the world is, he believes, language. Having grasped the importance of a shared perceptual-kinaesthetic world for my constitution of the other as like me, he suggests -

"Perhaps now we are closer to understanding better the accomplishment language represents for us, how language prolongs and transforms the silent relation with the other."<sup>52</sup>

This phenomenology of perception, with its emphasis on the embodied self, effectively challenges the whole egological philosophy of mind which

reduces man to his transcendental surrogate - the pure epistemological ego, itself condemned to a solitary if absolute status. Moreover just as my own and the other's corporality is a necessary condition of the emergence of a shared perceptual world, similarly my own and the other's linguistic faculty is the necessary condition for the emergence of a shared semiotic world. And, just as through our shared perceptual world I grasp the other as like me, so also, the world of inter-subjective meaning allows me to grasp the other as an other me.

The other's speech manages to reach us and signify for us. Our words, as his replies attest, reach him and signify for him. Thus we prove to each other that we live in a shared world of meaning. And as that common semiotic world to which we both have access is constitutive of our being, then the other is an other me. The common language we speak shares then, many of the characteristics of our inter-subjective sensory field. My use of linguistic signs, like my corporeality, generates a generalized other whose being mediates between my ego and the particular others who share my cultural world -

"This speech is like the other in general, ungraspable, unthematizable and to that extent it is generality, not individuality."<sup>53</sup>

Speech, he demands, should not be seen as merely the translation of thought into a public domain by means of ciphers. He attacks the project which he ascribes to Husserl, but which is common to all thought within egological discourse, that "language is one of the objects supremely constituted by consciousness, and that actual languages are very special cases of a possible language which consciousness holds the key to - that they are systems of signs linked to their meaning by univocal relationships which, in their structure as in their function, are susceptible to a total explication."<sup>54</sup> This view he sees as reducing language to a secondary role as an "accompaniment substitute, memorandum, or secondary means of communication." Thus the expressivity of language is seen in this translational view of language and binary-correspondence theory of the

sign as having its essential source in the ideal meaning intentions located in the mind of the speaker.

Merleau-Ponty totally rejects this egological conception of the relation to thought and language. He denies the assertion that to speak is to translate a thought into words. The relation of language to thought is he believes, more comparable to that of the body to consciousness, than to the translation between different private and public symbolic codes. In perception we appropriate the world in and through the body and its direct relation with the world. The body is not the barrier to the mind's immediate access to the object in itself. It is the very condition of any access to the object for me. Similarly, language is not merely the public means for the expression of thought, entirely transparent to itself and fully formed. It is the means by which our thought becomes revealed to others and indeed to us ourselves. As Merleau-Ponty notes -

"For the speaking subject, to express is to become aware of; he does not express for others, but also to know himself what he intends."<sup>55</sup>

The thematization of the signifying intention or pure idea does not precede speech, because, in fact, it is the result of speech itself, "my spoken words surprise me myself and teach me my thought." Speech is then not some second-order and derived operation we utilise only in order to render public our thought, but the vehicle by which we can indeed grasp our significations in a clear and ordered way.

Wittgenstein comes to a very similar set of conclusions about the nature of the relation between thought and language. He declares -

"Thinking is not an incorporeal process which lends life and sense to speaking and which it would be possible to detach from speaking, rather as the Devil took the shadow of Schlemiehl from the ground -"<sup>56</sup>

What he asks, is this mental process of intending? -

"But didn't I already intend the whole construction of the sentence (for example) at its beginning? - If it was in my mind, still it would not normally be there in some different word order. But here we are constructing a misleading picture of 'intending', that is, of the use of this word. An intention

is embedded in its situation, in human customs and institutions. If the technique of the game of chess did not exist, I could not intend to play a game of chess. In so far as I do intend the construction of a sentence in advance, that is made possible by the fact that I can speak the language in question."<sup>57</sup>

Wittgenstein like Merleau-Ponty attacks the translational theory of language and the atomistic binary-correspondence theory of the sign and meaning. From the standpoint of a conversational theory of language, he subverts the dualism which undergirds the egological theory of representation and makes of meaning a private mental cause and of linguistic form a mere expressive effect. Like Merleau-Ponty he rejects the idea of language as a form of secondary representation which translates the primary representational domain of image based thought; a view central to classical theories. For him -

"The mental picture is the picture which is described when someone describes what he imagines."<sup>58</sup>

It is, in other words, apprehended in and through language. Meaning is not some intangible mental process located deep in the mind which gives sense to an uttered sentence. It is not a facet of consciousness at all, but of language in concrete use in social settings. The meaning of a word, Wittgenstein was arguing by the late 1920's, is neither the image it conjures up in the mind of speaker or hearer, nor a fixed ostensive definition which locates the meaning of a word in an object pointed at. Rather, the meaning of a word is its place amongst other words in a 'grammatical system' of conventional usage.

Similarly Merleau-Ponty declares that -

"it is the lateral relation of one sign to another which makes each of them significant, so that meaning appears only at the intersection or as it were in the interval between words."<sup>59</sup>

Thus meaning does not in any way transcend or pre-empt language, but appears only in the context of concrete speech use.<sup>60</sup>

"Since the sign has meaning only in so far as it is profiled against other signs, its meaning is entirely involved in language. Speech always comes into play against a background of speech; it is always only a fold in the immense fabric of

language. To understand it, we do not have to consult some inner lexicon which gives us the pure thoughts covered up by the words or forms we are perceiving; we have only to lend ourselves to its life, to its movement of differentiation and articulation, and to its eloquent gestures."<sup>61</sup>

Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty departing from different positions, the former from a naturalistic study of linguistic usages, the latter from a phenomenology of perception, converge on a common destination - a conversational theory of mind, self and language which commits philosophy to a radical retheorizing from the sociologicistic standpoint. Are we witnessing is this convergence, and the similar ones of Mead and Volosinov, a set of strange but magnificent coincidences, which mark the latter half of the 1920's as being an epochival period in European philosophy? Or, can we trace a historical diffusion of a discrete doctrine with a determinate point and time of origin and traceable lines of communication and transmission? Or, are we perhaps observing here, a set of changes at the same time both less historically coherent than a cultural diffusion but more profound in their effect? Are we not witnessing a symptom, an index, albeit refracted through the opaqueness of a philosophical discourse, as yet not free of its past, of a subterrean rupture in our organization of knowledge? Is not this conversational theory which demarcates the theorists of the 1920's from their egological predecessors and unifies them in this demarcation, not the accommodation of philosophy to the newly grasped historicity of our thinking and sociality of our being which begins to appear at the end of the nineteenth century? Is not Husserl's anachronistic stance, as well as their rupture from classical epistemology an effect, a reverberation in the ethereal discourse of metaphysics of this fissure in the European episteme which appears in the wake of the appearance of the social sciences?

FOOTNOTES

1. M. Heidegger. "Holderlin and The Essence of Poetry", from *Existence and Being*, intro. Werner Brock, trans. Douglas Scott, New York, 1949.
2. Jean Paul Sartre. *Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Williams and Kirkpatrick, 1957.
3. Sartre: *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Gallimard, 1966.
4. Sartre: *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes, Methuen, 1958.
5. Sartre: *Transcendence of the Ego*, op. cit., p.21.
6. Ibid., p.21.
7. Ibid., p. 97.
8. He notes "the only way to escape solipsism would be here again to prove that my transcendental consciousness is in its very being, affected by the extra mundane existence of other consciousnesses of the same type". *Being and Nothingness*, p.235.
9. *Transcendence of the Ego*, op. cit., p.40.
10. Ibid.p.71-72.
11. Ibid.p.44.
12. Ibid.p.53
13. *Being and Nothingness*, p. xxix.
14. *Transcendence of the Ego*, p.
15. Ibid. p. 82.
16. George Herbert Mead. *Mind, Self and Socceity*, edit. Charles Morris, University of Chicago Press, 1935.
17. *Transcendence of the Ego*, p.81
18. Ibid. p. 38.
19. P.F. Strawson: *Individuals*, Oxford U.P., 1959, p.103
20. Sartre: *Transcendence of the Ego*, p.104.
21. He acknowledges his debt, from the outset, to Hegel and his account of the development of self-consciousness given in the master-slave relationship, the "self apprehension of the one in the other." However he proceeds to criticize Hegel for formulating the fundamental ontological problem of self-other relations in terms of knowledge rather than in "concrete" terms of human existence - see *Being and Nothingness*, p.235-244.

22. Ibid., p.298.
23. Sartre detects in philosophy at large, a move to a conversational paradigm in the philosophy of mind and self - "the examination of modern theories" (written some time after 1935) "reveals to us an attempt to seize at the very heart of the consciousness a fundamental, transcending connection with the Other which would be constitutive of each consciousness in its very upsurge." Ibid., p.233.
24. Transcendence of the Ego, p.104.
25. Being and Nothingness, p.227.
26. Ibid., p.255.
27. Ibid., p.261.
28. Ibid., p.259.
29. "The Other is given to me as a concrete evident presence which I can in no way derive from myself and which can in no way be placed in doubt nor made the object of a phenomenological reduction or of any other epoche." Ibid., p.271.
30. Ibid., p.236.
31. Mead, op. cit.
32. Sartre: Being and Nothingness, p.274.
33. The growing influence of Marxist social science in France in the 1940's and his ongoing liaison with Levi-Strauss, gave Merleau-Ponty an insight into central methodological problems in the social sciences which in the 1920's and early 1930's was probably not available for Sartre. See for instance the former's essays in 'Signs' on 'The Philosopher and Sociology' and 'From Mauss to Claude Levi-Strauss', reprinted in Phenomenology, Language and Sociology, edit. John O'Neill, Heineman, 1974.
34. On the Phenomenology of Language, in O'Neill, edit., p.90-91.
35. Prose of the World: Heineman, p.134.
36. Mead, op. cit., p.142.
37. Prose of the World, op. cit., p.135.
38. Mead, op. cit., p.138.
39. V.N. Volosinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, Seminar Press, 1960, p.12.
40. Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of perception*, trans Colin Smith R.K.P 1962 p.111.
41. "Signs", ibid., p.16.
42. Ibid., p.17.



43. Ibid. p. 17.
44. Ibid. p. 17.
45. "The Primacy of Perception", *ibid.*, p.202.
46. "Eye and Mind", *ibid.*, p.283.
47. *Ibid.*, p.292.
48. *Ibid.*, p.291.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Prose of the World*, *op. cit.*, p.136.
51. *Ibid.* p. 137
52. *Ibid.* p.139.
53. *Ibid.* p. 140.
54. "On the Phenomenology of Language" in O'Neill, *op. cit.*, p.81.
55. *Ibid.*, p.87.
56. Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*, Basil Blackwell, 1972, p.108.
57. *Ibid.*, p.109.
58. *Ibid.* p. 109.
59. Merleau-Ponty: "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence", in O'Neill, *op. cit.*, p.39.
60. "There is not thought and language; upon examination each of the two orders splits in two and puts out a branch into the other. There is sensible speech, which is called thought and abortive speech, which is called language." *Signs*, *ibid.*, p.18.
61. "Indirect Language", *ibid.*, p.39.

## CHAPTER NINE

EPISTEMOLOGICAL INTERVENTION IN AN AGE  
OF SOCIOLOGICAL REASON AND HISTORICAL METHOD

censored

*Jacques Lacan: Écrits*

Throughout the 1920's, a crucial period in the redefinition of modern philosophical thought, the pioneering texts of Heidegger, Mead, Volosinov and Wittgenstein, rethink the philosophy of language and mind from the fundamental starting point of social process and communicational practice. This rethinking involved a rupture from ego-logical thought and the appearance of a new paradigm of philosophical theory and practice —the conversational. The structural dimensions of this paradigm can be sketched and the more general epistemic discourse which conditions the possibility of its existence plotted. The privileged object of that discourse is the conversation.

Again, my aim is not to write a history of the ideas, themes and individuals which figure in this philosophical revolution in the second half of the 1920's and 1930's. We certainly have a need for such a history, which could trace the developments in philosophical thinking, in an age of growing awareness of the import of the social sciences, and trace the correlations and dependencies between these epistemic events and the tumultuous changes taking place in the structure of European society after the First World War, and in the wake of a massive crisis in the capitalist economy. However, clearly there are questions of periodization involved here. And, in the history of ideas and sciences this involves questions not merely of chronology (who? where? and when?) but primarily of epistemic structure, of inclusion and exclusion, continuity and discontinuity, unity and dispersal. For as Bachelard perceived, in the history of knowledge domains, epistemic structures do not merely impose themselves, in a definite chronological succession, on an already defined domain of "knowledge" and "sciences" which have an autonomous historical existence. Rather, these structures of inclusion and exclusion, continuity and rupture, unity and dispersal, demarcate and hence define what knowledge is, and what a specific science with a

distinct set of methods and concepts can be at a specific historical conjuncture. We are concerned here not only with the limits of what can be said with meaning and scientific credibility in a particular discipline in a specific period, but indeed with the emergence, institutionalization, decay and dissolution of disciplines per se. And indeed, we are concerned not only with the theoretical structure of discourses and ruptures at this level, but also with the level of technological application and pedagogic activity which sustain and realize knowledge domains as social institutions. In short, we are concerned with the conditions of recognition and acceptance of disciplines, sciences, schools or theories.

What separates Merleau-Ponty from Husserl, Mead from Watson the Behaviourist, the later Wittgenstein from his juvenilia in the Tractatus, is not a few years of argument, reflection and progress which can be descriptively catalogued in an empirical account of intellectual developments of the 1920's and 1930's. It is rather a profound rupture in the very organization of philosophical knowledge itself, the roots of which stretch back into the nineteenth century and the effects of which are being felt still today. Mead, Volosinov, Wittgenstein, Sartre, "philosophy in the 1920's", must be treated as effects, i.e. as effects of this discontinuity. The conversational paradigm which I have isolated as the distinguishing feature of philosophical theorizing in the 1920's is a regional instance or effect of the rupture with egological thought consequent upon the development of the historical and social sciences. Any history of philosophy in the 1920's and 1930's or indeed semiology of this conversational paradigm is dependent on an archaeology of the dissolution of the classical episteme and emergence of the modern episteme.

But we are not yet in a position to provide an adequate archaeological analysis of the modern episteme. We are, as Foucault comments, too close to it. We think in and through it, still living its changes. We have

not yet achieved the objective distance from it that the passage of historical time facilitates. However perhaps we are in a position to sketch a regional instance of this episteme. This I have attempted to do in my analysis of philosophical discourse since the 1920's and in the sketch of the conversational paradigm which is the unifying principle of this discourse and marks the point of rupture of philosophical theorising from the egological episteme. Moreover such regional studies may be able to illuminate the general structure of our contemporary organization of knowledge.

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(i) The Conversational Paradigm

The monistic world of sociological realism/idealism (the terms become meaningless) is comprised of a set of conversations, of these, some are distributed between individuals as distinct biological units in which case the conversation is external, others are distributed within individual biological units in which case the conversation is internal representing different levels of control or abstraction within the cognitive functioning of that unit - a thought or problem-solving process.

As Mead says - "The internalisation in our experience of the external conversations of gestures which we carry on with other individuals in the social process is the essence of thinking."<sup>1</sup> Mind then is the importation of social process, its form is that of a conversation, its content the semiotics of the social world. Indeed as Volosinov argues - "Consciousness becomes consciousness only once it has been filled with semiotic content, consequently, only in the process of social interaction."<sup>2</sup> Both transcendentalism and psychologism fail to grasp the sociality of consciousness. They localise meaning generation in the individual consciousness and in so doing they limit the study of signification, language, and culture, to a study of consciousness and its laws, whether this be pursued by transcendental deduction or in empirical psychological terms. This is precisely the 'error' Husserl commits in his Cartesian Meditations the forcing of inter-subjectivity, i.e. social relations and communicational practice into the framework of the individual consciousness, albeit an absolute subjectivity. It is also the 'error' of Carnap's essay on logical empiricism the Aufbau, where the reduction is psychologicistic rather than transcendental.

Take for instance the understanding of language, a problem we will be more fully occupied with in a later study. For both idealism and empiricism, in the classical period, understanding as a process becomes one of mapping on external signs to subjective internal experience, whether this be the non material world of mentalistic concepts or the psychologicistic world of behavioural responses. Language and signs as an external reality become merely a technical means for the expression of inner meanings, which are the true source of understanding. Again the basic dualisms of ego-logicism find expression. Thought is set against language; an independent realm restrained but not constituted by language; a deep structure of meaning struggling to express itself in a surface structure of all too human language.

However for the conversational paradigm, as Merleau Ponty has said, the understanding of a sign is an interpretation, of an apprehended sign in terms of an already known sign. Language is always understood against a background of language and social practice. To understand we do not have to consult an inner world of intensional meanings which gives us the pure thoughts or deep structure of a meaning intention somehow obscured by the language we are condemned to use. Understanding then is a process of semiotic creativity, moving from sign to sign and then to a new sign. It is perfectly consistent and continuous - from one link of semiotic nature (hence, also of a material nature) we proceed uninterruptedly to another link of exactly the same nature. And nowhere is there a break in the chain, "nowhere does the chain plunge into inner being, non-material in nature and unembodied in signs."<sup>3</sup> Neither meaning or thought are to be considered as prior to and the condition of language.

"this act of expression - this joining through transcendence of the linguistic meaning of speech and the signification it intends - is not for us speaking subjects a second-order operation we supposedly have recourse to only in order to communicate our thoughts to others, but our own taking possession or acquisition of significations which otherwise are present to us only in a muffled way. The reason why the thematization of the signified does not precede speech is that it is the result of it."<sup>4</sup>

The conversational paradigm empties "mind" into the world. The world of signs and language is no longer viewed as a means (to express thought) but as a realm of being, providing access to Being. As Heidegger notes, for man language is not merely "a tool at his disposal rather it is that event which disposes of the supreme possibility of human existence."<sup>5</sup> For it is only language "that affords the possibility of standing in the openness of the existent." The world as perceived and acted within is the set of all conversations. 'Mind' is a discrete subset of these, derived and dependent on this semiotic and social world to give it the power of meaning. As Merleau-Ponty says, "my spoken words surprise me myself and teach me my thought."

The conversational paradigm marks a return to ontology. Mind is subservient once more to the world. Meaning has its origin not in the cogito but in my being a language user. Intentionality is realised in the being of language. For the speaking subject to express is to become aware of, he does not express just for others, but also to know himself what he intends.

Epistemology once more takes its place behind ontology. We know, we who are. Philosophical anthropology is the form of this ontology.

Mind is subservient once more to the world but not a 'real' objectivist world robbed of concrete man, rather a conversational world constituted by the conversation of its members, themselves constituted by that conversation. The conversational paradigm restores man as a social existent to his world. The human world as cultural object is the constituted product not of a transcendental ego but of the meaning endowing acts of interacting concrete existence. Conversational inter-subjectivity reconstructs transcendental subjectivity. The world cannot be divorced from the self reproducing forms of conversation, for that is its structure and their content is its. Nowhere is this more true than in the world of language (could there be another world?). Volosinov demands - "The sign may not be divorced from the concrete forms of social intercourse (seeing that the sign is part of organised social intercourse and cannot exist, as such, outside it, reverting to a mere physical artifact)." <sup>6</sup>

To treat language as a natural object has been the characteristic of the egological science of language. But to remove language from its social context of usage, it is now argued, is to create the theoretical problem which has bedevilled egological philosophy of language - the relation of language to meaning. Just as we have seen the ignoring of the sociality of consciousness led to the 'problem of other minds' so a neglect of the eminent sociality of language leads to the "problem of



meaning". Language has no relationship to meaning, for meaning is language in use in social settings. However if we abstract, for the practical purposes of scientific linguistics, from language in use, a reified natural object, a language universe from which man as a social agent is absent, in so far as we have removed the source of meaning, language becomes meaningless and a new sphere is invented to recapture the loss - the world of magical mentalistic meanings. And so the problem of the relationship is created. Logist abstraction and psychological reduction of language is the nihilation of meaning just as the positivist reification of 'society' is the nihilation of man as a practico-critical being.

Thus, philosophical theories of language within the ego-logical paradigm, whether of an empiricist or rationalist variant are rent by a common paradox. This paradox is clearly visible in the culmination and exhaustion of egological philosophy in its empiricist and rationalist variants in neo-positivist and transcendental phenomenological accounts of language. Both forms of ego-logical thought presuppose language and communication as a condition of their analysis yet each in its abstraction and reductionism systematically erodes the social and pragmatic base of language and communication. Neo-positivist semantics as Wittgenstein, initially one of its leading proponents, was to grasp in the late 1920's nihilates rather than clarifies the basis of meaning, in its attempted transcendence of common sense in the ideal language project. Similarly transcendental phenomenology in its bracketing out of the Lebenswelt, reduces meaning to the pure intentional acts of a single, albeit universal ego. And accordingly in seeking a primal point of origin of meaning behind language it simply ignores the being, a dense material being, of language, while at the same time pre-supposing that being as a condition of its analysis.

i) The Epistemological, Common Sense and the Conversational Paradigm

But the restoration of the primacy of ontology is simultaneously a subversion of absolutism by sociologism. The acceptance of the ontological primacy of social process and communicative practice directly challenges the absolute epistemologies produced within the ego-logical paradigm whether of the rationalist - transcendental variant or empiricist-realist form. Within the conversational paradigm, no longer can objectivity be purchased at the expense of banishing man, as a concrete, existent from his world. Rather it must be conceived and articulated from the viewpoint of the 'a priori of communication.'<sup>7</sup> Objectivity is conceived as the realised product of a communication community, whether this be a scientific community or one of common people. Knowledge is grasped in turn as a socially and historically located material process of production and transformation of systems of signs, (theories, methods, facts). Within the conversational paradigm objectivity is no longer traced to the constitutive apodicticity of a transcendental subject nor to the brute facticity of a given real world but rather to the materiality, a human and historical materiality, of our communicative practices. The conversational view of man and his world, as self reproducing systems of communicative practices, challenges both traditional transcendental epistemology and also empiricist epistemology naturalized in positivist scientific method.

The radically differing conception of the relationship between philosophic and common sense theorizing held with the two paradigms illustrates the epistemological rupture which separates them.

Empiricist epistemology increasingly naturalized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with the increasing dominance of positivist rationality, has founded itself on the easy certainties and metaphysics of common sense. But, oblivious of those roots, it proceeds to launch an assault on the irrationality of common sense. Both accept the existence

of an objective order in the world, beyond human agency and cognition, and on the other hand, both accept the existence of a fundamental category of experience prior to any theories we might have about the world. Furthermore, both accept that theories, scientific or common sense, are absolutely true or false according to whether they represent the objective order correctly, the correspondence being verified by recourse to our 'pure' empirical experience. The rationality of common sense will stand or fall by judgement in front of the same tribunal as that of scientific theory, namely that of sensory experience. These shared conceptions of an independent and objective structure of the world, of a category of empirical a-theoretical experience and of truth as the satisfaction of a relationship of correspondence between a sentence and a fact, can be traced directly to the epistemic structure of the egological paradigm and its antinomies.

Naturalized epistemology and common sense interact then in a mutually supportive way within a common epistemic field of dispersal - the egological. The world of common sense, the taken for granted world of unexamined facticity, of practical non-theoretically imbued experience, and of overburdening necessity, became the foundation on which naturalized epistemology began to erect a metaphysical and methodological edifice. Moreover, epistemology disciplined by the rigour of scientific method then proceeds to offer a critique of common sense while remaining in its epistemic foundations imbued with the same metaphysical illusions. Epistemology founds on common sense, then has the nerve to bite the hand that feeds it. Positivist method increasingly struggled in the first decades, of the twentieth century to free itself from this contradiction by the creation of an ideal language, transparent to the objects it represented; a language, sought by Russell, Wittgenstein and Carnap, cleansed of the assumptions and ambiguity of ordinary language, which in the Leibnitzian

dream would be a perfect instrument of scientific rationality.

In hindsight we know this project was a failure. The abstraction and reductionism involved in the logist project was the death of language as a communicative medium. Moreover the failure itself was a necessary one, as I think Wittgenstein grasped, in so far as this ideal language project was generated and remained trapped within the antinomies of egologicism.

Within the rationalist-transcendental epistemological tradition Husserl grasped the subtle unthematized relationship between positivist science and its common sense hinterland, i.e., the life world which undergirds scientific reality and its standpoint but which remains itself taken for granted and uninvestigated by that science. Both common sense and positivist science for Husserl operate within what he calls the 'natural standpoint'. That is they automatically assume the existence of an objective fact world 'out there' external to man, then proceed onwards in their methods (in positive science namely those of measurement, correlation and causal analysis) on the basis of this taken for granted thesis of the natural standpoint. At no point do they ask how such an objective fact world is possible as a communicational accomplishment of scientific practice.

However as we know, Husserl sought that condition of possibility in the intentional meaning enduring acts of an absolute transcendental subjectivity and not in the social relations and communicative practice of historically located human actors. Husserl, like his positivist contemporaries, is reluctant to forgo the easy certitude and facticity of the taken for granted common sense world. True he suspends the "thesis of the natural standpoint" and brackets the objective facticity involved in that standpoint, but only to replace it with the apodicticity of the transcendental standpoint with its guaranteed noematic objectivity.

In Husserl's transcendental phenomenology the necessity of the taken for granted and the objectivity provided for by the thesis of the natural standpoint are mirrored and reconstituted as the universality of the transcendental, act and essence. Transcendental subjectivity is transcendental intersubjectivity declares Husserl. The transcendental reduction borrows the certitude of the Lebenswelt, reconstitutes it in the absolute form of the transcendental ego, and then from this apodictic base attempts to constitute anew that very intersubjectivity of the common sense world, on which it in fact remains predicated. Yet, and herein lies the paradox, the absolute and pure nature of the transcendental ego renders the constitution of another intentional ego and hence the constitution of intersubjectivity and the social world impossible.

Again we note the symmetry of the paradoxes within the egological paradigm. Neo-positivism in its attempted transcendence of common sense, in the ideal language project, nihilates rather than clarifies the basis of meaning. Similarly transcendental phenomenology in its bracketing out of the Lebenswelt, reduces meaning to the pure intentional acts of a single, albeit universal ego. Such a reduction, however, and the transcendental investigations it permits, are carried out in and through natural language. This system of signification is the unexamined auspices of the phenomenological project. Both forms of egological thought presuppose language and communication as a condition of their analysis yet each in its abstraction and reductionism systematically erodes the social and pragmatic base of language and communication.

As we have seen the investigation of the world of common sense and ordinary language as communicational accomplishments embedded within a nexus of social relations, has been a dominant interest in philosophy since the twenties. Indeed these new interests, albeit expressed in the first instance in the heady abstractions of philosophical anthropology, are an

index of the rupture with ego-logicism, whether in its phenomenological or positivist variants, and the new acceptance of the primacy of social process and communicational practice.

The socially constructed and experienced life-world became, as we know, the central arena of investigation for phenomenology after Husserl. In of course the social phenomenologies of Scheler and Schutz, but also in the concern with language shown by Heidegger and later Merleau-Ponty, and in the phenomenology of inter-personal relations and the emotions plotted by Sartre and Emmanuel Mounier.

Indeed, as we have seen, in the other traditions the same orientation is prevalent. Mead settles the account with the German idealist inheritance of Pragmatism and adds a vital social dimension to the dominant behaviorism of the period. He traces the constitutive role of language and social interaction in the genesis of mind. Dewey developed this social evolutionism of Mead's into the areas of epistemology, ethics and social and educational philosophy. More recently the neo-pragmatists Quine and Rescher have set about dismantling the remaining dogmas of empiricism —the analytic/synthetic distinction, the notion of theory-free observation, the correspondence theory of truth and verificational principle.

Within analytical philosophy since Wittgenstein and Austin, a parallel set of transformations has occurred. In the theory of language there has been a move away from the logical atomism of the neo-positivist period towards an ethnographic analysis of language-use in social contexts. Secondly, Wittgenstein's denial of the possibility of private language led to a far reaching critique within analytical philosophy of egological philosophical psychology. The work of Strawson, Hampshire and Ryle is in this tradition. Thirdly, and the latest development to occur chronologically, there has been a rethinking of its philosophy of science from the conversational standpoint and abandonment of the key tenets of the positivist epistemology.

The common starting point of the new analytic philosophy is a challenge to the view that statements, whether in the form of scientific theories or ordinary language descriptive utterances, have some fixed meaning as a result of their representation of, or correspondence to, particular empirically given states of affairs. Rather, it is argued, that statements have meaning only by virtue of their relations to other statements in the structured discourse to which they belong. This contextualist theory of meaning implies a conception of science which stresses these features.

1. The primacy of the theoretical over the observational. This is primarily explicated in terms of the assertion of the absence of a neutral pre-theoretical realm of scientific evidence, a central tenet of classical empiricism. There is no set of facts independent of the scientific observer's theoretical optic which constitute neutral evidence. As such scientific cognition is no mere reflection of objective reality but rather an interpretation and hence appropriation of it through the mechanism of theoretical practice.
2. The incommensurability of scientific paradigms. Scientific concepts, methods and theories are intelligible only within structured and mutually exclusive universes of discourse. A paradigm is "the network of theory through which the scientific community deals with the world."<sup>8</sup> As scientific criteria of selection of hypothesis are internal to paradigms, individual scientists lost in their interiors cannot judge these networks by independent criteria. For this would require an objective supra-paradigmatic point outside the boundaries of current discourse.
3. The pragmatic and socio-historical dimension of scientific discovery. With the abandonment of the notion of a neutral realm of facts and attack on invariant criteria of scientific rationality (viz. theories of confirmation or refutation) implicit in the paradigmatic view, epistemology has begun to reorient its structure. Systematic historical and sociological study of the concrete practices of the sciences has suggested that with regard the selection and acceptance of scientific hypothesis, social institutional constraints and paradigmatic dynamics may be more important than observation and verifying experiment.

The stress on these three features in analytical studies of scientific method has shifted concern away from a unified positive method for science founded on a naive empiricism to a consideration of the social and historical parameters of scientific research. I would argue that both

the contextualist theory of meaning and the paradigmatic view of scientific practice, are indices of the emerging centrality of sociology to modern analytic philosophy.

Indeed, with the recognition that no scientific observation or description is theory-independent, analytical philosophy has had to confront directly the philosophical problem of relativism more usually associated with the social sciences. For if what counts as a fact is indeed decided within a theoretical framework then surely it can be argued that there does not exist a neutral realm of facts which can function as a tribunal of experience by which to judge between competing theories. Scientists belonging to different traditions and holding conflicting theories actually see the world differently. The import of this perspectival theory of cognition is that objective scientific knowledge is impossible and that scientific theorizing is always constrained within relativistic world views. With the abandonment of the notion of theory-independent observation and adoption of a perspectival theory comes a certain anarchism in scientific practice, and relativism and scepticism in truth and knowledge.

Of course it should be noted that the relativism implied in the position of those who reject the empiricist view of theory-independent observation is a result of their incomplete rejection of the dogmas of empiricism. It is precisely because they still accept that the objectivity of scientific practice resides solely in its observational or experimental verificational procedures, that, having undermined the validity of these regulative mechanisms, they end up with a set of nihilistic conclusions about the nature of scientific knowledge. For them, to indicate the social and historical dimension of the scientific production of knowledge, is to open the gates to relativism and agnosticism. They are incapable of theorising these social relations of scientific practice as material



objectivities. They lack a sense of objective history and awareness of the materiality of scientific practices.

### (iii) Philosophical Method and Sociology

It is often held that it has been the growth and development of the positive natural sciences which led to the crisis of confidence that philosophy has suffered in the twentieth century. Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy, which itself has largely reduced epistemology to the philosophy of scientific method, has been a major proponent of this view, although it also pervades Husserl's work and has surfaced again in Critical Theory.

What is clear however, is that insufficient attention has been paid to the implications for philosophy of the tremendous growth and development of the social sciences towards the end of the nineteenth century. The hermeneutical and historicist philosophies of the neo-Kantians immediately spring to mind as an index of this influence. But more generally, and profoundly I would argue, philosophical theorising has, in the twentieth century, had to come to terms with the historical and sociological view of man so long suppressed by classical epistemology. This accommodation is what unifies the philosophical movements in Europe since the 1920's. The conversational theory or paradigm sketched above represents precisely such an accommodation of philosophical discourse to a more pervasive and subterranean rupture in the organization of our knowledge. Foucault has unearthed the foundations of this modern episteme<sup>9</sup> — the new concern with the materiality of history, and social structure and process; the emergence of a new interest in language, the body, the unconscious and social relations, as determinations of human nature; a corresponding decentering of the absolute cognitive subject. This "analytic of finitude and human existence" finds expression in the renewed interest in man, not merely as a possible object among others for the exercise of a positivistic scientific interest, but as an exemplar of being — human being. As

Foucault notes:

"the threshold of our modernity is situated not by the attempts to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called man."<sup>10</sup>

The conversational theory of mind, self and language plotted across the four major philosophical traditions in the 1920's represents a regional effect in philosophical discourse of this epistemic transformations. For Husserl and indeed Russell, there could be no compromise with historicism and sociologism and there could be no comprehension of the epistemological import of the founding of the sciences of history, political economy and semiology. Their work however, remains effected by that absence. Philosophy since then has been a thinking through of the implications, epistemological, moral and political of man's fundamental sociality and historicity.

Let us be clear here what I am asserting. I am not claiming that the academic discipline of Sociology as it has developed and is practised today, has been responsible for the mutation of philosophical knowledge which has produced in European philosophy, of different schools, a rupture from the absolutist ego-logical tradition of the classical period and the move to a new position - the sociologistic foundation of the conversational paradigm. As we have seen, Sociology itself has been trapped by the residues of this same ego-logical discourse and has been slow to reflect on the epistemological consequences of its own form of analysis. What I am claiming is the occurrence, in the twentieth century, of a fundamentally more profound rupture in the field of knowledge than the mere appearance of Sociology. This rupture is first visible in the historically precocious work of Nietzsche, Marx and indeed Freud, as they wrested the concept of "man" away from its enlightenment a-social, individualist roots, towards a radically social theory of being human. This rupture has in turn rendered possible the major trend in twentieth century philosophy in the four major

traditions, phenomenological, pragmatist, anglo-saxon analytic and Marxist philosophy.

It has lead philosophy, once it has begun to afford a central place in its theorizing to social process and communicational practice, "through the back door" into the epistemic area traditionally occupied by the Geisteswissenschaften. The existentialist philosophical anthropology of phenomenology, pragmatism's evolutionary and semiological interests, the ethnographic orientation of ordinary language philosophy, its 'socialized' philosophical psychology and the new sociologistic philosophy of scientific method sketched by Kuhn, are all indexes of this fundamental restructuring of philosophical discourse and the new relation with the social sciences.

The radical reflection on these investigations, as modes of social enquiry, became the situation for a critique of egological thought and for the initial tentative explication of a conversational epistemology. However the different traditions, phenomenology, marxism, pragmatism and analytical philosophy, the former two of a Continental habitus the latter of a distinctive Anglo-Saxon one, have shown different propensities to engage in such a radical reflection on the auspices of their mode of enquiry.

(a) Analytical Philosophy

The dominant institutionalized school and tradition in the Anglo-Saxon world is undoubtedly analytical philosophy. This approach, despite its post war ordinary language developments, has been slow to acknowledge the new intimacy of philosophy, in the conversational mode, with the social sciences. Indeed analytical philosophy has fought a vigorous rearguard action against encroachment on 'philosophical problems' by the social sciences. As epistemology became increasingly naturalized, in the twentieth century, and reduced to the philosophy of scientific method, analytical philosophy has been forced to abandon the classical claim of

philosophy to be 'king of the sciences', systematising all knowledge and providing it with indubitable foundations. Analytical philosophy has embraced instead a conception of philosophy as a second order activity directed at clarifying concepts and dispelling methodological problems in the first level discourses of various scientific disciplines. The role of philosophy is seen as one of clearing away the conceptual and methodological obstacles which occur in scientific discourse and which impede the progress of science. The assumption seems to be made by philosophers who adhere to this 'under-labourer' conception of philosophical practice, that scientists themselves are incapable of such theoretical and discursive activity and need the help of patient philosophers who will help them over their conceptual muddles. As Ted Benton notes:

"The under-labourer conception affects to give the philosopher a very modest role - but this humility is, I shall argue, misleading."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed it is. In analytical philosophy's 'second order' relations with Sociology, the specificity of philosophical method, and by implication its conceptual priority over social theory, is asserted despite, as we have witnessed, the sociologistic foundation of analytical philosophy in its ordinary language phase. Indeed Winch goes as far as to acknowledge this communicational and social foundation of philosophic method. Noting that:

"to be clear about the nature of philosophy and to be clear about the nature of the social studies amount to the same thing. For any worthwhile study of society must be philosophical in character and any worthwhile philosophy must be concerned with the nature of human society."<sup>12</sup>

But he ends up not merely establishing an identification at the methodological level between the two disciplines but rather reducing Sociology to the Philosophy of Language and Action. Sociology becomes construed as misbegotten epistemology. Thus despite his perception that Philosophy in dealing with language and thought is treating of essentially

social relations, he adheres to the view, central to the underlabourer conception of philosophy, that philosophical method has a logical priority and specificity vis-a-vis sociology, because it deals with the formal and conceptual features of social relations. Winch takes issue with the underlabourer conception in his argument of the importance of grasping the central consequences, for epistemology, of sociality. He refuses to confine the study of social relations to the regional area of Sociology and argues for the rejection of a second order philosophy of this regional area of Sociological discourse and its replacement with a serious reflection on the import for the key philosophical area of epistemology, of social reality. However in the end, he implicitly invokes the second order conception of philosophy with its claim to logical priority over first order empirical discourses in order to reduce Sociology to socialized epistemology.

This general assumption held by analytical philosopher, including Winch, of the specificity and indeed 'logical' superiority of philosophical method vis-a-vis Sociology or the other social sciences, rests apparently on a single assumption. It is held that philosophers and sociologists ask "logically different types of questions". The former is concerned with 'formal', 'conceptual' or 'logical' enquiries into the meaning of concepts and scientific practices with a view to clarifying or legitimating these. The latter is concerned with empirical investigations into regularities in social life, the explanation of these, and accumulation of a body of substantive knowledge.

However as we have seen, since Wittgenstein, ordinary language philosophy has abandoned the <sup>ic</sup>logism and crude positivist theory of meaning characteristic of the early reconstructionalist period of analytical philosophy. The search for an ideal language modelled on a calculus of scientific signification has been abandoned in favour of an analysis of

language in its social and pragmatic context of usage.

More recently Quine has demonstrated,<sup>13</sup> in a rather more formal manner than Wittgenstein's ordinary language analysis, that the importation of logistic approaches into the study of natural languages is unwarranted. Such an approach, he argues, rests on a confusion and conflation between logical relations and relations of meaning or synonymy.

The notion of analyticity in natural language where it does not rest on the analyticity of pure tautology, e.g. all spades are spades, is based on a prior notion of synonymy e.g. in the proposition: no bachelor is married. The assertion of the analytic nature of the statement, the 'logical' nature of its truth rests on the postulated synonymy of the terms bachelor and unmarried man. But however, the notion of synonymy utilized here, vis inter-changeability of the terms without change of truth value of the statement itself pre-supposes the notion of analyticity, for it is the case that the term bachelor is regarded as synonymous with unmarried man if and only if the statement - all and only bachelors are unmarried men - is analytic.

Hence a certain circularity ensues with the importation of the notion of analyticity into the analysis of meaning relations without any prior independent clarification of the notion of synonymy.

The notion of synonymy invoked by ordinary language analysis, the so called 'informal logic' or 'logical geography' of our concepts is based no longer on a principle of formal analyticity between formulae of an axiomatic system but rather on identities of meaning conventionally rooted in the us ages particular to various social contexts and activities.

To invoke the notion of 'informal logic' to describe these normative conventions of speech and word use is somewhat confusing and contradictory. For it is the case that the chief characteristic of logical or axiomatic systems is their purely formal nature. Propositions are related not by substantive relations of meaning but rather by formal rules of inference.

The sentence used to express logical truths must be formulas of a formal language i.e. a language that can be specified without any reference at all, direct or indirect, to the meaning of the formulas of the language. Modern logic clearly sees itself as a branch of formal axiomatic theory, concerned with the investigation of the transmission of formal truth functions in axiomatic systems by valid rules of inference. The concept of meaning has long since been banished from its concerns.

And, on the other hand for post-Wittgensteinian philosophers, it is the normative rules of everyday language with their social origin in a form of life, rather than the rules of implication of logical systems which constitutes both the object and framework of their analysis.

Analytic philosophy has made the move from a form of linguistic analysis based on the construction of a logico-syntactical framework for the language of science which demarcated the possibility and limits of meaningfulness, an ideal language project, to, on the other hand, a form of language analysis based on the descriptive analysis of the usage of ordinary language in various social contexts, with little or no self-reflection on the epistemological consequences of this very move from an objectivist standpoint to a socio-logistic position. It has suffered from a problem of residue.

For analytic philosophers since the 1920's it became more and more apparent that language owed its form not only to logical syntax, nor even referential semantics, but primarily to what Charles Morris christened 'pragmatics' i.e. to the use everyday people made of it in specific social contexts; to specific language games with constitutive rules. However this awareness was not accompanied by a corresponding self-reflection on the fundamental rupture in philosophical knowledge, in both the areas of epistemology and ontology, that the move to a conventionalist approach to language analysis entailed. To quote Karl Otto Apel:

"The logic of science as it was developed by the logical positivists has not, up to now, reflected upon the fact that, after the exposure of the hidden metaphysics of its early days it moved to the new ground of the a priori of Communication. Instead of reflecting upon

this new presupposition of its conventionalist phase it has tacitly held on to its former pre-suppositions inherited from logical atomism which implied methodological solipsism."<sup>14</sup>

Apel's claim is that language communication provides the prior methodological basis for all science, social or natural. Since Dilthey and Weber, the specificity and irreducibility of social science has been held to reside both in the nature of its object viz. systems of cultural meaning and value, and in the form of its method - interpretative or hermeneutic understanding.

For Apel however, natural science and its traditional positivist philosophy is also founded on the possibility of inter-subjective communication. Not merely because such communication is a material condition for carrying out research and transmitting results, but also because of the form of neo-positivistic logic of science. Analytical philosophy of science is characterized since Russell by its having taken 'the linguistic turn'. It is held that language is a necessary inter-subjective mediation between mind and the real world. Initially this entailed the search for an ideal language of science which could bring together mathematical logic and primitive referential propositions to produce a systematic calculus ratiocinator, the embodiment of scientific rationality. However this project was soon to flounder when it became apparent that the ontological status of logical connectives and observational statements was unclear. For both of these elements of the ideal language rested on a conventional basis and thus involved issues of the clarification of meaning and implementation of rules of usage. Conventions cannot be reduced from first principles within a calculus, nor can they be derived from empirical observation or by induction from such observation. Rather, they pre-suppose inter-subjective communication, language-games with distinctive rules. Rule following, convention adherence, as Wittgenstein has showed itself pre-supposes sociality and communication; a solitary ego cannot be said to follow a rule.



The cognitive operations of science presuppose then a 'community of interpretators' who arrive at both tacit conventions about the use of basic terms, observational and theoretical, as well as explicit conventions about definitions, theoretical constructs etc. As such, Apel claims, the 'a priori of communication' is the 'transcendental' foundation of natural science as much as that of social and cultural science. It is the auspices of analytic philosophy's linguistic method.\*

The consequences for analytical philosophy of this unthinking, this oversight of an absent presence - the newly emergent sociologicistic foundation of their conscious analysis - have been just the arrival at this contradictory notion of informal logics. The foundation and form of linguistic analysis moves from the 'ideal language project' to the description

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\*Apel's notion of the "a priori of communication" and the source of its derivation in Habermas's concept of a 'quasi-transcendental' set of different research guiding interests operative in the natural sciences, hermeneutic-cultural sciences, and critical theory, remains particularly obscure. Habermas, revealing his closeness to the German idealist tradition, confers upon these interests, which precondition the possibility of the methods and results of the various branches of science, the status of a 'phenomenological a priori'. He appears to reduce epistemology to a philosophical anthropology of knowledge of the most abstract sort. The historical and empirically material dimension of the structuration of scientific practices and discourses is replaced by an essentialist and completely a-historical ontology of the human being-as-knowing-agent.

In this study I have attempted to plot some of the epistemic conditions of existence of Apel's 'a priori of communication'. My analysis of the conversational paradigm, while undeveloped at the level of materialist extra-discursive dependencies, attempts to portray the historical specificity of the communicationally informed approach to epistemology. By invoking the notion of discursive structure and eventually plotting the relations of dependency between discursive events and other social practices we will eventually be in a position to give some body to Foucault's intriguing term "the historical a priori". It is only within the ambit of such a discursive analysis of a historical-materialist nature than we can in fact clarify the obscure status of Apel and Habermas's 'quasi-transcendental research guiding interests.' The anthropological and essentialist form of critical theory operates as a considerable obstacle in the path of a development of a properly materialist epistemology. A sociologized theory of meta science<sup>15</sup> is no substitute for the painstaking historical and discursive analysis of the specific conditions of existence of discrete systems of knowledge at particular historical periods.

of everyday usage; from a notion of language as a logico-syntactic framework and universal object language to one of a series of socially contextualized language games. However the terms of the surface discourse of ordinary language analysis are carried over from the objectivist-formal theories of the ideal language project. Not only in the very notion of an informal logic, but also in the maintenance of the rigid distinctions between 'formal' and 'substantive' questions, 'conceptual' and 'empirical' issues, 'analytic' and 'synthetic truths' and in talk of 'logically necessary conditions' for the application of concepts. All of this is quite inapplicable to a conventionalist approach to language and meaning. In what sense at all, if one abandons the neo-positivist reduction of language to logical syntax and universal object language, can one talk of a purely formal analysis of concepts and discourse.

A further consequence of the carrying over of these logistic terms into the discourse of ordinary language analysis has been to preserve the specificity of the philosophic approach over and above the sociological despite, as I have asserted, their common epistemic foundation in the 'A priori of Communication'. This assertion of specificity rests on the very claim of the specific formal and conceptual nature of philosophical analysis as opposed to the substantive empirical approaches of sociology.

Indeed, the traditional hostility of philosophers to Sociology itself as a discipline can be seen partly as the consequence of this same inability or unwillingness of philosophers to radically reflect on the auspices of their own analysis, namely on the central tenet of that analysis an essential sociologism.

Thus it is paradoxical, yet understandable, that analytical philosophy should recoil in horror from the implied relativism of a sociology of knowledge, which in confronting Western thought with its own radical sociality and historicity, subverts the traditional epistemological and

moral absolutisms characteristic of that thought in its search for the apodictic. For, if it is the case as my symptomatic re-reading of analytic philosophy suggests, that linguistic philosophy now occupies, wittingly or not, a common epistemic space with Sociology, the 'A priori of Communication' or conversational paradigm, then the new problems posed by this major move in Western thought to a sociologistic problematic must also be thought by analytical philosophy.

The 'logic' of linguistic analysis explicated in the notion of language games and forms of life, has clearly abandoned the previous objectivism of the neo-positivist period. The obscurantist clinging to the terms and categories of the former problematic may preserve the illusion of objectivity. But the very fragility of these outmoded terms cannot conceal the spectre of a lurking relativism more threatening because more ungrasped, than any resulting from sociological enquiry. The replacement of the outmoded categories of the neo-positivist problematic is the prime theoretical obligation of analytical philosophy today.

For analytical philosophers of science, it is necessary to rethink the problem of relativism in the light of the recent developments in the philosophy of science and meaning, rather than continue to address it from the standpoint of an outmoded positivist philosophy of science.

What we are required to think by the occasion of the emergence of the conversational paradigm and the revolution in philosophic thought since the 1920's, is the specificity of philosophical method and practice in an age of sociological reason. The phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge, Critical Theory and Marxist materialist epistemology of the French school represent attempts, with varying degrees of success, to do precisely this.

These forms of analysis in their unity and in their important differences, explicate the novel epistemological directions made possible by the opening up of that field of knowledge first chartered by the

analysis of self, mind and language from the social standpoint. That field, the conversational, which is the condition of possibility of reflective analysis on the social conditions of the production of knowledges, in turn become an object of such epistemological investigation. The sociologistic approach to epistemology encourages and sharpens the reflexivity of philosophical thought.

A materialist epistemology, which addresses the conditions of production, epistemic, ideological and socio-material of specific knowledge domains represents the most developed and historically appropriate form of philosophical reflection practised to date. It, in the end, is the only tradition capable of posing the issue of the objectivity of scientific theory and practice when the process of the production of scientific knowledges is understood in socio-relational terms. Both the phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge and Critical Theory stand unsteadily on their feet when they face this issue. They sway dizzily towards the twin supports of nihilism-relativism and transcendentalism which flank them on either side. They find in various existential and humanistic anthropologies a mediation of the two poles which still circumscribe them. Behind the multifarious reductions and scepticisms they employ to "render problematic" the world as "naively given", lies one bedrock, one absolute objectivity — "man", the incarnate subject-object of moral ideology. This "man" is a residue, the last figure in a long line of dramaturgical chimera — the Cartesian cogito, Kant's I think, Husserl's transcendental self, Sartre's existential subject, Mounier's person, Fromm's "man". Having disposed of the pure subject, must science now suffer its reincarnation in this transcendental doublet "man"? Can no one rid of this troublesome character; this anti-science?

#### (b) Towards a Materialist Epistemology

There is of course a genuine problem here in rethinking the concept of

science that is appropriate in an age of sociological reason. The problem to date has crystallised around the problem of relativism and the related one of establishing criteria of scientificity which demarcate science from ideology. The central problem within philosophy in the conversational mode has become how to theorize certain social relations as constitutive of scientific practice but maintain a non-reductive and hence non-relativist account of their relationship. This is the reformulated problem of relativism and even this form retains a burdening level of abstractness, generality and a-historicity. However, neither the phenomenologically oriented Sociology of Knowledge nor contemporary analytical Philosophy of Science has been able or willing to think through this reformulation. The former retreats to philosophical anthropology and the existential encounter Merleau-Ponty offers us. The latter follows Kuhn and Feyerabend up the anarchic and irrationalist cul-de-sac they have entered. Both responses lead to subjectivism and a self-defeating relativism and scepticism.

The greatest advances in the 'solution' of this 'problem' of relativism have come from the French epistemologists operating in the Marxist tradition who insist on reposing the 'problem' from the standpoint of a historical-materialist theory of scientific practices. This analysis reveals a historically, objectively given, "hard wall" of institutionalized activity carried out within given social conditions and organized on the basis of determinate economic, political, ideological and theoretical relations, which cannot be merely dissolved by the phenomenologists' or perspectivists' doubt. In a real sense only this materialist tradition has been able to trace the import for our understanding of science and knowledge, of the new centrality of sociological reason and historical method, without lapsing into either the scepticism or anthropologism which is the death of science.

As early as the pioneering work of Marx and Nietzsche the contrasting directions for epistemology sociologized were there. Either the development of a materialist approach to the social sciences which sought to extend the systematic and anti-idealist traditions of the natural sciences to the study of history and society and in turn rethink our concepts of science and epistemology from the viewpoint of a historical-materialist analytical practice: Or alternatively, the collapse of philosophical thought to a position of profound nihilism, from which philosophy can only be rescued by a profound leap of faith in God, man, life or any other abstraction provided by an 'engaged' philosophical anthropology. Nietzsche at least had the consistency to resign himself to his nihilism, to his madness.

Quite clearly, that irrationalism and nihilism while constituting in Nietzsche's hands a hammer with which to smash the idols of classical metaphysics and accordingly serving as a "progressive force" in the development of a materialist conception of philosophic practice, is now in the present period, an epistemological obstacle to the development of such a materialist theory of knowledges.

In this last section I wish to sketch the foundations of a materialist theory of knowledge. I shall be concerned here with the problems of science not of cognition in general. In particular I am concerned to outline the elements of a historically and sociologically informed analysis of scientific practices which is non-reductionist and demarcative with regard to ideology.

The problem of relativism as traditionally stated i.e. unreformulated is a consequence of empiricist epistemology. Because empiricism has traditionally conceived of science in logical and experiential terms, it restricted its analysis to formal proof and evidential support. This has led to an impoverished, rarified conception of science. In particular

the whole processes of discovery and dissemination which are inaccessible to logical analysis are ignored. As a result the analysis of these processes of discovery and dissemination, in the end social processes, are artificially separated from issues of proof and verification of formulated hypothesis. Empiricist epistemology becomes "a broken backed compromise between the unrestricted realm of an individual subjectivity that creates and the absolute restrictions imposed by a timeless true sphere of confirmation or falsification in its proof."<sup>16</sup>

The subjectivisation of the creative moment is accompanied by the reification of the verificational process; both result from the impoverished and abstracted conception of science. The more freedom given to the subject-hypothesizer, the tighter the objective controls on the verification/refutation of hypothesis viz. Popper's logic of science. Within this couplet

subjectivity		objectivity	the freedom of subjective
creativity	-----	verification,	creativity

is purchased by constricting the verificational process within impossible limits (impossible because science actually does not operate according to this logic.) Correspondingly any concern with the creative moment within the couplet implies a move to the subjective pole and the problem of relativism threatens. There is no investigation of the objective-material i.e. historical and epistemic conditions for the production of scientific knowledge. These objective conditions which include the social and historical context of particular scientific communities and individuals, the dominant structurations of knowledge in a science at a given period and indeed the technological conditions for experimental work are not theorised within empiricist theory of science. They are obscured and ignored under the psychologized notion of 'creativity' and the sole objective conditions for the emergence of scientific knowledge located in the realm of an invariant verification procedure. "Scientificity"

then resides in the prescriptions for an ideal science, often a stylised model of physics, and philosophers of science sit in judgement of the methodology of various areas, a constant overarching vigilance.

Against this supreme yardstick of scientific rationality, social theory is effectively disenfranchised as an autonomous area of scientific practice.

However, theories which take as their object the whole of knowledge, seeking an epistemology for all scientific practices in a general theory of cognition, set up the conditions for their own dissolution in scepticism. This is so for two reasons. Firstly the difficulty of conceiving knowledge as a unity given the obvious specific and differentiating nature of various sciences. Secondly, any half-blown historical or sociological study of a science reveals that scientific practice simply does not correspond to the legislative canons of positivist epistemology. Indeed it could be argued that the very notion of invariant criteria of scientific rationality is in fact only necessary if the terms of scepticism are accepted. If one accepts the materiality of scientific production of knowledge, and realizes that scientific practice has an objectivity which cannot be reduced just to an invariant hypothesis selection procedure, then in what sense can knowledge be cast in doubt? Can we doubt the material existence of research reports, conference papers, scientific abstracts, journal and books? Can we doubt the collection of scientific data, its storage and calibration, its utilization in technological process, its dissemination in educational programmes?

Etienne Balibar, writing about Gaston Bachelard the 'father' of historical epistemology, or at least its French variant, notes,

"Objectivity is not the name of a 'critical' questioning followed by the reassurance of a fictitious 'guarantee'. Rather it posed initially, as a fact, not a simple fact but one which is not to be doubted of. In other words, contrary to the whole tradition which flounders about interminably in the obvious incompatibility between the idea of an objectivity



of sciences (hence the idea of a truth in their results) and the idea of their historicity (hence the idea of the 'relativity' of their results, theories, concepts and givens of fact), Bachelard shows from the start that only objectivity of scientific knowledge permits the rigorous thinking of its history."<sup>17</sup>

Empiricism confuses and conflates two questions:

How is science possible?

How are human minds able to gain knowledge of the world?

A failure to answer the latter question, provokes a retreat to scepticism which means that the former problem cannot be objectively and rationally approached. Because, within empiricism the sciences privileged epistemic status is guaranteed by an invariant verification principle, any assault on this principle, as in Kuhn or Feyerabend, results in a problem of relativism. This epistemological edifice is built like a house of cards, tamper with the key card and the whole house collapses.

A materialist epistemology on the other hand, attempts to wrench epistemology from its traditional concerns viz. the truth-scepticism opposition, and to reconstitute its form by a systematic study of the concrete practices of the distinctive sciences. The central task of such an epistemology is to theoretise the objective conditions of production of scientific knowledges. The major assumptions of this approach are:

1. Science is epistemology functioning in its practical state. The epistemology must be extracted from the historical process of the development of various sciences by way of concepts which specify the conditions of possibility of that science and its development.
- 1.1 As such, epistemology interacts with history of science which is given a new privileged position in relation to epistemological concepts. A link is forged between epistemology and the actual practice of the history of the sciences.
- 1.2 Historical conditions do not exhaust the objective conditions of possibility of particular sciences. Scientific practice has a degree of autonomy with regards the material determinants of historical process. It is governed then by epistemic dynamics and structures which cannot be reduced to those of other levels of social formation - economy, polity etc. As such, epistemology must draw on the resource of a theory of discourse. That

is, an objective analysis which can formalize the structure of thought systems in their distinct systematicities and which can in particular, theoretize the specificity of various sciences as signs systems viz. a viz. ideology. Kuhn's unclear notion of a 'paradigm' is inadequate as an analysis of the structuration of scientific knowledge. It must be replaced by a rigorous semiotic study of scientific discourses.

2. The object of such an epistemology is the distinctive practices of specific sciences.
  - 2.1 This is a denial of the notion of a unitary science. Such a unity depends in its conception on a belief in a universal invariant methodology, such a belief is counterfactual. The singular term 'science' is in fact an imaginary unity constituted by philosophers of science.
  - 2.2 Accordingly the demarcation between science and ideology is not an invariant, absolute and universal one but rather specific to various scientific practices which struggle to differentiate themselves from their ideological context, a struggle objectively represented in their discrete systematicity of theory and method. Galileo's defence of Copernicanism and the emerging construction of classical mechanics illustrates such a struggle and the historical specificity of the science/ideology opposition.
  - 2.3 Epistemological intervention plays a subsidiary, auxiliary role within actual scientific practice. Epistemology must abandon its second order pretensions as a legislator of invariant scientific rationality. Such prescriptions of traditional epistemology have often functioned so as to hinder the production of scientific knowledge e.g. the effects of positivism on social science, in particular sociological theory.

'Science' then, is characterized in terms of the metaphor of production. Scientific practice is seen as a complex of definite processes of production of knowledge, the unifying principle of which is a common conceptual field, and set of discrete methods. The metaphor serves to challenge the whole atomistic and abstracted conception of knowledge. In turn it stresses the historical, epistemic and indeed institutional and technological situatedness of scientific practice, factors which condition the very possibility of that practice. The major concern of epistemology is then conceived of as the analysis of the process of production of knowledge -

"The transformation of a given raw material (scientific knowledge and/or pre-scientific representation) into a given product (new scientific knowledge); this transformation would take place by the application of definite scientific agents of production using definite means of labour (concepts, theories, methods) in definite production conditions (both material and social)."18

With 'science' grasped in its material situatedness, a materiality which is constitutive of scientific practices, and with epistemology conceived as an analysis of the conditions of possibility, historical and epistemic, of discrete scientific practices, then the question of objectivity can be seen in completely different light than within the rarified optic of positivism. Objectivity is no longer held to reside merely in the invariant hypothesis selection controls, but rather to be a function of a science's form as a definite i.e. historically and materially given means of conceptual labour in definite production conditions. The question of the historicity of science is not merely to do with the external conditions i.e. the social, economic and political 'context' of scientific institutions addressed by the empiricist History of Ideas or Sociology of Science. Rather it involves the core issue of the historical conditions of possibility of the production of the concepts and methods of a particular science. This historicized conception of the objectivity of discrete scientific practices, an objectivity which resides first and foremost in the posing of problems within a determinate discourse of theoretical concepts and methodological and experimental techniques rather than in the answers given to these and the strategies of verification employed to validate these, "introduces into the very heart of scientific activity a material constraint". Scientific practice can no longer be seen as the free play of the mind and reduced to an egological theory of cognition stripped of its sociality. The objectivity of scientific knowledge must be theoretized from the historical and discursive point of view and not from that of an outmoded

positivist theory of cognition.

On the other hand the materiality of scientific practices, a historical and discursive materiality, cannot be reduced to a social phenomenology of the scientific 'community'. The social relations of scientific production, institutional, economic, political and ideological cannot be reduced to the inter-personal interaction and cultural-ideological dispositions of a community of investigators. To assert that scientific practice is objectively determined is to deny that the social and structural relations of scientific production of knowledge can be reduced to the subjectivity or indeed inter-personal subjectivity of an individual scientist or group of scientists. It is this reduction of the social relations of scientific practices to those of a set of interacting subjectivities, involved in interpersonal communication, characteristic of the first phenomenological phase of the conversational paradigm, that leads to the very subjectivism and relativism that epistemology sociologized has been accused of. The materiality and objectivity of the social relations of scientific production is of the essentially same nature as that of other aspects of social production. Marx reminds us:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces."<sup>19</sup>

A historical materialist theory means that for the first time it is possible to theoretise the social relations of scientific production as constitutive of scientific practice, without a relapse to the relativism characteristic of phenomenological conceptions of inter-subjectivity.

Secondly with the development of a theory of semiotics i.e. a theory of discursive practice, originally derivative of the science of linguistics but increasingly differentiating itself as it develops its own specific

concepts and methods, it has become possible to theoretise the specificity and relative autonomy of the production of knowledge. Given as we have seen that scientific 'perception' and hypothesising takes place within determinate structurations of theory and concepts, then the adequate analysis of these discursive structures is of a paramount importance if we are to grasp the totality of the conditions of production of scientific knowledge. The key concept here is problematic rather than paradigm, for this term stresses that structurations of knowledge are not merely the ossified product of scientific practice but rather the mechanism by which scientific practice operates and hence the condition of that practice. We must understand how this specific machine operates. As it is in form a set of irreducible discursive practices, then the analysis of its mode of effectivity is a task for semiotics. Sign systems such as scientific knowledge can be analysed formally as distinct objectivities.

Within the circumscribing materiality of history it is possible to analyse the structural systematicity and discursive objectivity of systems of scientific knowledge. Materialist epistemology is then a synthesis between a history of scientific practices and a semiotic study of scientific discourses. This synthesis is accomplished within the theoretical ambit of historical materialism, the science of social formations and their determining form by Louis Althusser, who draws on the historian of science Gaston Bachelard, Althusser's student Michel Foucault has developed the perspective and applied it in his historical and structural study of the social sciences. In England the Marxist orientated journal "Economy and Society" has championed the new epistemology reprinting many articles of French and Italian origin.

The issue then is the specificity of philosophical practice in an age of Sociological reason. Materialist epistemology attempts to delineate the terrain on which we might expect to find an adequate philosophical

practice. It accepts the subordinate and auxiliary role of the philosophy of scientific practices in comparison to actual scientific activity. It rejects the notion of a universal philosophy of science concerned with legislating invariant criteria of scientificity, objectivity and control, by reference to imposed invariant standards or guarantees of verification and data collection. It rejects the notion of epistemology as a search for principles of legitimacy to "guarantee" or control the methods and findings of the sciences. This involves a critique of both positivist philosophies of Science which seek their own foundation on natural scientific method and also those epistemologies which seek a philosophical foundation for science such as Husserl's transcendental search for the apodictic, or Critical Theory's postulated "research guiding interests". As Manuel Castells has argued,<sup>20</sup> the latter variant i.e. the search for an epistemological principle of legitimacy external to scientific research itself, has become the dominant philosophical response within social science itself. Having abandoned its former positivistic optimism, and standing naked, to the implacable criticism of social practice, Sociology, like Hans Christian Andersen's Emperor, dons its make believe garments. However, no "epistemology", grand "search for method", "dialogic inwardness" can hide this essential-stark-nakedness. Sociology increasingly reduced to the activity of parading before a gullible public in these borrowed clothes, indeed faces, like the deluded monarch, a coming crisis.

However

/to those of us trained in the analytical tradition of the Philosophy of Science, with its traditional attachment to neo-positivist method and Unified Science Programme, the historical epistemology of the materialist still seems to leave certain key questions begging.

Firstly, there is the question of the nature of the relationship (if any) between the descriptive historical and structural analysis of knowledge domains as systems of social relations both institutional and

discursive, and between the activity of prescriptive intervention in the practice of various sciences aimed at defending and strengthening their objectivity and scientificity generally. It has to be recognized that analytical Philosophy of Science did attempt to address the central issues of the conditions of adequate scientific practice although it did so in terms of legislating as an external epistemic institution invariant standards of, objectivity based on empiricistic realism, of explanation explicated in terms of the deductive-nomological model, and of hypothesis control and selection founded on logically justified criteria of verification. This legislation may have had some effect on the actual practices of the sciences, we are not in a position to actually know.

However, what we are concerned with here, is "how does the historical epistemology of past scientific and ideological discourses make any contribution to the current development of the sciences?" Can it?

The clearly different motives of analytical-prescriptive Philosophy of Science and Historical Epistemology is displayed in the radically different ways they approach the issue of objectivity in scientific practice. For Bachelard and the French tradition he inspires, the objectivity of sciences is not in particular, as we have seen, a problem. Seeking as they do no absolute guarantee of truth for knowledge areas, they accordingly understand the objectivity of scientific practices in terms of their material givenness as a system of social relations of theoretical production in a specific historical period. The objectivity described, is precisely this material givenness of science as a set of social practices. This objectivity is the very condition of the historical recognition of sciences as specific social practices.

The Positivist on the other hand sees the establishment of absolute truth conditions for the verification or refutation of hypothesis as the condition for the correct ascription of the label "scientific" to a

particular theoretical activity. The verification principle or its Popperian variants, becomes the demarcative criteria for the identification of scientificity.

The former notion is descriptive, based on a theoretical understanding of the facticity of the historical and social. The latter notion is prescriptive. It seeks to divine and then legislate for Science by establishing the general and invariant conditions for intersubjective truth or indeed meaningfulness, in order to establish the demarcative criteria of scientificity. Caught in the gaze of its own idealized creation it turns its back on the history of sciences or forces that study to search for an essential teleology - the steady rational historical progress towards this ideal Unified Science.

It should be noted that in the first instance Althusser, operating in the historical and structural tradition, was able to overcome this gulf between the descriptive-structural analysis of sciences and the traditional prescriptive concern of epistemology with standards of scientific rigour. The threatening vent between these two interests was repaired in his early discourse by the utilization of the resource of invariant criteria or mechanisms for the identification of scientificity in theoretical production. As we have noted, Althusser sketches the science/ideology break in a universalistic manner. He invokes a general concept of Science and of Ideology in order to characterize the nature of the discontinuities between them. He ends up posing the abstract and general thesis of an absolute and universal opposition between science and ideology rather than describing the historically situated form of this break in specific sciences at a particular conjuncture. This thesis is, despite its materialist declarations, too close for comfort to neo-positivist demarcations, though of course Althusser's motive in defending such an invariant demarcation is quite



different, based as it is on providing a validation for the scientificity of Marxism, (independent of revolutionary practice) by establishing general criteria of scientificity which legitimise the particular science of Historical Materialism.

Accordingly, having established such invariant criteria by isolation of a general science/ideology break, a source is provided for the location of the conditions of "normal science". The structural description of the scientific problematic easily translates itself into prescriptions to guide scientific practice i.e. into norms to be realised or indeed to be imposed on science. Philosophy as the "theory of theoretical practices" lends itself, only too easily, to this subtle shift from structural analysis to methodological prescription and interference; a sleight of hand already with a distinctive historical pedigree since Stalin's "Dialectical Materialism". This move, i.e. this form of the linking of philosophical theory and scientific practice, made in the blessed name of the "relevance" of philosophy spells, as in the Stalinist Third International, the death of sciences, including the political science of Revolutionary Marxism itself.

But, perhaps we can re-pose the problem of the relationship of an archaeology of knowledge to current scientific practices i.e. its obligation, in different terms. The problem is, I would argue, no different from those which surround the issue of how Historical Materialism as the historical science of social formations informs current Marxist political practice and struggle. I am not it should be noted posing here a general question about the relationship of historical understanding to social planning, the so-called anguished enquiry into history's "relevance". Rather, I am addressing the relationship of a particular theoretical-practice viz. historical materialism to a practical-practice viz. political struggle.

In the specific realm of Marxist political science we have no difficulty in conceptualizing the above issue in terms of the relationship of revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. In this context we have no difficulty in posing this relation concretely in terms of the role of a mass Workers' Party, democratically committed to a programme based on this historical understanding, on a related analysis of the current conjuncture and its points of crisis and on the estimation on the basis of tendential laws, moderated in their effects by the state of class struggle, of likely future social and political developments and appropriate strategies of political intervention.

As Mao notes,

"Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance."<sup>21</sup>

We have no difficulty in seeing the role of the revolutionary cadre or organic intellectual (dare we say Philosopher!) as the intervention in already given political practices to strengthen the revolutionary struggle of the worker's movement and give it a sharper focus in its sectional struggles with Capital. We easily understand the basis of that intervention to be the employment of the correct strategy and tactics for mobilizing workers in conscious class struggle i.e. for raising the level of political consciousness of workers of the historical and material determinants of their concrete struggles. This involves challenging the ideological control of the ruling classes over the minds and political organs of the working classes precisely by raising their level of class consciousness and political activity in and through their involvement in economic and political struggles. It also entails safeguarding the classical but accumulative tradition of Marxism from revisionism and various types of opportunism which threaten its development and progressive refinement as a living body of theory and practice.

The fight for the correct programme for the workers' parties to combat Capitalism in the present era, and the struggle to implement this programme in and through the rank and file struggles of the working class, is the concrete means for effecting the unity of theory and practice in Marxist science.

The problem of the relationship of philosophical method to scientific practice is, I would suggest, of this order; theory as an intervention in practice.

And indeed Althusser late in the day after the chastizements of his fellow Schoolmen, and, with a burdening sense of his party's failings in May '68, has come to realize that political science and practice might directly inform our understanding of the role of philosophy vis-a-vis science. He has renounced his earlier "theoreticism" and returning to his study of Mao, announces the primacy of practice over theory. But we ask, is the organizational form of the political practice he espouses, the French Communist Party, likely to operate as the concrete means for linking revolutionary theory and practice and as the catalyst for thinking that relation at the level of theoretical reflection?

Practice, he announces, precedes theory and constantly goes beyond it, both the practice of science and that of the revolutionary struggle of the workers' movement. But, he has moved see - saw - like from one absolute pole in the theory-practice equation viz. theory, to the other viz. practice. His earlier position invoked a notion of pure theory and reduces science to theoretical practice and the intellectual to the Scholastic. His latter stance inverts the reduction affording practice, a pure and primary state. In truth Althusser seems incapable of grasping the relationship of revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice as a properly dialectical one.

At the political level he ends up divorcing theory and practice by

ignoring the question of the crucial role of programme, strategy and tactics in mediating theory and practice. His recent criticisms of the P.C.F. are delivered merely in terms of the organizational deficiencies of the party, i.e. an attack on the lack of internal democracy within it. He seems incapable of tracing the concrete relationship between the bureaucratic non-democratic form of the party organization (revealed in the leadership's sabotage of the Union of the Left and the Common Programme in cynical disregard to rank and file feeling and conference decisions) and the historical adoption by the party since the 1930's of a Stalinist programme and strategy. He offers no alternative to this degenerated programme other than the piecemeal democratization of the Party.

In turn, in his later work, Althusser turns his efforts from providing a general conceptualization of Science to establishing the discrete scientific specificity of Marxism as a particular area of theoretical practice. He moves in turn, to a different model of philosophy-as-political-intervention in science.

But again, he understands this relationship only in abstract terms, i.e. not concretely, in practice. He sees the intervention of philosophy as being one with an external origin i.e. from Philosophy a separate theory, on the autonomous discourse and practices of Science. Both in politics and science, theory is set in absolute opposition to practice. In the former domain, he is unable to grasp the dialectical relationship of theory and practice in the Workers' Movement largely, I would argue, because of his inability to break with the P.C.F. Stalinist programme which in its very ossification of the class-struggle in stultifying bureaucratic forms, destroys the role of the revolutionary programme strategy and tactics as the instrument for forging the link of theory to practice, practice to theory. He falls back instead to a crippling intellectualism; not to that of the Second International's deterministic remove, but to the new scholasticism of the intellectual in a Stalinist

party. The intellectual and his work, his "theoretical practice", is pushed to the sidelines of party organizational activity safely away from the key areas of programme and strategy. There he stalks in the wilderness of esoteric theory divorced from a concrete relationship to the workers' struggle in so far as<sup>as</sup> an intellectual he is removed from the fight for the programme. The intellectual in the Communist Party today, his practico-critical activities banned from the core programmatic policy decisions in the party, returns to his cloister.

The key to understanding Althusser's difficulties and indeed the new scholasticism of the intellectual left is the increasing rift between the intellectual and revolutionary political practice in the workers' movement. This is conditioned in turn by the political degeneration of the Marxist programme as a living guide to practice in the hands of the Stalinist Third International. The intellectual's emasculation is accompanied and completed by his increasing incorporation into the higher educational system in which he seeks a new social basis for his activities.

In the domain of science Althusser is similarly unwilling to grant scientists the ability to politically intervene in their own practices to defend science against ideological encroachments. Because this intervention is defined by him in terms of an ideological struggle, and ideological considerations are defined by him as outside the realm of science (Science is conceptualized in terms of an absolute opposition to ideology, practice in turn, is seen in the end as the antithesis of theory i.e. as non-reflexive, non-conscious). Accordingly, the sciences in their treatment of epistemological obstacles of an ideological nature, must be assisted by the externally based interventions of a philosophy committed to defending scientific rigour. Scientists as practitioners are apparently incapable of such interventions i.e of becoming conscious of the material auspices of their practices.

This judgement goes against the experience of the history of the sciences. For instance, the Royal Society the foremost body in England promoting natural scientific practice in the second half of the seventeenth century, clearly saw its task as not only providing the technical and theoretical apparatus for the pursuit of experimental science, which it in fact did, but also defending the "new philosophy" from ideological assaults, whether from the Aristotelian traditions of the Universities, from the Royalists who resented the puritan roots of the Society or from indeed the utopian reformers like Hartlib and Comenius who sought to harness "real studies" to their fabulous schemes for the creation of a "Pansophia". Seth Ward, John Wilkins, Christopher Wren, fought a running battle with the Universities in their pamphlets, speeches and indeed sermons from the pulpit defending experimental science and launching into the "epistemological obstacles" which stood in the way of the development of the "new philosophy". They were their own ideologists and philosophers accompanied but certainly not led by Locke the anatomist.

Moreover, what are we to make of Marx himself and his work? Does not this corpus present us with the clearest example of the unity of science and philosophy within a common set of theoretical practices? Is not his Critique of Political Economy a conscious rupture with the dominant bourgeois ideology of his day and its theoretical expression in classical political economy. Is not this critique a conscious critical rupture from this specific ideology, grasped as the signifying practice of a particular social class, and in turn the condition for laying the theoretical foundations for a new terrain of scientific practice? And what of Nietzsche? And Freud? Heisenberg? Foucault! Are not these concrete unities of philosophico-ideological theorizing and scientific practice not a real refutation of the judgement that philosophy is distinguished from a pure science because

"it alone can represent within the science and within its 'theoretical practices' the instance of the non-theoretical social practices and of class struggle which informs them."22

Surely what is in fact implied in Althusser's analysis is not that "Philosophy" has a pure and independent status, external to specific sciences, but that with the development of a materialist epistemology, itself derivative of the scientific practice of Historical Materialism, it is now possible to incorporate the class theoretical view in the very heartland of scientific practice where it may inform scientists of the material determinants of their theoretical and institutional practices? What is entailed here is the dialectical and dynamic relationship within the social institutions of science, Universities, Research Institutes, literature and records, between a pure scientific practice necessarily engrossed in its own interiority, yet materially dependent on outside bodies for resources and subject to political and class interests and control, and on the other hand a critical materialist reflection on these ideological and material constraints on scientific theory and practice in the current era of monopoly capitalism and world imperialism. This mediation is to be forged, as it has been historically, by pedagogic activity and in the present era, by opening up science as a social institution to public debate and democratic accountability and thus of necessity, to worker's control. In this sense the intervention of philosophy and its responsibility, is a political one.

We are now in a position to address the second question that seems to arise with the new ascendancy of historical epistemology. This is the issue of the specificity and role of philosophy as a theoretical practice given the apparent drastic reduction of the terrain on which its objects are to be found. This reduction has resulted from firstly the secession of the natural sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the independence clawed from it by the social, cultural and historical

sciences in the nineteenth. In the twentieth century furthermore, as we have seen, historical understanding and semiological analysis challenge the very kernel of classical philosophical reason - epistemology itself. Faced with these encroachments and challenges, philosophy has attempted to come to terms with both natural and social science; to the former by reducing epistemology to the prescriptive explication of scientific method in the positivist project; to the latter in the conversational paradigm itself; an attempt to accommodate to sociological reason and historical understanding by binding them to a foundational philosophical anthropology, a humanism.

The problem of the specificity of philosophic method in an age of sociological reason is I have suggested posed in its clearest form by Marx and Nietzsche. They and indeed they alone, struggled to think the unity of science and philosophy and forge it in their own theoretical practices.

More recently a materialist epistemology, itself the result of the extension of historical materialism and semiology, to science itself as a set of social relations and discursive practices, has given us the concepts with which to think that unity in a more systematic form.

This unity does not, it must be insisted, involve a reduction of philosophy to the empirical history of ideas or sociology of knowledges. Such a reduction and the relativism it invariably leads to, is the death of philosophy. It is an anti-science. In the archaeology of knowledge and the historical epistemology it permits, epistemology retains its methodological primacy over empirical history. History can only proceed in its empirical investigations on the basis of an epistemological theory about the rules for the identification and analysis of discourses. On the other hand this theory can only be distilled and refined in the course of particular historical studies of specific sciences and



ideological discourses. We are necessarily caught in a circle here. This circle is the unity of philosophy and history in their dialectical fusion. It is the current dynamic of philosophical method.

In turn philosophy once we accept its status as a momentum towards greater theoretical reflexivity and political intervention within scientific discourse can be redemarcated as a set of theoretical practices.

These can be understood in terms of philosophy's role in representing within various sciences the instance of non-theoretical social practices, the historical and political conditions which determine these, and their effectivity on the production, distribution, and use of sciences knowledge.

In particular we now increasingly understand the discontinuities which demarcate the emergence and transformations of sciences and ideological discourses in terms of a break which is irreversible but incomplete. It is in other words a process, a continuing break. We have in this study located as the other side of the incompleteness of this break the problem of residues from previous discourses. The conversational paradigm is itself, partly to be understood as formed with its specific discursive structure, as the product of a break with egologicism, but also simultaneously as a residual effect of egological discourse. What we have sketched is not an instantaneous and historically discrete event but rather, "the beginning of a process which has no end." Philosophy as I have suggested must think through the consequences of its conversational rupture.

Philosophy as a moment within scientific practice, engages these problems of residue and lapse, and the epistemological obstacles created by the very incompleteness of scientific revolutions. It does so by strengthening the tendency within sciences towards greater theoretical reflexivity. It helps sciences to "think" the break that is the condition of their emergence or revolution and the progressive continuation of which

is the safeguard of their scientificity.

## FOOTNOTES

1. George Herbert Mead: Mind, Self and Society, op. cit., p.47.
2. Volosinov: Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, op. cit., p.11.
3. Merleau-Ponty: Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence in O'Neil, op. cit., p.39.
4. "On the Phenomenology of Language", ibid., p.87.
5. M. Heidegger: Existence and Being, op. cit.
6. Volosinov, op. cit., p.21.
7. The term is that of Karl Otto Apel: The A Priori of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities, Man and World, Vol. 5, No. 1, February, 1972.
8. Kuhn: op. cit.,
9. Foucault: Order of Things, op. cit.
10. Ibid., p.319.
11. Ted Benton: Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies, R.K.P., 1977, p.3.
12. Peter Winch: The Idea of a Social Science.
13. W.V. Quine: "The Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in from a logical point of view, Harper Torchbooks, 1963, p.20-46.
14. Apel, op. cit.
15. See e.g. Gerard Radnitzky: Contemporary Schools of Meta Science, Akademiforlaget-Goteborg, 1970.
16. Karel Williams: Facing Reality - A Critique of Karl Popper's Empiricism, Economy and Society, Vol. 4, No. 3, August 1975, p. 309-359.
17. Etienne Balibar: From Bachelard to Althusser: the Concept of 'epistemological break', Economy and Society, Vol. 7, No. 3, August, 1978, p.212-213.
18. Althusser: Reading Capital, op. cit., p.
19. Marx: Preface to the Critique of Political Economy, op. cit., p.182.
20. Manuel Castells and Emilio de Ipola: Epistemological Practice and the Social Sciences, Economy and Society, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 1976, p. 111-145.
21. Mao-Tse-Tung: On Practice from Four Essays on Philosophy, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1968, p.14.
22. Balibar, op. cit.

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