MEDITATION, METAPHOR AND MEANING

This paper is an attempt to understand the nature and origin of meaning. The focus is on metaphor because meaning cannot be understood until metaphoric meaning is adequately explained. In ordinary language meaning is taken to be primarily literal and metaphor is measured against the literal. The paper suggests that this prejudice of the literal mind distorts meaning and makes metaphor impotent and unintelligible. The literal mind is incapable of understanding metaphor or meaning for that matter. Thus primary aim of the paper is to show that literalism leads to absurdity and fails to account for meaning. It is only when the prejudices of literalism are overcome that the mind is open and capable of appreciating the rational power of metaphoric meaning, indeed of rationality itself.

The Primary of Metaphoric Meaning

There has always been something mysterious about metaphors, and common sense has usually been ambivalent about it. One voice of common sense remains in awe of metaphoric meaning regarding it as the highest flight of poetic imagination and the deepest reaches of insight. But the predominant voice of common meaning takes metaphor to be frivolous, decorative, and secondary. This ambivalence in ordinary language persists and the two dispositions of common sense remain split and unmediated. The result is that metaphor has not been properly understood, and with the eclipse of metaphor all aspects of meaning become shrouded in darkness.

Perhaps the main reason for the mystification and deprication of metaphoric meaning is that the literalist voice of common sense has dominated consciousness and repressed the other intuitive non–literalist voice. One task in this study is to explore the workings of the literalist mind and show how it systematically reverses the order of meaning and leads to a pathological condition in everyday life and language. The literalist voice believes that literal meaning is autonomous and primary and that all other forms of meaning are derivative and based upon the foundation of the literal. It teaches that all modes of meaning have central reference to primary reality which is disclosed in the literal vision of the world and experience It moves in the faith that literal meaning is the absolute standard of fact and truth, and that other modes of meaning must be measured against this standard. Indeed, the literalist voice is taken to be the voice of rationality and understanding itself, hence the ultimate judge of what makes sense and what does not.

This study will attempt to show that the literalist mind has gotten priorities reversed and has forgotten the primacy of metaphoric speech. From its prejudiced point of view the literalist mentality is incapable of appreciating the true liberating power of metaphor and in fact only leads to absurdity and irrationality. By contrast, the repressed alter–voice of common sense – is brought to the fore and an attempt is made to mediate the two voices of common sense. While the literalist voice leads to absurdity and irrationality, the other voice makes clear that common sense essentially trades on metaphoric meaning in its every breath It is disclosed that metaphoric meaning is primary discourse–the noble but repressed voice of common sense which can liberate the mind from the bondage and fixation of literal meaning.

Thus, it is only with the true appreciation of metaphor that meaning and understanding come into focus. But to come to this appreciation the mind must first transform itself beyond the artificial limitations of literalism. So another objective of this study is to attempt to understand the dynamics of transformation of consciousness from literalism to metaphoric meaning. When the repressed and pre-conscious metaphoric voice of common sense comes to consciousness it then comes to light how common sense meaning can work. We then see that metaphors essentially call for a transformed consciousness to be understood, but at the same time they are the primary vehicles of such transformation.

Literalism and Primary Meaning ; The Faith of the Literal Mind

To understand literal meaning we must approach it in the context of the form of life from which it arises. Literal meaning is an expression of a mentality which I shall call " literalism ", so let us approach literal meaning by analyzing the features of the literalist mind.

Literalism is an *ontological* disposition—a way of being in the world, an attitude towards reality, an understanding about thought and meaning as these reflect that reality.

Meaning is primarily an ontological affair, and this is no less true of the forms of meaning which comprise " common sense " as expressed in ordinary language. So let us explore the ontological attitude of common sense.

The fixation of meaning

Common sense teaches that the conscious, rational thinker lives in a world that surrounds him, a world that is external to and independent of him. The world is changing, but with relative fixity of things. Things " out there " have a certain fixity and continuity in change so that we can identify them

fairly easily. In ordinary language, which reflects common sense, names are given to things and these names stand for the things they name. We can use names to refer to things and pick them out in the environment. Things are identifiable and have properties for which we also give names. These attribute names stand for properties or qualities of things, and we can pick things out by naming them and describe things by using the property words. One important function of thinking and using language is to pick out things and describe them, and in this way we represent or picture the world out there. Despite ongoing process and change both in the world as well as in ourselves the names and terms of our language and thought have a relative fixity of meaning A given name means the thing it refers to. So there is an ongoing one–to–one correspondence between words and things. The stability of meaning is grounded in the relative stability and fixity of things. This fixity of things gives a certain order to thought and the world and allows language to work.

The first point of interest in this simple common sense picture is that there is logical space between the thinker and the world—there is a structural distinction between the locus of thought and the locus of world. This original dual structure is a primary ontological feature of the literal mind : it sets the stage for the nature of meaning as representational–where meaning is a correspondence between the two realms.

The second point to notice of ontological interest is that meaning is grounded in things.. the way the world is. And things have inner stability which allows us to identify them and which differentiates them from other things. To state this in ontological jargon–things have essence and continued identity. Again, things are differentiated from one another by their unique properties–to be a thing is to comprise unique properties.

Since thought as expressed in ordinary language replicates the world we find that on the side of thought the structure of things is reproduced. Thought consists of names standing for things and property words which stand for the qualities of things. In logic this is called "predication"—thought consists in combining logical subject and predicate. The main point is that thought copies the world and meaning consists in a primary relation between the two. Later we shall face the question of the nature of this supposed relation— what do the two realms have in common to allow thought to replicate the world ? What is the unity between thought and world that allows signification or meaning to take place ?

In the above relatively simple common sense picture of meaning we find the ontological origins of literalism. It is so simple and powerful and intuitively clear that it seems to be beyond question to the literalist mind. Common sense has been carefully cultivated over centuries. And centuries of the best philosophical reflection has attempted to articulate and formalize this intuition of literalism. In logic from Aristotle to Wittgenstein the logic of literalism has been explored and formalized. Here the central concern has been with understanding logical form–the form of thought. Likewise in ontology the history of the tradition has been an attempt to articulate and formalize the nature of things with special emphasis on identity. Let us draw out briefly some of the main points of the tradition which has attempted to articulate and explain the literalism mentality – the philosophy of common sense and ordinary language.

I shall suggest that when the more complete picture of literalism is articulated it will be exposed as being incomplete, highly problematic, incoherent. To facilitate a brief sketch of the features of literalism I shall review some themes of several of my earlier published papers.

The Ontological Explication of Common Sense :

Ontology is the science of common sense, the science which gives an account of meaning as it arises in relation to reality and thought. We have seen that common sense (the shared meaning of a community of speakers) situates itself in a structure which makes reference to the world, to thought and to things. But common sense is not something that stands on its own apart from the speaker or thinker who entertains the sense, it is essentially an expression of the form of life of the speaker. The texture, quality and being of this sense is essentially a function of the state and quality of life of the speaker–thinker. The presence and identity of the speaker is implied in common sense, it usually remains implicit and in the background and is taken for granted. Yet it is of the utmost importance in ontological analysis to query the identity of the speaker–thinker, for the origin of sense is not just to be found in the words that are uttered, nor in the form of language spoken, but in the very voice or consciousness of the speaker-thinker. Common sense is a form of human life and literalism is an ontological mentality which expresses a certain quality of life of the speaker–thinker. Thus, in exploring the ontological structure of literalism we must constantly remember the central reference to the *identity of the speaker* in literalist thought, speech and meaning.

We tend to think of common sense as though it were an object having independent existence, analogous to how we think of the world, or language or thought. It seems that sense or meaning is an objective relation between these three things having no essential dependence on the identity of the thinker. Indeed the identity of the speaker–thinker is taken to be just another entity in the world; it is an entity which thinks and apprehends sense. But we shall see that in the ontological analysis of common sense this naive view must be corrected.

Literalism is the predominant way in which common sense has articulated itself...it has evolved over centuries in different cultural traditions.....it is in effect an ontological theory or self–interpretation of sense – thought interpreting itself.

There are numerous alternative ways in which we may approach the *ontology of literalism*.

One place to begin is to notice that sense is essentially some sort of relation which arises in a dual structure in which thought stands over against the world. We may say that reality is a comprehensive unity which encompasses any possible thing including thinker, thought and world. While the thinker is in the world and part of it, thought stands over against the world and attempts to think or apprehend the sense of things. Thus, sense arises in a dual structure.

Another starting point is to notice that common sense begins with dual intuitions both of which appear to be primitive—one is the intuition of unity, the other of diversity or plurality. That is, reality must be all encompassing, a totality of existence spanning all possible things. While the world consists of innumerable diverse things, reality is a universal ontological space which "contains" it all—a unifying whole. We shall see that this intuition of an absolute unity is a formal condition of the rationality of common sense. And this unity is not just the unity of reality, but a recurrent requirement throughout common sense – the speaker--thinker must have a unity, language must have a unity, there must be unifying condition of meaning, objects have their unity, and so on. At the same time, common sense teaches that there is diversity, difference, plurality, multiplicity. An essential part of the particularity and identity of things is that they are *differentiated* from one another and irreducibly distinct. It will be crucial for us to determine how the dual requirements or

conditions of common sense reason (of unity and diversity) are
to be reconciled. The central problem of this study is to under-
stand how common sense accounts for unity in the presence of
duality and diversity.

Sense, Grammar and Logos : Ontological Space :

In preparation for the articulation of literalism we need to
see how this *dual structure* of sense arises and it is necessary
first to explicate some fundamental terms and themes which set
the context for the literalist mind.

First, I shall use the term "Logos" to indicate that space
which makes possible and holds together in mutual relationality
the realms of thinker, thought, world and language The term
"Ontology" specifies the science which accounts for Logos – the
science of reality. Thus, " Reality " is synonymous with Logos
and indicates the all encompassing space that includes all being.
I shall use the word "sense" to indicate the essential relatedness
of thinker ("I"), thought, language and world–all of which
are included in Reality, or Logos. It may then be said that
Ontology is the science of Logos / Reality / Sense. I use the term
"Ontological Space" to indicate that universal domain in which
thinker, thought, world and language co–exist in mutual depen-
dence and relatedness. And the term "Grammar" is the form
of Logos or Ontological Space.

It is crucial for our purposes to understand the pervasiveness
and depth of *ontological Grammar* : all aspects of common sense
are grammatical, all forms of experience reflect grammar, the
world as such is constituted in grammar, language and its diverse
forms of meaning arise in grammar, the very identity and exis-
tentiality of the thinker and thought are possible only in the
context of grammar, and so on. To live, to interpret, to think,
to speak, to understand, to be rational, is to be grammatical.

Let us call this the *" hermeneutical theme '* : any form of sense or meaning is the expression of grammar – any form of interpretation must be relative to grammar.

Literalism is a certain attitude towards grammar and sense, and it is appropriate here to elaborate on the origin of sense in ontological grammar. A grammar is a structure or system which defines a language of reality, and historically diverse grammars have been developed. For example, the traditional Hindu language–world is the expression of a certain grammar. This grammar differs in fundamental ways from, say, the traditional Christian grammar or world. Human history has articulated a diverse range of ontological grammars which have emerged in the form of world cultures. And it is evident that what makes sense in one cultural grammar does not make sense in another. The particular shape of ontological space in the Hindu world differs remarkably from the grammatical form of the Christian grammar. Thus, from the ontological point of view reality, experience, rationality, and meaning are differently constituted in diverse grammars. What is taken to be common sense facts of existence in one world are not even intelligible in another world; common sense itself differs dramatically in diverse cultural grammars. So the first fundamental point about meaning is that sense is relative to a grammar of reality, and what literally makes sense in one grammar differs from what literally makes sense in another.

Grammar and Voice : Ontological Univocity

First we need to explore the origin of the literalist *voice*. In developing the hermeneutical theme it would be helpful to introduce the concept of " voice ". It was just stated that the very existence of the thinker is already situated in grammar. Here the " thinker " includes any possible form of experience and human life to be human is to be grammatical. So whether " thinker "

includes thinking, willing, judging, speaking, acting, etc., these are all activities situated in grammar. Let us use the term "voice" to indicate any possible mode of "I" as the speaker in grammatical space.

Now we may say that the primary condition of speech and meaning is that voice be *univocal*.

"Univocity" means having a Primal Unity, Uniformity or Universality.

The primary transcendental condition of discourse is that grammar and voice *be univocal*.

The Univocity Condition may be explained as follows :

If Grammatical space were not Unified and a unifying Force, discourse would not cohere. So Univocity means primal unity, consistence, uniformity and universality.

Ontological Universality needs to be explained : To be universal is to be all encompassing, and this means to be a unifying point of reference for all possible things. An ontological universal cannot have its unity external to itself. This is another way of saying that an ontological universal must constitute the Universe.

It has long been recognized that rationality in some sense depends upon there being ontological univocity. If grammatical space were note univocal then meaning would not cohere and would be *incommensurable*.

Furthermore, the Univocity Condition requires that *voice* be ontological univocal with grammatical space as well. If voice were not univocal with grammar, then speech would not cohere. There must be a primal unity (non-difference) between voice and grammar.

This means, of course that the features of grammar are the features of voice : and the univocity condition holds for voice as well—voice must be univocal for speech to be coherent.

It has been taken for granted throughout the history of thought that voice is ontologically univocal. Usually this point is not even brought up for discussion, it is simply assumed. Even in voices like Hume's where it is seen that there is no existential univocity for the " I " from moment to moment (for Hume questioned existential univocity) he nevertheless assumed ontological univocity in his own speech (in his own voice;) otherwise his treatise would not hold together in all unity.

If we carry Hume's point to the ontological level it would be readily apparent that ontological univocity of voice is a condition of intelligible speech :

Imagine (if it is posible) that voice were discontinuous from moment to moment and not univocal. (And we should question as well the univocity of time itself in this respect.) If voice were not ontologically univocal a continuity, unity, uniformity and a universal condition – thought, speech, meaning woulddisintegrate into chaos.

It must be stressed that ontological univocity (universality) is not the ordinary form of univocity or unity that we find in experience. For we shall see shortly that conventional univocity already eclipses the primal univocity of grammar. Primal Univocity is in some sense non–dual and prior to there being any possible determinate identity or differentiation. The mere presence of the differentiated " I " or voice has already disturbed the original univocity of grammar and voice.

The Holistic character of primal univocity of grammar/voice will be developed in section 3. But it is essential that we begin

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with a preliminary sense of the univocity condition, if only by contrast to the artificial univocity of the literalist voice.

The literalist mentality or voice has already divided (equivocated) grammatical space and cannot in its own terms recover or apprehend the primal univocity of grammar. Holistic Univocity is prior to identity/difference, internal/external. There is no separation, duality, diversity, multiplicity, and unity, polarization, opposition differentiation, individuation, particularization. In short, it has none of the features which arise with the duality of identity or literalism. Thus, in primal univocity grammar is a unity and unifying condition unto itself, there being no external or internal unifying point of reference.

Features of Artificial Univocity of Literalism

With the particularization of voice, grammatical space is divided against itself and there is a fault between voice and grammar, often experienced as the dual structure of "consciousness" standing over against the world (object). When grammatical space is thus divided the primal univocity of grammar/voice is lost, and a self–polarization of voice takes place.

But (the literalist) voice recognizes the need for univocity and creates an artificial univocity in an attempt to replicate the original univocity condition.

The presence of the individuated voice structurally divides grammatical space and sets a recursive divisiveness or polarization in perpetual motion. Let us see how this polarization of artificial univocity works.

The polarized grammatical space of literalism is committed to there being individuated identity – and this means a differentiated self existence or existential independence and determinacy. But any locus of grammatical space inherits the univocal feature

of grammar. The individuated voice sets itself up as the univocity condition within its domain.

Any individuated locus of grammatical space replicates (inherits) the features and dynamics of grammatical space as a whole. This means that any sub–divided portion of grammatical space will require the univocity condition in that domain.

So each domain will universalize itself and attempt to be a universe unto itself – having its unifying condition within itself – self referential univocity. This is the ontological meaning of self–existence – not being dependent upon an external thing for unity and integrity. Thus, any domain of divided grammatical space will universalize itself and have absolute dominion over its space. It will fill its space and be a universe unto itself.

Notice that this individuated univocity is set within a deep structural duality in which it stands over against *what is other then itself*. There exists a division between internal and external when grammatical spece is divided.

Grammatical Cosmology : The Origin of Grammars

The literalist voice is one that takes itself to be one which exists, which has determinacy and identity, which is (distinctive) unique and differentiated. It takes its own features to be an absolute necessary condition of the way things are. When we *begin* with this individuated voice grammatical space takes on a particular appearance, and we need to pause to inquire into the grammatical background that makes the individuated voice possible.

Grammatical Cosmology

Identity divides grammatical space, and to exist is to occupy a domain of grammatical space. The division of holistic grammar of course interferes with primal univocity and a divisive polari-

zation is introduced. Let us do some grammatical cosmology and attempt to recover the dynamics which were set in motion with the dividing of Logos. This is not a temporal (historical, evolutionary) process.

With the division of grammatical space a self–polarization arises which recurs throughout any domain, for the primal univocity condition is eclipsed.

With division comes polarization and with polarization identity and difference emerges. Now it is possible to differentiate regions of grammar and this implies a univocal point of reference with respect to which differences are held together.

Any region universalizes itself and stakes a claim over its territory. This is the law of existence—to exist is to occupy grammatical space and the force of existence is to create its own univocity-to be ontologically autonomous, independent, and self—identical This is not a temporal (Historical, Evolutionary) process.

In effect this means that the differentiated voice strives to take up its space universally (universally being precisely and fully occupying one's space).

This dynamics of self–universalization inherent in divided space expresses itself in the form of *self–existence* – the self reference (reflexivity) in which it provides its own inner univocity.

But self-existence finds itself in a deep predicament in attempting to provide its own univocity—for in defining its territory it finds itself in opposition to *otherness* (other univocities), the presence of that over which it stands in having its boundaries. The presence of otherness is ontologically threatening to the universality and univocity of the individuated voice. In declaring

itself universal and a universe, hence independent, it finds itself delimited and limited by the presence of the other. It thus finds itself in an inner tension of taking itself to be univocal, but at the same time realizing that its very existence reveals it to be delimited, particularized, differentiated and not univocal.

Another prefatory note would be timely. In a grammatical excursion such as this it is important for the author to flag his own voice as a reminder for himself and the reader of the locus of his voice at any given time. We shall see that an essential feature of voice is its ability to occupy diverse regions of grammatical space simultaneously and thus speak in multi–vocity.

Let us begin with the inner dynamics of the individuated voice in its own self–referential grammaticality.

The Literalist Voice

The individuated voice finds itself thrown in a deep tension and predicament.

On the one hand it sees itself as independent and self–existent and having its own inner integrity and univocity. In this respect it universalizes itself and claims universal dominion over its space. It takes itself to be the nniversal point of reference and the univocal condition of discourse.

However, in so doing it comes to see that its own inner self existence places it in polar opposition to external others and otherness in general which borders its space and delimits it. The mere presence of the *other* ontologically threatens its self image of being the universal point of reference and univocity—and a dual inner tension arises.

On the one hand it sees itself as being unique and universal and independent, but in that very image it realizes that it is dependent, delimited, particularized and challenged in its purported univocity.

Its response to this predicament is to assert itself in its self—universality and expand its territory and dominion to be all encompassing. It sees that two distinct voices cannot occupy the same space so it expands space, i.e., its *univocity*, to find a higher point of univocity which would encompass the diversity of otherness. But this polarized dynamic and triangular strategy only finds itself in the same dilemma of univocity of the higher locus, for it too is individuated and differentiated, and the polarization continues, without beginning or end.

The above grammatical cosmological myth of " origins " needs to be drawn out more fully.

Now the author will step outside the internalized self—image of polarization and take a more distant external and neutral locus and perspective.

The self universalizing (univocating) forces of divided grammatical space place any individuated voice within the polarized dynamics.

The drive to univocity of any voice expresses itself in polar ways :

The internal inertia to universality operates on the individuated voice to become a universe onto itself, to fully encompass all of its space and be fully self-existent and independent. This gives rise to the atomic tendency to be its own univocal condition and hence be grammatically unique and incommensurable, a totality unto itself.

When the individuated voice takes this polar voice, it finds itself polarized by an external force beyond itself which reminds it that it is delimited, not universal and stands in opposition to something beyond itself. This polar force is an *anatomic* tendency which calls for a higher point of unity and univocity. The ana-

tomic voice of universalization is a self–transcending force which recognizes that the way to univocity must be a higher more encompassing point of reference. Since the universe is an all encompassing, all inclusive totality and unity the anatomic voice addresses itself to a higher point of unity to encompass polarized opposites.

But this voice must remain open ended and recursive since, as we have seen, any purported transcendent point of univocity in divided space will always fall short of the primal univocity of holistic grammar, and polarization and triangulation goes on without end.

It is not just for individuated voice that the polar dynamics holds, for polarization is the inner feature of divided grammatical space itself, and whatever appears in localized space will show within itself the oppositional dynamics of identity – the simultaneous pull of the atomic and anatomic poles.

Let us elaborate on the polarization of voice and univocity in divided space.

It was just suggested that divided space strives for a univocity which it cannot achieve since voice becomes divided against itself in polar opposition The atomic voice strives for self–universalization in one direction while the anatomic voices pulls in the opposite direction to reach its univocity, but the polar voices remain self–divided and the irony is that in each striving for univocity equi–vocity is produced, and the necessary condition of rational coherence is violated at the deepest level.

The atomic strategy is to achieve absolute univocity by *excluding* anything else from its space – it moves to the limit of complete exclusion of any other and complete self–inclusion and simplicity. This form of self–universalization moves towards full

determinacy and specificity and finitude and it carries finitization to its infinite limit. It expands its *interior* space to the infinite limit which gives rise to an internal self–transcendence and indeterminacy.

By contrast, the anatomic voice makes the external self–trans· cending move to find a higher univocal point of reference which would be all–inclusive and encompass all possible space, all possible objects. The voice strives to the limit of infinitude as the universal point of univocity thus achieving universality on the cosmic level. Here it presses external self–transcendence to its infinite limit of complete indeterminacy.

The net result of this polarization is that any discriminated thing—any identity in grammar —will " speak " these two voices at the same time and thus be fundamentally equivocal.

We are in a better position now to resume the direct presention of the general hermeneutical theme.

It was suggested earlier that grammar makes the world, thought experience, language, meaning and thinker—" I " possible. And although we began this presentation taking the literalist voice as the starting point, we then found it necessary to back up and inquire into the grammatical origins of the literalist voice and of the literalist grammatical space. We may now proceed to see how divided grammatical space conditions and makes all things possible.

With the division of grammar into voice and field a dual univocity is initiated. And the attempt of voice to recover or recreate univocity only deepens the problem and leads to pernicious multi–vocity.

Our aim now is to try to understand the general dynamic of the separated voice to achieve univocity in grammar.

The irrepressible drive to univocity takes the form of a fixation of voice–a tendency for voice to fixate itself in grammatical space to take a determinate point or locus as the univocal point of reference. Univocity becomes a fixity of voice/locus in grammar.

But the most striking feature of the separated voice is the division of grammatical space into voice on the one hand and the *field* (field of consciousness) on the other.

It is within this division (duality) of voice and field that the dynamics of univocity is to be discerned

What makes this task complicated is the ability of voice to take diverse univocal points of reference in the field as well as to stand back from the field and witness the field.

There is, in effect, an initial multi–vocity of voice in this dual context, one which can be seen in grammatical ambiguity in the meaning of "I". The self–referential term "I" becomes equated with the voice–locus in grammar. In one breath the "I" may be identified with "ego" as the univocal point of reference. The ego is an object in the field, like any other object; to be an object of any sort is to be located in univocity in the field. The field of grammar takes on one reality when voice is identified with "I = ego". But voice may identify itself at any other univocal locus outside the ego in the field, and this gives a different phenomenology of grammer. Or the voice may take a generalized univocal position in the field transcending any given object in the field, including the ego–self. Here again grammatical space is disclosed in a different voice with this center of reference. Again, the voice has the power to disassociate itself from the field as a whole and the "I" becomes the witness of the field as a whole. In this contemplative posture the dynamics of univocity discloses itself in a different voice, and so on. Thus, the variability of voice in its univocity–locus requires that we remain

mindful of multi–vocity of speech in this exploration of univocity.
We shall see that literalism includes this variability in voice in
grammatical space. It is a strategy and habit of univocity within
the context of the multi–vocity of voice.

The Self and "I" in the Grammatical Field

It is natural to begin with the locus of the Self and "I" – the
self–referential voice in the grammatical field. For this becomes
the universal conditioning univocity of voice in any further
thought, or experience. The first person univocating voice condi-
tions all further thought, experience, meaning, world. It is a
transcendental condition of speech and life, and certainly in the
conversational structure of the present inquiry and author's voice.
So we must begin with the recognition of the ever–present *self-
referential univocity* of voice in the grammatical field of any
speech. (The pronoun "I" is a *variable of univocity* of voice in
grammatical space which can take different univocity positions.
There is inherent multi–vocity in the univocity of "I".)

With this as a transcendental preface we may now proceed to
discern the general dynamics of univocity in the grammatical
field.

We want to understand the fixation and fixity of voice and
meaning that is found in common sense in its literalist voice.

As we explore the field of common sense we find discernible
things–the self (referred to in the first person voice "I"), the
world, or cosmos, objects, events, relations, thought, language,
meaning, speech, and so on.

There is a typical dynamic of univocity that conditions any-
thing in the grammatical field. Let us begin with "I" :

That the self (I) is a univocal point of reference in grammar
is readily seen. Indeed, the "self" is a postulated *transcendental*

univocity which univocated all diverse utterances of "I" at different grammatical loci (space) and at different grammatical "times". Common sense assumes an on-going, continuous, ever-present univocal point of reference in the grammatical field which is the very existence of the self. This univocal self conditions all discourse.

With the univocity of the self comes the dynamics of polarization spoken of earlier. With the self-referential univocity of "I" comes the polar voices, each of which strives for primary univocity : First, the postulated univocity of "I" immediately in its specification and differentiation discerns the *not-I* (that which is *other than I*) as immediately given with the presence of the univocal I; with the I arises the not-I as an alien univocity. But the need for universal univocity in the field calls the "I" to a higher univocity, a higher encompassing point of univocity which can encompass both the I and the not-I; and this need for univocity calls for an equivocity in the I both in itself and beyond itself at the same time.

This produces a self-transcending univocity in the postulated univocity of the I and thus we find the *anatomic voice* as a univocity requirement of I.

On the other hand, the polar opposite voice–the atomic voice–feels the threat of complete existential dependency on the internal univocal point of reference and asserts its independence. It moves to its inner autonomy or univocity and takes its inner (self-existent univocity) to be its absolute center of reference. In this voice the self-referntial univocity takes the position of the cosmological universal for all discourse.

Thus in the very attempt to find its self-referential univocity the voice of the self finds itself split in a polar equi-vocity which appears to be beyond reconciliation or univocity.

For each of the polar voices, the move to its cosmological universal is a recursive process – a self transcending postulated univocity that recurs ad infinitum – there is something of the infinite in this process of self–univocation.

One polar limit leads to the transcendent infinite univocity – sometimes called "God" in certain religious grammars. The other polar limit leads to the immanent infinite univocity of absolute self–existence – the substantial self which underlies all attributes of the self, and is itself without attributes.

But this very dynamic of univocity recurs in any item which may be discerned in the grammatical field.

Let's loook at the "world"... the cosmos... which is the grammatical field itself taken as a whole... the all inclusive grammatical space of reality.

As we proceed with the grammatical cosmology we may now focus on the field of grammar which stands over against voice, which surrounds voice aud envelops it as well.

Holding the positioned univocated voice in the background for now, we may inspect the presence of grammatical field as a whole.

Here too we find the expected univocity condition which makes a unified field possible; indeed, the univocity condition of that field is precisely the cosmic universal (univocity) mentioned earlier. The cosmic univocity is that transcendent and ever-transcending cosmic point of referenee which encompasses all possible reality. But despite this infinite recursivity of the cosmic univocity we nevertheless find the polarization of multivocity at this global level as well.

For the field as a univocal whole stands over against the univocity condition of voice and these compete for being the one and true univocity of grammar. The alleged cosmic univocity

of the field cannot tolerate the independent univocity of the voice which necessarily conditions it and makes it possble : there would be no discernible cosmic field without the otherness of voice nor with the otherness of at least the *possibility* of an alternative field. So here again the drive to univocity finds itself in a self–divided situation of equi–vocity which cannot be resolved or mediated. To negate or defer the univocity of voice to the cosmic field is not the answer. And the strategy of postulating a higher mediating neutral univocity would be self–defeating as well.

The background hermeneutical context is now prepared so that we may get closer to the literalist voice and the literalist specification of the grammatical field. We are trying to trace step by step the determinants of the literalist voice in the full determinacy of common sense. We must remember that when we began our reflection centered in the voice of common sense we are *already* located in a highly determinate voice and grammatical field. We are ready now to examine the ontological dynamics in which the literalist voice is positioned in a determinate grammar of reality–a life world.

Let us begin with the internalized voice centered in a grammatical world. This voice lives in a cosmos which has determinate texture and specificity. *The cosmos* (reality) is taken to be identical with the life–world in which it is centered. The grammatical field has universal specificity and the voice self locates itself in this field and takes on specificity of the field as well.

The first point to notice in this internalized voice is that the world or cosmos in which it finds itself-its life–world – has a cosmic univocity or universality which encompasses all reality. Viewed from within (positioned within this univocity) on external independent reality or world can be conceived or imagined

to exist. The question of alternative independent worlds or grammatical fields cannot arise for this internalized voice.

We have seen that with the separation of holistic grammatical space into voice and grammatical field the dynamic of polarization and the problem of primary univocity arises. And we have seen that all subsequent speech–life is conditioned by the self–referential postulate of univocity of voice–that the voice of the speaker–thinker is indeed univocal and determinate in the speech situation. But we have suggested that this alleged postulate of univocity of voice is problematic and cannot be granted from the start. On the contrary, it is more appropriate to assume the *indeterminacy* of voice in ordinary language. That is, despite the required postulate of univocity of voice the dynamics of polarization in fact lead to multi–vocity of voice and it cannot be assumed that there is a true univocity of voice in conventional speech. This original indeterminacy of voice should emerge more clearly as we excavate the hermeneutical layers of the ordinary speech situation. So the question which prefaces this inquiry is : If the self–referential voice of the speaker–thinker is *not* univocal, not operating under a true univocal point of reference, then how can ordinary speech be coherent or rational ?

Within the primary polarity of voice and field we may now witness how the basic hermeneutical categories of world, thinker, thought, language, meaning mutually interrelate and replicate the same dynamics of polarization (univocity) just sketched. First, a world in general in the hermeneutical sense is an all encompassing univocity. The field as a whole which stands over against voice and even encompasses voice is the form of the world. Anything that does, or may or could appear in the world–field is postulated to be encompassed under a cosmic or global univocity condition. The form or substance of the world is precisely the universal univocity of the field. This formal univocity condi-

tion of the world necessitates that there could be nothing that is not encompassed within the world. The world is thus a self–universalizing univocity for any possible thing.

The world, of course, ambiguously encompasses voice and yet must be witnessed by it as its "other". And this original ambiguity is part of the indeterminacy of voice we just spoke of. Voice apparently has the capacity to fixate at different univocal points of reference in grammar. If voice takes the global univocity as its point of reference the voice too must include itself within the world–field. And voice may equally fixate on any thing *in the world,* taking it as its provisional point of univocal reference. So there is a sort of univocal transparency in voice– it is able to focus on a given object and take its univocity as its own point of reference and in a way *becomes* that object. In this way, the polar dynamics of univocity reiterates itself for any given univocal point of reference in grammar.

Conclusion

Thus, we have found in our meditative experiment that all meaning in natural language is conditioned by the presence of voice/grammar. We further found that the presumed univocity of meaning (literal meaning) traces directly to the presumed univocity of voice of thinker/speaker. But our experiment found that within the literalist mentality no real univocity of voice can be achieved. Instead, we found that the presence of voice in natural language always turns out to be inherently equivocal, multi–vocal and inherently indeterminate. The voice-field that conditions all natural language is found to be lodged in primordial indeterminacy if we begin from the postulate of literalism And of course this discovery of the indeterminacy of voice is devastating for the literalist faith since it implies that all meaning in natural language would be infected with original indeterminacy of sense/reference. In recent discussions in logical theory we

have become more used to the possibility of radical indeter-
minacy of meaning in ordinary discourse. For example, in
Quine's discussions of radical translation we are now familiar
with the idea of ontological indeterminacy of the referent. Our
meditative experiment has followed the lead of Nāgārjuna and
expands this limited indeterminacy of Quine's to its full form in
the radical indeterminacy of voice (speaker/thinker). But with
Nāgārjuna we find that this pervasive indeterminacy in natural
language is really a radical critique of the literalist mentality
with its deep compulsion to reify self, voice, mind, meaning,
discourse and world. Our meditative critique has shown that it
is the reifying mentality that is reduced to absurdity and inco-
herence, and cannot adequately account for the workings of
meaning in natural language. And this clarified result brings us
to the horizon of a more powerful hypothesis that we shall
present in the sequel and try to show is more successful in
accounting for the workings of natural language, the univocity
of meaning and the primacy of metaphoric meaning. The way is
open to the meditative exploration of the metaphoric or holistic
mind.

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