# THE LANGUAGE OF THE SELF

# THE LANGUAGE OF THE SELF: A HERMENEUTICAL STUDY OF THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND NARRATION IN SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

By

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## ABSTRACT

What I shall consider in this thesis is the degree to which language structure and usage must be considered if we wish to grasp the nature of that being we term the 'self' – the subject that I am, and that others presumably are. Stated in its strongest terms, the view I wish to explore is not simply that the medium of our understanding of the self is language, but the further and more controversial claim that this self is constituted in and through language usage, and more particularly through self-narration.

The thesis is intended as an elucidation and integration of various 20th century reactions to the modernist, and essentially Cartesian, conceptions of the self, self-understanding, and personal identity. At this level of analysis the thesis will be fairly eclectic, ranging through phenomenology, literary theory, deconstruction, semiotics, and psychoanalysis. The goal and systematic aim of this survey, however, is to develop on the basis of these investigations what I take to be a properly hermeneutic view of the self and self identity.

The contribution to knowledge afforded by the present enterprise lies in its synthesizing of the disparate trends in contemporary thought into a plausible and, to my mind, novel and provocative account of the human subject in relation to language.

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# INTRODUCTION

In a recent work Vincent Descombes[1] traces the development of French philosophy since Bergson through three important stages, which in turn represent three 'advances' in our conceiving of the epistemic relation of the knowing subject to the 'external world': First, the "phenomenological victory over the 'philosophy of representation', thanks to the concept of intentionality." This stage was prefigured in Husserl's exhortation zu den Sachen selbst, which carries over into Sartrean philosophy and phenomenological-existentialism generally. Important to the phenomenological perspective is the unmediated presence of the human subject to the world and its phenomenal contents, which in turn entail a rejection of the Kantian Ding an sich and the metaphysical tradition that prefigures it. The second stage isolated by Descombes is the "hermeneutic victory over 'onto-theology,' thanks to the concept of interpretation." From Nietzsche, through Dilthey and Heidegger, to Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, and Paul Ricoeur, this philosophical stance stresses man's finitude and the partiality of our knowledge of the world. The last of Descombes' stages is the "semiological victory over the 'metaphysics of the referent,' thanks to the revolutionary new concept of the sign." This semiological position, though evident in both Pierce and, to some degree, Wittgenstein, derives its contemporary impetus (which extends to a number of humanistic

disciplines) especially from Saussaurian linguistics and has motivated French thought up to its present deconstructive and postmodern representatives. Says Descombes:

> The discovery of the true nature of the sign is the thesis whereby a sign derives its meaning not from its relation to an independent thing...but from its relation to other signs inside a closed system. (p.5)

These three philosophical positions show an interesting and not arbitrary historical development.[2] All three can be viewed as a reaction against a metaphysics which seeks being (ousia, Sein) beyond experience, that is, in a metaphysical referent beyond the given. Phenomenology emphasizes what Merleau-Ponty called the "primacy of perception" – to be is to be perceived from the perspective of a human subject – while the second, hermeneutics, stresses that our knowledge of such being cannot escape from the historicity and locatedness of our gaze. There is thus no pure insight into being; an insight that could grasp the presupposed untainted intelligibility of things. The third position, semiotics, shifts this whole epistemological-metaphysical debate onto another level by firmly rejecting extra-linguistic reference as being "the unilateral measure of the validity of our assertions", to quote Descombes. The acquisition of knowledge would then be, to borrow from Wittgenstein, the learning and extension of new language games. This latter position, which Descombes identifies with semiotics, could, however, lead to an outright linguistic relativism, a mere word-play if it were not tempered by the life-practices it both serves and gives rise

to. The notion of reference should not, we suggest, be entirely abandoned, but should be recognized precisely as problematic; such caution will serve to exclude both its naive rehabilitation and also its outright rejection.

It is my belief that these three positions are all of value and that their central insights should be integrated. Contemporary hermeneutics can be viewed as usefully fulfilling this task. (I take Paul Ricoeur's work to be an example of such integration.) On the one hand, a hermeneutic philosophy can accept the phenomenological starting point of the human subject's immediacy to phenomena. However, it does not delude itself into thinking that there is a privileged mode of access to the phenomena that would disconnect the categories of our particular historical and linguistic heritage. On the other hand, while recognizing that our understanding is mediated by language and semiotic systems generally – the signifying networks of exchange and communication between human subjects – hermeneutics need not lose contact with the life-experiences of the subjects within this semiotic realm. That is, we not only come to understand the sign systems operative in our world, but also, to some degree, ourselves as we live and interact in and through them. As Ricoeur constantly stresses, semiotics (and structuralism) have still to take the final step of accounting for the experiencing subjects presupposed by any structural social system.[3] Semiotics, as defined by Descombes, would, at its extreme point, remain arbitrary with respect to phenomenal experience, just as phenomenology would remain

silent if it were consistently to avoid the conceptual and cultural biases of our languages.

This methodological prologue is intended to set the scene for all that follows. Hermeneutics, in the form just outlined, will be the guiding philosophical stance throughout the thesis, but this will not discount our accepting many important insights from both the phenomenological and semiotic traditions (including their deconstructive and postmodern inheritors). There are two important methodological points to keep in mind here. First, qua phenomenological, we shall restrict our philosophical exposition to describing human experience from the point of view of language using human subjects already enmeshed in social reality (the Lebenswelt). This philosophical stance will preclude our venturing into metaphysical speculation on the origins of, say, language or consciousness. Similarly, our phenomenological commitment avoids all consideration of the human subject from a traditional empirical or naturalistic standpoint. That is, for example, whether or not events of meaning, significance, understanding and the like can be reduced to functionings on the physical/chemical level of scientific enquiry will not be of concern to us here, for such models and hypotheses rarely, if ever, connect with the experience human subjects have of themselves as meaningful, understanding, self-reflective subjects.

Second, though the semiotic realm (language, advertizing, animal gestures, art, and so on) is far broader than what we ordinarily mean by the term "language",[4] I shall nevertheless restrict my discussion principally to language (spoken and written).

Many other semiotic fields, in the human sphere, both presuppose and utilize ordinary language, and this to the degree that one is justified in calling such language the preeminent or privileged sign system of human intercourse. Neither visual art nor music, for example, serve as the social medium in which our everyday interpersonal transactions are carried out; it is closer to the truth to say that we exist as a speech community within which such semiotic systems and symbolic activities arise as vocational activities. That it might be possible to gain some form of self-understanding and sense of personal identity to the exclusion of linguistic competance is, we believe, secondary to a consideration of the human subject gua language user and will not, therefore, be a question in this thesis. It is hoped that our conclusions will be seen to support this claim. We thus begin with what has been called the "language animal", with the aim of describing the nature of self and identity that this dominant characteristic of our lives entails.[5]

What is attempted in the following work, then, is to draw out and integrate insights from the works of important contemporary thinkers (primarily from all three of the above 'traditions') that are relevant to our central theme of self and personhood. The investigation should yield what I take to be a properly hermeneutic view of the human subject. That is, a view that places especial importance on the role of both language and interpretation to the very constitution of what we generally mean by a self-conscious human subject.

* * *

The principal goal of this thesis is to develop a consistent view of self and self identity from a primarily linguistic basis. More precisely, I want to offer a model of the human subject that takes acts of self-narration as fundamental to the emergence and reality of that subject. This latter position implies the related claim that 'persons' are the result of ascribing subject status or selfhood to those sites of narration and expression that we call human bodies. The person is, in other words, an embodied subject.

On this view the self is to be construed, not as a prelinguistic given that merely employs language (much as we would use a tool), but rather as a product of language – what might be called the 'implied subject' of self-referring utterances.[6] The self, or subject, then becomes a result of discursive praxis rather than either: (a) a substantial entity having ontological priority over praxis, or (b) a self with epistemological priority, an originator of meaning. Let me explain some of these points.

By 'self' is meant the distinct individual that we usually take ourselves to be, an individual, therefore, that also knows itself to be.[7] Associated with selfhood are modes of address such as 'I', 'me', 'myself', 'we'. Selfhood also entails a degree of identity, of self-identity over time. This self-identity, a term I will later have occasion to distinguish from personal identity on account of the latter also requiring embodiment,[8] involves believing or otherwise experiencing oneself to be roughly the same throughout a temporal span. I do not doubt that some such identity does or can exist.

One way to begin accounting for this identity is by positing some form of substantial self or agent that exists ontologically prior to the particular acts of the human subject. Such an underlying self can then serve as the basis of an identity that persists throughout differing acts and other attributes. There are numerous forms of this position, ranging from a religiously motivated soul-substance to an idealistic transcendental ego. Such views tend to be metaphysical or speculative in nature and aim at explaining the identity that is evidenced in our everyday experience by resorting to an underlying self-identical substance (hypokeimenon).

While I do not think that all such positions can be refuted, for their speculative nature may preclude this, I do think that alternate and perhaps more fruitful descriptions (and explanations) of the self can be had; descriptions that put us on a somewhat different tack than looking for a specifically foundational subject. The position I shall offer aims at elucidating the constitutive role of language in self-formation and in self-understanding, and seeks to answer all related questions from that basis.

In claiming that the self is a product, an implicate of action, I am thereby removing epistemological priority from the human subject. That is, there is no self serving as the originator of meaning; something or someone to whom we might appeal in matters concerning the meaning or truth of his or her utterances as though these were prefigured in some non-linguistic interiority of consciousness. Persons only 'know' themselves after the fact of expression, as it were. This move places considerable emphasis on

both habit (as support for identity) and the relevance of context (for the meaning of acts), and goes against all forms of intuitive self-evidence that claim an epistemic transparency of the self to itself. The self is, we might say, decentered, removed from the epistemically central position given it by modern philosophy (particularly in Descartes). Correlative to this decentering, then, is a loss of causal efficacy for the self and a stress on the subject's social setting, language, and habitual structures.

The subject's understanding of itself is, I shall claim, mediated primarily through language, where language is taken to be the social medium par excellence. I shall therefore devote considerable space to the way the subject finds expression for itself in its use of language. Of importance here is the way language prefigures a place for the subject in grammatical forms such as personal pronouns and adverbs of location (here, now, then, etc.). But what becomes especially significant within this linguistic view is the narrational nature of the subject's self-knowledge. The self, as implied subject, is inseparable from the narrative or life story it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits; it is out of this story that the self is generated. At this point it is sufficient to consider 'narrative' as basically synonomous with 'story telling'. Much of our self-narrating is equivalent to telling the story of our lives (or parts of it) from the perspective of a first person narrator. Such narrating generally seeks closure by framing the story within a beginning, middle, end structure. Closure of this sort, I want to claim, is not simply a literary device but a way in which

human events are understood. Failing this structure of closure, narrative at least aspires to followability, that is, to plot a meaningful or logical development of the action.

Though we shall deal primarily with first person narration, it should be clear that such narratives are considerably influenced by the social milieu in which the human subject functions. The stories we tell of ourselves are not only determined by how other people have narrated us, but also by our language and the genres of storytelling inherited from our tradition. Indeed, much of our self-narrating is a matter of becoming conscious of the narratives that we already live with, eg., our role in the family and in the broader socio-political arena. It seems true to say that we have already been narrated from a third person perspective prior to our even gaining the competence for self-narration. Such 'external' narratives will understandibly set up expectations and constraints on our personal self-descriptions; they significantly contribute to the material from which our own narratives are derived.[8] If our thesis were to be expanded, a chapter on this social dimension of narratives would probably be written. However, the present work does contain numerous discussions addressing the interrelation of social and personal narratives (see especially Ch.3, Section iv).

Self-understanding and self-identity will be dependent, in certain important respects, upon the coherence and continuity of one's personal narrative. However, I should point out that selfhood and identity, as I conceive them, are not all-or-nothing matters. One's identity may be (or become) fragmented into many different and

discontinuous narratives. That is, one may take oneself to be a different character at different times, and this is perhaps more common than is often supposed. It should also be made clear that my goal in this thesis is primarily descriptive and not prescriptive; I am not proposing that self-scrutiny and self-narration ought to be a primary and ongoing concern for human subjects. I only hope to describe how the self in fact arises, in various degrees, out of our linguistic behaviour. For much of our lives a concern for self identity may be marginal at best. It is especially in crisis situations and certain turning points in our routine behaviour that questions of identity and self-understanding seriously arise. That we may have, at any moment, the <u>belief</u> in a continuous and relatively unchanging identity is itself little more than a story we have learned to tell ourselves. Understanding the how and why of such narrational acts is a primary concern of my thesis. Let me outline this position in more detail.

Human existence is temporal — we grow older — but if we are to get at the more personal aspect of human existence we must see this temporality as a history. We indeed find ourselves, collectively and individually, embedded in an ongoing history.[10] When asked who we are, more often than not we are forced to give some account of our history that is predominantly narrative in form. Loss of this ability to narrate one's past is tantamount to an amnesia, with a resultant diminishing of one's sense of self.[11] Why should this be so? The answer, roughly stated, is that our history constitutes a drama in which we are a leading character, and the meaning of this role is to

be found only through the recollective and imaginative figuring of that history in autobiographical acts. In other words, in narrating the past we understand ourselves to be the implied subject generated by the narrative.[12]

Self-narration is, however, an interpretive activity and not a simple mirroring of the past. In this respect, even fictions can provide us with characters and plots that we may identify with; the experience of literature and film should prove this point. In the case of our personal narratives, 'truth' is more a question of a certain adequacy to an implicit meaning of the past than of historically correct representation or verisimilitude. I shall argue below (Chapter One) that the meaning of the past is not in fact something fixed and final but is something continually refigured and updated in the present. This question of the truth of our narrations immediately involves us in the very important problem of the relation between the expressed and the pre-expressed in human experience. Examination of this relation will be a central concern throughout the thesis.

This latter examination will involve showing that narrative is the form of expression most suited to portraying human experience. The basis for this position is that our pre-expressed, pre-thematic experience is already what we shall call an implicit or, better, a <u>quasi-narrative</u>. Giving pre-thematic experience such a status implies the claim that we always have a certain pre-understanding of our lives as being (1) historical, and (2) amenable to explicit narrative exposition. In short, we know we are, in our lives, always already

caught up in a story, in a drama of some sort. The term 'quasi-narrative' is primarily to be distinguished from the more worked up and perhaps complete narratives that we find in historical and biographical narratives, in fact from those narratives that we self-consciously give of ourselves. Thus, with respect to self-understanding, the pre-expressed is allied to quasi-narrative experience, whereas the expressed takes the form of narrative in the usual sense of the term. The quasi-narrative status of our temporal experience will allow us to claim that explicit narration of oneself takes up and further configures (selecting, augmenting, and so on) this implicit narrative structure. We shall usually refer to this quasi-narrative structure as the prenarrative level of experience; where the prefix implies not a complete absence of narrative, as though it were prior to all narrative structure, but rather an earlier stage of narrative structuration.

Although we are not self-consciously narrating ourselves all the time, narrational activity of some sort is common to a great deal of our experience — from dreams, to memory, to future plans, but also in emotional and moral experience. We may also have a sense of participating in many stories at once, even though these stories are not explicitly narrated. Such stories may be at odds with one another (a conflict that could, for example, cause emotional upsets), or they may be circumscribed and perhaps justified by yet another all-encompassing story. Both self-understanding and self-identity are, we shall claim, linked with the coherence of our life as reflected in our personal narratives. However, the nature of the

prenarrative level of experience may preclude just any story being constructed. We shall argue that self-narration is both a receptive and a creative activity; receptive in relation to embodying our prenarrative experience, and creative in its refiguring and augmenting of the prenarrative.

Before I present an overview of chapters, there is one point that should be stressed in order to avoid a possible confusion. General language usage predisposes us to conceive of the self in a way that is often at odds with the intent of my thesis. As Nietzsche has said, language leads us to posit a substantial "doer before the deed." In light of such expressions as "I think", "I walk", "I remember", there is a tendency to believe in a self existing outside those acts, a self that is their motivator. Now although I shall argue against this motivator position — this will indeed be a major focus of the thesis — it is nevertheless very difficult to avoid the structure of language that supports it. While I find it correct to say "I think", I would not want to suggest that there is a prelinguistic entity — some inner I — that does the thinking. Using "I", as in the beginning of the last sentence, is not only difficult to avoid, but of course becomes doubly problematic in a treatise that seeks gradually to unfold a possible meaning of the "I" and self. I must trust that the reader will bear this precaution in mind throughout the early chapters.

* * *

Structurally the thesis proceeds from the general to the more specific. Rather than begin <u>in medias res</u> with the narrative subject,

we shall work our way towards this position through an initial consideration of time and memory (Chapter One). Section One ("The Time of Our Lives") brings into focus the historicality and connectedness of human experience; the temporal structure of our lives is a cumulative process of sedimented meanings. This sedimented history serves as the horizon within which our present acts take on meaning. Self-understanding will involve thematizing our history in recollective acts. Accordingly, Section Two ("Memory") is an examination of memory and recollection. It is with recollection that the past is actively appropriated to the self. But this appropriation, I shall argue, is always an interpretation of the past, a selective and imaginative retelling of it from the perspective of the present. Chapter One prepares us for the explicit consideration of the narrative nature of our experience and of our self-knowledge. We shall argue that if experienced time is basically the time of our lives — our history — it is through narrative that this history is recounted. The consideration of memory will lead us to this conclusion.

Chapter Two ("On Narrative") deals explicitly with narrative and its relation to the self and self-identity. At this point, however, and in line with the previous chapter, I shall limit my discussion to narrative as it figures in the makeup of our daily lives. An important part of my aim in this thesis is to show that narrative structures are indigenous to human experience and are not simply an imposition of art on life. The art-to-life relation is a two-way street.

Section (i) of Chapter Two ("I am I") aims at discrediting the view that the self is immediately given to itself through some introspective intuition. I shall argue, following Alasdair MacIntyre and Hannah Arendt, that one's identity is that of a character in a narrative and that self-understanding is accordingly a matter of the emplotment of one's experiences. These latter themes are taken up in more detail in the second section.

Section (ii) ("The Story of Our Lives") develops the theme of narrative as a mode of understanding. The primary problem tackled here is the relation between narrative and prenarrative experience. I shall argue, against Louis Mink and invoking Paul Ricoeur, that narration of oneself is both a receptive and a creative activity; that the implicit narrative structure of life is taken up and augmented in our explicit narratives. My goal is to show that we are always already caught up in narratives, and that we are primarily, as MacIntyre has said, story-telling animals. The next sections attempt to back up these claims concerning the throughgoing importance of narrative in our lives by considering its importance to both emotion and morality.

Section (iii) ("Narrative and Emotion") examines the work of Charles Taylor on the importance of language and interpretation for our emotional experience. The claim here is that the higher or, as Taylor calls them, subject-referring emotions are inseparable from an autobiographical articulation that itself discloses value directions in the person's life. Emotions, it will be argued, both call forth

narrative articulation and are themselves based on some degree of narrative understanding of events.

Section (iv) ("The Virtue of Narrative") considers the way in which the value of an event is dependent upon how we narrate that event. The primary claim I shall make is that narration rarely escapes being evaluative. As social beings we are already indoctrinated into certain traditional narratives that set up 'standard' expectations and obligations and that guide our explicit evaluations; narrative, as Lyotard has claimed, is a primary vehicle of ideology.

In Chapter Three ("The Subject") we move away from a general discussion of narrative to a more particular consideration of the individual in relation to language. We shall pursue, in more detail than before, both the nature of spoken language and the development of self-consciousness with language usage. The first section ("He Who Says 'Ego'") studies the formation of selfhood and self-consciousness as these arise through the use of the first person singular ("I") and recognition of its dialectical relation to the second person ("you"). The analysis proceeds via consideration of the linguist Emile Benveniste's important writings on language and the human subject.

The second section ("Signs of Derrida") complements the earlier discussion of narrative by considering the soliloquizing subject and arguing against the position of language as, in essence, a means of communicating prefigured 'intentions'. We shall argue, with Derrida and against Husserl, that meaning arises from and requires the presence of signifiers and their iterability. In the

third section ("The Alter Ego") we shall consider how language usage introduces a split in the subject between what I shall call the speaking and the spoken subjects. Of importance here will be a discussion of Jacques Lacan's mirror stage of ego development.

The fourth section ("Narrative and Truth") draws conclusions, on the basis of the above sections, concerning the relation of self-narration and truth. We shall argue for a pragmatic rather than a representational theory of truth in this area. The discussion concludes with a consideration of the similarity of the problems of self-narration and the writing of history.

After a last criticism of the Cartesian cogito in section (v), the final section ("The Semiotic Subject") draws together our previous investigations into the self and self-narration by arriving at a systematization of the human subject into three primary moments: the speaking subject, the subject of speech, and the spoken subject. Briefly, these three subjects represent the three aspects of human expression. The speaking subject is the individual qua site of expression — the language user. The subject of speech is the purely signified subject of utterances, that is, the subject qua position within a signifying network without consideration of the flesh and blood author of the utterance; in other words, the subject projected by or meant in the utterance. Finally, the spoken subject is the audience of the utterance, the subject qua listener or receiver, the individual affected by the utterance. A rough, but perhaps useful, parallel can be drawn between the three subjects outlined above and

the more often encountered division, from the literary sphere, between narrator, character, and spectator.

A concluding note: From a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective there can be no such thing as a final 'truth' of the human subject and the human condition, for we are not, we investigators, the disengaged spectators that such a scientific enquiry would require; we are ourselves the subject of the enquiry, and the asking of the question regarding the nature of the human subject is a considerable part of what it means to be such a subject. Thus, I cannot claim the venerable status of 'the truth' for what is contained in these pages. What is hoped for, however, is that the reader finds this interpretation of the human subject to be both a plausible and coherent account, and, at times, perhaps even a provocative one.[13]

## Chapter One: TIME AND MEMORY

> We are, as Proust declared, perched on a pyramid of past life, and if we do not see this, it is because we are obsessed by objective thought.
> — Maurice Merleau-Ponty[1]

### (i) The Time of Our Lives

This first section primarily seeks to provide a basis, through the examination of our temporal experience, for a discussion of memory and its importance to our notion of self-identity. The present analysis involves isolating what I shall call lived time from objective or cosmic time, stressing the historical nature of the former. At this stage, however, we shall remain primarily on the pre-cognitive or passive level of experience. How this level gives rise to explicit self-consciousness will be the task of later chapters.

If we want to grasp the nature of our specifically human existence, an existence that has a certain self-identity and consciousness of that identity, it is appropriate to begin with the question of temporality, for if one thing is to be admitted, it is that our lives are temporally determined both by the beginning and end that our physical being exhibits and by the history that threads between, and even beyond these two poles. I do not think that what we

call our 'self' or our 'identity' can be adequately considered outside this historical and therefore temporal framework, outside the time of our lives. When we ask of someone who they are this question generally comes down to a recounting of their passage through time, their autobiography. Already we are talking not merely of temporality as a cosmic phenomenon, of the movement of bodies, but of a time whose events are the events in a person's life. This form of temporality is always someone's.

What must not be lost sight of during the following analysis is that the temporality we seek to describe is that which is most intimate to the human subject; that which is often overlooked due to its very proximity. I would say, with Heidegger, that Dasein is temporalizing in its very being. This claim leads one to the position that time is not merely something objective (belonging to what man often calls 'nature'), but in addition to this characterizes any being that can set up such an objective realm for itself. Human existence seems in all respects temporal.

This is not to say that temporality is the necessary form of intuitive apprehension for an "I" that itself escapes this temporal constraint. The "I" is caught in this temporalizing, is itself inseparable from it. I shall later have occasion to consider the substantizing of this "I". Initially, however, and in accord with phenomenological and therefore descriptive principles, we shall hold firm to experience itself as the horizon within which all objectivities make their appearance, and we will at first presuppose

nothing concerning the being to whom they appear. This latter being is precisely the problem of my thesis.

Experience is at once part and whole. The concept of experience can be used to cover the whole of a life ("There is nothing but experience."),[2] and also the parts of this life ("I just had a strange experience..."). Another way of saying this is that experiences come to one not simply in discrete instances but as part of an on-going life, my life. Experience gains its density and elusiveness precisely through this continuous contextualizing of part to changing whole; the relating of itself to itself. It was Merleau-Ponty, in the Phenomenology of Perception, who stressed that "now" is not atomistic but variable, depending on one's perspective. "Now" is equally "this moment", "this day", "this year", and "this life". Experience is in this sense overdetermined, it has an ever unfolding richness or expanse before our reflective gaze. And what applies to experience can also be said, as our example of nowness illustrates, for time.

I wish to consider time as a primary modality of this life that we are. Much of the philosophical controversy over the nature of our identity arises from the tendency of analyzing experience in terms of component parts only, and of attempting to reconstruct the unity of our lived experience therefrom. We presuppose that experience, in accordance with an objective and reductivist view of time, comes initially in units and that one's philosophical task is to propose how these units become linked. But this is to bias philosophical enquiry from the beginning. Perhaps all such problems

relate to the age-old metaphysical question of identity and difference, the one and the many.

This latter dualism reveals a complementary bias to the above problematic: we have already presupposed the unity and coherence of a life, we believe in our identity over time. Identity and difference are here set up as two unfriendly poles of the same concern; we simply attempt the resolution from A to Z or from Z to A. Perhaps, however, the identity and difference schema only applies to life in the same manner as Merleau-Ponty's "now" which is, without contradiction, both this day and this year, both one day and many. The experience of our identity is so interwoven with difference that neither pure identity nor pure difference can be granted complete precedence. Problems tend to change appearances if we shed some of our naturalistic assumptions and 'return' to our experience. Such a return has nothing mysterious or deeply metaphysical about it, but is simply a way of saying that experience may have a broader <u>meaning</u> than inherited paradigms allow.

Lived time, the time of our lives, is obviously not devoid of meaning. It is not a mere succession of neutral now points, a formal grid transparent with respect to the content of experience. On the contrary, lived time seems to be in strict accord with the present meaning of experience. That is, our sense of time changes with the significance of our experience. We live through "good times" and "bad times," we either "have the time" or we do not, though perhaps we can "make time." Our time — a time of indifference, a time of joy and hope, a time of despair — is bound not simply by a beginning and an

end, but between birth and death; we do not "end", we die. In this manner we could produce a catalogue of time (and times) that respects its native meaning in our experience.

Of course we are still very likely to ask: "But what of time itself, that which we experience in this way?" But such a time is precisely not experienced, it exists for us as a concept only, like the theoretically 'precise' units of an atomic clock that go their accurate way without us. We perceive the movements of the planets and of our sun, but the time we are considering is the experiencing of their motions by human beings, not their movement per se. As Merleau-Ponty has said:

> Nothing will ever bring home to my comprehension what a nebula that no one sees could possibly be.... What, in fact, do we mean when we say that there is no world without a being in the world? Not indeed that the world is constituted by consciousness, but on the contrary that consciousness always finds itself already at work in the world.[3]

The nebula that gave birth to our solar system, the accuracy of clocks, these are both scientific conceptualizations and are experienced only as intellectual constructs deriving from our actual experience of the world, theoretically inferred from it perhaps. However, this is not to doubt the efficacy of this scientific or naturalistic model, for it clearly produces important technological results.

But let us return to the question of identity. An analysis of temporality will reveal the continuity of conscious life. For Husserl this life is linked through a continuous series of protentions and

retentions which give a density and cohesion to the present. William James expressed this point rather well:

> ...the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we can look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception is a <u>duration</u>....[4]

Such a view of lived time stresses its interlocked nature; the present transcends itself in a continual and unbroken anticipation of the future and retention of the past — as in the experience of a melody. It is this continuity that is presupposed and demonstrated by any of our present actions. We do not need continually to reformulate or consciously remember our initial rationale or desires to continue meaningfully a present action to its conclusion, for the projected end is part and parcel of the present act. It is because of this durational aspect of time that the present is meaningful in a way that punctual moments would not be.

Our time-consciousness, then, is fundamentally durational and not punctual. But there is a further important implication to this position which bears directly on the question of temporal continuity and identity. To quote Merleau-Ponty again:

> The present still holds on to the immediate past without positing it as an object, and since the immediate past similarly holds its immediate predecessor, past time is wholly collected up and grasped in the present.[5]

It is precisely this phenomenon, the 'living present', that accounts for the experienced fluctuations of the "now" that were mentioned

earlier. The richness of the present is such that it discloses its horizons in accordance with the degree of penetration of our intentional gaze, and hence the degree of penetration required by our present task. We reach into the past in a fashion similar (I would not want to say the analogy is perfect) to the way our eyes penetrate the visual field — from the immediate vicinity to the far horizon — and concentrate on objects in the temporal field just as we might single out an object within the field of vision.

Apart from bodily identity it is the above phenomenon that best accounts for our initial sense of personal identity. At any moment we are aware that the past (or a past) is accessible to us, is with us as ours. We are therefore aware, though often implicitly, that the past is tributary to the very meaning of the present. Our link to a past is not something to be demonstrated, it is a given that all else is dependent upon. I would not wish, however, to presume that all of one's life is therefore in theory redeemable — though this is the conclusion of Bergson.[6] I would also not want to say that the past I am conscious of is <u>the</u> past as it actually was. We shall encounter this problem later.

Let us consider the human subject in relation to the above account of lived time. So far we have seen that our temporal existence is characterized by what has been called (following Husserl) the "living present", a present that contains, as Augustine pointed out in his <u>Confessions</u>, a present of things past and a present of things to come. Consciousness (or awareness) is related to and caught up in this present in a dynamic fashion. Time is always

'my time', it is my life that gradually unfolds (along with the lives of others), and this unfolding is evidenced in my changing awareness, my changing states and developing possibilities. The movement of time is, I want to claim, nothing other than 'subjectivity' furthering itself into its own possibilities.

"We must," said Merleau-Ponty, "understand time as the subject and the subject as time.... Time is someone."[7] If this co-constitution of the subject and time is correct, then it precludes or renders unnecessary the notion of a one-sided egological synthesis of time; that is, of a founding subject peripheral or external to the stream of temporal genesis, a transcendental ego.[8] Phenomenologically considered, the basic synthesis of time, and hence of the subject, is a passive synthesis (i.e., prior to conscious intentions) which, in a sense, we ourselves are; it is at once something we effect (in living) and something that effects us as subjects. As Husserl has said: "The ego constitutes himself for himself in...the unity of a "history"(Geschichte).[9]

Husserl's remark signals the direction in which we have been heading: The overall temporal form of the subject's genesis is in some sense historical. The unfolding of time is the unfolding of our history (our 'story', as the German also implies). The advantage of the term history over 'temporality' is that it is less remote, in terms of ordinary language, from the actual content of experience. Let us briefly consider how our history is generated at the level of passive constitution. I shall rely on Husserl's Cartesian Meditations for this account.

Our consideration of the living present has shown that the present moment rides, as it were, on the immediate past and is also caught up in a futural project. This passive linking of the "now" with the "just passed" and the "just, just passed" (etc.) is already enough to found a temporal continuity for the subject. In the words of William James: "Each thought [i.e., moment of awareness] is born an owner, and dies owned."[10] But one need not think of this continuity as necessarily conscious. Consider Husserl's following example:

> If, in an act of judgment, I decide for the first time in favor of a being and a being-thus, the fleeting act passes; but from now on I am abidingly the ego who is thus and so decided.... Likewise in the case of decisions of every other kind, value-decisions, volitional decisions.[11]

Such acts may become determinants for my future actions, it is on their basis that I adopt new beliefs and react in a certain way to a given state of affairs. They contribute to what Husserl calls an "abiding style" of my acts in the world, a form of predictability that he equates with a "personal character".[12] This character is thus constituted by a more or less unified and unifying substrate of habitualities or dispositions, of act types exhibiting a lawfulness determined by prior sedimented ego properties[13] – what in Medieval thought was called a habitus.

The habitus can usefully be seen, to borrow a phrase from Pierre Bourdieu, as "history turned into nature";[14] it is a past sedimented into "structuring structures."[15] Such dispositions are formative in mental and emotional life just as they are in the

performance of manual skills, and as such they function in what can be called a passive or unconscious manner. On the broader societal level, the habitus has important functional similarities to the phenomenological concept of a prevailing, though very often unconscious or horizonal, life-world (Lebenswelt) of sedimented values, beliefs, and attitudes, the unity of which must be accounted for by similar environmental conditions and a prevailing cultural tradition.

The formation of a habitus, then, is the relatively abiding result of our temporal genesis; the result of acts reinforced by

> Husserlian sense) and repetition, but also the
> decisions guided and often determined by a
> order and environment. One might also say,
> at habitus is the mediatory style of our contact
> hat it generates a cultural world correlated to
> typical style of my being-in-the-world is thus
> nt of my habitus, and, as we have seen, this
> the structural basis of my abiding character and
> is a point we will come back to.
>
> ning of this chapter it was stressed that
> be viewed to the exclusion of the life that is
> ough we have seen this interweaving in action,
> that remains to be said concerning this life of
> portance is the formation of self-consciousness
> ng as they fit into the above scheme. But so far

we have barely left the level of what phenomenologists call passive

genesis, and much that has been said could apply to the lives of chimpanzees as well as to humans. What I intend to pursue is not simply the question of identity at this passive level, for it seems to me that Husserl's and James' analyses of lived time (to name but two attempts) are adequate and convincing here, but the further constitution of the self, that 'entity' for which Hume could find no evidence and which is applied to monkeys only by way of analogy.

Especially important for this above task is an examination of the physical locus of our being-in-the-world (the body), and an examination of those processes (or events) we roughly term 'mental' — memory, imagination, emotion, and the like. But beyond these investigations stands another all-important phenomenon, language. It is towards an understanding of language as it relates to our historical being and personal identity that my thesis is oriented. We shall consider the role of embodiment in later chapters, for we should first consider, on the basis of the above analysis of time, that 'faculty' which has in the past been very closely related to the concept of personal identity, namely memory.

(ii) Memory and Recollection

> We live in memory and by memory, and our spiritual life is at bottom simply the effort of our memory to persist, to transform itself into hope...into our future.
> — Miguel de Unamuno[16]

It is understandable that memory is seen by many thinkers as somehow founding our experience of personal identity and selfhood. In acts of recollection I indeed seem to reactivate or at least contact moments of my past life, and I can also plot the course of my life from a past moment up to the present, though often this is very sketchy. My prior account of time attempted to show why and how this recollection is possible. To recapitulate, the possibility for recollection arises from the cumulative horizonal structure of experience itself, what William James called "fringes". Past and future time can be grasped precisely because it is the still more or less operative horizon of the present; it is the context within which the present (e.g., perception) becomes meaningful, the background against which it makes sense. We have also seen how this accumulated horizon sediments into a habitus which constitutes the more or less stable, more or less unconscious parameters of my acts in the world. This core accounts for the type or style of life that I lead, and therefore in some measure prescribes such things as the type of evaluations and judgements that I am now likely to make.

What we call the past may be considered in two primary ways. First there is the linear and objective view of a past stretching away irretrievably behind me, behind the present; the hours, the days, the years I have lived through. Secondly, there is the more phenomenological-existential approach which makes of the present a being-in-the-world whose richness is inseparable from the accumulated significance of my successive experiences. This latter position is in an important sense more primordial because this constant awareness, this felt weight of the past as it exerts influence in the present, grounds the more theoretical linear view and is the experience it is derived from. In other words, without such memories we would probably not raise the question of time itself. The linear view is an objective representation or recounting of lived time, and it posits a past, a time, that is irredeemably behind us, a past that is finished and which was as it was. While I do not doubt that things were as they in fact were (remembering that they only were to certain observers), it should be clear that now we have only recollections. This situation can only be remedied (made to accord with experience) by a more existential and descriptive approach, one that actually allows us to make contact with and participate in the values of the past in the only way that seems possible; a way that is not free from self-deception and falsity.

We have a present precisely because we are suspended in the network of our past (and impending future), and at any moment we may make this horizon thematic. As Merleau- Ponty has written:

> To remember is not to bring into the focus of consciousness a self-subsistent picture of the past; it is to thrust deeply into the horizon of the past and take apart step by step the interlocked perspectives until the experiences which it epitomizes are <u>as</u> <u>if</u> relived in their temporal setting.[My emphasis.][17]

The past, as we have seen, is a dimension of our temporal being and is therefore potentially accessible not merely through static representations (discrete memory images) but also, and primarily, by extending or redirecting our awareness in the relevant 'direction', e.g., away from the present praxis which we are caught up in or away from acts of pure fantasy. This process is, as it were, a movement through time, constructing a more or less coherent story of past events. What we must avoid here is the untenable position that such recollections are images which somehow duplicate original experiences as though now we could relive them as they once were. We tend very often blindly to assume recollection simply to be how things actually were in the past. This view may be fine for knowledge claims (knowing that, e.g., "I know that I was there at 9:00 pm."), but is impossible to verify for claims relating to a supposed duplication of experience. Much of what I shall say here is in support of this latter stance.

Memory, in what can be called its primary or immediate form (following Husserl), is already operative in perception. It is the structure of the living present – containing what Husserl called protentions and retentions – that accounts for the continued identity of perceived entities. It is very difficult for us even to imagine living in a world wherein the present is cut off from its immediate

past! But if retention is part and parcel of present consciousness, then what we normally mean by the word 'remembering' must be distinguished as a second form of memory. Remembering, or recollection, refers to acts which intend a content that is no longer an operative part of the living present.[18] One might call this form of recollection a 'representation', but this has connotations of duplication; I prefer to see remembering as operating with 'representatives' of the past, where this concept may include symbols, schemas, or other tokens that can stand for the past.

This latter form of memory (and from now on I shall refer to the former type simply as retention) reaches its apex in what might be called occurrences of deja vu, experiences of "then is now". An exemplar of this is the case of the madeleine cake described by Proust in Remembrance of Things Past. Here we find not simply a knowledge that the past contained such and such an event, but an imaginative 're-living' of the past in the temporal manner of the original experience (admitting that this is only presumptive). It is interesting to note that such a memory begins with a passive and somewhat brief flash of recollection that, because of its implied significance, prompts the experiencer to unpack, to narrate, the past that it refers to or seems to encapsulate. (In Proust's case this narrating is a retrieval of the self.) There is of course one condition built into memory, and this is the 'nowness' of the 'then'. If one has, in such an experience, lost the awareness of the present in which the recollection occurs, then one can no longer talk of memory but rather of hallucination or some such state. For a state to

be a memory the experiencer must be able to separate the recollection from the present in which it is recollected. We thus have, as it were, one time within another — rather as a story has both the time of the narrating and the time of the narrative. On the question of whether deja vu presents the past as it actually was, I can see no possible way of proving it and much, as we shall see, that would lead us to doubt it.

Locke viewed memory as central to our experience of personal identity, but with little respect for the difference 'now' makes to 'then': "...as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action; so far is it the same personal self" (my emphasis).[19] Memory in this ideal or veridical state would be the consciousness of a past stream of consciousness, one embedded in the other, the past relived from the standpoint of the present. In fact, if you take away this present then you remove the point of comparison that is necessary for remembrance to be cognized as such. Certain dream states, for example, may indeed be little more than a re-run of certain of the day's events, but they usually attain their status as memorial from the perspective of a later comparative reflection.

The question concerning the veridicality of memory, however, is not cleared up by simply saying that the past is relived, for there is always the influence of the present perspective to contend with. Memorial experience (recollection) is not simply of the past, it is, as we have said, the past for me now, and this qualification

can make a considerable difference. Perhaps, as Bergson thought, only in deep sleep do we minimize the influence of the present over the recollection, and this because there is very little guiding prejudice from our present praxis. Another problem to be considered is the infiltration of imagination into what is 'recollected'.

Imagination is so difficult to separate from memory because it shares a similar phenomenal structure. Their difference, where it is discernable, lies especially in the belief accompanying each presentation. In the case of recollection we acquiesce to its pastness because of such factors as familiarity, corroboration with other memories, and a certain involvement of ourselves in what is presented. The experience of a past as if it were relived or as if "this is how it was" is enough to draw us into a certain intimacy that is commonly lacking from simply imaginative projections. However, as especially happens with memories from early childhood, an imaginative projection can easily settle into the gaps left vacant by recollection, and we can no longer tell the difference between them. Imagination very often presents us with a past that we wish we had lived, or with the past as we now wish we had lived it. We might say, with Gaston Bachelard, that imagination augments recollection and augments the values of the memories recollected.[20]

What must now be addressed is the question of personal identity as it relates to memory. We have seen how the possibility of memory is founded upon the retentional structure of temporality, but what of the subject whose past this is? I have already referred to Locke in the above account, and it will be useful to look a little

further into his description of personal identity. What interests me is Locke's stress on the role of consciousness over against a substance oriented account of personal identity: "Nothing but consciousness can unite remote existences into the same person: the identity of substance will not do it...."[21] Elsewhere he writes: "as far as...consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person."(Essay, p.449) Personal identity, for Locke, is thus equal to my memorial grasp, equal to what I can encompass of my past. This position ignores the passive sedimentation of the past into my habitual and unreflected attitudes and general worldview (Locke's account, for example, is in terms of temporal expanse rather than density — horizontal rather than vertical), but it aligns very well with cases of memory disorder and the loss or deformation of personal identity that can result.

Although, as I have said, habitus is history turned into nature and that therefore the past is operative in the present, self-consciousness is another matter. My identity for myself is the identity I am conscious of, that I can bring to awareness. This identity is not necessarily something objective and pregiven that can simply be turned towards and noted (as though 'I' were outside it); its nature is rather correlated to my interests and to the degree of penetration of my recollection, the expanse it surveys. In a certain sense this makes me responsible for my identity. One might talk, for instance, of Proust's identity being richer or broader than that of other people, because he devoted a great deal of time to this

recouperative act (assuming his major work to be primarily autobiographical). Let us now look further at this question of personal identity and its relation to recollection. I shall begin with Locke and Hume who were among the first to address this question in depth.

Whereas the definition of 'man' also takes account of physical identity, the definition of 'person', for Locke, relies only on a continuity of awareness. A person is "a 'thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places..."(Essay, p.448). It is this identity over time and the contents encompassed by it that constitute, for Locke, our 'self', and this therefore includes the consciousness of our own bodies (Essay, p.466). What is important here is that our identity is independent of the normal changes in our body and dependent primarily on consciousness and memory. For Locke, the resulting self cannot therefore be reduced to an entity or substance underlying identity.

In not substantizing this self, Locke was criticized for giving ontological precedence to the cogito (the 'mental' process) itself. Bishop Butler's comment emphasizes this point: "One should really think it self-evident that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity..."(Essay, p.458, note 1). Locke's view, however, eschews such a (perhaps metaphysical and, more certainly, religious) supposition and relies solely on empirical observation. It was Hume

who reaped many of the results of Locke's position, and provided a rebuttal to Butler.

It is common knowledge that Hume's empiricist epistemology demands that our knowledge claims rely on "impressions" for their validation. This led to his notorious repudiation of the 'self':

> ...when I enter most intimately into what I call <u>myself</u>, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch <u>myself</u> at anytime without a perception and never can observe anything but a perception.[22]

In thus rejecting the empirical evidence for an intuitively given (an "impression") and substantial soul, Hume ends in agnosticism. But having avoided this underlying metaphysical substance, he proceeds with the more important task of explaining the nature of our belief (which he nevertheless admits exists) in personal identity.

Hume discovers certain relations operative on the flux of perceptions that create a sense of continuity across impressions (perceptions), viz. resemblance, contiguity, and causation. For these categories to be effective, however, memory must already be in effect: "Had we no memory, we never shou'd have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person" (<u>Treatise</u> p.261-3). Significant here, because different from Locke, is that although Hume also grounds personal identity on memory he then proceeds to the notion of causation as the final phase in constituting this identity. This move allows him to extend identity beyond the memory-consciousness of

Locke, and this by simply inferring back along a chain of causes. The following remark can be taken as a criticism of Locke:

> ...will he affirm, because he has entirely forgot the incidents of these days, that the present self is not the same person with the self of that time; and by that means overturn all the most established notions of personal identity? ... 'Twill be incumbent on those, who affirm that memory produces entirely our personal identity, to give a reason why we can thus extend our identity beyond our memory. (Treatise, p.262)

This is an important point. It is indeed the case that we commonly extend our identity beyond explicit consciousness of past events; we do this by a form of inference. There is, however, a point in Locke's favour here, for what goes beyond explicit consciousness is only thought to be, it is a remembering that such and such occurred but without a recollected presentation of the past experience.

Imagination serves, for Hume, as the underlying synthetic activity that is indispensible for constituting the world as we know it, for it is imagination that grounds causality and the other relations. Memories are thereby knit into the fabric of our world, and they attain their status as memory largely through an interconnectedness with other events known and recollected. An isolated image might, as I have said, easily be an hallucination or phantasm if it did not link into the broader network of memorial events that form our past life. Some form of causality indeed is at work here. How often have we said something of the form: "No, I must have only seen it on television, because I was away in Europe at the time." Images are not memorial in and of themselves, they require a

context, they require corroboration from related events to become meaningful or be meant in a certain way. Another way of saying this is that memory attains its important status as it links into and develops part of the story of our lives.

Memories are not what they are because they somehow mirror a pregiven and meaningful reality (Merleau-Ponty's "self-subsistent picture of the past"). Recollection, like perception, is a matter of interpretation; this is especially apparent in traditional psychoanalytical practice. Our access to what we call the past is guided by current interest, and the past is rarely, if ever, unfolded in the same way twice (though we may have, say, numerically the same visual images more than once). To put this another way: the past is not always experienced as fixed, over and done with. The past only approaches 'objectivity' when it is documented in some repeatable and accepted form, say, in history books. But the past may also become dogmatized, or attain a fixed sedimented form, in our own thoughts. What we regularly remember from the distant past is often just a repeatable token or icon taken for the 'real thing'.

The kind of causality that Hume discusses is not far from the causality utilized in scientific praxis, where the relations are of logical and necessary connections: If A, then B. But what must not be forgotten with respect to such causal and logical investigations is that they are themselves carried out within a certain context; they are part of a larger program, part of a broader scientific narrative. To discover this narrative we must always be ready to ask: "But <u>why</u> is that result or that research important?" Our actions do not occur

in a vacuum, but are woven into the fabric of an encompassing and often demanding praxial situation. The scientific narrative is what plots (no matter how vaguely) the nature and purpose of this situation.

Applying the above view to memory we see that a similar configuration occurs. Beyond actual recollection I may rightly infer other events preceding or following that which I remember, events that are causally connected with it. But along with this mere recounting of events there is another 'causality' operative, one brought about by the demands of understanding. When a past state of affairs is reflected upon, a degree of emplotment is enacted. What emplotment does is turn occurrences or a chain of events or images into moments of a narrative, and it is, I shall claim, this narrative structure that generates understanding of the past. James Olney has said of autobiography that it has the power of "transforming the mere fact of existence into a realized quality and a possible meaning."[23] In this respect we can say that memories, or images we take to be memorial, are very often occasions for interpretation and narration, just as many perceptions also are. This is what we might call the hermeneutic dimension of memorial awareness. To illustrate the above process we shall consider some examples taken from the work of Marcel Proust.

In the work of Proust we find many instances where a present perception will, through resemblance to something past, set off memorial reverberations or associations that promote the unfolding of

a past drama, which may at first be purely passive. Proust in fact extolls this passive dimension:

> Several summers of my life were spent in a house in the country. I thought of those summers from time to time, but they were not themselves. They were dead, and in all probability they would remain so. Their resurrection, like all these resurrections, hung on a mere chance.[24]

Intellect, he says, must be put aside in favor of those chance or involuntary sensations or objects that are a reservoir of the past's lived meaning.

Now although this account has a great deal of truth in it, it is surely not the whole story. Proust himself does not stop his 'reminiscences' at this point but goes on to unfold his past in great length and detail. The past may remain "captive forever [in the object], unless we should happen on the object, recognize what lies within, call it by its name, and so set it free."[25] Here we already see the need for a preliminary hermeneutics; we must both recognize and name. "Now and again, alas, we happen on an object, and the lost sensation thrills in us, but the time is too remote, we cannot give a name to the sensation, or call on it, and it does not come alive."[26] The sensation, the image, it could even be a word, functions like a symbol that rings with potential meaning. We know there is a message here for us, but very often this situation is like encountering a person we have known and whose name now escapes us along with the relevant details of our acquaintance, we are frustrated at having forgotten, and no conversation ensues because we must turn away to avoid embarrassment. The encounter with such images places a demand

on us, a demand to be 'heard', deciphered. Perhaps this demand occurs because the deciphering is also a retrieval of myself. This form of retrieval becomes explicit in Remembrance of Things Past:

> One experiences, but what one has experienced is like those negatives which show nothing but black until they have been held before a lamp, and they, too, must be looked at from the reverse side; one does not know what it is until it has been held up before the intelligence. Only then, when one has thrown light upon it and intellectualized it can one distinguish — and with what effort! — the shape of what one has felt.[27]

If the past, then, is not to remain just a collection of vaguely intuited phantasms it must undergo interpretation. Memories, in what I take to be the primary sense of the term, are the result of this interpretation. This situation is like encountering a new metaphor. For a metaphor to be more than a mere novel figure of speech it must give rise to a new insight, it must imaginatively refigure or redescribe its object or resituate the subject it is addressed to. In the case of memory it is a question of reconstituting, as it were, the drama surrounding a certain imagined object or state of affairs (presumed to be from the past), which may likewise refigure the past and quite possibly also resituate the subject (in both a cognitive and emotional sense — Heidegger's Befindlichkeit). Santayana was very aware of this imaginative-reconstructive ingredient. The following quotation perfectly summarizes the direction in which we are heading:

> When I remember I do not look at my past experience, any more than when I think of a friend's misfortunes I look at his thoughts. I imagine them; or rather I imagine

> something of my own manufacture, as if I were writing a novel and I attribute this intuited experience to myself in the past, or to the other person. [my emphasis][28]

The literary allusion is very important here for it stresses the narrational factor in remembrance. For Santayana the objects and events of our past are revivified through what he calls "moral imagination";[29] it is this ability that creates a dramatization characteristic of lived and hence valorized experience. As Santayana implies, it is this narrative result that we take to be the structure and import of our past lives. It should be clear why novelists must become experts in this form of reconstitution if they are to present in their works something with the depth and dimensions of life itself.

A further factor to consider here is that, as we saw before, the past may be narrated in many possible ways. It is very easy to believe that the past is something irredeemably fixed and determined behind oneself, for in a certain sense this is true; objectively speaking, I have presumably been to certain places at certain times and have done certain ineradicable things. We have also seen from Husserl that the "I" is the abiding result of such acts. But there is the all important question of the meaning of the past for me now.[30] I am not a machine that simply displays the past, I also respond to the display; experience consists of both these factors at once. I may recall a definite datable event, I may even recall what that event meant to me at a prior date, but there is no necessary reason why this meaning should still be operative or important. In fact, even my

recollection of what an event once meant to me will already be told from a new perspective, out of a new background, as part of a new narrative. Our accounts of the past can only be expected to have a degree of consistency if they are written down or are remembered and re-told frequently. This is the practice in many religious groups where the dogmas are recited regularly, it is also present in compulsives where an event (possibly traumatic) is obsessively run through again and again. But there is an incipient stagnation in all such enterprises, as Nietzsche well knew. In the language of Rudolf Bultmann, the kerygma must be interpreted anew, for a new age, a new worldview. This change that interpretation brings about is, I have been arguing, natural to human understanding and development.

What we cannot escape from in the case of recollection is Gadamer's hermeneutic principle of 'effective history' (Wirkungsgeschichte). We are finite historical beings whose understanding is mediated by and made possible through our history. We have no transcendental standpoint from which the past may be seen without the interference of 'subjectivity' (the 'present'). This means that there never was such a pristine or finished meaning to the past, a 'true' meaning that we ought now to recapture or coincide with, that we might once and for all pin down. In matters of the past we cannot escape the historicity of our gaze and our interests. However, this position need not lead to a total relativism where anything goes, where any interpretation will do, for the past we would recapture is woven into the same fabric that guides our understanding. As Bultmann has stressed: "The subjectivity of

historians does not mean that they see falsely, but only that they choose certain perspectives and proceed by way of asking questions."[31] We cannot avoid this perspectivism if we seek to understand and not merely repeat by blind rote or chronicle. It is a trait of a naive objectivism to believe that events have, or had, a univocal meaning which constitutes the 'truth' of those events. The past, on the contrary and if our analyses are correct, should be viewed as part of our lives, and because life is unfinished so is the meaning of the past.

What now becomes crucial for my endeavour is to consider further the narrational and interpretive aspects of recollection, especially with a view to grasping the implications this has for personal identity and selfhood. So far little has been said about the self, the subject who recollects, and it is interesting just how much can be said about memory and such like without having to analyze this mysterious entity. The self, somewhat like Ryle's university, is everywhere and nowhere; there are only buildings and activities, all of which are the concrete facts pertaining to the notion 'university'. Just as the university does not actually teach courses or do research, so the self does not think or remember. Though it must be admitted that we do <u>say</u> "I think", "I remember". The next section will go part way towards answering, in a broad fashion, some preliminary questions concerning the self; particularly the self's implication in the narratives and practices of our lifeworld.

## Chapter Two: ON NARRATIVE

> To raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and, possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself.
> — Hayden White[1]

> Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semiconscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue.
> — Peter Brooks[2]

The accounts of personal identity given by empiricists such as Locke and even Husserl are adequate as a basis, a starting point. However, the problem for us with such views is their archeological bias, their desire to explain a phenomenon by resorting to primitive structures of consciousness and their operation; for Locke the extent of our consciousness of the past, and for Husserl the temporal connectedness of lived time. Such a manoeuver is like describing a house only in terms of its underlying framework, its skeleton; this really shows only the possibility of a house. Personal identity is not so easily guaranteed, and human reality not that easily grasped. Already we have seen how imagination plays an important role in recollection, and as I proceed the influence of social reality and the linguistic and semiotic systems (i.e., language, gestures, literature) on which it depends will become equally important. My

task now is to pursue further the nature of narrative and the relation it bears to our lives. The previous chapter already takes us in this direction. At this point I will not be discussing narrative in its literary dimensions, but will concentrate on narration and narrative structures as they pertain to experience generally.

It is, I shall argue, the narrated past that best generates our sense of personal identity, and I put the emphasis on the word personal because emplotment may indeed create the individual meaning or story of our lives for ourselves. Narration into some form of story gives structure and understanding to the ongoing content of our lives. Personal identity should imply more than an empty pole of identity, and more than just temporal continuity. What makes personal identity personal is that it is my characteristic identity, my particular life. We have already begun to see a linking between self-understanding and narrative — that persons gain at least some of their meaning through the story of their past (this will also extend in a like manner to their future) — and, as I shall demonstrate, the meaning of a life can be adequately grasped only in a narrative or storylike framework.

I will begin by briefly considering the nature of our sense of self (my-ness), a theme I continually return to and develop throughout the thesis. The next section will consider the implicit and explicit narrative structure of our experience, and will introduce the problem of expression. The third section serves to illustrate the narrative position through a consideration of the

higher emotions and their dependence on language. Finally, I will consider the general role of narrative in ethics and value theory.

(i) "I am I."

That "I am I" seems not to be doubted (outside philosophy!). I am myself and no other. I wake from a torturous dream and soon continue into the day as my old self. "I am I", how secure that sounds, and as a performative assertion of identity it has served and continues to serve us very well. How could I not believe in myself! Even the wildly decentered and disoriented character of The Unnamable (Beckett) must assert it against everything to the contrary: "I can't go on, I must go on." Such talk has the result of promoting the belief in a substantial self behind, as it were, such utterances as: "I am speaking", "He looks this way", and so on. It may also promote the belief that this self is potentially knowable, an object of knowledge that can, say, be brought forward or mirrored in language. In this way we unwittingly generate the problematic and metaphysically tinged subject that a narrative theory seeks to circumvent. We say "I" as though referring to an active or motivating subject ontologically prior to the action, underlying it (a sub-stance). As Nietzsche stated the matter:

> The separation of the 'deed' from the doer...this ancient mythology established the belief in cause and effect after it had found a firm form in the functions of language and grammar.[3]

Thus when Descartes discovered his first principle, the ego cogito, he was led to assert thereby that the I spoken of existed (in

some sense) prior to the pronouncement, outside the discourse (and outside the Discourse On Method!). We end up with the well-known Cartesian substantial dualism, something that is not well supported by our ordinary experience. It is especially the reification and mystification implicit in this 'Cartesian subject' that a narrative account (and postmodernism generally) seeks to avoid. This 'substantial' self, I want to claim, is no more (nor less) than a fiction, which is, in a sense that will become clearer, all the self can ever be. As an implied subject, that is, implied from acts of expression, the self is a social and linguistic construct – a meaning rather than an unchanging entity.

The saying of "I" may be an act of repetition, but that it repeats the same self over time must be considered an illusion, for more often than not it is empty of content – in much the same way that Hegel considered Fichte's self-identical ego to be empty of content. We shall see later that the saying of "I" is not a simple referential and designatory utterance in the way saying "Fido" or "lamp" can be. "I" may also be devoid of significance or informative content; it is not like saying "english" or "child." When asked what "I" refers to, a common answer is "me"! I would claim, on the contrary (and assuming that the statement in fact had some sense), that the I does not even coincide with itself; such coincidence is an unattainable goal. This point was already prefigured in my discussion of the unavoidable interpretive dimension of memory.

Between consciousness and itself is an otherness (an alter ego) that, in an Hegelian Aufhebung, must be integrated, reconciled

with itself. But there is a delay here, a non-coincidence. It is not as though self-consciousness accumulates, expands or builds up further what it already was, reaching an apex in self-transparency. The Hegelian story is that of a changing habitus, or a changing tradition, where each stage has its attendant sense of self and reality; but more than this, for each stage has a certain forgetfulness of its predecessors. The "I" of today is not necessarily the "I" of tomorrow. The mere saying of "I" thus tells us very little about identity and continuity, though it does seem to presuppose these, or beg the question of them. The question to ask someone who says "I" is very often "who?" — sometimes we ask it of ourselves! Unlike much of philosophy, which often contents itself with the question of <u>what</u> a self is, we must turn towards literature and narrative to learn <u>who</u> the self is.

Hannah Arendt has particularly stressed the difference between who and what a person is. The latter question is answered, she says, in terms of attributes and qualities (brave, thoughtful, intuitive, etc.), but these are properties that one may share with numerous other individuals; it overlooks individuality.

> <u>Who</u> somebody is or was we can only know by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero - his biography, in other words; everything else we know of him, including the work he may have produced and left behind, tell us only <u>what</u> he is or was.[4]

Arendt illustrates her case by alluding to the fact that we know <u>who</u> Socrates was even though we have no actual works of his, whereas the same cannot be said, at least not to the same degree, of Plato or

Aristotle. That one leaves behind an autobiographical work must surely cause us to amend Arendt's position to some degree. Her argument, however, stresses the whole of a life, and in that case an autobiography cannot possibly be final.

Properties, as ordinary language suggests, are indeed attributes of someone, of a particular self. But this individual is not the self of some direct introspective scrutiny, it is rather the self of a personal history, of a self narrated. In narrating the acts of an individual we contribute to the creation of that individual as a definite character. As MacIntyre writes: "The self inhabits a character whose unity is given as the unity of a character."[5] This character must therefore be considered in light of a story it belongs to: "characters in a history are not a collection of persons, but the concept of a person is that of a character abstracted from a history."[6] Another way of stating this initially counter-intuitive view is that persons are such only if (amongst other things) they can be considered to have a history, a history of acts and involvements. We may use the term "person" without knowing that history, but the history is nevertheless implied.

One reason why automatons can be excluded from the category of persons is because they have no comparable history. However, the manufacture of automatons with some form of memory implant could cause problems for this categorization. The science fiction film Bladerunner is informative in this respect, for it poses the problem of the experiential similarity of implanted vs. real memories. If one cannot tell the difference between implanted and real memories should

this affect our predication of personhood? (This problem has some similarities to a question raised by Russell. If the universe were actually created only a second ago, and we sprung into being fully equipped with memories that date from years back, could we ever know the truth? It seems not.) Persons not only have memories, a history, but also take certain attitudes towards them. We notice change — that things as are not as they were. We may enjoy the intimacy of our memories. We show concern about what we remember having done. We despair about losing memories in old age. Factors such as these also contribute to personhood. If the attitude of the automaton towards its 'memories' is that it simply views them as so much data, then again we may be wary of predicating personhood. There is, I think, no single criterion for ascribing personhood to something, and on some of the criteria it may be very difficult to decide one way or the other.

Along similar lines, analytic philosophers are very fond of discussing the nature of persons through hypothetical examples of a science fiction sort. Derek Parfit, for example, begins the discussion of personal identity in his book Reasons and Persons[7] by considering the often cited case of someone who is teleported to a distant planet. This operation consists of some form of encoding of the person's total being and the transmission of this data for reconstitution at another location. The person is of course decomposed at the original location. It must be admitted that while such an example is purely hypothetical, consideration of it may nevertheless reveal some of our assumptions about persons. We might

be led to think that the person simply continues his existence at the other location. But suppose the decomposition did not occur; do we have two persons or one? There is certainly no numerical identity. Is the decomposition of one of the persons simply the death of that person? Is the other person, therefore, only a duplicate, a copy? Should we feel guilt if we had to destroy this duplicate, especially if it is qualitatively identical? Suppose it was you they forgot to decompose – would you happily be annihilated? Unless there were some form of 'mental' communication between the two, it would seem that they are now two different persons, or soon will be as their lives unfold in different directions.

The question of guilt takes us back to the automaton example. We have fabricated an individual that is identical to other persons, except in respect of having actually lived its past. Whether this latter fact counts against its being a person is very much a matter of our social conditioning and tradition, our way of understanding. If we reject the onto-theological notion of a soul substance then presumably other criteria, such as social responsibility and social interaction must gain importance, especially if bodily differences do not play a major role. However, it is not our aim in this thesis to directly address such empirical and hypothetical questions.

While we are on the topic of identity, we should say a word about Aristotle's ship. Is a ship still the same craft if during a voyage all its planks are gradually replaced by new ones? There is an analogy here to persons, who undoubtedly change considerably during the course of their lives. What is perhaps best asked in such

examples is why the issue is difficult to decide. We tend to waver between yes and no on such questions. If we replace a few planks, we tend to think of the boat as the same. If the planks were of a different shape we may think the boat to be different. If the planks were all replaced during one afternoon, we may think it is now a new ship; but from a legal point of view it may still be registered as the same vessel. Coming back to our previous example, two identical ships would not, other than loosely, be considered the same ship. The problem is that our notion of identity is not always a clear cut matter. We allow for identity in difference. After each use the craft changes, and from year to year so do we. Things change in time, and our notion of identity seeks to find some continuity in this change. Legally, for example, we are considered the same person throughout our lives. With the rise in organ transplants the issue of identity could become quite problematic. What this identity or continuity consists in is often relative to the type of entity considered, and relative to the reasons one has for positing identity. Let us now return from this digression to continue our consideration of narrative.

It is no accident that the word person derives from the Latin "persona", which has connotations of a character in a play. According to our historical view, the full characterization of who someone is must wait until the action reaches completion, until the play is finished (if it ever is!). This is why Arendt claims:

> Action reveals itself fully only to the storyteller, that is, to the backward glance of the historian, who

> indeed always knows better what it was all about than the participants.[8]

Presumably, however, the actor can become his or her own storyteller.

What is required here is an ability to extricate or distance oneself from embeddedness in the action and perceive it in the manner of a plot, a history. We often do this when a certain episode of our life has reached a (perhaps temporary) conclusion. Though, of course, that our lives have episodes is very often the result of narrative acts that may occur well after the events in question and from a broader perspective than was then possible. This is the basis of Arendt's position. Perhaps, in a Sartrean sense, we can say that only when our lives are finished (at death), is our essence complete, and perhaps from a god's all-encompassing perspective this essence receives its final meaning. But from a human and narrative point of view this meaning has a considerable margin of flux, for the story of a life can be told in a number of ways; we cannot help but be selective. We may admit, however, that the 'truth' is more or less established in people's minds when a version of the story becomes generally accepted, becomes canonical. We often have such a great desire for the so-called truth that we will overlook its status as a version. Just as we change week by week, year by year, so do our narrations of the past.

The "I" does not fully coincide with itself – this is implied in Arendt's "backward glance" of the storyteller. Who I am is very often perceived (narrated) by others more clearly than by myself.[9] Perhaps I should say that there is my story of myself and there are

numerous others, some of them from a vantage point superior to my own, our epistemic superiority to children, for example.

It may also be the case that the question of who I am often does not arise, and certainly not with any degree of urgency. Why this may be so is not difficult to fathom. One gets locked into a mode of life that may not change in any essential way for many years. We repeat the same routines. One's habitus, that fund of practical, but implicit and corporeal wisdom is like an ocean upon which our personal consciousness floats, and where even this consciousness is but a part of that same ocean. One's home life, one's work and leisure may enter a routine pattern that one becomes implicitly identified with. If one is at home with and immersed in this life then the question of "Who?" need not arise. We are supported by our practices. It is often in light of a possible or impending future, or a problem in the present that the question of "Who?" is raised. In Proust's case, for example, we find the desire to perpetuate himself in writing in face of the immanent demise of his physical being and in light of his belief that no part of himself will survive, in a religious sense, this death of his body.

The meaning of my existence can be a casual thing, fulfilled in the moments of my day-to-day praxis. My self-conception can be shallow and brief, or it can become my overiding concern (as it was for Proust). This variation also applies, of course, to other persons' conceptions of me. Am I anything other than these various conceptions, these versions, these stories?

We see from the above that a good case can be made to distinguish between what has been called, with relation to literature, the experiencing self and the narrating self.[10] Generally speaking, in self-understanding the narrating self is always trying to coincide with, or be adequate to, the experiencing self, but this path is easily frustrated or becomes a matter of self-deception. One must first have the means or vocabulary for expression, but then there is the perception of what material is relevant, the choice of when an episode begins and when it ends, the mode or genre of the expression, and numerous other details that can cloud the conversion. I shall look at some of these questions in what follows, and especially at the nature of our prenarrative experience.

(ii) The Story of Our Lives

We will now consider in more detail the relation between narrative, time, and experience. For our purposes, narration can be conceived as the telling (in whatever medium, though especially language) of a series of temporal events so that a meaningful sequence is portrayed – the story or plot of the narrative. It is the nature of a plot (traditionally considered) to synthesize events into a meaningful temporal whole, which it does by some form of closure or completion and by its developmental followability; that is, by giving a beginning, middle, and end structure to the narrative.[11] Such closure is effected through the resolution (sometimes partial or failed) of aporias that arise in earlier narrative stages. To narrate, then, is to tell the story or history of something or someone and will usually involve human or anthropomorphic characters (actors) whose lives are in some respect exhibited.[12] Narrative, furthermore, generally implies the presence of a narrator who is the story-teller. This latter point is what distinguishes narrative from drama.[13]

Before proceeding, a few explanatory remarks are in order concerning our use of the terms "narrative" and, more importantly, "prenarrative" in relation to the human subject. In self-narration the narrator is commonly found in the first person ("I then went to university..."), and what is related is the life of the narrator. In

fact, in spoken autobiographical discourse the character, the narrator, and the author are assumed to be one and the same; only when the listener suspects falsity or deception will he distinguish between them, particularly between the character portrayed and the author/narrator.[14] With regard to the subject matter of our personal narratives it generally relates back, directly or indirectly, to what I have called the prenarrative structure of experience. This prenarrative is, in its most general form, that drama that we call our lives. As dramatic, our lives cannot be said to have a narrator, for it is only when, from within the drama, we take up the narrator's role that the story of our lives is actually told. Earlier, however, we defined this prenarrative as a 'quasi-narrative', implying that narration has already entered into it. This is indeed the case, for, as we hope to demonstrate in this chapter, we are constantly adopting the narrator's position with respect to our own lives and also the lives of others.

* * *

If, as we have seen, time is fundamentally the time of my life, between birth and death, personal identity will depend upon the continuity of meaningful experience in this life. Now, the physical body may well be the permanent locus of my insertion in the world, and it is indeed a basis for continuity, but it is the events that unfold from this locus that generate the meaning of my existence, both through the habitualities they embody and the history they exhibit. Our lives, as we have seen, are not experienced as random unconnected events (though they may be thought so upon reflection),

and rarely as a series of such events. Actions are, generally speaking, already understood in the context of a before and after. Life is, as I shall argue, inherently of a narrative structure, a structure that we make explicit when we reflect upon our past and our possible future. (This reflection is not a neutral mirroring — a point that is worth repeating.)

The actions of human agents, to be intelligible, must be seen against the background of a history, a history of causes and goals, of failures and achievements. As Alisdair MacIntyre has written: "The notion of a history is as fundamental as the notion of an action. Each requires the other."[15] Actions do not occur in a void and are not meaningful in and of themselves; their meaning is dependent on the broader perspective of a framing story. We must ourselves know such a personal history if we are to make intelligent choices in the present.

It is a through-going characteristic of our lives that we view our actions as either beginning something (as a means), or as the conclusion of something. Practical reason itself shares this teleological structure of paths to envisioned goals. Ricoeur sums this up as follows: "An event is not only an occurrence, something that happens, but a narrative component."[16] I would further maintain that this particular narrative way of sequentializing is basic to the process of human understanding, especially as this is directed to acting, social persons. To understand a life is to trace its development upon a narrative thread, a thread that unites otherwise disparate or unheeded happenings into the significance of a

development, a directionality, a destiny. As Ricoeur has said: "The ability to follow a story constitutes a very sophisticated form of understanding."[17] That one cannot do this for oneself will therefore promote the psychological consequence of our experiencing a lack of development, of unity, and of directionality. I shall return to this conclusion when we look at psychoanalysis.

Time and memory, as we saw in the previous chapter, do not themselves constitute personal identity, they rather serve as the environment from which narrative is possible. Explicit narratives are, one might say, of a higher order, and it is this order that I wish to explore in what follows.

It is as a character in our (and other people's) narratives that we achieve an identity. Ricoeur has made the same point:

> Our own existence cannot be separated from the account we can give of ourselves. It is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity. We recognize ourselves in the stories that we tell about ourselves. It makes very little difference whether these stories are true or false, fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity.[18]

Implied in this statement is that the self is generated and is given unity in and through its own narratives, its own recounting, and hence understanding of itself. The self, and this is my primary thesis, is essentially a being of reflexivity, coming to itself in its own narrational acts. This conclusion can be seen as an important outcome of Ricoeur's basic hermeneutic stance: "...there is no self-knowledge without some kind of detour through signs, symbols and cultural works, etc."[19] Who I am is not given outside of such

mediated expression, but as we shall come to see, this is a case of expression creating being and not merely reporting or mirroring it. The self is not some pre-cultural or pre-symbolic entity that we seek to capture in language. I am, for myself, only insofar as I express myself.

We might, however, still ask about experience itself, prior to being narrated. What is prenarrative experience? Is it not falsified when narrated? Does language impose its own cultural forms of expression on this stratum? There are varying views on this topic. On one extreme is the work of Louis Mink: "Stories are not lived but told. Life has no beginnings, middles, or ends...."[20] Thus, if life has any narrative structure, it is one we have put there after the fact. Mink continues:

> We do not dream or remember in narrative...but tell stories which weave together the separate images of recollection.... So it seems truer to say that narrative qualities are transferred from art to life.

For Mink, story-telling is a mode of comprehension (of grasping together) that necessarily takes second place in relation to the experiences comprehended.

On the other extreme we find MacIntyre: "we all live out narratives in our lives and...we understand our own lives in terms of the narrative that we live out...."[21] For MacIntyre narratives are indigenous to experience. Barbara Hardy, the literary critic, also argues for this position:

> We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revize, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative.[22]

The disagreement between Mink and McIntyre can perhaps be resolved if we consider the relation between implicit and explicit narratives, though much of what I have so far said should discredit Mink's absolute severing of narrative from experience. We have already noted, for example, the narrational nature of recollection and the way temporality assumes a historical form linked to our purposes.

Ricoeur's position is, I think, more rigorous in its analysis of the question of the relation between narrative and experience than either Mink or MacIntyre, and can in fact serve to locate the other views more precisely. Ricoeur's stance is in certain respects intermediary, though sometimes ambiguous. Narration is the imaginative act that refigures a more primordial experience into something with meaning and structure: "...the plots that we invent help us to shape our confused, formless and in the last resort mute temporal experience."[23] This sounds very close to Mink. Elsewhere, however, Ricoeur will maintain that this primordial experience has a "prenarrative quality" or prefiguredness that "constitutes a demand for narrative."[24] His recent position can best be summed up by an opening remark from volume one of Time and Narrative:

> Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.[25]

Let us try to unpack the previous quotation. Human time, as we saw from Husserl, is not the bare temporality of succession; it is a succession that already has various imports for the individual(s) concerned — it already has "features". I have remarked that time is cut through with human values ('good times' & 'bad times', etc.), and in that time is already keyed to our purposes and therefore valorized, it must have been experienced in a contextualized form, e.g., the present is 'good' because something has turned out or is turning out well. Already there is in experience an implicit narrative structure and hence understanding. Our explicit narratives may indeed extend, even change, the meaning of our lived time, but this time is already structured according to our style of being-in-the-world, our habitus. As such, our narrative interpretations do not function ex nihilo but follow naturally upon the structure of experience.

If the temporality of human affairs is indeed experienced at its basic level within a teleological setting, then it is only narrative understanding that can do it justice. To narrate oneself is to make explicit this prenarrative or "prefigured" (Ricoeur) quality of our unexamined life, to draw out a story it embodies. This is to say that our unexamined life is already a quasi-narrative, and that lived time is already a drama of sorts. Also, and this is very important, this quasi-narrative can and does serve as a corrective or guide for the act of narration. One cannot tell just any old story without committing some form of injustice to the content of one's

experience – what Sartre has called 'bad faith'. As David Carr has written:

> Many of our plans go awry (and stories have to be rewritten) because we make mistakes about the past, about what happened and what we have done. The past <u>does</u> constrain us; it does have a fixedness that allows reinterpretation only up to certain limits.[26]

Lived time already has a quasi-narrative character, and this is why it is not amenable to just any telling. One fabricates one's past at one's own risk. Involved in this risk can be both psychologically harmful factors associated with self-deception and repression, and also socially harmful ones associated with lying to and deceiving other people.

While Ricoeur does not go as far as I would like on the question of the quasi-narrative character of lived experience, he certainly goes part-way. He is willing, against Mink, "to accord already to experience as such an inchoate narrativity that does not proceed from projecting, as some say, literature on life but that constitutes a genuine demand for narrative."[27] Narratives, for Ricoeur, are in the end justified by the need for the untold stories of our lives to be told,[28] though he is, I believe, overly cautious in his discussion of this point.

Narration of onself, because of the quasi-narrative character of ordinary life, may be both a receptive and a creative activity. If we turn to recollection we can find a receptive and an active stage. Receptively our memories may already generate a broken narrative of images and meaning as they first enter consciousness. Often we do not

have cause to notice just how broken and incomplete this recollection can be, for the fragments may nevertheless exhibit a quasi-narrative or dramatic structure that satisfies our need for meaning. (The same phenomenon can apply to dreams. No matter how disjointed or fragmented the dream may be to later reflection, during the dream there is often a sense of a plot unfolding.) But, as I stressed earlier, interpretation is inherent to recollection, and already this schematic narrative is being filled out with a present meaning, is refigured for me now. Interpretation is a continuous process with no precise starting point. We cannot say of recollection: "Here is the bare content, and here is where interpretation and meaning start." Interpretation has always already started.

Life, with a minimum of explicit narrative, approaches a sheer undergoing, like a child who does not consciously link A to B as it lives through them. This need not be James' "confusion", for habitualities, motor actions, and our general life-style can serve us well, but the broader significance of one's experiences might be lost — as indeed much of childhood is. One might now ask: But where does this broader significance reside? The answer can only be that it is generated through the narrative act itself; this important creative component is often overlooked. To narrate is to link A to B, to see causal affinities, to draw out and develop comparisons and harmonies, to deduce and project possible outcomes. Ricoeur makes a similar point:

> To make a plot is already to make the intelligible spring from the accidental, the universal from the

> singular, the necessary or the probable from the episodic.[29]

Whereas the young child does not set out to consciously narrate, but only runs through sequences of images (memory retrieval/picture consciousness), adults are already well initiated into a broad semiological realm. We have language, we have been told stories, we have seen and read them, we are no longer innocent in this respect. Our world is a progressively cultural one, where even nature is itself a cultural concept with a varying history. To quote Ricoeur once more: "We belong to history before telling stories or writing history. The game of telling is included in the reality told."[30] We might say that we are "story-telling animals" precisely because we are already caught up in a story, and already committed to meaning.

One reason we narrate is because mankind cannot fail, at times, to ask the question of its own being, because we know the story is there to be told – just as others have told it. But there is also, as Ricoeur stresses, the desire to make the inchoate intelligible, and we know that narrative understanding is traditionally suited to this task; as literature clearly shows. My point, in arguing for a quasi-narrative level, is precisely that "telling is included in the reality told". We are both experiencers and narrators (often at the same time), for the act of making intelligible is a more or less continuous one, even though the narratives may be appropriated from elsewhere. It is this continuity of our life-story that constitutes the greater part of our

experienced self-identity. Our identity is that of a particular historical being and this identity can persist only through the continued integration of ongoing experience. Because we bring our history along with us, as a more or less clearly configured horizon, new experiences will tend to flow into this story of our lives, augmenting it.

At the broadest and most abstract level, this identity is constituted out of the part-whole relation between the 'now' and the at least implicit horizon of my life as a whole. The mere fact of situating the now within such a frame is already enough to generate an identity, and one need not know much about the life itself for this relation to operate. Let us consider an example. You are listening to a piece of music at a concert. Even though you may not be able to identify specific themes and their development up to the present, even if you find the piece disjointed and disagreeable, and even if the opening sections are forgotten, one can still have the continuous and indubitable awareness of listening to the same piece of music. Identity can indeed persist despite a considerable failure to grasp the more particular content of experience. In the case of a concert, one continually has the broad referential frame of the piece beginning, coupled with an awareness that the clapping signaling the end of the piece has not yet taken place. A breakdown of this type of self-identity will occur if the part-whole relation breaks down.

Such a disruption of identity often occurs in dreams, and accounts for much of their strangeness. Consider being fully cognizant of having a now, but not knowing what frame of reference

the now belongs to, both in its spatial and temporal dimensions (i.e., not knowing the general 'where' of the current event, and not knowing its temporal context, such as 'my life'). In a dream our identity will still rely on a part-whole relation, but if the whole is not a very great expanse and if it often changes dimensions, then one's identity can become somewhat volatile and episodic. Amnesia can produce a similar result in waking life. Similarly, a catastrophic event, such as war, may simply destroy the credibility of one's prior life-horizon, resulting in a temporary or even a more permanent disruption of identity. Simply waking up in an alien surrounding (e.g., while on holiday) can momentarily unsettle the part-whole gestalt.

Applying these insights to the above notion of life-story, we can see that, as for the music example, self-identity may persist in our lives even though particular events and episodes do not mesh together well. Such an identity is grounded on the framing story of life in its most general features, e.g., birth and death as two limits. (On a similar level of generality, "They were born, they lived, and they died," is a biography that fits us all.) What falls between these two poles becomes part of my life, i.e., part of a unitary phenomenon. This identity, it should be noted, is not the persistence of an entity, a thing (substance, subject, ego); it is a meaning constituted by a relation of figure to ground, of part to whole. It is an identity in difference constituted by framing the flux of particular experiences by a broader story.

This continuous, though often implicit, awareness of our identity is an important phenomenon, all we may need in our day-to-day lives, but it needs filling out if our identity is to become more particular and rich. Indeed, we generally know far more of our broad life-story than its two limits. It is this still unfolding, developing, even fragmenting story that forms the backdrop of our present. Whereas the birth-death schema has little content but considerable stability, our particular stories have far greater content but may make little sense to us as a whole. Let us now return to our discussion of the prenarrative.

It should be obvious that there is a dialectic between the prenarrated and the narrated; narrative is not simply the making public of what already exists in a pre-expressed though privately cognized form. What must be stressed, against Mink, is that narrative is a realm of intelligibility that we are already involved in, explicitly and implicitly. But we must not be misled into thinking that the function of a narrative is to report the 'facts' as they were. This sort of simple recounting was disparaged in our chapter on time and memory. To narrate experience is, as Ricoeur emphasizes, to refigure it, to tell it in a certain way, and often for a certain end; it is, as we have previously said, both a receptive and a creative/interpretive act. Narration both excludes certain phenomena and dwells on others; it is selective. This selectivity is clearly manifested at the level of practical action. Certain acts contribute in a productive way to achieve a goal, while others are abortive; certain people and events are instrumental to our destiny, while

others are not. Many of our daily tasks are routine and mundane, performed in a like fashion by numerous other people in their daily lives. Narrative may of course recount these banal daily events, but a story traditionally seeks the exceptional and formative (while still seeking the exemplary and universal).

In considering what prenarrative experience is like we are treading close to what Wilfred Sellers called the 'Myth of the Given'; the myth that there is a realm of experience prior to, and amenable to, expression in language. But we need not go this far. Language, culture, and, as Heidegger has shown, understanding, cannot be subtracted from experience without doing violence to our humanity. Our experience is already what I have called a quasi-narrative, a story to be told, and one that is partly told already. We need only consider the sophistication of dreams to see just how far narrative is a part of our constitution. Barbara Hardy, in the passage I cited earlier, indicates the pervasiveness of narrative emplotment, and at a level that is not explicitly reflective. That is, we very often undergo experience in narrative sequences quite automatically, without choice. These may not be the full-blown narratives of autobiographies or stories, but they can serve in the same way to generate understanding, direction, and unity in our lives.

We tend explicitly to narrate longer temporal sequences only when the situation calls for it. Perhaps a dilemma calls for a reassessment of our project, or a lover asks for our history, or maybe we are in psychotherapy. If we are not always narrating ourselves in order to understand who we are, it is because this

second-order reflection is not necessarily required for everyday praxis. We do not, for example, need continually to reformulate or consciously remember our initial rationale or desires to continue meaningfully a present action to its conclusion; this could even be counter-productive. Much of the time our identity is not a concern for us because it is unthematically supported by the regularities in our day-to-day experience: our body, work, friends, home, and general style of living. In addition, our narratives are very often no more than verbal tokens, stating, for example, name, address, occupation and the like. These latter examples are narratives only in a weak sense, for while they are indeed narrated they nevertheless contain no real story or personal history; they do not connect up with prenarrative experience. To be satisfied with such 'narratives' is to be satisfied with a shallow sense of one's own existence and personal identity.

We shall proceed into the next chapter by considering some further instances of narrative that Hardy states in her list. I have already mentioned dreams, and that the same applies to day-dreams should be quite clear. To day-dream is preeminently to construct a narrative story, one that weaves language and pictorial fantasy together into the forms of our desire. But day-dreams can easily pass over into the images of anticipation, hope, hatred, and despair, each of which develops along the beginning-middle-end structure of a narrative. I want to consider emotion in more detail both because of its importance in our lives and because its structure carries over into many of the above areas.

(iii) Narrative and Emotion

If human experience indeed has a quasi-narrative nature (prior to our 'imposition' of art on life), then we ought to be able to substantiate this claim by discovering in our emotional life a throughgoing and essential narrative ingredient. In addition, we will also be interested in the implications of this position for our sense of self; especially our self-understanding. I shall primarily appeal to the work of Charles Taylor in this section.

Much of our emotional life is bound up with the way we narrate experiences (both past and present). It would be difficult to imagine someone experiencing guilt, joy, or anxiety without them having some cognizance of the events to which these are the responses, and beyond this to the story in which the events take on significance. As we have seen, the narration of events is not a simple description of 'facts', but an interpretive activity — it is an important way in which our experiences are understood, are given form. Prior to some degree of narration the meaning of human events is obscure or simply absent. This situation is like comparing a chronicle to a full historical narrative; the chronicle merely states occurences whose further relevance remains to be interpreted. If, therefore, narration is linked to emotions, then emotions are likely to be keyed to, or dependent on, the type of interpretation we give of events.

Charles Taylor's essay "Self-Interpreting Animals"[31] offers some very useful insights into the relation between narrative and emotion. Many important feelings or emotions are, he says, self-referential in that they arise from a certain articulated awareness of one's life situation. As the various imports on this linguistic level of description change so do the correlative feelings. An inflicted wound, for example, tends to be felt as painful no matter what we think (i.e., is not self-referential), but that this leads to the further and more distinctly human feeling of anxiety, say, or indignation towards one's assailant will very much depend upon one's articulation of the meaning the event has in its broader context; it will also depend on a certain pre-understanding of oneself. The latter, 'higher' type of emotions are, maintains Taylor, a product of interpretation and are self-referential.

To use an example of Taylor's: If we were unable to experience shame then "a world without beings capable of this kind of experience would be one without any aspiration to dignity" (SA, p.53). The experience of shame is manifest only against the background of leading a life where one desires a certain respect from others: "Thus the import of shameful can be explicated only by reference to a subject who experiences his world in a certain way" (SA, p.53). Emotions like shame must, therefore, be viewed as an indication of "what is important to us qua subjects...of what we value, or what matters to us" (SA, p.60), even though we may be only partially aware of this background. It is because of this self-referential element, this reference to the broader life of the subject, that such higher

emotions, says Taylor, "do not fit into an objectivist's view of the world" (SA, p.55). If this claim is true, then at least some emotions cannot be reduced to bodily states that the predelineated subject simply endures, but are part and parcel of the subject itself.

To see the central place of narrative in emotional experience we must pursue Taylor's analysis a little further. The type of emotions he is concerned with all involve some degree of interpretive articulation, which, because of the reflexivity to the subject's life, is also a form of self-understanding. Such emotions are language dependent: "To say that language is constitutive of emotion is to say that experiencing an emotion essentially involves seeing that certain descriptions apply"(SA, p.71). What this means is that emotion is concommitant with an articulated judgement concerning a given state of affairs. One sees, via something like Santayana's moral imagination, that a situation is "bad" or "degrading" and one experiences therefore the attendant affect; the initial insight into the context or implicit story is inseparably bound up with the emotion.

Emotions also have a life, for they change during the course of our developing understanding:

> The remorse may dissipate altogether, if we come to see that our sense of wrong-doing is unfounded; or it may alter in other ways, as we come to understand what is wrong; perhaps it will be more acute as we see how grave the offence was; perhaps it will be less as we see how hard it was to avoid.(SA, p.63)

This account should remind one of my earlier discussion of the relation between the prenarrative drama and the explicit narrative level. Very often the 'truth' of one does not carry over into the other and we continually adjust our story until we are satisfied that "this is how it was". Satisfaction is a major arbiter here.

Emotional experiences are, however, not only the result of interpretive emplotment but also the occasion for it. In promoting interpretation, emotions "open us to the domain of what it is to be human"(SA p.64). Language, in articulating the import of emotions, discloses what is important to us in our lives (what we get upset, angry, excited about, and so on) and will serve to define both our own character, our values, and our relationship to others. But it should be remembered that this articulation may in turn, as we saw above, affect the emotion itself.

Taylor concludes by considering our experience of inarticulate emotion, for this seems to be a case where the language paradigm falters: "we might be tempted to think of animals as experiencing inarticulatly what we give names to" (SA, p.74). However, such inarticulate emotions, claims Taylor, are already <u>unterwegs zur Sprache</u> by their very nature, for what characterizes such experiences is precisely their demand for interpretation: "We experience our pre-articulate emotion as perplexing, as raising a question. And this is an experience that no non-language animal can have" (SA, p.74). Taylor's reason for this demand follows from a position parallel to Heidegger's emphasis on the ontological primacy of both language and understanding. Says Taylor:

> Because as language-animals we are already involved in understanding it [emotion/feeling]; we already have incorporated into our language an interpretation of what is really important. And it is this articulation ... which makes our inarticulate feelings into questions. (SA, p.74)

Understanding is, we can say, a natural goal in the development of our inarticulate feelings; much as the inchoate episodes of our life seem to demand narrative emplotment for their understanding and development.

Subject-referring emotions always occur within a social matrix of goals and aspirations, aspirations that naturally achieve clarity and definition in language and often at the instigation of prior emotions that reveal value directions in our lives. Emotions can thereby bring us to ourselves in their demand for understanding; they demand a narrative to be unfolded which gives meaning to their manifestation and thereby an interpretation to our lives. But it is an already more or less explicit narrative understanding that promulgates our higher level affective responses from the very start; we have already seen a foundation for this understanding in the prenarrative character of lived experience.

It should be readily apparent that Taylor's account of emotion is directly applicable to a discussion of, say, hope and despair, and can even be carried over to certain forms of doubt and belief (speaking again on the level of self-referential states). All such states make sense only against a background emplotment, against a drama one is cognizant of. One <u>hopes</u> for a possible future, one that is already imaginatively delineated, whereas a situation that is

hopeless is one where an expected or wished-for drama is not being realized. In each case one's hopes and aspirations are already linguistically and imagistically mediated, and may involve the call to a further understanding.

Another way of stating that such states are self-referential is to say, borrowing from Gabriel Marcel, that they reflect something we are and not merely something that we have. Our body, as Marcel has shown, functions in both of these modes, depending on the perspective we adopt towards it. For example, we may be in pain owing to an accident, but we do not regard the pain as disclosing in some way our personal identity, our selves; it is simply something we have or undergo. On the other hand, we consider the higher emotions as disclosive of our nature qua individual social beings (for example, in the way we deal with pain). These self-referential states are important because, to quote Taylor, "they ascribe a form to what matters to us"(SA, p.64). Such states point to or embody important value directions, and in this respect they have moral relevance; especially as our affective states usually relate to the acts of other persons as well as to ourselves. Emotional states must therefore be considered as evaluative, and we have a long tradition that links one's moral leanings to what is particularly characteristic of the human individual.

Taylor sums up his essay as follows:

> Human emotion is interpreted emotion, which is nevertheless seeking its adequate form. This is what is involved in seeing man as a self-interpreting animal. It means that he cannot be understood simply as an object

> among objects, for his life incorporates an interpretation, an expression of which cannot exist unexpressed, because the self that is to be interpreted is essentially that of a being who self-interprets.(SA, p.75, my emphasis)

The human subject, as the existentialists have maintained, is an unfinished subject. But perhaps more than this – it is a subject that continually writes, develops, and often erases its own definition, its story. What lies behind our self-conceptions is not some identical thing-in-itself (soul, self, spirit, ego, etc., though these can have a place within a narratological theory), but rather language as it derives from our sedimented history, especially the autobiographical language of self-narration. If I am a being who self-interprets, then it is to the interpreting itself that we should turn; we should not think that we can escape this circularity by recourse to a self external to this act.

I am not saying, nor is Taylor, that consciousness equals language. It is rather the case that the various orders of human reality are cut through with language, and that the diversity and depth of experienced meaning in our lives is pre-eminently a result of our linguistic and story-telling nature (or at least has articulation and conceptual understanding as a goal).[32] Much of this experienced meaning, however, derives from our linguistic/cultural heritage and may remain in the background in ordinary praxis – just as our developing life story may remain horizonal. A self-interpreting animal is one that can define itself anew, that can discard or embellish its old definitions. As self-interpreters we

therefore have responsibility for our selves, for the selves we were and the selves we would wish to become.

Before I examine the status of the narrating subject in more detail, it will be instructive to conclude this chapter on narrative by considering an important area that has only been implicit in my preceding account: the relation between narrative and morality. It should be clear, especially from literature, that stories (fictional or otherwise) do not recount a mere string of details that have no human interest, nor do they describe events in an objective or neutral fashion (no matter what the author's avowed intention may be). Narratives grow out of a social milieu and they cannot help but reflect its values and concerns. We shall see that one's personal narrative is woven into a social structure, and is not fully of one's own making.

(iv) The Virtue of Narrative

Each human life traces out a complex figure that necessarily intersects and interacts with those of others.[33] Social action thus immediately involves us in various plots and subplots, many of which we are only passively entangled in. I have already outlined the prenarrative quality of experience and there is still more to be said about it. This social matrix of plots is the material, or subtext, out of which our more explicit self-reflections are formed along their narrative threads, both retrospectively and prospectively. In this respect narration is a secondary process,[34] that of a story becoming known, becoming explicit. But although narration is a secondary process, it is an essential one with respect to human understanding because it places acts in relation to each other and discloses those Gestalten and continuities without which understanding would prove infertile.

In addition, to narrate the figure of the past is also to attempt a retrieval of ourselves on the plane of self-understanding; it is to create a portrait of ourselves, no matter how badly delineated. Without this recuperative act there would be no content to the "I" that I am for myself; there would not be the reflection that is so characteristic of human agents. As Charles Taylor has written: "there is no such thing as what [human beings] are, independently of how they understand themselves."[35] It is a question

of what, in reflection, we make of our situation vis-à-vis the past, present, and future. Our conceptions (disclosed in stories) may even reveal a multiplicity of selves. This is a phenomenon more common than is often suspected, and one we shall talk of later.

Self-portrayal is a form of what might be called representation, where this does not imply a mirroring of the past, say, but rather a generation of something that stands for the past (or myself in the past), what I previously called a representative. The mirroring relation is not, however, totally alien to our experience, for our tellings are very often retellings, one story may or may not reflect or correspond to another from a prior date (or to another person's account). In this respect there is often considerable intertextuality in our remembering — the tale is retold, and relates to little but a prior telling. In fact, much of what we remember is simply a prior remembering, a prior narrative.

There are many reasons why experience gets narrated or represented, some of which I have alluded to in earlier sections, but in the realm of social action this is primarily because, as Ricoeur says, "human lives need and merit being narrated."[36] The "need" is manyfold and ties in not only with constituting our identity (as an individual, as a nation, etc.), but also with justifying our very existence, our acts (Sartre's Nausea, for example, concludes on this note). This is a sort of moral imperative. Narratives also reveal aspects, or 'truths', of our life that would otherwise remain obscure or simply unconstituted. Human lives "merit" narration not only because they can be exemplary and heroic but also because they should

not be forgotten: "The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative."[37] In this latter respect one need only remember the holocaust and the literature it gave rise to, or rather demanded (the poetry of Nelly Sachs and Paul Celan, for example). We might also wish to say that human lives are intrinsically interesting.

Human action is valorized action, if only because it involves choice and deliberation, and it is narration that carries over to explicit consciousness action's implicit moral tenor and attempts to preserve it.[38] Without such narration the past would sink into an obscurity of forgetfulness wherein everything becomes equal. Narrative, however, not only delivers over the past, but is also the medium of our aspirations and desires, imaginatively expressing, in the stories we tell ourselves and those others that we hear and read, a possible future with its attendant joys and hardships and, hence, possible selves.

The stories we tell are part and parcel of our becoming. They are a mode of vision, plotting what is good and what is bad for us, what is possible and what is not — plotting who we may become. But in the telling we seem also to be immediately involved in generating the value of a certain state of affairs or course of action, of judging its worth, ethical or otherwise. I have already mentioned how recollection does not simply describe but dramatizes events, in doing so it places them in hierarchical relations to each other, even if this only amounts to raising certain material to momentary prominence. In the sphere of social action this valorization

understandably takes the form of moral judgement and critique, contributing thereby to the ethical realm of our existence. This ethical aspect of narration, taken somewhat broadly, is what I now want to consider.

It was a general thesis of Santayana that neither perception nor experience can be re-perceived or remembered,[39] they can only be imaginatively reconstructed, dramatized in images and words. He gives the name "literary psychology" to this sphere:

> Scientific psychology is a part of physics, or of the study of nature; it is the record of how animals act. Literary psychology is the art of imagining how they think and feel.[40]

Scientific psychology, as Santayana defines it, thus addresses the animate world in terms of observable (at least theoretically) material events, whereas literary psychology addresses these same events as they are transposed into the broad realm of experienced significance on the part of conscious human subjects."[41] This significance needs to be apprehended, says Santayana, "dramatically, by imitative sympathy", and it is especially this intersubjective sympathetic element that escapes the purview of an objective science: "literary psychology, however far scientific psychology may push it back, always remains in possession of the moral field."[42] Such moral values, as we shall see, are very much a product of how experience is reconstituted and sustained in our narrative reflections; I have already had occasion to mention, in this respect, Santayana's important notion of the 'moral imagination'.

What follows from the above account is that values are indigenous to the story and can only be abstracted secondarily. In the same way that emotions vary with our articulated understanding of events (and vice versa), so does the value attending those events. It would not be pertinent to the topic of narrative to enter into a detailed discussion of the relation between emotion and value, but it should be clear that we cannot really seperate, in experience, emotion and value; they both contribute to the meaning or significance our life has in most, if not all, of its less mundane episodes. What "literary psychology" and "moral imagination" seek to display in their narrative reconstructions is precisely this significance; it is an endeavour closely paralleled by the novelist's enterprise.

A primary difference between literature and the world of concrete action is, of course, that the significance of the latter often demands immediate physical action from us — we must respond, say, with more than just understanding and compassion — and this reaction may bring in further responses (tied to our concrete involvement and ability to act), though not always. Many events that we hear of and many that we witness do not, however, demand our practical intervention, and in this respect they resemble our response to what we may read. The text or plots of life may result in much the same responses as do literary texts, and this is especially true on the level of valuation. This is why art can imitate life and vice versa, with advantages gained by both. In both life and art, narrative and significance work in a symbiotic relationship; for

example, the story (or memory) may call forth the emotional response. Likewise, the emotion may call forth the story (or the memory). Thus writers will often let the unfolding plot determine the emotional/valuational result, but they may also guide the plot in light of a response they wish to attain, a value they wish to exemplify. Either way, in life as in art there is an interweaving of narrative and significance (value).

It should be understandable, then, why dramatization is the form of expression most adequate to the direct disclosure of human action in its social and moral significance, and hence for disclosing individuals in their characteristic (and valorized) traits and identities: as villianous, heroic, vain, humble, and so on. Values arise in the drama of our life, in the choices this life involves.

In the relating of actual human lives, dramatization must of course occur after the fact. As Arendt has written: "[The] unchangeable identity of a person, though disclosing itself intangibly in act and speech, becomes tangible only in the story of the actor's and speaker's life."[43] One is reminded of Ulysses narrating his own past to the Phaiakeans. There appears to be some truth in saying that, as Max Scheler has put it, "the whole person is contained in every fully concrete act",[44] but this is in fact true only for someone who can interpret those acts into meaningful sequences, someone who can 'see' or imagine the broader story. For as we have seen, the significance of human action is understood in and through the reflection that the acts give rise to, from the context or framing story in which they fit. It is not that the self is behind

the acts, visible and fully formed at their inception, the self is rather a result of actions, something that actions imply.

Again we are back at the implicit story that is waiting, as it were, to be told, to be revealed, and on being revealed will itself disclose the implied subject of the actions (the actor) in his or her valorized dimensions. This revelation is, as we have seen, always interpretive, not the neutral description of a prior and non-linguistic objectivity. Another way of saying this is that the self is a 'reference' produced via the interpretation, projected by it. Ricoeur uses a similar notion when he talks of the world set up by a literary text as its 'productive reference';[45] in this way he circumvents naive objectivism.

Given that the self belongs in a teleological or story-like framework, it seems necessary that one's life exhibit something like a unity of purpose if it is not to be fragmented (or multiple) and unstable. It is on this level of purposes and intentions that our characteristic human identity, personal identity, is especially evident, for it is here that value determinations relating to the form of life that we lead are disclosed: "our identity is defined by our fundamental evaluations," says Taylor.[46] Telling a person's story tends invariably to plot the type of moral agent he or she is or was; it reveals the value directions in their life by plotting only those actions relevant or tributary to certain central purposes.

In the same way that a story traditionally demands followability and closure, so we tend to expect that same unity and continuity in other people's lives and in our own. No matter how

disorganized and disjunct a life may appear, the biographer's art, as with reflection generally, has always been to 'reduce' diversity to a perhaps hidden unity, a purpose, central disposition or group of problems that even the actor may not have been aware of (Sartre's existential psychoanalysis makes the same point – while contradicting some of his other views!). A story that does not provide us with such a unity is usually regarded as a failed or incomplete story. A life may similarly be considered incomplete; it is a life that does not facilitate some degree of final understanding and judgement. Although I think there are problems with this traditional position of unity and closure, it nevertheless still affords insight into the function of narrative in this area.

In our own lives, and our own self-understanding, the achievement of unity is usually considered necessary for our identity, and in our social life unity of purpose and consistency of valuation is part of what it means to be a responsible moral agent. Responsibility accrues to a person who can evaluate possible acts with respect to their worth, as noble or base, as cowardly or courageous, and so on, and in this realm one cannot help but appeal to an <u>already</u> constituted vocabulary of personal values. An extreme existentialist position of radical choice makes no sense precisely because one must there eschew such 'traditional' values (as a basis for choosing) and seemingly, therefore, evaluate out of thin air. Evaluation, however, is impossible in such a vacuum. Autonomy does not mean the complete overthrow of the past; it implies, rather, that possible actions are evaluated in light of the values I <u>already</u>

accept responsibility for, values that are already determinants for the direction of my life and therefore for the type of person that I am. Says Taylor: "Moral agency...requires some kind of reflexive awareness of the standards one is living by"[47] (or failing to live by). It is the latter horizon of values that allows further evaluations to be made.

If we now look further at the evaluation procedure, we find, as with the higher emotions, that it is significantly mediated through language, particularly the language of a learned vocabulary of contrasting values. On this question I shall primarily follow Taylor's analysis in "What is Human Agency?"[48] Taylor's principal claim is that evaluation is of two distinct types, weak and strong, and that only the latter properly reflects a self-formation of the subject and hence a formation of the type of life the subject leads. Weak evaluation is a judgement that considers outcomes and operates on the principle of greater or less desirability. What is lacking here, from the point of view of strong evaluation, is a qualitative judgement concerning the relative worth of the desires. Weak evaluation, in the extreme case, does not enter upon the path of rejecting a desirable alternative because it is, say, base or cowardly; such considerations of worth occur only to a higher or second level of reflection:

> In weak evaluation, for something to be judged good it is sufficient that it be desired, whereas in strong evaluation there is also a use of 'good' or some other evaluative term for which being desired is not sufficient.... (Agency, p.18)

In this way I set up second order desires which situate me in the properly human realm of morals and values; only at this point am I significantly different from other animal species (Agency, p.15ff).

In our consideration of emotions we noted that whereas lower-level feelings such as pain (and bodily disturbances generally) are simply given (or can be so considered for our purposes), the self-referential emotions are a product of how we articulate or plot a given state of affairs. This same structure, if I follow Taylor correctly, applies to evaluation. The truly ethical realm is not a pregiven stratum of experience, with attendant objective values that it is our job to discern and our duty to follow, but is again tied into our articulation of a given existential situation or proposed action. The situation prompts our evaluation and our evaluation reflects, dialectically, back onto the situation and valorizes it.

Sartre is thus quite correct in insisting that we create values, and also that we define ourselves in and through this creative process, that is, as someone who upholds a particular value or set of values. That we define ourselves is manifest precisely in the responsibility we feel for our decisions (and I am only talking here about authentic choices, not where one blindly follows custom), and also therefore for the guilt we may well experience. (Sartre's account of 'bad faith' would be instructive here.) Guilt is especially notable for bringing us, via its insistence on being interpreted, to a strong sense of our own being, our own deep-seated values. Guilt, like the inarticulate feelings I earlier discussed, seems to demand a narrative account of itself.

Such values, or value dispositions, are at once the foundation for my estimations of worth and the habitual basis of myself as a responsible social person. They are not only evidenced in my acts but also in the stories that I weave to justify such acts. These abiding values are always disclosed to some degree in our present evaluations. This is why our strong evaluations are self-referential (and referential to society) and also self-constitutive. The latter is important because: (a) strong evaluations imply a degree of self-emplotment, and (b) many of our evaluations do not simply reflect pregiven dispositions (or expectations) but may go beyond them, perhaps to enhance and deepen them. We may, for example, surprise ourselves in our own estimations and judgements (just as we may in our stories and dreams). To draw a textual (and hermeneutic) analogy, it is from our fund of knowledge about the world and about language that we are able to constitute and appreciate the intricate plot of a novel. But the novel, in turn, may not leave us as innocent as before we read it — in the end the novel speaks about us.

Present evaluations and judgements are thus founded on our cultural past, both our personal past and the broader historical horizon that delimits the possibilities for our mode of life. We are, as MacIntyre says, "bearers of tradition,"[49] and it is what we inherit from this tradition that forms and continues to guide our initial moral perspective. As social beings we are already caught up in a network of expectations and obligations, and hence of values that we either sustain or defuse. Such values are embodied in the practices of a society (as they are in the practices of individuals),

and they are made public and 'legitimated' in the narratives surrounding them. Thus we have the practice of scientific research, ostensibly motivated by the search for truth, and the further story that legitimates this reasearch by appealing, say, to a pragmatic telos — future benefit to the quality of human life, and so on. Here narrative, like rhetoric, is a medium of justification as well as of persuasion.

Narrative, then, articulates what is of value to us and why, for it essentially defines (in the first instance) who we are and what we want (cosmologies, eschatologies, histories, etc.). It is a moralizing force that embodies the norms (customs) by which a people gain identity and that provides criteria of judgement for acts that occur within the society it defines. This social force of narratives (myths, fables, legends, etc.) is perhaps more immediately discernable in 'primitive' societies than in our vast and diversified western culture; though the real reason for this may well be not a lack of narratives but simply our embeddedness in them and the myopia this lack of distance causes.

It is a commonplace that our age has often been characterized as lacking a guiding telos, a modern mythology in light of which we can view ourselves, gain identity and have clearly defined purposes; though science and technology do perform this task to some degree, usurping religion in the process (amongst other things). Jean-Francois Lyotard characterizes our age as not only lacking a "meta-narrative", a single story uniting human endeavour and aspirations to a single goal, but also as being distrustful of such a

thing.[50] In his praise of multiplicity and segmentation he goes as far as seeing the virtue of promoting a schizophrenic, divided identity (this is both descriptive and normative for Lyotard).

The power of totalizing ideologies is of course Lyotard's primary target, but from our point of view the sheer stress on the pervasive influence of narrative is informative. Narratives, and especially meta-narratives, are part and parcel of culture and tradition. This phenomenon is clear if we look to small tribal communities where the whole social structure, and the subjects within it, may be guided and regulated by (what we call) a mythological worldview. Once under the sway of such narratives life becomes simply a repetition of the same stages and orders that are there represented, from the broader social structure down to the individual life and its development. In such a worldview virtue is tantamount to fulfilling an expected role in society; one performs well or ill what tradition demands, and there may be very little leeway or toleration for deviation.

Narrative is thus a primary vehicle of ideology, both nationally and on the level of the individual – the ideologies we inherit and those we fabricate in our conversations with ourselves and others – and they are a powerful force in providing a delimited world where good is good and bad is bad. But we all know what happened to many of those values we upheld in earlier days – things tend to change. A critical reflection is necessary if our stories, our self-conceptions and possibilities, are not to become confining or stagnant, and if they are to keep in touch with the prenarrative

level. Traditions, like individuals, should allow for conflict and variation if they are to remain healthy and not decline.[51]

To conclude, narratives, traditionally conceived, seem inherently moralizing. The closure to human actions that they effect is often that of promoting one moral order over another. This is a thesis of Hayden White, one that he finds active in historical texts:

> ...it seems possible to conclude that every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralize the events of which it treats.[52]

As such, a narrative is a moral drama that serves in the last resort as an interpretation and judgement of the events related, especially with a view to offering an overview of and deciding between conflicting interpretations. A prime example of such conflict is that which guided much of Hegel's thinking in this area – Sophocles' Antigone – where we find played out the conflict of divine law versus the king's law. This situation is similarly reflected in the more prevailent conflict between personal desire and law. Much of our own narrating can usefully be seen as driven by some such conflict, tension, or crisis in our own lives.[53]

* * *

It is a commonly accepted view that a stringent and unswerving self-conception is a sign of possible intolerance towards people with a different outlook. One totalizes one's own position, one's own account (or belief) of what the good life consists in, and becomes blind to alternatives. This blindness spreads to the understanding of other positions, which are simply discarded rather than understood.

This situation especially applies to the dogmatist who lacks both imagination and playfulness, and who has ears only for that which he already believes. Our previous discussion points both to the value and the potential danger of such closure. But closure is often belied by the actual subtext of action (the prenarrative level), a subtext exhibiting divergencies and contradictions that are not taken up in the explicit narrative enterprise. Self-understanding rides tandem with an encountering of otherness, with an imaginative empathy for the other that in turn discloses or develops possibilities for oneself. How, indeed, can one understand that which is not a possibility for oneself, that which one has already closed off!

The individual is in fact something of a chameleon, adapting itself very much to the needs of the moment. The structures that support our existence are not static like the frame of a building or automobile. In mankind these structures are especially flexible and adaptive, able to accommodate the new, give birth to it (the "structuring structures" of Bourdieu). Structure is aimed at performance, at work. In other words, one's habitus is what gears into the present praxial situation, transforming the world. Viewed in this way structure alone, and not the superficial exploits of some supposed ego, is a force for creativity. This is why creativity is not easily taught and why it effects its best work passively rather than in accordance with the demands of a 'thinking-willing subject'.

Identity rides on a more or less continuous history of difference, identified and unified more by a route, a history, than by an essence (consider the diverse route of Augustine). The center

of my identity is pre-eminently the present itself and my certainty that I am this present, that it is me (the speaking/thinking subject). Yet in this present I change. I relocate myself or,more precisely, re-word myself. I was "there", now I am "here". I was "that", now I am "this".[54] Language thus situates the subject within a chorus of temporal and spatial shifters; opens a past and a future where the subject is caught in its own signifying practice, sustained by it, produced by it. As Benveniste says: "Language is ... the possibility of subjectivity because it always contains the linguistic forms appropriate to the expression of subjectivity...."[55] In language (and in expression generally) I am set free; but do I ever speak? With Foucault I would maintain that the performing self, the self as origin and originator is, in certain important respects, an unnecessary hypothesis. The question is, given the above account of the self, what role or position does the subject now have, now that it is displaced from center field?

Having shown the relevance of narrative to our lives generally – its role in personal identity, understanding, emotions, values, and cultural identity – I shall now pursue in more detail the question of the individual's relation to language and to his or her own story. This investigation will yeild a systematization of the self in terms of a play of semiotic positions; of speaking, spoken, and implied subjects.

Chapter Three: **THE SUBJECT**

> Language reproduces the world, but by submitting it to its own organization.
> — Emile Benveniste[1]

> Man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man.
> — Jacques Lacan[2]

In previous chapters it was shown how the human subject cannot be considered, either in terms of temporality or memory, without a considerable intervention of narrational activity. The last chapter attempted to sketch this thoroughgoing importance of narrative for many important aspects of human experience. This chapter will zero in more specifically on how the self is generated and sustained in expressive acts. Of particular importance will be the function and meaning of that little, but highly important word "I", and the cogito it is implied by.

Many of our mistaken or confused beliefs about the self and our identity result from a naive or misguided conception of language and of the role language plays in our lives. We shall begin by looking at three of these interrelated misconceptions; they were more or less explicitly addressed throughout earlier chapters.

(1) It has already been noted that language tempts us to posit, as Nietzsche said, a 'doer before the deed' — an "I" that

thinks, an "I" that acts. I have argued that the "I" is implicated in these practices rather than a cause of them. (2) Tied to this problem is a second: the belief in intentions, of 'thoughts' that exist prior to linguistic expression. Everyday discourse leads us to suppose that language is a medium for the communication of these thoughts, that it gives voice to them, makes them public. Here language is once removed from the more originary thought or, as it is often called, authorial intention. (3) Ideally, language neutrally mirrors, reflects, or re-presents this thought, makes it present again in a new medium. This is the third misconception, that language has a certain neutrality or transparency with respect to what is expressed, with respect to 'reality'. Language is overlooked. This leads us, in an especially metaphysical movement, to sever our categories of reality from the categories of our particular language and, in effect, from our historicity.[3] This last misconception should not lead us to separate language and reality, making of the latter an unknowable Ding an sich; it is rather the case that, for us, they belong together. The only reality that exists independently of us is precisely one that is not for us other than as posited by us, such as the sub-atomic model employed by science. World, self, and language belong inseparably together, and develop together.

Language establishes a complex realm of signifying relations that raise up the perceptually given to the level of meaning. To use language is basically to utilise a system of signs which relate one thing or attribute to another in diverse ways, and where "I" am, and this is very important, to the degree that I in fact utilise this

code, become signified in it. This implication of the subject in language usage is what this chapter seeks to demonstrate.

Whereas, and we are following Benveniste here, animals are responsive to natural signals which have a direct correlation to physical events (and can be trained to respond to new ones), man uses symbols that may have no natural relation to these events.(GPL, p.24) Symbols, and especially language, have left their roots in natural phenomena behind. Writes Benveniste: "Man invents and understands symbols; the animal does not.... Between the sensory-motor function and the representative function is a threshold which only human beings have been able to cross."(GPL, p.24) One might begin, as a child, relating to 'words', or rather to sounds, as mere signals, precursors of sensory events (e.g., gratification), but later the sensory recedes and the signs and more abstract references multiply. One learns to signify the absent conceptually (a process already prefigured by passive recollection), not only to see but to refer by name to aspects of what is, or has been seen. We are gradually educated into a broad realm of symbols and signification. But we are also, in this way, educated into the socio-cultural sphere.[4]

"Language <u>reproduces</u> reality", says Benveniste, which means that "reality is produced anew by means of language."(GPL, p.22) This reproduction is in accord with the conceptuality or structuration inherent to the language. It is with language that we grasp reality, and we do so in a manipulatory gesture, the style of which is to a great degree unconscious. Language acts on the world in a manner parallel to the silent bodily habitualities of our practical life.

Although language must be seen as yet another habituality, it has the added dimension of seemingly unlimited reflexivity.[5] This reflexive capacity makes all the difference.

Language also, of course, 'communicates', and in doing so creates a community: "Society is not possible except through language; nor is the individual."(GPL, p.23) It is in language that my individual perspective on the world is made known both to myself and others, and language accordingly allots linguistic functions for this individuality: personal pronouns, particularly "I" and "you". It is in personal pronouns that we reproduce ourselves as individual persons. But this statement must not be misunderstood. By "person" I do not mean just some thing among things, some entity in the world. Persons are, in the words of Charles Taylor, language animals. Thus, language is not simply a tool used by persons but is part of their definition: "It is a speaking man whom we find in the world, a man speaking to another man, and language provides the very definition of man."(GPL, p.224)[6] The "I" refers neither to a res extensa nor to some mysterious res cogitans but primarily to a speaker in the act of speaking. This thesis is essentially that of Benveniste,[7] and it will be of value to begin by considering his position more closely.

(i) He Who Says "Ego"

> I'm in words, made of words, others' words...
> — Samuel Beckett[8]

The three misconceptions previously mentioned (the belief in an I that thinks, in thoughts prior to linguistic expression, and in language as a neutral medium of communication), all relate to a construal of the subject in substantial terms; a subject that may indeed come to itself self-reflexively, but where the core of the self is posited as a prelinguistic datum — such as a transcendent ego. This position often relies on some form of consciousness that is directly present to itself, like Aristotle's conception of deity (noesis noeseos). In opposition to this way of thinking I have tried to sketch a view of self where language takes central stage, especially in the form of narration with its implied subject. As Calvin Schrag states the matter: "The event of self-consciousness is inseparable from the history of saying 'I'."[9] Such a history is primarily that of autobiographical acts, for a meaningful self-consciousness is, as the previous chapters have attempted to show, synonomous with self-narration and, therefore, with self-interpretation. Benveniste sums up this linguistic position as follows:

> It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a subject, because language alone establishes the concept of "ego" in reality, in its reality which is that of the being.
>
> The "subjectivity" we are discussing here is the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as "subject." It is defined not by the feeling which everyone experiences of being himself (this feeling, to the degree that it can be taken note of, is only a reflection) but as the psychic unity that transcends the totality of the actual experiences it assembles and that makes the permanence of the consciousness. Now we hold that that "subjectivity," whether it is placed in phenomenology or in psychology, as one may wish, is only the emergence in the being of a fundamental property of language. "Ego" is he who says "ego." This is where we see the foundation of "subjectivity," which is dertermined by the linguistic status of "person."(GPL, p.224)[10]

Subjectivity is attained in discourse by assuming the role of "I" in that discourse. "I" designates this speaking subject at the instance of utterance, just as it designates other speakers in their turn. "'I'", says Benveniste, "signifies the person who is uttering the present instance of discourse containing 'I'"(GPL, p.218). But, as Benveniste also reveals, "I" always functions dialogically with an addressee, "you" (singular or plural). It is here that language guarantees the possibility of sociality and intersubjectivity. (GPL, p.225) One cannot become "I" without an implicit reference to another person, an auditor or narratee – which may be the same subject qua listener. "I" functions in contrast to "you" in much the same way as "here" refers linguistically to "there" rather than to any fixed location. In Lacanian terms, "there" is the other of "here", "you" is the other of "I", and vice versa. Discourse always has its other,

which is one way of restating the Saussurean claim that signifiers gain meaning in relation to other signifiers, to those signifiers that are excluded by the utterance but presupposed by it.

"I" has fundamentally a locutionary reality, setting up what I shall call a subject of speech (le sujet de l'énonce); a form of subject that exists solely in the expression. In the ordinary train of discourse this linguistic subject tends automatically (habitually and implicitly) to be predicated by listeners and readers of its author, what I shall call the speaking subject (the bodily site of the enunciation, or origin of inscription). This form of predication is fundamental for generating what we term 'persons' (embodied subjects), but we must not forget that the subject of speech has an important autonomy from its site of production — it may be reproduced in a text, on a tape recorder, and of course it may be a fiction.

The main point here is that the subject of speech does not bear a one-to-one relation to the speaking subject, as though the 'truth' of the latter is mirrored in the former. Rather, we should see a parallel to the dialectical mechanism of prenarrative/narrative that was discussed in the previous chapter. The meaning of the speaking subject (for itself and for others) is only given via its discourse, where, if not identified with the explicit subject of the utterance (in autobiography), it at least becomes the authorial subject of the utterance. In itself the speaking subject is simply a possible site of utterances, a semiotic body of potential gestures and articulations through which it will make itself known as a particular subject with particular concerns. The speaking subject,

then, only attains selfhood via its expressions — much as the prenarrative attains its expression in a narrative (such as autobiography or history).

The obvious rejoinder to this general linguistic position is, once again, that language is simply more or less adequate to expressing what is prelinguistically already given to us in our experience. But let us look more closely at the prelinguistic. We undoubtedly have a bodily existence apart from language, but we wish to claim that it is in and through language that the dimension of the subject, the self, is generated. Consider the following statement by Helen Keller: "When I learned the meaning of 'I' and 'me' and found that I was something, I began to think. Then consciousness first existed for me."[11] Prior to this self-consciousness, she writes:

> I did not know that I knew aught, or that I lived or acted or desired. I had neither will nor intellect. I was carried along to objects and acts by a certain blind natural impetus. I had a mind which caused me to feel anger, satisfaction, desire. These two facts led those about me to suppose that I willed and thought.[12]

These statements bring out perfectly the effect of language in providing a position and identity for a subject. Prior to the appropriation of "I", she says, "my mind was in a state of anarchy in which meaningless sensations rioted, and if thought existed, it was so vague and inconsequent, it cannot be made a part of discourse."[13] Yet despite this situation, it seems so natural for us to attribute selfhood, intention, and conscious deliberation to others that we do so to very young children and, sometimes, even to animals! If we can

trust Keller's description, there simply was no reflective consciousness, no point of view from which future acts are assessed and the past reflected on. Thus, there simply was no "I" that she was for herself. The only "I" was the one predicated of her by others.

Another interesting point arises from Keller's observations. What I have called the prenarrative level of experience seems not to have existed in any organized fashion, instead there is primarily a riot of sensations and impulses which "cannot be made a part of discourse." This leads us to suppose that without language, without a modicum of self-narration during the course of one's life, even one's unreflected or pre-conscious life loses structure, loses some of its implicit narrative. In other words, if we have not been brought up with stories, we cannot expect to find them in our lives, cannot expect to live them.[14] The prenarrative and the narrative (or linguistic) levels are intertwined, their histories continually cross.

Let us be reminded of Benveniste's central tenet, now that it might have a more concrete value:

> ...it is literally true that the basis of subjectivity is in the exercise of language...there is no other objective testimony to the identity of the subject except that which he himself thus gives about himself."(GPL p.226)

We should note especially the implications of this statement. What, for example, are we to do with patients in a catatonic state? Are they still subjects, still persons? On Benveniste's view the question remains open, but borders on the negative. They are granted subject

status for us only because they once were subjects – we tend to give them the benefit of the doubt. If self-consciousness is correlative to language, then only a solipsistic interior dialogue can sustain them as subjects; a fact that is most difficult to ascertain.[15]

It is interesting, in films, how even a computer can become a subject (and be treated like one at the discursive level) if it responds with a voice that uses the first person singular, rather than the drone of impersonal information we might otherwise expect. HAL in 2001 is an obvious example of this subjectifying brought about in speech, and it often occurs without a visible and localizable physical body. Our positive responses to such, usually fictitious, cases can be revealing. They point, among other things, to a certain independence of the speaking subject from its state of embodiment.

HAL was successful as a subject because 'his' speech respected the dialogical nature of the personal pronouns: he could become "you", the addressee. The "subjectivity" of HAL is different from the subjectifying of animals I mentioned earlier, for here it comes primarily from HAL 'himself', not from our own projecting. We are caught up in the dialogic situation his speech engenders, are ourselves addressed as subjects.[16]

Lacan has said of communicative interaction: "...if I call the person to whom I am speaking by whatever name I choose to give him, I intimate to him the subjective function that he will take on in order to reply to me, even if it is to repudiate this function."[17] It is surprisingly difficult to avoid this 'intersubjective' dialogue altogether. Of course, much does depend on the status of the reply,

for I may either recognize or refute the other as the type of subject they set themselves up to be, or may refute their subjective status completely by simply not responding to the speech situation at all. This latter case, however, may still form two categories: (a) relegating the other to total object status ("only a machine"), which truly negates the other as subject; (b) alienation of the other, which still therefore presupposes subjectivity. This second category may, for example, take the form of a master-slave relationship where only a quasi-subjectivity is granted.[18]

Can HAL ever be a 'person'? Not by our standard definition, for this does require, amongst other things, embodiment in what we take to be a human form. Persons tend to be commonly conceived as a soul or mind plus body; we encountered this with Locke, and it goes back at least to Plato. Of course this could change, if our conception of embodiment changed in a more mechanistic direction, as it indeed seems already to be doing! I shall not enter into this latter debate.[19]

In a face to face dialogue it is the other's 'body' that speaks to me. The other's 'body' becomes both the <u>site of narration</u> and also, on my part, the <u>site of ascription</u> for subjectivity. By this I mean that the subject, the "I" of discourse, is attributed to a certain spatial location, the perceived origin of the voice. This physical body, the site of narration, thereby becomes endowed with the status of selfhood, becomes a distinctly human body, a person rather than a mere impersonal mechanism or animal.[20] Even when the

speaker is absent some form of ascription to an authorial origin generally occurs.

This act of ascription is a prime factor in the generation of what we call "persons", but also in the formation of potentially troublesome concepts such as soul and mind. The soul (also the mind) has been traditionally viewed as distributed in the body in some way, though it is especially associated with the head and throat regions, both by the speaker and the addressee. William James points this out when he says that the spiritual self, or what is commonly taken for it, is really only those intimate and diffuse, but continuous, bodily motions or pressures occurring at the head and throat and does not necessarily indicate the presence of a soul substance.[21] These motions are thus assumed to be the seat of the self, the feeling of subjectivity, or what James calls "the real nucleus of our personal identity."[22]

The head is the most obvious site of ascription for a personal self that originates in voice (mouth and throat), and whose world is eminently visual (eyes). We must remember, however, not to reify these 'spiritual' entities — soul, mind, self — and also not to set up unnecessary dualisms of mind and body substances. As I hope to have shown, the self (mind could also be included) is not a substance or thing, and is not therefore localizable in anything but a derived sense. One becomes a subject for oneself, one has a self, within a speech community where the "I" and "you" are played out. It is our inveterate habit of substantializing this "I", of giving it a being other than as expressed in the praxis of discourse and at the moment

of utterance, that leads us to the belief in localization and also, because it cannot of course be discovered at that locale (consider Descartes' glandular problem!), to an essential separability from the body. Ignoring the functioning of language has created numerous such problems in the history of philosophy, problems that we are only just learning to think from this new perspective, or simply discard as totally ill-formed.

(ii) Signs of Derrida

Let us return to the second misconception with which we began this chapter, particularly with a view to understanding further the nature of signification and meaning at the level of soliloquy – the "dialogue of the soul with itself". Soliloquy is especially important to the question of self-identity conceived narratologically and also to the function of shifters ("I", "you", "here", "there", "now", etc.). The second misconception was as follows: the belief in intentions or 'thoughts' that exist prior to linguistic expression.

What is often supposed in ordinary discourse is that expression carries over in a communicative act what was initially given prelinguistically. This prelinguistic realm is considered to be a realm of 'thought' or direct intuition that serves as a preconceptual origin and touchstone for the meaning and truth of our expressive utterances and statements. For perception this distinction is especially clear. I say "It is snowing outside", and this statement is presumably verified in my own perceptual experience and can be similarly verified by the addressee if he, say, looks out the window. This position is essentially that proposed by Edmund Husserl, whose phenomenology is one of its most detailed expressions. If we pursue Husserl's thought, primary in the earlier works, it will take us directly to a consideration of expression and soliloquy. We shall, in effect, be arguing against the Husserlian position.

For Husserl,[23] the meaning (Bedeutung) of an expression is fulfilled in intuitive self-evidence or in the sense (Sinn) of extra-linguistic experience,[24] just as meaning may be taken as an expression of such a sense on the part of the speaker. A prime function of expression, which requires a signifying medium, is thus to communicate a pregiven sense or intended content, a sense that is directly present to oneself and which one seeks to indicate to others. Language (and I shall take exception to this view) is then conceived of, in its ideal state, as a transparent or self-effacing conveyance of meaning from one interiority to another, from one 'soul' to another. The goal of this communication is intuition, conceived of as the presence of the state of affairs (the referent) 'in itself'. One may of course remain at the level of meaning and simply accept the other's word. This latter situation is very common practice and it also indicates an important difference between meaning and truth. For Husserl, meaning is fulfilled in intuition, much as Kant's "empty" concepts are, or in the presence of the object intended (an object that could also be fictional or intellectual).

There are a few distinctions to be made here. Signs may be broadly divided into two primary camps which I shall call, following Husserl,[25] "indicative" (or "indexical") and "expressive". The former functions like my pointing finger, or smoke that indicates fire; no intermediary level of meaning is required, one simply has to know the ostensive convention or make the relevant association: "Every sign is a sign for something, but not every sign has 'meaning', a 'sense' that the sign 'expresses'."[26] Expressions, on the other hand, involve

meaning, and are not therefore in a one to one relation to things. Expression (Ausdruck), as in written and spoken language, operates through a degree of ideality; in fact, expressions refer to an ideality rather than to a reality. We can also say that expression expresses the meaning of things or states of affairs;[27] it raises the sense of things to the level of communication. Meaning thus requires the existence of a signifying medium (or legible structure) that allows for recognition and repetition of signification and meaning within a community. Without this iterability there could be no meaning, no communication from persons A to B.

It is essentially this iterability that allows meaning, and hence expression, to break with the empirical. "It is snowing," is meaningful whether it is snowing or not; it is meaningful now as later.[28] The ability of writing to communicate over centuries is a clear indication of this break, a break even from the moment and context of inscription and its psychological associations and implications. Thus Derrida: "A written sign...is not exhausted in the present of its inscription."[29] It is of the essence of writing to be able, potentially, to transcend its particular context or site of production, to communicate in the absence of author, author's intention, and implied referential situation.

What is problematic here is the presumption by expression theories of meaning to conceive of expression as a duplication or reproduction of a prior stratum: "to repeat or duplicate a sense content which does not wait for speech in order to be what it is", says Derrida.[30] Expression is restricted to the model of

communication, a communication of what is already prefigured in the interiority of consciousness, and which is simply mirrored forth in the linguistic utterance. Truth becomes a matter of, on the one side, adequacy of the expression to the intended sense, and on the other, adequacy to the object referred to. The dissociation that may occur with writing already points to a serious undermining of both these aspects of truth, and also of the conception of language as communication, that is, the passage of meaning from one soul to another.[31]

Already in Husserl's work, however, the notion of a neutral mirroring is problematic, for the expressed gives something of a new form to the pre-expressed:

> A peculiar intentional instrument lies before us which essentially possesses the outstanding characteristic of reflecting back as from a mirror every other intentionality according to its form and content, of copying it whilst colouring it in its own way, and thereby of working into it its own form of "conceptuality."[32]

Husserl continues, "expression is not something like a coat of varnish or like a piece of clothing covering it over; it is a mental formation exercising new intentive functions on the intentive substratum...."[33] More and more the initial instrumentality of language gives way to a creative function that generates rather than mirrors a pregiven meaning. However, expression not only generates meaning, perhaps more importantly it also generates the subject and object (qua intended) presupposed by it. Was there in fact a subject preceding expression? This is a position that my previous chapters

have continually argued against. "There is," states Derrida, "no constituting subjectivity. The very concept of constitution itself must be deconstructed."[34] Let us now follow this subject, necessarily presupposed by Husserl, back into soliloquy.

Expressions may rely on intuitive fulfillment for their truth value, but this is not what makes them meaningful. Meaning, as Saussure pointed out, is a matter of the juxtaposition of traditional signs in a more or less grammatical chain (syntagm). Hence, even in interior 'monologue' what one expresses may be quite meaningful, but the question arises as to the communicative value of the expressions. Consider Husserl:

> One of course speaks, in a certain sense, even in soliloquy, and it is certainly possible to think of oneself as speaking, and even as speaking to oneself, as, e.g., when someone says to himself: 'You have gone wrong, you can't go on like that.' But in the genuine sense of communication, there is no speech in such cases, nor does one tell oneself anything.... In a monologue words can perform no function of indicating the existence of mental acts, since such indication would be quite purposeless. For the acts in question are themselves experienced by us at that moment.[35]

If, as Husserl clams, such communication is considered to be the expression of an already known intention, then communication to oneself is a gratuitous act. What follows from the act, what it indicates, is already present to oneself.[36] In order to follow this argument further let us turn briefly to the indexical function of expressions.

Expressions can, indeed must, be able to function also as indices. They may, for example, indicate attitudes, moods, or states

of mind. (Bodily and facial 'expressions' also do this.)[37] They may also indicate the sheer otherness, or the congeniality of the other. They may indicate the 'intention' to describe a certain object (the referent), or a certain memory, feeling or perception. They may indicate a meaning that the speaker seems not aware of, and so on. These indicative functions are very often associations that experience teaches us, they may also be subsidiary to the express meaning of the utterance.

The question to be faced is whether, qua listener, the speaker stands in a privileged relation to his own 'thoughts', his own intentions, as Husserl would have us believe. Or is the speaker in the same position as any other listener might possibly be to such an utterance? Does speech in general, like writing, have a deferred or non-present origin? Is the subject produced in and through the signs, and not vice versa? It is already significant that language is, to use Husserl's expression, interwoven (verflochten)[38] with many other act strata.

When people seek to express themselves do they really check, by something like a backward glance, with the pre-expressed sense they seek to communicate? Does what is said never surprise the speaker? Is it not the case that the meaning, even the feel or tone, of the expression itself guides one's next utterance, by the way the utterance relates to the speech context for example? It appears to me that what one 'intends' is not at all clearly given unless one has, or has had, the expression for it. It is often after the demonstrated

inadequacy of an initial expression that one says: "What I meant to say is...," thus feeding in the intention after the fact.

Seeking an expression is very often a matter of attaining a degree of univocity, such that the expression cannot be taken wrongly by a listener. This seeking functions by exclusion and by knowing what one has said rather than what one supposedly 'intended' to say. The adequacy of one's expression is a question of how one understands that expression oneself. If it is ambiguous, one rephrases it, and so on. It is interesting that when someone says, "I have it on the tip of my tongue," that they do not yet know what it is, do not yet have it, and they may only come to know it in the moment of expression. It is as though the coming of language sets the sense free, first brings it to the light of consciousness. Another example would be: "I know what I want to say, just give me time." How often it is that "what I wanted to say" gets worked out in the actual expressing.

These phenomena of language do not, I maintain, only occur in public speech, but also in soliloquy – there is, to disagree with Husserl, no essential difference between the two. It is interesting to note, however, that in public one is often much more careful in one's formulations, for they are questioned and corrected not only by oneself but, more importantly perhaps, by other people; that one in fact "does not know" becomes apparent more readily than in soliloquy. It can take discipline even to think in complete sentences to oneself.[39]

Rather than posit something like a private language or a mysterious self-knowledge, it is more economical (in Occam's sense)

to suggest that in solitary monologue one's expressions first render the meanings of one's experiences or states present to oneself. This situation is not significantly different from expressing oneself to others. One becomes an interlocutor to oneself.

Much of what I am saying here can be seen to derive from what was said in our previous chapter, for it is especially clear in Taylor's description of the relation between emotion and expression. For Taylor, as we saw, man is defined as an interpreting animal, a language animal. It is this thorough embeddedness in language that is often overlooked by Husserl. We could also say it is because language and signification have already occurred that one has a 'sense' of knowing beforehand. This refers back to what we called above the prenarrative (quasi-narrative) level of our experience.

We can now take a further look at the language of the soliloquizing subject. First it should be noted that meaning is not a free-floating X, but is indissolubly linked to a basis in materiality — to both the iterable mark on the paper and to the phonetic material of voice (e.g., one identifies the same word in different modulations of voice). It is this materiality of the sign that is iterable, that has a certain self-identity in its occurrences despite variations in voice and accent.[40] Ideality, to follow Derrida, is a matter of the seemingly infinite repeatability of signs; their freedom from any particular utterance and any particular speaker. Ideality, therefore, does not properly apply to meaning, for meaning is thoroughly contextual and syntagmatically dependent.[41] In other words, meaning (where it is not what we commonly call "self-evident") is a matter of

interpretation, where interpretation that seeks understanding is essentially an act of translating the given expression into what one sees to be an equivalent expression; it is putting the expression into one's own words, one's own language.[42]

Here we find another major indexical relationship: that existing between the materiality of the sign and the phenomenon of expressed meaning. One must see the vocal gestures or the written script as potentially meaningful, as indicating an 'intention' towards meaning. It is especially the self-effacing nature of the phonetic medium that leads to our belief in something like an unmediated presence of meaning, to the belief in extra-linguistic sense (Sinn). It is as though the materiality of words immediately passes away once spoken, leaving behind the pure stratum of meaning, of which it was simply the carrier. But this is far from true.[43]

"My words," writes Alfonso Lingis, "are 'living', animate with my own life; they do not quit me, do not exteriorize themselves from my own breath."[44] Those iterable words that are always at my disposal are like my life-blood, for it is here that a certain self-consciousness arises, and is constantly renewed, in the form of hearing oneself speak. It is perhaps this relationship, one that Derrida classes under acts of "auto-affection," that best founds our sense of subjectivity: "This auto-affection is no doubt the possibility for what is called subjectivity or the for-itself... without it, no world as such would appear."[45] Thus, if there is a presence of the subject to itself, it is the presence of the voice;

it is here that I find myself expressed, where I hear myself expressed. The "I" appears in this auto-affective relation.[46]

(iii) The Alter Ego

If auto-affection is the possibility of subjectivity, this subjectivity finds its release, its expression of itself in acts of signification. The feeling of subjectivity that we have more or less continually, I want to claim, is quite simply the possibility of signification, of expression; what might be called vouloir dire or a wanting and being able, in most cases, to say. But this subjectivity does not know itself outside the fulfillment of its desire to express.[47] It is at this level of desire that the use of the word 'intention' becomes serviceable.

It is in the actual expression that I take my place as a subject among subjects, a place that is prepared by language itself. This preparation we have already seen in the function of personal pronouns, in the dialogical unity of "I" and "you". Just as the "I" gives voice to the silence of subjectivity, so "here" and "now" give voice and definition to my spatio-temporal being.[48] But what, we might ask, is the difference between the child who simply mimics the word "I" and the adult who expresses himself thereby? Before we can consider this question, however, we must distinguish between the casual user of the word and he who, like Descartes, is philosophically fascinated by the "I", by the cogito.

The casual user is designated by the "I" but is not held by it; he is, rather, caught in the drift of the conversation and the

topic at hand. The casual user is not usually concerned with what "I" actually means or what it indicates. As was said before, when one is asked what the "I" stands for, the common answer is some vacuous variant on "me!" It usually takes either a philosophical mind or a significant event of some kind to prompt a further questioning of the "I". There are two types of questioning that can occur here. One is the explicitly philosophical kind that asks after 'I-ness' in general, while the other answers "who am I?" in terms of an autobiographical or narrative account.[49] In earlier chapters we were focusing primarily on the second narrational type of questioning; here we are pursuing the philosophical question ourselves.

When the child mimics the saying of "I" he may be on the way to authentic expression (wherein the speaking subject identifies with the subject of speech), but insofar as his vocalization only mimics the phonetic material this gesture can be considered no differently than other sounds he makes; it is neither an expression nor normal speech. The first vocal gestures of a young child are on a par with the spontaneous gestures of his limbs. Such gestures are indices and not true expressions (as these were defined in relation to Husserl), and are to be interpreted in a schema of associations. It is only from the second year and later that the child is capable of clearly distinguishing his own person and his own perspective from that of others, while allowing others their own perspective.[50] As Merleau-Ponty has written:

> The pronoun I has its full meaning only when the child uses it not as an individual sign to designate his own

> person — a sign that would be assigned once and for all to himself and to nobody else — but when he understands that each person he sees can in turn say I and that each person is an I for himself and a you for others."[51]

It is perhaps true, however, that if the child had no prelinguistic sense of self (no matter how vague), he could not develop into that which language offers him. It will therefore be of use here to outline what Jacques Lacan calls the "mirror stage", for it presents us with a prototypical situation of I-identification at an age preceding language acquisition.[52]

Lacan distinguishes between what he calls the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real in human experience. The first two realms are defined primarily in opposition to the real, that which is always outside representation and signification. The real is analogous to the drives and desires that, in Freudian theory, are 'tamed' by civilization; it also approximates a mute nature in the nature/culture split.[53] Both the imaginary (images, perceptions) and the symbolic may serve in the formation of a 'subject', but the symbolic is the primary order.

By "symbol" Lacan means the realm of signification generative of meaning through a system of differential relations (much as Saussure defined language). Language is, for Lacan, the privileged symbolic medium, but symbolization extends to rituals, ceremonies, conventions, and such like. Entry into the symbolic begins with the acquisition of language, and from that point on, says Lacan, the real is gradually left behind. Reality is, as it were, redefined and alienated in the new social and cultural order of the symbolic:

> Symbols...envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him 'by flesh and blood'; so total that they bring to his birth...the shape of his destiny; so total that they give the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he is not yet and even beyond his death....[54]

The symbolic is thus where the child, qua member of a family unit of such and such a type, is constituted even before it is born. Becoming the subject of this symbolic prefiguration (i.e., becoming what it signifies) is one of the child's passions as well as one of its torments, and is well documented in many novels.

The symbolic does not directly represent or correspond to the real, for it generates a level of signification, and therefore meaning, in a more or less closed network of mutual relations that both refigure and transcend the level of the real. This mutual relation of signifiers is such that the signified is always another element in the signifying network, that is, another signifier or group of signifiers. (It is to this symbolic realm that Benveniste's account of the subject truly belongs.) Lacan accordingly sees in the expressions of subjectivity a split that is symptomatic of this real/symbolic division, a split between the embodied speaking subject (real) and the subject as signified in, say, language (symbolic). This latter division is essentially what we have already argued for in terms of the division between the 'speaking subject' and the 'subject of speech'. The embodied subject, in effect, is externalized in language (and in other signifying systems) and identifies with the externalization, the projection.[55] (This stage of identification is

productive of what we will call the spoken subject; the final stage of the linguistic auto-affective relation.)

This alienation of the symbolic from the real is best exemplified in the earlier 'mirror stage' of imaginary representation. The young child has no conception of itself (in the linguistic sense of concept) and its bodily image of itself (if it can be said to have one) is at first highly fragmented into the various auto-affective relations pertaining to its own bodily functions, particularly the touching-touched relation. Unlike its perception of others, who may have a certain visual totality, the child has no vantage point from which to view itself in a like manner. Visual reflection corrects this deficit.

Lacan claims that the mirror stage occurs first at about the age of six months,[56] and involves the child identifying with its specular body image:

> This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the infans stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject.[57]

What this experience, which is essentially that of objectification, yields is a visual or imaginary (in Lacan's sense; not to be equated with fanciful) alter ego set over against oneself, one's bodily-feeling being, that one then identifies with. Correlative to this development in the imaginary is a significant reorganization of

the child's spatial field in relation to this new-found 'sense' of self. Says Lacan, "the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world."[58] One important effect of this imago is a break in the syncretic identification with others around him; a separation of his life and actions from theirs.

Important here is that the mirror-image is not experienced as separate from the child's identity, and yet it is a displacement from the immediacy of the tactile body (the real). Lacan locates this méconnaissance at the origin of self-consciousness, and its general structure of displacement (the "fragmented body")[59] is carried through into the symbolic stage. From the narcissism of the mirror stage, for example, the infant gradually transfers its ego-ideal onto other people, especially the mother. The symbolic does not, however, totally replace the imaginary, for the identification, say, with iconic role models and ideals continues throughout life.[60] Consider in this regard the effects of advertizing and films, and also the quasi-presence that one experiences in front of photographs and the like. In many societies the imago is potentially dangerous (like one's name) if it gets into the wrong hands. The mirror stage is highly indicative of the role that representation of oneself (doubling/mimesis) will play throughout our cultural life, and of which narrative recounting is a primary form.

We can see in Lacan's account of the mirror stage a few traits that we have noted before. The I or ego is not the product of a gradually evolving, self-generating consciousness; as though self-consciousness simply enlarges itself from itself in the course

of the child's experiencing. There is in the mirror stage a fundamental dialectic with an other that precludes such an autonomy of consciousness. As Lacan points out, we should not "regard the ego as centered on the perception-consciousness system, or as organized by the 'reality principle' — a principle that is the expression of a scientific prejudice most hostile to the dialectic of knowledge." Rather should we start "from the function of méconnaissance that characterizes the ego in all its structures...."[61]

Merleau-Ponty espouses a similar view when he considers the child's perception of others: "...the perception of others cannot be accounted for if one begins by supposing an ego and another that are absolutely conscious of themselves, each of which lays claim, as a result, to an absolute originality in relation to the other that confronts it."[62] Merleau-Ponty's role of the body-image and the image speculaire in the initial relation of a child to the other, and to itself, parallels the function of Lacan's mirror stage.

The specular I, and the general structure of consciousness that it maps out, represent a loss of presence, especially if we equate presence with a unity of being that overlaps with itself, that is transparent to itself and knows itself as origin. If Lacan's category of the "real" stands for something like an originary being, this is not a form of being that has self-presence. Only by the detour of the other is 'self-presence' attained. (Earlier we noted that Ricoeur also insists on some such detour if self-knowledge is to be had.) As we have seen, this self-presence is precisely a presence grounded in an identity given through difference. This conclusion

relates back especially to the illusions of intentions and of the supposed thinker behind the thinking.

* * *

Our investigations up to this point reveal a subject that can be conceived, and can 'conceive' of itself, in a number of ways. Each of these ways is related to certain experiences; they are not intellectual abstractions. There is, first of all, the "I am I" experience of syncretic unity (in the child primarily characterised by 'introspective' feelings and impulses). Second, there is the auto-affective stage prior to the mirror stage, where no stable or holistic self-identification occurs. Third, the mirror stage sets up, on the plane of the imaginary, a representational self-image that one identifies with. Fourth, beyond the mirror stage comes the realm of role models that the image identification is transferred to; one gains selfhood in and through other persons. Finally, through the acquisition of language, there is a gradual and complex identification with voice and thought on the plane of the symbolic. This identification is based especially on the speaking/hearing dyad which, in expressions of meaning, promotes the belief in an interiority of consciousness — mind.

This assumption of a substantial self behind expression occurs by overlooking the essential materiality of the signifier. This symbolic level also opens positions prefigured for the subject in the form of personal pronouns, and these have been shown (in the first person) to be dialectical. In interior monologue this dialectic still occurs — in the form of talking to oneself. Here the alienation, or

duplicity, of the mirror stage continues; one may still ask: "Is the I that speaks the same as the I spoken about?" With this entry into language proper (the symbolic) all other modes of I-identification tend to fall prey to the linguistic and to the type of understanding that the linguistic affords. Only perhaps in dreams and 'mental' disorders do we find what seems to be a predominance of the more archaic modes.

It is often considered important, in matters pertaining to self-consciousness and self-understanding, that the relation of the pre-expressed and the expressed is such that the latter should mirror the former. But we have seen that this model disregards the essential relation of man to language. The disclosive power of language is formative of the subject,[63] of a speaking subject that defines itself in its own expressions and identifies with the subject there portrayed. Our earlier chapters have sought to delineate the pre-expressed or prenarrative realm in terms of the prior functioning of language and in terms of the quasi-narrative structure characteristic of experience itself. We have seen that the prenarrative nature of experience serves as a basis for interpretive narrational activity (as for memory), but such narration cannot be said to aim simply at mirroring the prenarrative level. We shall now consider, taking psychoanalysis as an example, what is meant by saying that narrative can be the <u>truth</u> of the prenarrative.

(iv) Narrative and Truth: Reflections of Psychoanalysis.

> The problem of recognizing oneself is the problem of recovering the ability to recount one's own history....
> — Paul Ricoeur[64]

What I want to demonstrate here is that the truthfulness of a self-narration is more a matter of pragmatic and creative adequacy than of a correspondence to the way things actually were or are. We have already seen, in our section on memory, that although the past is a constant horizon and support for the present, it is not thereby given with fullness of meaning to reflection and recollection. Recollection is both selective and interpretive. We do indeed remember certain events as having occurred; however, understanding their import is a matter of discerning a chain of events or a story to which they belong. Self-understanding also requires that we see some form of causality (and rationality) operating in our lives. For human actions this causality takes the form of motivations or purposes. In his work The Phenomenology of the Social World,[65] Alfred Schutz makes a useful division of human motivation into two aspects: the 'because-of' and the 'in-order to' motives. The former motive is oriented to the past, the latter is futural. Understanding human action begins with the explication of these two aspects of motivation. Without the meaning conferred by such an explication we would have, at best, only a chronicle of events.[66]

The problem with motivation is its not being fully conscious to the actor. Motivational contexts usually extend beyond anything we explicitly formulate. (Part of the reason for this is simple forgetfulness.) How often have we read in a novel something of the form: "Although he didn't know it yet, it was his growing love for her that drove him to such extremes of behaviour." Other problems with describing motives concern the possibility for fabrication and duplicity. For example, one's explicit reasons for acting can disguise a deeper, less conscious motive. This disguised motive may also be the product of repression rather than a simple oversight.

Perhaps the very suggestion of fully accounting for motives becomes inconsistent or at least highly problematic, for such a task would seem to require a foundational subject that has the sources of its own acts potentially within scrutiny. The meaning of our acts, however, as this is worked out in terms of because-of and in-order-to motives, is a product of retrospective and prospective emplotments that draw upon the prenarrative past, refiguring it in light of the present demand for sense and coherence. Here again we find the dialectic of the prenarrative and narrative; a dialectic that is, to borrow a phrase from Merleau-Ponty, one of creative adequation.

This dialectical situation places us in the proverbial chicken and egg dilemma, the hermeneutical resolution of which is to say that we cannot have one without the other. We undoubtedly act based on our prenarrative context, but the question of motivations immediately involves us, as self-conscious human subjects, in our awareness and expression of such motivations. As human subjects we not only act but

do so within a more or less detailed plan or emplotment of the action. The question of truth thus involves us in the question of the adequacy with which our explicit narrations map onto prenarrative experience.

As stated, however, this approach involves us in the problematic epistemological stance of a correspondence theory of truth. The correspondence theory is only tenable if our prenarrative experience had meaning for us outside our interpretations of it, but, as we have argued in this and earlier chapters, such is not the case. It is not the case that the truth of our narratives resides in their correspondence to the meaning of prenarrative experience but that narrative is the meaning of prenarrative experience (so far as we can be said to have the truth in any of our narratives). The adequacy of the narrative can not, therefore, be measured against the meaning of prenarrative experience but only against alternate interpretations of that experience.[67]

Our task here, then, is to pursue what is meant by a creative adequation between prenarrative and narrative experience, with the emphasis on the word "creative". In order to illuminate this relationship we shall begin with a further look at psychoanalysis and conclude with an examinaton of historical writing.

If the telos of the symbolic, as we saw earlier from Lacan, is to generate a subject whose domain is in the order of signification, this transformation must occur at the expense of what he calls the real: drives, instincts, primary desires (keyed especially to the sites of bodily processes, but also to external objects of intimacy

and gratification), and the body's rhythms generally. This symbolic subject is always on the way to becoming the Cartesian subject or Husserlian transcendental ego that, from the secure platform of the cogito, is assured of its own unity, homogeneity, and epistemic centrality. What holds the symbolic subject back, what checks its flight, are the transgressions wrought by the more primitive level. As Julia Kristeva says:

> [A]nguish, frustration, identification or projection all break down the unity of the transcendental ego and its system of homogeneous sense and give free rein to what is heterogeneous in sense, that is, to the drive.[68]

In such transgressions, especially if they are extreme, "...the speaking subject undergoes a transition to a void, to zero: loss of identity, afflux of drive and a return of symbolic capacities, but this time in order to take control of drive itself."[69]

This shift is what inaugurates new signifying processes, particularly of a creative or poetic kind. Poetic language with its reliance on metaphor and metonymy is, in its revitalizing of our symbolic capacities, essentially a revolutionary practice, overturning the categories with which we commonly describe ourselves.[70] What poetic discourse (lyric especially) establishes, to borrow from Kristeva, is a "subject-in-process" (sujet en procès), a subject still finding itself, refiguring itself. This unsettled subject manifests itself as a speaking subject that diverges from normal referential and communicative discourse. Poetic discourse often operates, much like Freud's discourse of the unconscious,

through displacements and condensations that may defy both semantic and grammatical categorial interpretations.[71] What 'speaks' in such instances is a state of being anterior to the Cartesian subject; what is said may be epistemically unprecedented.

Whereas poetic discourse gives willing voice to otherwise unformed desires and emotions, that which is repressed seeks a voice for what the conscious subject has, for one reason or another, avoided or put aside. In operation these two processes can be very similar.[72] Lacan states the psychoanalytic model as follows:

> Undoubtedly, something that is not expressed does not exist. But the repressed is always there — it insists, and it demands to come into being. The fundamental relation of man with this symbolic order is precisely the same one which founds this symbolic order itself — the relation of being to non-being.
>
> That which insists on being satisfied can only be satisfied through recognition. The end of the symbolic process is that non-being comes to be, that he is because he has spoken.[73]

For Lacan the unconscious develops from the split that the symbolic introduces into our being. The unconscious thus evolves dialectically with the expressed; it is the other side, as it were, of the expressed. In this way, as Lacan says, "the unconscious is structured like a language"[74] — a phrase that might usefully be said of prenarrative experience generally. The origin of this view is found in Freud's notion of unconscious "dream-thoughts" that undergo transformation and censorship in the dream-work and which interpretation seeks to uncover.[75] Psychoanalysis is thus a process of disclosing the 'discourse' of the unconscious that motivates our

explicit discourse, particularly our self-narrations, and this means (at least for Lacan) being sensitive to the metaphoric and metonymic transformations that occur as this other discourse enters conscious expression. In psychoanalytic practice the analysand should come to recognize and appropriate this other discourse; this is the central moment of 'curing' the analysand. As Lacan succinctly puts it: "Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in his relation to a future."[76]

It should be clear how this model of the subject fits in with our previous discussions of the prenarrative level.[77] The psychoanalytic prenarrative is a part of one's history, one's experience, that is refused anything but an oblique entry into one's ongoing and conscious life-story. Though it has its roots in a perhaps instinctual, bodily basis this prenarrative nevertheless has conscious recognition as its goal, and is already a structuring force in one's self-conception. What psychoanalysis is premised upon and constantly stresses is the resistance of the subject to its own truth: "One is never happy making way for a new truth," says Lacan, "for it always means making our way into it; the truth is always disturbing."[78] Earlier we talked of this truth of the subject in terms of an act of creative adequation, and this tends to involve, at least in the psychoanalytic case, overcoming prior and perhaps well established interpretations of ourselves. This is also a reason why literature, at its best, is both disturbing and liberating. We shall

now pursue this notion of truth a little further, keeping psychoanalysis as our guide.

Psychoanalysis is known as the 'talking cure' precisely because its analyses are carried out primarily in the realm of discourse and dialogue — the discourse of the analysand with himself and with his analyst. It has become increasingly evident that a primary aim of the analyst is the unfolding of a life-history, a history that does justice both to the past and to the present. Analysis can take diverse routes, but the end result is a narrative account of the analysand's life wherein the analysand finds himself adequately reflected and can accept this representation as biographical and, perhaps more fruitfully, as a basis for future action. As Roy Schafer writes:

> "It has been becoming increasingly clear in recent years that clinical psychoanalysis is an interpretative discipline whose concern it is to construct life histories of human beings."[79]

Why this should be so is that the human subject, as we have stressed, exists and knows itself as the implied subject of its own discourse and narratives (though often these are told by other people). "We are," says Schafer, "forever telling stories about ourselves." He continues:

> In saying that we also tell them <u>to ourselves</u>, however, we are enclosing one story within another. This is the story that there is a self to tell something to, a someone else serving as audience who is oneself or one's self.[80]

We have, in earlier sections, already discussed this self in terms of the implied subject (especially signified by the personal pronouns) and the speaking-listening dyad. What Schafer is pointing to is that the reality of the subject for itself is a primarily linguistic one, derived from its self-narrations. Schafer rightly applies this thesis also to other persons: "The other person, like the self, is not something one has or encounters as such but is an existence one tells."[81] Even where this story of other persons is not explicitly told there is, nevertheless, the implicit assumption that it could be told.

In his recent book of case studies, The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat,[82] Oliver Sacks discusses various cases of memory disorders caused by Korsakov's syndrome. In one example, a patient with a memory span of only a few seconds, Sacks notes:

> Unable to maintain a genuine narrative or continuity, unable to maintain a genuine inner world, he is driven to the proliferation of pseudo-narratives, in a pseudo-continuity, pseudo-worlds peopled by pseudo-people, phantoms."[83]

Such a patient," says Sacks, "must literally make himself (and his world) up every moment."[84] The problem here is that memory loss makes it impossible to link different narrative instances, and yet some sort of narrative is necessary for a sense of identity and purpose. The identity of the patient, for himself, can only be maintained through continuous narrative activity, through staging dramas in each succeeding moment: "The world keeps disappearing, losing meaning, vanishing — and he must seek meaning, make meaning, in a desperate

way, continually inventing, throwing bridges of meaning over abysses of meaninglessness...."[85] For the patient these bridges are not mere inventions; they are the world as he knows it, as he interprets it at that moment.

What this example illustrates is the ongoing need for narrating experience and the function of narrative in generating continuity (of identity, of self). Such continuity, however, can be a feigned one – especially from the perspective of other people. Sacks' patient had no knowledge of his dispersed self other than through the reports given by other people. The narratives he invented were simply fragments or residues of his past life and past occupations – his fragmented habitus – which are then arbitrarily imposed on the present. These stories (and dramas) are created (and acted out) by the patient not only to give himself a role to play but also to integrate his surroundings into something familiar, something that makes sense. Socially, however, the identity he creates is a failure, for there is an imposition of roles on other people that are simply not appropriate and an adoption of roles by the patient that, for an observer, are absurd or misplaced.

Because of the physical damage to his brain, Sacks' patient cannot be cured of his delusory fabrications; anything told to him is forgotten after a brief interval. Such a person lives at the level of shifting surface phenomena; he lacks the depth that the past imposes on one. Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, is aimed at people who have the possibility of augmenting their life-stories in light of both present practices and expectations, as well as their past. But

there are numerous interpretive barriers to be encountered, not only, for example, in the recounting of dreams; even in the narrating of what took place yesterday there are problems of interpretive distortions to be overcome.

As we saw earlier, even memory retrieval involves a degree of emplotment if what is memorial is to be interpreted and understood in the context of an ongoing life.[86] The psychoanalytic analysand has the additional problem of the involuntary masking of certain events and interpretations. Certain avenues of interpretation of the past are closed or inhibited, due, for example, to a traumatic experience in the past.[87] The analyst is especially seeking to facilitate the movement of such repressed contents into explicit speech and recognition. But here again there is an interpretive problem. The analyst must interpret what is told to him out of his own interpretive schemas, with consideration of a direction the analysis is to take, and on the basis of his own life-experiences. The problems multiply when we consider the stories involved in the psychoanalytic dialogue.

There is, first of all, the presumed story 'waiting to be told' which contains the key to anomalies or inconsistencies in one's present behaviour; this is the repressed story and it belongs at the prenarrative level. Second, there is the story told by the analysand. This story may be a pure fabrication, but even if it were a report of what the analysand distinctly remembers there will still be, in the telling, impositions of both style and context onto what is told, as well as selectivity. Also, in Habermasian terms, one will likely

understand out of an 'interest'. Thus, the so-called 'facts' are told in a certain manner, style or genre, and for certain effects, to illuminate certain points, and also out of certain interests that inform the dialogical situation. And no doubt there could be other factors involved that I have not mentioned, such as one's emotional state during the telling. Third, there may be the further story which the analysand constructs on the basis of his or her initial disclosure. This latter story would be the story of what the story told 'actually means' to the analysand upon reflection. Fourth, there is the story as heard by the analyst, the meaning of which is inevitably different from the analysand's for it is heard against a different background, out of a different context and interests. Finally, there is the underlying story that the analyst seeks behind what is told – the sub-text. In classic psychoanalytical theory, which Freud saw as an archeology,[88] this latter story should coincide with the first story, the repressed story which is the 'truth' of the analysand's past.[89] What, then, are we to make of the above proliferation of narratives?

Truth, as the term is commonly used, relates to the adequacy of statements for conveying the way things actually were or are. The archeological model of psychoanalysis would similarly commit one to what might be called 'historical truth': the correspondence of descriptions to the analysand's past. What has become evident to numerous psychoanalysts, however, is that this historical truth is little more than 'narrative truth'. As Donald Spence remarks:

> [It] is more appropriate to think of construction than reconstruction; to give up the archeological model; to think of an interpretation as a pragmatic statement that has no necessary referent in the past; and to replace historical truth by narrative truth.[90]

The archeological-historical method commits one to a merely factual view about a person's past, thereby reducing the significance of the present and future for the very meaning of the past. The archeological model seeks story number one (above) as though it were fully formed and only had to be brought to consciousness and recognized for what it is. Such a view, as we saw in our chapter on time and memory, disregards the futural nature of human existence and the role of interpretation. The past has meaning only in light of what precedes it and what follows it (Schutz' because-of and in-order-to motives). This requirement is what makes all recollection that seeks understanding a narrative endeavour, a matter of emplotment. Story number one is only a quasi-narrative, a story still to be told, and told from a certain perspective.

Much of the past, including motivations and possible complexes, is only on the way to language, and the carry-over is often a rather difficult, creative, and prolonged task (if psychoanalysis is anything to go by!). As Spence says:

> The construction not only shapes the past — it <u>becomes</u> the past in many cases because many critical early experiences are preverbal and, therefore, have no proper designation until we put them into words.[91]

The analysand's explicit associations and recollections are like so much disorganized material that needs to be understood in light of a

narrative that holds it together in a development that yields both familiarity, meaning, and , accordingly, understanding. This is a process that in our ordinary lives we commonly achieve to our satisfaction. The methodological result is that psychoanalysts should orient themselves not towards revealing a final story that supposedly duplicates a repressed past, but should enable the analysand to overcome problems in the present by allowing the formation of a therapeutic narrative that nevertheless gives meaning and direction to the analysand's life.

Narrative truth is thus more a matter of facilitating understanding and integration than of generating strict historical verisimilitude (supposing this were even possible at our level of investigation). To quote Spence again:

> Narrative truth can be defined as the criterion we use to decide when a certain experience has been captured to our satisfaction; it depends on continuity and closure and to the extent to which the fit of the pieces takes on an aesthetic finality.... Once a given construction has acquired narrative truth, it becomes just as real as any other kind of truth.[92]

Spence's last remark may appear somewhat extreme, but we must remember the context within which it is written. When dealing with the meaning of a person's life (or of the past) we can only have interpretations that, given what we otherwise know of that life, afford us a satisfactory comprehension of it (especially of motives). As we earlier argued, interpretations vie for credibility not simply in their accounting for the known details of a life, but, more importantly, in relation to other and perhaps more viable

interpretations. Spence's use of the term "real" may still be puzzling, however, but what is implied is that a narrative account that fulfills the conditions he mentions (continuity, closure, etc.) is the optimum in our understanding of a person's life. That is, the historical account must become narrational if a comprehensive understanding of individual lives is the goal.

While agreeing with Spence's general position, it should be noted that certain questions are nevertheless raised by his account. First, there is the problem of the relativism of narrative interpretations, that is, no one account can be regarded as the final truth. This is, however, a limited relativism, for there will exist extra-narrative elements (e.g., knowing that, in relaton to dates, and places) for which one seeks a narrative emplotment. Presumably, the narrative must respect both the temporal sequence of these elements and their content, and it must also link them in a way that is intellectually and emotionally acceptable. The narrative should, in other words, provide a feasible context for the exhibiting of the elements in their causal and temporal connections; it should also reveal how the past is operating on the present and on the expected future (though perhaps with apprehension). As Spence indicates, the final judge of a narrative is the acceptance of it by the one whose experience it recounts and whose reflected life it becomes, even though this acceptance may not be easily won. It should also be added that one's own acceptance of a narrative may be significantly affected by whether or not other people accept one's account.

Another possible problem with narrative relates to its aesthetic and rhetorical appeal. Once certain experiences are brought into some form of narrative sequence and closure there may be a tendency to accept uncritically the finished product. This situation is largely due to the persuasive character of narrative. A related problem is that any series of events may be amenable to numerous different tellings, to different ways of filling in the gaps left by recollection. This question of open-ended interpretation is, however, common not only to self-understanding but to all fields of the humanities and can not be avoided.

The kind of truth proposed here is, as Spence mentions, a pragmatic one. Psychologically, narrative is aimed not at achieving a mirror image of one's history but at generating a plausible account of the details of that history and allowing one to have an understanding of oneself that facilitates the overcoming of psychic blockages and allows one to function satisfactorily in the present. In fact, a fictional narrative could serve the same end if it addressed the right questions, situations, and conflicts. As C. G. Jung said at the beginning of his autobiography: "Whether or not the stories are 'true' is not the problem. The only question is whether what I tell is <u>my</u> fable, <u>my</u> truth."[93] Narrative truth is thus a matter of adequacy and fit to what is otherwise given, and this is so not only for psychoanalysis but also for historiography and any form of recollection that seeks to unfold a past history that aims at more than a mere chronology.

By way of expanding our discussion of narrative and truth, it will be fruitful to add a few remarks on the similarity of historical narrative to our account of self-narration.

Like self-narration, the writing of history is a way of consolidating a past, a tradition, and therefore an identity. Like self-narration, history is also concerned with a form of archeology that operates on a prenarrative subtext; though in this case the prenarrative material consists primarily of material artifacts in addition to memorial traces. However, both self-narration and history writing have a common grounding in the sense of our lives as being temporally circumscribed.

In much the same way that contemporary philosophy has brought into question the status of an underlying self or soul-substance and, as we have done here, has sought to approach an understanding of the human subject via the paradigm of language, so many historiographers and philosophers of history have problematized historical research by investigating the nature and presuppositions of the historian's use of both language and narrative. The dream of a history which, in Ranke's words, reports the past wie es eigentlich gewesen ist becomes questioned. History is an interpretive discipline that should not hope to coincide with past events; it must make do, as the French historiographer Paul Veyne says, with narrative reconstructions in language: "Knowledge of the past is not an immediate datum, for history is an area in which there can be no intuition but only reconstruction."[94]

Given that history writing is a narrative endeavour,[95] like the novel, we are led to ask after the status of its 'referent'. As Hayden White remarks:

> ...the problem of narrativity turns on the issue of whether historical events can be truthfully represented as manifesting the structures and processes of those met with more commonly in certain kinds of "imaginative" discourses, that is, such as fictions....[96]

If we consider this question from the point of view of a form/content distinction, it is an easy matter to say that formally historical discourse borrows from literature but that nevertheless its content is drawn from 'reality' rather than from the imagination. That is, the content of history is found rather than invented; its final referent is not simply a product immanent to one's narrative, but is external to the recounted story.

The answer we have already formulated (in earlier chapters) to this question of reference is, on the contrary, that narrativity is a principle of intelligibility and not simply a vehicle for a pregiven and fully evident sense. As we have argued, the given (for history this consists primarily of human actions) has a quasi-narrative status that has yet to be brought to explicit narrative understanding. This latter process, however, will not tolerate a description in terms of a simplistic dichotomy of form and content. Narrative expression is not mere communication of information but is a constitutive and synthetic activity. Historical narration takes its lead from artifacts but must aim beyond them, as it were, to a synthesis that yields a satisfactory coherence, directionality, and

intelligibility; otherwise history would be a mere cataloging or dating and could not hope to rise beyond the chronicle stage. Peter Gay says as much when he writes: "Historical narration without analysis is trivial, historical analysis without narration is incomplete."[97]

What historical narrative generates is not a neutral mirror of the past but a seeing of the past as something: as a gradual emancipation from certain class structures, as a tragedy, as dominated by certain religious beliefs, and so on. The artifacts may be seen to justify such interpretations or stories, but they can usually be seen to justify numerous other stories as well. As with recollection, present interest and the conceptual tools of the present set parameters to what material will be deemed relevant, what story will be told, and the style (or genre) of that story. Hayden White makes a similar point in his collection of essays Tropics of Discourse:

> "Histories are not only about events but also about the possible sets of relationships that those events can be demonstrated to figure. These sets of relationships are not, however, immanent in the events themselves; they exist only in the mind of the historian reflecting on them. Here they are present as the modes of relationships conceptualized in the myth, fable, and folklore, scientific knowledge, religion, and literary art, of the historian's own culture. But more importantly, they are...immanent in the very language which the historian must use to describe events prior to a scientific analysis of them or a fictional emplotment of them."[98]

This 'seeing as' of historical narrative is what gives to the fragments of the past a significance beyond their mere occurrence.

Of course, the historical past generally does not consist in mere disparate events and archival material. The past is, for developed societies at least, already historicized, already told and continually updated. As with our self-narrations, one's present account is largely a reworking of stories already related, already participated in — only the amnesiac begins, as it were, ex nihilo. As we noted earlier, experience is irredeemable qua experience, and, in addition, it is the significance or meaning of the experience and the world that one seeks to present and understand via narration.[99]

This intertextual and literary nature of historical narration has not been overlooked in contemporary scholarship. Roland Barthes goes so far as to bring historical narrative and fictional narrative into the same camp, with a view to contesting the former's claim to scientificity and objectivity:

> Does the narration of past events, which, in our culture from the time of the Greeks onwards, has generally been subject to the sanction of historical "science," bound to the underlying standard of the "real," and justified by the principle of "rational" exposition — does this form of narration really differ, in some indubitably distinctive feature, from imaginary narration, as we find it in the epic, the novel, and the drama?[100]

The object of Barthes' criticism is twofold: a rejection of extra-linguistic referentiality and a critique of the ideological use of historical discourse. We can go along with both criticisms, but only to some degree.

Barthes sums up his rejection of reference in the following way:

> Claims concerning the 'realism' of narrative are therefore to be discounted.... The function of narrative is not to 'represent', it is to constitute a spectacle.... Narrative does not show, does not imitate.... 'What takes place' in a narrative is from the referential (reality) point of view literally nothing; 'what happens' is language alone, the adventure of language....[101]

This claim, which I take to be too extreme, is aimed at narrative in general; although it may appear to apply primarily to literary fictions, it is nevertheless, for Barthes, also applicable to historical discourse.

Barthes' point is that the meaning of a narrative is a product of its language and thus cannot be said to mirror the nature of 'real' past events. In historical discourse we construct a spectacle that via the authority of its author, its academic situation, and so on, is deemed 'historical' and is thereby granted a referentiality to the 'real' world — much as the implied subject of a personal narrative is reified into an existent soul-substance, a res. Like Mink ("Stories are not lived but told"), Barthes views narrative as an integrative way in which the past is given a meaning it otherwise lacks, a meaning that is actually a play of language that is far from ideologically innocent in its 'recounting': "As we can see, simply from looking at its structure...historical discourse is in its essence a form of ideological elaboration." Such historical narratives have a performative dimension that often serves surreptitiously to fashion and promote a certain image of man. One only has to consider mythological worldviews to appreciate how the individual's image of himself and his social relations are delimited

and perhaps constrained by the parameters placed on his 'reality' by the society's 'histories'. In our own time histories differ depending on whether they are told by the East or the West, the rich or the poor, them or us.

We have already said a good deal about the illocutionary force of narratives in Chapter Two. However, what is overlooked in Barthes' strongly semiological-structural account is that narrative expression is constantly interwoven with what he calls 'reality'. There is still in Barthes a dichotomy of the narrated (language) and the real. If this 'real' is consistently examined, however, we find that it cannot be exempted from at least a quasi-narrativity (this was our argument against Mink). Historical narratives, like their personal counterparts, need not be free-floating but, as we have said, can draw on the narrative structure of human-time itself, on the story that is already evidenced in the teleological (though not in a strictly determined sense) structure of human events.

Historical discourse, like self-narration, falls into that intermediary realm between 'factual' science and fiction, and this is what leads Paul Veyne to say that "history is a true novel."[102] What <u>distinguishes</u> history from fiction is that the events related in the former are presumed to have actually taken place. What <u>unites</u> history with fiction is its dependence on narrative discourse and creative synthesis. As with traditional fiction, history seeks both closure and completeness but can attain this only through selection and by applying the formal beginning-middle-end structure of narrative, which then implies 'discovering' such teleologies in the events of

the past. As we learned from MacIntyre, it is often the story within which events are framed that first gives them their importance.[103]

The problem with conceiving historical discourse in this way is that (1) it does not satisfy the positivist longing for empirical exactitude and disinterestedness, and (2) it opens the gates to potential abuse, to constructing a past that suits, say, one's ideological purposes. In response to the first of these objections I shall only say that empirical exactitude makes for boring history, history without life's drama.[104] History without interpretative narrative emplotment, which gives meaning to the events related, would in fact be an impoverished account of human experience and social transactions, especially if we are correct in granting these a quasi-narrative status in the first instance. Empirical exactitude applies only to dates, places, and documented evidence. The more global meaning of these events and reports is developed in the story which is told after the fact and which cannot be said to simply correspond to any of "the facts". Thus, one does not report an already constituted meaning of the past, rather, one seeks a narrative that synthesises the various threads of the past into a coherent and plausible account. Such plausibility may depend on factors (e.g., future events) not at all present to the actors of the events being considered. Secondly, disinterestedness may be an ideal, but hardly a practical one from a hermeneutic point of view.[105] The positivist's claim applies primarily to the necessary empirical analyses that precede the actual <u>historia</u>.

The second objection, ideological abuse, is one that continually threatens any discourse concerning a cultural study of man. As human beings we are quite simply prey to fallibility, to self-deception, and to self-edifying discourse, and we have no neutral vantage point from which to make final judgments. Hayden White adds a new and valuable slant to this ideological component of history when he says:

> ...it may be observed that if historians were to recognize the fictive element in their narratives, this would not mean the degradation of historiography to the status of ideology or propaganda. In fact, this recognition would serve as a potential antidote to the tendency of historians to become captive of ideological preconceptions which they do not recognize as such but honor as the "correct" perception of "the way things <u>really</u> are."[106]

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the legitimation of one narrative over another is often due not to its correspondence to "the way things really are" but to its pragmatic and comprehensive nature: Is it edifying, without being narcissistic or egotistic; does it make sense of what we otherwise know; is it useful in furthering other and interesting interpretations? It would seem that a primary way to overcome, at least in part, the ideological use of language is to open ourselves to alternative viewpoints and worldviews, and to alternate interpretations. Anthropological studies and the reading of literature, for example, especially serve in this regard to broaden our knowledge of human society and sharpen our critical capacities with respect to restrictive and dogmatic narratives. A great deal could be said concerning this problem of legitimation, for it has far

reaching social and political ramifications; here I can only point the reader to the various works of Jurgen Habermas as an introduction and working out of some of these important questions.

(v) The Cogito

> From my childhood I lived in a world of books....
> — Descartes[107]

Before bringing together the results of our present investigation of the self, it would be appropriate to return at this point to an examination of the Cartesian cogito, if only because Descartes inagurated much of what we are arguing against. In earlier chapters certain problems surrounding the Cartesian cogito were noted; we are now in a position to pursue these issues more thoroughly. My primary concern will be to bring out, in accordance with our recent investigations, the consequences of the spoken quality of the cogito. In Descartes it is this spoken quality that is overlooked.

What in particular the Cartesian philosophy instigated was a shift towards an indubitably given subject that could itself become the ground for a more scientific, primarily epistemological philosophy. The Cartesian moment of self-certainty is the guarantor of truth and the overcoming of both relativism and skepticism. This turn toward the subject as what is immediately accessible had the correlative function of relegating objects to the status of mediated, secondary phenomena: "...although the things which I sense and which I imagine are perhaps nothing at all apart from me, I am nevertheless sure that those modes of thought which I call sensations and

imaginations, only just as far as they are modes of thought, reside and are found with certainty in myself."[108] The orientation that Descartes gave philosophy provided the impetus for the unfolding of the Kantian system and continued its effect at least up to Hegel.

There are two problems (though in essence they are one) that arise from the Cartesian position; both are metaphysical. In dispossessing objectivity of a reality other than that of a cogitatum, philosophy became burdened with the problem of accessing the 'things in themselves'. A decisive split results between spirit and nature (res cogitans and res extensa).[109] The second problem concerns the other pole of the cogito — not the status of what thought intends but the I or ego that intends it, that is cognizant of it. If that which is intended has determinations but is ontologically doubitable, the I (ego) has no determinations but is indubitable. We might wish to see the thoughts (cogitata) as determinations of this ego, but they are really only occasions for its apperception. The ego is a res, a something that thinks, a subjectum whose thought is immediately given to itself. The cogitata may be predicated of the ego (as its acts) but they are nevertheless known by it as objects. That Descartes isolates both I and mind from its acts is clear from the following: "Nor can the faculties of willing, perceiving, understanding, and so forth be called parts of the mind, for it is the same mind which wills, perceives, and understands." (MED.VI, p.139) The mind thus has ontological priority over its own acts.

The ego is, for Descartes, not itself an object but a transcendence. As Kant was later to say: the "I think" must be capable of accompanying all of my representations, but it is not itself a representation.[110] The essence of the Cartesian subject lies in this moment of self-consciousness, this presence to its representations. However, the I, or ego, itself appears to be contentless and fundamentally ahistorical, for content and change will properly pertain only to the temporal and spatial representations that the ego has. The ego is thus the ontological ground for the very possiblity of both history and representation. Descartes' I in fact remains anonymous unless we turn back to the thoughts (cogitata) themselves, and also to their historical context and their production.[111]

For all its absoluteness the Cartesian cogito is fraught with frailties; consider dreams. Can I always actualize the "I think" during dreams? Am "I", in fact, the dreamer? Descartes does not address this problem. In saying that even if this (waking life) is a dream I cannot doubt that I am, Descartes is referring to the "I" that exists even within deception, not to what we call dreams. There are also psychological cases such as split personality, where we find two or more possible cogitos!

What we must now consider is the cogito as language event. As Descartes writes: "I am, I exist, is necessarily true every time that I pronounce it or conceive it in my mind." (MED.II P.82) This pronouncing seems all-important, for it is difficult to see how

conception can be achieved outside this pronunciation.[112] Descartes does not come back to pronunciation other than to say:

> "I am, I exist – that is certain; but for how long do I exist? For as long as I think; for it might perhaps happen, if I totally ceased thinking, that I would at the same time completely cease to be. (MED.II p.84)

This statement should remind us of Helen Keller's observation, and point to the fact that we can take Descartes' statement more literally than he perhaps intended. Descartes res cogitans still harbours traits from scholastic ontology, especially unity and indestructibility.

But who or what is the "I"? Is it solely an impersonal transcendental ego, or is it the person we call Descartes? In the text we clearly have a sense of both meanings though they are not explicitly separated. One of the 'egos' clearly has a history, and Descartes in fact offers an autobiographical account of himself in the opening sections of the Discourse on Method. Here the I is not the bloodless and anonymous epistemically foundational subject, and is this I not found throughout the Meditations as the subject who actually enquires after itself, the narrator? It is this latter I – let us call it "Descartes" – whose history leads itself to pose the question of certainty in a fight against skepticism. It is Descartes who has perceived, doubted, and dreamed, and it is he therefore who embodies the context within which radical doubt may arise. The I of the cogito is located ontologically outside the narrative of Descartes' systematic meditations and yet is temporally a product of

it, parasitic on it. As Merleau-Ponty remarks: "The question is how subjectivity can be both dependent yet irremovable."[113]

As in the case of Kant, the Cartesian "I think" is a manifestation of the spontaneity of the transcendental ego, the sheer mineness (and hence unity) of experience. But this I is as empty as the bare form of temporality. It is only, and here we refer back to Husserl, in the "unity of a history" that individual persons are manifest, and it is here that the Discourse on Method begins; cogitos come later. An important question to ask concerns the explanatory value of the I disclosed in the cogito. Can the unity or synthesizing powers it exemplifies be demonstrated? Is it in fact anything more than a mode of address? What does the "I" refer to, what does it designate?

The cogito can be said to be to the extent that I pronounce it, but it is more than this, for I may be just blindly repeating Descartes' phrase. The I must become my I,[114] it must be indubitable in my own intuition, my own experience. The cogito must be the expression of my own being, a re-enactment of the ontological moment of self-certainty. As Merleau-Ponty has written: "The cogito at which we arrive by reading Descartes is...a spoken cogito, put into words and understood in words...."[115]. "I" is not before the words, just as I never discover myself at the origin of the words I say. The cogito must be spoken, for it is only in the spontaneous upsurge of language and expression that I find myself.[116] I then acquiesce to the logic of the expression, think myself into being as it were. I become the

"I" spoken of. But this "I" is nothing more than an index of the person who speaks it, qua speaker: the speaking being.

The self-referentiality of the "I", as has already been suggested, lies not in a prelinguistic or transcendental subject but in the auto-affection of speaking-hearing. This phenomenon is certainly a relation of 'oneself' to 'oneself', but, unlike the relation touching-touched, language also designates the being of this relation by the personal pronoun. One does not simply hear, one also names oneself with the universal subject "I". Again, the reification of this universal subject seems to me an adequate explanation of the problematic transcendental ego, and, as I previously stressed, this arises from a forgetfulness of the constitutive power of speaking; one believes that saying "I" relates back to something other than a speaking subject at the moment of speaking.[117] The iterability of the cogito, the ability we have continually to repeat or reactivate it, reinforces our belief in the trans-temporal unity of the ego and creates the illusion of having a stable identity (a self) throughout the flux of empirical differences.

(vi) The Semiotic Subject

It is time to draw together the various threads of our previous sections into a model of the human subject that respects its situatedness in language and signification. I shall call this subject the 'semiotic subject'. I prefer the label semiotic to any derivation from the word "language" since, while remaining within the realm of signification, its extension is broader. Though language is perhaps the most important signifying system, it is clear, to take one example, that art in its various nonlinguistic forms can also express the subject.[118] Man is a being of semiosis, a living body of gestures and articulations that exist in extensive inter-action with other acting bodies and the products of semiosis – speech, texts, artworks, and meaningful action generally. The development of the subject will depend on a reflective grasp of, and habitual participation in, this network of social communication and praxis. The subject must thus be situated within the structures that sustain it and must not be posited as transcendent to them; it must be implicated in the production of such structures but not be taken as foundational.

We have tried to show how the subject, in losing its autonomy, is both decentered and split; it comes to itself across the divide demanded by expression and not in the immediacy of self-intuition. While we have disparaged authorial intention we have nevertheless sought to retain the notion of intention, of vouloir dire, because it

establishes the speaking subject's essential 'wanting to be' – regardless of the degree to which this is determined before hand by one's habitus. Though structuralism, for example, has gone a long way toward eradicating the causal efficacy of the subject by reducing it to a puppet of structural systems, it is clear that this impersonal approach is of limited applicability. There is, as we saw earlier, a spontaneity of the subject which has to do with the way it gradually appropriates and refigures its social world. This is not to say, however, that the subject can be extracted from this network of processes and significations and still retain an identity as subject, for this spontaneity remains one with the malleability of the social structures themselves. Social structures undoubtedly determine individual possibilities (as is the case for language and history, to which we are subjected); however, they do so only because, on the other side of the coin, the individual has those possibilities open to it; these possibilities are what ground the notion of intention. In fact, a more favourable interpretation of structuralism would be to see it not as committing one to the rejection of the subject (and subjectivity) but simply as refusing to separate the subject from the social order, thereby rejecting the notion of a 'free' or autonomous foundational subject. In talking only of structures, stucturalism will imply, therefore, subjects to which these pertain, for the two cannot, in the end, be separated.[119] Whether we turn to anthropology or linguistics it is obvious that subjects are always implied; the problem to be dealt with is the function and place of these subjects.[120]

This question of the efficacy and value of the subject ties directly into the question of authorship (and ultimately into authority). It is fairly common, especially in literary circles, to hear of the "death of the author": the notion that one should examine texts on their own merit rather than viewing them as mirrors of a constituting consciousness. The same argument would hold for speech. There is much that we can agree with in this stance but it will be useful to consider exactly where this position leaves us with regard to the speaking subject. I shall refer to both Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault on this issue.

Writing, says Barthes, "can no longer designate an operation of recording, notation, representation, 'depiction' (as the Classics would say)",[121] for the "scriptor" does not exist outside the scene of writing.(IMT, p.147) The author must 'die' for the text to begin its own life, a life without final closure, without a final signified content. The text's future lies in the hands of its readers. But while the psycho-physical author (the person) is left behind, what we have called a subject of speech remains:

> Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as I is nothing more than the instance saying I: language knows a 'subject', not a 'person', and this subject, empty outside the enunciation which defines it, suffices to make the language 'hold together', suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it. (IMT, p.145)

Parallel to the way Barthes moves from author to scriptor, here we must note a move from the speaking subject to the linguistic subject. Just as it may seem banal or even tautological to talk only

of a scriptor in the context of writing, so it also appears obvious that in a purely linguistic context we can only talk of subjects of enunciations and not flesh and blood persons; in a text there are only signified subjects, subjects of speech. This situation need not, however, deny the reality of authors or persons insofar as it restricts its claim to the linguistic.

Barthes' linguistic "I" is nothing other than the subject of speech we isolated in Benveniste; an "I" that is usually taken to denote a speaking subject. Barthes' point is that the "I" of a literary text, be it a character or narrator, cannot be innocently ascribed to a 'real author' (a phrase I shall use for the flesh and blood author). The real author is left behind once the text goes public. However, the causal efficacy of this author is attested to in Barthes' remark: "His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others...." (IMT, p.146) The author is thus a confluence of intertextuality. He cannot escape linguisticality and intertextuality even on the expressive plane:

> Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner 'thing' he thinks to 'translate' is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely.... (IMT, p.146)

Thus, beneath the written (and spoken) words there are only more words, words that are the life of the author, words that even replace his "passions, humours, feelings, impressions". Barthes writes: "Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him the passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this

immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does more than imitate the book...." (IMT, p.147) This rejection of authorial intention as being anything other than a potential expression is something we should now be familiar with. The real author has no access to thoughts other than those he himself expresses, in language or otherwise. We have seen that even passions and feelings are largely inseparable from interpretation and that the so-called 'neutral' impressions of perception are themselves framed by a certain worldview (or conceptual framework) which cuts out and defines elements in the perceptual field. Emotions and passions are best seen as a motivation or impetus for expression and action within the symbolic and cultural spheres.[122] The development of our expressive capacity goes hand in hand with the broadening of affective experience. It is in this respect that life can be viewed as imitating literature (or some other signifying medium, such as, song or film), for literature provides us with a rich vocabulary for articulating, and thus interpreting, experience in ways previously unsuspected.

However, whereas language may only 'know' a subject, the reader to whom the text is destined also knows persons (the embodied speaking subject). The body is, as we saw earlier, both the site of narration and the site of ascription or predication for utterances.[123] This ascription is clear for face to face dialogue, but it also pertains to literature; one generally assumes fictional utterances to be the product of a (fictional) speaking spatio-temporally located human body (exempting some science

fiction). To put this another way, we know that texts imply authors – authors that are usually named at the beginning of the text. It is to this named or supposed author that the text is attributed, and with this attribution goes a degree of responsibility for that text. This is not to deny, however, that the author is in turn defined in and through the text. I would also not want to deny that a psychological reading can yield insights into the character or personality of the real author, though the proof of such claims would presumably have to be corroborated by something other than the text itself if the text is not to fool us into misguided assumptions.

Barthes, somewhat boldly, explicitly separates the authorial function of texts from that of the persons who write them. Even his autobiography, Roland Barthes, is prefaced by the statement: "It must be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel."[124] While accepting the general framework of this separation of author/writer, I nevertheless wish to propose a closer link between the two categories, for the human subject is a semiotic subject that must become its own author in order to define itself. As Foucault has said in "What is an Author":

> ...the subject should not be entirely abandoned. It should be reconsidered, not to restore the theme of an originating subject, but to seize its functions, its intervention in discourse, and its systems of dependencies.[125]

The path we have been pursuing throughout this thesis is one that describes just these dependencies of the subject on language and discourse. We can only definitively separate the subject from

discourse at the expense of that subject, for the subject is an implicate of its discourse. Foucault's remark points to a needed rehabilitation of this subject into the realm of signification (literary or otherwise). The "author function", as Foucault says, is one of the forms in which the subject is manifest, though not necessarily in a one to one relation.[126] Texts, like speeches and even casual discussions, have social conditions and expectations attached to them. Each mode of signification may have its particular restraints and freedoms. Each may set up a different subject as its implied origin. (Consider, for example, the difference between a poem, a scientific manual, and a charter of rights.) Even from the point of view of the speaker, there are different personae, different roles to be assumed in these different discourses.

Is there a central, organizing "I" behind these various roles? Only if we should choose to <u>believe</u> so; if we believe that the "true me", for example, appears only under such and such a condition. Later, of course, we may come to see the folly of this belief, or revise it. Either way, it is not that we behave contradictorily in our lives, for this is still to postulate a subject at the center of things that is enduring and is able to contradict itself; it is rather the case that social reality demands, during our life (even during a single day), that we be different, diverse. As Barthes remarks:

> This is why, when we speak today of a divided subject ...it is a <u>diffraction</u> which is intended, a dispersion of energy in which there remains neither a central core

> nor a structure of meaning: I am not contradictory, I am dispersed.[127]

Even the body can be seen as plural, dispersed among a repertoire of roles such as the sensual, digestive, athletic, sick, emotive, mimetic, gestural, and so on.[128]

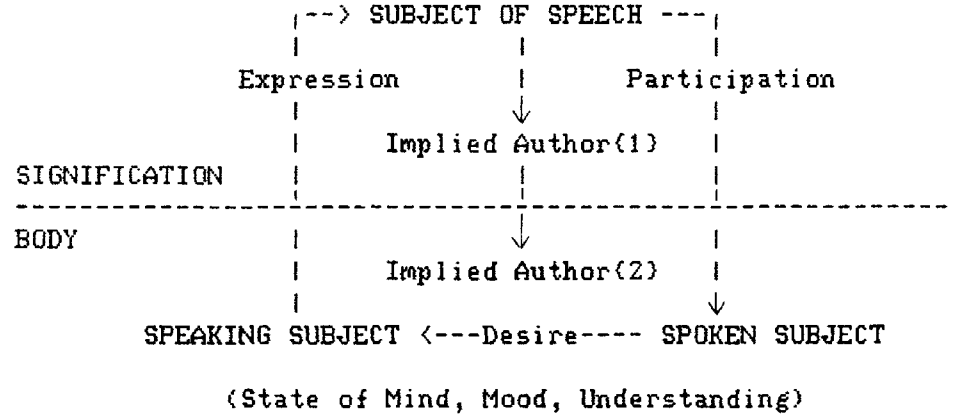
Given this diversity, the possibility of unity for the subject can only arise: (a) through routine activity, and (b) through self-narration. In the first case, identity is a matter of repetition, of having a schedule that one repeats daily, weekly, etc.. Because this type of identity is largely unconscious, it will take something like sickness to bring our implicit dependence on it to the foreground. Our earlier discussion of habitus has much to do with this form of identity. The second option, self-narration, is the properly conscious form of human identity. Only here is the implicit order (or disorder) and structure of our lives taken up into conscious understanding. It is also in narration that we seek to tie together the more disparate strands of our lives, of our history.

I would like now to develop a model of the human subject, the semiotic subject, that respects Barthes' observations while fulfilling Foucault's demand for a resituated subject. This model, which was employed in earlier sections of the thesis, is based on a tripartite division of the subject:[129] the <u>speaking subject</u> or material agent of discourse; the <u>subject of speech</u> or purely linguistic subject of the discourse (designated by personal pronouns and other deictical indications); and the <u>spoken subject</u> or subject produced through or by the discourse as a result of its effect on a

reader (listener). Thus, for example, in the case of self-narration, of the past, the speaking subject is myself *qua* language user and repository of images (and hence conditioned and restricted by that language, by tradition, and by past experience). This narrative then sets up a subject of speech, the character signified by the pronoun "I" and involved in a certain narrated life-situation. What then makes this narrative personally historical or autobiographical is that I correlatively become the spoken subject of the narrative — just as a spectator might identify with some character in a play or film. Of course this third stage might be thwarted, the identification might not occur, or it occurs when the subject of speech is a fabrication or lie with no direct relation to one's actual memories or prior narratives.

A diagram may help us see the relations between the three subjects more clearly.

THE SEMIOTIC SUBJECT



The diagram shows two primary realms: signification and body. Through expression the speaking embodied subject enters the realm of signification. The utterance, if it is autobiographical, relates back to the embodied subject in two ways; by implication and by participation. The first generally occurs on the part of an addressee or receiver. If I write a letter to someone, for example, I become for the reader the implied author(2) of the correspondence. If the letter were anonymous the exact site of ascription for the implied author could be lacking; this would lead to implied author(1). A more common academic use of implied author(1) is the literary one, where a text is said to set up an implied author that cannot be naively identified with the real author. We tend to attribute, in one way or another, almost all texts to an implied author.[130] One may even adopt the receiver standpoint to one's own utterances.

By participation I mean the various forms of identification that the embodied subject has in relation to an utterance and its subject of speech. Very often the immediacy of listening to speaking carries one in an unbroken and unreflective reciprocity forward into further articulations. Here there can be immediate identification with the subject of speech. But such immediacy can break down. When narrating one's past it is often the case that first attempts are unsatisfactory; the recollections are seen as too sketchy or perhaps as fabrications; there is a rejection of the implied subject (of speech) as being or representing oneself. This rejection of one's own narrative is, as we have seen, central to psychoanalysis. Another revealing example of participation occurs in acts of rage (or

drunkenness) where one's emotions cause one to say things that at the time one positively identifies with, and which later seem exorbitant and excessive. The act of participation can also, as it were, take us out of ourselves. In reading a novel or watching a film a certain relinquishment of self[131] occurs that is necessary for us to participate in the values, characters, and action of the drama. The sympathy we feel for a certain character, say, is a form of this participation in narratives that are not of our own making.[132]

The spoken subject that participation results in is particularly evident in cinema. Consider how we often, on the visual level, identify with the camera's perspective, especially if the shot is taken from approximately head height. Again, consider how we can walk out of an adventure film feeling somewhat like the hero. In literary criticism this manipulation of the viewing/reading subject is recognized as as an essential function of texts. Texts not only set up an implied author, but also an implied reader. In a text, the presenting of material in a certain way may not only place restraints on the reader but can also set up certain expectations and biases in the reader.[133]

The embodied subject can be characterized in a general way, following Heidegger, as being in a certain state of mind with attendant moods and degrees and modes of understanding.[134] These general characteristics are what provide the impetus for expression, and they are what develop and change in acts of participation.[135] I have labeled the relation between the spoken subject and the speaking subject as desire, for this seems to capture the impetus that

changing states have for the subject. Earlier we had occasion to define subjectivity as being the possibility of expression; here we see, in more detail, the dynamics of this more or less continuous state of the subject.

For structuralism (and Barthes in his earlier structural phase), semiotics, and narrative theory (as applied to literature), it is the subject of speech that has been especially emphasized. Indeed, it is here that the stories we tell of ourselves appear in public space, and hence where the linguistic subject is constituted. But rather than leave this subject of speech floating in linguistic space, which is the sense one gets from Barthes, the above model attempts to integrate the body back into the equation; not of course as the positivist material body of science, but as the speaking-feeling embodied subject (the person). Earlier I talked of the body as both the site of narration (the speaking subject) and site of ascription (implied author(2)) for the subject; it is here that our common-sense notions of ourselves as embodied subjects are satisfied.

In conclusion, what the above model of the semiotic subject seeks to emphasize is the division of the subject into different moments with no central and organizing core. Subjectivity is itself blind without mediation through the realm of signification, but signification is not a neutral mirroring process. Subjectivity, as a form of volouir dire (a wanting to say, to be, to do), is manifest as the speaking embodied subject who seeks to carry over into expression the implicit truth of itself (its implicit history or story).[136] This

expression is a creative adequation to what is only schematically given in a quasi-narrative form. The "I" then exists in its communicable form as the subject of speech. Already there is a split between the speaking subject (what Roman Jakobson called the 'subject of the enunciation') and the subject of speech (the 'subject of the enounced').[137] In self-narration the final stage of the semiotic subject is identification with and appropriation of this linguistic subject through the reading/listening process. A split or non-coincidence in the subject is also apparent in the interpretive nature of this participation. One may not accept the expression as an adequate representative of oneself; this may cause the cycle to continue again. This cycle of ever new signification and appropriation is, of course, none other than the dynamic framework within which personal development takes place.[138] Again, as Charles Taylor says:

> [Man] cannot be understood simply as an object among objects, for his life incorporates an interpretation, an expression of what cannot exist unexpressed, because the self that is to be interpreted is essentially that of a being who self-interprets.[139]

# CONCLUSION

> It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man's disappearance. For this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled. It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think.
> — Michel Foucault[1]

What we have sought to accomplish here is to move behind the scenes of the human drama in order to discover how such role playing is enacted, for if one thing is to be concluded from this study it is that man develops (and inherits) the identity of a character in the gradually unfolding narrative that is lived time. But we need not act our parts with blind necessity, for the script is not entirely prewritten, only certain backdrops are preset. As in a first-person narration, we interrupt the ongoing drama with conscious retrospective assessments and refigurations; we are not completely engulfed in our roles.[2] It is as such a narrator that we make sense of our lives, delineate the character(s) that we are and have been. But, as should now be clear, such seeming self-reflectivity is not that of a pregiven self simply musing over its past and future; narration is not a gratuitous act as far as the self is concerned. Self-narration, we have argued, is what first raises our temporal existence out of the closets of memorial traces and routine and unthematic activity, constituting thereby a self as its implied

subject. The self is, then, the implied subject of a narrated history. Stated another way, in order to be we must be as something or someone, and this someone that we take ourselves to be is the character delineated in our personal narratives.[3]

The unity of the subject, where such a unity exists, is exhibited as an identity in difference, which is all a temporal character can be. In his important texts on the literary work of art, Roman Ingarden speaks of what he calls the "idea" of the work — that more or less comprehensive unity we carry away with us when our reading has made us sufficiently familiar with the text.[4] It is this "idea" which allows us to classify the work, as a whole, as of a certain type and as gravitating around a certain problematic and certain values. I think that this notion of "idea" applies fairly well to the lives of persons, for no matter how diverse a life may be there tends always to exist, upon reflection, that "unity of a Geschichte" of which Husserl spoke in his Cartesian Meditations. Temporal existence is such that prior chapters of our life inform and determine, to a greater or lesser degree, later ones. Not that this "idea" fully determines the closure of a life, for we well know that a text has many possible endings, many changes of fortune. We are not dealing here with a metaphysical predestination, but rather with a transtemporal kernel of meaning, or style, which satisfies what appears to be our inherent need for understanding, coherence, and unity. As with a novel, this identity need never be settled and final, for the prenarrative out of which it arises need never have a definitive interpretation.[5]

This "idea" (or identity) has the attraction of answering to the perennial question we ask of our own identity, our own reality, and its power over us results in the sedimenting of our identity into a relatively unchanging self-conception. However, what seems truly unchanging is not so much our identity, for we often do not notice the significant changes time effects, but rather the need for such an identity, which is perhaps also our desire to be. Psychologists have long attested to the fact that the mental health and sanity of the individual requires something more than mere being and the satisfying of primary bodily needs, for beyond these is required the sense of being as someone that we mentioned above.

I have argued that behind the scenes we do not find some form of transcendental ego serving as stage director, but rather a certain form of activity whereby selves make their appearance as characters; this activity is language usage, particularly the employment of personal pronouns and narrative structures. The self is thus not a prelinguistic given to whom language is just a tool, but is an implicate of language. Again, language is not the instrument of an 'inner self' (to which we might grant autonomy, free-will, and the like) but is one of the body's acquired habitualities that becomes as spontaneous and ordered as, say, perceiving. However, language usage, unlike breathing or walking, is a highly social phenomenon, undergirding as it does the whole cultural sphere.

It is in this 'intersubjective' — though perhaps one should say with Merleau-Ponty 'intercorporeal' — social realm that language functions. Speech arises not out of a particular ego's intention to

speak, but is called forth by a social situation, much as many other of our social acts are. Speech is similarly not prefigured in an interiority and then sent forth like the "winged words" of Homer, for even in interior monologue it is not "I" who speak (except in a retrospective and derivative sense). When we are in the heat of conversation it is particularly evident that what "I" say is not at all prefigured in consciousness but is a spontaneous and bodily response to the speech situation. As Merleau-Ponty writes: "Neither the word nor the meaning of the word is in fact constituted by consciousness."[6] Speech, which should not be seen in this respect as essentially different from other bodily acts, should thus be understood in its overall gestalt; which may or may not include what we call "conscious intentions".[7]

What obscures the above view is a persistent tendency to dematerialize language,[8] to find in it a "spiritual essence" that must be present at its inception. As was previously noted, one commonly insists on an "I" that speaks and on a meaning for which language is merely the vehicle. Such a position generates many of the problems that have plagued both philosophy of language and philosophy of mind for centuries. The pronoun "I", we have argued, simply does not have the independent referential 'object' often attributed to it, be this soul, mind, or self. "I", as Benveniste has said, designates the speaker of the utterance containing "I"; it designates what we have called the site of narration, and in the last resort, the person. We defined person as the result of ascribing selfhood (in an act of predication) to the site of narration, the body. The person is

thus, though this is not an exhaustive definition, an embodied-self. The body must be seen as the enduring locus to which a life-history accrues, and hence to which the character of that history is indissoluably associated.

The body thereby becomes what we call a lived-body, not just an animate organism. This body is in a sense me, is alive with me, both because it is the site of ascription for selfhood and because it is a semiotic body that through its gestures enables and maintains the social realm within which the "I" (and "you") function. Our earlier investigations prompt us to claim that with a diminution in the semiotic potentiality of the body there will be a correlative diminution in what is called self-consciousness or self-presence.[9] The "I", in other words, requires for its existence the very saying of "I" that is predetermined by participation in the socio-linguistic network, but this is not the blind saying of a machine, a tape recorder say, it is rather a saying wherein this "I" becomes thematic in further narrative acts; becomes, as it were, an object to itself.[10] Speech, as Merleau-Ponty insists, "brings about that concordance between me and myself, and between myself and others...."[11] The "I" appears to break with the body when the dependence of speech on the body (especially on the phonetic) is overlooked and the "I" takes on independent referential status — seen especially in the form of "I act." This formulation sets up, for example, the motivating subject that we have already criticized. Such a subject is no more necessary than is a "plant-soul" required in order that it turn towards the light.

The "I", the self, is an effect of language, and the status and meaning of the self will thus depend on the particular "language game" in which it is invoked and in which it comes into play. But this does not make the self superfluous, it only problematizes it. Who or what the self (and ultimately the person) can be is a result of the semiotic and discursive practices within which the speaking subject functions. The place of the subject just one century ago differs considerably from that of man in the modern industrial and technological era. To take one example: In the field of artificial intelligence it is no longer just a matter of mapping computational models onto thought and brain characteristics, what we are seeing is a situation in which the very language of computer modelling is gradually replacing the other ways of speaking about mind. Orwell's insights, in 1984, concerning language and thought are not just possibilities, they have in effect been with us all along.

Freedom and autonomy are, on this view, not elements of a pregiven "human essence" (as they were, say, for Kant); they are instead measures of the prevailing socio-linguistic system and its customs. Freedom relates to the possibilities for self-definition and expression allowed the individual within the system. Similarly, creativity is not so much the exercising of "freedom" as it is the exercising of the possibilities inherent to signifying networks. Because signifiers function in differental relations and not solely by a system of prefigured meanings, it is possible to generate new and often revealing significances by tropic transformations (metaphor, metonymy, and so on). A repressive society is one where

this expressive potential is consistently restricted or treated as renegade and anti-social. What lies behind social norms and values is very often an image of man that appeals to a fixed essence, one in light of which individuals can be classified as either degenerate or healthy, sane or insane, sinful or virtuous. Foucault's historical study of madness,[12] for example, seeks to show how madness is not simply and not always a physical or medical "disorder", but is a changing category (or definition) operative within a certain socio-political system and which serves that system by making outsiders of those that threaten its "rational" order and power structure.

* * *

The present study has not sought explicitly to examine and criticize the actual content of our self-definitions, though we have pointed to a few implications. We have, instead, restricted ourselves to a primarily descriptive examination of the framework within which such definitions arise, that is, the language of self-narration.

From what has been something of a survey of contemporary, particularly European, thought regarding the scope and function of narrative language to the status of the human subject, we can draw a few broad conclusions. Of first importance is the situating of the subject within the play of language and social structures. This move has the function of displacing the subject from center stage, even to the point of emphasizing certain discontinuities in the subject's identity. While the subject is viewed from the perspective of the

history in which it is implicated, working out the subject's history is an interpretive enterprise that can no longer be seen as free from ideological and psychological distortions. The human subject is a self-interpreting animal that, via narration, is of neccessity prey to its own "fictions".

Contemporary trends also reveal a marked rejection of metaphysical thinking. Autonomy, freedom, and identity, for example, are not pregiven but must be redefined within the context of the person's appearance within the socio-linguistic arena. We have not said much about religious presuppositions concerning the essence of man, but it should be clear that, from a postmodern perspective, religion is a semiotic system that presumes to articulate that which is beyond language and even beyond the given; here one must have faith or a particular belief in the possibility of transcendental signifieds. There is a tendency in contemporary thought, deriving from structuralism, to treat all such speculative, metaphysical, and utopian thought reductively in terms of the social matrix out of which it arises; this acts as a demystifying, if not deconstructive, enterprise. However, what balances this latter tendency is a pragmatic strain that, in effect, gives countenance to what works for furthering human community and personal enrichment.

In taking away emphasis from the self as the inner core or 'substance' of personhood, one need not, therefore, conclude that the human subject is just an ephemera of little significance. The constitution of persons through acts of predication remains perhaps the most human of acts, one that is central to our western thinking

and general worldview. The status of the subject is not necessarily demeaned because it is now seen as the product of a creative act rather than as a pregiven entity to be recognized and respected.

## ENDNOTES: Introduction

1. Vincent Descombes, Objects of All Sorts: a Philosophical Grammar (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), translation of Grammaire d'objets en tout genres (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1983). All quotations are from pp.4-5. It should be pointed out that while Descombes isolates these three trends in contemporary European philosophy, he is not totally in agreement with them as stated in the quotations I refer to. He finds each position to be inconsistent or obscure with respect to its central tenets.

2. To see these stages as a 'development' is to describe the way they were taken up into 20th century philosophy; their genesis was fairly simultaneous, especially if we emphasize the pioneering works of Husserl, Dilthey, and Pierce.

3. See Ricoeur, "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology" in The Conflict of Interpretations (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

4. Semiotics or semiology, deriving from the Greek semion (sign), is essentially a science of signs and communication. As such, the range covered by this discipline is understandibly very large.

5. As Roland Barthes has written, following Benveniste: "Man does not exist prior to language, either as a species or as an individual. We never encounter a state where man is separated from language, which he then elaborates in order to 'express' what is happening within him: it is language which teaches the definition of man, not the contrary" (The Rustle of Language, trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1986, p.13).

6. What I call the 'implied subject' has important parallels to what, in literary theory, is called the 'implied author'. The latter term is employed in two primary and interrelated senses: (1) To designate the the status of the author that a text sets up for the reader in and through itself, and (2) to stress that what the text reveals about the 'author' cannot be directly identified with the flesh and blood author. The term 'implied subject' is intended to refer to the subject set up by our utterances, but which, in ordinary language usage at least, does not contain the distance evidenced in point (2) above. That is, behind our speaking or thinking there is not another (more real) subject or author.

7. It should be noted that I do not intend, in this thesis, a complete overthrow of our beliefs in the existence of selfhood and

personal identity; I do not doubt the importance of these concepts to our lives. My aim is to examine the ways in which our experience of selfhood and identity are in fact dependent on language and self-narration.

8. Unlike self and selfhood, I take the notions of person and personal identity to include embodiment. Later chapters will expand on this distinction.

9. Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre (After Virtue. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984): "I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point" (p.220). Again; "...the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity.... What I am, therefore, is in key part what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, ...whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition"(p.221).

10. As the psychologist Jerome Bruner has said in his recent work Actual Minds, Possible Worlds (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 67: "It can never be the case that there is a 'self' independent of one's cultural-historical existence." In this work Bruner develops a position similar to my own, adopting a "transactional" view of self rather than an egocentric or private one (see ch.4).

11. The amnesiac will not necessarily experience a diminished sense of existence. Indeed, in his desparate situation the fact of existence will probably be heightened by his not not knowing what or rather who he exists as. It is this as that I take to be the important factor in human selfhood.

12. I can also become the implied subject of the narrative activity of others, in biographies, for example, or by identifying with a character in a novel.

13. Cf. Charles Taylor: "As for any hermeneutic explanation, interpretive plausibility is the ultimate criterion" (Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.7). Much of Taylor's Introduction to this volume is instructive with respect to the nature of hermeneutic explanation in the human sciences.

## ENDNOTES: Chapter One

1. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, Inc. 1962), p.393.

2. Since Descartes this fact has understandably promoted numerous idealistic strains of philosophy.

3. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.432.

4. W. James, The Principles of Psychology (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1883), p.574.

5. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.69.

6. See Bergson, Matter and Memory, trans. Nancy Paul and Scott Palmer (New York: Humanities Press, Inc., 1970).

7. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.422.

8. To reiterate a point made in the Introduction, we are offering here a descriptive and not a speculative account of the human subject. That human experience should be explained proceeding from a transcendental or founding subject seems to us an unnecessary hypothesis, though one that cannot be definitively refuted. It is our belief that whereas human experience contains a number of relatively abiding characteristics that can be described or otherwise indicated, metaphysical theories concerning how experience got to be as it is are, at least potentially, innumerable.

9. E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, trans. Dorian Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), §37.

10. W. James, Principles of Psychology, p.322.

11. E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, §32.

12. Ibid., §32.

13. Where "ego" refers to a pole of identity.

14. Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.78.

15. Ibid., p.72.

16. Miguel de Unamuno, Tragic Sense of Life, trans. J.E. Crawford Flitch (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), p.9.

17. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1962), p.22.

18. In his recent work Remembering: A Phenomenological Study (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) Edward Casey, following Husserl, makes a similar distinction between "primary" and "secondary" remembering (see pp.48-52). Primary remembering, says Casey, is the persistence of the immediate past (retention) in the present moment of consciousness, whereas secondary remembering is the recollection "of experiences that had lapsed from my consciousness after their initial occurance" (p.50). This latter form, says Casey, is what, in ordinary parlance, we generally mean by remembering. Casey's work is illuminating in its descriptions of the many different ways in which recollection occurs in our daily lives.

19. J. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1959), p.451.

20. Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, trans. M. Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968). There is, given the interweaving of imagination and memory, good argument for adopting the more Kantian terminology of reproductive vs. productive imagination, thereby subsuming recollection under the more general heading of presentations. However, a systematic enquiry into these matters is not my purpose here. It is hoped that one's own experience bears witness to my general distinctions.

21. J. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, p.464. (Further references to this work will be added to the text.) Thus the substance may change while identity persists. This of course places the onus on memory — the "storehouse of our ideas".

22. D. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p.252. Further references to this work will be added to the text.

23. James Olney, Metaphors of Self (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 44.

24. Marcel Proust, "Contre Saint-Beuve" (In Marcel Proust, On Art and Literature, trans. Silvia Townsend Warner. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers Inc., 1984), p.19.

25. Ibid., p.17.

26. Ibid., p.19.

27. M. Proust, Remembrance of Things Past, vol.II, trans. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Random House, 1934), p.1014.

28. G. Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1955), p.158.

29. Ibid., p.158.

30. Cf. for Dilthey meaning is always the product of a backward reflection.

31. Rudolf Bultmann, New Testament Mythology, trans. S.M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p.136.

## ENDNOTES: Chapter Two

1. H. White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality" (In On Narrative, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.1.

2. Peter Brooks, Reading for the Plot (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p.3.

3. F. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p.631.

4. Hanna Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.186.

5. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p.217.

6. Ibid., p.217.

7. D. Parfit, Reasons and Persons (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

8. H. Arendt, The Human Condition, p.192. The use of "always" is somewhat strong in Arendt's remark. She presumably means: may know better....

9. Ibid., p.179.

10. Kate Hamburger had much to do with promoting this distinction. See The Logic of Literature, trans. M.J. Rose (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

11. Cf. Peter Brooks: "Plot as I conceive it is the design and intention of narrative, what shapes a story and gives it a certain direction or intent of meaning. We might thinkof plot as the logic or perhaps the syntax of a certain kind of discourse, one that develops its propositions only through temporal equence and progression" (Reading for the Plot. New York: Vintage Books, 1985, p.xi).

12. Cf. ibid.: "Narrative is one of the large categories or systems of understanding that we use in our negotiations with reality, specifically, in the case of narrative, with the problem of temporality: man's time-boundedness, his consciousness of existence within the limits of mortality", p.xi. For a detailed examination of the history and nature of narrative see Robert Scholes and Robert

Kellogg: The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

13. Cf. R. Scholes and R. Kellogg: "By narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story-teller. A drama is a story without a story-teller" (Nature of Narrative, p.4). This general distinction is that between telling and showing, which received its classical formulation in the separation of diegesis from mimesis (Plato). Narrators, however, may be covert or overt, and this can sometimes obscure the above distinction. Seymour Chatman, in his Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1983, pp.33-34), expands narrative to include the covert and dramatic: "[Narrator] should mean only the someone — person or presence — actually telling the story to an audience, no matter how minimally evoked his voice or the audience's listening ear. A narrative that does not give the sense of this presence, one that has gone to noticeable lengths to efface it, may reasonably be called 'nonnarrated' or 'unnarrated.' (The seeming paradox is only terminological. It is merely short for 'a narrative that is not explicitly told' or 'that avoids the appearance of being told.') Thus there is no reason for positing some third category of narrative (like 'dramatic' or 'objective' or the like) since that is essentially 'non-narrated' narrative."

14. In literature this threefold relation of author, narrator, character is immediately problematized due to the separation of the real author and narrator. In texts we cannot identify the narrator either with the real author or with what is called the 'implied author'. The latter is derived from considering the text in all its attributes and not simply from those pertaining to the narrator. See Seymore Chatman's Story and Discourse, Chapter Four.

15. A. MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.214.

16. P. Ricoeur, "On Interpretation" (In Philosophy in France Today, ed. A. Montefiore. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.178.

17. Ibid., p.178.

18. P. Ricoeur, "History as Narrative and Practice" (Philosophy Today, Fall 1985), p.214.

19. Ibid., p.213.

20. L. Mink, "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension" (New Literary History, vol.1, 1969-70), p.557.

21. A. MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.212.

22. Barbara Hardy, "Towards a Poetics of Fiction" (Novel, vol.2, no.1, Fall 1968), p.5.

23. P. Ricoeur, "On Interpretation", p.181.

24. P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, Vol.I, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.74.

25. Ibid., p.3.

26. D. Carr, Time, Narrative, and History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p.99.

27. P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, p.74.

28. See ibid., p.75.

29. Ibid., p.41.

30. P. Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, p.294.

31. C. Taylor, "Self-Interpreting Animals" (Human Agency and Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Further references to this work will be entered in text as SA.

32. Cf. Gadamer, "Being that can be understood is language" (Truth and Method. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p.432.

33. It is this trace that is retraced in memorial intentionality, refigured in remembering. Remembering is a re-enactment.

34. See Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, p.75.

35. C. Taylor, "The Significance of Significance: The Case of Cognitive Psychology" (In The Need for Interpretation, eds. S. Mitchell and M. Rosen. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1983), p.146.

36. P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, p.75.

37. Ibid., p.75.

38. This is a virtue of novels and biographies over philosophical discourse.

39. G. Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p.158f.

40. Ibid., p.252.

41. Ibid., p.257.

42. Ibid., p.252.

43. H. Arendt, The Human Condition, p.193.

44. M. Scheler, Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values, trans. M. Frings and R. Funk (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p.385.

45. See Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality" (Man and World, 1979).

46. C. Taylor, Human Agency and Language, p.34.

47. C. Taylor, Human Agency and Language, p.103.

48. See ibid., chapter 1, "What is Human Agency?". Further references to this work will be added to the text as Agency.

49. A. MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.221.

50. J-F. Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

51. See MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.222.

52. See H. White, On Narrative, p.14.

53. On this theme, see Julia Kristeva Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p.140ff.

54. This is Hegel's problem at the beginning of the Phenomenology.

55. E. Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), p.227.

## ENDNOTES: Chapter Three

1. E. Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), p.22. Further references will be added in text as GPL.

2. J. Lacan, Ecrits: A Selection (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977), p.65.

3. Cf. Benveniste on Aristotle's Categories: "Now it seems to us — and we shall try to show — that these distinctions are primarily categories of language and that, in fact, Aristotle, reasoning in the absolute, is simply identifying certain fundamental categories of the language in which he thought." (Problems, p.57.)

4. An interesting case in point here is autism. The autistic child, for example, has no grasp of language and none of the understanding that goes with it. The behaviour associated with this lack is a certain self-absorption that cuts most social ties. As one writer has said: "The capacity for language, for talking, accompanies a capacity to care about whether anyone talks to you; autistic children don't care." (Vicki Hearn, Adam's Task: Calling Animals By Name. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1986, p.251.) Such children seem to live in a world where reliance on others occurs only for their material and bodily needs. Much of the time autistic children are quite happily absorbed in sensory phenomena. Lack of language leaves these children at what might be called an 'animal' level, a level that lacks the social and cultural dimensions of the language user. Whereas we may attempt to integrate them into our world, there is little or no reciprocity on the part of autistic children. Even to think of an autistic person as having a world similar to the language user's is begging the question. Language not only operates on the perceptually given, imbuing it with a meaning it would otherwise lack, but also goes a long way to constituting what we mean by being a self, a person. As Hearn writes: "'Why learn language?' is identical to the question 'Why be human (what we mean by human) at all?' In most cases, our humanity is in place before we can ask the question, because most of us learn language so quickly and easily that we are already in and of the problem; autism is not an problem." (p.252) The example of autistic children is a good illustration of what Benveniste is expressing in his distinction between the sensory-motor and the representative functions.

5. Cf. Husserl: "Everything has its name, or is nameable in the broadest sense, i.e., linguistically expressible." (In Jacques Derrida, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, trans, John Leavey. New York: Nicolas Hayes, Ltd., 1978, p.162.)

6. E. Benveniste also adds: "We can never get back to man separated from language and we shall never see him inventing it." (Problems, p.224.)

7. See Benveniste, Problems, ch.21.

8. S. Beckett, The Unnamable (In Three Novels By Samuel Beckett, New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965.).

9. C. Schrag, Communicative Practice and the Space of Subjectivity (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.), p.124.

10. See Schrag, ibid., for a useful interpretation of this quotation from Benveniste, pp.122ff.

11. H. Keller, The World I Live In (New York: The Century Co., 1908), p.117.

12. Ibid., p.113.

13. Ibid., p.160.

14. One implication of our account of the subject is that personhood is dependent on expression, more particularly on the predication of the implied subject of utterances to the site of their production (the material body). The person is, as we have said, an embodied subject. This position implies that pre-verbal children and certain individuals with serious language disorders, such as Helen Keller, are not, strictly speaking, persons. I think this is correct, especially if we consider the social responsibility that acrues to persons. However, this does not mean such individuals are therefore to be treated like animals and perhaps be disposed of as one might dispose of an animal. Children are on their way to becoming persons, and this future must be respected. In the case of Keller, and many others like her, the possibility for self-conscious expression should not be ruled out, even if this requires the learning of special sign languages. At the other extreme, patients that have lost their means of expression (through brain damage, seizure, etc.) may indeed no longer have any self-awareness and very little possibility of regaining it. In the latter case a certain retrosective respect for the person is understandable as well as recognizing the possibility of a reprieve of the disability.

15. In the case of animals, structure is generated through the exigencies of their lives; they must behave in certain fixed and ordered patterns if they are to survive. In Keller's case, one can imagine that such throughgoing purposes were lacking in her life.

16. There are some interesting parallels here to the famous Turing Test of artificial intelligence. See A.M. Turing "Computing

Machinery and Intelligence," in Hofstadter and Dennett, The Mind's I (New York: Bantam Books, 1982).

17. J. Lacan, Ecrits, pp.86-87.

18. War provides an interesting example of negation and alienation in their ethical dimensions. As a morally responsible person one cannot kill another subject, another person. The 'enemy' must be objectified, must not be allowed to speak; they must be regarded under a category of thingness, or at least as "them". Only he who is immoral, can annihilate without guilt what is clearly constituted as another person, as "you". This latter situation provides a definition of evil. Alienation is already on the way to this condition. It is interesting to note in this respect that the category of the "third person" does not function like "I" and "you", for it passes outside the discourse to an 'objective' reference. As Benveniste observes: "Certain languages show that the 'third person' is indeed literally a 'non-person'." (From "The Nature of Pronouns" in Problems of General Linguistics.)

19. With regard to developments in artificial intelligence and androids: if you cannot tell the difference, then what difference is there? Our application of the person concept is in fact fairly flexible, including babies, malformed individuals, people with artificial limbs, and such like.

20. This process usually occurs with animals only if we first personify their gestures, that is, see them as expressive of a certain subjectivity and as analogous to our speech.

21. W. James, The Principles of Psychology (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), p.288.

22. Ibid., p.323. James might also have said "locus" instead of "nucleus". In love-making I see no reason why this locus might not change.

23. See Husserl, Logical Investigations, Vol. one, Investigation I, trans. J.N. Findlay (New York: The Humanities Press, 1970).

24. The Bedeutung-Sinn dichotomy is more pronounced in Ideas (New York: Collier Books, 1975), see §124. Bedeutung is there reserved for linguistic or ideal meaning.

25. E. Husserl, Logical Investigations, p.269.

26. Ibid., p.269.

27. In Logical Investigations Husserl separates the 'content' or meaning, from the 'object' referred to. See p.290f.

28. See Husserl, Logical Investigations, p.327.

29. J. Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.317.

30. J. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p.115.

31. J. Derrida's "Signature, Event, Context" aims at these conclusions primarily by considering the indeterminate nature of context, the situation out of which utterances are to be interpreted. This is not to deny meaning itself, for linguistic or written signs must be meaningful by definition, only that an 'intended meaning' cannot be univocally encoded in language. This is the basis of Derrida's important notion of "dissemination," which he maintains is different from the more hermeneutic assumption of polysemia. The latter, according to Derrida, still has traces of an origin that a traditional hermeneutic investigation aims to disclose or recover, while dissemination avoids such an origin.

32. E. Husserl, Ideas, §124. See also Husserl's "The Origin of Geometry": "Thus men as men, fellow men, world...and, on the other hand, language, are inseparably intertwined...." (In Derrida, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry p.162.)

33. E. Husserl, Ideas, §124.

34. J. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p.85 footnote.

35. E. Husserl, Logical Investigations, pp.279-80.

36. See Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p.58.

37. See Husserl, Logical Investigations, p.275.

38. See Husserl, Ideas, §124.

39. This is very much like the way some of us read to ourselves. Because one thinks one must know already, one does not actually attempt to express oneself fully to oneself; it is deemed superfluous. This is a way of stating Husserl's position.

40. See Derrida "Signature, Event, Context" (Margins of Philosophy), p.318.

41. Although I think there are numerous important philosophical implications to this separation of ideality from meaning, it would take us too far away from our primary topic to pursue them here.

42. This translation paradigm is one way of interpreting Gadamer's notion of the 'fusion of horizons', which always involves

the following important claim: "one understands differently if one understands at all" (Truth and Method. New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p.264.

43. Cf. Merleau-Ponty: "The wonderful thing about language is that it promotes its own oblivion: my eyes follow the lines on the paper, and from the moment I am caught up in their meaning, I lose sight of them.... Expression fades out before what is expressed, and this is why its mediating role may pass unnoticed...." (Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith. New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1978), p.401.

44. A. Lingis, "Signs of Consciousness" (Substance 42, vol XIII, No.1, 1984). Here Lingis is following Derrida (Speech and Phenomena p.76).

45. J. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p.79.

46. Cf. Derrida: "Speech and the consciousness of speech — that is to say consciousness simply as self-presence — are the phenomenon of an auto-affection lived as the suppression of "differance". That phenomenon, that lived reduction of the opacity of the signifier, are the origin of what is called presence." (Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, p.166.) Presence is thus the overlooking or suppression of the mediating signifier, or, which is the same thing, the erasing of a primordial difference or otherness. (Magritte's paintings often point to this overlooking: Ceci n'est pas une pipe, for example.) This self-presence is thus fundamentally alienated, in much the same way as a child's identity is gained in and through an other (e.g., the mother) or Narcissus discovers himself in a reflection.

47. If expression indeed creates being, then this desire is also the desire to be.

48. One might wish to add to the Cartesian cogito the fact that I not merely am but am also 'here' and 'now', thus giving an initial affirmation of being spatio-temporally located. The further explanation of such relative locations, as Hegel stressed in the beginning of the Phenomenology, would still have to be determined. The answer we have been pursuing lies in narrative emplotment.

49. There are also physical-biological answers, which are not of direct interest here.

50. See Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations With Others", trans. William Cobb (The Primacy of Perception, ed. James Edie. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p.151.

51. M. Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations with Others", p.151.

52. See Lacan, Ecrits, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I."

53. The "real" is not what we tend to mean by 'reality', for this is primarily a symbolic product. Lacan does allow the female subject a closer relationship to the real than the male, with a respective loss of the symbolic. See Kaja Silverman, The Subject of Semiotics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.186.

54. J. Lacan, Ecrits, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", p.68. This position of Lacan's was derived primarily from Levi-Strauss' ideas on the pre-personal nature of symbolic social structures.

55. This distinction is evidenced in the way Proust (re)captures himself in the textual identity of the character Marcel.

56. See Lacan, Ecrits, p.1. Also Merleau-Ponty "The Child's Relations With Others", p.125.

57. Ibid., p.2.

58. Ibid., p.3.

59. Ibid., p.4.

60. The syncretic stage is also continued, both in the experience of one's bodily unity and in certain forms of sympathetic identification with others.

61. Ibid., p.6. The influence of Hegel on Lacan's dialectic of self and other cannot be overestimated here.

62. M. Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations With Others", pp.118-119, written eleven years after Lacan's address (to which he refers).

63. A point we have especially learned from the later work of Heidegger.

64. P. Ricoeur, "The Question of Proof in Freud's Psychoanalytic Writings," (Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, trans. John Thompson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.268.

65. A. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, trans. G. Walsh and F. Lehnert (Bloomington, Indiana: Northwestern University Press, 1967). See especially Chapter 2.

66. A chronicle, such as the Annals of Saint Gall (See Hayden White's "The Value of Narrativity" in On Narrative, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, p.7), tends to list a calendar of events that exhibit little in the way of emplotment; reports of the weather being placed on equal footing with the death of a king. The chronicle, while selective, leaves one wondering about the historical import of the events recorded.

67. The hermeneutic epistemological stance that we have outlined does not, of course, preclude our rejecting interpretations because of a straightforward misrepresentation of the 'facts'. Interpretation that aims at truth must begin from an adequate grasp of the spatial and temporal details of the course of events to be understood, much as textual interpretation must account for and begin from what is actually given in the text.

68. Julia Kristeva, "The Speaking Subject' (On Signs, ed. Marshall Blonsky. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1985), p.217.

69. Ibid., p.217. Cf. Heidegger on anxiety in "What is Metaphysics": "Anxiety robs us of speech. Because beings as a whole slip away, so that just the nothing crowds round, in the face of anxiety all utterance of the 'is' falls silent." (Basic Writings, ed. David Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1977, p.103) Anxiety, for Heidegger, severs the threads of intentionality that allow us a lived-through familiarity and complacency with the world, in so doing it opens the possibility for resignification. However, Heidegger's interests are more of an ontological nature (concerning Dasein's authenticity) than explicitly psychoanalytical.

70. Language used against tradition is a major theme in Kristeva's Revolution in Poetic Language, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

71. On the relation between displacement-condensation and metonymy-metaphor, see R. Coward and J. Ellis Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject (Boston: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1980), ch.6.

72. See, for example, Freud's "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming" of 1908, also Christopher Cauldwell Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry (New York: International Publishers, 1977). Art may have a spirit of playfulness that is lacking in its psychological counterpart.

73. J. Lacan, On Signs, "Sign, Symbol, Imaginary", p.209. The repressed, in this case, is nothing other than an example of what we have called the prenarrative.

74. J. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1981), p.20.

75. See Freud, Introductory Lectures (Penguin Books, 1974), lecture 11.

76. J. Lacan, Ecrits, p.88.

77. A similar process to that described here was seen, in an earlier chapter, to occur in relation to unexpressed emotions. Repression is the censoring of such emotions from conscious conceptual recognition.

78.J. Lacan, Ecrits, p.169.

79. R. Schafer, Language and Insight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p.6. Cf. Lacan, Ecrits p.52: "What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history — that is to say, we help him to perfect the present historization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical 'turning points' in his existence." Cf. Ricoeur ("The Question of Proof in Freud's Psychoanalytical Writings", p.273): "Psychoanalytical reports are kinds of biographies and autobiographies whose literary history is a part of the long tradition emerging from the epic tradition of the Greeks, the Celts and the Germans".

80. R. Schafer, Language and Insight, p.31.

81. Ibid., p.31.

82. O. Sacks, The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat: and Other Clinical Tales (New York: Harper and Row, 1987).

83. Ibid. p.111.

84. Ibid. p. 110. The parallel with Schafer's position becomes evident from the following quotation: "We have, each of us a life-story, an inner narrative — whose continuity, whose sense, is our lives. It might be said that each of us constructs and lives, a 'narrative', and that this narrative is us, our identities.... Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us — through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations.... To be ourselves we must have ourselves — possess, if need be repossess, our life-stories" (Sacks, ibid., pp.110-111).

85. Ibid. p.111.

86. Cf. Ricoeur ("The Question of Proof in Freud's Psycho-analytic Writings", p.253): "But what is it to remember? It is not just to recall certain isolated events, but to become capable of forming meaningful sequences and ordered connections. In short, it is to be able to constitute one's own existence in the form of a story where a memory as such is only a fragment of the story."

87. I shall not consider in any detail the precise models and mechanisms of mind that Freud offered in explanation of the processes that we are considering in this section. Such models and their terminology have a somewhat inconsistent history in Freud's thought. The processes at our present level of discussion are not only well documented in fields other than psychoanalysis (especially other forms of psychological therapy and literature), but are also applicable to much of our everyday lives.

88. See Donald Spence Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984), Chapter VI.

89. The case history is not itself one or more of these stories, but rather plots the development of certain of them during the analytic sessions.

90. D. Spence, Narrative Truth and Historical Truth, p.288.

91. Ibid., p.175.

92. Ibid., p.31.

93. C.G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), trans. Richard and Clara Winston, p.3.

94. Paul Veyne, Writing History, trans. M. Moore-Rinvolucri (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), pp.71-72.

95. As B. Croce has said: "Where there is no narrative, there is no history." (Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory", History and Theory, #1, 1984, p.3.)

96. H. White, "The Question of Narrative..." p.2. As White says in Tropics of Discourse (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p.92: "Historians may not like to think of their works as translations of fact into fictions; but this is one of the effects of their works."

97. Quoted by White, ibid., p.3, note 4.

98. H. White, Tropics of Discourse, p.94. White's final claim is interesting for it points to what I have called the prenarrative level. If narrative style is "immanent in" the language in which we

describe events (prior to expicit historical analysis and emplotment), and if we view language not simply as a tool but as disclosive of the world, then the world of human actions will invariably appear in a narrative structure.

99. As Arthur Danto puts the matter: "...since we plainly have no access to the world apart from our ways of thinking and talking about it, we scarcely, even in restricting ourselves to thought and talk, can avoid saying things about the world." (Narration and Knowledge. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, p.xv)

100. R. Barthes, "The Discourse of History" in The Rustle of Language, trans. R. Howard (New York: HIll and Wang, 1986), p.127.

101. R. Barthes, Image, Music, Text, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp.123-24. See Hayden White's account of this passage, "The Question of Narrative..." p.14.

102. P. Veyne, Writing History, p.x.

103. Cf. Veyne: "Then what are the facts worthy of rousing the interest of the historian? All depends on the plot chosen; in itself, a fact is not interesting or uninteresting...the fact is nothing without its plot." (Writing History, p.33.)

104. Paul Veyne does make the claim that whereas literature, which is fictional, must generate interest by developing exciting or aesthetically pleasing plots and characters, history need simply relate the 'truth', for in that an event actually happened (even though it may be boring) it carries an intrinsic interest value for the general reader. See Writing History, p.11. It must be admitted that there is some truth in this view, but that it will not stand without certain provisos. One could, as a historical exercise, seek to discover what Emerson generally had for lunch on weekends and the precise manner of its preparation, or describe in detail what route he took on his morning walks. These would be historical 'facts', but they would hardly hold the average reader's interest for long. Facts, as Veyne does go on to say, are nothing without the plot within which they take on significance. Irrelevant details have therefore little interest even though they may be correct. A second point to be noted is that literature is not exactly devoid of mimetic character. Though fiction might deal with imaginary characters and plots, there is still a mimetic relation operating that insists these fictional worlds be possible worlds, and as we know, the possible always stands in a dialectic with the actual. Fiction is perhaps more 'factual' than Veyne is prepared to admit.

105. Both Gadamer and Habermas have rejected this claim of disinterestedness to be a profitable (and even possible) means of acquiring understanding and knowledge.

106. H. White, Tropics of Discourse, p.99.

107. R. Descartes, Discourse on Method and Meditations, trans. L.J. Lafleur (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1960), p.5. Further references to this work will be added to the text.

108. R. Descartes, ibid., Meditation III, p.91. Further references to this work will be added to text.

108. Also compare Husserl:"Between the meanings of consciousness and reality yawns a veritable abyss." Ideas, §49.

110. See Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p.246.

111. Husserl in fact sought to remain between, and therefore outside, the two metaphysical options of res cogitans and res extensa by stressing 'intentionality', though not always with success. Phenomenologically speaking, perception, for example, is in essence nothing but a presentation to a subject, and there is no thing in itself except as a derived theoretical construct.

112. I have already indicated above my problems with the concept "mind".

113. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.400. Cf. Dalia Judovitz: "Reading philosophy no longer suffices to become a philosopher: rather, one has to become an epistemologist first, for the guarantee of certain knowledge takes precedence over historical knowledge itself. Morover, this conception of philosophy in purely epistemological terms excludes from the domain of history that which belongs to its own history as a system of thought; it precludes the history of its own thought in order to found the evidence of its truth." ("Autobiographical Discourse and Critical Praxis in Descartes", p.100, in Philosophy & Literature, vol.5, 1981). Montaigne, for example, works in the other direction; a reflection on history disclosing general and often contradictory characteristics of an always situated subject.

114. As Benveniste has said: "Ego is he who says ego."

115. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.402.

116. Merleau-Ponty posits the existence of what he calls a "tacit cogito" preceding the spoken one, but his formulation seems to undermine itself when he admits that: "The tacit cogito is a cogito only when it has found expression for itself."(Phenomenology of Perception, p.404) This tacit cogito would appear to be parallel to what I have called subjectivity (one's sense of possible expression), which is perhaps synonomous with our sense of 'existence'.

117. Many of the problems surrounding this speaking subject I have already investigated in earlier sections.

118. Cf. Piaget: "Language is certainly not the exclusive means of representation [of action]. It is only one aspect of the very general function that Head has called the symbolic function. I prefer to use the linguists' term: the semiotic function.... In addition to language the semiotic function includes gestures, either idiosyncratic or, as is the case of the deaf and dumb language, systematized. It includes defered imitation.... It includes drawing, painting, modelling. It includes mental imagery.... Language is but one among these many aspects of the semiotic function, even though it is in most instances the most important." (Genetic Epistemology, trans. Eleanor Duckworth. New York: W.W. Norton, 1971, p.45-46.)

119. In The Raw and the Cooked (Trans. J. and D. Weightman. London: Cape, 1970) Lévi-Strauss took the structures of the social world back, in Kantian fashion, to an architecture of the mind. This form of reduction leads to a transcendentalism which supports the synchronic or atemporal analyses that Lévi-Strauss preferred, but this view is perhaps at odds with many of his essential insights into the symbolic and its functioning in differential relations.

120. It no longer seems correct to say that 'man' speaks, as though language were a mere instrument at the mercy of our wills, but it seems similarly incorrect to say simply that 'language' speaks (a move instigated by Mallarmé and the later Heidegger), unless we can somehow feed man back into 'language'. These two approaches each have something important to say about our embeddedness in language. It can be seen that we have been supporting a middle view where I indeed speak, but where I am only insofar as I do.

121. R. Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in Image, Music, Text, p.145. Further references to this work will, in this section, be added to the text and be preceeded by the initials IMT.

122. Which is not to say that emotions (and affectivity generally) have no cognitive value, for they are intimatly linked to our understanding. Moods, as Heidegger has shown, cast a certain meaning over the world, disclose it in new ways.

123. A parallel can be made for action generally, in terms, say, of a 'site of production' and a 'site of responsibility'; this would yield an agent.

124. R. Barthes, Roland Barthes, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984).

125. M. Foucault, Language Counter-Memory, Practice, trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1981), p.137.

126. Ibid., p.138.

127. R. Barthes, Roland Barthes, p.143. Barthes also offers an interesting quotation from Diderot: "Everything has happened in us because we are ourselves, always ourselves, and never one minute the same", p.144.

128. Ibid., p.60.

129. I derived this model primarily from Kaja Silverman's, The Subject of Semiotics, Chapter 5.

130. Certain computer mailings could be exempted from the normal category of authorship.

131. See Ricoeur's use of this term (relinquishment) in Part II of Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences.

132. Cf. Wolfgang Iser's essay "The Reading Process" (Reader-Response Criticism, ed. Jane Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, p.67): "In thinking the thoughts of another, his [the reader's] own individuality temporarily recedes into the background, since it is supplanted by these alien thoughts.... As we read, there occurs an artificial division of our personality, because we take as a theme for ourselves something that we are not."

133. Part of the ploy of much contemporary literature (especially what is called self-conscious fiction or metafiction) is to bring to the fore this manipulatory moment by frustrating the reader's normal identifications. This break can be made, for example, by explicitly parading the text's textual and written nature, much as a film shot may pan back to reveal the film-crew and equipment.

134. M. Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

135. These characteristics of the embodied subject have both temporary and more permanent aspects. That is, many of our states are fairly ephemeral, while others serve as one's underlying and relatively abiding habitus.

136. Subjectivity (the possibility of expression) is also allied to proprioception (the sensory awareness of our body that serves as a basis for action) on the purely bodily level.

137. See Jakobson, "Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb", Word and Language (The Hague: Mouton, 1971).

138. Roy Schafer draws a similar conclusion from a psychoanalytic viewpoint: "Personal development may be characterized

as change in the questions it is urgent or essential to answer. As a project in personal development, personal analysis changes the leading questions that one addresses to the tale of one's life and the lives of important others."(On Narrative, p.31.)

139. C. Taylor, Human Agency and Language, Philosophical Papers I, p.31.

**ENDNOTES: Conclusion**

1. M. Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p.342.

2. Bruce Wilshire has written: "One is one's 'roles' but not just one's 'roles,' for one is also an unobjectifiable consciousness of 'roles' actual and possible — even roles as yet unimagined." (Role Playing and Identity. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, p.227.) In contrast to my own exposition, Wilshire emphasizes the importance of prethematic role playing (based in mimetic social behaviour on the part of a body-self) for his view of self and does not, in my mind, place enough emphasis on the linguistic and narrative aspects underlying the "consciousness of 'roles'."

3. Being as, which is fundamental to a hermeneutic ontology, also has interesting mimetic connotations. We not only view ourselves as someone, but also as like someone. For example, we view our life-story as being tragic, perhaps like Hamlet, or like Othello. We use such models (or archetypes) more or less consciously when we tell our own story.

4. R. Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, trans. George Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), see Chapter 10.

5. The 'ethical' argument of existentialists such as Sartre that all role identifications of the human subject are forms of "inauthenticity", forms of denying one's freedom, seems on our account to fly in the face of fact. At most one can say that certain representations of an individual are insufficient with respect to that individual's diversity, possibilities, and history.

6. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.402. Merleau-Ponty continues, "the speaking subject plunges into speech without imagining the words he is about to utter.... The word 'sleet', when it is known to me, is not an object which I recognize through any identificatory synthesis, but a certain use made of my phonatory equipment, a certain modulation of my body as a being-in-the-world." (p.403)

7. We have also argued ("Signs of Derrida"), that there is a good case to be made for developing a theory of meaning and ideality that takes as its basis the material signifier and its iterability, and which eschews appeal to transcendental signifieds or what has also been called in the history of philosophy "intelligible essences". Though we cannot here go further into working out the details, what must be addressed in such a position is the various

ways in which meaning is generated in associative relations. Meaning is not only a matter of a signifier's difference from other signifying units, but is especially a product of temporal and tropical relations and transformations, e.g., contiguity and juxtaposition, sequence, identity and difference, metonymy and synecdoche, metaphor, and so on. One problem we mistakenly introduce into the consideration of language (as with considering "man") is to see it as somehow different from everything else, as outside 'nature' and capable of reflecting it.

8. I do not imply by the word "dematerialize" any metaphysical option for what is called in philosophy materialism.

9. Sleep without dreams is surely a temporary extinguishing of the self.

10. This shift can be easily mapped on to our earlier distinction of the experiencing versus the narrating self. Our position also parallels that of G.H. Mead: "I know of no other form of behaviour than the linguistic in which the individual is an object to himself, and, as far as I can see, the individual is not a self in the reflective sense unless he is an object to himself." (Mind, Self, and Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.142.)

11. M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p.392.

12. M. Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

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