I. A. Richards Selected Works 1919-1938

Volume 2: The Meaning of Meaning

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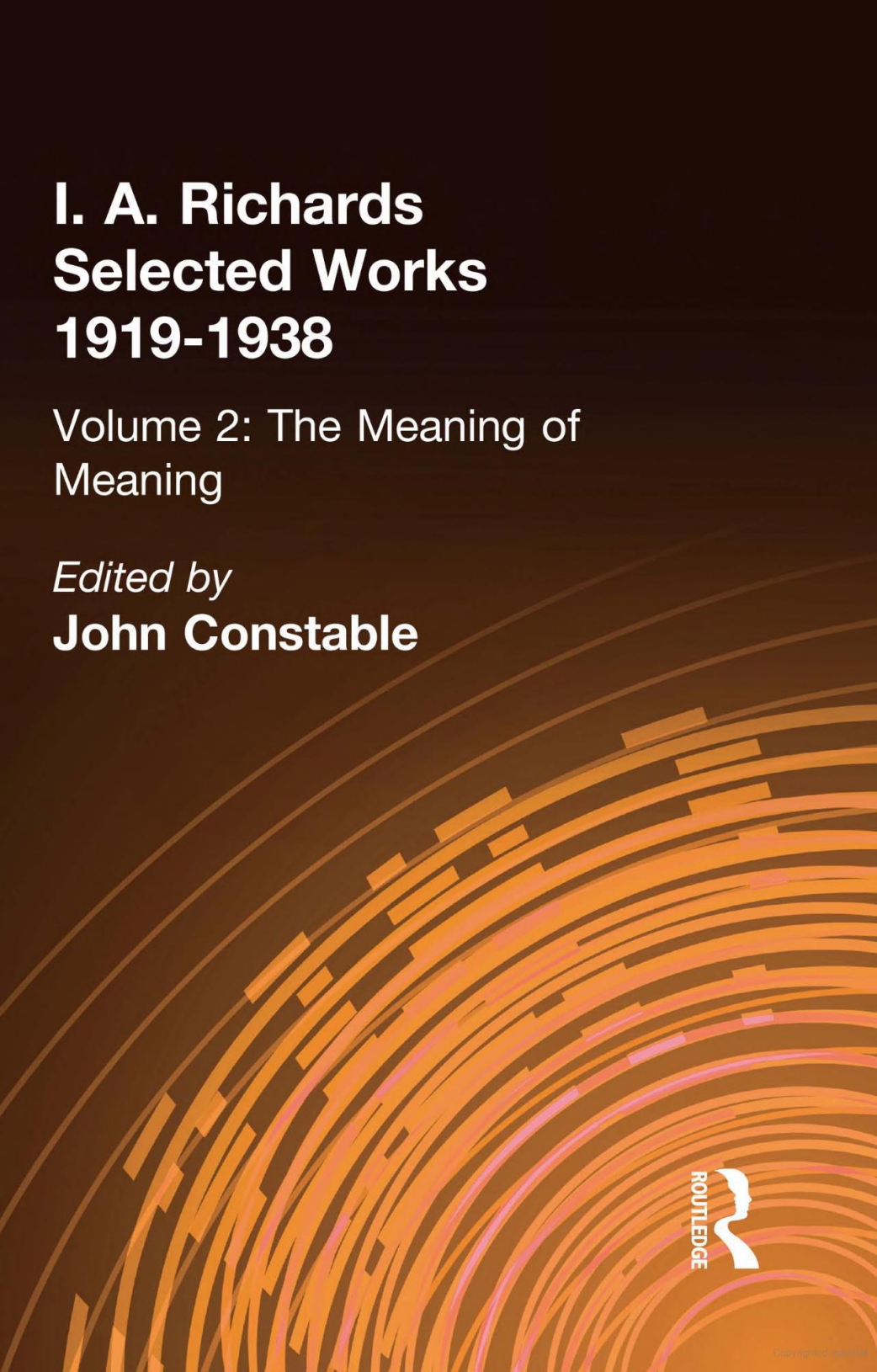

C. K. OGDEN &
I. A. RICHARDS

THE MEANING OF MEANING

A Study of The Influence of Language upon Thought and of The Science of Symbolism

With Supplementary Essays by
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CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Origins and Authorship

C. K. Ogden was the most important influence on the course of I. A. Richards' career, an influence which extended from their acquaintance as undergraduates, through the joint composition of *Foundations of Aesthetics* and *The Meaning of Meaning*, and into the years devoted to the development of Ogden's Basic English. Their first meeting was in 1912. Richards, who had come up to Cambridge to read History at Magdalene College in 1911, was in trouble. He had found that after a term or so of this subject he had become 'possessed by some heartfelt objection to reading any more of it', and he was in search of an alternative. His Director of Studies in History, F. R. Salter, invited him to lunch to discuss the issue. Richards himself provides an evocative account of this event:

> The other guest was a small commanding undergraduate, also, I discovered, of Magdalene, with a large pale head and disconcertingly reflective glasses. He was some three years older than myself and ready to discourse all through the afternoon out of preternatural knowledge, and in a beautiful and tireless voice, on the Choice of Subject.
>
> Our host left us early to play tennis, and I listened on and on to what the leading lecturers in almost every field would soon be telling me if I did not take due care. 'Will you change your mind, if I convince you?' used to be one of Ogden's openings. I suppose I was convinced that the Moral Sciences Tripos was what I needed. He took me such a tour of it as no other guide could have offered. Not only *what* Russell, Moore, Sorley, Broad... would say, but *why* they would say it, all this he made wondrously clear to me. Just how dependent their philosophies were upon their socio-political-economic backgrounds, he seemed to have no doubts about whatever. [...] At last, I let him lead me off to his attic in the Pepys Building and provide me with books which could, he said, ease a beginner's steps into

> Moral Science. I still feel at times that I would have done well to have read them.[1]

Their paths did not cross in any serious way for another six years, by which time Richards had taken Part I of the Moral Sciences tripos, and was now waiting in Cambridge, toying with various career paths and reading widely in linguistics, psychology, and literature. He was living in a room rented from Ogden at 1 Free School Lane, close to the Cavendish Laboratory and above one of the various shops that Ogden retained in Cambridge for running the *Cambridge Magazine*. This penny University weekly had become under Ogden's inspirational and courageous editorship during the 1914–1918 war a controversial journal nationally-known for the quality of its coverage of the foreign-press and the balance of its analysis of the war.[2] This also made it very unpopular in some Cambridge and government circles, and there appears to have been some reason for supposing that the magazine was the target of more or less official interference, which Ogden believed culminated in the wrecking of the magazines's offices on King's Parade minutes after the Armistice was announced on the 11th of November 1918.[3] Richards, who happened to be passing, saw the event:

> [...] an excited Frenchman leapt off his cycle in King's Parade and cried: 'They told me the war was over! But look!' Crashing out through the plate glass window of Ogden's Cambridge Magazine Book Shop and Art Gallery, No. 18, came canvas after canvas: Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry.... Medical students, flown with the spirits of the occasion, were smashing the place up. This looked, and was, rather dangerous; but there was Ogden standing in the next doorway calmly watching the assailants. He was chewing his lips a little and pressing the corners of

1 'Co-author of the Meaning of Meaning', in P. Sargant Florence and J. R. L. Anderson, eds, *C. K. Ogden: A Collective Memoir* (Elek: London, 1977), 96–7.

2 See Martin and Eva Kolinsky, 'A Voice of Reason in the First World War', in *C. K. Ogden: A Collective Memoir*, 56–81.

3 See Ogden's remarks on the affair quoted in P. Sargant Florence, 'Cambridge 1909–1919 and its Aftermath', in *C. K. Ogden: A Collective Memoir*, 40.

> his eyes with his finger-tips – a trick he had for improving the acuity of his vision.[1]

Later that evening Ogden called on his tenant at Free School Lane to ask for assistance in identifying the rioters:

> After collecting my useless impressions [... he] started off, steadily talking, for Top Hole, his fantastically cluttered attic above Mac-Fisheries in Petty Cury. Half-way down the tightly twisting stairs, under an aged, faintly whistling, Bat's wing gas jet, he stopped to make some remark upon a recent contoversy in *Mind*. An hour or two later when we went on downstairs, the main outline of *The Meaning of Meaning* was clear enough, and plans for a joint work to embody it were in being.

The relationship with the *Cambridge Magazine* was to continue. Ogden had decided that one way to ensure the journal's survival and discharge his obligations to the subscribers, who were numerous, was move to quarterly publication and to use it as a vehicle for their joint work. Initially, writing seems to have gone slowly, as the pattern of collaboration took time to establish, and also because Ogden had by this time begun to transfer his operations to London, largely because of his deepening involvement with the publishing firm of Kegan Paul:

> As little by little we learnt to understand (and write) one another's language, the book advanced. I early found that the best way to speed it up was to compose what were almost parodies of Ogden and try them out on him. Much of it had to be written in the small hours after Ogden's arrival by the last train from London, and without cocoa and biscuits in abundance I hardly think much would have resulted. He held the pen, on the ground that his hand was more legible to his typist than mine. And he sat while I walked up and down.[2]

In 1919 they published nothing, and it was not until the summer of 1920, when their first joint article 'Symbolism' appeared in

1 'Co-author of the Meaning of Meaning', 97.
2 'Co-author of the Meaning of Meaning', 100.

the *Cambridge Magazine*, attracting immediate attention outside Cambridge, even if it was mystifying to these readers. In a letter to his mother of the 24th of October Richards reported that:

> Gardiner of the British Museum, who is the leading British expert on Hieroglyphics came to see me about 'Symbolism'. We had a very satisfactory talk and I think I shall manage to change his entire outlook, little by little. He is a very acute person in a prodigious muddle over the matter [...] I found I had to explain every sentence in our 'Symbolism' article to Gardiner. It was all much too scientifically stated. He couldn't understand a word of it. And the same with everyone else.[1]

The importance of this connection with the Egyptologist A. H. Gardiner, whose place in the development of intentionalist based linguistics is coming to be more widely appreciated, has yet to be explored.

With 'Symbolism' published, they seemed to enter a phase of sustained writing. The composition of 'The Sense of Beauty', co-authored with James Wood in the late summer and autumn intervened, but they were now very active, and not even Richards' lecturing for the English Tripos in the winter seems to have held them back. The excitement is evident in a letter to his mother in November, where Richards reported that the importance and power of their theory was growing more apparent every day:

> I think it is extraordinary in the light it is throwing across the most difficult controversies there are. We are having a small gathering tonight in order to see whether other people think so too. Last night we succeeded in writing down what we think to be a solution of the main metaphysical problem, and at the same time showed that it couldn't possibly have been solved or even the sentence written at all without our work in the article in the spring.[2]

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1 IAR to his mother, 24 Oct. 1920, Richards Collection, Magdalene College, Cambridge, hereafter RCM.

2 IAR to his mother, 2 Nov. 1920, RCM.

1921 saw a rush of pieces in two phases; the first group appearing in January 1921 were mostly composed in the previous year, while the second group was at least in part written in 1921 itself.

With the issue of these articles in 1921 the composition of the book was essentially complete. 1922 was given over to revising and arranging the sections already written, and supplementing them with further developments. Richards describes their working methods in a letter, again to his mother:

> I now have the whole of *The Meaning of Meaning* book pasted up on my wall paper so that it is easy to find any part of it, and I go round in spare moments making alterations and additions.[1]

It was an exuberant period. With the book pasted around them Ogden and Richards amused themselves by putting 'a *not* in any sentence we thought would benefit from having a *not* put into it.'[2] They were also writing additional material. Two further articles based on some of these additions were published in 1923 not long before the book itself appeared.

Given the complexity of the issues the rapidity of the composition is very striking, but as Richards himself noted in an interview, Ogden had been thinking about these matters for 'twenty years perhaps' when they first discussed the ideas together,[3] and manuscript evidence suggests that the core of the book originated with Ogden. A notebook survives in the University Library at Cambridge (Add.8309) which Ogden himself has described, in a remark written on the notebook itself, as a first draft for the book, dating from 1909–10, which was then used as the basis for a presentation to The Heretics, a Cambridge discussion society, on the 19th of February 1911. In 1919 the notebook was, in Ogden's words, 'unearthed, abbreviated, and typed for *Meaning*

1 IAR to his mother, 1 Dec. 1920, RCM.

2 'Beginnings and Transitions: I. A. Richards Interviewed by Reuben Brower', in Reuben Brower, et al., eds, *I. A. Richards: Essays in his Honor* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1973), [17–41], 35.

3 'Beginnings and Transitions', 23.

of Meaning historical section', in other words the 'Word Magic' chapter, but there is a little more in the notebook than this. The parable, in Appendix E, beginning 'Realize thyself, Amoeba dear' is present in nearly complete form in the draft (Leaves 80–82). Beyond this our best guide to the distribution of the authorship are the signatures over which the various pieces appeared in the *Cambridge Magazine*. The following listing is of all these parts in chronological order:

1. Unsigned, 'The Linguistic Conscience', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/1 (Summer 1920), 31. This short piece, which functions as an introduction to 'Symbolism' below, is perhaps by C. K. Ogden alone. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* as the epigraphs and 'Preface'.
2. C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, 'Symbolism', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/1 (Summer 1920), 32–40. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* in Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, and 10.
3. C. M. [*Cambridge Magazine*, i.e. C. K. Ogden], 'What is What', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/1 (Summer 1920), 40. Reprinted as the fable in Appendix E.
4. Adelyne More [C. K. Ogden], 'What is a Fact?', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/1 (Summer 1920), 41–2. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* as Appendix E.
5. C. K. Ogden, I. A. Richards, James Wood, 'The Sense of Beauty', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/2 (Jan.–Mar. 1921), 73–93. Reprinted as *Foundations of Aesthetics* (1922), and used in Chapter 7 'The Meaning of Beauty', of *The Meaning of Meaning*.
6. I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden, 'The Art of Conversation', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/2 (Jan.-Mar. 1921), 94–100. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* in Chapters 1 and 6.
7. Adelyne More [C. K. Ogden], 'Vision and Imagination: A New Basis for Physics', *Cambridge Magazine*, 10/2 (Jan.–Mar. 1921), 101–3. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* in Chapter 4.

8. Unsigned. 'Thoughts, Words and Things', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/1 (1921), 29–31. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* as 'Summary', with other sections becoming parts of Chapter 3, 'Sign Situations', and Appendix B. Attributed to 'C. M.', i.e. *Cambridge Magazine*, on the cover of the journal, and therefore probably by Ogden alone.

9. I. A. Richards, 'What Happens When We Think', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/1 (1921), 32–41. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) in Chapter 3, with material from pages 35–7 providing material for Appendix B.

10. C. K. Ogden, 'An Invaluable Word', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/1 (1921), 41–8. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* in Chapter 8.

11. C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, 'The Meaning of Meaning', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/1 (1921), 49–57. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* in Chapter 9.

12. I. A. Richards, and C. K. Ogden, 'On Talking', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/1 (1921), 57–65. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* in Chapter 10.

13. C. K. Ogden, 'The Power of Words', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/2 (Early Spring 1923), 5–45. Reprinted, abbreviated, as Chapter 2, 'The Power of Words', *The Meaning of Meaning*.

14. I. A. Richards, 'The Future of Grammar', *Cambridge Magazine*, 11/2 (Early Spring 1923), 51–6. Reprinted in *The Meaning of Meaning* as Appendix A.

This takes us a little further, but even where the authorship is clearly assigned to either Ogden or Richards there is reason to suppose that collaboration was present. Richards himself remarked that

> I have many times been asked about this collaboration, about how the central philosophical policies of *The Meaning of Mean-*

> *ing* were selected and co-ordinated. The answer is that they were truly a joint product of two widely differing temperaments looking together – like two eyes – at and into communications: and, not less, at and into failure to communicate. It may be argued that we found this failure excessively, even morbidly, amusing, that we over-incited one another on its pursuit; but it was deeply a shared relish and, equally, the remedies we 'ventured to recommend' were jointly excogitated and framed. The erudition, the resourcefulness, the awareness of possible readerships were mainly Ogden's, the analyses and combinations as much mine. But among the sentences assigned to various authors in *The Cambridge Magazine* (1919–1921) there were very few of any theoretical consequence in whose composition we did not both take a shaping hand.[1]

It seems best at a general level to take the volume as Richards himself describes it here, that is as the outcome of a true collaboration at a time when they 'agreed so easily on every point',[2] but it is equally clear that the major inspiration was Ogden's, and that Richards' contributions were inflections of the fundamental themes of the volume, a point which the following section will clarify by considering the development of one of these themes, that of emotive meaning.

The Development of the theory of Emotive Meaning

Within the context of a set devoted to the works of I. A. Richards it is needless to comment specifically on the character and value of *The Meaning of Meaning* as linguistic philosophy, beyond noting the fact that its status as a founding document in Pragmatics now seems to be receiving some attention, and perhaps merits more.[3] Similarly, the undoubted historical significance of *The Meaning of Meaning*'s dual language hypothesis in contem-

1 'Co-author of the Meaning of Meaning', 100.

2 'Beginnings and Transitions', 23.

3 See for example, Russell Dale, 'The Theory of Meaning', doctoral dissertation, City University New York, 1996, which suggests that H. P. Grice's initial work in pragmatics was stimulated to some degree by Ogden and Richards' quotation from the works of Victoria Welby and A. H. Gardiner.

porary ethical debate need only be noted in passing.[1] Instead, my aim here will be to draw attention to the way in which the distinction between 'emotive' and 'symbolic' (or referential) meaning, which is usually considered to have preceded, governed, and contributed to other departments of Richards' thought, was in fact established in conjunction with those departments. In my introduction to *Principles of Literary Criticism* I remark that the collaboration with Ogden and Wood on *The Foundations of Aesthetics* was largely responsible for the development of Richards' psychological theory of value, and here I shall suggest that the development of that theory of value, particularly in lectures in late 1920 and early 1921, conditioned the treatment of 'emotive' meaning, introducing a further analysis of the two-part division. However, I will show that in his subsequent writings Richards failed to employ this more complicated emotive theory, and reverted to a simpler treatment derived from the earliest writings towards *The Meaning of Meaning*, a treatment which fails to do justice to that articulated in the book taken as whole.

The term 'emotive' makes its first appearance as the key pole of the distinction only in the volume publication of 1923, but the roots of the distinction are deep. The first published version of the theory is to be found in the article 'Symbolism', which appeared in the summer of 1920, the earliest of their joint articles. Here we find Ogden and Richards proposing that 'meaning' is to be understood as the result of interpreting a sign as pointing to a referent:

> If we stand in the neighbourhood of a crossroad and observe a pedestrian confronted by a notice *To Grantchester* displayed on a post, we commonly distinguish three important factors in the situation. There is, we are sure, (1) a Sign which (2) refers to a Place and (3) is being interpreted by a Person. All situations in which Signs are considered are similar to this.[2]

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1 The importance of the work to C. L. Stevenson is well-known, and its wider impact is a commonplace. See, for example, the standard history of the emotive doctrine in ethics: Stephen Satris, *Ethical Emotivism* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1987).

2 'Symbolism', 32.

In disciplined utterance this act of referring is governed by 'The Six Canons of Symbolism', for example that a symbol refers to one and only one referent, and that substitutable symbols have the same referent. When it is so governed the user is able to exercise control 'over his thought, and thus in a sense over his surroundings and over objects at a distance.'[1]

Ogden and Richards contrast this with the 'function of poetical language in evoking emotion',[2] and under the heading 'The Dual Function of Language' they suggest that:

> Words or arrangements of words evoke emotion both directly as sounds and less directly in several different ways through what are called loosely 'associations'.

It becomes evident therefore that the distinction between what they here call the prose and poetical uses is in its deepest sense a psychological distinction between thoughts and attitudes, and language is classified according to whether its aim is the control of thought, or the expression or excitation of attitudes.

In achieving the latter end the authors concede the effects of words as sounds to be relatively unimportant, but suggest that the 'immediate emotional accompaniments due to past experience of them in typical contexts', and 'the effects ordinarily alluded to as the emotions due to associations which arise through the recall of these contexts'[3] explain their emotional power, and that these effects are the province of the arts. On the other hand 'all such emotional effects are disregarded in the scientific function of language'.[4] Their concrete example may make this still clearer:

> If we wish, for instance, to describe how, when we are impatient, a clock seems to go slowly, we may either describe psychologically the peculiarities in the expansion of our sense of duration,

1 'Symbolism', 34.
2 'Symbolism', 34.
3 'Symbolism', 38.
4 'Symbolism', 39.

> using symbols for the elements of the situation, and disregarding the emotional evocations of these symbols, or we may use symbols for a selection of these elements only, and so dispose them that they re-instate in the listener the appropriate emotions.[1]

The terminological instability here is worth noting. We are offered 'poetical' and 'scientific' as two opposed language functions, but also 'emotional' or 'evocative' as opposed to 'symbolic', and 'Prose and Poetry' is even used as a section heading in the article. The subject matter has been identified, a traditionally recognized distinction in the effects of language, but the symbolization of this distinction is so varied that it is reasonable to conclude that it has not been fully integrated within the overall scheme of Ogden and Richards' language theory. In the next significant appearance, in the article publication 'The Sense of Beauty' (written in the summer and autumn of 1920), the distinction has gained in firmness, perhaps because of the brevity of its reference, though it adds little to the earlier account:

> It is necessary to bear in mind the distinction between the evocative and the scientific use of language. Evocative language which is employed primarily to produce effects by suggestion, may (as is obvious in all poetry) be highly misleading if interpreted as though it had a scientific function.[2]

Curiously, despite these early appearances the doctrine makes no significant figure in Richards' lectures on 'Criticism' in the Michaelmas term of 1920 (October to December) and the Lent term of 1921 (January to March). Other aspects of the thought of these early articles is, however, most certainly present in the lectures. For example the 'Symbolism' paper discusses the tendency to hypostasize *beauty* as a good example of the way that failure to control the use of symbols may confuse the thinker.[3] In his lectures Richards expands on this point and claims that

1 'Symbolism', 39.
2 'The Sense of Beauty', 85.
3 'Symbolism', 36–7.

by assuming that beauty is an entity, and by confusing the qualities of the stimulating object with emotional effects in the beholder, critics and aestheticians vitiate much of their work, since it leaves them engaged in a 'futile and fatal hunt after general definition',[1] a single quality of 'beauty' in all beautiful things, where a pluralistic approach would be more appropriate. It seems, therefore, that it was nominalism which excited Richards most at this time, though the dual language hypothesis is mentioned. Richards notes that the similarity between reader's and authorial experience is the result of 'Attitude evocation less than reference',[2] but the point is not dwelt upon in any depth. Bearing in mind the degree to which the distinction between emotive and referential uses of language is the climax of *Principles of Literary Criticism*, in chapters 34 and 35, this is worth remark. As we have seen, the materials for this distinction were already in print, so we must conclude that Richards did not at this time believe that it was applicable, or at least was not ready for application, to his theory of value, itself still in the process of incubation. We might even venture the conclusion that the distinction seemed to be too simple and unrefined, too commonplace and commonsensical, to merit special mention.

In fact none of the other sections of the work written late in 1920[3] and published in early 1921 discuss the dual language hypothesis, but Ogden and Richards seem to have returned to the issue almost immediately, publishing the first full-form version of their theory late in the year in the article 'On Talking'. Interestingly, Richards is listed as the first author for this piece, and while this is a very small fact to build upon it is tempting to speculate that the recasting and enrichment of the doctrine of dual language function was largely at his instigation, and that it arose from the very dramatic increase in the sophistication of his

1 Lecture 2, p. 1, Notebook 4, RCM.

2 Lecture 4, p. 4, Notebook 4, RCM.

3 IAR to D. E. Pilley, 11 Dec. 1920, RCM: 'Very busy now term is over with more Symbolism for new double number Cambridge Magazine due after Christmas'.

theory of value as it was being articulated in his lectures.[1]

The treatment in 'On Talking' (pp. 62–5) is extensive, and much is reprinted almost unchanged in *The Meaning of Meaning* where it is further expanded (pp. 224–42). Even a bare summary will make evident its increase in subtlety over the presentation of 'On Symbolism'. 'Meaning', Richards and Ogden propose, can be subdivided into:

1. Strict symbolization of reference.
2. The expression of attitude to the listener or reader, for example amity or hostility. In speech this is managed by tone of voice and other indicators of manner, and is supplied in writing by word order, underlining, figures of speech, and other devices.
3. The expression of attitude to the referent.
4. The promotion of effects intended.
5. The reflection of the ease or difficulty of reference.

With these categories in hand Richards and Ogden suggest that the degree to which any sentence diverges from strict symbolization 'will be due to disturbing factors' arising from one or more of the other four groups,[2] and indeed that the normal type of utterance is of this 'mixed or rhetorical kind', as opposed to the 'pure, or scientific, or strictly symbolic'.[3] Thus, regarding them as variables which cannot all simultaneously be maximized, it is noted that even the lesser goal of optimization for all functions is extremely unlikely:

> Only occasionally will a symbolisation be available which, without loss of its symbolic *accuracy*, is also *suitable* (to the author's attitude to his public), *appropriate* (to his referent), *judicious*

1 See the introduction to Volume 3, *Principles of Literary Criticism,* for a fuller account of this aspect of the lectures.

2 'On Talking', 63.

3 'On Talking', 64.

> (likely to produce the desired effects) and *personal* (indicative of the stability or instability of his references).

Consequently, in most utterance some functions are sacrificed: for example, in the case of the verbal signs 'goodbye' and 'good morning' the symbolic function has lapsed since all that is required on such occasions is the utterance's suitability to the speaker's attitude to the listener. Orders or commands, on the other hand, must be accurate in their reference and likely to produce the desired effects, but may neglect *suitability* and *appropriateness*. Threats can dispense entirely with reference and be governed only by the purpose intended.

This preamble introduces a new account of the dual language hypothesis which is notable not so much for the terminology, which remains in the form presented in 'The Sense of Beauty', but for the relation between this distinction and the rest of the language theory:

> These instances of the dropping of one or more of the language functions lead us naturally to the most remarkable and most discussed case of such variation, the distinction, namely, between the prose and the poetic uses of language. In these terms the distinction is not happily symbolized, poetry being best defined for the most general and most important purposes by the relation to the states of mind produced by the 'poem' in suitable readers and without relation to the precise verbal means. Instead therefore of an antithesis of prose and poetry we may substitute that of symbolic and evocative uses of language. In strict symbolic language the emotional effects of the words whether direct or indirect are irrelevant to their employment. In evocative language on the other hand all the means by which attitudes, moods, desires, feelings, emotions can be verbally incited in an audience are concerned.[1]

The admission that their earlier treatments had been little better

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1 'On Talking', 64. It may be noted in passing that this passage is one of those revised to introduce the term 'emotive' in *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923): 'Instead therefore of an antithesis of prose and poetry we may substitute that of symbolic and emotive uses of language.'

than commonplace and their terms inadequate is noteworthy, but most importantly a new analysis of language has been offered. What had been proposed as a simple division of function, evocative and scientific, is now replaced with a combinatorial theory based on the relevance of the various language functions in any particular utterance. Richards and Ogden present utterances as objects in which the five language functions appear in combinations where the relevance of one or more of them may lapse. Some of these combinations are highly salient, and deserve separate consideration. Science, for example, is a highly salient case in which only the strictly symbolic is relevant, and other functions, if they occur, may and should be neglected. Most of the other combinations, where only two or three of the functions are present, are not markedly distinct from one another, but a case which is as distinct as that of science, Richards and Ogden claim, is that where all the non-symbolic functions are present but there is no *relevant* reference, and this they term the evocative use of language. That there is some reference is of course implied by item three in the list, attitude towards the referent, but in cases where the reference is not relevant to the communication this is to be taken merely as a substrate.

Richards and Ogden go on to refer to these two salient combinations of functions as separate *uses*,[1] but then, a page later, in an unfortunate slip, refer to them as separate *functions*,[2] an error that is perpetuated in the text of *The Meaning of Meaning*. It should be understood, however, and certainly in the context of *The Meaning of Meaning*'s anti-hypostatic sermonizing, that the nomination of a language 'function' is only an artefact of analysis. Nevertheless, one regrettable consequence of this inconsistency in terminology is that the combinatorial version of the thesis is to some degree obscured. The reference to the 'two functions of speech'[3] overlaps with and seems to strengthen the earlier and simpler dual language hypothesis of the 'Symbolism' article,

1 'On Talking', 64.
2 'On Talking', 65.
3 'On Talking', 65.

traces of which remain in the book,[1] where 'use' and 'function' are employed interchangeably.[2] This is particularly regrettable since the new version of the thesis, while not a departure from the earlier view but rather a filling out of the definitions, is a vastly more sophisticated, flexible, and suggestive position.

An obvious question to raise at this point is what prompted this development. I have already suggested that the piece seems to originate from Richards, and we will now turn to evidence in the final paragraphs of 'On Talking' that indicate a particular source of the pressure towards a refinement and a recasting of the 'two languages' hypothesis. Namely, in providing a psychological account of evocation Richards and Ogden employ terms which Richards had only recently begun to use in his lectures at Cambridge:

> The means by which words may evoke feelings and attitudes are many and offer an alluring field of study to the literary psychologist. As sounds and again as movements of articulation, as well as through many subtle networks of association, the contexts of their occurrences in the past, they can play very directly upon the organised impulses of the affective-volitional systems.[3]

Note, particularly, that the account has close resemblances with the earlier description in the 'Symbolism' article, with its references to the effects of words as sounds and of the effects of associations, but that these have been subordinated to a new governing account, that of the organisation of impulses. I have shown in my discussion of the genesis of *Principles of Literary Criticism* that Richards' interest in aesthetic theories of harmonies and equilibria of impulses originates from the work conducted in the summer of 1920 on the article 'The Sense of Beauty'.[4] We can now see that what was by early 1921 a nearly fully-grown theory of aesthetic effect was making its presence felt in the theory of language use.

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1 E.g. *The Meaning of Meaning*, 238.
2 'Symbolism', 39.
3 'On Talking', 64.
4 See Introduction to Volume 3.

However, as has been noted earlier, there is almost no mention of the two languages hypothesis in the Michaelmas 1920 and Lent 1921 lectures, and we must ask why. The answer is, I believe, that the need for a further development in the language theory was not evident to Richards until his distinction between 'balance' and 'equilibrium' had been given in detail with an account of the qualities of both in the lectures of January 1921. In the Michaelmas 1920 lectures, which begin by offering suggestions for improving the intersubjectivity of criticism, and make a plea for an explanatory pluralism in discussions of value in the arts, Richards finally concentrates on two of the strongest candidates for value, firstly 'revelation', the imparting of some truth about the universe and our place in it, and 'balance', the communication of a stable arrangement or equilibrium of impulses.

In his discussion of 'balance' Richards was proposing that poetry, loosely construed, was capable of organizing the impulses in a remarkable way. On the face of it integrating such a view with the 'Symbolism' version of the dual language hypothesis would present no special problems. The balance is simply another something to be communicated by evocation. This is unsatisfactory, not because the phrasing misses its aim, but rather that when hit with a projectile so large the target is obscured. The theory is insufficiently analytic to count as a descriptive advance on common sense. More significantly still, it is sterile of further hypothesis.

Furthermore, while Richards had noted the plausibility of 'Revelation' doctrines he had been uneasy with them on account of their mystery. It was not after all clear how poetry could bypass the difficulties facing normal science, and he had concluded that revelation doctrines were 'merely other words' for an explanation in terms of an equilibrium of impulses,[1] and that in the words of Schiller, an earlier theorist whose work proposed a version of a balance theory, the communication of valid knowledge was not a prerequisite for psychological benefit from art:

1 'Final Lecture', p. 4, Notebook 4, RCM.

> The experience of Beauty, he [Schiller] continues (Letter 21), gives us no particular sort of knowledge and has no direct utility, but renders it possible for a man 'to make out of himself what he will, and restores to him the freedom to be what he ought to be'.[1]

Nevertheless the intuition of 'revelation' was genuine, and constituted an important explanandum. To suggest that it could be regarded as arising from the equilibrium of impulses was helpful, but the need for some account as to why readers often mistook an evocation for a referential use was required, and this put still greater burden on the equilibrium theory itself, and on the theory of the linguistic means used to evoke it.

The five function theory outlined in 'On Talking' is in itself analytically simple, but relative to that which had gone before it is very much more resourceful. Merely subdividing the category of 'emotion' as it appears in the 'Symbolism' paper goes some way towards explaining how an equilibrium of impulses might manifest itself to a subject reading a poem. That is, it would be a constellation consisting of the recognition of the attitude of the speaker to the reader, to the referent, and so on. And bearing in mind the presence of reference in a subordinate role we can begin to see potential for hypotheses accounting for the strong but mysterious intuition of revelation. For example, utterances employing emotive techniques in conjunction with scientific reference – a frequent combination – may be mimicked by combinations where the reference is employed for the sake of its attitudinal consequences. My point here is not to develop such accounts, much less defend them (better explanatory accounts offer themselves today within contemporary linguistics[2]), but rather to explain why the new version would have seemed supe-

1 'The Sense of Beauty', 91. See also *Foundations of Aesthetics*, 84.

2 See my 'The Character and Future of Rich Poetic Effects', in Shoichiro Sakurai, ed., *The View from Kyoto: Essays on Twentieth-Century Poetry* (Rinsen Books: Kyoto, 1998), 89–108, and the summary of this paper in John Constable and Hideaki Aoyama, 'Word Length Frequency and Distribution in English: Part II. An Empirical and Mathematical Examination of the Character and Consequences of Isometric Lineation.' *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 14/4 (Dec. 1999), 507–535.

rior to Richards at this time. Its combinatorial approach permitted accounts of the subdivisions.

For example, Richards also wished to distinguish a 'balance' or equilibrium of impulses, on the one hand, and a harmony of impulses on the other, a thesis introduced in 'The Sense of Beauty' in the summer of 1920. The distinction as it appears in the lectures of January 1921 aimed to account for two kinds of merit detectable in poems. Harmony was typified by Scott's 'Coronach', and equilibrium by his 'Proud Maisie'.[1] In the first we find only emotional consistency, perhaps leading to action, whereas in equilibrium

> there is no tendency to action, and any concert-goer must have realized the impropriety of the view that action is the proper outcome of aesthetic appreciation. When impulses are 'harmonized' on the other hand they work together, and such disciplined co-ordination in action is much to be desired in other places. When works of art produce such action, or conditions which lead to action they have either not completely fulfilled their function or would in the view of equilibrium here being considered be called not 'beautiful' but 'stimulative'.[2]

Here again the improved emotive theory would have been more adequate. The plain division of the early account left an unanalysed 'emotional' category which would have to contain both the equilibria that Richards thought characterised the best art, and the harmonies which occurred in valuable and valueless forms. With the combinatorial version of the theory Richards could propose, if he cared to, any admixture of the three emotional functions together with reference to explain any particular suasive utterance. The importance of this should be immediately evident. The earliest version of the dual language hypothesis had offered no purchase on the issue of the relative

1 *The Lady of the Lake*, Canto III, xvi, in J. Logie Robertson, ed., *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (Oxford U.P.: London, 1916), 234. 'Proud Maisie' appears in *Heart of Midlothian*, and is collected in *Poetical Works*, 774–5.

2 'The Sense of Beauty', 89.

values of evocative utterances. This was not an omission; it just didn't fall within the remit of the project at that stage. This issue was now a major preoccupation of Richards' criticism lectures, and a sufficiently detailed account of evocative uses of language was needed. For the most part it was only necessary to account for the gross distinction between the 'Equilibrium' of impulses and all other states, but the example of Scott's 'Coronach' showed that there were emotively driven utterances not productive of equilibria which were yet relatively valuable. The new combinatorial version not only had room for such utterances, and by virtue of its handling of references could adequately distinguish them from those producing equilibria, but it also exposed these utterances to a standard moral criticism.

With such evident virtues it is all the more surprising that Richards did not immediately exploit the full potential of the combinatorial theory. In *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and in the popular work derived from it, *Science and Poetry*, Richards recurs for strategic reasons to a presentation much closer to the simple binary of the original dual language hypothesis, and it is this version that is by far the better known of the 'emotive' meaning theories.

The Meaning of Meaning *and I. A. Richards' subsequent books*

Before turning to what I regard as the extension of this theory into Richards' subsequent writing it will be as well to deal with a very prominent remark asserting discontinuity, that put forward by C. L. Stevenson in his very widely read *Ethics and Language*,[1] and in an article, 'Richards on the Theory of Value', published in *I. A. Richards: Essays in His Honor*.[2] This view has been widely accepted, notably by J. P. Russo in his standard

1 Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (Yale U.P.: New Haven, 1944), 9.

2 Stevenson, Charles L., 'Richards on the Theory of Value', in Brower, Reuben, Helen Vendler, and John Hollander, eds, *I. A. Richards: Essays in His Honor* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1973), 119–34.

account of Richards' thought.[1] In the first of his remarks Stevenson merely claims that a passage from *The Meaning of Meaning*, quoted as an epigraph to his book, 'suggests a quite different theory of value' than that of *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and in the later article he writes that Richards' name is 'associated with two quite distinct theories of value',[2] that in *Principles* and that in *The Meaning of Meaning*. This is on the face of it a very peculiar suggestion; Richards nowhere suggests the existence of such a new theory, and the preface to the second edition (1926) of *The Meaning of Meaning* observes that:

> *Principles of Literary Criticism* endeavours to provide for the emotive function of language the same critical foundation as is here attempted for the symbolic.

Furthermore, when Richards read Stevenson's *Ethics and Language* he underlined the words 'quite different theory of value' and wrote a question mark in the margin to express his surprise.[3] This is of course not conclusive. Richards might be mistaken about his own efforts, but I will show below that this is not the case and that the error is in Stevenson's grasp of the text of *Principles*.

Stevenson's case, which is very much simpler than his presentation might suggest, is for an incompatibility between the emotive theory of *The Meaning of Meaning* and the definition of value in terms of the satisfaction of appetencies given in *Principles of Literary Criticism*. Stevenson takes the following quotation from *The Meaning of Meaning* as his text:

> When we use the sentence, 'This is good', we merely refer to *this*, and the addition of 'is good' makes no difference whatever

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1 J. P. Russo, *I. A. Richards: His Life and Work* (Johns Hopkins UP: Baltimore, 1989), 189. See also W. H. N. Hotopf, *Language, Thought and Comprehension: A Case Study of the Writings of I. A. Richards* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1965), 191, who queries Stevenson's remark, but does not rebut it in detail, and Manuel Bilksy, 'I. A. Richards' Theory of Value', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 14/4 (June 1954), 536–45, who accepts Stevenson's suggestion.

2 'Richards on the Theory of Value', 119.

3 Richards' copy is held in the Richards Collection, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

> to our reference. When ... we say, 'This is red', the addition of 'is red' to 'this' does symbolize an extension of our reference. ... But 'is good' has no comparable *symbolic* function; it serves only as an emotive sign expressing our attitude to *this*, and perhaps evoking a similar attitude in other persons, or inciting them to actions of one kind or another.[1]

Of this Stevenson claims that 'It is good' is a sentence which while it expresses an attitude, does not describe the properties of the object which led to the attitude. This may be compared with statements such as 'It is red', which not only express a belief that 'it is red' but also describe the property which led to this belief. Thus, Stevenson concludes that Ogden and Richards were offering a distinction between 'This is good', on the one hand and 'This meets with my approval' on the other, since in the latter the attitude of approval is described. While parts of Stevenson's account seem here dubious, particularly the latter claim with regard to the descriptive content of the sentence 'This meets with my approval', we may grant the generalization that the emotive utterance as discussed by Ogden and Richards seems to be empty of descriptive content. The real problems with Stevenson's argument occur in its second movement, that is in his handling of the following definition of value from *Principles of Literary Criticism*:

> We can now extend our definition. Anything is valuable which will satisfy an appetency without involving the frustration of some equal appetency.[2]

Of this Stevenson writes:

> I trust that 'valuable' is only one of the several terms that Richards wants to define in this way – that with only minor qualifications he would say the same thing of 'desirable', for instance, or of 'good'. So to preserve terminological uniformity, in com-

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1 'Richards on the Theory of Value', 120. Quoted from *The Meaning of Meaning*, 125.

2 'Richards on the Theory of Value', 125. Quoted from *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 48.

> paring this later view with his earlier one, I shall temporarily take 'good' as the term defined, recasting [it] in this form:
>
> > 'X is good' has the same meaning as 'X will satisfy an appetency without involving the frustration of some equal or more important appetency'.

This move then permits Stevenson to conclude that Richards has shifted from a position where 'It is good' is empty of descriptive content, to one where it is 'attitude-designating':

> Or to put it otherwise, he is no longer taking judgements of the form *X is good* to be expressing attitudes, but is simply taking them to be expressing *beliefs about* attitudes.[1]

The flaw here is obvious, but partially concealed by the specious scrupulosity of discussing the extension of the term 'valuable' to include 'good' and other related terms. What Stevenson does not address is whether his translation is in itself a permissible move, and it is in fact illegitimate, since Richards' remark in *Principles* need not be understood as a description of the content of any particular judgement of value, for example the statement 'It is good', but rather as a description of a psychological state of affairs that usually underlies the utterance of such statements. When Stevenson later outlines a solution for the problem detected he remarks that Richards should have handled the 'inquiry into what value-judgements mean' quite separately from the 'inquiry into how people make up their minds as to whether or not something is valuable', using emotive theory for the first and psychological views for the second.[2] However, this is exactly what Richards does, and it is very difficult to see how Stevenson could have failed to notice the fact; the chapter from which he takes Richards' definition is entitled 'A Psychological Theory of Value'.

The discontinuity between *The Meaning of Meaning* and

1 'Richards on the Theory of Value', 126.

2 'Richards on the Theory of Value', 130, 132.

Principles of Literary Criticism is of another kind than that remarked upon by Stevenson, and a much more delicate and ultimately perhaps a more damaging one. Although published in the same series as *The Meaning of Meaning*, the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method, Richards seems to have aimed *Principles* at a more general readership. In his preface he remarks that he is aware that he is writing not for the specialist only, and that the book omits various reservations and qualifications which he might otherwise have included.[1] These are not identified, but the theory of emotive meaning may be suspected. When writing *Principles of Literary Criticism* in 1923 and 1924 Richards did not take up the five function combinatorial version of the theory in all its details and apply it in conjunction with his equilibrium theory, but instead he summarized over that theory with a description in terms of a dual language thesis that is in many respects a recurrence to the earlier thesis of 'Symbolism'. It should be emphasized that Richards did not turn his back on the five function theory, rather that he simplified it in ways which were potentially misleading, and did mislead many readers, but which are also even if correctly grasped relatively uninformative.

Consider for example the account of 'The Two Uses of Language', the title of Chapter 34:

> A statement may be used for the sake of the *reference*, true or false, which it causes. This is the *scientific* use of language. But it may also be used for the sake of the effects in emotion and attitude produced by the reference it occasions. This is the *emotive* use of language. The distinction once clearly grasped is simple. We may either use words for the sake of the references they promote, or we may use them for the sake of the attitudes and emotions which ensue. Many arrangements of words evoke attitudes without any reference being required *en route*. They operate like musical phrases. But usually references are involved *as conditions* for, or *stages in*, the ensuing development of attitudes, yet it is still the attitudes not the references which are important. It

1 *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 3.

> matters not at all in such cases whether the references are true or false. Their sole function is to bring about and support the attitudes which are the further response. The questioning, verificatory way of handling them is irrelevant, and in a competent reader it is not allowed to interfere.[1]

This is clearly derived from the later version of the dual language hypothesis, as the emphasis on the usual presence of reference in evocative language testifies, but the flexibility of application arising from the combinatorial version and its subdivision of the emotive category has been lost, and this is consonant with a narrowing of focus in *Principles* itself. Whereas *The Meaning of Meaning* had shown interest in the entire range of emotive utterances, from simple exclamations, through common or garden suasive utterances and on up to literature of the highest status, *Principles* is limited to this latter category, and even there is sharply focused. As has been noted, in the lectures Richards had been deeply concerned with the distinction between harmonies of impulses and equilibria, but this distinction, one of the most suggestive of the course, is minimized in *Principles* (see pp. 220–1). It seems plausible to assume that Richards had reasoned that since his aesthetic theory had been simplified then his linguistic theory could also be simplified without risk. As a consequence the subtilized version of emotive meaning theory is absent.

In the case of 'revelation' doctrines, which do appear in *Principles*, the result is merely that without the five function emotive theory the explanation seems vaguer and more confused, more of an assertion, than it need have done:

> Many attitudes, which arise without dependence upon any reference, merely by the interplay and resolution of impulses otherwise awakened, can be momentarily encouraged by suitable beliefs held as scientific beliefs are held. So far as this encouragement is concerned, the truth or falsity of these beliefs does not matter, the immediate effect is the same in either case. When the

1 *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 267–8.

> attitude is important, the temptation to base it upon some reference which is treated as established scientific truths are treated is very great, and the poet thus easily comes to invite the destruction of his work; Wordsworth puts forward his Pantheism, and other people doctrines of Inspiration, Idealism, and Revelation.[1]

This is very close to the variety of account I noted above as being possible within the combinatorial version of emotive meaning, where it was suggested that an attitudinally suggestive reference together with various other emotive uses might be mistaken for a scientific reference appearing in combination with emotive functions, this latter being itself quite a commonly occurring language use. But the simpler form of the emotive theory in *Principles* cannot readily describe such mixed forms as a scientific reference combined with an emotive use, and consequently Richards merely resorts to description – 'attitudes [...] without any dependence upon any reference [...] can be momentarily encouraged by suitable beliefs held as scientific beliefs are held' – without being able to show why this event is plausible. My point here is that in concentrating on the literary in *Principles* Richards may have made his account less distracting, but he has also made it less precise. The emotive use as it appears in literary texts of the highest status cannot be as easily explained within his theory if the more everyday emotive uses are excluded from the account.

This has touched both *Principles* and *The Meaning of Meaning*, since many readers have approached the latter work through the relatively uncomplicated pages of the former. Even very capable readers have been misled in this way. Take for example the following remark on *Principles* by Max Black:

> [...] the weaknesses of Richards' earlier critical theories are connected with overemphasis upon the need for a *science* of criticism. When this was coupled with an excessively nominalistic conception of the nature of scientific discourse, the consequences were disastrous. On the one hand, referential discourse

1 *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 274–5.

> was so narrowly defined that on a strict interpretation almost no utterance would qualify for that description; while the remaining field of nonreferential discourse was left so spacious that essential distinctions could hardly be made with any effect. That a theoretical structure having such grave flaws could have proved so acceptable is only to be explained by Richards' engaging refusal to be bound by strict adherence to his enunciated general principles.[1]

As a description of the faults in the simplified, two term, treatment of emotive theory this is entirely justifiable. On a strict interpretation hardly anything outside mathematics would count as science. But as we have seen, the five part combinatorial theory in *The Meaning of Meaning* is much more tolerant in this regard. Similarly, Black's second point, that the lack of subdivisions within the field of emotive discourse makes it only weakly informative, is unfortunately true of *Principles*. But the potential for the necessary refinements was present in the *Meaning of Meaning*, and since Black here allows his reference to stray beyond *Principles* to the emotive theory in general it is surprising that he does not note this point. Clearly, *Principles* distracted him.

We are left then with the conclusion that in *Principles*, and in the still further simplified version published in the very widely read *Science and Poetry*, Richards failed to do justice both to the psychological aesthetic he was working out in his lectures, and to the doctrine of emotivism that he had constructed with Ogden. Richards must have been to some extent aware of this, since in *Practical Criticism* he returns to the theory of emotive meaning, and this time attempts to correct his earlier mistake. Indeed, the preface to *The Meaning of Meaning* of 1930 (Third edition) refers to *Practical Criticism* as an 'educational application' of Chapter 10, 'Symbol Situations'. It is in Chapter 10, of course, that the five part combinatorial version of emotivism is explained at length.

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1 Max Black, *Language and Philosophy: Studies in Method* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1949), 211–12.

traces of these descriptions are everywhere evident in *Principles*, and to a lesser degree in *Practical Criticism*, but to realize them is now the task of the reader, and in this task *The Meaning of Meaning* is an indispensable text.

REVIEWS AND OTHER DISCUSSIONS OF *THE MEANING OF MEANING*

Reviews

Anonymous, 'The Meaning of Meaning', *New Statesman*, 21/527 (28 Apr. 1923), 176, 178.

Coomaraswamy, A. K., 'Reviews of Books', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 53/3 (Sep. 1933), 298–303. Reprinted in Volume 10.

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Kantor, J. R., 'Book Reviews' *Journal of Philosophy*, 21/8 (10 Apr. 1924), 212–19. Reprinted in Volume 10.

Ramsey, F. P., 'New Books', *Mind* 33/129 (Jan. 1924), 108–9. Reprinted in Volume 10.

Russell, Bertrand, 'The Mastery of Words', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 33/ (21 Apr. 1923), 87–8.

Russell, Bertrand, 'The Meaning of Meaning', *Dial,* 81/2 (Aug. 1926), 114–21. Reprinted in Volume 10.

Sapir, Edward, 'An Approach to Symbolism', *Freeman*, 7 (22 Aug. 1924), 572–3. Reprinted in Volume 10.

Stocks, J. L., 'Philosophy', *London Mercury*, 16/95 (Sep. 1927), 552–4.

Other Discussions

Black, Max, *Language and Philosophy: Studies in Method* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1949), 189–200, 203–20. Reprints 'Some Objections to Ogden and Richards' Theory of Interpretation', *Journal of Philosophy*, 39 (1942), 281–90; and 'Some Questions about Emotive Meaning',

According to later reprints issued by Routledge, such as that of 1960 and 1972, there were further editions in 1947 (the ninth) and 1949 (the tenth), all subsequent issues being 'impressions' of this last supposed edition. However, since this listing also falsely claims that the last revised edition was the fourth (1936), its authority may be doubted. A copy of the printing of 1947 has been impossible to trace, but the College Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, does contain a copy of the printing of 1949. Careful comparison of the 1946, 1949, and subsequent issues suggests that all printings later than 1946 are in part or in whole reprints from this eighth edition.

The reasoning behind this assumption is as follows. While certain errors or defects in printing are common to all the photolithographic editions, some are found only in the 1949 issue, which is very poorly produced. For example, on p. 31, line 3, the closing quotation marks after the word *arrangement* are missing in the 1949 issue, but present in that of 1946 and also in those of 1960 and 1972. Similarly, some damaged sections of type in the 1949 printing, e.g., p. 35, lines 6–7, are not found in that of 1946 or reproduced in that of 1972. Further, on p. 43 line 5, the comma after 'to it' and the bottom of the 't' is missing in the 1949 printing, but found in 1946 and also in the later printings, for example in 1972. Similarly, damage found in 1946, 1960, and in 1972 (on p. 73 the first 'o' in 'proviso' is underinked) is not found in 1949. It would appear then that the 1949 printing was not used as a source for later printings.

Confirmation that the 1946 edition was used as copy for subsequent reprintings can be found in the presence of damage in the this edition (generally, a fairly well printed volume) which is not present in the 1949 printing, but is reproduced in the impression of 1972 (interestingly it is not found in the impression of 1960, a point on which I will comment again later). Namely, the last footnote on p. 51 of the 1946 edition is defective (the lower halves of letters are missing as a result of a plate error, perhaps ink distribution, in the lithographic process). The damage is reproduced exactly in the 1972 impression (and in the

CONTENTS

All life comes back to the question of our speech – the medium through which we communicate. xxiv

Henry James.

Error is never so difficult to be destroyed as when it has its root in Language.

Bentham.

We have to make use of language, which is made up necessarily of preconceived ideas. Such ideas unconsciously held are the most dangerous of all.

Jules-Henri Poincaré

By the grammatical structure of a group of languages everything runs smoothly for one kind of philosophical system, whereas the way is as it were barred for certain other possibilities.

Nietzsche

An Englishman, a Frenchman, a German, and an Italian cannot by any means bring themselves to think quite alike, at least on subjects that involve any depth of sentiment: they have not the verbal means.

J. S. Mackenzie

In Primitive Thought the name and object named are associated in such wise that the one is regarded as a part of the other. The imperfect separation of words from things characterizes Greek speculation in general.

Herbert Spencer

The tendency has always been strong to believe that whatever receives a name must be an entity or being, having an independent existence of its own: and if no real entity answering to the name could be found, men did not for that reason suppose that none existed, but imagined that it was something peculiarly abstruse and mysterious, too high to be an object of sense.

J. S. Mill

Nothing is more usual than for philosophers to encroach on the province of grammarians, and to engage in disputes of words, while they imagine they are handling controversies of the deepest importance and concern.

Hume

Men content themselves with the same words as other people use, as if the very sound necessarily carried the same meaning.

Locke

A verbal discussion may be important or unimportant, but it is at least desirable to know that it is verbal.

Sir G. Cornewall Lewis.

Scientific controversies constantly resolve themselves into differences about the meaning of words.

Sir Arthur Schuster

CHAPTER ONE
THOUGHTS, WORDS AND THINGS

1 Let us get nearer to the fire, so that we can see what we are saying.
The Bubis of Fernando Po

The influence of Language upon Thought has attracted the attention of the wise and foolish alike, since Lao Tse came long ago to the conclusion:

He who knows does not speak, he who speaks does not know.

Sometimes, in fact, the wise have in this field proved themselves the most foolish. Was it not the great Bentley, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, Archdeacon of Bristol, and holder of two other livings besides, who declared: 'We are sure, from the names of persons and places mentioned in Scripture before the Deluge, not to insist upon other arguments, that Hebrew was the primitive language of mankind'? On the opposite page are collected other remarks on the subject of language and its Meaning, and whether wise or foolish, they at least raise questions to which, sooner or later, an answer is desirable. In recent years, indeed, the existence and importance of this problem of Meaning have been generally admitted, but by some sad chance those who have attempted a solution have too often been forced to relinquish their ambition – whether through old age, like Leibnitz, or penury, like C. S. Peirce, or both. Even the methods by which it is to be attacked have remained in doubt. Each
2 science has tended to delegate the unpleasant task to another. With the errors and omissions of metaphysicians we shall be much concerned in the sequel, and philologists must bear their share of the guilt. Yet it is a philologist who, of recent years, has, perhaps, realized most clearly the necessity of a broader treatment.

'Throughout the whole history of the human race', wrote the late Dr Postgate,

> there have been no questions which have caused more heart-searchings, tumults, and devastation than questions of the correspondence of words to facts. The mere mention of such words as 'religion', 'patriotism', and 'property' is sufficient to demonstrate this truth. Now, it is the investigation of the nature of the correspondence between word and fact, to use these terms in the widest sense, which is the proper and the highest problem of the science of meaning. That every living word is rooted in facts of our mental consciousness and history it would be impossible to gainsay; but it is a very different matter to determine what these facts may be. The primitive conception is undoubtedly that the name is indicative, or descriptive, of the thing. From which it would follow at once that from the presence of the name you could argue to the existence of the thing. This is the simple conception of the savage.

In thus stressing the need for a clear analysis of the relation between words and facts as the essential of a theory of Meaning, Dr Postgate himself was fully aware that at some point the philosophical and psychological aspects of that theory cannot be avoided. When he wrote (1896), the hope was not unreasonable that the science of Semantics would do something to bridge the gulf. But, although M. Bréal's researches drew attention to a number of fascinating phenomena in the history of language, and awakened a fresh interest in the educational possibilities of etymology, the net result was disappointing. That such disappointment was inevitable may be seen, if we consider the attitude to language implied by such a passage as the following. 3
The use of words as though their meaning were fixed, the constant resort to loose metaphor, the hypostatization of leading terms, all indicate an unsuitable attitude in which to approach the question.

> Substantives are signs attached to things: they contain exactly that amount of truth which can be contained by a name, an amount which is of necessity small in proportion to the reality of the object. That which is most adequate to its object is the abstract noun, since it represents a simple operation of the mind. When I use the two words *compressibility*, *immortality*, all that is

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

References are to the pagination of the original edition, given in the margin of the current volume.

INDEX OF NAMES