magical formula, or in a proverbial saying. But they also may occur during a famine, forming an integral part of some of those essential transactions wherein human beings co-operate in order to help one another. The whole character of such words is different when they are uttered in earnest, or as a joke, or in a narrative of the distant past. The words need not be idle in any of the cases. We have shown the function of narrative. Even a joke about a serious subject may do its part in begetting a traditional attitude—an attitude which in the long run might prove of considerable significance in tribal life, and this is the most important result of an utterance from the point of view of a scientific theory of meaning.

The pragmatic relevance of words is greatest when these words are uttered actually within the situation to which they belong and uttered so that they achieve an immediate, practical effect. For it is in such situations that words acquire their meaning.

Since it is the function, the active and effective influence of a word within a given context which constitutes its meaning, let us examine such pragmatic utterances.

Div. V. MEANING AS FUNCTION OF WORDS

All our considerations have led us to the conclusion that words in their primary and essential sense *do*, *act*, *produce* and *achieve*. To arrive therefore at an understanding of meaning, we have to study the dynamic rather than the purely intellectual function of words. Language is primarily an instrument of action and not a means of telling a tale, of entertaining or instructing from a purely intellectual point of view. Let us see how the use of words is shaped by action and how reciprocally these words in use influence human behaviour. For if we are correct it is the pragmatic use of speech within the context of action which has shaped its structure, determined its vocabulary and led to various problematic characteristics such as multiplicity of meaning, metaphorical uses, redundances and reticences.

Since it is best to investigate every phenomenon in its most pronounced form, let us enquire where the dynamism of words is most pronounced. A little consideration will show that there are two peaks of this pragmatic power of words: one of them is to be found in certain sacred uses, that is in magical formulae, sacramental utterances, exorcisms, curses and blessings and most prayers. All sacred words have a creative effect, usually indirect, by setting in motion some supernatural power, or, when the sacramental formula becomes quasi-legal, in summoning social sanctions.

The second climax of speech dynamism is to be found obviously in the direct pragmatic effect of words. An order given in battle, an instruction issued by the master of a sailing ship, a cry for help, are as powerful in modifying the course of events as any other bodily act.

Let us first consider the power of words in their creative supernatural effect. Obviously we have to accept here the intent and the mental attitude of those who use such words. If we want to understand the verbal usage of the Melanesian we must, for a moment. stop doubting or criticising his belief in magic, exactly as, when we want to understand the nature of Christian prayer and its moral force or of Christian sacramental miracles, we must abandon the attitude of a confirmed rationalist or sceptic. Meaning is the effect of words on human minds and bodies and, through these, on the environmental reality as created or conceived in a given culture. Therefore imaginary and mental effects are as important in the realm of the supernatural as the legal effects of a formula are in a contractual phrase. There is no strict line of demarcation between the signature on a cheque, a civil contract of marriage, the sacramental vow on a similar occasion, the change of substance in the Holy Eucharist, and the repulsion of bush-pigs by means of a fictitious excrement. One of the contextual conditions for the sacred or legal power of words is the existence, within a certain culture, of beliefs, of moral attitudes and of legal sanctions.

What interests us in this type of speech is that, in all communities, certain words are accepted as potentially creative of acts. You utter a vow or you forge a signature and you may find yourself bound for life to a monastery, a woman or a prison. You utter another word and you make millions happy, as when the Holy Father blesses the faithful. Human beings will bank everything, risk their lives and substance, undertake a war or embark on a perilous expedition, because a few words have been uttered. The words may be the silly speech of a modern 'leader' or prime minister; or a sacramental formula, an indiscreet remark wounding 'national honour', or an ultimatum. But in each case words are equally powerful and fateful causes of action.

Our magical formulae in Trobriand gardening produce fertility, ward off pests, guarantee the successful sprouting and growth of plants, make harvest plentiful and prevent yams from being eaten up too rapidly. All this would be simply regarded as imaginary. What, however, is very real about the words of magic is that they consolidate the morale of the gardeners, give authority to the garden magician, and thus are the main elements in integrating the whole

process. This system of ideas is well known to us already and we shall be returning to analyse certain aspects of it when discussing magical formulae. Again, a word summons the help of spirits to the gardens and words are necessary to transform the material substance of food into something which is fit and appropriate for spirits to eat.

There are also ceremonial utterances with a definitely legal import. For instance, when in Text 92 the man instructs his wife to approach her brother and offer him a valuable, saying to her: "Take a valuable and untie your brother's yam-house", this utterance has a definitely contractual power. After the acts have been performed and the words have been uttered the other person has no choice but to act according to the traditional customary pattern or receive blame. The phraseology of gifts—*kam motu, kam urigubu, um pokala*—has this power, and combine ritual with legal efficacy. As we can see from Text 94, certain words must be uttered before certain fields in Oburaku may be cultivated. Equally important and equally binding are purely personal agreements: the case, for instance, of one man asking (*nigada*) another for a garden plot and the other consenting, granting (*tagwala*). In the Trobriands such an agreement, though not always absolutely quarrel-proof, is on the whole regarded as binding. The same type of pragmatic effectiveness of words is found among ourselves, where one nation boasts of *ein Mann—ein Wort*, another of 'my word is my bond', and another of the validity of its *parole d'honneur*, and all keep their promises with the same degree of sacredness as the Kiriwinians.

But in every community, among the Trobrianders quite as definitely as among ourselves, there exists a belief that a word uttered in certain circumstances has a creative, binding force; that with an inevitable cogency, an utterance produces its specific effect, whether it conveys a permanent blessing, or inflicts irreparable damage, or saddles with a lifelong obligation.

It was necessary to emphasise this point in the context of our argument, because it brings us face to face with this interesting theoretical problem: whence comes this conviction as to the creative force and pragmatic power of words?

It is this creative function of words in magical or in sacramental speech, their binding force in legal utterance, which, in my opinion, constitutes their real meaning. To record one of these sacred formulae without discussing its contextual belief, what effects it is supposed to produce and why; to quote a legal saying without showing its binding force; in short, to detach the linguistic side of sacred and

binding speech from its sociological and cultural context is to sterilise both linguistics and sociology. And perhaps nothing demonstrates more clearly that words are acts and that they function as acts than the study of sacred utterances.

Of course not all religious speech, even in magical formulae, shows the character of absolute pragmatic cogency; its degree varies considerably. Glancing beyond the Trobriands we see that sacred writings, our own Holy Scriptures, for instance, use words with a function entirely different from that of prayer, sacramental speech, blessing or exorcism. Though pertaining to religion, such texts are not pragmatic in so far as they do not create sacred realities. But take certain utterances in the Holy Mass, those which within the appropriate context transform bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Our Saviour. Take again the verbal act of repentance in the Roman Catholic confession of sins, or again the sacramental act of Absolution administered verbally by the Father Confessor: here words produce an actual change in a universe which, though mystical and imaginary to us agnostics, is none the less real to the believer.

In the same way, the religious discourses of the Trobriander and his mythology; such dogmatic statements as we have in Texts 78 and 79; the parts of his magical formulae concerned with mythological similies or the enumeration of ancestral names do not exemplify pragmatic efficiency at its maximum. For this we must go to the key words of magical formulae, which we shall be discussing more fully in the comments on these (cf. Part VII.). But in Formula 2, to take only one example, such words as 'go', 'begone'; the words announcing the advent of fertility, ordering fertility to be, as in 'the belly of my garden rises, the belly of my garden swells'; exorcistic words such as 'I sweep', 'I cleanse'—these definitely represent words of magical action. The legal phraseology already mentioned, in which the utterance definitely constitutes a contract, shows the maximum of pragmatic efficiency.

Let us now turn from religious and sacred speech to utterances embedded in the ordinary life as well as in the practical concerns of man. In the free flow of speech as it passes between people who converse and co-operate, words may be bandied in joke or in gossip, formulae of politeness may be exchanged, information may be given. And then, perhaps, news of some event arrives which demands decision and starts a new line of activities. Speech immediately changes its character. Words are uttered in serious deliberation, a decision is arrived at in discourse and translated into instructions and orders. And these words are not less related with

the context of action than is full pragmatic speech. They become immediately translated into activities, they co-ordinate man to man and man to his environment. The orders, the verbal instructions, the descriptions given in such circumstances show the full pragmatic effectiveness of speech in action.

If we wanted to present our point more dramatically, not to say sensationally, and emphasise the opposition between words when they are "idle" and words when they are a matter of life and death, we could take as a prototype any situation where words mean life or death to a human being. Whether it be a Trobriand canoe rapidly sailing at night over deep and stormy waves and one of the crew suddenly swept into the sea or a solitary climber in the Alps overtaken by fog and threatened by death from hunger and exposure —the reaction to the situation is the same: the signal for help, an S O S sent out mechanically, verbally or, as in an Alpine accident, by whistling. Such a signal is a compelling order, a definite force which puts all those whom it reaches under a moral obligation to render help. The *meaning* of this first signal, which we will for the moment assume to be a verbal utterance, lies in this compelling force. It has to be heard, it has to be understood and it has to convey this moral compelling force. Whence this force comes we shall see presently.

Once on the spot the rescuers have then to communicate, and here communication usually takes place by verbal means. Instructions are exchanged, some apparatus may be used; technical language, information, specification of position play their part. But the words must be heard, understood and followed. The incorrect use of a word or the incorrect interpretation of a word may be fatal.

What is the function of words here? Each of them modifies and directs human behaviour in a situation of urgency. One person acts on the organism of another and, indirectly through this organism, on the surrounding environment. The word is as powerful an act as any manual grip.

An imperative, a noun, an adjective, even an adverb, screamed from a distance in the dark might reorientate completely the movements of the rescuers or those in danger. Now what is the meaning of the word here? It is above all a stimulus to action. It is a stimulus to a very specific and determined action, a stimulus correlated to the situation, i.e. to the environment, the people and the objects they handle, and based on past experience. The efficacy of rescue action may depend on the question whether both parties are well acquainted with the technicalities of the situation and with the technical words. Hence whenever a body of people are in a situation

of potential danger, they have to be instructed in the orders which will be given them, in the use of apparatus, and familiarised with their environment. Whether we consider the simple boat-drill on board a passenger steamer, the regular drill of a fire brigade, the preparedness of a life-boat crew and the corresponding preparedness of an ordinary crew of sailors, the professional drill of soldiers— they all show how essential is verbal knowledge in correlation with control over the necessary bodily movements, and knowledge of the environment and apparatus. For in all such drill the teaching of words, the explanations as to what the orders mean, exact descriptions of apparatus, environment and purpose, make linguistic and practical training inseparable. They are two aspects of the activity which we call "drill".

From what I have just said it may have become clear to the reader that the dramatic and sensational situation from which we started is not really as unique, exceptional and outside the run of ordinary events as might appear at first. Apart from drowning or being caught in deep fog on a crag in the Dolomites, we often find ourselves in a more or less difficult or dangerous situation. Here again we need not think of the recent war or political disturbances, or an encounter with kidnappers or gangsters. Few of us have passed our lives without such minor accidents as the beginning of a fire, or bodily hurts which might have serious consequences if not rapidly treated. Here very often a clear utterance, an order, or the information of what has happened may save the situation. The more correct the reference to the environmental reality, the simpler and better the co-ordination between human action, apparatus and environment, the more easily is the danger avoided and the accident prevented. The nursery is a specially usual scene of such accidents, and here also the difficulty of clear linguistic statements from children is often acutely felt by those in charge. Moreover, in all the highly complicated and at the same time essentially dangerous forms of modern transport and industrial activities, there is a strict need of symbolic communication, at times mechanical, at times verbal. In this the obedience to signs, written instructions and orders by the machine driver, leader or working man, is indispensable. In the treatment of illness words again play this fundamental pragmatic rôle. Clear verbal statement on the part of the patient makes diagnosis infinitely easier. The instructions of the practitioner are of considerable importance. Their correct comprehension and execution may be a matter of life and death.

This pragmatic speech, words which do infinitely more than impart information or tell a story, words which are meant directly

to effect action and influence it, occurs to a far wider extent in our own civilisation than might at first appear. And it seems to me that, even in the most abstract and theoretical aspects of human thought and verbal usage, the real understanding of words is always ultimately derived from active experience of those aspects of reality to which the words belong. The chemist or the physicist understands the meaning of his most abstract concepts ultimately on the basis of his acquaintance with chemical and physical processes in the laboratory. Even the pure mathematician, dealing with that most useless and arrogant branch of his learning, the theory of numbers, has probably had some experience of counting his pennies and shillings or his boots and buns. In short, there is no science whose conceptual, hence verbal, outfit is not ultimately derived from the practical handling of matter. I am laying considerable stress on this because, in one of my previous writings, I opposed civilised and scientific to primitive speech, and argued as if the theoretical uses of words in modern philosophic and scientific writing were completely detached from their pragmatic sources.[1] This was an error, and a serious error at that. Between the savage use of words and the most abstract and theoretical one there is only a difference of degree. Ultimately all the meaning of all words is derived from bodily experience.

I have purposely considered the pragmatic use of words on general evidence taken mainly from our own culture. If we turn to primitive speech we can easily exemplify its pragmatic function: words have to be uttered with impeccable correctness and understood in an absolutely adequate manner in those situations where speech is an indispensable adjunct to action. In my earlier article on this subject I used the example of a fishing expedition. A small fleet of canoes moving in concerted action is constantly directed and its movements co-ordinated by verbal utterance. Success or failure depends on correct speech. Not only must the observation of the scouts be correct, but they must give the correct cry. The meaning of the cry announcing a shoal of fish consists in the complete resetting of all the movements of the fleet. As a result of that verbal symbol the canoes rearrange themselves so that the nets can be cast properly and the shoal of fish driven into them, and constant verbal instructions pass from one canoe to another in the process. Each utterance is bound up with the technicalities of the pursuit and is based on the lifelong experience of all the members of a fishing team who from childhood have been trained into the craft.

Perhaps the first time that I was struck by this mysterious power of

[1] Appendix to *The Meaning of Meaning* (Ogden & Richards), pp. 466, 474.

speech, which, as by an invisible force, moves human beings, moves even bulky objects, and forms the connecting medium for co-ordinating action, was when in complete darkness I approached one of the lagoon villages in the Trobriands with a large fleet of canoes. There was no real danger in a wrong movement, except that, with the rapidly outgoing tide, a canoe might get stuck in the mud and have to remain there the whole night. We were being directed by the local natives from the shore and the effectiveness of the instructions given, the smooth and rapid way in which they were carried out led to our fleet getting quickly into the tidal creek through the intricate channels of approach. This had a most impressive effect on me. I knew how easy it was to miss the deep punting channel which forms the only fairway and how unpleasant it may become to be caught in the deep sticky mud of the shallow lagoon.

When during illness a group of people are keeping watch over a sick person and warding off the sorcerers of whom they are afraid, they will also keep communion by words. Each man in such a watch guards an approach to the village. They signal to each other from time to time to make sure that everyone is awake, and when some suspicious signs appear, they give the danger call. Voice is used as an effective mode of concerted action. In olden days at war, scouts and watchers communicated verbally, and passed on signals of safety, of alarm or of warning against possible danger.

In all such cases the direct effect of the word, uttered as an imperative, as an environmental direction or as technical advice, is clear. The meaning of a single utterance, which in such cases is often reduced to one word, can be defined as the change produced by this sound in the behaviour of people. It is the manner in which a sound appropriately uttered is correlated with spatial and temporal elements and with human bodily movements which constitutes its meaning; and this is due to cultural responses produced by drill, or "conditioning" or education. A word is the conditioning stimulus of human action and it becomes, as it were, a "grip" on things outside the reach of the speaker but within that of the hearers.

Is this definition of meaning merely "academic"? Decidedly not: it gives us more than a different philosophic attitude towards speech.[1]

[1] This is not the place to enter into critical disquisitions or to buttress the importance of my point of view by comparing it with that of others. But I should like to say that, as long as we define language as "the expression of thought by means of speech sound" (Henry Sweet, *Introduction to a History of Language*, Ch. I) or a "method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols" (Edward Sapir, *Language*, New York, 1921,

Our definition of meaning forces us to a new, a richer and wider type of observation. In order to show the meaning of words we must not merely give sound of utterance and equivalence of significance. We must above all give the pragmatic context in which they are uttered, the correlation of sound to context, to action and to technical apparatus; and incidentally, in a full linguistic description, it would be necessary also to show the types of cultural drill or conditioning or education by which words acquire meaning.

Turning directly to Trobriand gardening, let us ask what forms of pragmatic speech we meet there. In actual work utterances are not as important in agriculture as in some other forms of economic pursuit, such as fishing, sailing a canoe, collecting and hunting, the building of a house or the construction of craft, because what might be called concerted work, i.e. correlated team-work, is not essential in gardening. By concerted work I mean the performance of tasks which transcend the powers of one man, which have to be done by two or more people and in which verbal instructions passing between the workers are an indispensable ingredient of success. It is only in the erection of the large yam supports, in building an arbour and sometimes in the making of the fence that two or more people must co-operate and verbally communicate. Unfortunately, I have not noted down any actual texts of such speech, being unaware

p. 7); or, if we assume with one of the latest and most acute thinkers that "the essence of language is human activity—activity on the part of one individual to make himself understood by another, and activity on the part of that other to understand what was in the mind of the first" (O. Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar*, 1924, p. 17), we should never be led to the study of context, nor to the study of associated actions which is essential if our analysis is right. As a matter of fact a careful perusal of Jespersen's *Philosophy of Grammar* or of Sapir's *Language* or of some older, and still influential, books, such as Wundt's *Sprache*, shows that the whole treatment of language up till recently has neglected the effective use of context of situation. Grammatical discussions on such fundamental problems as inner word-forms, the relation between word and sentence, and the whole problem of the empirical approach to spoken language in its relation to grammar and dictionary have greatly suffered in consequence. A point of view closely akin to the one here adopted has been set forth in an excellent monograph by Grace A. De Laguna, *Speech; its Function and Development*, 1927, who follows the lines indicated by John Dewey in *Experience and Nature* (1925) and G. H. Mead in numerous articles, and expounds a general theory of language from a moderate behaviouristic point of view. Professor De Laguna critically analyses the old point of view and gives a number of additional examples of unsatisfactory definitions of meaning which will be of interest to readers of the present pages. Markey's *Symbolic Process*, London, 1928, is a book written on excellent lines but unfortunately not very clear. Compare also my earlier articles on 'Classificatory Particles' in the *Bulletin of Oriental Studies*, Vol. II, 1921; and 'The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages' in *The Meaning of Meaning*, by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, 1923.

of the great importance of this form of utterance when in the field. I have witnessed such work dozens of times and remember quite well that it is accompanied by such simple imperatives as 'lift it higher', 'grip it from underneath', 'move it hither', 'push it there', and so on. In co-operative work, when a number of people are engaged on the same or similar tasks, they will talk and co-ordinate their movements, stimulate each other by their presence and by a sort of competition. Here the conversation would often be about the progress of the work, and sentences or phrases of the type referred to above in Division IV might well be used.

It is much more in the planning, in the discussions which precede, accompany and follow the *kayaku*, in the exhortations of the magician and in the disputes which sometimes arise, especially during cutting, that the practical value of words comes to the fore.

The most important aspects of native agricultural speech, however, would be found in education. Here again I have unfortunately not noted down the actual wording of gardening instructions though I heard them being given time after time. But many of my 'definition texts' and items of ethnographic information, as given in native, are of the type of speech used by an experienced gardener to a youthful helpmate (cf. above, Div. V of this Part). As a matter of fact I was astonished by the fluency with which information texts on the meaning of words, on technical details, on the why, when and wherefore of magical ceremonies, were given to me. One day, after I had been discussing these matters with Gomila of Omarakana, I met this informant in the garden with his little daughter, Yona'i, and to my astonishment he repeated to her almost word for word some of the explanatory texts which he had given me the same morning.

At cutting, *takaywa*, small boys, each with a minute toy axe, amuse themselves by skirmishing about the outskirts of the main body of workers. The father or some elder boy will show them how to do the work and instruct them in word and activity alike. Incidentally it is interesting that the boys use stone implements whereas their elders have completely discarded them. This 'survival' is due in the first place, I should say, to the fact that the European trader has not yet had imagination enough to supply the natives with toy steel implements, so that the boys are reduced to the use of the old material. But there is also a distinct tendency, both in child and adult, to revert to the ancient material in games. For the native, though he appreciates the greater efficiency of steel, has not yet lost his craftsman's delight in the polished stone, which appears to him infinitely more valuable and beautiful. It is on such occasions that the boys

would be taught such words as *ta'i*, 'to cut', *ta-si*, 'to lop off', *ko'umwari*, 'to break the branches'. Again at the clearing of the ground, *koumwala*, boys and girls play at constructing miniature squares or assist their elders and are given instruction by means of the vocabulary found below (Div. VI, § 6). Later on little children, armed with miniature digging-sticks, are shown how to break the ground at planting and place a yam in the right position. The growth of the roots underground is demonstrated with diagrams, and by exposition on an actual example. And here as elsewhere the intense interest in the right word and in verbal distinctions is very prominent.

Another feature, which any reader of this book may already have noticed in looking at the photographs, is the interest which the children take in magic. Often when the magician goes into the field accompanied by a bevy of young boys, or boys and girls, although sometimes the girls are not quite so welcome, this interest leads them to questions and they are answered very much in the manner in which I was answered (cf. Texts 36–78). Thus as a Trobriander grows into a *tokwaybagula*, 'perfect gardener', or the average approximation to that ideal, his technical ability develops side by side with his linguistic fluency, his ideas and beliefs about magic with his knowledge of the terms of magic, his ambitions and interests with the language of boasting, of praise and of criticism. And his intense appreciation of the value and beauty of the word seems to be present from the very beginning. Indeed it appears to me that it is in the study of juvenile and even infantile uses of words that we shall find the right approach to a real understanding of the nature of these. And this leads us to one more theoretical digression on infantile uses of words.

Div. VI. THE SOURCES OF MEANING IN THE SPEECH OF INFANTS

In order to gain a clear insight into the nature of meaning we conjured up a number of dramatic incidents in which words became a matter of dead earnest because their correct utterance in the appropriate manner and with a successful grip on the hearers was the condition of safety, comfort or even existence.

Now we could ask whether there are any ordinary situations of speech within human life corresponding to this pattern and occurring normally and usually. I think there are. The use of inarticulate and later of articulate sounds by children correspond exactly to what we have been analysing in order to establish our concept of meaning. Children react to all bodily discomforts—hunger, dampness, painful position, and so on—with a variety of physical gestures, of which

vocal expression is one. These sound reactions, the crying and gurgling of infants, are a natural equipment of the young organism. They are characteristic, in that different sounds emerge corresponding to the type of emotion experienced by the child, that is, on the whole to his need or desire. Again such expressions possess a direct significance for the adults surrounding the child, especially for the mother. These sounds usually set in motion some sort of activity on the part of his surrounding adults which cuts short the emotional upset by satisfying the need or removing the cause of pain and discomfort, or, by the cuddling and comforting of the child, gives it general satisfaction and sends it to sleep. Thus a small child acts on its surroundings by the emission of sound which is the expression of its bodily needs and is, at the same time, significant to the surrounding adults. The meaning of this utterance consists in the fact that it defines the child's wants and sets going a series of actions in his social environment, and finally brings about such environmental conditions as satisfy his need.

As inarticulate sounds pass into simple articulations, these at first refer to certain significant people, or else are vague indications of surrounding objects, above all of food, water, and favoured toys or animals. These words, as were the previous pre-articulate sounds, are especially important to the child when it needs help in order to relieve some sense of discomfort or satisfy some want. As soon as words form, however, they are also used for the expression of pleasure or excitement, or they are repeated in an aimless fashion, in the same way in which a child aimlessly exercises its limbs. But even at this early stage there is a clear distinction between the manner in which the child utters these words significantly and with a purpose, and the manner in which he repeats them just for the pleasure of the sound; and it is when the words are used in earnest that they mobilise the child's surroundings. Then the uttered word becomes a significant reaction adjusted to the situation, expressive of the inner state and intelligible to the human *milieu*.

So we see that the capacity for significant utterance is the very essence of welfare, of power, nay of action, at the earliest stages of human life. The physiologically determined responses of adults, especially of the parents, to the child's clamouring; the natural expressiveness of inarticulate sounds and of semi-articulate words, combine to make the child's speech as effective as if it were real magic. The child summons the mother, the nurse or the father, and this person appears (cf. Part VI, Div. V.). When it asks for food it is almost as if it uttered a magical incantation, a *Tischlein deck dich!*

Early words in childhood are a means of expression and, more

important, an effective mode of action. The child lives in a world of effective words. While to the adult words may in certain circumstances become real forces—in so far as their utterance is equivalent to direct bodily action—to the child they normally are so. They give him an essential hold on reality and provide him with an effective means of moving, attracting or repulsing external objects, and of producing changes in all that is relevant in his surroundings. This is the experience in which the child is immersed, and we cannot be astonished that such experience leaves an indelible mark on human mentality. In all the child's experience words, when seriously uttered, *mean* in so far as they act. The intellectual function of words probably develops later, and develops as a by-product of the pragmatic function.

As the child grows up this conviction as to the power of words does not weaken. It essentially grows. In the first place, as we can see in any type of technical or moral education, instruction in the meaning of words and in manual or intellectual skill run parallel. In primitive conditions where every member of the community has to master most if not all manual and technical crafts and become a man of the world as regards social intercourse and the arts of war and peace, the parallelism between verbal and manual technique is even closer. I have tried to show this as between verbal and manual technique in agriculture. In the handling of any implement or utensil the word which signifies it becomes as familiar as the object used. In social intercourse, after the child has learned the names and kinship appellations of the members of his own household and family, he has gradually to learn how to address other members of the village community and later of the tribe, and he learns his duties and obligations to them in association with this often very complex sociological terminology. His knowledge of magic and of religion is usually imparted through more or less esoteric teaching, in which the name of the supernatural beings, a spell, a story, are strongly bound up with the ritual *mise-en-scène*. His early magical attitude towards words, his infantile feeling that a name conjures up a person, that a noun sufficiently often repeated can materialise the thing—all this receives system and body in the magical dogmatism which he learns.

Thus the source of the magical attitude towards words is, if the theory developed here is correct, to be found in the use of words by infants and children—a view to which we shall return in Part VI. Thence also start those profoundly pragmatic ways of learning how to use the word by learning how to use its counterpart in the reality of behaviour.

The above is a summary of a view of language which I have already developed elsewhere,[1] or rather of that part of the position there adopted from which I have moved but little. I should also like to add, firstly, that I have here summarised the unspecialised non-quantitative observations which I made at first hand on my own three children and, secondly, that I believe this problem will have to be studied in infantile speech if we are to arrive at the most important foundations for a science of semantics: I mean the problem of how far and through what mechanisms speech becomes to the child an active and effective force which leads him inevitably to the belief that words have a mystical hold on reality.

Div. VII. GAPS, GLUTS AND VAGARIES OF A NATIVE TERMINOLOGY

Throughout our analysis the intimate relation between language and culture has become more and more prominent; and we can now appreciate how unfounded and dangerous is the assumption that language simply mirrors reality. Even more dangerous is the fallacy of "one word—one idea—one piece of reality". And let me remind you that this fallacy is by no means the laid ghost of past anthropological errors. The whole discussion about the sociological relevance of kinship terminologies, for instance, is based on the view that "Nothing gives more insight into the intimate nature of social organisation than the mode of naming relatives".[2]

We could show how untenable is this view in an abstract way, by making the generalisation that terminological distinctions cannot, by the very nature of human speech, correspond, either adequately or exactly, to real distinctions. Therefore a purely formal terminological approach to any aspect of human culture must be futile.

But let us rather examine concrete instances. Among the

[1] Appendix to *The Meaning of Meaning* (Ogden and Richards), 1923.

[2] *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 5th ed., 1929, p. 66. In fact one of the most distinguished social anthropologists maintains that "the way in which . . . peoples of the world used their terms of relationship was conditioned and determined by the social relations which these terms denoted", and thus "demonstrate the close relation between the terminology of relationship and social institutions"; and "the details which distinguish different forms of the classificatory system from one another have been directly determined by the social institutions of those who use the systems" (W. H. R. Rivers, *Kinship and Social Organisation*, London, 1914, pp. 18 and 19). It is impossible in this brief compass to show the errors in this point of view, but to "correlate" kinship terms with kinship facts is based on the mistaken assumption that when there is one term for two people these two people must somehow be lumped together or telescoped or united in the mind of the native, or even that they must be one and the same person.