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Coral Gardens and Their Magic

Volume II

THE LANGUAGE OF  
MAGIC AND GARDENING

*by*

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INTRODUCTION BY JACK BERRY

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TO MY WIFE

## AN ETHNOGRAPHIC THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND SOME PRACTICAL COROLLARIES

THIS linguistic supplement owes its existence to practical considerations. Naturally I wanted to present all the linguistic material concerning Trobriand agriculture which I had collected: without it the account of gardening would remain incomplete. And yet I found that a full and clear presentation of this material became technical and unwieldy; it broke up the flow of the narrative. In order to remedy this I at first attempted to relegate my linguistic comments to footnotes. When these became too bulky I collected them into digressions. But it soon became clear that when these digressions were joined up they made a consecutive story and in that form became less tedious as well as more illuminating. Thus I found myself with no choice but to separate linguistics from description and to place it in this supplement.

The genesis of this supplement would in itself, perhaps, account for the form in which I am presenting my material. Instead of the usual glossary with texts and comments, I have woven the linguistic data—terms, phrases and texts—into a continuous narrative which, necessarily, has grown to a length almost comparable with that of the descriptive part of the book. This method of presentation, however, appears to me so much better, clearer and more readable than any other—indeed so inevitable—that I have resisted any temptation to be more concise.

In fact, in the course of these introductory theoretical reflections we shall be more and more cogently driven to the conclusion that this is the only correct presentation of any linguistic material. The method undoubtedly does entail certain hardships for the reader and writer alike. On the one hand the double account, descriptive and linguistic, submits the reader to a greater mental effort, as he will have to collate the statements from one part to the other. This method of presentation has also given the writer a considerable amount of extra work. But the double entry into the subject has compensating advantages: it allows of a much fuller control both of linguistic data and ethnographic description than could otherwise be given. I think that the material thus illuminated from two sides will stand out, so to speak, stereoscopically.

But the chief virtue of this method is that it closely follows the technique of field-work. The ethnographer has to see and to hear; he has personally to witness the rites, ceremonies and activities, and

he has to collect opinions on them. The active, personal and visual side are the main concern of the descriptive chapters. The conversations, comments and grammatical apparatus are given here.

#### Div. I. LANGUAGE AS TOOL, DOCUMENT AND CULTURAL REALITY

In the following study of Trobriand agricultural linguistics there are several points of view which have to be kept before the reader. First of all there is the special methodological interest in the frank and full presentation of all available linguistic evidence. For language is the ethnographer's most important tool. It is through his knowledge of the vernacular and through his practical handling of native grammar and vocabulary that the ethnographer can ask clear questions and receive relevant answers. These answers he then has to interpret and comment upon before he can give them in an intelligible form to his English reader; and it is a long way from the mouth of the native informant to the mind of the English reader.

But the value of linguistic data is only in proportion to the ethnographer's own knowledge and his critical accuracy in drawing inferences; therefore he is obliged—as is every scientific worker who must present his credentials and describe the way in which he has reached his conclusions—to disclose his most important apparatus, that is, his linguistic outfit.

Thus in the study of technical terminologies and characteristic phrases—some volunteered, others obtained in answer to questions, others again repeatedly heard as traditional sayings—the reader will gain an insight into the linguistic equipment of my field-work. From the amount of terms collected he will be able to assess the range of subjects within which I could converse with the natives; from the type and structure of the statements, the difficulties of giving an adequate translation. As regards the terminologies, the reader will see that my aim is not to introduce a false precision into native ideas, but rather to ascertain precisely what a certain word means to the native and how it is used by him. About three-fourths of the statements contained in this supplement are what might be called definition texts; that is, texts in which a native either tries to define a word or uses it in a characteristic manner. As the reader will see from Divisions IV and V, such definition texts are not merely answers elicited from informants, but are an intrinsic part of the native educational process. On difficult subjects I have given several texts referring to the same word.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Texts 2, 3 and 4 (Div. I, §§21-23) show how a happy wording of a native statement will sometimes give a clear insight into linguistic usage. Again, such

As regards the completeness of my information, the reader will find no difficulty in judging where, for instance, one of my lists exhausts all the native forms used in that context and where it is incomplete.<sup>1</sup> In general the more fundamental the concept the more exhaustive is my evidence and the better is my practical acquaintance with the word and its various uses. It is hardly necessary to state that the texts and sayings here reproduced represent about a hundredth or so of the times I heard any given word used. Expressions referring to botanical characteristics, for instance, or to types of soil, I mainly learned to use and to understand in my cross-country walks. But quite often I was not able to make very full linguistic notes at the time. When an exceptionally good phrase occurred I would make a brief note of it, mental or written, and then lead my informant to repeat it, not necessarily as I had first heard it, but so as to reproduce the information it contained and its linguistic character.

Methodologically it is always interesting to know whether a statement is an answer to a direct question or whether it is a volunteered statement or a traditional saying. It is obvious that all the magical formulae, the gardening cries and ditties, are traditional, set texts (cf. Part VI). In most cases I have marked when a statement was volunteered to me. The majority of the definition texts or such little descriptive accounts as the texts concerning garden work,<sup>2</sup> the briefer texts on magic<sup>3</sup> and the fuller texts on magic,<sup>4</sup> were obtained in the course of ethnographic discussions. The greater part of my linguistic material was, however, obtained from my more competent informants, and with these I did not work very much by the question and answer texts as 38, 39 and 40 (Div. VIII, §§ 2 and 3) exhibit grammatical peculiarities and are juxtaposed mainly to exemplify certain difficulties with which I was faced and to account for certain apparent inconsistencies in my presentation of the linguistic material. Some really important texts—such as 33 (Div. VI, § 45) on the function of the boundary pole, 21 (Div. IV, § 13) on the aim of the *kaytubutabu* magic, 9 (Div. II, § 12), 15 (Div. III, § 24) and 19 (Div. IV, § 9) on some aspects of the growth of plants—are methodologically interesting because they show the manner in which the ethnographer has to manipulate the raw material of his linguistic evidence in order to draw his theoretical conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> At times, as in the lists of varieties of *yam* and *taytu* (Div. III, §§ 9 and 10), I expressly state the limitations of, and lacunae in, my materials. Again, in enumerating kinds of cultivable soil (Div. I, §§ 11 and 12) I may have missed one or two words, though the list is the result of long and repeated enquiry; but the fundamental divisions as to the type of habitat (Div. I, §§ 3 to 9) are certainly complete.

<sup>2</sup> Texts 29–35 (Div. VI, §§ 14, 22, 42, 44, 45, 47 and 48).

<sup>3</sup> Texts 38–76 (Div. VIII, §§ 2, 3, 9, 20, 22; Div. IX, §§ 6, 8–10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20–22, 24, 28, 32, 35–37; Div. X, §§ 3–6, 8, 12 and 13).

<sup>4</sup> Texts 77–84 (Div. X, § 15; Div. XI, §§ 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13 and 14).

method. They had a clear idea of what I wanted from them and, in the course of conversations, were always keen to give me sound informative data. The line therefore between a spontaneously volunteered and an elicited statement is not always easy to draw.

The reader's methodological interest in the following analysis and the ethnographer's practical interest in language as an instrument of research both refer to language as a means to an end. But language is more than this. Although it is not correct to say that language expresses native ideas or that it embodies their concepts and categories, yet it stands in a definite relation to the life of the people who speak it and to their mental habits and attitudes. From this point of view it provides us with the most important documents illustrating types of human behaviour other than linguistic.

Take for instance two of the magical formulae which will be discussed in Part VII. When the magician in Formula 1 declares: "This is our oblation, old men, I have put it, hey"; or when in Formula 4 he says: "I cut thee—my garden site; I make thy belly blossom with my charmed axe, my garden site. It lifts and stands there, it lifts and stands here," he is definitely commenting on his actions. Now a traditional standardised commentary of this sort, which emphasises and enumerates what to the natives are probably the most relevant aspects of the ritual, has a great ethnographic value. The formulae containing exorcisms and enumerations of the most dreaded blights and pests; the formulae where fertility is anticipated in hyperbolic phrases; those where stability is insisted upon by metaphors drawn from sailing and anchoring, are one and all documents of the native attitude towards gardening. There is not a single formula in which we do not find some important piece of ethnographic information which throws additional light on the ceremony, on its function and on its meaning to the natives.

What is true of formulae is, in a way, even more true of those direct sayings and commentaries which refer to certain aspects of gardening. The series of texts, 38 to 84, which comment on the purpose, function or technique of certain practical or magical operations are, as the reader will agree, most valuable illustrations of native cultural acts. The texts—mentioned above from the point of view of methodological interest—which define the function of the boundary pole or the aim of coconut magic, or Text 37 which deals with the relation between magic and work, also illuminate the native outlook. We shall enter into this more fully in discussing the educational character of a number of texts here presented. It will be seen then that most of the sayings naturally throw light on



technical, economic and ceremonial behaviour, since in native life they actually function as commentaries to these activities—and as directions and precepts given to the young (cf. Divs. IV and V).

The list of terminologies, the pairs of opposites or mutually exclusive concepts, the linguistic relationship between the term *pwaypwaya* as 'fertile soil', that is, 'soil *par excellence*', and as 'land in general' (cf. Div. I, §§ 3 and 1) obviously correspond to realities of native culture and behaviour. So do also the botanical terms which show the special place occupied in the native mind by cultivable crops as against all other growth. The use of possessive pronouns and the special place given to food, more especially to vegetable crops, in this class of words, is important as indicating standards of value.<sup>1</sup>

Every item given in the following analysis could be considered both as a document and as a tool in ethnographic field-work. It is not necessary here to stress this two-fold orientation of interest any further. But it is necessary to insist that the function of language as a clue to mental process is by no means easy to assess. The relation between idea and word, between verbal statement and mental attitude, is a question which we shall have to consider in some detail. Words—and even more so, perhaps, phrases, sentences and texts—taken in conjunction with other types of behaviour, constitute extremely significant documents and commentaries. But there is nothing more dangerous than to imagine that language is a process running parallel and exactly corresponding to mental process, and that the function of language is to reflect or to duplicate the mental reality of man in a secondary flow of verbal equivalents.

The fact is that the main function of language is not to express thought, not to duplicate mental processes, but rather to play an active pragmatic part in human behaviour. Thus in its primary function it is one of the chief cultural forces and an adjunct to bodily activities. Indeed, it is an indispensable ingredient of all concerted human action. Here I want only briefly to indicate what I mean, as it will be necessary to enlarge on it further on (cf. Div. IV).

Let us survey rapidly the uses of language in Trobriand gardening, starting, for instance, with a group of people who after the council (*kayaku*) repair to the gardens in order to "count the plots in the bush" (*kalawa o la odila*; cf. Ch. II, Sec. 3). These people have to determine the area to be put under cultivation, to fix the boundaries, in short to make everything ready for the cutting of the boundary belt. The older men, with experience and a good knowledge of the ground, identify the fields (*kwabila*), place the boundaries by means

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part V, Div. XII, §§ 3 to 7.

of landmarks and trace the lines of stone (*karige'i*). All this is done by means of a combination of speech and bodily activity. Movements, words and gestures are used to solve this practical problem. The natives search for objects such as trees, coral outcrops, or stone heaps, discuss their proper names, point out, disagree. Finally they come to a decision which is the outcome of verbal discourse, of going about, pointing and using implements; for, as they come to an agreement, they leave signs, blaze marks on trees, and cut down saplings. Such words as *kwabila*, *karige'i*, *tuwaga*, *baleko* or *tukulumwala*, words which define various species of trees and types of coral outcrop, the proper names of a field, path or garden plot, are used as significant actions side by side with bodily movements. Speech is here equivalent to gesture and to motion. It does not function as an expression of thought or communication of ideas but as a part of concerted activity. If we jotted down the words spoken there and treated them as a *text* divorced from its context of action and situation, the words would obviously remain meaningless and futile. In order to reconstruct the meaning of sounds it is necessary to describe the bodily behaviour of the men, to know the purpose of their concerted action, as well as their sociology. Speech here is primarily used for the achievement of a practical result. Secondly it also fulfils an educational purpose in that the older and better-informed men hand on the results of their past experiences to the younger ones.

If we followed the group of people who usually go to cut the boundary belt we would see that they also use words in order to co-ordinate their activities, to communicate at a distance, to call out for assistance—in short to regulate their concerted work. The same would be the case also when, a few days later, after the great inaugural ceremony, they repair in a body to the garden and carry out communally the early clearing (*takaywa*). Then the bush is alive with men who call out encouragements to one another, issue commands, and co-ordinate their movements by verbal action at a distance. Their work would be impossible without speech. Speech again is meaningless without the context of the activity in which it is enveloped. The handling of poles in the erection of the *kamkokola*, the building of a fence, or the construction of a garden arbour, would each supply us with examples of speech interwoven with manual behaviour.

I want to make it quite clear that I am not speaking here only of the Trobriand language, still less only of native speech in agriculture. I am trying to indicate the character of human speech in general and the necessary methodological approach to it. Every one of us could convince himself from his own experience that language in

our own culture often returns to its pronouncedly pragmatic character. Whether engaged in a technical manipulation, pursuing some sporting activity, or conducting a scientific experiment in a laboratory or assisting each other by word and deed in a simple manual task—words which cross from one actor to another do not serve primarily to communicate thought: they connect work and correlate manual and bodily movements. Words are part of action and they are equivalents to actions.

Thus put, the point which I am labouring here may appear a commonplace, something so obvious that it may well be neglected. But the neglect of the obvious has often been fatal to the development of scientific thought. The false conception of language as a means of transfusing ideas from the head of the speaker to that of the listener has, in my opinion, largely vitiated the philological approach to language. The view here set forth is not merely academic: it compels us, as we shall see, to correlate the study of language with that of other activities, to interpret the meaning of each utterance within its actual context; and this means a new departure in the handling of linguistic evidence. It will also force us to define meaning in terms of experience and situation. All this will be fully substantiated in the following sections of this book.

The pragmatic character of language has so far been illustrated only in its pronouncedly active uses; but this does not mean that other types of language, such as narratives, magical formulae, public harangues or legal utterances, lack completely the pragmatic dimension. Language is never a mere shadow of some other cultural reality. Take for instance a magical formula. The ethnographer may find in it a number of illustrative phrases. He may discover that certain words point to certain traditional attitudes and that others contain a running commentary on the manual rite. The critical reader may be interested in keeping a close methodological watch over the ethnographer's manipulation of the formula. But to the native himself a magical formula is not a piece of folk-lore, still less—obviously—an ethnographic document. It is a verbal act by which a specific force is let loose—an act which in native belief exercises the most powerful influence on the course of nature and on human behaviour. Magic, moreover, as we have seen, acts as a powerful social organising force. The utterance of a magical formula, which forms the very core of every magical rite, is to the native a very momentous and sacred act. The ethnographer who would treat it as a mere piece of verbiage containing interesting linguistic illustrations would really miss the most important point about magic—I mean its cultural and sociological significance.

The same applies to invocations of spirits, to legal utterances, such as are made at the *kayaku*; to the harangues of the magician, which are among the most powerful organising elements in native gardening; to the cries and traditional banter exchanged at a communal competitive enterprise; to expressions which accompany exchanges of gifts or of obligations. All these verbal acts are as important types of human behaviour as any manual rite.

I have tried to make clear that language is a cultural aspect in its own right, a type of human behaviour which fulfils not some sort of subsidiary function but which plays a part of its own, unique and irreplaceable. The descriptions of linguistic reality must therefore be given as fully, as minutely and accurately as those of any other fact. They have to be given, of course, as they really happen, that is, in the vernacular. With this there enters an additional difficulty into the treatment of linguistic data. In language, as has been already insisted in the Introduction, the purely conventional element is very much more pronounced than in any other human activity. Human beings have to eat, to sleep, to sharpen the point of a stick, to dig the soil and to paddle a canoe, if not on exactly the same pattern, at least in ways which are roughly comparable and have a conspicuous common denominator. But the words which they use to describe the act of sleeping and of eating, of digging or sharpening, are based on a specific convention which must be learned for every culture. The phonetic reproduction of sounds heard in native language does not give the same direct picture to the English reader as does an account in English of what the natives are doing at a ceremony or when they carry out a piece of work in the garden.

To put it even more cogently: if we had a sound-film taken of a Trobriand gardening activity, the visual part of it would be self-explanatory or could be made so by a brief ethnographic commentary. But the accompanying sounds would remain completely incomprehensible and would have to be explained by a long and laborious linguistic analysis. This is the reason why we were able to condense several aspects of gardening, technological, economic, magical and sociological, into the relatively very short account of Volume I. On the other hand one aspect, that of language, is going to demand a disproportionate amount of space and attention.

We shall have in the first place to produce the texts, phrases, terminologies and formulae in native. Then we shall have to face the task of translating them. A word for word rendering is necessary to give a certain direct feeling for the language, which a free translation in no way can replace. But the literal translation is not sufficient because—as you will convince yourself easily by glancing

at any of the ninety or so prose texts and forty-five magical formulae which follow—such a translation simply never makes sense. The wading through the unwieldy jumble of words carries its own reward, but without an additional commentary on the part of the ethnographer, it does not lead to a clear understanding of the text.

As we shall see, commentaries—and extensive commentaries at that—are necessary. But it is easy to become redundant in commentaries and by no means obvious where to draw the line between going too much into detail on the one hand and giving an insufficient and altogether too dry indication to the reader. It will be necessary, therefore, to enter more fully into the details of the task which faces us: how to achieve a full portraiture of a native language.

#### Div. II. THE TRANSLATION OF UNTRANSLATABLE WORDS

It might seem that the simplest task in any linguistic enquiry would be the translation of individual terms. In reality the problem of defining the meaning of a single word and of proceeding correctly in the translating of terms is as difficult as any which will face us. It is, moreover, in methodological order not the first to be tackled. It will be obvious to anyone who has so far followed my argument that isolated words are in fact only linguistic figments, the products of an advanced linguistic analysis. The sentence is at times a self-contained linguistic unit, but not even a sentence can be regarded as a full linguistic datum. To us, the real linguistic fact is the full utterance within its context of situation.

But still, as in all work of analysis, it does not matter very much where we begin. Since in the translation of texts we have to proceed by giving a word for word rendering, let us discuss this first. It will soon enough lead us into the apparently more complicated, but in reality more elementary, question of how to treat native texts and contexts.

Let me start with the apparently paradoxical and yet perfectly plain and absolutely true proposition that the words of one language are never translatable into another. This holds of two civilised languages as well as of a 'native' and a 'civilised' one, though the greater the difference between two cultures the greater the difficulty of finding equivalents.

Turning for a moment to more familiar European languages—anyone who has faced the difficulties of translating a novel or scientific book from Russian or Polish into English, or vice versa, will know that strict verbal equivalents are never to be found. Translation must always be the re-creation of the original into

something profoundly different. On the other hand, it is never a substitution of word for word but invariably the translation of whole contexts.

It would be easy to skim the surface of any language for completely untranslatable terms. Such German words as *Sehnsucht*, or *Sauerkraut*, *Weltschmerz* or *Schlachtfest*, *Blutwurst* or *Grobheit*, *Gemüt* or *Gemeinheit* are not to be equated to any word in English, or, for that matter, in any other European language. Such English words as 'sport', 'gentleman', 'fair-play', 'kindness', 'quaint', 'forlorn'—to mention only a few from a legion—are never translated in a foreign tongue; they are simply reproduced. International currency has been achieved by many Italian words: *bel canto*, *basta*, *maccaroni*, *diva*, *salami*, as well as terms from music and painting. If we were to enquire why these, with certain French words referring to technicalities of love-making such as *liaison*, *maitresse*, *au mieux*, *complaisance*; or to culinary compositions and details of menu; to fashion or to niceties of literary craft, such as *belles-lettres*, *mot juste*, *connaissance* are untranslatable—the answer would be easy. In each culture certain aspects are more openly, minutely or pedantically cultivated: sport in England, good cooking and love-making in France; sentimentality and metaphysical profundities in Germany; music, noodles and painting in Italy.

Words referring to moral or personal values change their meaning deeply even if the form is similar: compare French *honneur*, Spanish *honra*, English 'honour', and German *Ehre*; or 'faith', *foi*, *Glaube* and *fe*; or *patrie*, *Vaterland*, 'home', and *la peninsula*. English changes east of Suez; it becomes a different language in India, Malaya and South Africa. The question whether American is English is very fruitful from the present point of view: you cannot swear in English in the U.S.A. and *vice versa*. You cannot order your food in an 'eat-house' nor 'get outside your drinks' by the same verbal symbols in a 'saloon' as in a 'pub'; while Prohibition has introduced words corresponding to the change of institutions and values surrounding drink. In brief, every language has words which are not translatable, because they fit into its culture and into that only; into the physical setting, the institutions, the material apparatus and the manners and values of a people.

With all this, it might appear that such words, however frequent, are but freaks or peculiarities. Surely, it will be contended, numerals, parts of the body, terms of relationship, conjunctions, adverbs, prepositions, words as ordinary as bread and butter, milk and meat, are simply, plainly, adequately and completely translated between any two languages of the Western cultures. A brief consideration

convincing us that this is not so. Were we to aim merely at achieving some approximate indication of correspondence between two words, sufficient to order a meal, to bargain over the price of an umbrella or ask our way in the street, then even the linguistic instruction supplied on a few pages of our Baedeker, certainly a cheap pocket dictionary or an Ollendorf, will give adequate translations. But if in our scientific analysis we define words as devices used in a number of verbal and situational contexts, then translation must be defined as the supplying of equivalent devices and rules. This makes our point clearer: there is no simple equivalence between two languages ever to be found which could be used right through, replacing the German word by the English, or vice versa.

Let us take the simplest example, the numeral 'one', *un, ein*. They correspond closely in counting. But *un homme, ein Mann* is not 'one man' but 'a man'. 'One man one vote' could not be translated by *un homme un vote*, nor is *ein Mann ein Wort* translatable into 'one man one word'. Nor is *c'est un homme honnête* equivalent to 'this is one honest man'. As soon as we come to derived uses, to subsidiary meanings, to idiomatic handling of words, the equivalence breaks down. Translation as an act of putting 'one'=*un* appears to us at once as a matter of rough, preliminary, makeshift arrangement which has to be supplemented by a long series of additional data.

Or take the parts of the human body: we have at once to face up to the fact that the conventional restrictions, euphemisms, and twists obfuscate the meaning in English to a much larger degree than in French or in German. For instance 'belly' is not equivalent to *Bauch* or *ventre*; 'stomach' reaches almost to the knees, legs are curtailed in their upper reaches. Such words as 'breast', *gorge, sein, Brust, Busen* become untranslatable. And in English again the word 'navel', associated in a daring anatomical metaphor with an orange, shocks many a continental damsel who thinks herself absolutely protected by English prudery on this side of the Channel. 'Eye', 'hand', 'foot', and 'arm', 'mouth' and 'ears' seem so well defined and precise that here a simple = might be enough. But even here some European languages, for instance Slavonic, use the term 'hand' often to embrace the 'arm', as in Polish and Russian, where instead of having 'feet' and 'legs' we have only lower extremities. Moreover, in every European language the derived and metaphorical and idiomatic uses of 'eye', 'hand' and 'foot' are so little co-ordinated that they cannot be equated. 'My two legs' could not be set = *meine zwei Beine*; it would have to be *meine beiden Beine*. We neither eat nor sleep linguistically in the same manner: while the Englishman 'sleeps with', the Frenchman *couche avec*. As to eating, a Frenchman's

*bien manger* becomes in German *gut speisen*, while the Englishman 'dines well'. As regards adverbs and conjunctions, no one brought up in a continental language will ever live down the absence of *déjà*, *schon*, *juž*, *uže*, *già* or *ya*. Such German adverbs or particles as *doch*, *nanu*, *also*, the French *mais non*, *mais oui*—not equivalent to the German *aber nein*, *aber ja*—can neither be equated nor reproduced in English.

We have now whittled down our paradox to the platitude that words from one language are never translatable into another; that is, we cannot equate one word to another. If by translation we mean the supplying of the full range of equivalent devices, metaphorical extensions and idiomatic sayings—such a process is of course possible. But even then it must be remembered that something more than mere juggling with words and expressions is needed. When we pass even from one European country to another we find that cultural arrangements, institutions, interests and systems of values change greatly. Translation in the correct sense must refer therefore not merely to different linguistic uses but often to the different cultural realities behind the words. All the new systems of teaching modern languages—whether it be Toussain-Langenscheidt, Pelman or Berlitz—have in practice fully adopted this contextual theory of language and realised the untranslatability of words. In the case of words which have to be international, e.g. scientific terms, congresses have to deal with their unification; and it can only be achieved because the apparatus of science is uniform, because such arrangements as the metric system have been widely adopted and because the institutional side of scientific training, laboratory organisation and academic life is sufficiently similar.

In diplomatic documents and international treaties, which must not contain any linguistic ambiguity, we are again faced with the difficulty of finding a safe and unequivocal common denominator to untranslatable words. Whether this is mainly due to the fact that diplomatic language is used to conceal thought—according to the definition of one of the most famous diplomats of history—or whether it honestly attempts to serve its purpose, need not be discussed here.

The translatability of words or texts between two languages is not a matter of mere readjustment of verbal symbols. It must always be based on a unification of cultural context. Even when two cultures have much in common, real understanding and the establishment of a community of linguistic implements is always a matter of difficult, laborious and delicate readjustment.

When two cultures differ as deeply as that of the Trobrianders and the English; when the beliefs, scientific views, social organisa-



tion, morality and material outfit are completely different, most of the words in one language cannot be even remotely paralleled in the other.

Let us turn at once to our own special case, that of Trobriand agricultural terminology. The simplest word to be considered is 'garden'. But obviously the English term may suggest anything from a suburban plot to a park, from an allotment to a market-garden, and in none of these senses, nor yet in any of the metaphorical extensions to which this word is liable, could it be translated into Trobriand. So that at once we are faced with a serious 'gap' in the vocabulary of our Melanesian friends. For they really have no word corresponding to our general term 'garden'.

Instead they have a series of words: *bagula*, *buyagu*, *tapopu*, *kaymata*, *kaymugwa*, *baleko*, each of which describes a certain type or kind, aspect or phase of 'garden'. But to 'translate' any of these native terms by equating it to an English word would not merely be wrong, but impossible; or rather it would be impossible to find an English word exactly corresponding to any one of the native ones. Furthermore, to label the native term by even a combination of English words is at least misleading.

What then is the correct procedure? Let me exemplify it on one of the words just mentioned—the native term *buyagu*—by making a methodological reinterpretation of the technique adopted in Division I (§§ 16-26) of Part V. First we had to remind the reader of the general context of situation within which the word *buyagu* could be used: that is, to indicate the social, legal and technical arrangements by which a portion of cultivable soil is ear-marked for next year's gardens and recognised as 'the future gardens'.

Then I give the merely approximate but useful English label 'garden-site', which I have used throughout the descriptive chapters in order to avoid repeating the native term constantly. But this compound term has to be immediately redefined by fuller English circumlocutions, such as 'land under cultivation at a given season', 'the land intended for cultivation', 'all the land within the common enclosure'. These circumlocutions obviously derive their meaning from the reader's knowledge of how land is cultivated in the Trobriands; that is, tracts of land consisting of one or two fields (*kwabila*) are put under cultivation and a common enclosure is made round them, which converts the area into one communal garden. This meaning is illustrated in Text 3, where 'garden-site' and 'the garden as a whole' is defined by its economic as well as by its technical characteristics. In the definition of the term *buyagu* the reader has then to be reminded of the manner in which a garden-site is physically

delimited for the natives, first by the boundary belt and later by the fence (§ 17).

Throughout its analysis we see that the word is progressively defined by reference to the ethnographic description, supplemented by additional information concerning linguistic usage. In paragraph 17 this parallelism of verbal use and real situation shows clearly: "as soon as this (i.e. the bush) is cut *buyagu*, 'garden-site' becomes opposed to *odila*, 'bush', 'all the land outside', also called *yosewo*, 'uncut bush outside the garden-site' ". It is through the opposition of the word *buyagu* to the two words *odila* and *yosewo* and, in the sentence following the one just quoted, to the words *kapopu* and *kaulaka* that the term *buyagu* is more closely defined. The relation of this term to the cognate terms, *bagula* and *baleko* (§ 20), is equally important; as well as the negative fact that one of the terms for division of land, the term *kwabila*, is never used to describe a garden in process of cultivation. Thus the definition of a word consists partly in placing it within its cultural context, partly in illustrating its usage in the context of opposites and of cognate expressions.

Turning to paragraphs 20-25 we see how the words *buyagu*, *bagula*, *baleko* are defined by placing them within a series of terms with mutually exclusive uses. It is clear that in all this the definition is partly based on the long descriptions of the main ethnographic account, but also largely on the contrast between the terms to be defined and their opposites, and also on the comparison between the respective area of each of the three terms.

It is interesting to note that, in his definition, the native informant himself reproduces the context of situation first: "When we clear the bush there remains the uncut scrub, there comes into being the garden-site" (Text 2). Here we have an indication that the term *buyagu* in its most characteristic form can be used at the clearing; that it marks the opposition between the uncut scrub and the land which is being prepared for cultivation. In the second part of this definition text: "When we stand on the boundary belt, on one side (we have) the uncut bush, on the other the garden-site," the native further defines the two terms by putting before us the concrete situation in which we can have one of the opposites on each hand. He then attaches the verbal labels to either side of the picture respectively.

The need of a clear context of situation for certain words is even more obvious in Text 3, where my informant reproduces the sociological as well as the physical context. We have an indication that strangers arriving at a garden would first enquire about the 'garden as a whole' (*buyagu*) and then about the 'individually owned portions'

(*bagula*). In this text we find also the interesting grammatical feature that one word, and one word only, of the three expressions which we have roughly translated by the English 'garden' can be used verbally, and that this word *bagula* in its nominal form corresponds to the dynamic conception 'garden as actually cultivated'. In a full commentary on these texts a number of other grammatical points would have to be considered. For instance, the use of the possessive pronoun 'his' in Text 4 correlates a semi-economic, semi-legal claim to the whole garden site on the part of the magician with the meaning of the term *buyagu*, 'garden as a whole'; while the possessive 'his', referring to the individual owner, has a definite economic meaning and is connected with the synonymous use of the terms *bagula* and *baleko*.

We see then that it is impossible to define a word by mere equation. Translation in the sense of *exact and exhaustive definition of meaning* cannot be done by affixing an English label. Our paradoxical heading 'Translation of Untranslatable Words' is obviously based on a two-fold use of the term 'translate'. If we understand by 'translate' the finding of verbal equivalents in two different languages, this task is impossible, and the Italian adage *traduttore, traditore* holds good. Translation in the sense of *defining a term by ethnographic analysis*, that is, by placing it within its context of culture, by putting it within the set of kindred and cognate expressions, by contrasting it with its opposites, by grammatical analysis and above all by a number of well-chosen examples—such translation is feasible and is the only correct way of defining the linguistic and cultural character of a word.

Thus, while for practical reasons we have to adopt a certain rough and ready English equivalent for each native term—an equivalent which functions as an *aide-mémoire* or rough label, but lays no claims whatever to *translate* the native term—the real translation is contained in the combined ethnographic and linguistic description, which we have exemplified on the one term *buyagu*, but which will be found illustrated in the few hundred words cited in the course of Part V.

Take, for instance, the apparently simple case of a technical implement. What do we achieve in the rendering: *dayma* = 'digging-stick'? A digging-stick is not an implement familiar to an English curate or clerk, even if he happens to be an amateur gardener; he has never seen one, never heard of one, certainly never used one; and even if he knows that peoples exist who break their soil and plant their seed by means of a pointed stick, he still does not understand the term unless he also realises that the use, the type and the institutional

setting of a digging-stick are not the same in every primitive culture. But to the reader the meaning of *dayma* has become real in that he knows something about its material, shape and size; the technical uses and economic associations, even the values and sentiments which the digging-stick derives from its daily employment and from the part it plays in magic and ceremonial. He is able to place it within the gardening scheme of the Trobriands. All he now needs is a general linguistic description of this word, of its various uses outside gardening, of the set of terms to which it belongs, and of its grammatical characteristics. All this the reader will find in Division VI (§ 5).

When we translate *kema* by 'axe' we have to be even more on our guard, because here we are dealing with an object which also exists and functions in our culture and it is very important not to assimilate the uses, the form and the material of the native implement with those of our own. In so far as the axe is used in gardening, I have described most of its technical functions and also its magical rôle. And the meaning of the term *kema* is in the last instance to be derived, not from the substitution of 'axe' for the native word, but from our knowledge of the rôle which it plays within native culture, here more specifically within native gardening.

All this refers also to such words as *kaylepa*, 'magical wand', *kaytukwa*, 'staff', *kali*, 'fence', *tula*, 'boundary pole'. In every case the English words merely supply a mnemonic counter, while the meaning of the native terms is given in the descriptions and through linguistic analysis. The word *kamkokola* I have only occasionally translated as 'magical prism', so far is the native word removed from anything which could be rendered by an English equivalent.

Thus it is only because we know the world of ideas, the various activities, the economic rules of Trobriand gardening that we can grasp the linguistic side of Trobriand agriculture. It is what we might call their *context of culture* which supplies us with the relevant elements whereby we can translate these words. Translation then becomes rather the placing of linguistic symbols against the cultural background of a society, than the rendering of words by their equivalents in another language.

At times it is necessary in ethnographic description resolutely to go beyond the verbal and even, as we shall see, beyond the conceptual outfit of the natives. The term 'garden', used throughout my descriptive chapters is, as we know, an example of this, for it does not correspond to any native word. At the same time I did not use this word in its English meaning, and I trust that, especially towards the end of Volume I, the word 'garden' did not conjure up

to the reader a cabbage patch with a border of geraniums or pansies, but that he saw the fence enclosing yam vines, taro, some bananas and a patch of sugar-cane.

In the same way, in speaking about 'agriculture' and 'gardening', about 'labour' or the 'organisation of garden work', about 'leadership' and 'economic dependence', I was using abstract scientific terms which have no counterpart whatever in native speech, and yet have their meaning defined by facts belonging to Trobriand culture. The ethnographer has constantly to go beyond the native outlook and introduce certain categories which are not native. At the same time, in building up his concepts the ethnographer must never go beyond native facts. The question as to how far certain terminological lacunae, such as the absence of words for 'garden', 'work', *mana* (magical force), 'crops', and so on, signify the absence of native concepts, or even the absence of sociological realities, is still to be examined (cf. Div. VII of this Part).

Returning now to the mechanism of translating words, the truth of the principle that only full ethnographic description can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis becomes very evident when we deal with sociological terms.

*Kayaku*, whether in its more general meaning of 'sociable reunion' or in its narrower sense 'garden council'—the German words *gesellschaftliches Beisammensein* approach perhaps the native idea more closely—is obviously not at all translated by either English equivalent. What really supplies us with the meaning of this native term is an account of the place which the *kayaku* occupies in the scheme of gardening: the character of the deliberations, the nature of the business transacted, the legal consequences of the typical harangues, and its ceremonial and magical framework. And this applies to all magical activities, all legal acts and all the other sociological and ceremonial phenomena which we have met with in our descriptions. *Kayasa*, *yowota*, *gabu*, and so on—such meaning as these words have acquired has come from the description, not from the English label which we affixed to them for the sake of convenience.

We have found that the word *kayaku* has two different meanings: 'sociable reunion' and 'garden council'. We find a similar phenomenon in the word *towosi*, which signifies 'garden magician' and 'garden magic' (cf. Part V, Div. VII, §§ 10-14). With the term *towosi* a formal analysis of its structure will help us to decide which meaning is primary. Such a formal analysis, which by showing certain affinities between the word discussed and others indicates probable derivations, further demonstrates the necessity of giving a

special place to the linguistics of gardening over and above mere descriptions of gardening.

Multiplicity of meanings will be found a characteristic of most native words, even of such simple terms as *pwaypwaya*, 'earth', 'land', 'soil', 'cultivable soil', 'economically appropriated soil'; *valu*, 'village', 'place of human habitation', 'spot', 'home'; *dakuna*, 'stone', 'coral rock', 'stony soil'; *bagula*, 'area under cultivation', 'individual garden'; or, in a verbal form, 'to garden', 'to cultivate', or, in a compound adjectival form 'cultivated'; *buyagu*, 'garden enclosure', 'garden-site', 'cultivated land' as opposed to the bush. The detailed analysis of each will convince us beyond doubt that the natives do distinguish between these various meanings. If we were to index the sound we would find that the meaning of *pwaypwaya* (1) is very definitely laid down by the context in which this word occurs, and distinguished from *pwaypwaya* (2), *pwaypwaya* (3), and so on. The meaning is differentiated also by grammatical indices, by the possibility of substituting a synonymous word, by emotional tone and by circumlocutory phrases. In no case have I found any confusion in the mind of the speaker as to which of the several distinct realities he wished to indicate by the use of one homonym or another. The differentiation of meanings can be seen if we take the word, not in isolation, but in conjunction with other words, sometimes with synonyms, sometimes with opposites. Thus, as we shall see the word *odila* can be synonymous in certain uses with the word *yosewo* (Div. I, § 17) and then it can again be interchangeable with the word *baleko* (Div. I, § 15). In the first sense it is antonymous to *buyagu*, in the second sense to the body of words describing land not put under regular cultivation, words such as *dumya*, *rayboag*, *kaboma*, *weyka*, *valu*.

The contention that homonyms—that is, words which have the same sound but different meanings—should not be lumped, should not be represented as one word with a vague confused meaning, but rather as a series of distinguishable linguistic units, will be proved abundantly throughout the following pages. The extreme theoretical importance of doing this cannot be exaggerated. Carelessness in dealing with this problem, or probably a wrong theoretical attitude, has been responsible for a great deal of misleading information, sometimes on such extremely important and crucial native words as, for instance, the Melanesian word *mana* (magical force), kinship terminologies, dogmatic terms relating to such concepts as 'soul', 'spirit', 'God', and sociological appellations. To this question we shall still have to return in the course of our theoretical analysis.

We can now lay down a number of points, some theoretical and

some practical, which it will be necessary to bear in mind throughout the following analysis:—

(1) The mere lexical equation of an English and a native word is necessary for practical convenience but theoretically inadequate. For practical convenience it is necessary because if we used a native term wherever possible an ethnographic book would become an unreadable jumble of native and English, of native technical expressions and sociological concepts sticking out of the grammatical framework of the English language.

(2) At times it becomes necessary to use an English term with Trobriand implications, that is, a word from our own language in a native sense. For an ethnographic description must not merely reproduce the native outlook, still less confine itself to the native linguistic compass, but must operate with general sociological concepts.

(3) The correct translation of each native term, besides its rough and ready labelling, is indispensable. This is achieved by reference to ethnographic descriptions and by the placing of the word in its context of culture, in the context of cognate words and opposites and in the context of appropriate utterances.

(4) The various meanings of a homonym must be kept apart. We have to consider the use of the same sound with several distinct meanings, not as a linguistic vagueness or lumping together or confusion, but as what it really is—a series of distinct uses.

All these considerations simply mean that language is a part, and an essential part at that, of other cultural realities. The language of agriculture enters deeply into the Trobrianders' gardening activities. Unless we know how they make their gardens we can give no sense to their terms, nor meaning to their magical formulae, nor yet develop any interest in their gardening phraseology. Without this cultural foundation linguistics must remain always a house of cards. Equally true is it that without the language the knowledge of any aspect of culture is incomplete.

This is really tantamount to saying, as we did above, that language is a cultural force in its own right. It enters into manual and bodily activities and plays a significant part in them, a part *sui generis* which cannot be replaced, even as it does not replace anything else.

What this part is, however, and in what consists the placing of a word against the context of culture, we still have not defined with any precision. It is obvious that words do not live as labels attached to pieces of cultural reality. Our Trobriand garden is not a sort of botanical show with tags tied on to every bush, implement or activity.

It will be our business to reconstruct what speech achieves in a primitive culture, or, for that matter, in a highly developed one.

But first it is necessary to realise that words do not exist in isolation. The figment of a dictionary is as dangerous theoretically as it is useful practically. Words are always used in utterances, and though a significant utterance may sometimes shrink to a single word, this is a limiting case. A one-word sentence, such as a command, 'come', 'go', 'rise', a 'yes' or a 'no', may under exceptional circumstances be significant through its context of situation only. Usually a one-word sentence will have to be explained by connecting it with utterances which preceded it or which follow. To start with single words—even if such words might occasionally be uttered in isolation—is the wrong procedure. But this I do not need to elaborate; for it is now a commonplace of linguistics that the lowest unit of language is the sentence, not the word. Our task is rather to show that even the sentence is not a self-contained, self-sufficient unit of speech. Exactly as a single word is—save in exceptional circumstances—meaningless, and receives its significance only through the context of other words, so a sentence usually appears in the context of other sentences and has meaning only as a part of a larger significant whole. I think that it is very profitable in linguistics to widen the concept of context so that it embraces not only spoken words but facial expression, gesture, bodily activities, the whole group of people present during an exchange of utterances and the part of the environment on which these people are engaged.

I have spoken several times of the *context of cultural reality*. By that I mean the material equipment, the activities, interests, moral and aesthetic values with which the words are correlated. I shall now try to show that this context of cultural reality is strictly analogous to the context of speech. Words do not live in a sort of super-dictionary, nor in the ethnographer's notebook. They are used in free speech, they are linked into utterances and these utterances are linked up with the other human activities and the social and material environment. The whole manner which I have adopted for the presentation of my linguistic and ethnographic material brings the concept of context to the fore. Not only have I tried in the definition of technical terms to show how these terms form groups of kindred entities, not only have I tried, by placing the linguistic account against an outline of real activities, to give them life and body; but the division of the linguistic material under headings which closely correspond to the chapters of the descriptive account keeps every word, every phrase and every text within its proper context of culture.



## DIV. III. THE CONTEXT OF WORDS AND THE CONTEXT OF FACTS

We started the last division on a paradoxical quest: how to translate untranslatable phrases and words. Our argument, which incidentally enabled us to solve the riddle of the paradox, landed us in another apparent antinomy: words are the elements of speech, but words do not exist. Having once recognised that words have no independent existence in the actual reality of speech, and having thus been drawn towards the concept of context, our next step is clear: we must devote our attention to the intermediate link between word and context, I mean to the linguistic text.

From among the fourscore or so native utterances recorded and printed I shall choose one which, through the scope of its subject matter, the variety of its linguistic features, its grammatical interest and also through its length, is specially suitable for analysis. The free translation of this text has already been quoted in Section 1 of Chapter V, and I advise the reader first to refresh his memory by perusing it and the descriptive context in which it occurs. The tale tells us about the all-important subject of famine. The fear of famine and the hope of prosperity form, as we know, the emotional background of the whole economic life of the Trobriander. In this text, besides one or two dramatic highlights thrown upon the happenings during famine, we find an interesting account of gardening (vv. 10-12), information about economic transactions (vv. 8-9), reference to magic (vv. 6-7), legal discussion upon vendetta (v. 15) placed in the setting of the precarious existence led by inland natives on the lagoon shore (vv. 13, 14, 16). Finally, the belief, so very important in the political and tribal life of the natives, as to the causes of famine and prosperity (vv. 17-19).

The first sentence arose out of my conversation with a group of informants, in the course of which I enquired whether any one of them had himself experienced a bad famine. Tokulubakiki answered me (for abbreviations, see Introductory Note, Part V):

## T. 24

- |                      |                   |                |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. <i>Molubabeba</i> | <i>o gwadi-la</i> | <i>i-gise.</i> |
| (informant's father) | in child his      | he see         |

Immediately after this he enlarged upon the bodily ailments associated with famine:—

- |                 |                |                        |                      |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 2. <i>Iga'u</i> | <i>i-kugwo</i> | <i>sipsipsipwapunu</i> | <i>i-katoula-si.</i> |
| later on        | he first       | (a skin rash)          | they sicken          |

3. *Mimilisi boge i-kariga-si tomwota o la odila; mimilisi wa*  
 sundry already they die humans in bush sundry in  
*dumya, mimilisi o raybwaga, mimilisi wa sopi.*  
 swamp sundry in coral-ridge sundry in water
4. *Kidama wa sopi, bi-lumli yama-si*  
 supposing in water he might be moist hand theirs  
*kayke-si — bi-kariga-si wala.*  
 foot theirs they might die just
5. *Pela molu, kaulo ta-kam-si gala.*  
 for hunger yam-food we (i.p.) eat no

Then he went on to describe the events which took place after the famine was over. It is very characteristic that first of all he turns his attention to the magical and ceremonial side:—

6. *Iga'u boge i-wokwe — molu; i-miga'i-se*  
 later on already he is over — hunger they magic  
*leya, bi-pulu-se valu.*  
 wild ginger they might bespit village
7. *Oyluvi bi-kaylum-si boge lay-kuna.*  
 afterwards they might magic-herb already he did rain

The subject next in importance is the quantitative measure of dearth and misery; the account of how much is paid for a basketful of seed yams. Anyone acquainted with typical European peasants, of whatever nationality, will find himself on familiar ground in this association of numerals of currency or articles of exchange with agricultural produce:—

8. *Bayse*  
 this (Here the narrator marks off a length on his forearm of about 40 cm. = 16 in. from the tips of his fingers.)  
*vaygu'a i-gimwala-si yagogu:*  
 valuable they barter seed yam
9. *vaygu'a bwoyna, luwatala yagogu;*  
 valuable good ten (basketsful) seed yam  
*vaygu'a kwayketoki, lima.*  
 valuable small (r.b.) five (basketsful)

Then comes an equally illuminating account of the absurdly restricted extent of gardening activities. And here again he gives numerical data and units of measurement, and the whole account is punctuated by the emotional drive: the gradual return to normality, to the state where each man makes at least one garden plot for himself.

10. *Iga'u*      *bi-sapu,*                      *bi-sapu:—*                      *kway-tala*  
 later on    he might plant    he might plant    one (r.b.)  
*baleko*              *luwayyu tomwota,*    *gubwa-tala,*    *gubwa-tala,*  
 garden-plot    twenty humans    one (sq.)        one (sq.)  
*gubwa-tala . . . .*  
 one (sq.)
11. *Iga'u*      *boge*              *sita*              *i-kasewo*              *yagogu;*  
 later on    already          a little        he plentiful        seed yam  
*kway-tala*    *tayyu*              *tomwota.*  
 one (r.b.)    two (m.)        humans
12. *Iga'u*      *bi-kasewo*                      *yagogu:*  
 later on    he might be plentiful        seed yam  
*kway-tala — tay-tala;*    *kway-tala — tay-tala.*  
 one (r.b.)    one (m.)    one (r.b.)    one (m.)

After that my narrator—whom, according to the inviolable rule of field-work, I let ramble on as long as he was fluent and relevant—returns to the dramatic side of the situation:—

13. *Kulumata*                      *bayse bi-tamwa'u-si:*                      *gala waga*  
 (western district)    this they might disappear    no canoe  
*bi-la*                      *o bwarita, ta-poulo.*  
 he might go    in    sea                      we (i.d.) fish
14. *Waga bi-la,*                      *i-gisay-dasi,*    *boge*              *i-katumatay-da*    *wala.*  
 canoe he might go    they see us    already    they kill us        just
15. *Bi-katumatay-da,*              *gala*              *bi-giburuwa*                      *veyo-da,*  
 they might kill us    no              he might be angry              kindred ours  
*pela molu.*  
 for hunger
16. *Ta-supepuni o la odila, ta-gise*                      *waga, kay-tala —*  
 we hide    in    bush we (i.d.) see    canoe canoe one (w.l.)  
*gala, ta-la*                      *ta-poulo.*  
 no    we (i.d.) go    we (i.d.) fish

Finally, he ends up by giving the 'cause' or 'reason', the *u'ula* of famine. And here we see the native mind running in its traditional groove and attributing this unusual, unnatural, intensively painful occurrence to magic inspired by retribution. However distorted its ethical value may appear to us, we have here a piece of moral metaphysics:—

17. *U'ula*    *bayse waygigi,*                      *boge*              *i-bulati-se*              *valu*  
 basis    this    drought-sorcery    already    they bewitch    place  
*gweguya, pela*    *ta-bugwa'u*                      *veyo-la.*  
 chiefs    for    we (i.d.)    ensorcel    kindred his

18. *Mwakenuva*, *Purayasi* *boge* *i-kariga-si*,  
 (dead chief) (dead chief) already they die  
*Numakala* *boge* *i-bulati*.  
 (last but one chief) already he bewitch
19. *Kidama* *bi-karige* *guya'u* *ta-bulati* *valu*.  
 supposing he might die chief we (i.d.) bewitch village

If the reader is still somewhat hazy about what I mean by context, let him reflect upon the manner in which we have framed the above narrative into its context of subject-matter. It is, alas, impossible, with the means at the disposal of a present-day ethnographer to reproduce certain aspects of the context. If I could, by a good phonographic record, counterfeit the living voice of Tokulubakiki: how it trembled with emotion when he was depicting the miseries and illnesses (vv. 2-4, 13-16); the relative rest and satisfaction of its cadences through vv. 6-12 as he described the gradual re-establishment of prosperity in the village; the accents of awe and reverence when he spoke about the dreaded and respected power of the chiefs through their magic of *waygigi* (vv. 17-19)—I should certainly be able better to *translate* the text in the sense of imparting to it its full cultural flavour and significance. Again, if by a cinematographic picture I could reproduce the facial expression, the bodily attitude, the significant gestures, this would add another contextual dimension. The gesture in at least one place (v. 8) I had to indicate because without it the words became meaningless. But please remember that the integral rôle of gesture in speech is quite as important for our understanding of an utterance as the one or two significant movements or indications which actually replace an uttered word.

There is no reason whatever why, in the future, an exact and physiological study of speech should not use the apparatus of sound films for reproducing fully contextualised utterances.

There are parts of the context of speech, however, which we shall be able to reproduce as fully as is necessary to illustrate certain essentials of language and of meaning: I refer, not to the context of gestures or of significant bodily movements, but rather to the context of associated activities. To this, however, we shall return when we have learned to understand the context of pragmatic speech, i.e. of utterances inextricably bound up with action. The contextual comments, whereby I have framed the fragments of the above narrative into their appropriate situational setting, correspond to a certain extent to such pragmatic contextualisation.

Let me, however, pass to some more technical and more ele-

mentary points with regard to the editing of native texts. Let us glance at the second line running under the native text—the word-for-word English rendering. This has been made throughout by placing what we have called “mnemonic counters” or “approximate labels” under each native word; that is, we have rendered each native word by an English one which does not purport to define the word but simply to identify it. If the literal rendering is compared with the free translation (cf. Ch. V, Sec. 1), it will be seen that a great many words are changed in passing from the one to the other. This shows that the adequate English reproduction at which we aim in the free translation could not be given in the interlineal labelling.

Let us have a look at a few of these interlineal labels. The word *iga'u*, which appears in vv. 2, 6, 10, 11 and 12, has been labelled throughout by ‘later on’. But, as we shall see when we come to the commentary and free translation of the text, this word in v. 2 has a vague conjunctive sense of ‘at that time’, ‘then’. In v. 6 it is frankly a temporal conjunction, ‘when’. In v. 10 it is rather a temporal demonstrative, ‘then’, ‘at that time’. In v. 11 it has the same meaning, something like ‘as soon as’, temporal correlative; in v. 12 its meaning is similar, but through its place in the context of narrative and as following the first *iga'u* it carries a stronger emphasis, something like ‘and again then’, ‘as soon as’. Indeed the variety of meanings of such words as *iga'u*, ‘later on’, *pela*, ‘for’ (vv. 5, 15, 17), *u'ula*, ‘basis’ (because of) (v. 17), *kidama*, ‘supposing’ (vv. 4, 19), *oyluvi*, ‘afterwards’ (v. 7), *boge*, ‘already’ (vv. 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 17, 18), is extremely great. We already know that such words as *molu*, ‘hunger’, ‘famine’, ‘scarcity’; *valu*, ‘village’, ‘place’; *odila*, ‘bush’, ‘uninhabited land’, ‘uncut scrub’; *baleko*, ‘garden plot’, ‘individual garden’ and so on, have a wide range of meanings.

Now why do we make it an infrangible rule to render every native sound by the same English equivalent, only to spend a good deal of extra work afterwards in trying to indicate what exactly this equivalent represents in the given context? My aim is to show how by means of a limited number of vocal symbols the Trobriand natives arrive at expressing a very wide range of meanings. I want the reader to have as close a reproduction as possible of the bald clipped juxtapositions of the Kiriwinian language. Now it would be too great a strain on an English reader to memorise the meaning of each native term, in other words to learn the Trobriand language, before he could appreciate my collection of texts. Therefore I am using the device of identifying each native word by a rough and ready English approximation. Each such approximation, however, I want the English reader to apprehend in the native sense. Exactly

as in the main ethnographic text I advised the reader to visualise the word 'garden' in the Trobriand cultural setting, so here when he reads 'hunger' for *molu*, 'barter' for *gimwali*, 'valuable' for *vaygu'a*, 'seed yam' for *yagogu*, 'garden plot' for *baleko*, 'one square' for *gubwa-tala* and so on, he must think in native though he uses English terms. And if such counters are to fulfil their main function, that is, to stand for and represent a Kiriwinian word, it is obviously necessary always to use the same English equivalent for the same native word. But after we have taken this first step to bring home the native text to our European minds two further tasks remain. The first is to establish the relationships between the words; to show how they integrate into sentences; how, by means of certain grammatical instruments, by position and by context, the various shades of meaning are produced. In other words, we must supply a grammatical commentary to each text, and redefine each term into the proper grammatical form in which it will appear in the free translation.

But the meaning of each word alters in yet another dimension. The same sound, as we know, corresponds to a variety of meanings; and each sound must be regarded as liable to function in a variety of homonymous rôles. Now the choice of the appropriate shade or distinction is not always easy, and this contextual specification of meaning constitutes our second task.

After having briefly indicated in what the general interpretation of the texts will consist, let me enumerate the practical rules observed in the interlineal rendering, in the grammatical commentary and finally in the contextual specification of meaning.

#### A. *Rules of Interlineal Translation.*

As we know already, the fundamental principle here is that for each native word we adopt one English *fixed meaning*. The only exception to this are accidental homonyms; that is, two or more native words that obviously have nothing to do with each other semantically and yet have by sheer accident the same sound. Thus for instance, *kam* 'to eat' and *kam* 'thine', *mi*, abbreviated from *mili* or *mini*, 'people of' and *mi* 'your', cannot be translated by the same English equivalent. Also the word *tabu* in the sense of 'grandmother', in the sense of 'maternal aunt' and in the sense of 'taboo' are accidental homonyms and I shall provide each with its own fixed meaning.

Any group, however, of cognate homonyms, that is, of words used in different but allied meanings, will be rendered by the same English equivalent. In the texts which follow the reader will find a

number of words of which there is no analysis either in the preceding ethnographic description or in the linguistic commentaries to the texts. Such words as *gise*, 'to see', *kugwo*, 'to be first', *tomwota*, 'humans', *yama-*, 'arm', 'hand', *kayke-*, 'leg' 'foot', *bwarita*, 'sea', *kalasia*, 'sun', *yena*, 'fish', *sisu*, 'to sit', *la* or *lolo*, 'to go', *ma*, 'to move hither', *wa*, 'to move thither', etc., etc., are generic words which have no place in any part of this ethnographic study. They are used in all speech, whether it refers to religion, magic, economics, social organisation or arts and crafts. The full meaning of each such generic word will be understood by perusing a number of the texts in which it appears.

As to the fixed meaning for such generic words, I have tried always to choose the most usual or ordinary sense given to them by the natives. As a rule these are neither the most abstract nor yet the most concrete meanings. When the word describes a physical act, as with *gise*, 'to see', and is then in its particular contextual uses widened into the more abstract 'to experience', 'to visualise', 'to grasp mentally'; or into the more specific concrete 'to perceive', 'to discriminate', I have adopted the simple English word 'to see' as the fixed meaning. At times I was guided by practical considerations: when an exact rendering of the Trobriand meaning would require lengthy circumlocutions or compound terms I have chosen a shorter though less adequate label. In many words, such as those for the parts of the body, or for such ordinary bodily acts as to sit, to go, to lie, to sleep, to eat, there is not much difficulty.

The choice of the fixed meaning, however, is best illustrated in the divisions dealing with agricultural language and words which refer directly to gardening. At the end of each division, I am passing in review the distinctions within each group of homonymous variants. In most cases I am making an attempt to establish what I have termed the primary meaning and I have provided each derived meaning with an index number. But as will be seen, it is not always feasible or convenient to use the primary meaning as the fixed equivalent, although in most cases I have stuck to this rule. Thus *molu*, 'hunger', *malia*, 'plenty', *valu*, 'village', *pwaypwaya*, 'soil', *odila*, 'bush', are all translated by the word which we give as the primary meaning.

A glance through the texts will show that some words are rendered by a description in brackets. The first word in the text quoted above is a personal name and instead of repeating this I have described the status of the person thus named—always acting on the principle of making the text as accessible to the reader as is compatible with the principles here adopted. Certain grammatical instruments have also been rendered in brackets, but of these I shall speak more fully in

our grammatical discussion (see below, B). In several texts the reader will also find the context of gesture indicated. Thus, besides the example in the above text, in Text 14 the demonstrative *bayse*, 'this', is accompanied by a deictic gesture, my informant pointing to an object in the physical context, in this case a flower. In Text 19 a similar gesture indicates the new shoot of a coconut. This type of deictic gesture, the pointing to an object instead of naming it, is as frequent in the speech of a Trobriander as in that of a Neapolitan, or for that matter, of any European. It may be rude to point, but it is often convenient. The deictic gestures in Text 15 refer to elements which are not so easily described in the language of the Trobriander; they give indications of a surface, of a severed portion of a plant, of a certain combination of vegetable anatomy for which, as far as I know, there are no native words. Here again the gesture is an integral part of language and it had to be indicated in the interlineal rendering. In the texts here quoted there are not many gestures of emotional importance, nor gestures descriptive of an action, nor yet gestures of a comical or indecent nature which are so frequently to be found in some types of Trobriand story. But every Trobriand utterance is associated with graphic gesture which, unfortunately, it would be hardly feasible to reproduce.

From all this it is clear that the interlineal word-for-word rendering is based on a great deal of antecedent work and knowledge, that it implies a detailed working out of the meaning of terms, grammatical distinctions and also certain contextual annotations. Only in so far as certain grammatical instruments are translated is anything done in it to indicate how the words are linked up, and to this we now turn.

### B. *Grammatical Treatment of Texts.*

In Trobriand, as in European languages, grammatical problems can be divided into that of syntax, that is, the relationship of words to one another or the structure of sentences; into the problem of accidence, that is, the modification of certain words by formal or positional elements (cases and numbers of nouns, tenses, persons, moods and aspects of verbs, classification of nouns by gender and associated categories, and the problem of the formation of words from significant elements).

In Trobriand, also, we can legitimately divide words into parts of speech: noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, preposition, adverb and conjunction stand out as clearly as in English. Both in the choice of fixed meanings and in the general analysis of isolated words it was important to adopt a system which would clearly indicate the character of each word as a part of speech. This I have achieved by



the simple device of translating a Kiriwinian word by an English noun when the root is predominantly nominal; by a verb when it is primarily an action word or one that describes a state or condition. And similarly with adverbs, adjectives and so on. Whenever for some reason this could not conveniently be done I placed behind every native word its brief grammatical description (n. = noun; v. = verb; adv. = adverb, etc., etc.).

Throughout Part V, though not in the descriptive account, the grammatical particle is set apart from the root by means of a hyphen. Such particles are principally used with verbs, adjectives and numerals, more rarely with nouns.

Without a single exception the verb must be provided with a personal pronoun. Take the word *-gis* or *gise*, 'to see': *a-gis*, 'I see', *ku-gis*, 'thou seest', *i-gis*, 'he sees', *ka-gis*, 'we two (exclusive dual) see', *ta-gis*, 'we two (inclusive dual) see'. The plural is marked by the suffix *-se* or *-si*, accompanied at times by a slight variation of the verbal root for phonetic reasons. Thus the plural of 'to see' is: *ka-gisi-se* or *ka-gisay-se*, 'we (exclusive plural) see', *ta-gisi-se* or *ta-gisay-se*, 'we (inclusive plural) see', *ku-gisi-se* or *ku-gisay-se*, 'you see', *i-gisi-se* or *i-gisay-se*, 'they see'. In the interlineal translation I have rendered each verb in its complete form by a personal pronoun and the root. In the above text, for instance, we find *i-gise*, 'he sees', *i-kariga-si*, 'they die', *ta-kam-si*, 'we (inclusive plural) eat'. Phonetically such personal verbal pronouns as well as the signs of plural are incorporated into the words. I have hyphenated them off in order to make the root stand out. The pronominal prefixes never appear except in conjunction with verbs.

The reader will find two more forms of personal verbal pronoun. First, the consonant *b* is sometimes prefixed to the verbal pronoun when this is a vowel; or an extra syllable, *bu*, *ba*, may be added. Thus instead of *a-*, *ku-*, *i-*, *ka-*, *ta-*, *ku-*, *i-*, we have *ba*, *buku-*, *bi-*, *baka-*, *bata-*, *buku-*, *bi-*. This sound *b* changes the character of the verb. It could be very roughly described as constituting the future tense, but in reality it is a much more comprehensive category. It conveys the idea of potentiality, past, present or future; or at times it is simply emphatic. Thus a very strong imperative, defined as a rule by gesture, context and voice, would be expressed by the prefix *bukula*, 'go away!'; on the other hand *buku* as in *bukula* might be an expression of potentiality 'perhaps thou mightest go'. As a fixed meaning distinguishing verbs thus modified by the potential *b* I have chosen the English auxiliary verb 'might'. It remains to redefine in the commentary on each text the very vague sense which we have advisedly given to this grammatical element and to give in the free

translation its real and specific meaning derived from the context. Another modification of the verbal pronoun is by the sound *l*. As regards form, it is used in a manner completely analogous with the sound *b*, except that in the third singular it becomes *lay-* as in *lay-gis*, *lay-ma*. This sound imparts a tinge of definiteness; at times it places the action into a regular past, accomplished state; at times it only gives emphasis. On the whole it is best to regard it as an implement of definiteness and accomplishment. The letter *l* I have rendered by the fixed meaning 'did', *luku-gis*, 'thou didst see'. The fact that this rendering is sometimes a little un-English is rather an advantage than a drawback; for we have here to render something for which avowedly there is no equivalent in English.

Another modifier of the verbs is the adverb *boge*, rendered by the fixed meaning 'already'. This fulfils a somewhat analogous function to the *l* in personal verbal pronouns and is very often found superimposed on them. *I-ma*, 'he moves hither', *lay-ma*, 'he did move hither', *boge lay-ma*, 'he already did move hither'. One might describe these as a series of forms of gradually increasing accomplishment. But even here, unless we know the context and very carefully assess the integral character of the utterance, it would be rash to jump to conclusions. Certainly the series has not a clear temporal meaning, and does not represent present, imperfect, preterite, perfect or pluperfect. In dealing with the Trobriand language it is best to lay aside completely the idea of clear temporal categories.

One or two more points about the use of verbs remain to be mentioned. Sometimes particles are suffixed to the verbal root: *-ki* adds direction to the meaning: *la* or *lolo*, 'to go'; *lo-ki*, 'to go there'; *sayli*, 'to put', *say-ki*, 'to put there', 'to give'; *mwoy-ki*, 'to move hither at', *woy-ki*, 'to move thither at'; *kana-ki*, 'to lie at', 'to lie by somebody'.

A difficult subject is that of reduplication in verbs. Sometimes it gives the words an iterative or durative meaning; sometimes it is employed only for emphasis. Here again one has to consider the sentence as a whole and as a part of its context, and only then proceed to the grammatical diagnosis of the word.

Nor is the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs easy to make. Transitivity is very clearly marked in pronominal forms only, and in these only the first and second persons have an objective case: *i-woy-gu*, 'he beat me', *a-woy-m*, 'I beat thee', but *i-woy-ye ka'ukwa*, 'he beats the dog'. The part played by a noun in a sentence, the question whether it functions as an object or as a subject, is therefore not marked in any formal manner. *I-woy-ye tau* means 'the man beats' or 'he (subject implied) beats the man'. The context gives the solution. The passive does not exist.

We can deal much more rapidly with nouns. There is no plural except for kinship terms, terms for states of mind, and one or two sociological descriptions: *guya'u*, 'chief', *gweguya*, 'chiefs', *gwadi*, 'child', *gugwadi*, 'children'. Nouns are characterised, however, by two kinds of agreement: in the first place they are used with and determine the form of several types of pronouns. This point has been fully dealt with in Division XII (§§ 3-7), so I shall not enter into it here. In the second place each noun has what might be called its gender in the wider meaning. As in many Indo-European languages, notably in those of the Slavonic family, each noun is either masculine, feminine or neuter; and adjectives, ordinal numerals, pronouns and also (as in Slavonic again) certain verbal forms vary in accordance with gender, so in Kiriwinian there is a strict agreement between the class of the noun and the particle which is used to compound the adjective, numeral or demonstrative pronoun used with it.

None of these words exists in a self-contained form conveying an abstract meaning of number, quality or reference. There are no single words to express such conceptions as 'this', 'big', 'long', 'one', etc., in the abstract. Thus, for example, there is no equivalent for the word 'one', or for any other numeral. Whenever number is indicated the nature of the object numbered must be included in the word. Thus:—

- |             |   |                                   |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) One man | = | <i>TAYtala ta'u</i>               |
| One woman   | = | <i>NAtana vivila</i>              |
| One stone   | = | <i>KWAYtala dakuna</i>            |
| One canoe   | = | <i>KAYtala waga</i> etc.          |
|             |   |                                   |
| (2) Two men | = | <i>TAYyu tau'a'u</i> <sup>1</sup> |
| Two women   | = | <i>NAYyu vivila</i>               |
| Two stones  | = | <i>KWAYyu dakuna</i>              |
| Two canoes  | = | <i>KAYyu waga</i> .               |

Comparing the numerals in these tables, *TAYtala*, *NAtana*, etc., it can be seen at a glance that each consists of two elements, one of which remains unaltered in (1) and (2) respectively, namely, the suffix *-tala*, 'one', *-yu*, 'two', etc.; whereas the other part, *TAY-*, *NA-*, *KWAY-*, *KAY-*, etc., corresponds evidently to the objects or persons numbered.

The same holds good with regard to other numerals, as well as to demonstratives and adjectives. Such words consist of a fixed form

<sup>1</sup> *Tau'a'u*, 'men', plural to *ta'u*, 'man'. Another of the very few plurals extant in Kiriwinian.

or mould, which carries the meaning of the numeral, demonstrative or adjective, and of a variable particle which denotes the class of object to which the numeral, demonstrative or adjective is being applied. We shall call the former element the fixed part or root, and the latter one the classificatory particle or formative.

As we saw in the above example, the numerals are formed by suffixing the fixed part, which carries the meaning of the number, to the classificatory particle, which carries the meaning of the object numbered. This may be represented diagrammatically:—

Prefix denoting object numbered	Stable element or root denoting number
by means of the classificatory particle <i>TAY-</i> human	by means of the fixed numeric part <i>-TALA</i> one
<i>TAY</i> is the classificatory particle denoting that human beings are numbered	<i>TALA-</i> is the numeric root denoting that the number is one

The demonstratives are formed by infixing the classificatory particle into a fixed frame. This latter consists of the two syllables *ma-*, *-na*, which carry the meaning of pointing to or referring to. Thus *ma-tau-na* is used to point out a human being, 'this man'.

Root Frame	Infix	Root Frame
<i>MA-</i>	<i>-TAU-</i>	<i>-NA</i>
The fixed frame which of direct		conveys the signification reference.
<i>TH-</i>	human	<i>-IS</i>

Finally, adjectives are formed in the same manner as numerals, i.e. by suffixing the adjectival part of the classificatory particle.

Prefix denoting object qualified	Stable element of root denoting quality
by means of classificatory particle <i>TO-</i> human	by means of fixed adjectival part <i>-VIYAKA</i> big
<i>TO-</i> is the classificatory particle denoting that human beings are qualified	<i>-VIYAKA</i> is the adjectival root denoting that the object is big

Thus we see that the three classes of words, demonstratives, numerals, and adjectives, cannot be used *in abstracto*, but must carry in them the expression of the objects to which they refer. This reference is made, however, only in a general manner; the particle does not mention directly the thing to which it applies, but indicates only the class of object numbered, pointed at or qualified. This is why we have called them *classificatory* particles.

This is a general outline of the nature and grammatical extent of the classificatory particles in Kiriwina. It is, however, necessary for the reader, in order to follow with interest the technical details given in Part V, to familiarise himself with this linguistic phenomenon, to get it well in hand. A good way to achieve this—to make the particles a living fact of speech—is to imagine how such an arrangement would appear in English.

Let us then transpose this peculiarity of Kiriwinian into English, following the native prototype very closely, and imagine that no adjective, no numeral, no demonstrative may be used without a particle denoting the nature of the object referred to. All names of human beings would take the prefix 'human'. Instead of saying 'one soldier' we would have to say '*human*-one soldier walks in the street'. Instead of 'How many passengers were in the accident?' 'How *human*-many passengers were in the accident?' Answer, '*Human*-seventeen.'

Or, again, in reply to 'Are the Smiths *human*-nice people?' we should say 'No, they are *human*-dull!' Again, nouns denoting persons belonging to the female sex would be numbered, pointed at, and qualified with the aid of the prefix 'female'; wooden objects with the particle 'wooden'; flat or thin things with the particle 'leafy'.

Thus, pointing at a table we should say, 'Look at *wooden*-this'; describing a landscape, '*leafy*-brown leaves on the *wooden*-large

rees'; speaking of a book 'leafy-hundred pages in it'; 'the women of Spain are female-beautiful', 'human-this boy is very naughty, but female-this girl is good', and so on, in this Ollendorfian strain.<sup>1</sup>

In the interlineal rendering I have translated a compound adjective, numeral or demonstrative, by putting the specific meaning of the word underneath and its classificatory component, defined in general terms, immediately behind in brackets. Thus for the class referring to human beings, *tay-to-tau-*, I put 'human' or m.; for the class referring to persons of the female sex and animals, *na*, I put 'female—animal'; for the class comprising trees and plants, wooden things and long objects, *kay*, I put 'wooden long'; for the class referring to round bulky objects, stones, abstract nouns, *kway*, I put 'round bulky' and for that comprising objects made of leaf or fibre, or any flat, thin object, *ya*, I put 'flat leafy'. In what follows the classificatory particle will often be indicated as part of the grammatical definition of a noun. I have enlarged on this subject because it is unquestionably the most exotic feature of the Trobriand language.<sup>2</sup>

In all other respects the language belongs to the so-called agglutinative type of human speech; that is to say, such differences as exist in the form of verb and noun are brought about by the mere joining up of significant particles.

The real difficulty of this language consists not in the complexity of the grammatical apparatus but rather in its extreme simplicity. Its structure is on the whole what might be described as telegraphic; the relation of the words, as well as the relation of the sentences, has mainly to be derived from the context. In many cases the subject remains unmentioned, is represented merely by a verbal pronoun and has to be gathered from the situation. Of the difficulty in the modal and temporal definition of the verb I have already spoken. The relation between paragraphs and periods is often extremely erratic; abrupt transitions such as that between verse 6 and 7, 7 and 8, 12 and 13 in the text quoted are characteristic. Yet, in reality, there is no vagueness at all in the purport of speech or in its effect. When a Trobriander recounts in a long narrative some past happenings; when a group of people plan an expedition; when, in a complicated or even dangerous situation, such as a squall at sea, a hand-to-hand fight, a nightly vigil against a sorcerer or in pursuit of him—on all such occasions orders are issued and obeyed, without ambiguity or confusion. The ambiguity and confusion appear when we project the words on paper after having torn them

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, Vol. I, Pt. IV.

<sup>2</sup> A system of abbreviations has been adopted in interlineal renderings. See Introductory Note to Part V.

out of their context and tried to reinterpret them from our point of view, that is, that of an entirely different culture. As the words convey meaning within the compass of native linguistic function, the Trobriand language is an adequate instrument of communication; there are elements in their utterance and in its context which introduce as much definition as is necessary to the communicating natives. And it is a duty of the ethnographer to show where these elements which define and make precise and concrete are to be found.

C. *The Contextual Specification of Meaning.*

It results from what has been said in the two preceding sections that a great many words have to be reinterpreted when we pass from the interlineal word-for-word rendering to the free translation. This transition, however, is not arbitrary. It must be based on definite principles and the application of these principles has to be clearly although succinctly stated in a commentary to every text. In this commentary a brief 'contextualisation of meaning', as we might call it, has to be given for each sentence, for single words are affected by their integration into a significant sentence. The context supplies such grammatical data as subject and object; tense of the verb, i.e. temporal definition of action; the relation of clauses and the special meaning of the rare conjunctions. For instance, in each case we have to decide whether the *b* modifier of the verb rendered by 'might' signifies future or pending action, subjunctive mood, a command or merely potentiality. Again the suffixed *-la* may be either the third possessive person of a pronoun (nearest possession) or else an emphatic, or else almost play the part of the definite article.

But the best way of showing how this contextual specification of meaning works will be to give a full commentary on the above text. This specimen commentary must be controlled by the collation of free and interlineal translation.

(1) If we compare the literal rendering 'informant's father in child his he see' with the free translation (cf. Ch. V, Sec. 1) 'Molubabeba in his childhood witnessed a famine', it is clear that we have added the object 'a famine', changed the verb 'see' into 'witness' and given it the accomplished past tense, and slightly modified the order of the words. We were able to make these changes because we were aware of the context of situation to which this utterance belongs: i.e. we know that Molubabeba is the father of Tokulubakiki, that the subject-matter of the text is historical and concerns famine, and that the question had been asked whether anybody had himself experienced the calamity. There is one modification, however, which requires a fuller commentary: *gwadi* is the

word for 'child', male or female, but used only in describing a child without reference to kinship. 'Child' in the sense of 'so-and-so's offspring' is *latu*:- *latu-gu*, 'my child', *latu-la*, 'his child'. Nowhere is *gwadi* used with a third person pronoun of nearest possession (cf. Part V, Div. XII, Secs. 3-7). Yet it does not mean 'child of so-and-so'; for this the word *latu* would be used. Nor would such an expression fit into this context. The addition of the suffixed pronoun makes this noun into an abstract 'childhood', and thus it had to be rendered in the free translation. We see therefore that in passing from a literal to a free translation we had to modify or add four elements in this short sentence.

(2) In this sentence the adverbial conjunction *iga'u* had to be given the specific meaning 'at that time'. The main subject, which is given by context of situation, had to be added, while the subject of the verb *i-kugwo*, 'he first', which corresponds to the German impersonal *man* or French *on* or English 'one', was transformed into an adverbial expression 'with a skin disease'. To put it more precisely, the subject of 'they sicken' is just 'the people'; the subject in *i-kugwo*, 'he first', is an impersonal 'it', of which the significance here is more or less 'it first happened', so that we could pass from the literal translation, 'later on he first a skin rash they sicken', through an intermediate sentence, 'then it first happened a skin rash people sickened (with it)', to the free translation 'at that time the people became ill with a skin disease', which is the nearest grammatical and unambiguous equivalent of our intermediate link. When taking down this text I was not quite certain what the word *sipsipsipwapunu* meant, although I knew it was a rash. But I always went over such texts with some other informant and from one of my best linguistic commentators, Monakewo of Omarakana, I received the following definition:—

<i>Sipsipsipwapunu</i> (skin rash)	<i>makawala</i> alike	<i>pukuna.</i> pimple	<i>I-tuwali</i> he different	<i>pukuna</i> pimple
<i>kway-viyaka</i> big (r.b.)	<i>i-tuwali</i> he different	<i>i-puripuri</i> he break forth in clusters		<i>wa woulo</i> in body
<i>sipsipsipwapunu.</i> (skin rash)				

I reproduce it without further linguistic analysis as it does not directly bear on the subject of gardens and interests us here rather as a methodological device than as a linguistic document. In any case, comparing the interlineal version with the free translation, the text becomes quite clear.

*Free translation:* The *sipsipsipwapunu* rash is like ordinary pimples.



There is one type of pimple which is big, and another which breaks forth in clusters all over the skin; (this latter we call) *sipsipsipwapunu*.

(3) Here the commentator's work amounts merely to the choice of specific equivalents to the words given in the literal rendering. The reader is supposed to be acquainted with such words as *odila*, *rayboag*, *dumya*, so that the English equivalents 'bush', 'coral-ridge', 'swamp' bring up the correct picture. One word only had to be reinterpreted contextually: 'water' into 'water-hole'. The word *sopi*, 'water', has several sharply distinguished homonymous meanings which are not discussed in Part V, since the word does not bear directly on agriculture. The fundamental meaning of the word is unquestionably 'water', i.e. 'sweet water', for they have a special word for 'brine'—*yona*. But it can also mean 'water-hole', by an obvious derivation, and 'water-bottle'. This second meaning has to be inserted by contextual reinterpretation.

(4) Here a much fuller reinterpretation was necessary. The whole sentence has an explicative function. The conjunction *kidama*, for which the nondescript fixed meaning 'supposing' had to be chosen, has here a vaguely conditional but at the same time consecutive meaning. In the free translation I have rendered it by 'so as'. The appended clause 'they might die just' could have been translated freely 'and yet they died', 'but still they died'. On the principle, however, of not adding anything which is not clearly contained in the native utterance, I translated it 'and then they died', in which there is a vague indication of the possibilities of opposition.

(5) 'For hunger yam-food we eat not.' Here for the first time we have the appearance of the narrative *ta-*, 'we' (inclusive plural), which functions very often in Kiriwinian in lieu of the English 'one' or 'you': 'there was hunger, one had nothing to eat', 'there was hunger, you would have been starving'. The subject of these few sentences is 'people', more precisely the people affected by the famine. The grammatical expression of this subject suddenly shifts from third person plural to first person (inclusive plural) between 4 and 5. In a well-constructed narrative we would obviously have placed this sentence at the beginning, because, in a way, it is the one which contextualises the whole narrative. Its insertion as an afterthought to integrate the preceding clauses is characteristic of Trobriand speech.

(6) Here the adverbial 'already' had to be changed into the temporal conditional 'when'. To understand this sentence and the following one it is of course necessary to be acquainted with the ethnographic aspect of native life and with the fact that after a

severe famine the *vilamalia* magic would be performed (cf. Ch. VII). The word *molu* in this and in the previous sentence had to be changed from its fixed meaning 'hunger' into 'famine'. Here the word *iga'u*, 'later on', could retain its fixed meaning in the free translation.

As to the subjects corresponding to the personal verbal pronouns in *i-wokwe*, *i-miga'i-se*, *bi-pulu-se*, the first of course refers to *molu*, 'hunger'; 'it is over', 'the hunger is over'; the other two refer obviously to the magicians of prosperity who perform the *vilamalia*. It is noteworthy that the first verbal pronoun is given in a simple form: *i*. The second in the form *bi*. This second form corresponds to a certain teleological subordination of the second clause: 'they becharm wild ginger so that they might bespit the village'. The change into the past tense is obviously implied by the context of situation, though of course we could have used the historic present even in English, by straining our linguistic habits a little.

(7) The adverb *oylwi* corresponds to the *iga'u* of the previous sentence. It means something like 'later still'; we rendered it by 'then' in the free translation. The context of situation enables us to specify the word *kaylum*, which means 'magical bundle' or 'magic-herb' according to the fixed meaning chosen (cf. Part V, Div. VII, § 26). *Boge* has a temporal consecutive meaning, 'already' being equivalent to 'and then'. It links the first part of the sentence to the second as cause to effect. Here the rare accomplished form *lay-* appears for the first time.

(8) The context of gesture, defined in the interlineal rendering, has been embodied in the free translation by an appropriate clause 'as long as a forearm'. There is a slight inconsistency between 8 and 9, as obviously the same size of valuable would not be bartered for ten and for five baskets of seed yams. But the meaning of the speaker is clear.

(9) The one outstanding grammatical peculiarity in this sentence is the use of the numeral without a classificatory particle; *luwa*, 'ten', *lima*, 'five'. Comment on this use will be found below in Division II (§ 9). The structure 'this valuable they barter seed yam' shows well the function of mere juxtaposition. We had to add the preposition 'with' in order to link up the verb 'to barter' with its two objects: barter of seed yams for valuables or barter of valuables for seed yams. In Kiriwinian you simply speak about the valuable bartering something. This, however, on the whole does not make the native wording obscure.

Finally, here once more we have a sentence without an explicit subject, though the subject understood differs from that of the

preceding sentence. In vv. 6 and 7 the subject was the 'magicians', here it is 'people in general' again.

(10) The initial adverb 'later on' has a definitely conjunctive function: it links up this sentence with the previous one. 'Later on' means here 'after that had been done', or, more concretely, 'after the seed yams had been procured'. In free translation I have rendered it by the clause 'with such seed yams', in order to bring out the implicit meaning contained in such native words. It is remarkable that the word *bi-sapu* is in the singular. Here again it is probably the impersonal unspecified 'it': 'later on it became planted, it became planted, twenty men working on one garden plot'. The juxtaposition: 'one garden plot—twenty humans', and the following three-fold enumeration: 'one square, one square, one square', were rendered in free translation in as near a phrasing as possible: 'one single plot twenty men, one square each'. The correlation by mere juxtaposition in 'one garden plot—twenty men' is characteristic of the native style. In a developed European language we would say: 'twenty men working on one garden plot', or 'one garden plot being allotted to as many as twenty men'. Then again we would say something like: 'a single square being worked by each man'; the native simply repeats: 'one square, one square, one square', the rest being left unexpressed but clearly implied in the context.

(11) Is similar in structure to v. 10. Again the adverb 'later on' has a conjunctive function, correlating the previous sentence to this one in the temporal sequence: 'as soon as', or, as we put it in the free translation, 'after that, when'. Again, in the second part, correlation is achieved by juxtaposition; 'one plot—two humans'. Here the classificatory numeral shows its reference to garden plot by the use of the classificatory particle.

(12) The temporal correlative *iga'u* has, by its position, a more emphatic meaning. We translated it 'later on still, when'. The *b* modifier of the verb refers here to the past and conveys an idea of potentiality: 'would be plentiful again', as we translated it. And once more we have the direct juxtaposed correlation with classified numerals: one (r.b.) = plot: one (male) = man.

(13) Passing from v. 12 to 13 we meet a characteristic feature of native narrative. Without any verbal expression indicating it, the narrative goes back in time. Verse 12 has treated of the time after the famine is over, perhaps a year or two later when plenty is re-established. Verse 13 goes back to the famine again. The native dispenses with the special indication he could easily have found, because of his intimate acquaintance with the facts related. The speaker and his audience knew perfectly well who it was that perished in Kulumata

and when it was that this happened. In a native community the function of a narrative, however historical and real, is to call to mind, revive the memory of important deeds, rather than to impart information. In passing from the interlineal rendering to the free translation we had to add the preposition 'in', which the native easily drops. Here in fact it would not have been possible in Trobriand to say *o kulumata* or *wa kulumata*, 'in the western district'. It is not easy to explain the function of the demonstrative *bayse*: it has a spatial, pointing effect. We translated it by 'there'. The root *tamwa'u*, 'to disappear', we specified in the free translation by adding 'perish' after it. Here the verbal modifier *b* has a subjunctival meaning and is translated by 'could'. The juxtaposed single verb *ta-poulo*, 'we fish', is really a self-contained clause with the implication of reason or motive: 'so that we might fish'.

(14) Here the verbal modifier *b* gives a definite conditional flavour to the clause. 'Were a canoe to sail', as we translated it, 'then they would see us.' *Boge* again has an inferential function 'then already', translated here 'they would kill us directly'.

(15) The two verbal modifiers *b* in 'they might kill us' and 'no he might be angry' have here a conditional and potential function: 'if they would kill us', 'in case they would kill us, our kinsmen would not be angry'. It might be well to take this as an example of what I really mean by the contextual modification of meaning. This sentence on the face of it and as we have given it in the literal interlineal rendering runs: 'They might kill us, no he might be angry kindred ours, for hunger.' Now first of all this sentence is interesting because of its essential ambiguity. If the negation word were attached to the first verb the whole meaning would be opposite. It would run: 'They might not kill us, our kinsmen would be angry, because of hunger,' and the free translation would run: 'They would never dare to kill us as our kinsmen would be angry because we had been killed in famine.' In fact to the European or Christian moral sense it would seem a much greater crime to murder a famished, exhausted man in times of national disaster and because he sought for a bare subsistence than to kill the same man in times of prosperity because he was poaching. But the Trobrianders, obeying the stern law of necessity, have developed different rules. Our ethnographic knowledge, combined with the fact that punctuation was indicated by the delivery, enabled us to solve this ambiguity.

By the same means we arrive at the meaning of the two verbal modifiers. *Bi-katumatay-da*, 'they might kill us', is here obviously not the future nor the imperative. Since the verb occurs in a narrative referring to the past, it has to be projected into that time setting.

But it could still mean either 'they would kill us', a statement of likelihood; or 'they might kill us', a statement of possibility; or 'they should kill us', a statement as to moral obligation or customary rule. Taken, however, in conjunction with the second clause, 'no he might be angry kindred ours', the conditional or hypothetical meaning becomes clear, and that because the sentence, *gala bigiburuwa veyo-da*, is clearly a statement of an exceptional, extraordinary state of affairs. The fact that his kinsmen would not resent the death of a man carries with it the implication of something like 'then we would have the extraordinary case (of absence of vendetta)'. And the meaning of this sentence is given really by its ethnographic setting, which makes the first clause into: 'were they to kill us', or 'in case they had killed us', or even 'in the extraordinary event of ourselves being killed'. Here, as well as in the next clause, 'us' and 'we' (inclusive plural) functions as the impersonal *on* or the English narrative 'one' or 'you'; 'were anyone to be killed', or 'were you to be killed'.

I have given this detailed analysis of how context functions grammatically in order to justify some of our succinctly stated conclusions.

(16) Here the use of the numeral 'one' in the sense of the English indefinite article is characteristic. The use of *odila*, 'bush', in the wider sense of 'jungle', 'open nature', and the juxtaposition of clauses are very interesting. In the free translation I have almost verbally reproduced the interlineal rendering. The last clause, however, might have been placed in a more definite relation to the first ones. It is the consequence, the logical outcome, of the clause immediately preceding it. A still freer translation might render this sentence 'we hide in the bush, we look out for a canoe, (when we see one) we do not go to fish (we forbear from going out fishing)'. The sentence really expresses the anxious time, the need of precaution, even the risks which sometimes were taken. As a rule, however, even in the free translation I did not include all such contextual implications, for English prose as well as Kiriwinian has its contextual fringe, and if one started to develop all implications it would be difficult to draw the line.

(17) The noun *u'ula* is used here in the abstract sense 'basis this', 'the cause of all this'. The adverb *boge* 'already' is here what might be called an adverb of completion which, as is well known, is lacking in English to the discomfiture not only of Trobrianders but also of Poles, Germans and even Frenchmen, who miss such words as *juž*, *schon*, *déjà*.

Looking at the verbs we see that the subject of 'they bewitch' is

'the chiefs', incidentally a genuine plural. The subject of *ta-bugwa'u-si* is in inclusive plural. Here it means 'the chiefs bewitch the villages because we (meaning 'the whole lot of us', 'the commoners') have ensorcelled his (i.e. their) kindred'. The 'we' stands really for 'one among us', or 'a few among us', the chiefs being angry with the whole lot of the commoners because one of them had dared to use evil magic. It is remarkable that the term *veyo-la*, 'kindred his', is referred to in the third person singular, although the preceding noun is in the plural. Such grammatical mistakes are frequent in the native texts as I have taken them down. I do not think that this was because the natives had to speak more deliberately than was their custom when I was taking notes since, especially towards the end of my stay when I took down this text, I became able to write the spoken word rapidly and did not have to slow down the normal tempo of their speech.

(18) The same adverb *boge* has here an entirely different function, i.e. meaning. We could almost translate it by the English 'because', by reason of the temporal sense of accomplishment emphasised by its context: 'already so-and-so died, therefore another so-and-so carried out black magic'. Here, also, we could very minutely and elaborately justify these reinterpretations. But to anyone who has followed our previous arguments the grounds for them will be clear.

(19) Is really a repetition of vv. 17 and 18 in other words, the conjunction *kidama* having a somewhat general sense of temporal conditionality, which we have translated by 'whenever'. Remarkably enough, the verb 'to bewitch' is here coupled with the inclusive 'we'. Comparing v. 17 with v. 19 the inconsistency is flagrant. In v. 17 'we' were the culprits guilty of sorcery. In v. 19 'we' are the avengers punishing the commonalty. The speaker in this case probably was influenced by the fact that, as a member of the chief's village and as the son of a chief of high rank, he could identify himself with the highest nobility. But in such discriminations and corrections one constantly has to pass from grammar to context—meaning by context, native sociology, personal conditions of the speaker, verbal habits and general customs of the natives, and so on.

This specimen commentary, which will serve as a pattern for the more concise future annotations, also enables us to formulate one or two theoretical points. We see, in the first place, that the elucidation of the 'meaning' of a word does not happen in a flash, but is the result of a lengthy process. Exactly as in the field the meaning of a native term only gradually dawned on me, became clearer and finally crystallised into a manageable linguistic unit, so the English reader must pass through several stages: the rough identification of

the word by means of the mnemonic counter, the subtler and more precise idea of the rôle it fulfils in a given sentence, the range of its possibilities, at times vague, at times concrete and clear, and finally its paraphrase into acceptable English. Throughout this process what really matters is to understand what the text conveys to the native. From the above commentary we see that this can be best achieved by holding constantly before our eyes the background of native culture and by showing how much the words add to it and what emphasis they place on some aspect or segment of this background.

Our scholastic operations consist in a constant manipulation of words and context. We have to compare the word with its verbal setting; we have to interpret the occasional significant gestures, and finally we have constantly to see how the situation in which the utterance is being made and the situation to which it refers influence the structure of paragraphs, sentences and expressions.

#### Div. IV. THE PRAGMATIC SETTING OF UTTERANCES

*everyday speech = speaking language or related to culture*  
 Let us now for a moment consider our text as a whole. It is a narrative and it is a narrative at second-hand. That is, the man who is telling it has not gone through the experiences himself, but is recounting what was told him by his father.

It will be interesting, therefore, to enquire, first, what are the actual root experiences through which the words become significant to speaker and listener alike and, secondly, what is the function of such a narrative utterance.

Since throughout our enquiry we are trying to overcome the limitations of ethnographic apparatus and get beyond the field-worker's notebook to the reality of native life, it will be of interest to see under what conditions such a narrative would actually occur. I heard it in the course of a conversation with a group of informants, but it is just the type of tale that might be told on some evening at a fireside, either because the conversation suggested it, or, even more likely, in appropriate seasonal conditions. The response of the natives to the atmosphere of season or circumstance is remarkable. During the lean moons, the time which is represented by the word *molu*, they will often speak about real hunger, about historical cases of sensational famine. And again in a plentiful harvest, they will remember famous examples of *malia*, 'prosperity'. Although I was told this tale in the cold blood of an ethnographic discussion, I have heard similar narratives time after time recounted, not for my edification, but to satisfy the interest of native listeners.

As with most traditionally known events, the natives are well acquainted with what happens during famine. The words which we find in our text, *molu*, *kaulo*, *kam*, are familiar to them in the sense in which they are used in their present context. In a less dramatic form hunger occurs often. The bodily discomforts associated with insufficiency of food are experienced almost every year. The emotional associations are strong, especially for children, who, moreover, connect a wide range of verbal acts with these. Words such as *ba-kam kaulo*, 'I would eat some food', *agu molu*, 'I am hungry', *magi-gu kayvalu'a*, 'I want fruit-food', are often heard during the months of scarcity when even children have to be rationed. Therefore the personally experienced reality on which the understanding of our text depends exists for every native listener. It is, moreover, systematised, i.e. associated with the rotation of seasons, with the annual yield of gardening, with excessive rain or prolonged drought. On the verbal side the use of such opposites as *molu* and *malia* (Div. V, § 3) and of such correlatives as *kaulo*, *kayvalu'a*, *gwaba* (Div. II, § 12) is consistent. In the same way with the other cycles of ideas: barter of food, the extent of gardening done in good and in bad seasons, when seed yams are plentiful or scarce, are familiar concepts to the native.

Thus we see that on the one hand the real meaning of words, the real capacity for visualising the contents of a narrative, are always derived from a personal experience, physiological, intellectual and emotional, while on the other, such experience is invariably connected with verbal acts. A narrative type of utterance is, therefore, comprehensible by the reference of the statements to past personal experiences in which words were directly embedded within the context of situation. The context of situation of words which refer to hunger, scarcity and lean seasons is obviously the time of scarcity, hunger and the lean season—the time when eating is an important act achieved with difficulty, when people clamour for food and complain about its absence, when the significance of a sentence or of a single word is driven home and extracted by the powerful pang of bodily pain.

In a narrative words are used with what might be called a borrowed or indirect meaning. The real context of reference has to be reconstructed by the hearers even as it is being evoked by the speaker. But situations in which the same words have been used with all the pragmatic vigour of a request or imperative, with all the emotional content of hope or despair, situations in which the use of a word is fraught with weighty consequences for the speaker and for his hearers, in such situations we have speech used in a



primary, direct manner. It is from such situations that we are most likely to learn the meaning of words, rather than from a study of derived uses of speech. This answers our first question as to the primary experiences from which the meaning of words is derived.

But though not used in the pragmatic, i.e. primary meaning, words in a narrative have their part to play. Narratives always entertain and at times instruct, but they also fulfil a more important function. A sacred tribal tale told in justification of the social order or of morality; in explanation of a ritual, or to illuminate religious mysteries, such a tale is of the greatest importance in that it systematises belief and regulates conduct. Again a legend, an incident in tribal history may also contribute to the building up of morale. A tale, such as the present narrative, contributes indirectly to the formation of economic standards and values. For, as we have seen, it is the shadow of scarcity, hunger and famine which constitutes the most powerful incentive to work in the Trobriands. The whole system of organised work and incentives is associated with the traditional handing on from generation to generation of stories of *molu* and *malia*, of success and failure, of the importance of magic, of work and discipline in gardening. Thus, though narratives considered singly might appear idle enough, integrally their function goes far beyond mere amusement and entertainment, and those tales which centre round vital interests, such as hunger and sex, economic values and morality, collectively serve to the building up of the moral tradition of a tribe. The function of speech in them is an important cultural contribution to the social order.

The text to which we have devoted so much attention is somewhat peculiar in that it contains a multiplicity of subjects, one or two of them dramatic, and because it is a narrative at second-hand, almost legendary or historical in character. It will be profitable to consider, in a more general manner, the other texts contained in Part V, showing in the first place what part each utterance plays in tribal life and, in the second place, from what type of actual experiences its meaning has been derived.

We have one or two more narrative texts. There is one (85) which is an account of events of the immediate past, in fact the antecedents of events which were then in progress. This is a long text, and its analysis reveals very much the same features as those we found in the account of famine. The main function of Text 85 would be to keep alive the tradition concerning accumulation of food, and through this the enhancement of tribal grandeur.

It is characteristic that certain actual speeches uttered, such as a challenge or a boast or a praise of generosity, are remembered

verbally and would be handed on from generation to generation. After having overheard such ceremonial and obviously important utterances as those reproduced in Texts 86, 87 and 88, I found no difficulty in getting them repeated to me, in exactly the same form, by one or two informants who had heard them with me. Some of the statements contained in these have more than a narrative function. Words which accompany gifts or which contain a challenge are usually uttered in a set traditionally prescribed form. They constitute what might be called semi-legal, semi-ceremonial set phrases. Text 94, which reproduces the verbal tribute to the traditional owners of the soil given at a *kayaku*, is typical of such sayings. Text 92 contains a number of expressions which have also a semi-legal binding force and are uttered as a request for an additional contribution from the wife's brother. Text 93 is typical of words spoken with an indirect purport, words which in a way conceal the thoughts and sentiments of the speaker rather than reveal them.

Texts 78 and 79 give us the substance of native beliefs about the effects of a magical rite which frightens away the bush-pigs and about the mythological pig which lives in the home of the bush-pigs. Such dogmatic texts are typical of the whole body of utterances on the subject current in the tribe. They would be told with an educational aim by the elder people to the young ones, or narrated in discussing the miscarriage of a magical rite, or in connexion with some damage done by bush-pigs, or in explanation of a rite given in the course of a regular training in magical lore. Their general function is obviously again the maintenance of tradition.

We have only one mythological narrative (Text 96), the function of which is largely dogmatic and to a certain extent explanatory. It is, however, not an explanation by statement of fact, but rather by correlating native interests in gardens with their geographical orientation. For this myth connects the distribution of gardening and fertility in the eastern area of our tribe with an important event of the past.

Text 82 is a set formula or ditty with a vague magical purport. The body of magical formulae collected in Part VII supplies us with rich material, to which, however, we shall devote special attention later on.

All these texts which we have so far surveyed are either narratives or fixed formulae. Some of the formulae very definitely show an effective or active side. Take utterances such as statements at a *kayaku*, or requests for a gift, or challenges which might set in motion a long series of tribal activities: each of these is a definite act which produces effects, at times on a large scale, and the function

of which is obviously defined by these effects. But the effective force of such verbal acts lies in directly reproducing their consequences; and it is because there is a tribal tradition, sanctioned by various beliefs, institutions and explicit rules, that a certain challenge cannot be ignored, that a certain request must be fulfilled. The pragmatism of such verbal acts is based on the same complicated mechanism as that on which the pragmatism, i.e. the effective force, of all rules of conduct, customs and tribal laws is founded.

What is the real reason why human beings always attach such a great importance to a mere sound—to the *flatus vocis*, which in one of its aspects appears so completely futile and empty, and in another aspect has, in various human creeds and systems, been regarded as that which was at the beginning, as the force which created all things? Can we come any nearer to this problem in the consideration of the material offered by Trobriand agricultural linguistics?

Let us glance at the other texts. Most of them are shorter, more fragmentary and apparently even more remote from a direct active and pragmatic function. Take, for example, the second text in our collection, quoted in Part V (Div. I, § 21), which on the face of it is merely a definition of certain terms. The defining of terms would seem, at first glance, to be the province of a linguistically minded ethnographer rather than of an inhabitant of a coral island. Let us see, therefore, whether this text can naturally be placed within some normal context of native life. In commenting upon it above, I indicated that the speaker himself contextualised his definition and placed it within a natural situation both temporarily and spatially; 'when we clear the bush' and 'then stand on the boundary belt'. Now some such situation often occurs, because the natives have to find the boundary between the fields to be cultivated and the bush. When choosing the land for next year's garden they frequently inspect various parts of the territory. The expressions *ma-kabula-na yosewo*, 'this side uncut bush', *ma-kabula-na buyagu*, 'this side garden-site' might be actually uttered with a future anticipatory reference. Or again a stranger might thus be informed of a fact already obvious—for the natives very often comment verbally on the obvious. Or a small boy who was being instructed in agricultural lore might have a similar text given him. It is thus the informative and educational character of this text which might very well make it a linguistic actuality. Giving information to strangers and instructing children are activities which are constantly going on in Trobriand communities. Again Text 4, quoted in illustration of certain verbal uses, was given to me as a piece of information that might be given to any stranger. The direct speech reproduced in this text preserves its live

and actual character and, since natives are intensely interested in the economic side of affairs, in claims of ownership, in the *towosi's* titles as master of the garden, such an utterance would pass on innumerable occasions in everyday life.

It is beginning perhaps to dawn on us that the texts which, at first blush, appear as merely artificial by-products of ethnographic field-work fit very easily as they are into the normal context of tribal life. Take for instance Text 7: 'It has no name, it is just a weed (*munumunu*)'. This phrase I have heard used time after time to children who, as is the way with children, would pick up an attractive flower or a coloured leaf and enquire its name. For Trobriand children, as do all children, take an interest in names. And again, the preceding text, defining the same word, *munumunu*, 'weed', by its inability to burn (Text 6): 'when we try to blow up a fire and it will not blaze up, this is because it is made of weeds'. Here we can easily reproduce the practical situation: a child saying, *boge a-yuvi gala bi-kata*, 'already I have blown, no it might blaze', and another child with more experience, or a grown-up, answering, *kuligaywo munumunu pela*, 'throw it away since it is a weed'. Instruction in fire-making, discussions about how to make a fire, often leading to disputes and quarrels, are as frequent in the Trobriands as anywhere else where fires are made in the open and where everybody thinks that he is a special expert in the art. Often I have heard, though I did not note down the remark, people commenting on the production of fire by friction: 'it will not catch fire because it is so-and-so (naming a wood which is not suitable); you ought to have used so-and-so (naming one or two of the plants which yield excellent material—dry, brittle and producing the fine powder which serves as tinder)', verbal discriminations, knowledge of nature and knowledge of handicrafts are inextricably mixed up.

And this brings me to two important points: first, when speaking about the educational or instructive function of speech, I do not necessarily mean that a regular lesson is being imparted by a grown-up to a child. In the Trobriands, I should say, that more than half of the instruction was given by one child to another. In the second place, as will be amply illustrated in Part V, an interest in words and in their correct use—even in definitions—is very great indeed among the natives. They are amused at anyone, whether it be a child or a foreigner or a feeble-minded person, who does not use words adequately and in the proper sense. They regard the knowledge of words as a symptom of wisdom. The seat of *nanola*, 'mind', is located in the throat, in the larynx, because, as they say, it is from there that you speak. The word *tonagowa* is indiscriminately

applied to an idiot, a feeble-minded person, a man with an impediment of speech and a hopelessly incapable or clumsy individual.

Thus the series of definition texts concerning botanical expressions (10-13) are undoubtedly exact reproductions of what is said hundreds of times every day among Kiriwinians. Again, Text 15, always accompanied by significant gestures and Text 19, both specially interesting because they contain direct speech in the form of comments, are typical instructions about the planting of taro and coconut. These and similar texts can readily be placed within the context of tribal life; and such short phrases as 16-18 are often recurring fragments of conversations.

There are a number of typical educational texts containing a direct explanation of why certain practical activities or magical ceremonies are carried out. In 29 we have a statement concerning the fertilising power of ashes, the reason why burning has to be done in the gardens. In 41 we have a very similar statement of why a magical ceremony, the first grand inaugural rite, is performed. Such brief sentences as Texts 44-77 would be used during the instruction of the young in gardening, since they include verbal definitions (58-60, 62), the correlation between magical acts and practical activities or phases in the growth of a plant (54-56, 61, 63, 69-71), and texts which state directly the effects of a magical act (44, 52, 64, 68, 72-84).

This concludes our brief survey of most of the texts presented in Part V. The reader will usually find clear indications of how each text was collected and what it represented in actual ethnographic field-work; also what it represents to us as a document in agricultural linguistics. Here I have tried to reset most of these texts into their living context, and thus to show what they mean to the natives themselves. We understand now how natives would naturally use the various types of texts, how the listeners would receive them and what the speakers normally achieve by them.

In the course of our analysis it has become increasingly clear that the contextual definition of each utterance is of the greatest importance for the understanding of it, and that this contextual reference must be two-fold. In the first place, an utterance belongs to a special context of culture, i.e. it refers to a definite subject-matter. Each of the sayings, phrases and narratives which I have here adduced belongs definitely to a certain division of our Supplement and each such division corresponds to an aspect of Trobriand gardening.

But side by side with this context of culture or context of reference, as it might also be called, we have another context: the situation in which the words have been uttered. A phrase, a saying or a few sentences concerning famine may be found in a narrative, or in a

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 similes 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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".<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Appendix to *The Meaning of Meaning* (Ogden and Richards), 1923.

<sup>2</sup> *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.

Trobrianders nothing is so important as gardening. If sociological reality were expressed adequately in native terms we would have expressions for 'agriculture', 'crops', and 'gardens'. But there is no single native term for any of these three key concepts. Again the natives are fully aware of the importance of 'work', 'effort', 'skill' in gardening. Are there any words for these? None. The concept of magical force pervades their whole tribal life, and nowhere is it so prominent as in gardening. Now since throughout Oceania we find the term *mana* or its equivalents, we might expect such a term in the Trobriands. But it does not exist. Are we then justified in assuming that these natives have no concept of magical force? Certainly not. They have the concept very clearly and its existence can be proved.

Let me add at once that all these concepts can be expressed indirectly—by circumlocutions, metaphorical extensions and a somewhat strained or compounded use of homonymous words; but specific terms corresponding to them are absent. 'Agriculture' can be indicated in a roundabout way by one of the several terms for 'garden', such as the word *bagula* (cf. Part V, Div. I, § 18); but *bagula* does not mean either 'garden' or 'agriculture'. The European concept 'agriculture' is invariably implied in native phraseology and not expressed. In the same way the term *kaulo* can be used so as to cover 'crops'. Furthermore, this same term *bagula* may at times express 'work' or even, through such compounds as *tokwaybagula*, 'excellence in gardening', whence we see it can be translated by implication by such words as 'effort' and 'skill'.

One of the prominent characteristics of the Trobriand language is the paucity of terms which stand for general concepts and the multiplicity of words which describe particular subdivisions. In the following part the reader will find long lists of names for varieties of the main crops. We have already spoken about the several expressions covering the term 'garden' (*buyagu*, *bagula*, *baleko*, *kaymata*, *kaymugwa*, *tapopu*, etc.), but on the other hand such general concepts as *valu*, 'village', 'place', 'home'; *pwaypwaya*, 'soil', 'land', 'terra firma', 'cultivable soil'; *towosi*, 'garden magician', 'garden magic', 'specific system of garden magic'; *baleko*, 'unit of gardening', 'garden plot', 'garden as cultivated by one person', are characterised by a multiplicity of homonymous uses.

To us, however, the gaps in abstract concepts and the gluts in concrete words, together with other vagaries in terminology, do not present an insoluble puzzle, for analysis has shown us that native terminology is determined by the needs and interests of everyday life. Words are necessary for the instruction of the young in garden-

ing; they are necessary in the planning of gardens, in preparatory arrangements for gardening and in the disputes which arise about the disposition of gardens. Words are especially necessary as a means of handling things. Therefore we may expect consistent and exact vocabularies for things which are constantly handled. And this is what we find in fact. There are exhaustive, consistent and empirically sound terminologies in the inventory of native implements and for the distinctions between the various yam supports. There is an intelligent analysis crystallised in an adequate terminology of the constituent parts of the fence. The terminology for botanical distinctions is not scientific, but from the practical point of view it is adequate. The main categories of useful and useless plants are differentiated; there is a rich vocabulary for cultivable vines and taro, and an extraordinary poverty of words for any kind of irrelevant plant. Thus the terminology is pragmatically sound: it closely corresponds to the practical interests and activities of the natives, and covers the parts, varieties and peculiarities of the cultivable plants which are manipulated in conjunction with their social and economic activities. Again the minute distinctions between the functional categories of crops—between the yams to be used as seed for the future harvest, those to be offered as a ceremonial gift, and those to be kept for the household—are necessary for the co-ordination of human activities, because the various categories must constantly be referred to in planning, calculating, boasting or criticism. Similarly the exhaustive terminology referring to the series of magical ceremonies and the consistent distinctions between the varieties of human work obviously have a high practical importance. Thus Trobriand terminology in its positive aspect is determined by actual needs, and the gaps in it are accounted for by the fact that a certain type of concept is never used. A general word, for instance, such as agriculture, has no place in the typical speech situation of the Trobrianders. Since everybody has gardens, good gardeners may be distinguished from indifferent ones; but it is impossible to speak about people who do not garden at all. For the same reason it is unnecessary to speak about gardens or gardening or gardeners in general.

These considerations lead us to two conclusions as regards method. In the first place a mere collectioneering of words does not exhaust the problem of terminology. It is as essential to record phrases and sentences as the verbal settings in which these occur. Above all it is essential to study a term in a variety of situational contexts in order to elicit its full meaning or, more correctly, its range of meanings.

In the second place, we have seen that many general concepts can

be expressed indirectly—by implication or by circumlocution; therefore from this point of view also a mere collection of terms with attached meanings is insufficient. And this brings me to the further question: What 'meanings' do exist in any given aspect of native culture? By 'meaning' I understand a concept embodied in the behaviour of the natives, in their interests, or in their doctrines. Thus the concept of magical force, for instance, exists in the very way in which they handle their magic. I have insisted that every magical performance which we have described shows that, to the Trobriander, it is the production, transmission and location of magical force by means of spell and rite. Every magical ceremony is, in its essence, a handling of *mana*. The nearest word for this concept is *megwa*, which, *mutatis mutandis*, covers the meaning of our word 'magic'. Also, in a way which I shall discuss in Part V, they can compensate any deficiency in their vocabulary by extending the meaning of such terms as they possess. But the problem of ascertaining that, for instance, the concept of magical force is embodied in native behaviour and in their whole theoretical approach to magic; and then of ascertaining that they certainly have no term for this concept and can only vicariously express it—this, in spite of its negative quality, is the real problem of ethnographic linguistics.

This last point leads us back to the question of homonyms. We find that a great many of the essential words in the agricultural vocabulary of the Trobrianders are used with a multiplicity of meanings. *Pwaypwaya*, roughly 'land', 'soil', has been listed under six headings; *odila*, 'bush', 'jungle', under five; and *baleko* under three; while *bagula* is used in five and *buyagu* in four definitely distinguishable classes of meaning (cf. Part V, Div. I, § 31). How comes it that important words are made to function in all sorts of subsidiary ways? In my opinion this is by no means a particularly Melanesian or primitive phenomenon. It occurs in all languages and is, in English at least, as pronounced as in Kiriwinian. But the important point is, as I said above, that the failure to distinguish the various meanings in a homonym is one of the most fertile sources of anthropological error.

For it is characteristic of the Trobriand language that the more important the term, the more pronounced is the tendency to use it over a wide range of meanings. *Ka'i*, for example, means anything from 'tree', 'plant', 'vegetable', 'wood as material', 'shrub', 'magical herbs', 'leaves', 'stick' to the abstract concept 'made of wood' or 'long object'; in this latter sense it also functions as a classificatory formative. The words *megwa*, 'magic', *taytu*, 'yam', *kaulo*, 'crops', all correspond to capital concepts and are all used in a variety

of meanings, some of which are remarkably far-fetched and figurative.

When a native sits plaiting a hunk of fibre in the village and is joined by a few others, who discuss what he is doing, there is no need to inform them that he is holding a hunk of fibre, or for them to refer to it in general terms. This is given by the context of the situation. There is, as a matter of fact, no term for 'hunk of fibre' or 'fibre' in Trobriand. But it is important to be able to indicate the material from which the hunk is made, because various kinds of fibre differ in method of handling, in quality and in the purpose for which they are used. He will, therefore, define the hunk either as 'pandanus' or 'ficus' or 'hibiscus', calling it by the same name as he would use for the whole plant, for its flowers or for its fruit. The distinctions made are those which are not contained in the context of situation, and only that which is not in the context is verbally stressed. In English, too, we use the words rose, jasmine or laurel for the plant and its blossom or leaf.

I chose here the example of a hunk of fibre because the verbal identification of its kind or species is particularly important: in the form of fibre, the source of the material is not easily distinguishable by the eye, but the distinction is extremely important as regards its use. In the same way when a magician pulverises 'coral boulder' or 'bush-hen mound' for his mixture he will name these substances, defining what is no longer obvious from the context. The word *kanakenuwa*, 'sand', is used for 'beach', in the same way in which in English we speak about 'the sands', 'the pitch' or 'the turf', or in which the ancient Romans spoke about the 'arena'. The extension of the word *taytu*, which primarily means the plant and then the food derived from it and the year in which the crops ripen, is another example. It would be a commonplace to state that it is wrong either to lump these meanings together in one confused category, or to look for far-fetched explanations of such verbal uses. Yet when it comes to words such as the Melanesian *mana* or primitive kinship terms, the ethnographer does not bother to investigate their various uses, or to find out whether these are definite homonyms, that is, different words with the same sound. He lumps the meanings together, and the arm-chair anthropologist evolves confusing sociological theories out of these confused data.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Usually such words have been represented as indicating one concept, and their variety of uses attributed to a vagueness or confusion in the native mind which lumps meanings together without distinction, or to pre-logical mentality, or to 'poverty of language'. Thus a misinterpreted observation has been crystallised by erroneous theory.

It is clear that the homonymous use of the same word in a variety of meanings is not due to confusion. In the examples adduced we can see that this apparent 'poverty of language' or 'misuse of words' fulfils a very definite function. When a Trobriand magician describes a pinch of powder as 'bush-hen mound' he does not create confusion. On the contrary, he introduces something familiar into an undefined situation. By using this word he tells us how, wherefrom and in what way he has produced his material (cf. M.F. 2 in Ch. II, Sec. 4). In this one word he also summarises an important element in Trobriand magical theory, that is, the sympathetic use of substances. He also perhaps reminds his listeners of one or two passages in his formulae. Thus, given the context of culture, in this example familiarity with magical formulae and performances, the use of the same sound with a different meaning contributes the one element which is lacking in the situation, and yet necessary for common work or common knowledge of what goes on.

The naming of the year after the most important object in the principal economic activity points to the same conclusion. The word *taytu* underlines the most crucial aspect of the sequence of the seasons, and its theoretical, emotional and even pragmatic value is clear.

At times the use of the same sound with different meanings implies even more. When the magician describes the fields chosen for next year's gardens as 'garden-site', meaning the future garden, this anticipatory lumping does not create confusion: the natives are well aware that the bush has not yet been cut on these. But this word, officially and ceremonially uttered at the *kayaku*, lays a legal stress on the relevant aspect which is not given in the situation. It declares "we have decided on using these and no other fields for next year's garden". In the analysis of magical formulae we shall see that when the magician addresses the soil as *buyagu*, 'garden-site', in his inaugurative magic (M.F. 2), when he affirms that the 'belly of the garden rises', 'swells', 'bursts forth with fertility', the metaphor which here defines the soil as a blossoming garden has a more than legal import. It is the essence of magic that, by the affirmation of a condition which is desired but not yet fulfilled, this condition is brought about (cf. Part VI, Div. V.). What might be called the creative metaphor of magic is at the bottom of a great deal of homonymous usage. In social flattery, in the designation of people by titles which are just a little above their rank, in the incorrect and flattering use of terms of affection or kinship, we have the same principle of verbal magic. The word claims more than actually exists, and thus places upon the person addressed certain obligations, or puts him under some sort of emotional constraint.



Examples of the same thing are frequent in what might be called Trobriand legal phraseology. The presentation of a gift is always accompanied by some verbal statement which anticipates the completion of the transaction as well and indicates its nature: 'thy valuable', 'thy visiting gift', 'thy tribute'. Such ritual phrases are both subtly flattering and imply a request for a reciprocal return, thus stressing what to the Trobriander is essential in this type of legal act, namely, that a gift puts the recipient under an obligation to the giver.

This point is so important that I will add one or two more examples. Take the word *pwaypwaya*, 'soil', 'ground', 'that on which we tread and on which we labour'. Why is the word used when the crew of a benighted or strayed canoe sight terra firma? Why do they use a familiar word rather than a specific term with a meaning such as 'terra firma', or 'distant shore', or 'land and not sea'? Thus posed, the question answers itself: because they want to convey, not a fine abstract shade of meaning, but just the fact of fortunate, joyful familiarity. The crew have been in distress, hungry and thirsty, frightened of the possibility of drifting astray; they hail that which means safety and comfort by the name which is fraught with the emotional associations of 'land', 'soil', 'ground on which we usually tread'. A new word would create confusion and strain, and would be an act of pedantry incompatible with the degree of emotional stress. The word already well familiar brings intellectual and emotional satisfaction and creates also the necessary pragmatic response.<sup>1</sup>

The word for 'village', *valu*, designates primarily that special portion of the earth which is the most relevant and most familiar to every Trobriand native. It is obvious to us now why it is extended to mean 'place' in the abstract, and 'home', with all the emotional sociological implications of that term.

There is no abstract word for 'stone'. A coral stone, a rock, the material of which it is composed are all designated by the term *dakuna*. The natives do not lump these meanings together; but dead coral is the most familiar of this group of objects and, as it is little used for practical or technical purposes, anything made of it can thus be described without confusion. The word for stones of plutonic origin imported from the South is *binabina*. *Binabina*

<sup>1</sup> The reader who is not intelligent enough to see that here, once again, I discuss the nature of homonym, metaphor and drive to meaning in general, and not a freakish feature of Trobriand or 'savage' vernacular, will not profit by a reminder. The intelligent one does not need it, but there are always intermediate cases—*verb. sat.*

covers rocks of various types and composition, stressing only their alien origin and the non-coral character of their substance; for the significant characteristic of these is that they are not procurable in the Trobriands, but in the d'Entrecasteaux Archipelago. They are not more exactly specified because they do not play a very important part in Trobriand technology, but are mainly used for certain magical purposes, especially in the *vilamalia* magic (cf. Ch. VII, Sec. 1). In the word *kema*, *utukema*, on the other hand, the material is stressed—the word being applicable to all objects made of the volcanic tuff out of which the stone implements were made in the olden days. Here the word covers the rock in the mass, chips or lumps detached from it, the implement made out of it in process of manufacture, the finished blade, and the axe ready for use. This variety of meanings does not create confusion when the word is used within a well-defined context. When we speak about a man swinging an axe or cutting with it, it is obvious that he is not swinging a rock or a chip or a lump. Still less is there any confusion when the word is used within a pragmatic context. On the other hand, the similarity of the term introduces the necessary unity and gives the familiar element within the situation.

Our conclusion is then that homonymous extensions of meaning and the multiplicity of uses of each word are not due to any negative phenomenon, such as mental confusion, poverty of language, wanton or careless usage. On the contrary, homonyms add a great deal to the efficiency of language. They emphasise the familiar, or the practically important; they foreshadow legal duties and reciprocities; in the creative metaphor of magic they evoke the desired object or event.

This shows us that, in order to define a sound, we must discover, by careful scrutiny of verbal contexts, in how many distinguishable meanings it is used. Meaning is not something which abides within a sound; it exists in the sound's relation to the context. Hence if a word is used in a different context it cannot have the same meaning; it ceases to be one word and becomes two or more semantically distinguishable units.

We have therefore to index the meanings of native terms quite as carefully as is done in any good English dictionary. If possible it is important to indicate which is probably the primary and fundamental meaning and to establish the relations between this fundamental meaning and its extensions.

I think that, theoretically, the more resolutely we face this problem of homonymous and metaphorical extensions, the clearer we shall be about the magical use of words, the part played by general

concepts in primitive mentality and the nature of words in their intellectual, emotional and pragmatic rôle.

*Summary of Part IV:—*

Why have I given this long theoretical introduction? I wanted to make clear my method of presentation and justify it. I also wanted to bring out fully the theoretical value of my material.

As to the method of presentation, I think that roundabout and explicit descriptions give a better picture of the language than a succinct and bald collection of texts with commentaries, vocabularies and grammatical notes.

Incidentally we have been able to elicit the following principles and practical rules:

(1) The inadequacy of translating words by equating them to English equivalents and the purely provisional character of the employment of English words as mnemonic counters;

(2) We tried to show definitely that the lumping of homonyms as one word is incorrect and that to index the meanings of these is both feasible and indispensable;

(3) We made an onslaught on the idea that native terminologies represent native mental categories. It is always necessary to show where terminological distinctions are full and adequate and where they are entirely misleading;

(4) It is in the multiple uses of general terms and in the hypertrophy of concrete expressions that the greatest difficulty lies. We gave a theoretical explanation of this phenomenon and adduced a certain amount of material to back up our theoretical views;

(5) The contextualising of texts, phrases and words, the description of where such words occur and how they are used, has been a constant feature of our analysis.

But it is the insistent linking up of ethnographic descriptions with linguistic analysis which provides language with its cultural context and culture with its linguistic reinterpretation. Within this latter we have continually striven to link up grammar with the context of situation and with the context of culture. Here the distinctions between pragmatic speech, educational speech, legal and ceremonial utterances, narrative and pure gossip appears to me to furnish us with certain concepts and principles which ought to be more fully used in ethnographic work.

All this has enabled us theoretically to give and justify a definition of meaning of such concepts as 'context of situation' and the 'pragmatic reality of speech'—concepts which I have developed

previously, but which the present material allows me more fully to vindicate.

I am aware that in many ways this linguistic analysis may be difficult to master as it has been difficult to compose. But theory without material is sterile and material without theory is not illuminating. And since on many points I had to struggle for a new method in my own mind and fight for it against potential misunderstanding, I should like to claim that the effort expended on the reading, and perhaps on the writing, of this part has not been altogether wasted.

PART V

*CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM AGRICULTURAE  
QUIRIVINIENSIS;*

*or*

THE LANGUAGE OF GARDENS