

## FROM THE MEANING OF MEANING TO THE EMPIRES OF THE MIND: OGDEN'S ORTHOLOGICAL ENGLISH<sup>1</sup>

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As part of a project I have been engaged in on "Modern Prophets of Language,"<sup>2</sup> I have been investigating the creation of so-called BASIC English, the word *BASIC* being an acronym for *British - American - Scientific - International - Commercial*, the various realms or spheres in which it is to be useful at least as an auxiliary language, if not a first language. Of course, for British, American, and even Australian, New Zealander, etc. speakers of English as their primary language, this takes the form of a specific *lexical register* that contains, other than numerals and such, 850 permissible or included lexical primes. For others, as for example the immigrants taught it in Massachusetts during the 1940s, it became the primary exposure to at least a form of usable English, one that functionally instantiates something of what we now recognize as a *pidginized variety* of English.

It would be of some interest in its own right to examine Basic English from these points of view. One might try to see whether or not, for example, a non-English-speaking learner could go on and build on the pidginized variety so as to convert it into a functional lexical register of more fully developed English competence. And one might try to see what paradigms of lexical conjugates<sup>3</sup> are associated with the lexical register of Basic English in such a person's competence, and how various indexical values emerge in the use of such conjugate sets. But that is not my purpose here.

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<sup>1</sup> I thank Michael Locher for his help as my research assistant during the initial period of bibliographic search and gathering of materials on Ogden and Richards, tasks he carried out with distinction.

<sup>2</sup> A manuscript of this title was produced as a preliminary report for a lecture to the Institute for the Humanities and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan on 23 October 1992. I thank these institutions and their respective heads, Professors James Winn and Richard Ford, as well as Professor Bruce Mannheim, for the arrangements and support that facilitated that project and presentation. For this project, in addition to the compilation of an archive of newspaper, magazine, and journal articles, and the reading of the works of the authors themselves, a number of other sources have been especially useful for basic biographical information; for Ogden, see Florence & Anderson (eds.) 1977, and for Richards, Russo 1989.

<sup>3</sup> The term comes from Geertz's (1968 [1960]: 287) usage "sets of linked conjugates" for the paradigms of lexicalized register-alternants in Javanese honorification. For a more adequate analysis, see Silverstein 1979: 216-27; Errington 1985 and 1988.

Nor, moreover, is it my purpose merely to practice what I have come to call "smirk anthropology," here in particular "smirk linguistic anthropology." I do not wish merely to hold up the specimen of my own culture to the necessarily ironic - and frequently ridiculing or dismissive - postmodern gaze, the ostensive display being actually all there is of an argument in such a rhetorical move, which indexes a recognition that it would be drowned out by knowing laughter. To be sure, there is something of crackpot science here in C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, respectively the impresario and the ringmaster of this transcontinental circus. But Ogden and Richards' real problem in this respect was not that they were wrong, even ludicrously wrong, for we are all 'wrong' in the technical sense if we are scientists. The example they present us here lies in showing (1) the particular location - institutional, ideological, and processual - of 'language' as a phenomenon (and phenomenon of contemplation) in the Anglo-American sociocultural universe, and particularly (2) the location of social rights that render authoritative or legitimate people's construals of language, with all their profound practical consequences.

This I take to be the central importance of the particular example, the wild, attention-grabbing success of the Basic English movement for nearly twenty years, from about 1930, when Ogden's scheme was becoming widely known, to 1950, when he closed up his Orthological Institute in London. For in the Anglo-American sociocultural universe, language is something in what one would indeed call the "public sphere." And in this particular moment of high intellectual modernism and heightened inter-War despair of the well-intentioned liberal left, it was the mobilization in the public sphere of the paraphernalia of applied science, even such insurgent science as Ogden professed in "orthology," the intersection of psychology, philosophy, and linguistics,<sup>4</sup> that was the basis for the authority with which Ogden and Richards eventually reached their wartime success in the governmental realms of both America and Britain (gaining the attention and approval of both FDR and Churchill). Literate, literary man of science and practical, scientifically-inclined man of letters, Ogden and Richards united the imaginative duality at the cultural boundary where language as a phenomenon is in fact theorized by the institutional structures of the educated elite.

And, of course, in the cultural ideology of this elite, language is the indicator of thought. So in this respect in particular, Ogden and Richards elaborate on the dualistic folk-view of language-form-as-accidence and conceptual-thought-as-essence in our nontechnical cultural view of the matter. At this boundary of literate art and

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<sup>4</sup> Observe that this intersection developed as an "insurgency" within the American academy in two forms in recent decades, first as "cognitive studies" at, e.g., Harvard-MIT and then more broadly as "cognitive science" in a number of these and other institutions, incorporating the computer as both vehicle and metaphor for the object of study-and-simulation, mind. In a sense, Ogden was far in advance of his contemporaries in theorizing the existence of interesting work at this triple intersection, in the Mertonian sense of the historical sociology of scientific knowledge. Note, however, that both Ogden's orthology and later cognitive science are firmly rooted in the tradition of conceptualizing an autonomous, individual mind as the locus of knowledge, action, etc., rather than recognizing an order of social (or sociocultural) factuality that is predicable only of groups of people to the extent one can recognize organization of the groupness and of individuals' membership-orientation to that groupness.

mental science Ogden's orthology, like Korzybski's "general semantics," wishes to apply a therapy of reworking language-form to cure the disease of conceptual thought. A talking cure, as it were, where, in contrast to psychoanalysis, the control over the mode of talk that the lexical enregisterment of Basic English demands of its users will lead them into denotational utopia, marked by clear, unambiguous, and easily communicated thoughts.

Note how consonant are these aspects of the Basic English movement with intellectual trends in Europe and America during this period, all being expressed in the emergence of a suspiciousness of ordinary phenomenal language-as-discourse (not to be countered until the heighday of J. L. Austin et al. and the last years of Wittgenstein, at Ox- and -bridge, respectively). As a social phenomenon that for them constituted the *pars pro tota* of all human symbolic behavior, language-as-discourse came to view for intellectuals and professionals in the public sphere as something to be given a critical, theoretically-based interrogation or "reading" on behalf of the culture-hero, the individual human psyche, who could, in a sense, be victimized - the term is decidedly of our own political era, note - by being led astray by its own talk.

Imagine with what great force this was driven home to Ogden and Richards on Armistice Day - the original one - in 1918, as they watched Ogden's bookstore in Cambridge being thoroughly trashed by an angry mob led by the medical students. Ogden had been publishing pacifist-leaning and mildly German-tolerant material in the war years; this was his punishment by the crowd of semiotic victims who were, our theorists concluded, reacting more to the "emotive" than to the "symbolic" and "referential" meanings in the verbal and other signs that were the tools of publishing (as of other intellectual endeavor). Thus, they report, was *The Meaning of Meaning* (Ogden & Richards 1923) born as a project and thesis on that occasion.

Through this connection, one can perhaps appreciate how vividly the "madness" of the War was presented to the Cambridge-Bloomsburyite network (the Woolfs, the Bells, Bertrand Russell, Keynes, the Stracheys, etc. etc.), and how such an incident of the public suppression and destruction of the artifacts of thought was construable as essentially thoughtless. That is, it could be seen as a result - like the War itself - of the way that language in a pathological form mediates social, i.e., aggregate and communicable, pathologies of thought that lead inevitably to war, destruction, and social pathology. (Note then that the individual's inherent, logical reasonableness is masked by pathologies of language and thus leads, under the communicative reconstruction of sociality-of-monads, to what appears to be a social-level pathology.)

And even the intellectuals and professionals concerned with language elsewhere than Bloomsbury - even those in German-speaking Europe, indeed! - were formulating parallel kinds of theories that were at once clarifying the nature of mathematico-logical thought, holding "natural" languages up to this clarificational model by seeing them through it, and at the same time finding "natural" languages

deficient with respect to it by conceptual undercoding or semiotic superplenitude.<sup>5</sup> There is thus the potential for a kind of *ex cathedra* priestly access to the refined or purified version of language-used-for-pure-symbolic-and-creative-thought, an enregisterment of an almost diglossic situation for those who have mastered the discursive style of scientific-expository register.

Now Ogden, to be sure, was not recommending that everyone learn how to perform the kinds of operations on everyday English to render it orthologically purified, even as Basic. But he was taking the stance of the socially aware and concerned scientist - just as, inversely, Richards was always encouraging the masses (of Harvard students, at any rate) to be each and every one of 'em his own practical critic. And as concerned scientist, Ogden was formulating and launching a tool toward the end of clarified and rationalized "pure" denotation, free of messily-encoded emotion and calibrated to "reality."

And with such a metric, developed out of Jeremy Bentham's theory of "(linguistic) fictions," which Ogden edited and published with an extensive commentary, the natural English language is found wanting: Too luxuriously hypertrophied in lexicon, with many words and lexicalized expressions that seem to be used to denote "the same thing"; with, indeed, many words that seem to be used to refer to what Bentham and Ogden and their like consider nothing at all. Like Bentham, Ogden had no use for verbs, in fact precious little use for predication at all as a functional concept. And one can see that he might well have been happy as one of Jonathan Swift's Sages of Lagado, who dispensed altogether with words in favor of the "real" things of verbal referring, which they merely exhibited (*demonstratio ostentiva*). For "real" things, successfully and correctly referable-to by means of "literal" lexical simplexes<sup>6</sup> independent of other, contextual encumbrances, was what Ogden was after. Hence, by eliminating synonyms and other elements of lexical-conjugate sets that are "emotively"-based, by invoking phrasal and compositional paraphrasis whenever possible (e.g., *tears* = *eye-water*), Ogden and his devoted assistants, principally Miss L.W. Lockhart, managed, by Spring, 1928, to achieve a pruning or slash-and-burn clearing through the *OED* and yield 850 such lexical primes or word-units as the elements of Basic English.

What is of interest is *not* the obviously 'positioned' nature of the resulting list.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, the fierce sociohistorical locatability of the items (e.g., *ink*, *porter*)

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<sup>5</sup> One has in mind here the development of formal mathematical logic (in which Russell was a major early player) and the use of it to clarify the nature of scientific empiricism in the philosophy of science, under conceptions of operationalism, physicalism, logical constructivism, and so forth, one such trend culminating, for example, in Vienna Circle doctrines and perspectives that proved to be so influential for more than a generation in such fields as psychology and linguistics especially in America.

<sup>6</sup> Note that, in phrasal-head position, with their minimal obligatory inflections, if any, such lexical simplexes occur as word forms, sometimes identical with the citation forms of metalinguistic operations by native speakers.

<sup>7</sup> In symposium presentation, this was reproduced and distributed from the chart in Leonard Bloomfield's presentation copy of Ogden's *Psyche Miniature* series essay, *Debabelization* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1931), now in the library of The University of Chicago. The February, 1934 inscription "To Professor Bloomfield from the Author" sends Bloomfield to pp. 155

is almost too sad for us to contemplate retrospectively, given the pretensions of the list to *universality* in the mode of John Wilkins and other 17th century Puritan scientists. And also quite apparent is the expected semiotic myopia of the native speakers Ogden & Co. such that the whole grammar of English disappeared from view in their creation, except for the morphological paradigm of 'plural' -s and a few other such things. The real grammar, organizing the grammatical categories of Saussurean sense for us linguists in highly intricate and complex patterns of arrangement, appears here as merely commonsensical modes whereby, for the native speaker, lexical units are combined in "natural" phraseology. After all, shouldn't the grammar of transitive *take* as quasi-causative to intransitive *go* be, well, obvious? Tell that to a contemporary like Sapir, Bloomfield, or Whorf!<sup>8</sup>

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ff., where he could have read:

"It will thus be seen that Basic English fulfils in a high degree *all* the conditions laid down by professors Sapir, Bloomfield, Boas, Gerig, and Krapp as requisite for the success of an International Auxiliary Language."

We can understand, perhaps, why Bloomfield quietly passed the volume on to the library, saving the institution paying for it.

<sup>8</sup> Whorf addresses Basic English directly in a passage of his ca. 1936 manuscript, posthumously published (Carroll [ed.] 1956: 65-86) called "A linguistic consideration of thinking in primitive communities." Noting (1956: 82-83) that such "social prophets" as H.G. Wells had been promoting "Ogden's ingenious artificial language called Basic English," Whorf goes on to observe that

"Basic English appeals to people because it seems simple. But those to whom it seems simple either know or think they know English - there's the rub! Every language of course seems simple to its own speakers because they are unconscious of structure. But English is anything but simple - it is a bafflingly complex organization, abounding in covert classes, cryptotypes, taxemes of selection, taxemes of order, significant stress patterns and intonation patterns of considerable intricacy. English is indeed almost in a class by itself as regards prosodic complexity, being one of the most complex languages on earth in this respect; on the whole, it is as complicated as most polysynthetic languages of America, which fact most of us are blissfully unaware of. The complex structure of English is largely covert, which makes it all the harder to analyze. Foreigners learning English have to absorb it unconsciously - a process requiring years - by dint of constant exposure to bombardment by spoken English in large chunks; there exists at this time no grammar that can teach it. As with Basic English, so with other artificial languages - underlying structures and categories of a few culturally predominant European tongues are taken for granted; their complex web of presuppositions is made the basis of a false simplicity. We say 'a large black and white hunting dog' and assume that in Basic English one will do the same. ... The English adjectives belong to cryptotypes having definite position assignments, and their formula is a definite and complex one, but lo, the poor Indian organizes his thinking quite differently. The person who would use Basic English must first know or learn the immensely intricate covert structure of actual 'English as she is spoke.'

"We see here the error made by most people who attempt to deal with such social questions of language - they naively suppose that speech is nothing but a piling up of LEXATIONS, and that this is all one needs in order to do any and every kind of rational thinking; the far more important thought materials provided by structure and configurative rapport are beyond their horizons. It may turn out that the simpler a language becomes overtly, the more it becomes dependent upon cryptotypes and other covert formations, the

It is of particular interest that Ogden, who even as a Cambridge undergraduate carried organizations and publications on his back and shoulders as their chief or only responsible party, operated outside of academia *per se*, having no regular Cambridge or London appointment in a recognizable field. But ever the intellectual entrepreneur, Ogden promoted the adoption of Basic through the institutions of applied science in the public sphere that he himself created and staffed. By 1931, Ogden and Richards were situated trans-Atlantically, Ogden in Cambridge-and-London, Richards on an extended visit in Cambridge, Mass., where he was to remain after 1939. In the early 1920s, Ogden had created *Psyche*, which was an organ of his Orthological Institute and of the humanist sensibility of the movement he hoped to foster in educated highbrow circles. He founded, edited, and vigorously contributed to, Kegan, Paul's *International Library of Philosophy and Science* (of which some 110 volumes were ultimately to be published), his reprint-packaging *Psyche Miniatures* series (many extracted from Ogden's own prose in the magazine), and others as well. He founded - and, it might be said, essentially constituted - the Orthological Institute, first in Cambridge, then in Bloomsbury. He wrote voluminously for the middle-to-high-brow press - even in America, *Saturday Review*, *Harper's*, etc. Richards, too, was, from his nominal Harvard appointment as lecturer in the English composition and rhetoric program at its School of Education (he was only much later to become the prestigious University Professor he was in later years), something more of a public intellectual, vigorously publishing accessible material on bringing science - especially orthological science (though he did not, in this cis-Atlantic context, faithfully adhere to the term) - to criticism and thereby, through reading and writing, to thought.

So note the foundation laid among the educated reading public, and the semblance of authority these writers were building up for themselves and their programmatic extensions-of-self. We can trace the index of the increase in their emergence to public view in the magazine accounts of their work on Basic English and related matters. Over the course of time, from 1923, when *The Meaning of Meaning* was published, Ogden and Richards appear as authors in book reviews of their textual productions, to be sure. But increasingly in the press, there are what we can term *personalia* articles, focused on the personages themselves as well as on their specific texts. And by the time of the Second World War, the work promoting Basic through teaching texts and a vast panoply of media innovations becomes a recurrent feature that combines the *personalia* aspect of the work with the contribution of this metonymic British-American transatlantic cooperation to win the

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more it conceals unconscious presuppositions, and the more its lexations become variable and indefinable. Wouldn't this be a pretty kettle of fish for the would-be advocates of a 'simple' international tongue to have had a hand in stewing up! For sound thinking in such fields we greatly need a competent world survey of languages."

Observe the echoes here both of Bloomfield's innovative 1933 terminology "eme"-icizing grammar in terms of minimal units of formal grammatical arrangement, called *taxemes*, that are completely autonomous of the facts of surface segmentability or *lexical* form, and, in its moralistic punch-line, of Sapir's earlier discussions of international auxiliary language, to be based on universal grammar of grammatical processes and grammatical concepts, and illustrated in the monographs "Totality," "Grading," and "The expression of ending-point relations..." and other work stimulated by Sapir's encounter with Alice Vanderbilt Morris of the International Auxiliary Language Association.

war and get on with the reconstruction of the world order. This movement in exposure is not, of course, by accident. As early as an editorial on "The future of English" that Ogden published in the January, 1928 *Psyche* (volume 8, number 3), he trumpets the importance of the orthological approach to this question:

Philologists will surely be the last to discover the bearing of modern psychology on their devoted labours, the last to appreciate the uses of the gramophone in linguistic technique, and the last to realize that on the application of their labours and that technique the future of Empires may now depend.

The future of Africa lies with those who can master African languages, and still more with those who can devise a more practical medium of communication, in commerce and in racial interchange, for our black brethren. That medium is likely to be some form of American, but there is no reason why it should not be English. The future, in fact, will be with the language which can simplify itself most rapidly, and the simplification of English is one of the most important branches of Orthology.

[W]ith a command of 1000 easily memorized names of common objects, situations, and occurrences, and some 500 linguistic devices for operating and connecting them, a foreigner could make himself more fluent and intelligible after a three months course in English than most Scotchmen and any bucolic after fifty years. Chaucer's English, Milton's English, or Oxford English, would then take their place with Latin, Welsh, or Chemical formulae as accomplishments for antiquarian, literary, local, scientific, or polite society, and the business of international communication might leap forward a thousand years.

So the dream of winning, as it were, the World War of words, and of making English - particularly British-based English - already has its roots in how Ogden links simplification of vocabulary, "names," note, "of common objects, situations, and occurrences," to "the business of international communication" and thence to "the future of Africa" and "the future of Empires" more generally.

In the domain of the public sphere that articulates the social utility of scientific knowledge, orthologists, like others, were offering a way of making language into a well-honed instrument of essentially Bauhaus design, form following function just so as to allow us, Humpty-Dumpty like, to be masters of the words rather than vice-versa. Everyone on the political left or right seemed to recognize the essentially political nature of Basic English. In writing of "The meaning of C. K. Ogden" for *The New Republic* in 1934 (78.328-31), the late Kenneth Burke draws out the urgency left-inclined intellectuals gave to the task:

If language is the fundamental instrument of human cooperation, and if there is an 'organic flaw' in the nature of language, we may well expect to find this organic flaw revealing itself throughout the texture of society. If the 'nature of our thinking is determined by the nature of our productive forces,' it becomes vitally necessary to consider what part

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<sup>9</sup> Note here the superstructure/ (infra)structure relationship characteristic of Marx-influenced formulations, which would be both said and (of necessity) unsaid for the savvy readership of *The New Republic*. I have found no evidence of this particular Marxist turn-of-phrase in Ogden - quite the contrary - but Burke's political affiliations and positions were, of course, and are well-known. Note further down in the quotation the nicely Vygotsky- or Bakhtin-like functionalism of "our speech [=language], which evolved out of use, again echoing the practice-before-thought/structure

the genius of man's key productive force, language, has played in determining the nature of his thinking, his notions as to what 'real issues' are, and thence his ways of dealing with them.

For such reasons, a thoroughly documented technique of linguistic skepticism might be considered as essential to human welfare as any single line inquiry.

...We have reached a point in culture where our speech, which evolved out of use, must be made still more useful - otherwise it will continue to serve best the needs of salesmanship, political landslides, wars and Hitlerite 'sanitation.' "

One can only be impressed by the prescience of Burke (was he writing tongue-in-cheek?) in invoking the Benthamite orthological project as a machine-shop for instruments to counter Nazism. For this is what ultimately prevailed, in the end.

Indeed, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill eventually came around, in mid-war, to endorse and even embrace Basic English as a kind of Pax Anglophonica for the post-Axis world. Churchill, in his address at Harvard (then Richards' university) on 6 September 1943, declared that "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind," and sought such empires by "spread[ing] our common language even more widely throughout the globe and, without seeking selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable amenity and birthright" (cited in *Time* 22.82 [20 September 1943]).<sup>10</sup> By this time, Richards had long since been collaborating with Walt Disney Studios to produce animated teaching cartoons to take Basic to such places as China, one of the sites of imperial struggle yet to be resolved. And Ogden had begun negotiations, eventually ill-fated, to have His Majesty's government take over the work of the Orthological Institute in this practical realm of Basic.

So the curious oppositional irony existed, as Churchill was accepting his honorary Harvard degree that September, of having the American professional linguistic establishment mobilized at 165 Broadway in New York City to crank out the Army Language courses in a variety of intensities so as to make contact across languages and cultures feasible, while on the West Coast Walt Disney and Richards had been preparing for linguistic homogenization through the instrumentality of Basic. That ultimately things changed in the demobilization, the Army Language Program becoming the famous or infamous "oral-aural" or "direct" or (barbarous) "linguistic" method teaching program in departments of language and literature across America, the Basic program for places like China falling with Chiang Kai-Shek's government to be replaced by Mao's applied linguistics, is merely an historical eventuality of a continuous cultural era.

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<sup>10</sup> Albert Guérard wrote in answer to this Churchillian and, as he discovered, orthologist's attitude in the 20 September 1943 issue of *The New Republic* (109.400), in his review of *Basic English and Its Uses* by I.A. Richards, then recently published. Entitled "Linguistic imperialism," Guérard's piece finds that "Mr. Richards betrays, or rather displays, the magnificent insularity which is the pride of the Anglo-Saxon mind" - with a wonderful pun on *insularity* - and invites Richards to show that he is not "a chauvinist in 'orthological' clothing" by agreeing that "All dreams of 'imperialism' should be exorcized, including linguistic imperialism, which sums up all the rest."



In retrospect, we can, I think, see the particular coming-together of orders of ideological licensing of the Ogdenian project, and the very emblematic embodiment of that project in the Ogden-Richards dyad and its particular institutional location. At its heighday emblemizing an Anglo-American partnership between Britain (and Cambridge) and the United States (and Cambridge, Mass.), between a main Orthological Institute and its branch office at the particularly anglophile oldest private university (historically connected to the other Cambridge), Ogden and Richards were distinctively public figures in the circles in which, in those years, "educated public opinion" translated into important decision-making. In the United States, certainly, support by The Rockefeller Foundation for a Harvard project constituted an important imprimatur of legitimacy and authority, for example. Such a project would, perhaps, more easily enter into the consciousness of an FDR (Harvard class of 1904), surrounded as he was by people such as Stuart Chase and others of his "Brain Trust." (Harvard and the Rockefeller Foundation were "private" institutions, to be sure, but still perhaps a mere quarter-step away from governmental power at this time.)

Of course in Depression-era and Wartime America and Britain, the ideological project focused on saving the polity from fascisms, communisms, etc. on right and left, while ameliorating the lot of truly suffering populations within the orbit of liberal political institutions, based on individual rights - grounded in absolutes beyond those institutions, recall, in political theory - and the rational participation of individuals. It is in such a context that the specific dualisms and dichotomies of the Ogden-Richards project - like Count Korzybski's project of "General Semantics" that flourished coevally - have such an appeal: The amelioration and spreading of rationality as a therapeutic antidote to these political threats, which are constituted as the antithesis of individual, freely-exercised rationality. Basic English is the instrumental route into rational English (that most rational of languages!), a route that is quick, efficient, and achievable in the pressed circumstances of a world needing a quick fix before it spins out of control. So as *The Meaning of Meaning* articulated the distinction between referential (read: Rational) and emotive (read: Irrational) functions of words, BASIC was presented and promoted as the quick way into the strictly referential content of English, the strict adherence to which, it can be seen, constituted a longed-for condition beyond the malaise located in this very dualism of the human psyche.<sup>11</sup> Ogden and Richards' position, grounded in philosophical analysis and the paraphernalia of academic, even scientific, research, is licensed as embodying the disinterested position of rationality as much as it theorizes that very positioning and a route to it for everyone-and-anyone who will learn BASIC. It is, in short, "science" applied, i.e., applied science, with therefore the confidence that this licensed authority brings.

The question now is, to what extent we ourselves as students of language in our society still live in this location in the public sphere. We might note that the very concept of a "public sphere" might be analyzed as really constituted out of a

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<sup>11</sup> As noted by Russo in his comprehensive biography of Richards, this dichotomy of 'rationality' vs. 'affect' underpins all of Richards' literary criticism, which, like the Basic English project, flowed out of the orthological analysis of sign phenomena and mind in the Edwardian Cambridge milieu of humanism. See esp. Russo 1989: 35-385.

projection of certain necessary conditions for rational discourse to be broadcast from anywhere-and-hence-everywhere-yet-nowhere - such as Wilkin and Bentham and Ogden and ... have been after - onto a structure of supposedly inhabitable role-relations abstractable from everything else sociocultural, especially positioned interests differentially valorized. But here is, perhaps, where our own expository expertise about language actually makes its authoritativeness indexically - even emblematically - manifest. There are, to be sure, theories around in our professional-academic field - think of Anna Wierzbicka or of George Lakoff - which duplicate in large part one or another of the presumptions of the Ogdenian mission, with at least as much evangelical fervor. And there are "applied linguistics" projects galore under such a departmental rubric, from saving to reforming to suppressing languages and varieties, each making its authoritative appeal to governments which, as the old saying implies, create "languages" out of "dialects" by calling in the army and/or navy on their behalf. But as anthropologists we must examine the very culturally and historically specific class- and sector-bound modernism of this cluster of institutionalized activities. So doing constitutes a probing of the possibly essential, or inherently presupposing, relationship between the very concept of a "public sphere" and its "public" on the one hand, and, on the other, the location in some embodyable scientific authority of the mystical power to create or project "language" from text (entextualizations) in the applied science mode. These authoritative scientific statements have the dangerous effect of seeming abductively to turn otherwise leaden surface tokens of ideologically democratic rationality into underlying golden semiotic types. And we must beware of the tendencies to alchemy in each of us that may seem to come with the professional-intellectual license.

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