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English Language Learning in Nigeria: In Search of an Enabling Principle

Introduction: Ambivalence towards English

In Nigeria in the early 1960s, independence came with inevitable revaluations that did not spare the language with which the project of colonization was accomplished and sustained over many generations, a language that had also been bequeathed as a legacy. This questioning insinuated ambivalence in thinking about English in Nigeria. On the one hand, the permanency and pervasiveness of the role of this language in national life was recognized and the fact inscribed in constitution after constitution (see, for instance, the 1999 Constitution, chapter five). With regard to participation in international affairs, its role was clearly irreplaceable. Therefore, English was to retain a position of central importance in the educational curriculum. On the other hand, the decision makers and curriculum planners appeared to be observing certain unwritten cautions towards this legacy; and the result was to dampen interest in the learning of English and the intellectual culture sustained by the educational system handed on. For example, if the language of the former colonist was admittedly a needed tool, why not keep it simply as a tool? In any event, it could not be the case that the entire content of the colonial baggage which had made its way into the educational curriculum was equally needed. English literature and English and European history were some of the elements of this curriculum of which the utility seemed hard to explain. Therefore they were down-graded in status from key components of the curriculum to electives or something worse. It is not clear what or if any question was asked about the role of Latin - which was not the language of the colonizing power - in the educational system. But it too had to go. The withdrawal of these components of colonial education or their reduction to the status of electives in the new curriculum was to have unexpected consequences.

The low performance of Nigerian students in English which has been worsening since the mid-1970s is often attributed to factors like poor attitudes towards the second language, low investment in education, poor training of teachers, non-availability of teaching aids, poor teaching methods, government take-over of schools, resulting in poor supervision and lowering of standards, poor social environment,poor motivation among the learners and the teachers, lack of commitment among the teachers, the explosion in in-take and student population,

with consequent pressure and collapse of facilities, and of course mother tongue interference.

Without a doubt, these are all factors involved in the decline. But they weigh differently in the equation and are all products of forces working at deeper levels. For example, if we had the most up to date teaching aids, that would still not achieve much as long as the attitudinal element remained unchanged. But if we ask what may be done to bring about a change of attitude, we immediately see that poor attitudes are so much more an effect than a cause. We do have to go to the roots of the problem, if we may hope for a turn around. This paper is committed to asking exactly these questions, to help find a way out of the vicious circle in which thinking about the decline in English language learning generally - and in education for that matter - has been mired for some time.

The Roots of Attitudes

The explanation of attitudes and the sources of behaviour is a vexed question for philosophical anthropology and meditation on it is one reason why philosophical anthropology has led the field in interdisciplinary research in what the French philosophers call the *human sciences,* namely literary and language studies, history, psychology, sociology, political economy, and anthropology. Concerning the question of attitudes and sources of behaviour, the differences among the intellectual practices are often more methodological than substantive. The presupposition is that the critical element needed for explanation is to be found at a certain depth where it is not directly observable. Under psychoanalysis, for example, Freud seeks explanation in 'the obscure inaccessible part of our personality,' a dimension of the unconscious comprising instinctual drives and the most 3-chaic individual experiences, overwritten and vertically repressed by more recent experiences (1932); while his one-time disciple Carl Jung postulates a universal unconscious rising the collective memory of mankind as the ultimate source. Of the motions of this system, Jung says, 'we at first wholly unconscious ... only [to] discover long 'rewards why it was that we acted in a certain way' (1933 'The Basic Postulates of Analytical Psychology'). Marxism own part, traces everything back to the mode of production, which produces its dominant and subservient classes and places them in a relationship of struggle.

For Allport and the Behaviourists, the search for explanation leads to 'motivation in terms of organic drive

and conditioning' (Airport, 1937); on the one hand, needs associated with the identity and maintenance of the organism in being and on the other, the needs

arising from behaviours learned, whether consciously or not, in the socio-cultural environment or in the historical or geographical space. But it is doubtful that all the variables can be factored in, in any individual search. Accordingly, Chomsky reminds us that with regard to any act whatever, there is *'a* variety of motivational factors about which nothing serious is known in the case of human beings' (1959). Behaviourism is concerned with the study of individual behaviour, but it probably works better in the analysis of action and trends in the public sphere. Hence it won't take a deep and involved analysis to explain that 300 million Chinese children are enthusiastically studying English at the present time, with some textbooks going to 100 million copies in one print run. For English language spread worldwide is accelerating at the present time as an outcrop of the mythology and rituals of political power exercised with a global reach by the United States of America, with the internet and the information superhighway providing extra thrust. Therefore, with their manufacturing industry powering ahead and marketing products all over the world, the Chinese have quite pragmatically come to the realization that English is going to be the mode and the language of their engagement with the world; and English has become a key subject in the schools as a result.

The questioning of the role of English in the emergent national culture was probably inspired in part by anti-imperialist sentiments sweeping the Third World during the 1950s and 1960s as a reaction to the Cold War and the Vietnam War. In this atmosphere, the process of revaluation was probably conducted without regard to any possible negative consequences that might follow. The language was kept - there was no alternative, given the distribution and relative strengths of the major ethnic nationalities. But it was hardly looked upon as a valued legacy - which led directly to the decline in the level and quality of English being added by pupils and students passing through our schools. It does not follow, however, that a change of policy expanding the role of English in Nigeria will necessarily produce the opposite effect, or produce it in as short a period of time as it took to do the damage. The policy on the teaching of Nigerian languages in the lower educational level has been in place for more than two decades already, but the learning outcomes are hardly measurable. If failure in individual motivation is blamed for this, the Nigerian situation is clearly quite unlike the Chinese, and individual choice is not necessarily related to government policy. Therefore, even though we trace the decline in English language learning to changes in government policy,

there is probably more to the question than government policy alone could explain. What we may, certainly blame government policy for is that in this particular case it is in support of reduction of effort. For language learning is difficult in the best of times - as may easily be seen in the years of trial and error which all children go through in rearing their mother tongue (MT). The adding of a second language after MT has been learned requires still greater effort sustained over a longer period of time; and any form of discouragement - even indifference - can have long-term negative consequences.

> We need to examine the 'conditioning' outside facts of our cultural environment also to see if there are in it factors that predispose or even encourage the reduction of effort, where change probably needs to occur in order to bring about the kinds of impulses which will support effective second language acquisition. The study of such *conditioning* outside facts is one of the paths followed in philosophical anthropology.

In Jurgen Habermas's study of ideology, the farthest point reached in the search for underlying causes is what he calls the *lifeworld.* This is a principle he applies in the explication of human phenomena generally, but there is a special role for language in it:

> In anthropological terms, morality is a safety device compensating for a vulnerability that is built into the socio-cultural form of life. The basic facts of such a socio-cultural form of life are the following: Creatures that are individuated only through socialization are vulnerable and morally in need of considerateness. Competent subjects-competent in both a linguistic and a behavioural sense of the term - are constituted as individuals by growing into an intersubjectively shared lifeworld; and the lifeworld of a language community is reproduced in turn through the communicative actions of its members ('Morality and Ethical Life').

This lifeworld comprises for the community the ground of all ideation and sense-making. It does not itself require to be made sense of because it stands as the absolute starting point, and marked by the impossibility of being gone behind,' according to Habermas (see Roderick 120). We are probably making contact with the lifeworld of traditional Igbo society, if we ask why it cannot dispense with the institution known as the ancestors. Their whole life and action orientation, as well

as their strategies of engaging the world are apparently tied to this unique principle, of which some of the surrogates are the masquerade, the *ikenga,* and the *ofo* symbols, all of which are invested in mystery. These kinds of sacred objects are familiar in the 'symbol systems' of traditional societies, whereby the worldviews of these societies are 'presented as an image well-suited to accommodate such a **way of life' (Murray, 1993). We e**ncounter them in Virgil's *Aeneid,* for instance, where as he prepares to depart from overthrown Troy, Aeneas's sole concern is his immediate human community and the ritual community of which the sacred objects are the . visible signs:

> 'Haste**,** my dear father, ('t is no time to wait,) And load my shoulders with a willing freight. Whate'er befalls, your life shall be my care; One death, or one deliv'ranee, we will share. My hand shall lead our little son; and you, My faithful consort, shall our steps pursue.... Our country gods, the relics, and the bands, Hold you, my father, in your guiltless hands: In me 't is impious holy things to bear, Red as I am with slaughter, new from war, Till in some living stream I cleanse the guilt Of dire debate, and blood in battle spilt' (Book II)

There is no reference to property or even provisions to take along on this dire journey. Aeneas is to lose his 'faithful consort,' Creusa, in the course of it; a deep and painful loss though it is, this depletion in number threatens the identity and integrity of the household group not at all! The essential constituents of the group are physically connected together around the person of Aeneas: the little son Ascanius, whose fingers, in Lewis's translation (1979:187) are 'twined' to Aeneas's, his aged father on his shoulder, with the *patriosque Penatis* (the country gods and relics, or 'the sacred relics and home-gods' (Lewis)) in his 'guiltless hands.'

In all traditional societies, the 'symbol system' is distantiated in the numinous realm; hence C.J. Okafor, in a 1991 study, identifies the masquerade in the Igbo tradition as 'the inscrutable wonder. It is no less the case with the *ikenga* and the *ofo.* But the masquerade constructs its identity' as this object of wonder, which at once draws the gaze to itself and simultaneously interdicts investigation and analysis. The term *culture is,* of course, now serving as the means whereby the identified lifeworld of the Igbo may travel unmolested and unchallenged, never appearing on the screen for scrutiny, but unobtrusively instructing behaviour and attitudes, with the result that the habits of thought of the educated and the uneducated in that society share striking features. This 'duty-word' was also

invoked at the time that the political decisions were being made as to what may go into the educational curriculum, what may be emphasized or de-emphasized. If in traditional societies sacred objects and images and the practices and sentenced wisdoms of the ancestors were the main carriers of the symbol systems, the vehicle is more diverse and therefore the symbol systems are much more unobtrusive in modern mass societies: they travel in advertising, in the operating rules of cultural, political, and educational institutions, such as the legislature, the court of law, and the university; they travel in popular entertainment like the film and rule-governed sports; they travel in everyday language itself, and with amazing facility in the 'anonymous utterances of the press', identified by Roland Barthes (1977:165) as a key aspect of twentieth-century mythology.

We may, therefore, be certain that if the lifeworld was exclusively the motivator of behaviour in traditional society, it can hardly still hold the same position since that culture had been undergoing modification from intense contact with Western culture and symbol systems, with individuals exposed to profoundly different influences and models of self-actualization than the ones known in traditional society. It has often been said that the characterizing feature of the foreign culture from which all the new impulses are coming is individualism, but the matter can bear some exploration. Probably the worst sense of individualism is glimpsed in Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground,* where we read:

> Oh, tell me, who was it first announced, who was it first proclaimed, that man only does nasty things because he does not know his own interests; and that if he were enlightened, if his eyes were opened to his real normal interests, man would at once cease to do nasty things, would at once become good and noble because, being enlightened and understanding his real advantage, he would see his own advantage in the good and nothing else, and we all know that not one man can, consciously, act against his own interests, consequently, so to say, through necessity, he would begin doing good? (15)

What Dostoevsky's Underground Man settles for as the outcome of the above reflection is that what moves men irresistibly is the idea of exercising 'free unfettered choice, one's own caprice, however wild it may be, one's own fancy worked up at times to frenzy' (19). This is the very antithesis of freedom, as we shall soon see in Hegel, though it may :?pear quite other to the individual. But the

desire of this moode of functioning by the law of the *instinctual drives* is, in Freudian psychoanalysis, what the individual learns to give up, in virtue of which sacrifice civilization takes place. Thus does society keep at bay 'the state of nature,' which : cording to Hobbes, 'is nothing else but a mere warre of all against all' *(Liberty,* 'The Authors Preface to the Reader'). The concluding movement of Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' is a figuring forth of this 'possible world' (Ricoeur, 1981: 177) called 'the state of nature.' Here,

> the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

If the above is a pessimistic view of human reality, and is objectionable because of the prospects it opens up, we are not to forget that it arises from one and the same humanistic ethic of which the optimistic trend yields up what is called axiology or value philosophy of which one sort is seen in Hegel, with the state as the repository of all that is humanly worthwhile.

Now it may be being up to date and socially aware in Nigeria to be wryly antagonistic towards the state. In Hegel, it is the one real force for good in the world; and he writes it with an initial capital:

This essential being is the union of the subjective with the rational Will: it is the moral Whole, the State, which is that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom; but on the condition of his recognition, believing in and willing that which is common to the Whole; And this must not be understood as if the subjective will of the social unit attained its gratification and enjoyment through that common Will; as if this were a means provided for its benefit; as if the individual, in his relations to other individuals, thus limited his freedom, in order that this universal limitation -the mutual constraint of all - might secure a small space of liberty for each. Rather, we affirm, are Law, Morality, Government, and they alone, the positive reality and completion of Freedom. Freedom of a low and limited order, is mere caprice; which finds its exercise in the sphere of particular and limited desires (Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* par. 40).

The question of the relationship of the individual and society is an issue that is

often connected to the birth and early career of the European novel. Having originally been posed by Enlightenment philosophy, the question was to be played endlessly in an infinite variety of ways by the novel, never offering a clear and precise answer because it really is a philosophical question. Its role, as far as literature is concerned, is as a provocation - in all senses, but especially that of *calling forth* the poetic act; and anything whatever in human experience is capable of this provocation. In the above passage, Hegel handles the question philosophically, where it could be determined one way or another. Following the first principles of his philosophy, he is able to decide it quite clearly on the side of society - in one of its sharpest definitions, the state.

Another kind of value philosophy mistrusts any kind of collective, especially the state, as a guarantor or protector of humane values, trusting the individual rather to know what is good for himself - which must therefore be good for everyone else. This is utilitarianism, a philosophy that is so frequently invoked in discussions of the role of English in Nigeria and the educational system - invoked even in the discussion of education itself - as to give ground for the view that the utilitarian principle is deeply ingrained in the habits of thought of Nigerians. May the principle of utility not have to do with the value system that upholds this society and people? For if the issue of utility is raised with regard to anything whatever, few there are who may ask whether this is the correct question to ask and under what conditions it may validly be put. The utility principle is never put to question, because it probably goes far back and possibly intertwines with other principles in the makeup of the lifeworld that upholds Nigerian society.

For example, a certain picture does emerge if we link the attitudes instructed by the ancestral ideology to that of utilitarianism, a connection which is already made in Achebe's *Arrow of God.* As part of the dialogue between Akuebue, Ezeulu's friend, and the messengers who come to fetch Ezeulu to Okperi, we read:

The Corporal thought about it and agreed. 'But we cannot come and go for nothing. When a masked spirit visits you, you have to appease its footprints with presents. The white man is the masked spirit of today,

'Very true, said Akuebue, 'the masked spirit of our day is the white man and his messengers.' (154)

This is a moment of insight for Akuebue. But it is an insight of which the practical implications in the world of ethics and politics do not seem ultimately to register for Akuebue or anyone else except Ezeulu. The latter is, in fact, the first we see in *Arrow of God* who attains the insight, and for him it comes with a consciousness of its full implications in action orientations and decision making.

He sends his son Oduche to the white man's school, with the following instruction:

> "The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying *had we known* tomorrow, (46)

The masquerade in Ezeulu's illustration here is one dancing. It is an overwhelming challenge to perception, not to interrogation and understanding. Indeed Ezeulu himself, as one invested with the priesthood of Ulu is as much a masked spirit. The common people know this, but they imagine that the mask is functional only at ritual moments. The 'graver heads,' as *The Duchess of Malfi* would say, know better**.** Remarks Akuebue:

> 'I am not the man to dispute any of the things you say, Ezeulu. I am your friend and I can talk to you as I like; but that does not mean I forget that one half of you is man and the other half spirit.' (133)

Ezeulu embodies a font of knowledge that is not available to the rest of men, and because he embodies it, he has *depth* and is mysterious: he is 'Known and at the same time ... Unknowable' (132). Whatever is not encompassable by knowledge is feared as a repository of power - possibly destructive power. Ezeulu totally understands this, and that if the white man is a *mask*, it is one of which the power is incontestable because he has placed himself outside the field of the knowable. He knows, further, that the white man is not irremediably out of reach of all knowing and has divined that the school is how to attain this knowledge and harnesses, its power. He gives the following instruction to Oduche after he has fallen into the power of the white man and had his whole world turned upside down because of it:

> If anyone asks you why you should be sent to learn these new. things tell them that a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time.... When I was at Okperi I saw a young white man who was able to write his book with his left hand. From his actions I could see that he had very little sense. But he had power; he could shout in my face; he could do what he liked. Why? Because he could write with his left hand. That is why I have called you. I want you to learn and master this man's knowledge so much that if you are suddenly woken up in the night and asked what it is you will reply. You must learn it until you can write it with your left hand. (189-190)

There is a utility attached to this knowing as prescribed by Ezeulu. It is the access route to power. In No *Longer at Ease*, we find that some have been acquiring this knowledge, and that there is power in fact attached to it. For Obi Okonkwo, the power in question is the capacity to contribute one's labour in building up sociality. For some others, it is a masquerade of power, the make-believe of having power. Interestingly, these attitudes are reflected as speech facts, and it is the Secretary of the Umuofia Progressive Union at the reception given to Obi in Lagos that speaks the latter sort of language, where, undoubtedly, is occulted the 'will to power' familiar in the discourse of the disadvantaged (Nietzsche: 107-9). The narrator of No *Longer at Ease* prudently holds back from telling all:

> Needless to say, this address was repeatedly interrupted by cheers and the clapping of hands. What a sharp young man their secretary was, all said. He deserved to go to England himself. He wrote the kind of English they admired if not understood: the kind that filled the mouth, like the proverbial dry meat.
>
> Obi's English, on the other hand, was most unimpressive. He spoke 'is' and 'was'. He told them about the value of education. 'Education for service, not for white-collar jobs...' (29)

We see clearly the exercise of this will to power quite simply as imposture in Soyinka's *Ake*, when a hothead nicknamed Iku addresses the Principal's 'court,' after he and two others are caught roasting a chicken that had strayed from the poultry of the Principal's household. The concluding movement of his 'impudent rigmarole' is as follows:

> Our offence therefore principal, lies not in any wilful, overt act, but in the passive misdemeanour of concealment, principal. But the deed was done, there was no use crying over spilt milk, in every cloud there is a silver lining and like thoughts, not to mention our fear to report ourselves and maybe, be misunderstood, kept us back. For this slight error of judgement, speaking for myself the first, and the second and third accused here principal, we throw ourselves on the mercy of the court.'(175)

There is no question that the young student is learned: he only sounds so. The mask is in full display to be wondered at - and the principal duly ponders what he has heard! For some outside the covers of a novel, English did come to designate a mask to be put on and imposture for learning; that is to say, the language was being utilized for the purpose of presenting a certain image of the self. Some of the uses

of Igbo proverbs in the broadcast media in fact, as well as in public speaking, frequently evoke the functionality of the mask.

Utilitarianism is a philosophy which is traced back to the Greeks, but it was reinterpreted and given powerful expression by the Englishman John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century. It explains value simply in terms of utility. According to Mill,

> The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals. Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure; and to what extent this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded - namely, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain. (9)

According to Mill, therefore, the motive force for all action is utility; that too determines the value of an action: whatever brings happiness must be good. In common usage, the application of utility as a measure of value rarely picks up the question of pleasure; but that, according to Mill, is the content of utility. He makes clear, however, that pleasure has a range of forms: it may be intellectual, emotional, or physical. And these are not necessarily of equal value:

> But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect; of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. (10)

In a philosophically well-founded account of the 'Epicurean theory of life,' Mill is here maintaining, 'pleasure' is more than a matter of 'mere sensation;' it extends to whatever is determined as well-being.

Utility has to do with whatever promotes well-being or promises it.

Stated in this way, we see very clearly that this philosophy is much more pervasive than first appears. For example, this is what governments claim to exist for - the well-being of the greatest number of citizens. All government policy is justified by this one principle, that it procures or will ultimately bring about well-being for everyone; at least the majority of the citizens. This 'greatest happiness principle,' as Mill puts it, is said to be bound up with Western culture and reflected in the philosophical works of that tradition 'from Epicurus to Bentham.' And all these writers have 'meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain; and instead of opposing the useful to the agreeable or the ornamental, have always declared that the useful means these, among other things' (Mill 8). Obviously, the well-being in question is first of all individual well-being - and if we draw a parallel to Hegel 'above, it is this well-being that the state exists to protect: it exists for 'the greatest happiness principle.'

This political philosophy is part of what Africa has inherited from colonization - but it could equally be a point of coincidence between the political philosophy of the colonizers and traditional African philosophy, since it is

encountered in the kinds of things that Julia Kristeva

identifies as the *text* of culture, such as proverbs (1980:36). If we are right on this point, then we must interpret some of the images of consumption and enjoyment in Achebe's A *Man of the People* as formulations of this philosophy. This is how Odo, Edna's father, expresses his expectations of Chief Nanga after he has deposited a bride price on behalf of his daughter:

> 'Listen to her,' said the man turning to me. 'Because she ate yesterday she won't eat today? No, my daughter. This is the time to enjoy an in-law, not when he has claimed his wife and gone away. Our people say: if you fail to take away a strong man's sword when he is on the ground, will you do it when he gets up ...? No, my daughter. Leave me and my in-law. He will bring and bring and bring and I will eat until I am tired. And thanks to the Man Above he does not lack what to bring.' (91)

This speech comes from the same stock and habits of thought as the Corporal's in *Arrow of God;* and if there are proverbial sayings at the hearts of these speeches and these are part of the *text* of culture, might it make sense to seek explanation for the tendency observed in public life almost everywhere in Africa - at any rate during the twentieth century - to misappropriate public money in a certain

application of the utilitarian principle as the enabling philosophy?

African governments, in any event, appeal to the same 'greatest happiness principle,' used in the West to justify economic and social policies. Language policy follows the same logic - we see this especially in the evolving of policy with regard to the languages that have come as part of the colonial legacy, which therefore fall outside of what may be protected under the designation of culture or national heritage. English is the second language of the Nigerian elite - or to be less provocative, the educated Nigerians. For the Nigerian state itself, it is for all intents and purposes *the* official language, insofar as all official documents, from the constitution to the Acts of the legislature, the national budget and policy initiatives of the government, are made in this language. And if they afterwards feature in any of the indigenous 'official' languages, it is by translation. The justification for this is always in terms of utility; for example, the need to *communicate* and to ensure that the same identical document is available to the greatest number, reducing the problem of misinterpretation and conflict. In short, the chief justification for treating English in practical terms as the official language is that it promotes national unity and integration. As a result, discussions of the role of English in Nigeria and in the educational system by academics and researchers have usually been conducted under the general rule of utility: the principles have been handed down from politics.

If Mill is right that utilitarianism has pedigree in Epicurus and continues its development up to Bentham, it is probably the case that it can be traced in the intellectual tradition subsequent. Functionalism is a case in point. It has been called 'one of the major theoretical developments of Twentieth Century analytic philosophy' (Block, 'Functionalism'), and has evolved in somewhat different ways in the different cognitive sciences. In anthropology, ' Malinowski gives an account of *function* which conflates the different kinds of human needs discussed in biology and psychology, bringing out 'a metamorphosis of the seven needs of the individual nutrition, reproduction, bodily comforts, safety, relation, movement, and growth into the secondary needs of society' (Glazer, 'Functionalism'). Society is said to exist to satisfy these needs and every element of

culture in Malinowski's terms is *functional* in the sense that it serves as a means for satisfying these needs.

Nutrition, reproduction, bodily comforts, and so on are needs insofar as their lack translates directly for the individual to distress, anguish, or pain in general. In short, the difference is that Mill classifies well-being into 'the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, on the one

hand, and on the other, 'mere sensation;' whereas Malinowski uses parameters which give his classification more concreteness. Like other elements of culture, analysis of language under Malinowski's 'biocultural functionalism' (Edwards and **Neutziing,** 'Functionalism') must be in terms of its role in 1B» satisfying of the individual needs, for example, those of safety and relation.

There is another influential account of value, which like Mill's captures a trend of thought of which the origins have deep roots in the Western tradition, going back to the Greeks. That account is reflected in Ortega's philosophy of *vital reason,* in which human life in the widest sense comprises the highest value, and everything else has value to the extent that it relates to human life. Human life is realized first and foremost in the life of the individual person, who has identity as 'I,' an 'I' whose self-knowledge is by opposition to other things, beginning with consciousness itself and the body. In other words, to know oneself is at the same time to know a system or a process which relates to one as one's consciousness, and in the same way, one's emotions, one's body, one's surroundings, the engaging and the coming to terms with all of which is what is known as *living.*

Ortega here provokes a question about the nature of the self, which Ned Block in his 'Max Black's Objection to Mind-Body Identity' traces back to Descartes. The question has been complicating, and extends to whether the self is a substratum different from consciousness, a kind of 'unconscious personality [that] is deep within us and governs our actions' (Merleau-Ponty 1967); whether it corresponds to a faculty of consciousness, or whether it corresponds to the whole organism, including consciousness and the body. Merleau-Ponty would be in favour of the last because of his well known opposition to philosophical dualism in all its forms. For him the self is strictly identical with consciousness - 'by the elucidation of [the individual's] concrete being and is verified only by the active integration of isolated dialectics - body and soul -between which it is initially broken up' (Block, 'Functionalism'). This "active integration, which is necessary because, according to him, "we understand our lived states only through an idea which is not adequate for them,' is his way out of the dilemmas of structuralism. The introduction of functionalism into psychology as a way of solving 'the mind,body problem' (ibid) was in fact because some saw structuralism as dead-ended. The controversy, of course, rages on (see Block, 'Max Black's Objection to Mind-Body Identity'). In any event, the discursive practice of functionalism has brought about the analysis of 'mental states' in psychology; whereas the question had previously centred on the nature and form of consciousness.

Whatever Language may Say

Let us not forget, however, that the provocation of the problem of the self and the not-self by Ortega had come as a result of the analysis of language, and that analytic philosophy is first and foremost a linguistic practice. One says, *myself, my mind, my body,* and so on. The question is whether language may always be relied upon that whatever it says is implicitly a description of the real, that whatever name it assigns corresponds to actuality. In much the same way, sociological-historical criticisms of literature take the view that if literature is a linguistic act, it is about real things, about human experience and society, and therefore that its references are to be taken literally and seriously. This is part of a realist ontology in which the extra-mental world consists entirely in the physical, and reasoning has validity only to the extent that it has *fundamentum in re.*

The *utility* I have hinted at commonly invoked to show how valuable language is, is a by-product of realist ontology, namely that language is a means of communication. Whether or not language may always be relied upon whatever it may say signifies the necessity of chinking the problem of meaning as a distinct category than the conveying of it. In the distinction of 'I' and consciousness and so on, we are dealing with *meaning.* In Ezeulu's remark to Oduche, 'My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying *had we known* tomorrow, he is not conveying the information that he and his spirit are two different things. The information component is a judgement that he has reached. For those who see language as a source of information, it is this judgement that matters, and this is what the linguistic act has been constituted to say. But neither the information component nor the meaning content captures the aspect of intention, which is another element that is usually discussed under the general theme of meaning, and which is usually cited in humanist literary criticism as the guarantee of meaning and information-value, and in fact is the real -tent of meaning and information-value.

Ezeulu's *intention* is determinable only by taking the interactive relation with Oduche as a whole. In that relation, the father's aim is to inspire his son with new energy and sense of purpose; which means that the *intentional act* in this early scene (*Arrow of God* 46) is the same as in the scene following his return from detention at Okperi (189-190) -unless we think of the last in terms of a reinforcement of the first. The information element is a judgement arising from experiencing - it has a foundation in reality. The intention need only have a basis in the mapping of Ezeulu's long-term objectives in the field of consciousness. But the linguistic meaning - as opposed to the discursive meaning - of 'my spirit tells me ..'

probably escapes the speaker completely. But does it escape the world of reality? Semantics may account for the interpretability of 'my spirit tells me, but how it is that very many different languages have comparable forms is a question either for philosophy-anthropology or psychology.

For Ortega and for analytic philosophy in general, the linguistic act means a great deal more than the information conveyed. But having accessed the full meaning of a linguistic event such as the one we have found in *Arrow of God,* Ortega draws consequences which are significant for existence itself: to live is immediately to be in confrontation with one's surroundings, including the 'social stock of knowledge, symbols, and ideas' (Ritzer 247), and the historical and geographical space. As Ortega argues,

> The individual human being does not inaugurate humanity. He immediately encounters in his surroundings other men and the society which they comprise. Hence his humanity, that which begins to develop in him, takes its point of departure from another that has previously developed and reached its culmination; in short, to his humanity is added an already forged mode of being man, something that he does not invent; the need only root himself in it and use it as a starting point for his individual development (qtd in Marias 459).

Language is one of these things which the individual does not invent, which is part and parcel of 'an already forged mode of being man, to which he is summoned by virtue of human life to 'root himself in' and 'use ... as a starting point for his individual development.' Even more than self development, language is bound up with self-identity achieving a footing within the scheme of things, not for Ac individual alone but also for the human community depends the very possibility of a human community depends on it. This remarkable fact Habermas explains by reference to his concept of *lifeworld:*

> Thus, the more differentiated the structures of the lifeworld become, the easier it is to discern the simultaneous growth of the autonomous individual subject and his dependence on interpersonal relationships and social ties. The more the subject becomes individuated, the more he becomes entangled in a densely woven fabric of mutual recognition, and this means a fabric of reciprocal exposure and vulnerability. Unless the subject externalizes himself by participating in interpersonal relations through language, he is unable to form that inner centre that is his personal identity ('Morality and Ethical Life').

The role of language here in the formation of a 'personal identity' suggests that the very 'I' which is the most archaic substratum in Ortega, where self-apprehension is in opposition to both consciousness and the body, is an outcome of intersubjectivity through language. It is not -unthinkable that a man may reject his surrounding, including the language component of the human environment and the symbol system; but if he does, he must enter into another set of surroundings, and another order of language and symbol system.

Therefore, it is possible to construct and re-construct the 'I.' To put it another way, human beings are not rooted by virtue of birth in any set of circumstances: they root themselves - and need must do so, if they accept the summons to live. Writes Ortega:

> To be free means to lack constitutive identity, to not be ascribed to a determined being, to be able to be other than what one was and to not be able to establish oneself once and for all in any determined being (qtd in Marias 458).

Freedom in this account is one thing a human being ha? which a tiger - to use Ortega's example - can never have But does not a man reduce himself to the status of being of a tiger if he constrains himself to being determined within the structures of one specific language as his own constitutive identity? The possibility of acquiring a new language or a new symbol system keeps one in openness to the exercise of freedom. The linguistic shift we have mentioned with regard to China is in terms of Ortega here an exercise of freedom involving a new project of self-identity. This is a freedom to which the individual as much as the state is entitled - perhaps it belongs properly to the individual and to the state by transference; and this is coming a long way from Hegel.

Utilitarianism and vital reason are one kind of philosophy as they either name the working of a cognitive world or specify the motivation that guides and imposes value on human action. These philosophies are about the foundations which support knowledge and perception, and determine outlooks and attitudes. Whether we have a positive attitude towards life or a negative or whether we merely float along; whether we believe that we can make a difference and allow the awaking of our energies for this purpose or whether for us living is a matter of consuming what there is; whether we are 'standing in the openness of Being, of enduring and outstanding this standing-in (care), and of out-braving the utmost' (Heidegger, 'Existence and Being'), or whether we shy away and protect ourselves from engaging the world, all these depend on the founding principals that account for the orientation of our mind and give it a sense of what it can do or what it is called

to do. Whether one learns to use the computer or another -language, the extent of one's mastery of these, and the possibilities and capabilities they awaken in the mind depend much less on opportunity than on the powers that the 'I' allows itself to exercise, and the extent it is prepared to engage all its energies, mental and bodily, in this project. The utilitarian principle can go a long way, as long as some utility can be found, and this utility is perceived as holding more 'pleasure yield' (Freud) than other competing utilities. Among Nigerians, the pleasure of consuming what there is and of display seems to outweigh every other pleasure and utility. And therefore, thanks to this philosophy, we can only pay lip service to the idea of this nation having potentiality. Nigeria is perceived especially from the outside as having a great potential. What it perceives of itself is another matter. But it is this alone that can call forth the energy to work to transform itself, to express its freedom, 'to be,' in Ortega's words 'other than what one was.' To the outside world, Nigeria underperforms, falls short of its potential; Nigerians frequently lacking the drive to exert themselves in labour and productivity, blame others for their condition: the West, colonization and the colonial masters, the slave trade, geography, the world order, the rich nations, imperialism. God, and so on.

It is rather the philosophy that sees selfhood as a *project* that we need. Under this project, one is *becoming* in a way of one's determination. The self does not account for itself in terms of an established identity, but precisely as this movement towards what one aims to be - which itself opens new vistas. Within this philosophy, the learning of a language like English won't be considered to be accomplished until one has attained adequate mastery to exploit its full potential - perhaps to *outstand* it (Heidegger) in a new project of selfhood. This is mastery in much the

same way that the need to learn the computer to the point of turning it into a machine to put to work and to manipulate in order to bring about desired changes in one's surroundings is part and parcel of the project of self-production, self-construction, self-actualization.

If this basic philosophical issue is settled, we can move on to the next question, which concerns the approaches to teaching and learning English. In line with our preferred philosophical position that language is an opportunity, a challenge, and an instrument for the project of selfhood, the acceptable approach to language teaching and learning has got to be the one which can ensure mastery, awaken all the individual's energies, and lay open before the learner the full resources of this language for exploitation in the task of self-construction, in the project of living, of selfhood.

Language always Works through a Language

Up to the shift in the educational policy in Nigeria of which the outcome was a downward trend in competence and mastery of English, the teaching of this language had gone hand in hand with the teaching of English literature. The change in policy required that this be stopped and that a new methodology of language teaching be adopted.

In the old method, reading was a very important activity, and the reading matter was usually the high quality linguistic productions we call literature. Information content could not be the reason for this choice. Quite other reading matter like encyclopaedia articles, occasional and topical essays, news magazines and digests in well-made prose, or documentaries could serve much better for this purpose than a literary work, for the latter speaks in a plurality of voices, tones, and cadences; and the reason one pattern of sense is preferred over others often has to do with interest, rather than some cause internal to the literary text itself. The reason for the preference for these high quality productions in language study is because of the exposure they afford to the language in the richest possible array. In the literary work, we see dialogue or even the language of conversation, as well as the one governed by rhythm, rhyme, and measure; we see the transparent and anonymous language that distinguishes narration, by contrast to the ones governed by the norms of thematic prose,as in a speech, which again is quite different from the interactive language ordered to the proving of a point or expressing of an opinion (Aristotle, *The Poetics* 11); we see one and the same language become a ritual event; we see it become a song of praise or a lament; we see it issue from a specific subject, carrying all his markings; we see it adjust itself to an object in order to capture it in description or in representation; we see it move at the scale of the everyday in novelistic realism, we see it adjusting to human biological functions in what is called satire, figuring forth in images of atrophy, decay, and disintegration; we may equally see it rise to the sublime and the grand because the object of representation is tragic action, an epic or a heroic sequence, and so on. This is a mode of flowering of linguistic reality to which lexicographers are especially attentive because of the tendency for meaning to proliferate thereby, with words breaching their accustomed borders. For example, the following is part of the entry under 'set' in Webster International Dictionary,*1913-1966,* and the Shorter Oxford Dictionary,1997:

9. <def>To adorn with something infixed or affixed; to stud; to variegate with objects placed here and there. <blockquote> High on their heads, with jewels richly -set-, / Each lady wore a radiant coronet. - Dryden. <blockquote>Pastoral

dales thin -set- with modem farms. -Wordsworth (The 1913 Webster Unabridged Dictionary).[1]

> 31 *v.t.* Fix (a stone or gem) in a surface or framework of metal or (formerly) on a garment, as an ornament. Also, fashion (a design or pattern) *in* precious stones. ME. b *transf. 6'fig.* Place or insert (a thing) *in* a certain setting or framework. Formerly also *spec.,* frame (a picture). M16. 31 F. FORSYTH He had had Cartier of London cut and set the stones. *(The Oxford- Interactive Encyclopedia).*[2]

Two examples of the application of *set* as'... to stud; to variegate with objects placed here and there' are cited in the Webster, and they are from poems by John Dryden and William Wordsworth, while the Oxford Dictionary cites Frederick Forsyth. Wordsworth's line in the Webster entry is striking because of the extra dimensions of meaning which resonate in it. For if the general sense of *set* in the two extracts involves 'design,' or 'arrange,' the disposition of the farms in the 'pastoral dales' is necessarily as if by an intentional act. Hence it would not be expected in the linguistic production of the average native speaker. But this is not a good reason to invoke what is called 'poetic license' for explanation. This notion is commonly used in the so-called linguistic criticism that makes the round to cover up laziness on the part of the critic and refusal to inquire about things to the roots if possible.

In point of fact, 'poetic license' is meaningless as a critical concept. What we do have, which is often misrepresented as 'poetic license' is discourse opening up the living depths of language and the possibilities of word meaning and signification. In discourse, language, thought, the world of action, the subject and object of discourse, time, space, the specific function the verbal act is constituted for, the addressee, or some combination of these, are in correlation. The structure of the linguistic production as well as its interpretation is bound up with all these elements which are , at play in the 'instance of discourse' - which, in other words, make up this *instance of discourse,* as Benveniste calls it (see Ricoeur 1991: 133). Sometimes discourse does bring out entirely new forms, but these are new in the sense of unprecedented, not in the sense that this wasn't always possible. This concept of the instance of discourse provides the framework for discourse analysis as an extension of functionalism. With functionalism, discourse analysis has access to the conventions that govern linguistic activity, as well as the means to identify the specific task assigned language in the construction, whether the conveying of

information, description, or calculation, or the analysis of one's own perception and the interpretation of this perception, in terms of meaning construction and representation.

We have seen that Chomsky derives his major premises from Saussure; so does functionalism, despite .being diametrically opposed to Chomsky. The ontology of this theory of language reflects the following remark by Saussure in his 'Third Course of Lectures in General Linguistics:'

> We can say that language always works through a language, without that, it does not exist... it is essentially social; it presupposes the collectivity.

On the one hand, no language is perceived or encountered, unless in the real language spoken or written by real human beings; on the other hand, this language does not belong to the individual, is not natural to him, but 'is essentially social' - which means that like every social institution, it has evolved, and has been learned by the individuals to whom it thereby pertains as a factor of self-identity. As an 'essentially social' fact, there can be but one explanation for every single one of its features and changes in behaviour, namely convention. For example, the following pair may be contrasted:

1.1. Know you not the city favours them?
1.2. Don't you know that the city favours them?

Within the logic of transformational grammar, the difference between (1.1) and (1.2) may be stated simply in terms of the former being unacceptable, while the latter is acceptable. Some may even say that the former is ungrammatical. But (1.1) was probably acceptable in former times in everyday usage; and it remains part of the language insofar as it is registered in a highly regarded literary text. It comes in fact from *Henry VI, Part 3* Act One, Scene 1.

All this means that whereas (1.1) is in conformity with certain conventions governing the English language in some historical period, it is not accommodated by those governing the everyday language at the present time. It is not necessarily ruled out permanently from the language. As to *(1.2),* its place in the competence model remains as long as the present governing conventions of acceptability persist. Consciousness is so in tune with language that it rarely registers the linguistic changes taking place all the time as a memorable event. Writing, on the other hand, silently keeps vigil during the periods of continuity we call convention, through the moment of change when a new convention becomes the norm, and is thus recording the history of the language as it unfolds. In this same movement, it registers constructions of high elegance like the text of Wordsworth cited in the

Webster, which would be very rare in everyday speech. In the peculiar setting of our second-language situation, reading high quality literature, going back as far as possible is the chief, perhaps the only point of encounter with the vicissitudes of the language as it records and shapes the language community and is in turn shaped by them. In other words, reading encounters with literature are the externalizing of oneself, as Habermas in a passage already cited puts it, by becoming 'entangled in a densely woven fabric of mutual recognition' whereby 'the inner centre that is [one's] personal identity' emerges. Far from a passive absorbing of information, reading signifies the expansion, the challenging, and in short, the awaking and engaging of the mind.

> The method of language study in which literature played a central role was to give way in the Nigerian educational system in the 1960s to the teaching of rules, definitions, classifications, and taxonomy, with the occasional essay where, presumably, the extent of mastery of these rules was tested. The intellectual underpinning of this strategy is found in the distinction in linguistic phenomena which had been established by Saussure more than half a century previously between *langne* and *parole.* Saussure had concentrated his analysis on the former, the 'linguistic system.' The reason for this is reflected in the metaphors he uses in specifying the object of study of linguistics. According to him, one must think of 'the performance of a musical masterpiece on an instrument; many are capable of playing the piece of music, but it is entirely independent of these various performances' ('Third Course'). No single production corresponds to the masterpiece itself; nor can any two performances correspond exactly. In modern popular music, it is noticed often that the sound quality of the official release is usually different from the live performances of the same piece by the same band. Even variations in weather and temperature and the acoustics of the arena can affect the output. In this way, Saussure maintains a difference between the language itself and the production of it by real human beings in different contexts. He offers further guidance in identifying this object which is worth the labour of study, while the linguistic productions of the individual are not:
>
> You can conjure up a very precise idea of this product - and thus set the language, so to speak, materially in front of you -by focusing on what is potentially in the brains of a set of individuals (belonging to one and the same community) even when they are asleep; we can say that in each of these heads is the whole product that we call the language. We can say that the object to be studied is the hoard deposited in the brain of each one of us; doubtless this hoard, in any individual

case, will never turn out to be absolutely complete. We can say that language always works 'through a language', without that, it does not exist. The language, in turn, is quite independent of the individual; it cannot be a creation of the individual-, it is essentially social; it presupposes the collectivity. (‘Third Course')

Noam Chomsky was to make this distinction of *the language* - the learned aspect, and *the performance* - production as a linguistic event, the cornerstone of his transformational generative grammar, which by the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s occupied the high ground in language study as the intellectually most rigorous and analytically most exact linguistic theory.

Even though Troubetzkoy's structural linguistics succeeded Saussurean linguistics in theoretical studies of language and still largely held the field in the 1960s, before yielding it finally to transformational generative grammar, the language-teaching component of structuralism hardly registered at all in the Nigerian educational system, despite its superiority in certain respects over traditional grammar, with its commitment to taxonomy and rules; in short with everything that Chomsky associates with 'language' in opposition to 'performance' - whatever is said to comprise the linguistic system. Structuralism, on the other hand, is already analytic, being a reflection on language with a view to 'performance.' Hence by identifying 'structural words,' and giving illustration with cases of sentences generated from their operation, a learner may see easily that the shape of a sentence may depend as much on certain characteristic behaviour patterns associated with a given word as on the specific communicative action in view, the linguistic preferences of the subject of the linguistic event, and the semantic and syntactic processes of the language. For example, there are sentential slots in which both *can* and *may* are possible from the purely syntactic point of view, and the decision which is the correct one is by reference to what is called the 'intended meaning.' But if the slot in question occurs in the principal clause, where the verb in the associated *if*-clause is *have* or *has*, only *can* may serve in the slot (see A.S. Hornby, II.48-49). For instance:

2. If I have a book, I can keep awake all night.

This *can* is not about the capability of the speaker, nor does it describe the status of the speaker, whether literate or not. The question does not arise, but if the question of literacy should be raised, then it is taken for granted that the speaker is literate. The sentence would be unthinkable - the intention would be self-contradictory - without this presupposition. At the interpretative level, however, the meaning is probably that the speaker takes a book for a companion - that is, as long as he/she

is at liberty to select the book: it cannot be any book at all that is meant. This land of interpretation, of course, could have no place in Chomsky's system or even in rule-bound traditional grammar. And yet it does open up the world of nuances where the boundless possibilities of implicature and signification are uncovered. -

To the extent that traditional grammar was able to assist in language learning, it was because many more of the factors involved in education delivery actually worked, and because reading was a strong component of the language learning package - that is to say, reading was not understood in the reductive sense that is now dominant, namely a means for acquiring information; really a passageway to information. This brings us back to the notion in common usage that language is a means of communication. It is in *common usage* that this notion has a basis, and has not been discovered by any form of investigation. In these terms, it would make little sense, in fact, to rank language among the objects of academic inquiry. The being of language, accordingly, poses no problem to a well-known and innovative researcher like Levi-Strauss, and the 'function' is perfectly obvious; only *how* it brings about communication calls forth and sustains inquiry. Thus we read in his *Structural Linguistics,*

> While it is true that the social sciences must share the limitations of linguistics, they can also benefit from its progress. Nor should we overlook the profound differences between the phonemic chart of a language and the chart of kinship terms of a society. In the first instance there can be no question as to function; we all know that language serves as a means of communication. On the other hand, what the linguist did not know and what structural linguistics alone has allowed him to discover is the way in which language achieves this end. The function was obvious; the system remained unknown. (Chapter 2)

What constitutes the *function* of language is a matter to be inquired into more fully further on. According to Levi-Strauss here, however, it is communication; and the argument is as if this is what language exists for. But this is an argument that makes no appeal to internal rigour or to evidence. The case is obvious because it derives from common knowledge. Since Comte's specification that the 'destination' of science is 'that of satisfying the craving of our understanding to know the laws of phenomena (43), it must be a troubling fact if linguists continue to hold a view about language of which the basis is nothing but common belief; whereas a key achievement of science by which it has helped to transform consciousness, freeing it at the same time from superstition, has been to wean it away from common knowledge by confronting it with well-founded knowledge. Northrop Frye cites a

few telling examples in his *The Great Code:*

> Copernicus is the great symbol for a new realization that such words as 'sunrise' and 'sunset,' though metaphorically efficient, had become 'only' metaphors, and that, so far as they were descriptive, what they described was illusory. Darwin is the great symbol for the new realization that divine creation, as generally conceived, was an illusion projected from the evolutionary operations •within nature. Einstein is the great symbol for a new realization that matter, which up to the twentieth century had been the great bastion of the objectivity of the world, was an illusion of energy. (14)

Of course, the common view of language has for some time been undergoing a critique. But it appears that this activity has passed fairly unnoticed, with the result that its consequences have hardly begun to filter through into language teaching and learning in our educational system. Chomsky, for example, has this to say on the point:

> it is wrong to think of human use of language as characteristically informative, in fact or in intention. Human language can be used to inform or mislead, to clarify one's own thoughts or to display one's cleverness, or simply for play. If I speak with no concern for modifying your behaviour or thoughts, I am not using language any less than if I say exactly the same things with such intention. If we hope to understand human language and the psychological capacities on which it rests, we must first ask what it is, not how or for what purposes it is used. ('Language and Mind')

If basic literacy is promoted as a skill necessary for accessing information in a mass society, education at higher levels which persists in the reductive view of reading is inevitably self-undermining. It leaves behind an essential tool it needs in order to bring the learners across the threshold from *literacy* to *education.*

Reading is a key component in language education and language learning if it provides a means for continuous and sustained exposure to the workings of the language, enabling high levels of assimilation, providing models of performance, and challenging, for example in the invitation to write, the production of one's own linguistic acts. It has been known for a long time that reading has a great deal to do with the state of health of the mind, in terms of its agility, in terms of its perspicuousness, in terms of its readiness to perceive phenomena in their complexity, and accordingly in terms of its descriptive power. J.M. Synge has written, concerning the capacity of dramatic literature to engage attention:

> The drama is not made serious ... by the degree in which it is taken up with

> problems that are serious in themselves, but by the degree in which it gives the nourishment, not very easy to define, on which our imaginations live. (qtd. in Watson and Pressy 241)

Drama is first and foremost *writing;* and therefore matter for reading (see Aristotle, *The Poetics* 39); for mankind has traditionally relied on literature to supply material suitable for this engagement to every 'stomach' as Sydney would say, and not only to experts. In this, literature has never failed mankind: in fact, the more the demand, the more abundant and various the supply; the more sophisticated the audience in its tastes and requirements, the more *avant-garde* and complex the resultant literary output. And it follows with unfailing logic that where there is no demand for this reading matter, as has been the case for many decades in Nigeria, literature has felt no obligation to supply and has fairly folded its wings, so to speak. What Nigerians have rather proved avid for is news matter: and that is what they get in abundance. Where there is some demand for literature with what some might call an *African flavour* is in the West; and that is where many of our writers have migrated, often trying to make ends meet, like a great many others in the diaspora - with compromises, even on the key issue of what constitutes an *African flavour*.

Of course, if we re-centre literature and reading in our educational system, the demand for new works will gradually build up. But this is not our main interest. Our main interest is language learning, and our argument here is that the level of language mastery is highly relevant for over-all intellectual development and that the quality and quantity, as well as the degree to which reading is sustained as a life-long engagement all have to do with the quality of the intellect.

As a language skill, reading can content itself with extracting information; but it achieves its full potential as a language skill if it becomes a moment of encounter with the language; in other words, a context of enhanced language learning. The issue of encounters with language is hardly noticed in the theory of language that has been dominant in Nigerian institutions for more than thirty years, that is, transformational generative grammar. Under this theory, the role of reading as an encounter with language seems to be limited to the earliest phase of language acquisition, when, according to Chomsky, the key activity is making out the rules of the language: 'The grammar of a language must be discovered by the child from the data presented to him' (Language and Mind'). This is what this learner needs to begin generating sentences of his own. Generative grammar does not examine the question of language learning in a systematic way beyond this initial point of discovering and deriving the rules; and it is quite as if there is no need for further

effort at improvements. The reason, obviously, is that for this theory it is grammar that is worth studying, which in fact demands 'paper-and-pencil analysis' (1966:10); and whatever else isn't grammar must be relegated to 'performance. But reading is being actively promoted throughout the West as part of language learning and has been developing as a holiday programme for school children in the United States in recent times because language learning is an on-going process. The capability of language learners to generate a limitless variety of new sentences on the basis of the grammar discovered is undoubtedly a major step in language learning; but it is only a step and at best may account for basic competence. What ensures that the learner grows and achieves higher and higher levels of mastery and linguistic sophistication is that living interaction is maintained with the linguistic community, and the quality of the resultant linguistic productions, whether *cultured* or *popular* will depend on whether this living interaction is with the reading and writing community or dominantly with the oral.

Aristotle draws an interesting contrast between a tragedy and an epic: 'Tragedy endeavours, as far as possible, to confine itself to a single revolution of the sun, or but slightly to exceed this limit; whereas the Epic action has no limits of time' *(The Poetics* 8); hence tragedy 'attains its end within narrower limits' (40). The time parameters in view here relate to the reading or experiencing the literary work of art. Whether it takes three hours, as for the stage performance of a tragedy, or three days or even longer, for the reading of an epic, this length of time is still very short compared to the amount of time required to write the tragedy or the epic. Of course, as in many other things, Wordsworth's remark that Toetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' *(Lyrical Ballads 16)*, which is imbibed by many Nigerian students at secondary school and well-liked by them, is widely understood to mean that writing, especially literary writing is effortless. The full text of Wordsworth does not suggest anything of the sort, and the misreading is probably by being received into a certain belief system reflected in many aspects of life that there is -must be - an effortless way of getting on, or even getting ahead. The text of Wordsworth actually says:

> I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from

> various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. (16-17)

The 'spontaneous overflow' comes about as a result of a recollection of emotion 'in tranquillity.' This is the first step. The second is the sustaining of contemplation upon this emotion *till* 'the tranquillity gradually disappears' and its intensity is renewed just as on the occasion of the experience itself. Only then does a 'powerful overflow' begin; in this "mood ... it is carried on, This overflow is in fact a "composition:' it remains a deliberate and pains-taking activity. Wordsworth's Notebooks supply abundant evidence of this process, with many revisions, cancellations, re-writings, and drafts preceding the emergence of the poem, 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors* (2581) provides as an example of this process Wordsworth's 'She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways,' comprising five stanzas in the 1798/99 version and three in the final version of 1800.

A Productive Mark

Of the two modes of production of language, speech and writing, the latter is usually the slower process. A very important reason for this is the level of analysis of thought and calculation which writing involves. As I have written elsewhere, where it is established as the propriety of language in both the written and the oral forms,

> Representation in a linear order is not only of the unfolding of thought, it is more importantly the sustaining of thought in time. The difference between speech and writing is really that thought is more rigorously, more continuously sustained in writing. In providing itself with the analytic format of writing, thought ensures that it can keep track of its own movements, that it can return to these movements in another reflection. *(Language and Habits of Thought* 119)

The language skills are conventionally listed as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. But each is in fact a complex of skills. By reason of the relation of language to thought, which is reflected in the passage just quoted, each of the skills entails the discipline of thought. Listening would normally, although not in all cases, make less demand of the discipline of thought than say, reading. In general, the more difficult and sophisticated the linguistic form that one is confronted with, the greater the demand on the discipline of thought. Writers are associated with high levels of intellectuality - the so-called intelligentsia - for this very reason.

They tend to develop the discipline of thought to a very high degree - really because this thought is disciplined by the rigour and analytics of writing.

Ladies and gentlemen, we can no longer afford to think of language exclusively as a means of communication, or worse still give the young in our schools that impression of language, because in that case, there is no point in acquiring language beyond the needs of exchange of information, whether in everyday discourse or with one's professional colleagues; because in that case, every linguistic act sustains the function of an envelop of which the career is at an end once it has been ripped open and the content removed. It is a view of language that is quite old. But it has been confronted from Plato onwards with a basic question: in that case, how about poetry? Until the *destruction* of traditional/humanist literary criticism by post-structuralist phenomenological criticism, the answer had always been a certain reformulation of Plato's notion of 'poetical charm'

(The Republic 73) - in general, the aesthetic principle. Wordsworth invokes it as part of the argument from which we have already quoted, where he writes that the poet,

> ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. (17)

According to Wordsworth, therefore, experience is the background formation and ultimate reference of poetry. But one does not start writing where the experience is made, or when it is still fresh, but long afterwards, when it is recollected in tranquillity. One breathes life into this experience by contemplation; then one writes, describing what has now become a passion in the particular mind, the aim being to communicate the passion to the reader. A poet would render these emotions vivid through 'powerful descriptions;' and this would probably be too much for the reader - Wordsworth implies. It has got to be eased for him and assimilation facilitated by surrounding and 'intermingling' powerful emotion with 'poetical charm.'

The 'destruction' or even *deconstruction* of this traditional view of the poetic act

involves a new account of reading. According to Derrida,

> To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that my future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding, and yielding itself to, reading and rewriting. When I say 'my future disappearance,' I do so to make this proposition more immediately acceptable. I must be able simply to say my disappearance, my nonpresence in general, for example the nonpresence of my meaning, of my intention-to-signify, of my wanting-to-communicate-this, from the emission or production of the mark. For the written to be the written, it must continue to 'act' and to be legible even if what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed, whether he is provisionally absent, or if he is dead, or if in general he does not support, with his absolutely current and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his meaning, of that very thing which seems to be written 'in his name.' *(Margins* 316)

The myth of the book as written communication was maintained for ages alongside another which implicates the writer as permanently present from the very first moment of positing by means of this linguistic act an 'intention-to-signify. The result was that the book was always understood as a substitute or even the *supplement* that enabled the writer to overcome the constraints of time and space and a sensitive reading would require the gentle nudging aside of the book so that that personal source of flow of discourse may realize in the form of a monologue a wish 'to-communicate-this' specific meaning. In Derrida above, we see the *destruction* or *deconstruction* of both reading and writing, which is at the same time a const*ruction.* The old concepts of reading and writing are *shaken* and new possibilities uncovered within them. And we can now see that 'to write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive:' far from a 'dead letter' (Derrida 1978) from which fixed and self-identical meanings can be drawn, and may always be e have a vital text which is *productive,* which 'must continue to "act" ... even if what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed.

Language fixed in a book may become productive as long as reading is not about skimming over the surface of the text in search of where the message is hidden; or as Sven Birkerts puts it in his instruction to the reader as investigator of style, who must think of his reading 'attention as a kind of gauge, at what point does the needle shoot up most dramatically? Where is the uranium deposit?' (10) In reading

as envisaged in Demda's text above, one is not looking for a uranium deposit: one agitates the text to make it productive, to make it yield a meaning. But this would be a magical process if the yielding of meaning were the end of the process: one wants to ascertain how this meaning has come about, knowing that other meanings are possible and should be expected as long as the text *is* productive. Therefore, one stops over; one ponders the words, since the text has nothing else, *is* nothing else, but these words.

Even in the days when reading for the message content was official policy, so to speak, language learning in the West assigned much time to reading - and of course writing. I take two examples, one from the United States of America, the other from Ireland. The first is a 1960 instructional material entitled, *America Reads: Wide, Wide World, Grade 7.* This is a 528 - page book in two columns, comprising short stories, novelistic episodes, historical and biographical sketches, poems, records of exploration and adventure, occasional, philosophical, and scientific essays and reports reflecting a range of functions that language commonly performs: conversation, dialogue, negotiation, description, analysis, documentation, construction of a sequence or a myth, creation and narration of a story, the representation of an action, the making of a case, disinterested reporting, divertissement, ritual, and so on. None of these distinct activities takes place without language going through some internal adjustments in order to cope. In short, the textbook is designed to introduce the children to as many different functions of language as possible; these they experience for themselves, especially by individual reading, following which are interactional and instructive entries, namely 'How Well Did you Read, 'About the Author,' 'The Reader's Craft,' and 'Know your Word.' There is no question here of reading as a passive absorbing of information; rather in 'How Well Did you Read?' and 'The Reader's Craft,' an inventory, as it were, of findings is produced together with an account making explicit how one has arrived at these findings and questions requiring the reader to go back to the passage for verification. Remarkable words and phrases are then highlighted for pondering over and exploration.

My second example is the textbook for junior secondary school English in use in Ireland until at least the early 1990s, called *Exploring English.* This work is in three volumes:

Anthology of Short Stories, Fiction, and Poetry. In addition to Exercises, each chapter has a-section on Explorations, which is interactive and involves pondering words, phrases, and clauses, reviewing what has been read, identifying and analysing specific features like metaphors, synecdoches, and themes. Some of the

issues of exploration in Yeats's 'A Prayer for My Daughter,' for instance are:

> The poet is constantly aware of the child's defencelessness. Where is this evident? What feelings does it evoke in the poet?
>
> There are extended references to the Horn of Plenty and the laurel tree. What do these stand for? What is their application here? How do they relate to the storm?
>
> There seems to be a contradiction in the phrase 'murderous innocence.' Is it a real, or only an apparent contradiction? What does it mean there? Ponder mis. (Volume 3: 223)

Each of these questions is an invitation to return to the poem itself, to *go over it* again, to consider the verses with an inquiring pair of eyes, lingering over them, pondering, constructing and reconstructing, exercising thought. Reading in this format is a real encounter with language and undoubtedly a real learning experience, as it both calls forth and trains the power of observation and forms and sharpens me critical intelligence. It was part of the educational practice which had to be forsaken in the 1960s in Nigeria for a new one which has gradually turned out to be a matter of getting the answer right, no matter if by guesswork.

The current textbooks in use in Nigeria at levels comparable to the American and Irish ones above tend to develop with the question and answer method adapted for :he multiple choice format of examining in view, and the reading content is extremely low - in quantity, to begin with, but I am afraid also in quality. I noticed, for example, in the book I looked at that the passage on *Things Fall Apart* was a paraphrase supplied, presumably, by the author of the instructional material itself Some of the students who actually register for literature in the school certificate examination seem to manage very well without reading a single literary work, not even *Things Fall Apart.* They read questions and answers on *Things Fall Apart,* in some cases written by persons who have no training whatever in literary or English language studies. Amazingly, they score high marks, and so have the special entry requirement for university admission to study English, Law, Mass Communication, and Theatre Arts.

Under the general understanding of language as a means communication, the language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are really *communication skills,* and are grouped around the information component, which is the *matter* of the linguistic event. This gives rise to two additional skills: coding or encoding and decoding, which are exercised respectively by the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. Speaking and writing, just like listening and reading are available alternatives of which the choice or necessity is determined chiefly by spatial factors. These patterns of equivalence have, accordingly come into thinking about language, especially in its social aspect:

> Speaking (writing) is equivalent to coding,encoding;
> Listening (reading) is equivalent to decoding.

This model is what accounts for such notions as 'the use of language' and 'literature in English' entering into general circulation, although there is no need for a deep exercise of thought to unveil their inefficiency as semantic bundles. In this model,

failure in communication is understood to be as a result of inept coding or decoding, usually due to 'poor lexical selection,' 'poor articulation,' 'poor vocabulary, or some such thing. These issues may have something to do with practical discourse - and that precisely is the problem:
that all linguistic acts, irrespective of mode or context, are assumed under this account of language as a means of communication to have exactly the same aim as practical discourse.

Discourse Functionality

Now issues are bound to remain confused as long as we depend on a hunch or on common opinion to guide us, especially where we are faced with complex phenomena. And language is definitely a complex phenomenon. What is needed is a theory to serve as an instrument for use in analysis, classification, and description of the language phenomenon. The model we are proposing goes all the way back to Emile Durkheim *(1858-1917),* namely functionalism. Durkheim elaborated this concept for use in the study of social phenomena, and wasn't thinking about language particularly. As an instrument of analysis, *function* is to be distinguished from two associated concepts: *cause* and" *purpose,* both of which are often encountered in language study and textual interpretation. Probably the most *traditional* of all the ways of interpreting linguistic acts is to ask about the *intention* of the subject in positing the act. It has been normative in Humanist literary criticism from the neo-Classicists in the seventeenth and Mathew Arnold in the nineteenth to Daniel Schwarz in the late twentieth century. From time to time, there is unease expressed as to the reliability or even viability of this method of reasoning, but rarely any radical questioning within the school. Peter Rabinowitz, for example, concedes that there are no objective grounds for ascertaining the intentions of the author, and that one must rely on 'intuitive literary judgement' (1980:255); which boils down to disavowing one's guesses and haunches as one's own and canonizing them as the poet's fundamental meaning. The arbitrariness of this procedure can already be deciphered in Plato's *Republic,* where we find that though the poet may mean well, what strikes the reader and the lasting impression he takes from the work may be quite different from the intention or purpose the writer may be aiming at.

In the second chapter of this work, Plato connects poetry to an educational programme that is conscious of the whys and hows whereby 'justice and injustice grow up in states' (63); he then proceeds to interrogate poetry as if it is a settled fact that the poetic act is undertaken for the purpose of assisting the cause of justice

- justice in the widest sense, which includes right reason, sound judgement, decency, piety, upright conduct, and so on. Socrates, the central intelligence in this, as in all the other dialogues of Plato, finds so many scandalous episodes and 'bad lies' told about the gods, the sons of the gods, and the heroes in the great works of the tradition that he recommends to his interlocutor, Adeimantus, that the objectionable portions should be expunged from these works as they are bound to do a disservice to education and aid and abet injustice and all the negative values associated with it. He continues:

> let us further compel the poets to declare either that these acts were not done by [the sons of gods], or that they were not the sons of gods; - both in the same breath they shall not be permitted to affirm. We will not have them trying to persuade our youth that the gods are the authors of evil, and that heroes are no better than men - sentiments which, as we were saying, are neither pious nor true, for we have already proved that evil cannot come from the gods. (78)

Having postulated education as the purpose of poetry, Plato finds that it must needs be self-defeating if it is not guided by philosophically well-founded principles. But poetry has remained *unruly* and *unprincipled* from Homer's time until the present, and the only law it knows is what Aristotle calls 'artistic requirements' (38). So it is utterly inexplicable - if indeed literature is communicative action - that an activity which has been unable to satisfy during the course of three millennia the purpose for which popular opinion says that it exists nevertheless carries on as if it had done nothing but achieve it!

> For Durkheim, neither the cause nor the purpose is of much help in understanding social phenomena, but only the *function,* which pertains to the social or organic need the element supplied (See Robert Jones 1986). The socius, according to Durkheim, exists and maintains itself in existence by reason of division of labour giving rise to organic solidarity. He makes the following point about the structure of societies where organic solidarity is preponderant. They are constituted, not by a repetition of similar, homogeneous segments, but by a system of different organs each of which has a special role, and which are themselves formed of differentiated parts. (1933:181, excerpted by Dunman 1999,2003)

Language undoubtedly serves an organic need, but it is equally an organic system, insofar as it is itself 'formed of differentiated parts.' The aspect of constituent structure is well known in language studies, and has been a central question in

linguistics at least since Saussure. What was less understood was the notion of language serving an organic need; and this was not directly studied by Durkheim: it may have been taken for granted, as his main interest was in such social facts as crime, deviance, and suicide, which are rather unlikely candidates for social functionality - if this be understood in line with everyday language where it stands for *usefulness.* Andre Martinet was the one to apply the principle to language study, and formulated the general principle that governs linguistic study under functionalism, namely that 'function is the criterion of linguistic reality' (see Mulder 11).

Implicit in this statement is the idea that the being, the phenomenology, and the sociology of language, the structure and the laws of signifying, the variety of linguistic forms and processes of internal change are explicable to the extent that the analysis is compliant to the functional principle. In every analysis, the first question to address must be as to the function that accounts for the given formation. But the second question is also crucial for a full functional analysis, namely how does the formation hold together as an organic structure?

As already hinted, structuralism and its successors focus on the second question as *the* problem of linguistics.

Sociolinguistics and pragmatics which might connect to social functionality in fact do not, because of their concern for the sources, the facilitation, and the effectuating of communication. The principle they respond to, and have accordingly been shaped by is *language as a means of communication.* Functionalism in the hands of such practitioners as M.A.K. Halliday has more or less sought accommodation with traditional linguistics, and seeks not only to cover the same ground broadly covered by traditional linguistics, but in some cases, as in axiomatic functionalism elaborated by Mulder and Hervey, the theory has incorporated the principle of language as a means of communication. Accordingly, the general theory of functionalism elaborated by Martinet has been re-written in axiomatic functionalism to the following effect, that 'all features in semiotic sets are functional,' and further that *functional* is to be understood as 'relevant to the purport of the whole of which it is a part' (Mulder 41). By these two rules, *function* is unhinged from the organic form that is the social system and reconnected by a detour to meaningfulness and information transmission.

Northrop Frye (1970:113) offers, by contrast, an account of literature which appears to link him in a pattern of continuity through Martinet to Durkheim, where he associates poetry with two different activities: (i) symbolic meditation on the destiny of sociality, and (ii) assisting the work of society by suggesting workable

alternatives. If we ask the same question about language, we find that there is first of all an organic need, in terms of participation in human life through the exercise of mind - this being the distinctive possession of the human kind whereby it stands apart from the rest of creation. We here reconnect to Habermas and Ortega whom we saw early on, and in whose discourse *human life* is unthinkable without language.

> The logic or the morphology or - for those who think of mind as a material device - the mechanics of this interrelation of mind and human life remains an open question. But it is possible to interrogate and follow the movements of thought, both individual 'mental states' and 'collective representations, that is ideation in general, as a basic manifestation of 'human life, first of all in its dimension of individuality. And since language is involved in the learning of ideas (Locke 272) and the 'analysis of thought' (Rousseau, see Derrida 1976: 295), the exercise of thought is already a mode of participation in human life in the dimension of sociality; for 'in the life of the human race, it is the collectivity which maintains ideas and representations' (Durkheim, 'Pragmatism & the Question of Truth'). As the element in which ideas and representations are preserved and kept in circulation, language is the supreme event, as Heidegger would say, by means of which the subject breaks out of the isolation of individuality and enters a community of other human beings; and within this community, through the linguistic activities especially of naming and identifying, classifying, exchanging, and communicating, he is able to make his way in the world. As Heidegger states it, one 'does not touch the 'essential essence' of language in saying that 'language serves to give information, to say so, one merely indicates an effect of its essence. Language is not a mere tool, one of the many which man possesses; on the contrary, it is only language that affords the very possibility of standing in the openness of the existent.... the event which disposes the supreme possibility of human existence, (qtd in Akwanya 2005:149)

By entering into the formation and consolidation of the human community, the linguistic functions of naming, classifying, representing, and signifying in general, communicating information, and exchanging ideas and representations are therefore fundamentally social skills. Socialization is impaired for one who is deficient in these.

Just as in the meditation on language itself, analysis of a concrete linguistic event requires first of all the determination of the constitutive function. For example,

information communication is the constitutive function of a news report. This function requires concrete nouns, adverbials of time and place, and the finite verb of which the tense is the past of completed action. Perceptual verbs are dominant. By means of all these the linguistic event presents its object as a set of facts of which the validity is entirely objective. Sermons, lectures, speeches, on the other hand, build up communities of shared convictions, and the facts in these kinds of linguistic acts are not indifferent as in the news report, but demand an affective response from the hearers. These *facts* can be explored and extended, leading to new findings and new insights, the presentation of which is by arguments and justifications, the specific linguistic forms that appeal to and engage the cognitive processes. The system of reference is internal, inasmuch as it is based on the well-known facts within this particular formation, and 'outside facts' may be invoked either for illustration or for interpretation in the light of the established certainties.

To Conclude: Criticism as a Discipline of Thought

When art is the function that accounts for the emergence of the linguistic act, we have a different situation altogether. We are dealing with what is called 'poetry,' or 'literature,' or 'writing,' in the French sense of *ecriture.* That is to say, the outcome of the linguistic act of which the constitutive function is poetry is itself an *object* - an art object. What can we do with it? We can talk about it; we can meditate on it, for it gives rise to thought (Ricoeur, 1974:288), and sustains thought by giving rise endlessly to 'new critical discoveries' (Frye 17). The New Critics used to talk of taking the poem apart and breaking it down in analysis. But this is really a manner of speaking - the New Critics knew this too. They too recognized that there is a sense in which the art object is

inviolable, and some of their contributions in this regard are mentioned by Suleiman:

> Perhaps no single idea has had as tenacious and influential a hold over the critical imagination in our century as that of textual unity or wholeness. Amidst the diversity of metaphors which critics have used to describe the literary text - as an organic whole, as a verbal icon, as a complex system of interlocking and hierarchically related 'strata' - the one constant has been the belief in the text's existence as an autonomous, identifiable, and unique entity: the *text itself.* (1980:40)

The use of *text* here preserves the Latin sense which is familiar in 'textile.' The poem is a kind of fabric (Latin *fabrica* 'cloth'), where words comprise the woof and the weft.

So far as this object is concerned, the individual words and sentences that constitute it are no more analysable than the bricks that constitute an edifice. The individual elements have functions; and this is their justification, this function. In their functionality, they quite give up one of the basic functions associated with language, which is to be meaningful: it is the poetic act itself as a unified whole that may be questioned for meaningfulness, not the individual words or sentences or episodes found in it. To state the matter differently, meaningfulness for the functional elements of a poem is quite simply the possession of correlates. The study of the work as one unified act is what is called *literary criticism.* Hereby the work yields 'itself to, reading and rewriting' in a space where the exercise of language overlaps entirely with the exercise of thought. Literary criticism is a discipline of thought because it is really, finally a language that keeps track and watches over another, the poem, but at the same time over its own movements. Criticism so understood signifies the necessity of ending the separation in our educational system of *language* and *literature* in the same movement that it announces the possibility of an intellectual culture growing up as a learning outcome in our school system.

I thank you very much.

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