

Signifying and Understanding



Semiotics, Communication and Cognition 2

Editor

Paul Cobley

De Gruyter Mouton

Signifying and Understanding

Reading the Works of Victoria Welby
and the Signific Movement

by

Susan Petrilli

De Gruyter Mouton

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Peace cannot be kept by force.
It can only be achieved by understanding
(Albert Einstein, *Notes on Pacifism*)

Dedicated to the memory
of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi and Thomas A. Sebeok,
to my mentor, Augusto Ponzio,
and to the younger generations around the world

Foreword

Paul Cobley

Although I was vaguely acquainted with semiotics as a result of reading Barthes, Foucault, Althusser and other figures then associated with French ‘structuralism’, I first started to study semiotics in the early 1980s as an undergraduate. At my university, one building in particular was devoted exclusively to ongoing open lectures, and a fellow undergraduate had told me she had just attended the first in a series of lectures by Jacqueline Rose who talked of ‘signifiers’ and ‘signifieds’. It all seemed a bit tricky to me, but I decided to investigate anyway. Within a few months, the English paperback version of Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* had been published and I was suggesting it as set reading to my tutor on the ‘Modern European Mind’ module.

Subsequently (I thought) I read widely on structuralism and poststructuralism, the latter a new development which baffled both me and my lecturers when we heard it discussed in a one-off lecture by Malcolm Bradbury, then visiting the university. Reading some of the key poststructuralists with their oblique prose – and their commentators: some with less oblique prose than their subjects, some equally obfuscatory, and many basking in reflected glory and going along for the heady, ‘radical’ ride – I was left with the feeling that this would be a great club to join if they were willing to have me. As far as studying signs was concerned, this was *it* – linguistics was a science; it mapped precisely onto Marxism; this, in turn, mapped onto psychoanalysis. If I could only grasp just how the mirror phase worked, what were the consequences of the ‘materiality of the signifier’ (and it *was* material: Barthes said so; no need to read all of Saussure’s *Course*), why the axes of metonymy and metaphor were so important, what the big deal about *différance* was (apart from the *oh-so-witty* pun), and how ‘discourse’ was such a massive advance on the term ‘ideology’ – then the world would be mine. I might even get an academic job.

Yet I was left with a nagging feeling. As the 1980s turned to the 1990s and I saw how publishing academic books on ‘postmodernism’ (i.e. poststructuralism with more pictures) had become a lucrative industry, my unease grew. Some of the stuff I had been reading referred to an American called Peirce (sometimes he was called ‘Pierce’, and this [mis]naming was usually accompanied with no references whatsoever to his work). Of course, a few commentators *had* to mention Peirce, because they were trying to use Jakobson’s emphasis on iconicity, indexicality and symbolicity. Peter Wollen, the film theorist, was one of these. Curiously, the writers on film from the journal *Screen* (who were *incredibly* important for reasons so trivial now I can scarcely remember them) never mentioned Peirce. It was beginning to seem to me as though they were deliberately avoiding something. Reading Peirce would entail a load of toil which may not have enhanced one’s profile as swiftly as a quick shot of Deleuze or Baudrillard. Also, those writing favourably about Saussure seemed broadly to subscribe to the idea that the world was ‘constructed in discourse’, particularly such current aspects of the world as ‘identity’. That was good news, indeed: it meant worries about the real world could be consigned to the dustbin, these constructions could be attended to, instead, and we could order some more ivory for the extensions to our towers.

So, in the midst of my unease, I was asked by my PhD supervisor (round about 1987) to find good summaries of ‘semiotics’ as potential reading to accompany a presentation by undergraduates. Taking the task literally (rather than was his figurative intention), I proceeded to find out about just that – not the Parisian theory with which I was vaguely familiar, but semiotics, the study of signs, or, rather, the *action* of signs. As a result, I started to learn about Peirce (spelled and pronounced correctly). I found out that he was one of the most confusing writers ever to walk this planet, but nevertheless overbrimming with ideas that exceeded even his voluminous works. Getting to the most preliminary of grips with Peirce would be a Sisyphean task. But then I found a card in the library index which pointed me to the Fawcett library (now the Women’s Library), located in the basement of the City of London Polytechnic where I was doing my thesis and a fair bit of part-time teaching. It was a card indexing Charles Hardwick’s 1977 collection of the Peirce-Welby correspondence. If he writes in an epistolary tone, I thought, then I’ll be able at least to start to understand what Peirce is on about. And I wasn’t disappointed. Peirce’s letters offered the clarity on sign theory which I could not, untutored, find in the *Collected Papers*. From then on, I knew semiotics was a different proposition, only dimly resembling the *semiological* verbiage I’d been mugging up. After having read, here and there, odd essays of Sebeok in my quest for a summing up in the 1980s, I went back to him with a different purpose. I bought his collection *A Sign is Just a Sign* and his monograph *Semiotics in the United States* when they came out in 1991, and the importance of Peirce running through them was clear. When I reached the Berkeley Congress of the IASS in 1994, Saussure was almost nowhere and it became obvious that semiotics had travelled a great distance since the Parisians and their lackeys had briefly tarried with it.

Yet that was not the only thing that started to strike me after my time in the Fawcett Library with Hardwick’s collection. Reading Welby’s letters, it became clear that she was not just Peirce’s interlocutor, or some British noblewoman who might have helped his financial situation by way of patronage (as I had assumed when I had first seen the volume mentioned in the card index); rather, she was a formidable intellect with a focus on matters which were becoming important to me, particularly the pros and cons of ‘clarity’ in the understanding of how signs work. I then found that the library also had books by ‘Mrs. Henry Cust’ (Welby’s daughter) and, on reading *Echoes of Larger Life and Wanderers*, I was transported to a nineteenth century world of leisure, unfettered intellectual pursuits, and double-barrelled (sometimes triple-barrelled) names. I entertained the idea that this could be the subject of one of the (thus far) great unwritten intellectual biographies. I fancied I could spend a decade or so writing it myself. So I started at the beginning and, by way of inter-library loan, ordered a copy of Welby’s first book, *Links and Clues*, published under the pen name of ‘Vita’.

Links and Clues duly arrived; but it was impenetrable. I needed some secondary literature – anything – to give me a leg up. Firstly, I discovered Schmitz’ 1985 reprint of *Significs and Language*, full of potentially great material and scholarship. But Schmitz’s apparently comprehensive editorial material was not as engagingly written as it might have been. I then ordered, through inter-library loan again, Schmitz’ collection of *Essays on Significs*, then recently published. One title jumped out at me: it signalled a ‘confrontation’ of Welby and Bakhtin in an essay by Susan Petrilli, an essay which economically discussed the relation of both as a means to explore the plurivocality of ‘significs’ and ‘semiotics’. I was particularly interested because I was preparing a lecture

on Voloshinov. However, I ended up learning more about both Bakhtin and Peirce, as well as Welby, than I had hitherto. All of this was offered in engaging, urgent prose, demonstrating at the same time that here was a commanding authority, not only on the minutiae of Welby's work, but on where the latter fitted in terms of contemporary sign study.

I looked up Petrilli's other publications, and found she had written quite a few articles in Italian, a book (which I later learned was a collection of her essays), and had published a small Italian collection of Welby's work, *Significato, metafora, interpretazione* (which, for some reason, I did not twig as being translated into Italian by Petrilli, too). A number of her articles were written with Augusto Ponzio, a scholar with a plethora of publications on his CV and also a contributor to the Schmitz collection on signification. I realized my whim to publish a biography of Lady Welby now had to be put on hold – indefinitely, it turned out. Furthermore, in order just to get up to speed on Welby from a theoretical angle, as well as to make contact with the fount of knowledge by the name of Susan Petrilli, I would be advised to learn Italian. I signed up for a beginner's class with Westminster Adult Education.

Around that time, not long after the Berkeley Congress, I also made the acquaintance of Tom Sebeok who, with his legendary facility for bringing people together, immediately put me in contact with Petrilli and Ponzio (in academic terms, “a class act”, he called them). I was taken aback to learn that Petrilli was actually an Australian from Adelaide and as fluent in English as me, if not more so. Still, I kept going to my Italian class for the meantime, and can now just about dispute a bill in a restaurant should the need ever arise when I visit Italy. Yet, what dawned on me was that Petrilli's status as a native speaker of English went some way to explaining why she had such a grasp of the nuances of Welby's writing, one fact that also gave her an advantage over other, non-native scholars of Welby's signification. It did not, of course, explain away her phenomenal research in the archives at York University, Ontario, and elsewhere. Indeed, I even took a brief glance at the Welby Collection in Senate House Library in the hope that Petrilli would one day come to London to work. Nevertheless, the fledgling internet and email allowed us to correspond until I finally met with her, and also with Ponzio, in Dresden in 1999, a short time after the publication of her *Su Welby*.

Since then, I have visited Bari on a number of occasions for conferences and talks, partaking of the lively scholarly atmosphere there – although disavowing myself of my early ambition to write a Welby biography. And it is this disavowal that has precipitated the no doubt apparently indecorous and (seemingly) indulgent autobiographical nature of this Foreword. My point is that my Welby ambition was abandoned mercifully early as I encountered the staggering scholarly capacity of Susan Petrilli. That was evident from the start, as it is in this present work. The degree of scholarship coupled with theoretical expertise and a vision for the future exemplified in the book you are reading is seldom to be met with in academic life. Petrilli's work ‘divorced’ or apart from the recovery of Welby is impressive enough. It comprises single author publications such as *Significs, semiotica, significazione* (1988), *Materia segnica e interpretazione. Figure e prospettive* (1995), *Che cosa significa significare? Itinerari nello studio dei segni* (1996), *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio* (1998), *Teoria dei segni e del linguaggio* (1998), *Percorsi della semiotica* (2005), *Sign Crossroads in Global Perspective* (2008), as well as the current monumental volume for which this is the Foreword. On top of this is her co-authored work which comprises numerous journal

special issues, articles and books. Notable in particular for the holistic sense they give of the work carried out in Bari with Augusto Ponzio are *Signs of Research on Signs*, the 1998 special issue of *Semiotische Berichte*, and the huge book of 2005, *Semiotics Unbounded* (which places Welby in a substantial section of her own among other giants of semiotics). Petrilli's work as a conference organizer is legendary, but is almost eclipsed by another major contribution to the international scholarly community: her ability to get the work of other scholars into print, in journals and proceedings volumes, in almost superhuman time.

Petrilli's work is *au courant*: in consonance with the foundational work of Sebeok, she promotes a global (or 'holistic') semiotic perspective on phenomena, eschewing glottocentrism and monologism. Her observations on globalization eschew the common understanding that it is a socio-economic phenomenon and assert, instead, that it is also a semiotic phenomenon. This issue is approached through a synthesis of Peircean sign theory, Bakhtinian dialogue, biosemiotics and the recovered insights of Welby. Along with her collaborative formulation of the idea of the 'semiotic animal' (with Deely and Ponzio), she has been inspired by Welby's signification to present an outline of 'semioethics' – an imperative that is not merely discursively constructed but is the result of the 'concrete' demands of the other (Levinas, as well as Bakhtin, is a key figure, here, as is Ponzio, whose contribution to Schmitz' volume projected an 'ethosemiotics'). Furthermore, for her, and following Welby's formulation of the 'mother-sense', otherness is not just a matter of explicit requests from our co-habitants on earth. Rather, it is thoroughly grounded in the sign, both in communication and non communication.

Petrilli's work *with* Welby – in the sense of being *on* Welby and *informed by* Welby – is among the leading endeavours in the disciplinary field of semiotics. It is a major work of archaeology, recovering an almost forgotten figure from library stacks that have become dusty and archival papers that are beginning to fade drastically. It is also a revision: semiotics has not just two founding *fathers* but also a founding *mother*. Furthermore, that founding mother's perspective not only reorientates much of the theoretical impetus of semiotics but also re-draws the history of linguistics in the twentieth century, the shadow that has sometimes obscured the semiotic enterprise. The re-discovery of Welby is on a par with the recovery of John Poincaré and, before this, even Peirce. Yet Petrilli's work, especially as represented in this current book, not only presents Welby on her own, as it were, but also gives a rounded sense of the context and milieu in which Welby operated.

But, more than all of this, perhaps, Petrilli makes Welby mean much to both the present and the future. In my own relatively feeble (yet, for me, meaningful) semiotic odyssey, I described some intellectual doubts that led me to the particular reading strategy which alighted, ultimately, on Petrilli and Welby. Petrilli's odyssey, on the other hand, has taken her from Australia to Italy, from a PhD thesis idea to the depths of the archives, and now to a future for a politically inflected, ethically permeated, semiotics. More than a reading project, Petrilli's has been a journey of writing: where I longed to visit, she had already been, charted and cultivated the landscape. Far from the smugness of poststructuralism and the shortcuts of complacent critique, Petrilli's work embodies an eclectic but theoretically and research informed perspective. With the current volume, she delves into the past – Welby – with a view to the future. So, if you want to learn just how important signification is, start with this book. If you want to learn how important Welby's writings *will be*, start with this book.

Acknowledgments

My interest in Victoria Welby has its origins in the fact that Ferruccio Rossi-Landi commissioned me to write an essay, given that he could not do it himself, for a book edited by H. Walter Schmitz. This led to my monograph in Italian of 1998. But as I became more and more aware of Welby, my involvement increased. In an essay co-authored with Thomas A. Sebeok, Welby figures as one of the most important 'women in semiotics.' To me this was an important act of recognition in the face of an author who, as much as she might be known in the sphere of studies on signs and language, is hardly mentioned despite her crossing paths with such important authors as Charles S. Peirce, Bertrand Russell, Charles K. Ogden and Ivor A. Richards, etc. Given the consistent corpus of materials in the Welby Collection, Tom Sebeok proposed that I prepare a Special Issue of the journal *Semiotica*, the official organ of the International Society for Semiotic Studies, entirely dedicated to Victoria Welby. When Sebeok died, this project was supported by Marcel Danesi, who has continued Sebeok's work as Editor-in-Chief of *Semiotica*. But my volume continued growing with the addition of published and unpublished writings by Welby as well as with texts by scholars who develop the general framework of her research, the 'significians' from the name Welby herself chose for her own standpoint and orientation, 'significs.' At this point, just as the volume was becoming rather difficult to publish because of its size, Paul Cobley came onto the scene. He had already been working back stage, and not a few times from the prompter's box warmly encouraging me to finish my work towards publication, and even taking upon himself the task of reading my 'monster manuscript' (the expression is Sebeok's). And here I take the opportunity to thank Vincent Colapietro as well who also read an initial draft of the manuscript. He, along with a number of scholars including Jeff Bernard, Massimo A. Bonfantini, John Deely, Nathan Houser, Frank Nuessel, Eero Tarasti have followed the development of this project with interest and have contributed to an atmosphere of anticipation. I express my gratitude in particular to Paul Cobley for his constant interest in my work, his suggestions for improvement, and for promoting this volume with Mouton de Gruyter and accepting it for publication in his book series 'Semiotics, Communication and Cognition.'

Of course none of the people so far mentioned, and here I wish to name Augusto Ponzio (whom I must inevitably thank as my mentor), is responsible for any limits eventually traced in this work.

The University of Bari through the Department of Pratiche Linguistiche e Analisi di Testi has contributed to financing my research at the York University Archives, Toronto Canada, at the Lady Welby Library, University of London Library, and The British Library in London, United Kingdom. This financing made it possible for me to consult the archives, and gather the papers assembled in this volume. My thanks to the Department secretary, Alba D'Albero, for taking care of all the administrative issues.

Over the years I have enjoyed the assistance of Suzanne Dubeau, Kent M. Haworth, Phyllis Platnick, Dennis Skinner, Carolyn Cannon, Laurel Parson, and Michael Moir at the York University Archives in Toronto; also Pam Baker at the University of London Library. I wish to thank them all.

I am specially grateful to H. Walter Schmitz. We have been in contact over Victoria Welby and her signifiics since the mid 1980s, even though irregularly and without ever meeting personally. Exchanges with Schmitz began at the time of writing my first essay on Welby, commissioned for his volume *Essays on Signifiics*, published in 1990. I have never left Welby since, and have stayed in touch with Schmitz also in relation to my studies for my doctoral dissertation *Segno e valore. La signifiics di Welby e la semiotica novecentesca*, 1993–1994, and again for my monograph in Italian, *Su Victoria Welby. Signifiics e filosofia del linguaggio*, published in 1998. My interview with Schmitz on Welby and her signifiics was published in 1988, in the volume *The Semiotic Web 1987*, again by initiative of Thomas A. Sebeok.

Other scholars who have kindly responded to my inquires concerning signifiics-related research projects, work in progress and published literature on Welby and signifiics include: Paul Chipcase, Terrence W. Gordon, Adriaan D. De Groot, Erik Heijerman, Brigitte Nerlich, Rita Nolan, Timothy J. Reiss, Christian Thiel, Henk Visser, and more recently Jan Noordegraaf, and Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen. The essays sent to me by these authors in response to my search for information concerning any publications on signifiics and the signifiic movement have all been listed in the relative bibliography at the end of this volume. These people too I warmly thank for their generosity and participation.

The assistance of two librarians in my department has proven indispensable for accessing necessary materials and bibliographical information. My thanks go to Valeria Maranò, succeeded by Simona Ricci. In particular Simona has patiently assisted me in surfing the net on numerous information searches. I am grateful for such competent support.

I also wish to express my gratitude to Margaret Hosking from Barr Smith Library, Adelaide University in South Australia, for her unfailing assistance during my many visits there in search of materials and bibliographical information.

I have enjoyed help in typing or scanning much of the materials assembled in this volume, in particular from my niece Nicole Petrilli and from student assistant Claudia Romanazzi. Thanks also to my research assistant Rosa Stella Cassotti, as well as to Arianna De Luca, Antonella Barile, Tiziana Giudice, Manuela Messina, Tiziana Navarra, Ida Rodriguez, Antonella Russo, and Stefano Carlucci, all of whom contributed to translating manuscripts from the Welby Archives into digital format. Too, Rosa Stella's assistance has been precious in web searches for information otherwise unretrievable, and in the final editing of this volume for publication with Mouton de Gruyter.

Last but not least, many thanks to Anke Beck from Mouton for her interest in publishing this volume and Marcia Schwartz for her editorial care.

Solitary as research and writing may be, I have always had the pleasure and the privilege of working in generous, even joyful dialogue with others – and for this I am truly grateful.

Susan Petrilli
The University of Bari, Italy
June 2009

About this volume

This volume presents a selection of Victoria Lady Welby's published and unpublished writings from the Welby Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections, Scott Library (North York, Toronto, Ontario, Canada), and from the Lady Welby Library, University of London Library (London, United Kingdom). The whole course of Welby's production is delineated in its various phases from its inception through to developments beyond Welby herself with the Signific Movement in the Netherlands, and still other ramifications, contemporary and subsequent to her. In addition to her unpublished manuscripts, the volume also presents a selection from her unpublished correspondence from the York University Archives; a choice of 'essaylets' originally printed during her lifetime for private circulation; a series of excerpts from her two early monographs long out of print, *Links and Clues* (1881) and *Grains of Sense* (1897); a selection of essays published between the 1880s and the first decade of the 20th century. The important essays 'Metaphor and Meaning' (1893) and 'Sense, Meaning, Interpretation' (1896) have also been included. And her main monographs, *What is Meaning?* (1903, 2nd ed. 1983) and *Significs and Language* (1911, 2nd ed. 1985) have been amply cited throughout my own chapters examining significs.

Welby's correspondence with Charles S. Peirce is generally known to the specialist thanks to the editions produced first by Irwin C. Lieb, *Charles S. Peirce's Letters to Lady Welby*, 1953, and subsequently by Charles S. Hardwick, *Semiotic and Significs. The Correspondence Between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, 1977. Her correspondence with such figures as Michel Bréal, André Lalande, Bertrand Russell, Charles K. Ogden, Ferdinand S. C. Schiller, Ferdinand Tönnies, Frederik van Eeden, to name just a few among the many significant intellectuals of the time who entered her network of relations, is also worthy of attention, but still today remains mostly unpublished. A selection from the massive corpus of unpublished correspondence in the Welby Collection has been included in the present volume, with the hope, apart from all else, of stimulating work towards the publication of complete annotated editions. Welby's exchanges with Mary Everst Boole, Julia Wedgewood, and many others are also presented from the published collections edited by her daughter, Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust, *Echoes of Larger Life*, 1929, and *Other Dimensions*, 1931, now long out of print.

Apart from some exceptions which are not lacking (as indicated in the last two chapters in this volume), the general silence around Welby, her connections and influence, the development of significs after her, represents a real gap in the history of ideas. This volume is intended as an appeal to the scientific community and to enthusiastic researchers, for a commitment to restore and reconstruct, on both the historical and theoretical levels, a period in cultural history which deserves more attention, concerning not only Victoria Welby and her ideas, significant in their own right, but more extensively all those (famous and less famous) personalities that had anything to do with her significs (directly or indirectly), and were somehow influenced by her ideas (declaredly or not).

A small selection of essays by first generation significians contributing to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands completes the present volume. The plan is to provide historical documentation testifying to the progress of significs after Welby and even independently from her. These papers are like signposts indicating itineraries in signifi-
cational

research followed during the first half of the twentieth century and beyond, in developments across the second half of the twentieth century, influenced by signification or somehow connected to signification, or prefigured by signification, as in the case of anglo-american speech act theory or psycholinguistics. The selection is necessarily limited and was difficult as is often the case when having to make choices, but also considering the fact that the main corpus of these texts is in Dutch. In any case, I believe the texts gathered suffice to evidence the desirability of continuing research and publication projects in this direction. The ambition of this volume is to convey a sense of the theoretical topicality of signification and its developments, in particular its thematization of the question of values and the connection with signs, meaning, and understanding, therefore with human verbal and nonverbal behaviour, with language and communication.

Papers in the Welby Collection (York University Archives) are organized into files and boxes (see description in Chapter 1, and in Appendices 2 and 3), and are mostly dated, but not always. Sometimes these papers are not arranged in any particular order. Where possible, the main criterion used for presentation in the present volume is chronology. Often more than one copy of the same manuscript is available in the same file, or in different files even, with more or less significant variants. This is the case, for example, of the manuscript entitled 'A Plea for Signification' (now appended to Chapter 3), included both in the file entitled 'Mother-sense' (Box 28, File 24), and in 'Signification' (Box 30, file 43).

In many cases the papers in the Welby Collection (York University Archives) seem ready for publication, and though indications on how to assemble them are mostly lacking, Welby had planned to publish several books using these materials, as can be inferred from the correspondence, schemes for some of which are also presented in this volume. The Welby Collection offers an abundant corpus of unpublished manuscripts including correspondence and theoretical papers, representing work in progress, sometimes close to the publication phase. The present volume offers a representation of Welby's writings that is necessarily partial, though significant, of the materials effectively available at the archives. A serious problem not to be underestimated is the physical state of the manuscripts – in many cases the writing is slowly fading away as the paper becomes ever more fragile on its return to the dust. Consequently, beyond the fact of making a part of the Welby manuscripts available as best as I could, with the present volume I hope to communicate at least an idea of the worth and importance of the woman, her ideas, of the cultural ferment generated by her research and writing as in the case of the Signification Movement in the Netherlands, and therefore to encourage further signification-related inquiry not only into Welby's signification, but also beyond.

The following conventions have been used: CP = *Collected Papers* by Charles Sanders Peirce; WCYA = Welby Collection, York University Archives. In the Chapters written by myself, footnotes that are not my own are placed in square brackets. Instead, in the sections entitled 'The Texts' featuring writings by Victoria Welby and the significationists, the footnotes in square brackets are my own.

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Introduction

... it was with Life – Life more abundant here, Life unspeakable beyond the point where knowledge for the present ends – that Lady Welby was ultimately and always concerned, and only with Language as it was the means and attribute, the expression and the power of Life. (W. Macdonald 1912, in Cust 1931: 355)

This volume is dedicated to the life-long research of the English scholar Victoria Lady Welby (1837–1912) as it found expression in her theory of meaning or Significs. My Italian monograph, *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio*, 1998, is a stepping-stone towards this volume and in turn a development of my doctoral dissertation, *Segno e valore. La significs di Welby e la semiotica novecentesca*, written under the direction of my original mentor in semiotics, Augusto Ponzio, and delivered at the University of Bari, Italy, in 1993. A general overview of Welby's plurifaceted research is attempted through a selection from her published and unpublished writings, as well as from her correspondence with numerous personalities of the time who somehow entered what I propose to call the 'Welby Network.' 'Significs' is the term coined by Victoria Welby in the 1890s for her original contribution to studies on signs, meaning, and understanding. It provided her with a methodology, theoretical framework, and unifying perspective on the broad range of issues and fields of research at the centre of her attention.

In the past, Welby's work in its own right was largely ignored, or misunderstood. However, *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance*, her main monograph, first published in 1903, was republished in 1983 under the editorship of German scholar Achim Eschbach. This was followed in 1985 by the re-edition of Welby's 1911 book, *Significs and Language. The Articulate Form of Our Expressive and Interpretative Resources*, in a volume collecting other writings by Welby, under the editorship of another German scholar and significs expert, H. Walter Schmitz. Welby was never completely forgotten, even if only as a consequence of her association with Charles S. Peirce and publication of their correspondence in the volume, *Semiotic and Significs. The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, 1977, edited by Charles S. Hardwick. This important editorial enterprise was preceded in 1953 by an earlier edition, albeit a partial one for it included Peirce's letters, but not Welby's (see Lieb 1953). Other important volumes relating to Welby include: a biography on herself and her mother, *Wanderers: Episodes From the Travels of Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley and Her Daughter Victoria, 1849–1955*, 1928, written by her daughter Elizabeth (known as Mrs. Henry or Nina Cust); and two volumes of correspondence, *Echoes of Larger Life. A Selection from the Early Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby*, 1929; and *Other Dimensions. A Selection from the Later Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby*, 1931, again both edited by Welby's daughter. To my knowledge, no major works repropounding Welby's writings have appeared since 1985, though important editions of her correspondence with single authors have been published in articles by various significs scholars.

These are reported in Chapter 8 of this volume as well as in the Section entitled, ‘Writings on Welby, the Signific Movement and Current Developments,’ appended at the end. Apart from single essays by Welby, two volumes collecting her writings in Italian translation have also appeared, and a third is forthcoming, respectively: *Significato, metafora, interpretazione*, 1985, *Senso, significato, significatività*, 2007, and *Come interpretare, comprendere, comunicare*, 2009.

After considering ‘sensifics’ along with other possible alternatives such as ‘semantics,’ ‘semasiology,’ ‘sematology,’ ‘semiology,’ ‘sem(e)iotics,’ etc., Welby introduced the neologism ‘significs’ for her own special approach to the study of sign, language and meaning. In *What is Meaning?*, Welby describes significs as ‘philosophy of interpretation,’ ‘philosophy of translation,’ and ‘philosophy of significance.’ Significs studies the conditions that make meaning possible, its principles and foundations, keeping account also of the biological basis of signifying processes. The relation between sign theory and value theory is a central concern, between signs and values, signs and sense, signs, values and subject, signs, values and behaviour. In this context, value is understood in a broad sense as the object of study of the general theory of value, axiology, and not specifically as economic, linguistic or cognitive value, etc., which it includes. In Welby’s thought system a general theory of sign and meaning cannot prescind from the problem of value and vice versa, which means eschewing a purely descriptive attitude towards the study of signifying processes in the human world, and evidencing the need for a critical approach to signs, values and behaviour, verbal and nonverbal. Therefore, significs transcends pure descriptivism and strictly logico-epistemological boundaries to study signifying processes from a global perspective where signs, values and behaviour converge. Welby’s global and critical approach makes her contribution to our understanding of signs and meaning particularly significant. By contrast with dominant trends across the twentieth century, Welby aimed to expand traditional epistemological-cognitive boundaries into a ‘significant’ framework, where sign theory and value theory, signs and values are interconnected. With co-author Augusto Ponzio, I have proposed a development on this orientation in terms of ‘semioethics’ (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2003b and 2005).

Significs is associated with such sign sciences as general semiotics, psycholinguistics, philosophy of language, etc. where by ‘language’ is not only understood verbal language, but most significantly the concept of ‘modelling device’ specific to human beings. Here the connection with Welby’s original concept of ‘mother-sense’ is particularly interesting, and represents another important contribution to our understanding of human signifying, expressive and interpretive behaviour. As used in this volume, the term ‘language’ has different meanings: it refers to ‘verbal sign systems’ as distinct from ‘nonverbal sign systems’; it thus refers to so-called ‘historical-natural languages’ and the different ‘special languages’ forming a given language; and, again, it refers to the great plurality of different ‘nonverbal sign systems’ that are also considered as languages, precisely, ‘nonverbal languages’ (as distinct from nonverbal sign systems that are not languages) which proliferate in the world of human semiosis (anthroposemiosis). From an evolutionary perspective, the modelling device identified as ‘language’ arises with the process of hominization, which it makes possible, and is specific to the human species. On the basis of this species-specific modelling device, verbal and nonverbal languages subsequently arise for communication. In other words, ‘language,’ under-

stood as a modelling device, like Welby's 'mother-sense,' is the condition of possibility for the acquisition of experience, its expression and communication in the properly human world through the development of verbal and nonverbal languages (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 343–376).

In a letter to Welby of 1903, the Italian philosopher of language and mathematician Giovanni Vailati commented Welby's choice of the term 'significs' as follows:

I would subordinately object to the word 'Significs': it could, as it seems to me, with some advantage, be replaced by 'Semiotics', which has already been appropriated to the very same meaning by no less an authority than that of Locke (*Essay* IV, 21, *in fine*). (Vailati to Welby, 18 March 1903, WCYA,¹ Box 18; now in Vailati 1971: 143)

Welby replied defending her standpoint:

Allow me to thank you for the kind words wherewith you have honoured my book [*What is Meaning?*], and to explain that the word 'Significs' was chosen after consultation with English scholars, because (1) it had not been used before and had no *technical associations*, like those of semiotic, semasiology, semantic, etc.; and (2) because in English idiom it appeals not merely to the student and the scholar but also to what we call 'the Man in the street.'

All men alike with us ask naturally 'What does it Signify?' and put aside, ignore what does not *signify*. They unconsciously give the Sign its true place and value. They say 'never mind that' throw it away, it does not signify (it is no *sign* and has therefore no *sense*). I think it is important to take a case where the popular instinct is unconsciously philosophical and utilise this in favour of an advance in thought which must concern us all, though in different ways. I much hope that this explanation may remove your objection...May I add one more word. Neither Locke nor any other thinker, it appears has ever yet analysed on 'signific' lines *the conception of 'Meaning' itself*. (Welby to Vailati, 28 March 1903, WCYA, Box 18)

The question 'What is Meaning?' inspires all Welby's research and as we have seen gives the title to her main monograph of 1903. She developed her theory of sign and meaning transversally and in an inter-disciplinary frame as she studied life in its different expressions as well as the great array of sciences that reflect upon them – theology, philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, logic, literature, sociology, psychology, medicine, neurology, optics, biology, mathematics, physics, astronomy, astrology, cosmology, in other words in her studies she easily ranged indiscriminately across the human sciences, the hard sciences, the life sciences, the sign sciences, etc. Nothing seemed to escape Welby's attention as she contemplated the multiple and diversified expressions of signifying and interpretive processes, without ever making claims to specialized expertise in any single field taken separately. She considered the different problematics and issues at the center of her studies as 'witnesses' to the signifying processes of life in their complex globality, and aimed to interpret them in light of her quest for sense, meaning and significance. Without losing sight of specificities and differences, she described the multiplicity of life and its expressions as united in a common denominator, meaning. In Welby's thought system, meaning is engendered in the relation among signs in open-ended signifying and interpretive-translative processes. Her quest for meaning – 'the very condition on which all forms of study and knowledge depend

1. WCYA = Welby Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections, Scott Library, Downsview, Toronto, Canada.

[...], that very meaning which to intelligence is the quality of fact' (Welby 1983 [1903]: 1) – led her to scrutinize the expressive universe from as many angles as possible and from the unifying perspective of signification: the relation between signs, sense and value.

A fundamental assumption guiding Welby's research is that perception, experience and knowledge are mediated by signs. Indeed, the sign-mediated relation between the knowing subject and the object of analysis, a relation that is not direct but rather is mediated by signs in interpretive processes, is constantly thematized by Welby throughout her published and unpublished writings. In Welby's view, all that which concerns the relation between one human being and another, between the human being and the universe, may be re-conducted to the problem of interpretive mediation and, in the last analysis, is a question of translation in the movement towards ever higher degrees in signification.

Welby's gaze ranges from sign processes pervading the universe at large to those specific to human semiosis, including what in present-day research are identified as 'metasemiotic' or 'semiotic' processes. In addition to naming the general science of signs, recent trends in semiotic studies now also use the term 'semiotic' to indicate the specificity of *human* semiosis. Taking this specification into account, the human being is not only a 'semiotic animal' like all other animals, but also a 'semiotic animal' (Deely, Petrilli and Ponzio 2005). At the primary level of semiosis, interpretation and the direct response to signs coincide. Semiosis understood as 'semiotics' or 'metasemiosis' refers to the human capacity for reflection on signs, for the suspension of response and deliberation, where sign activity is no longer limited to direct response, but becomes the object itself of interpretation. A third level also emerges in Welby's discourse, that is, the methodological: signification is described as a method, the significant method, an interpretive-translative method. As she stated in her *Encyclopaedia* article of 1911, 'Signification':

It is clear that stress needs to be laid upon the application of the principles and method involved, not merely, though notably, to language, but to all other types of human function. There is need to insist on the rectification of mental attitude and increase of interpretative power which must follow on the adoption of the significant method, throughout all stages and forms of mental training and in the demands and contingencies of life. (Welby in Hardwick 1977: 167–168, now this volume, Section 3.15)

Developing her position as outlined in 1902 with the *Dictionary* entry 'Signification' (Welby/Baldwin/Stout 1902: 529), or in 1903 with her monograph *What is Meaning?*, Welby invested signification with a methodic function for 'mental training,' that is, for the development of our 'mental attitude' and 'interpretative power.' In an unpublished letter of 1903 to André Lalande who had proposed the expression '*théorie des significations*' as the French translation of 'signification,' Welby responded underlining that the term 'signification' indicated 'the study of the Significant Method and not only a "theory of signification (or meaning)"' (Welby to Lalande, 23 August 1903, WCYA, Box 9).

Welby elaborated her signification in the context of an international network of relations thanks to her correspondence with scholars, scientists and friends from different countries (beyond the United Kingdom, the United States of America and diverse countries in continental Europe). Her correspondents counted such important personalities as Charles S. Peirce, Giovanni Vailati, Michel Bréal, André Lalande, Ferdinand

S. C. Schiller, Max Müller, Frederik van Eeden, Ferdinand Tönnies, Charles K. Ogden, Bertrand Russell, Herbert G. Wells, Henry and William James, Mary Everest Boole, and many others with whom she confronted her viewpoints. Dialogical exchange was structural to the very formulation of her ideas, as evidenced in particular by her correspondence. Beyond dialogue in formal terms, dialogism and polyphony as understood by Mikhail Bakhtin characterize Welby's method of inquiry in a substantial sense: she was always ready to listen and respond to the word of the other, to critically rethink and reformulate her ideas in the light of her exchanges, and to explore the open plurality of different perspectives as a means of verification.

Her dialogical approach was also enhanced by recourse to different discourse genres: in addition to her correspondence, which no doubt represents one of the most significant places for the development of her ideas, apart from her scientific essays and monographs she also wrote essaylets, newspaper articles, aphorisms, short stories, dialogues, and poetry – what, recalling Charles Morris and his own literary production, I propose to name 'wisdom poetry' (see Morris 1966, 1976). Victoria Welby's poetry is collected in a file at the York University Archives entitled 'Poems of Victoria Welby: *Thoughts in Rhythm*' (Box 37, file 10, WCYA). The corpus of materials in this file is consistent and merits publication as an independent volume, like many other files containing her theoretical papers. The present volume aims to give voice and visibility at least to a part of Welby's research and writings.

A whole period in the history of ideas as represented by Welby's signifiacs and its various ramifications, including the Signific Movement in the Netherlands, though neglected, has never been completely forgotten. As signalled in Chapters 7 and 8 and in the Section entitled 'Writings on Welby, the Signific Movement and current developments,' at the end of this volume, scholarship devoted to signifiacs is not lacking and hopefully will continue to flourish. Given the theoretical importance of the signifiac approach to studies on signs, language and communication, its topicality for research today, the prospects it offers for progress in knowledge and understanding, my hope is that more scholars dedicate their attention to fully recovering and reconstructing this particular phase in cultural history.

The main goal of the present volume is to outline the overall architectonics of Victoria Welby's thought system through a selection of her writings. These are not always easily accessible, either because they remained unpublished and are now dissolving in the archives, or were published privately for limited circulation and, in any case, like her monographs, have long been out of print. Welby's signifiacs found an important following in the Signific Movement of the Netherlands. This movement officially recognized its debt to her in its initial stages, and subsequently took other courses. Documents testifying to this particular trend in studies on sign, language, and meaning are also included in this volume.

The consistent corpus of Welby's correspondence with numerous personalities of the time is mostly unpublished. Here again, the selection presented in this volume aims to signal the interest of these materials from both a theoretical and historical point of view. It is to be hoped that research projects continue, resulting in the integral publication of Welby's epistolary exchanges, as in the case of the volume collecting the correspondence between Welby and Charles S. Peirce, *Semiotic and Signifiacs. The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, 1977. As testified by their exchanges,

Peirce and Welby worked together closely during the last decade of their lives and reciprocally influenced each other's research, though they never met personally.

The quantity of unpublished papers by Welby, together with her yet unpublished correspondence resting in the archives, is substantial and calls for attention. It is important to continue working on the Welby Collection at the York University Archives, simply considering the physical state of these papers. Manuscripts are deteriorating with time – the writing is fading away and the paper itself is disappearing. No doubt the materiality of ideas is more resistant than the physical material supporting them, but it cannot be denied that the physical means, whether oral or written, is the necessary condition for handing down ideas and allowing them to flourish. It is important to communicate Welby's signification and its developments to an eventual readership, rather than keeping materials locked away in the archives or trapped in computers. I hope the present volume may at least contribute to firing the necessary interest in young scholars ready to take on the task.

Following the methodological orientation of Welby's signification, in particular her theory of translation, her ideas are also examined and developed in dialogue with others in relations of 'responsive understanding,' as Bakhtin would say. Welby theorized the need for dialogue and confrontation, as well as translation across the different spheres of human experience as a means of verifying the validity of ideas and developing them further in the common quest for truth, knowledge and understanding. Applied to Welby and her signification, and not just *by* Welby, this interpretive-translative approach has evidenced the topicality of her thinking, its potential and relevance for ongoing research today in a great variety of different fields, from the human sciences to the hard sciences in interdisciplinary, indeed transdisciplinary and transcultural perspective.

Epitaph on the Archival Monument

Here lies the dame who thought she saw a truth
 She buried was without or rock or ruth;
 But life is that which bursts the stoniest shroud
 And (whisper this) she yet may cry aloud.
 (V. Welby, 11 March 1907, Box 28, File 29, titled 'Personalia: "Projects of Draft Schemes of Books"')

Chapter 1

Welby's intellectual development and writings

For her, philosophy is not the monologue of a lonely thinker, but essentially a dramatic process, in which our present mind holds intercourse with a larger mind beyond itself, whose 'cosmic' vision it seeks to penetrate, the question asked becoming equally significant with the answer given when both are placed in that wider perspective. (Jacks in Cust 1931: 11)

1.1. Her life and early studies. An outline

I never had any 'schoolroom' lessons; mine were world-room lessons. I never personally learnt to hate the words 'school' and 'lessons': never learnt instinctively to shrink from anything they suggested: never thought that learny days, discovery days, work days were not holy days – except through those who had thus 'learnt.' (28 July 1910, Box 28, File 29: 'Personalia: "Projects of Draft Schemes of Books"')

Lady Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa Stuart-Wortley (1837–1912), whose married surname was Welby (and subsequently Welby-Gregory), was born into the highest circles of the English nobility on 27 April 1837, England. She was the last of three children of the Honourable Charles James Stuart-Wortley (1802–1844), and his wife, Lady Emmeline Charlotte Elizabeth, *née* Manners (1806–1855), writer, poet and traveler. James Archibald Stuart-Wortley (1776–1845), fifth Duke of Rutland, was her grandfather.

Victoria Welby was named after Queen Alexandrina Victoria who acted as her godmother with the Duchess of Kent, the Queen mother. After her mother's tragic death on the road to Beirut, during their many travels, she lived with a succession of relatives before being taken in by her godmother, the Duchess of Kent. In 1861 she was appointed Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria and spent almost two years at the royal court before her marriage at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, London, on 4 July 1863, to Sir William Earle Welby (1829–1898), military official, MP, and high sheriff, who with his father's death in 1875 became fourth baronet and assumed the additional surname Gregory. It followed that Victoria Welby's surname became Welby-Gregory. Her children were Victor Albert William (1864–1876), Charles Glynne Earle (1865–1938), assistant undersecretary of state at the war office and MP, and Emmeline Mary Elizabeth (1867–1955), also known as Nina and Mrs. Henry Cust (her married name), painter, sculptor and writer. Nina dedicated an official biography to her mother, Victoria Welby, and grand-mother, Lady Emmeline, entitled, *Wanderers: Episodes From the Travels of Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley and Her Daughter Victoria, 1849–1955*, published in 1928; and edited her mother's correspondence in two volumes, respectively *Echoes of Larger Life. A Selec-*

tion from the *Early Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby*, published in 1929; and *Other Dimensions. A Selection from the Later Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby*, 1931.

The following is a ‘letter of congratulations’ to Victoria Welby from Queen Victoria, written on learning of her god-daughter’s intended marriage to Sir William, in which the Queen expresses her mixed emotions of joy and profound sorrow at the thought of Victoria moving away from daily sight. This letter was made available by Nina Cust who included it in the Appendix to her mother’s biography (Cust 1928: 349–350):

Balmoral, 21 May 1863

My dear Victoria,

It was with very mixed feelings that I heard of your intended Marriage with Mr. Welby; for while I rejoice to think that you will be happily settled and will have a Home, which promises to you all that you and those who love you can wish for – I am very sorry to lose you. You were so bound up with recollections of my beloved Mother, and of my *own* happy blessed Life, now *crushed* and *ruined* for ever on *Earth*, that I am grieved to see in your departure another link which connected me with the happy past – broken! May you be as happy as it is possible to be in this uncertain [world], and may your happiness be of far longer duration than mine! I know that my beloved Husband would have taken great interest in this event! I write to you from a place *formerly* so full of joy and life and every enjoyment of health and vigour – now more utterly lonely and desolate than *all* the other beloved abodes of our former blessed Life, which also recalls you to my mind, as you were here with dear Mama.

Once more repeating my sincerest wishes for your welfare,
Believe me ever, dear Victoria,
Yours affectionately and sadly,

V. Reg.

In spite of her poor health (as a child she fell ill with scarlet fever), Victoria Welby spent the formative years of her life (from 1848 to 1855) travelling the world with her mother, who chose to continue living as she did with her husband before his premature death in 1844:

Fortunately for her inclinations, the delicacy of her little daughter, Victoria, provided a reasonable excuse for prolonged absences from England. It may however be doubted whether such strenuous enterprises as travelling through Italy and France during the revolutions of 1848, coaching on the notorious roads of Mexico, or crossing the Isthmus of Panama in a dug-out at the height of the gold-rush, were really a suitable rest-cure for a child so seriously weakened by virulent scarlet-fever, that she had been pronounced unfit for the ordinary business of childhood. (Cust 1928: 17–18)

Together Victoria and her mother visited many countries including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Morocco, Turkey, Palestine, Syria, often facing unbelievable difficulty and danger such as the time they were caught up in the revolutionary events of 1848 in France and Italy or the war in Crimea. In 1852 Victoria published her travel diary, *A Young Traveller’s Journal of a Tour in North and South America during the Year 1850*, which she began writing in 1850 with the beginning of her travels in America, and did so with ‘an eye on a possible public,’ as her mother had done before her. As Victoria herself states in her ‘Preface,’ her intention was to amuse and to a degree instruct her fellow child readers:

It may seem presumptuous in so youthful a traveller (having only attained her twelfth year a week before starting for America), to put her every-day and naturally childish impressions and observations in print. This little book, however, is not destined to become a candidate for the honours of books or travels in general; since it is intended for children – those of her own age, for instance – whom it is her highest aim to amuse, and, to a certain degree, instruct. Her little volume, therefore, lays no claim to the attention of the public farther than its character as a child's book may deserve. (Welby 1852: 1)

While traveling across the Syrian desert in 1855, Lady Emmeline fell sick in the vicinity of Antioch, where she was abandoned by their guide and died in tragic circumstances leaving her daughter all alone until help came from Beirut. This dramatic event marked the end of Victoria's adventures over foreign lands and the beginning of her pilgrimage, which lasted from 1855 to 1861, among illustrious relatives who took turns in giving her hospitality. Victoria remained a 'wanderer' for she did not find permanent shelter and was relentlessly uprooted from a long series of homes. All the same, though she was without a permanent abode during this time in her life, Victoria in fact spent most of her time with the Queen mother in her various residences, and was dearly loved by her. After the Queen mother's death in 1861, she entered the court of Queen Victoria who took on the commitment of caring for those who had depended upon her mother, or in some way had referred to her.

Victoria Welby's daughter, Nina, acted as her assistant and collaborator. As anticipated, she edited two volumes of her mother's correspondence, published posthumously in 1929 and 1931, respectively: *Echoes of Larger Life*, which covers the years 1879 to 1891; and *Other Dimensions*, the years 1898 to 1911. Nina's biography, *Wanderers*, was published in 1928. Her primary sources were writings by Victoria and Lady Emmeline – their travel journals, diaries, correspondence, published volumes, unpublished manuscripts, and so forth, from which she quoted abundantly. Lady Emmeline was an exceptionally prolific writer herself – in verse and in prose. Indeed, her overwhelming passion for traveling and constant longing to visit all parts of the world was one with her love for writing and describing her experiences and impressions of the peoples, societies and institutions she had visited. Unfortunately, however, almost all her unpublished manuscripts and papers were either lost in Syria, or destroyed.

Wanderers is divided into three parts and narrates the adventures of Lady Emmeline and her daughter as they traveled through America, Spain and Syria, in third person. These characters emerge from this fascinating description as two extraordinarily unconventional figures from the early Victorian era, distinguished for originality, open-mindedness, capacity for criticism, tenacity, courage and generosity: two cosmopolitan citizens of a world devoid of chronotopical boundaries. They were wholly immersed in their studies and artistic pleasures (in addition to writing, they also indulged in music, sketching, embroidery, etc.), looking towards the future as prospected by progress in the sciences. Though written between 1913 and 1914, this volume was only completed nearly a decade after the First World War, in 1927, as we learn from Nina Cust with the following statement made in her closing note: 'The greater part of this book was written in 1913–1914, after the death of my mother, the younger traveller. When the War came it was put aside, and it is only lately that I have been able to complete it. July, 1927' (Cust 1928: 365). The volume was published in 1928 and is still today the most exhaustive source of information concerning the first thirty years of Victoria Welby's life.

Ronald Storrs opens his Preface by expressing his admiration for Nina (Mrs. Henry) Cust's capacity for narration. Her words intrigue the reader as she interweaves three voices into a single and plurivocal narrative text in her description of Victoria's and Lady Emmeline's literary and nonliterary wanderings:

Mrs. Henry Cust is already known to many as a sculptor and a poet, the rarity of whose work is its chief reproach; and as the author of one of the best modern studies of mediaeval adventure, the scholarly and entertaining *Gentlemen Errant*. In this new book she follows the travels of her own mother and grandmother, and with these two remarkable figures, Early Victorian to the core but, at that core, citizens of a world that knows no date, wanderers across the already disuniting and increasingly clamant America of the early 'fifties; down the great Mississippi River of death and tears, where their warnings have this year a tragic and topical interest; up into the Mexican land of perennial revolutions and performing bandits; over the incredible Isthmus of the Gold-Diggers; and so, with interludes in Peru, Morocco, Spain and the Constantinople of the Crimean War, to those Near Eastern scenes which also, and above all others, know no date and draw the citizens of every city. (Storrs, July 1927, in Cust 1928: 7)

Lady Emmeline and Victoria were careful observers, critical commentators, even active participants when at all possible in local events. They took an interest in political, cultural and economic affairs, described social behaviors, traditions, and beliefs, encounters with people from all walks of life, including eminent women and men, and were particularly sensitive to issues relating to social justice. With reference to their American journey they were careful to comment the state of slavery, the relation between negro slaves and owners; they observed the indigenous peoples, the Indians, and the complex relationships among the various races, including 'Negroes,' 'Indians' and the 'white population' – mostly tormented by prejudice of all sorts. Detailed descriptions are also lavished upon natural and cultural architecture – housing, transport systems, breathtaking landscapes with their infinite open spaces and sweeping skylines, as well as modern cities, country or desert townships, homesteads, huts in the woods, cottages, and plantations. The language of these three female writers is constantly enriched with literary references to authors and their heroes, which further enhance the adventures, or misadventures, experienced by Lady Emmeline and Victoria, the magnificence of their descriptions, the overwhelming multiplicity of senses and critical acumen engendered by their narrations.

Constant literary references include: Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Frederick Marryat, Herman Melville, Frances Trollope, Thomas Paine, William M. Thackeray, Madame Calderon de la Barca, Bayard Taylor, Walter Bagehot. Many of these writers were often fellow travelers, likewise committed to writing their own travel journeys, as was the custom of the day. The following three excerpts are descriptions, among the many, from journeys by Lady Emmeline and Victoria through Mexico, Havana, and the Isthmus. These descriptions evidence the latter's participative attention for the life conditions and vicissitudes of the peoples living in the countries they visited, their lucid criticism, together with their dauntless optimism and determination such that they were never deterred by danger nor discomfort, their capacity for irony and laughter:

... the two *Gringo* ladies shortly laughed with all Mexico at a caricature of their own appearance. For in the Carnival Masque there swaggered along a small pony-chaise in which, 'driving *themselves à l'Anglaise*,' sat two presentments of European ladies in the

height of the fashion. 'Over the bonnet, which in its size almost entirely covered the little chaise, loaded with every sort of flower and ornament, towered a huge feather, a yard in the air, nodding in all directions. This was purposely dashed into everybody's face as they passed along. In her hand one of the ladies held a ridiculous little parasol, no bigger than a pincushion, with fringe several yards deep, held, with particular care, in the exact contrary direction from that of the sun. It served also as a whip for the ponies, and a weapon to make way on all sides for this pompous equipage.' Escorting the turn-out, were masked ladies on horse-back, 'with immensely long habits trailing along (they were men dressed up), floating veils and jaunty riding-hats and whips – a quiz upon English and French equestrianesses.' (Cust 1928: 98–99)

At a later stage during their journey, the travelers learned that the 'negroes' of Cuba had an especially undesirable reputation. During a visit to a new prison in Kingston (Jamaica), they noted a striking variety among the prisoners, some being of a peculiarly repulsive and ferocious aspect, with 'a foreign dress and air.' On inquiring about these savage looking men, the questioners learnt they were *emancipados* from Cuba, by far the most hardened, irreclaimable and desperate men in the prison, but also the greater part of the criminal population. The *emancipados* were slaves imported illegally from Africa, who had been rescued and pronounced free by the 'Court of the Mixed Commission' at Havana. The freed negroes were apprenticed to certain families, who undertook to train and protect them for a period of five years. [...]

This system in the Havana is said to be the fertile source of frightful abuses. They are seldom or never properly taught any trade; while they are continually under-fed and overworked, and treated even worse than the commonest slaves in the regular employ of their masters. It is too often the sole object of the heartless persons, to whose charge they have been committed, to get as much labour out of the poor wretches as possible, without consideration as to their future value, strength or capabilities, as in the case of regular slaves. [...]

When the period of their apprenticeship came to an end, their slavery ('for such in real fact it is') frequently continued, with innumerable instances of *emancipados* being retained for fifteen or twenty years, not infrequently even for all their lives. [...]

Sometimes, instead of being taught a trade by which to support themselves when delivered from this intolerable bondage ... they are used more like beasts of burden than human beings. It will be readily imagined, that under such circumstances their moral and religious instruction is totally neglected. Can we wonder, then, at the result? [...] The prison (at Kingston) appeared to abound in exemplifications of this truth, and pity was mingled with the irrepressible shudder of abhorrence with which one glanced at the murderous looking *emancipados* as, sullen and ferocious, they stalked to and fro like caged tigers, with countenances from whose expression every faintest indication of goodness seemed irrevocably banished. (Cust 1928: 114–115)

But night was at hand, the fireflies were alight, the travellers were adrip, and, albeit the stars 'shone out like little suns,' the boatmen were a-feared. So, though they had only reached the hovels of San Pablo, where – said the men firmly – there was no accommodation for ladies, they were compelled to stop. 'Having told us that they would not go a step farther, since the river was very shallow and dangerous, they left us to our fate,' to remain, as preferred, in the wet boat, or on one of the numerous sand-banks. As for themselves, the ruffians prepared to sleep on shore. In vain did the sodden victims call into the darkness, praying for at least a fire to dry the running streams that were their garments: no answer came nor comfort, even from the faithless coloured clerk. At last the young traveller solved the

problem by a stroke of involuntary genius. Thinking to drown her sorrows in the flowing river, she rose from her seat to find her calabash, and so overbalanced, and fell plump into the water: making, in the event, a brave attempt to drown herself. The water, indeed, was at this point shallow, but it was a favourite haunt of the dreaded alligator, and matters might easily have gone ill with her. By happy chance, however, a Perseus at once appeared in the shape of a courteous American, who not only extricated the frightened and mud-caked maiden from her peril, but informed her mother of the existence of two huts in which assistance might probably be found. To these huts accordingly they betook them, 'like a damp procession of naiads learning to be amphibious,' the smallest of the naiads being indeed so coated and clogged with the slime of the river that she perhaps more closely resembled an infant crocodile walking upon its tail. (Cust 1928: 128)

Welby studied privately and lacked a formal education in any conventional or systematic sense of the word. In later life, she recognized in her unconventional upbringing, extensive traveling, experience of the world, and in her insatiable pleasure for reading, the condition for her open-mindedness and originality as an intellectual. In a letter to Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914) of 22 December 1903, who fully recognized her genius as testified by their correspondence, Welby offered the following autobiographical information with considerations on a child's capacity for learning, consequently on the importance of education – a constant concern throughout her lifetime (see Ch. 4):

As I'm now speaking personally I may perhaps mention that I never had any education whatever in the conventional sense of the term. Instead of that I travelled with my mother over a great part of the world under circumstances of difficulty and even hardship. The present facilities did not then exist! This I think accounts in some degree for my seeing things in a somewhat independent way. But the absence of any systematic mental training must be allowed for of course in any estimate of work done. These peculiar circumstances have suggested to me very strongly that the average ability of man in early childhood is higher than we suppose; and that the problem before us is how to preserve the freshness and penetration of the child's mind while supplying the – mainly logical – training, the lack of which is so great a disadvantage. But I only allude to the unusual conditions of my childhood in order partly to account for my way of looking at and putting things: and my very point is that any value in it is impersonal. It suggests an ignored heritage, an unexplored mine. This I have tried to indicate in *What is Meaning?* (Hardwick 1977: 13–14)

Not at all attracted to life at court, Welby retreated to Denton Manor, Grantham (Lincolnshire) after her marriage in 1863, where she soon began her research, with her husband's full support. Very little is known about the early years of her marriage except that she lived her domestic life fully and satisfied her social duties as demanded by her status as a representative of the English nobility. After contributing to the Royal School of Art Needlework, founded in 1872, Welby also set up and financed the Decorative Needlework Society (see William Macdonald's obituary, now appended to Ch. 8, below). As part of her more strictly intellectual life, she became a member of the Aristotelian Society of London (founded in 1870); in 1890 she was elected as member of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (founded in 1871, permission to add the word 'Royal' was granted in 1907; the Anthropological Institute was the result of a merger between two rival bodies, the Ethnological Society of London, founded in 1843, and the Anthropological Society of London, 1863–1870); she was also one of the original promoters and a founding member of the Sociological Society of Great Britain (established in 1903).

From 1863 until her death in 1912, Victoria Welby was friend and correspondent to many leading personalities of the time from different walks of life and professions – the sciences, literature and public life, often acting as their source of inspiration. She corresponded regularly with over 450 people from different countries across the world including Great Britain, the United States of America, France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands (see next section). The following is the introduction from *Echoes of Larger Life*, signed N. C. (Nina Cust), cited integrally to supplement information on Welby's biography:

The strange girlhood of Victoria Welby, her travels in three continents with her mother, Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley, her subsequent life with the Duchess of Kent and as maid-of-honour to Queen Victoria, and finally her marriage to Sir William Welby-Gregory: all these have been described in an earlier book (*Wanderers*: Jonathan Cape, 1928). The first years of her married life were filled chiefly with home and social occupations, the latter of which included the founding of the present Royal School of Art Needlework. At the end of the 'seventies, however, the writing and anonymous publishing of *Links and Clues* (Macmillan, 1881) opened for her a new and wide world of friends and correspondents, and it is from the letters of this date and of the ten following years that choice has been made. The book, wrote a stranger to a friend more than twenty years later, 'is most original and full of suggestive thought. In some respects it reminds me of Tolstoi in its startling and bold deductions. . . I am reminded too in reading it of Thoreau. It is a strong book, and I should not have guessed it as written by a woman. . .'

Certainly during this early period her brain had not been idle. Her erratic upbringing, with its complete omission of any education in the customary sense of the word, had, as it seemed, endowed her with an insatiable hunger for what lies beyond education; and she read, marked and learned with untiring zest. As the years passed, indeed, her craving for knowledge increased in a constant progression, and she quickly became the almost embarrassed possessor of innumerable books, scored from cover to cover with notes that never failed to excite if they sometimes tended to bewilder. No statement was allowed to pass unchallenged. Her thought-sword slept not in her hand, and never, till the last hours of her life, did she cease from mental fight.

And, with it all, both the courage and the content of her 'inmost uttering song' remained inviolately her own; for her mind was in the highest sense original, moving easily and habitually in a rarer atmosphere. From the time, also, of her Confirmation at Jerusalem, with its sorrowful setting and tragic outcome, her 'alive life' had been the inner life – its impulse and its energy spiritual. And though, as her powers developed, they seemed to concentrate increasingly on a sternly practical study of her own new science of Significs (see 'Significs' in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* and in the *Oxford Dictionary*; also her books, *Grains of Sense*, Duckworth, 1897, *What is Meaning?*, Macmillan, 1903, *Significs and Language*, Macmillan, 1911, etc.), coupled with the relentless exposure of the entanglements and inaccuracies of all accepted data of thought and speech, yet ever for her, beyond this dark impeding region, were the radiant spaces of the Light, the vergeless yonders of Ultimate Significance, 'the promise of the Glory of God.'

It should perhaps be explained that the letters, or extracts from letters, here given are often only fragments of very long and full exchanges of thought. This is specially so in the case of Bishop Talbot, her cousin and life-long friend; and, in a lesser degree, of Charles Voysey, 'the Anti-Christian Theist'; of Andrew Jukes and Rowland Corbet, leading mystics of their day; of Bishop Westcott and Professor Max Müller; of Richard Holt Hutton, Julia Wedgwood, Mrs. W. K. Clifford (see her article 'Victoria Lady Welby: An Ethical Mystic,' in *The Hibbert Journal* of October 1924), and the author of *John Inglesant*. Overlapping

with the last chapters, moreover, are the beginnings of what were in some cases to prove even fuller correspondences with the philosophical and scientific friends to whom she was for a time at least very definitely to turn, among these being Shadworth Hodgson, Frederic Myers, Conwy Lloyd Morgan, Sir Francis Galton, Sir James Crichton-Browne, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Clifford Allbutt, Professor E. B. Poulton and many others. It should be remembered also that not only were her own letters frequently mere covering sheets for one or possibly several papers, too long for inclusions here, but that they are in many cases missing altogether, or extant only in her own almost undecipherable notes. On the other hand, the letters written to her seem sometimes to give indications of the many-sidedness of her personality more vivid than those written by her, and they have been for this reason rather lavishly used. It must again, however, not be forgotten that in all cases, including her own, the views expressed are by no means necessarily those which the writers should hold to-day. Finally, sincere thanks and apologies are due to all who kindly returned originals in response to a request made so long ago as before the War.

It remains only to say that the title of the book is taken from one of Victoria Welby's own early papers. The words occur also more than once in her letters. 'We must listen,' she writes in 1885 to Professor Max Müller, 'for the whispering echoes of the larger life: most surely are they quivering all round us, telling that this brief flash is only worthy of the name of life so far as we look through it into the Light of which it is a ray.' The fact that to-day this phrase suggests the faint strange 'wireless echoes,' said to be fathered ('in what distant deeps or skies?') by electrons thick-streaming from the sun, would have been to her but another witness to – another symbol of – the unending if gradual revelation, through the medium of science, of what she was later to call 'the Meaning of Meaning' – the supreme Meaning of Life. (N.C., 'Introduction,' in Cust 1929: 11–13)

1.2. Her correspondence

Welby carried out a significant part of her intellectual work through her extensive correspondence with approximately over 450 interlocutors, as mentioned. This material is mostly unpublished but available at the Welby Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections, York University, Toronto, Canada (from now on WCYA, see Appendix 3). In some cases Welby's epistolary relations lasted for many years in spite of polemical overtones, testifying to her influence on the scientists and philosophers of her day, indeed on cultural circuits and thinkers generally. On the basis of her direct personal contacts and correspondence, she weaved throughout her lifetime an ever expanding network of relations which developed across various phases, forming what I propose we call the 'Welby Network' or 'Welby Circle.' Welby used this network to articulate her ideas in dialogue with others, as well as to communicate the ideas of her correspondents whose letters, articles and papers she readily copied and circulated.

The two volumes of 1929 and 1931, *Echoes of Larger Life* (title inspired by the title of the essaylet 'An Echo of Larger Life,' of 1885, now in Ch. 3, below), and *Other Dimensions*, present an important selection from Welby's correspondence. The editorial criteria applied are rather arbitrary (e.g., letters from different periods are sometimes made to run into each other and presented as a single letter text), but these volumes, all the same, have the merit of delivering documents which would now be difficult, even impossible to recover. As such, they present a rich and important corpus of documents

not only for the reconstruction of Victoria Welby's theory of meaning, what she called 'significs' – the specific focus of the current volume –, but also more generally of a significant phase in the history of ideas.

By 1870 Welby had begun her relations with people representing a broad range of different competencies and experiences – aristocrats, politicians, spokesmen of the Church, theologians, scholars and intellectuals, writers and scientists, forming a network that began to rapidly expand from 1880 onwards at both the local and international levels. Interesting names that emerge from these papers as Welby's correspondents include, beyond the already mentioned Peirce, the Italian philosopher of language and mathematician Giovanni Vailati who was the first scholar in Italy to have taken an interest in both Welby and Peirce, introducing them both for the first time to the intellectual scene in that country, his collaborator Mario Calderoni, and further, in alphabetical order, Arnold Matthews, James M. Baldwin, Henri L. Bergson, Mary Everest Boole, Andrew C. and Francis H. Bradley, Michel Bréal, Rudolph Carnap, Lucy Clifford, William K. Clifford, Edward Clodd, Frederik van Eeden, Francis Galton, Frederic Harrison, Shadworth H. Hodgson, Thomas A. Huxley, Henry and William James, Benjamin Jowett, André Lalande, Andrew Lang, 'Vernon Lee' (pseudonym for Violet Paget), Lynn Linton, C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Lucas Malet' (pseudonym for Mary St. Leger Harrison), Max F. Müller, Otto Neurath, Charles K. Ogden, Jules-Henri Poincaré, Bertrand Russell, Ferdinand C. S. Schiller, George Bernard Shaw, Alfred and Henry Sidgwick, Leslie Stephen, George F. Stout, Ferdinand Tönnies, John Tyndall, Julia Wedgwood, Herbert G. Wells, and many more (other names are listed in Ch. 2: note 3, this volume). Welby's correspondence with Peirce is known firstly thanks to the edition produced by Irwin C. Lieb, and subsequently by Charles S. Hardwick. (On the relationship between Welby and Peirce, see Deledalle 1990: 133–150; Petrilli 1998a: 113–160, 2005b: 5–60, 2005c: 70–74). However, the correspondence with other significant figures of the time moving in these circles such as Ferdinand S. C. Schiller, Frederik van Eeden, Charles K. Ogden, or Mary Everst Boole, is also impressive and remains mostly unpublished (but see van Eeden-Welby 1954, and for Ogden-Welby, see Petrilli 1995a).

Welby privileged the epistolary genre as the place of encounter and confrontation of ideas, never losing an opportunity to sound out issues that preoccupied her as she interweaved the various threads of discourse into the unifying and detotalizing framework of her significs. She mastered different research areas and variously responded to the community of investigators in the language of their different competencies, methodologies and theoretical horizons, which she believed complemented each other and integrated her own vision of the world. The research areas she inquired into were unbounded and included such different spheres as religion, theology, philosophy, language studies, science, mathematics, axiology, theory of knowledge, theory of interpretation, theory of translation, semiotics, semantics, methodology, education, sociology, anthropology, etc. For Welby dialogical exchange, criticism, confrontation, and responsive understanding were the necessary requisites for the acquisition of knowledge. She emphasized the importance of asking questions which she intended as signposts for possible research, without claiming to provide replies – if not in the form of a new question. Thanks to her generous mediation, Welby's interlocutors entertained exchanges with each other, whether directly or indirectly through her mediation. Indeed, far from taking an individualistic, monological and sectarian standpoint, Welby materialized the ideal shared

with Peirce of conducting scientific research in the form of cooperation among the open community of investigators.

Regarding Welby's published correspondence: her exchanges with Peirce were made available in the volume, *Semiotic and Significs. The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, edited by Charles S. Hardwick, in 1977. Important to signal is also the fact that Welby's daughter, Nina Cust, included a consistent part of the correspondence between Peirce and Welby from the years 1903–1905 and 1908–1911 in the volume *Other Dimensions*, 1931. Since publication of the Hardwick volume, another four unpublished letters from Welby to Peirce have emerged as well as a letter from Peirce to John W. Slaughter, one of Welby's interlocutors (see Schmitz 1985b: cxlviii–clvii). In addition to letters exchanged between Peirce and Welby from 1903 to 1911, *Semiotic and Significs* includes Welby's entry *Significs* for *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1911 (see Ch. 3.15, this volume), and Peirce's review for the journal *Nation* 77, 15, of Welby's monograph, *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance*, which he associated with Bertrand Russell's, *The Principles of Mathematics*, Vol. 1, both published in 1903 (see CP 8.171–175 and Hardwick 1977: 157–159). As noted earlier, Hardwick's volume was preceded by a volume of 1953 edited by Irwin C. Lieb, *Charles S. Peirce's Letters to Lady Welby*, which however only included Peirce's letters to Welby while excluding Welby's to Peirce. Despite this, the volume had been out of print for many years when Hardwick decided to prepare his new edition (see Hardwick 1977: ix–xiv).

In chronological order of their appearance: during Welby's lifetime letters addressed to her by Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), (German born) English philologist and ethnologist, scholar of primitive cultures, oriental religions and comparative studies, were published in the latter's autobiographical volume (see Müller 1902: 63–67, 85ff. 104, 273). Müller worked at the translation of texts from the *Veda* which Welby (1983 [1903]: 46) quoted in her own writings. In fact, vedantic philosophy flows into her theory of meaning. Welby's correspondence in English with the Dutch psychiatrist Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) lasted from 13 August 1892 (the year they met) to 11 February 1912. Their letters are centred on problems relevant to significs as well as on social and political issues. The originals are available at the van Eeden Archives, University of Amsterdam library, while a part of this extensive correspondence was published in 1954 under the title, *Briefwisseling met Lady Victoria* (see van Eeden-Welby 1954). Welby's exchanges with the Dutch philosopher Gerardus Johannes Petrus Josephus Bolland (1854–1922), whom she met through van Eeden, were published in 1991, annotated by Jan Noordegraaf (1991, and on the relation between van Eeden, Bolland, and Welby, see Noordegraaf 2005, which also includes the correspondence between Welby and Bolland). These collections of letters involving Welby with van Eeden and Bolland are important for an understanding of the connection between Welby, the lady significian (Petrilli 2005d: 80–137), and the Signific Movement in the Netherlands (see Ch. 8). In Italy, Giovanni Vailati (1863–1909) and consequently his collaborator Mario Calderoni (1879–1914) were in contact with Welby, which made her name indirectly familiar to Vailati and Calderoni scholars. Some of the letters exchanged between Welby and Vailati were published in 1971 in a volume collecting the latter's correspondence, *Epistolario 1891–1909*, edited by G. Lanaro with an introduction by M. Dal Pra. Moreover, a paper entitled *Anmerkungen zum Welby–Russell–Briefwechsel* presenting the correspondence

between Welby and Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) was published by H. Walter Schmitz in 1995.

Appended to this chapter is a selection of letters, previously published and unpublished, from WCYA. Welby's correspondence with Ogden, Russell, Peirce, and Vailati is discussed further on in this volume, in relation to the problematics driving her research. The letter texts presented have been selected on the basis of their theoretical interest, while more personal comments are reported only when they illuminate some aspect of her studies, research method, and personality.

1.3. Her writings

The focus of the present volume is on Welby's studies on sign, meaning, understanding and value, therefore on the foundation of signifiacs. The problem of signifying, interpreting and communicating through signs, particularly verbal signs, provides the common denominator for her broad-ranging interest in manifold and seemingly disparate areas of study. Problems of language and meaning and the need for critical interpretation are the main focus of her early essays 'Meaning and Metaphor,' 1893, and 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' 1896. These were anticipated by her critical studies on the Sacred Scriptures and their interpretation, the results of which were published in the collection *Links and Clues*, 1881. Further developments were presented with her reflections in *Grains of Sense*, of 1897.

Encouraged by the English psychologists Edward B. Titchner and George F. Stout, Welby announced the 'Welby Prize' for the best essay on signifiacs in the journal *Mind* in 1896 (see Ch. 2, below). This was awarded to the German philosopher and sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) for the essay 'Philosophical Terminology,' published in 1889/1900 in English translation (by Madame B. Bosanquet) in *Mind*, and only subsequently, in 1906, in the German original in the form of a booklet entitled, *Philosophische Terminologie in psychologisch-soziologischer Ansicht*. Essays by participants were commented by Welby in 'Notes on the "Welby Prize Essay",' published in *Mind* in 1901 (see below, Ch. 2.16).

Welby's most systematic scientific contribution to the foundation of signifiacs is her monograph of 1903, *What is Meaning?* Her entries for James M. Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes*, 'Translation,' 'Sensal' (co-authored with G. F. Stout), and 'Signifiacs' (with J. M. Baldwin and G. F. Stout) had already appeared in 1902 (see Ch. 2.9). The Oxford dictionary entry, 'Signifiacs,' was published in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, in 1911 (see Ch. 3.1), the same year Welby's second volume appeared, *Signifiacs and Language. The Articulate Form of Our Expressive and Interpretative Resources* as well as the above-mentioned encyclopaedic entry 'Signifiacs,' commissioned by the editor of *Times*, in 1907, for the 11th edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (see 3.15, below). This editorial event marked a fundamental step in the history of signifiacs, representing the official recognition Welby had so much desired for her general theory of sign and meaning, as she recounted in a letter to Charles K. Ogden of 17 December 1910 (see 7.5 below).

Some of Welby's essays are the published version of papers delivered at conferences attended as an 'outsider.' Welby in fact was not affiliated to any academic institution,

although she was a member of culturally prestigious organizations such as the Aristotelian Society, the Anthropological Institute, the Sociological Society, and with her writings she never failed to enter the heart of ongoing intellectual debate (at the time, often connected with Darwinian controversy, see below). In her essay, 'Truthfulness in Science and Religion,' 1888, she dealt with the problem of truth in terms of necessary dialogue between science and religion. In published lectures delivered at three different meetings during the early 1890s, she proposed what she described as a 'significant' approach to philosophical-anthropological issues relating to mental evolution and cognition: 'Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?' was delivered at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Leeds, 5 September, 1890; 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution' was delivered at the Anthropological Institute, 9 December 1890; 'The Significance of Folk-Lore' at an International Folklore Conference, 1891 (all are appended to Ch. 2 in the present volume).

In addition to her correspondence and full-length essays published in scientific journals, Welby formulated her ideas through other discourse genres including 'essaylets,' used extensively (privately printed and short, even just a page), newspaper articles, and literary genres such as dialogues, stories, parables and poetry. Her writings were often commented on by her interlocutors in their letter exchanges with Welby and in reviews published in newspapers such as *The Rock*, *The Guardian* and *The Spectator*. The essaylets most discussed in the early phase of her research (as reported, for example, in the correspondence assembled in *Echoes of Larger Life*, or in her 1881 volume *Links and Clues*, and in her full-length published essays), include: 'Questions for Teachers,' 1885, 'An Echo of Larger Life,' 1885, 'Death and Life,' 1886, 'The Evolution of Heliology,' 1886, which all variously focus on problems of a philosophical, scientific, educational and theological order. A selection of Welby's essaylets has been appended to the present chapter: some were traced in the WCYA, and at the Lady Welby Library in London, others were generously provided to me in the early 1980s by the renowned signifiCS scholar from Germany, H. Walter Schmitz.

Welby edited four small anthologies (printed privately) which collect excerpts from a variety of writers with the intention of demonstrating the need for a critique of language and terminology and for the adequate development of a 'linguistic conscience': *Witnesses to Ambiguity*, 1891; *The Use of 'Inner' and 'Outer' in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, 1892, assembled as proof of her theses on the bad use of figurative language in psychology and negative consequences thereof on reasoning, distributed at the International Congress of Experimental Psychology, in 1892; *A Selection of Passages from 'Mind' (Jan. 1876, to July, 1892), 'Nature' (1870, and 1888 to 1892), 'Natural Science' (1892)*, 1893, which focuses on the influence of terminology in theoretical and applied logic; *The Witness of Science to Linguistic Anarchy*, 1898, a collection of extracts from the journals *Nature*, *Science* and *Natural Science*.

Welby's monographic volumes, *What is Meaning?*, 1903, and *SignifiCS and Language*, 1911, have already been mentioned. They were preceded by the two aforementioned books of reflections, *Links and Clues* and *Grains of Sense*, respectively of 1881 and 1897, and a childhood diary of 1852, but the bulk of her writings lies unpublished in the Archives.

As we learn from her manuscripts in the Welby Collection at the York University Archives and Special Collections, other books were in the making such as *What is &*

What Might Be, 'a powerful witness to signification in education,' as Welby writes in a letter to Ogden (dated 20 September 1911, see Ch. 7). Welby worked tirelessly and wrote a massive quantity of papers which she had intended to publish in book form, often announcing her editorial projects in her correspondence. For example, in a letter to Giovanni Vailati of 28 December 1907, she wrote: 'I venture to send you with this a few typed Notes out of a mass of material from which I hope the first of a series of small volumes may, in the course of 1908, appear.' The existence of a consistent corpus of writings by Welby is testified by various sources, but most unfortunately a substantial part has gone missing, most likely never to be found in either libraries or archives (see Schmitz 1985b: xvi).

Welby's writings are published with different signatures: until the end of the 1880s she signed herself as 'Hon. Lady Victoria Welby-Gregory'; from 1890 onward as 'Hon. Lady Welby'; and from 1893 'Victoria Welby.' Other variants of her name include 'Victoria Stuart-Wortley' (before her marriage), 'Lady Welby,' 'Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory,' 'Victoria Welby-Gregory,' 'V. Lady Welby,' or very simply 'V. Welby.' She liked to use the pseudonyms 'Vita' and 'Vera Welldon' (which reproduces the initials of her real name). Also, she frequently signed with the initials, 'V.W-G' or 'V.W,' and sometimes even 'V. Welby and V.W.' (Victoria Welby and Vera Welldon). The expedient of anonymity also appealed to her and sometimes she signed mysteriously as 'An Outsider.' Concerning her signature with specific reference to *What is Meaning?*, Welby explained the following in a letter of 22 December 1903 to Peirce who was in the process of reviewing her book:

Before I say any more, may I confess that in signing my book 'V. Welby' I hoped to get rid as far as possible of the irrelevant associations of my unlucky title? I am called 'V. Lady Welby' merely to distinguish me from my son's wife, now Lady Welby; which is a custom of ours. Thus I have no right to be called Lady Victoria Welby. I explained this to Prof. Baldwin but like many others he forgot to correct the name. You will understand my desire to be known as simply as possible though I cannot altogether ignore the 'Hon.' conferred upon me as Maid of Honour to the late Queen. But the only honour I value is that of being treated by workers as a serious worker. (Hardwick 1977: 13)

As documented by her correspondence, the different intellectual trajectories followed by Welby from 1880 onward, which eventually converged in the unity of her significant perspective, may be characterized as shifting from a critical rereading of theological, ethical and religious issues to a critique of all forms of expression and knowledge, and reinterpretation of these. As a practising Anglican, she was as radically critical of ecclesiastical institutions when they appealed to the authority of orthodoxy and dogma as she was of institutions in general. Her reflections on the problem of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures found expression, as noted earlier, in *Links and Clues*, which she signed with the pseudonym 'Vita' (while the second 1883 edition was signed 'Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory'). Aspects of this volume are discussed in *Echoes of Larger Life*. The expression 'Links and Clues' prefigures Welby's decidedly transdisciplinary life-long research method, which consisted in the search for interconnections among the manifold faces of the signifying universe and of the signs that pervade it. Though hard criticism was not lacking, the predominant reaction to this book was sufficiently positive to occasion a second edition, which led to a significant amplification of her network of correspondents. Welby was encouraged to continue writing in the same style, that is,

with recourse to the language and expression of different discourse genres including aphorisms, short-stories, satires, fables, dialogues, paradoxes and parables.

Grains of Sense is the suggestive title of her book of reflections of 1897, 'Dedicated to the misunderstood.' In respect of the problems at the centre of her attention rather than mere chronology, this volume belongs to a different phase in Welby's intellectual life by comparison to *Links and Clues*. With *Grains of Sense*, her interests had shifted from the strictly religious sphere to issues connected with the scientific, anthropological, philosophical, pedagogic and linguistic spheres, viewed in the light of signification, that is, with a focus on meaning and expression value, in particular linguistic or verbal expression. *Grains of Sense* was preceded by publications dedicated to expression and interpretation, specifically 'Meaning and Metaphor' (1893) and 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation' (1896). At that time, Welby was deciding between 'signification' and 'sensification' as the most adequate term to designate her particular approach to the theory of sign and meaning. The term 'signification' did not appear in her 1893 paper, whilst both 'signification' and 'sensification' did in her 1896 paper.

Grains of Sense is a topical volume responding to issues at the centre of discussion in science, philosophy, education, politics, economy, journalism, literature, rhetoric, logic and everyday discourse, put forward in public speeches, lectures, newspapers or articles published in scientific and philosophical journals. Welby was always ready to contribute to the public debate of her time, commenting and interpreting problems from the perspective of her special concern for meaning, language, and communication. In consonance with her 'critique of language,' she maintained that the adequate development of a 'linguistic conscience' for the correct use of terminology, figurative expression and language generally, was closely related to precision in the formulation of ideas and to the evolution of knowledge and behavior in all spheres – from the intellectual, including scientific research, to the spheres of everyday social praxis.

In the framework of her theory of meaning, or signification, Welby proposed an important triad distinguishing between 'sense,' 'meaning' and 'significance.' From this point of view, of particular interest are three short paragraphs (nos. 7–9) grouped together under the title 'Sign and sense' in which are identified various types of sense – 'word sense' or 'verbal sense,' 'pragmatic sense,' 'common sense,' 'ethic sense,' 'religious sense,' 'philosophical sense,' and anticipating today's biosemiotic perspective on signs and signifying processes, 'perceptual sense.' On the basis of the concept of 'perceptual sense,' Welby in *Grains of Sense* already signals a profound interconnection between the organic and the intellectual, the biological and the cultural dimensions of sense, underlining the action of organic intelligence in the properly human world of signs and language. Such considerations were developed in *What is Meaning?*, 1903, where sense is postulated as the condition for adaptation and experience. 'Sense in all "senses" of the word,' says Welby, 'is the fitting term for that which makes the value of "experience"' (1983 [1903]: 27). In its organic form, 'sense' is shared by all life-forms and refers to the perceptual sphere; with the advent of human life, sense also develops into 'meaning' or volitional, intentional, purposive, and rationally idealised sense; and beyond the latter, with reference to the value of experience in the human world, to ethical, pragmatic and ideological sense, also to unintentional sense – but related to both organic sense and meaning sense – the highest value of sense experience is identified in 'significance,' that is, in sense as it emerges in the relation between signs and

values, augmented in ongoing translative processes from one sign and sign system to another.

1.4. Her cultural context and language

Welby's conception of language, meaning and knowledge relates to a philosophical tradition deriving from Heraclitus and Parmenides, reviewed in the light of current debate on the contradiction between the idea of transformation and fluctuation of the existent, on the one hand, and fixity, on the other. Welby's research and language resonate with the intellectual innovations of the times, with progress in the sciences, in particular the natural sciences then heavily influenced by Charles Darwin and evolutionary theory.

The Origin of Species appeared in 1859, famously provoking diatribes among critics and defenders, between traditional scientists and theologians, on the one hand, and progressivists, on the other. Thomas H. Huxley (1825–1895), a critical supporter of Darwinian theory much appreciated by Welby, George J. Romanes (1848–1894) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) may be counted among the latter (see Ch. 2). They each corresponded with Welby. The Darwinian doctrines of organic variation and natural selection upset the very foundations of theology with its creationist theses and belief in the presence of God's design in nature. It was at last possible to appreciate the place of humanity in the natural order, subject to the same evolutionary laws regulating development through the entire living world.

Welby's use of organistic images is symptomatic of a cultural context that was undergoing profound changes in traditional values, in part ensuing from the influence of Darwinism. In terms of cultural history, the Victorian era was a time of transition comparable to both the Copernican and Baconian revolutions: progress was equally threatened by theological prejudicial dogma and by the tyranny of antiquated and deviating terminology. 'Intellectual nomenclature,' claims Welby in *Significs and Language*, 'ruled reality out of the universe and confidently took its place in all disquisition or discussion upon Man and Nature' (1985 [1911]: 2).

The philologist and anthropologist Friedrich Max Müller exerted a determining influence on Welby's shift in interest from the religious to the philosophical-anthropological sphere. However, her originality led to developments in a different direction from Müller's, as testified by her essays of the early 1890s: 'Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?', 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution,' and 'The Significance of Folk-Lore.' Welby took a critical stance against positivism as represented by the French philosopher and sociologist Auguste Comte (1798–1857) (whom she had been introduced to by Müller). This stance was important in the formulation of her own conception of expression, language, meaning, interpersonal relations, social interaction, and subjectivity. In the light of evolutionary theory interpreted from her own significant perspective, she criticized dominant ethnocentrism and challenged official interpretations of myths, religions, superstitions, rites and cults. Welby studied the formation processes of thought and knowledge in cultures alien to the European, unmasking the mainstream tendency in the ethnological and anthropological sciences to indiscriminately superimpose cognitive categories and classifications characteristic of Western thought. Her questioning attitude towards contemporaries such as James Frazer (1854–1941), Andrew Lang (1844–1912),

even Müller himself (though less directly), situated Welby in a tradition of thought that led to recent developments in twentieth century semiotics, cultural anthropology, ethno-linguistics, and philosophical anthropology, as well as to the research of such scholars as Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) (likewise critical of Frazer).

In stylistic terms, Welby's language is rich in imagery (analogies, similes, metaphors, etc.), tending towards the suggestiveness of literariness even when couched in the scientific genre. Her discourse is open to dialogue with different spheres of experience, with different discourse genres as foreseen by her interpretive-translative method, indeed is the expression of ongoing dialogic translative processes. Welby weaved imagery from the organic world as well as from the world of mechanics, technology and the sciences at large into the language of signifiacs. Similarly to Mikhail N. Bakhtin (1895–1975), she described verbal language as a continuously reproducing organism receiving a new imprint from individual genius, new associations and expressive force each time it is used.

Welby made direct use of figurative language in her writing, but also objectified it in her theory of language. She discussed issues relating to 'Expression by Figure' (Welby 1983 [1903]: 24), theorizing the generative-structural function of imagery in the development of knowledge (Welby 1893, 1896, also see Ch. 4). In Chapter VIII of *What is Meaning?*, she proposes a schema for the acquisition of writing and stylistic competencies evoking such writers as Walter H. Pater (1839–1894), Walter Bagehot (1826–1877), Pierre Loti (1850–1923), Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), Paul Bourget (1852–1935), Victor Hugo (1802–1885), John Ruskin (1819–1900) (1983 [1903]: 67–72).

Welby upheld the thesis of linguistic 'plasticity': language is plastic, flexible, endowed with a capacity for 'expressive ambiguity,' which renders it capable of adaptation and renewal to ever new expressive situations. She distinguished between ambiguity in a positive sense, indeed the condition for expressivity, and ambiguity understood negatively as the cause of linguistic and conceptual confusion, which is connected with the failure to develop an adequate 'linguistic conscience.' To define the relation between 'sign' and 'sense,' Welby evoked the image of the organism responding to a stimulus from its environment: signs in the human world acquire a given value, implication, reference as they respond to a given signifying context. In turn, they elicit further responses and engender new contexts. Analogies of the organismic type evidence 'plasticity' and 'expressive potential' as essential characteristics of language. Such qualities must be regenerated when lost through 'bad linguistic use,' and recovered in terms of linguistic theory when left aside by inadequate concepts of language. In Welby's view, the relation of reciprocal adaptability between word and context is analogous to that between the organism and its environment.

Welby's positions met the approval of the pragmatist philosopher Ferdinand C. S. Schiller (1864–1937) whom she met in Oxford in 1900, where he had been lecturing since 1897. Their correspondence began in 1900 and lasted until 1911. Schiller (1907) worked on the concept of 'humanistic pragmatism' and recognized the methodological necessity of the principle of linguistic plasticity. However, while accepting the foundational aspects of Welby's theory of meaning and communication, he was also one of her most ardent critics. For example, he rejected what he described as her principle of linguistic perfectibility (see Ch. 6).

In spite of oppositions, Welby and Schiller were united in their criticism of mainstream Oxonian philosophy, in particular of formal logic as developed by Francis H. Bradley (1846–1926), Harold H. Joachim, and Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923). Schiller (1912) was also critical of Bertrand Russell (1872–1970). Together, and in the light of the concept of thought-language theorized in terms of process, energy, activity, behavior, transformation, Schiller and Welby both critiqued the thesis of ‘pure thought’ fixed according to universal and immutable laws, just as they critiqued theories of meaning based on this thesis. The problematic of meaning was to be the object of public debate with the symposium *The Meaning of ‘Meaning’* which took place in Oxford, 1920. The results were published in the journal *Mind* in an article under the same title. Participants included Charles A. Strong (editor of the journal), Alfred Sidgwick and the main speakers Schiller, Russell and Joachim.

The appearance of hominids in the universe and the beginning of history were considered another step forward in evolutionary development from primordial life-forms, and a particularly significant one thanks to the rise of ‘language’ and ‘mother-sense,’ which in the verbal expressive form is Welby’s privileged object of analysis. With intuitions that anticipate today’s developments in communication, artificial intelligence, robotics, cybernetics, she identified one of the motors of evolutionary development in the human world in the capacity to transcend the limits of sense, enhanced by progress in the sciences. The following passage is from *What is Meaning?*:

[. . .] The physiologist and psychologist alike tell us that our organism is a plexus of energies intimately related to that ‘environment’ which we call the material or physical world, and, moreover, that it persists or survives in virtue of a process called adjustment; whence it follows that the unfit (that which is not adjusted, cannot adapt itself to its surroundings and adapt them to itself) is eliminated. This is the adjustment which is the condition of what is usually called experience. We are full ‘in touch’ (including all sense) with the world we live on, and therefore and thus we live and reproduce life. Now, as sense is the typical means of this adaptation, we may say that sense in all ‘senses’ of the word becomes the fitting term for that which makes the value of ‘experience’ in this life and on this planet.¹

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1. [Words like ‘consciousness, sensation, feeling, mind, thought, will,’ wander and collide in the endless cross-currents of ‘meaning.’ Every psychologist deplors this and recommends his own usage. But there is no consensus and therefore no consistency or real advance. Meanwhile, surely ‘sensation’ – varying in degree and in kind – supplies us with the natural starting-point. Virtually it is already this. For we begin with a vague ‘sense’ which is a response to stimulus. This becomes gradually more conscious, rising to that level which we may call ‘feeling,’ and involving more and more definitely that which we call ‘mind’; a word which in its turn suggestively connotes in popular usage will, desire, intention, memory. Thus, as the first simplicity of Sense differentiates into ‘special sense,’ and we gain the widely varying response-types which we call touch (including smell and taste), hearing, and sight; so the first simplicity of ‘sense’ as the guarantee of sanity, the individual’s right response to the stimuli of the physical world (resistance, temperature, etc.), differentiates into the special ‘senses’ in which we apprehend, analyse, act upon what we learn to call (1) fact, (2) truth, and at last reach, or at least recognise, as Reality. This is not a mere question of etymology, which indeed would be but a broken reed to lean upon. It is a question of unconsciously developing mental habit; of “instinct” growing into volitional maturity and *revealing itself in language*. This revelation is, of course, as yet vague and shifting. But when it is seriously investigated and properly interpreted: when our usage becomes orderly and progressive (as, except in this

But this 'sense' in its organic form we share with subhuman and even primitive forms of life. In Man it rises, by virtue of what may be compared to the integral unity of this and other planets of the 'solar system,' into the higher form which is expressed not only in phrases like the sense of a word or a man of sense, or common-sense, but (when the word is rightly used) by meaning, that is by volitional, intentional, purposive, rationally idealised sense. Man sees and deals with Meaning because he is a citizen of a greater Commonwealth than this secondary world, this mere planet; and realises as its 'meaning,' its relations with that which lies beyond and around it as well as within it. The whole animal 'kingdom' (if not also the plant order) shares the sense-world: the advent of the sense of meaning – the highest kind of sense – marks a new departure: it opens the distinctively human era.

Here again Science has been the revealer. She has shown us that all our 'energies' are due to the sun; that they must all be referred to what is 'beyond,' what literally 'transcends' the limits of our own world and of our means of communication and access. More than this. We cannot speak without sending a thrill through the universe; and 'all rotating bodies tend to turn themselves towards the pole star.'² And the periods of waxing and waning, characteristic of climatic (the 'essential' or 'primary') fever, 'are no other than the cosmical periods of the earth itself.' Of course it must not be supposed that even in what we have called our planetary experience, there is no hint of 'meaning' or of purpose. There is of course in a true sense a teleology, an unconscious working for 'end' throughout the living world. And Man is from the first conscious not merely of Sense as excited response, but also of what he calls intention, governing his activities – 'I mean to do, or to prevent this' – the voice of that rational action and inhibition which belongs to the highest centres of his brain.³

This at first coincides with a crude and grotesque form of that reference to what is 'above' him which has supervened with the attainment of the erect attitude. That which began with usefully aiming stone or stick or arrow at the flying bird in the air, and translated itself into terror at the supposed black beast of prey which shot out deadly flashes and roared and growled 'over his head' out of the cloud; into fancied outlines of men or animals drawn in stars upon the sky, or into explaining the stars as little holes in his roof through which he could see the light-world; that which developed into sun worship and 'heavenly myths,' into Walhalla or Olympus or Swerga, had always the same idea as its moving force: 'I belong to what is beyond the world I live upon; my world is bigger than this; that sun and moon are my lamps; all that I see in the sky concerns me.' Thus astrology was born. And throughout the long ascent, the invisible region under man's feet was part of the same idea: that of reference beyond the mere surface of this earth he lived upon – even in the assumption which, as already pointed out, still survives, to the confusion of thought, as the 'foundation of the world.' Some of us are so wedded to our primitive mental 'heavens' that we resent anything that looks like dissipating into nebulous immensities the comfortable roof hung

solitary case of language, all our developed energies passing under the control of intelligence and reason tend to be), then, we shall find many 'impossibilities' quite feasible, and many things now 'beyond words' clearly expressible (Welby 1983 [1903]: 267–268, n. vi).

2. [Professor Perry on Tops (1983 [1903]: 28, n. 1)].
3. [The triadic form, into which ideas which belong to the category of positive, comparative, and superlative naturally and conveniently fall, easily becomes a snare. Even Wundt seems to have succumbed to its fascination (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1901). Thus too much stress must not be laid upon triads which seem both to fit facts and to correspond with each other. Yet it may be worth noticing that the triad 'specific, generic, ordinal' found in *Outlines of Sociology* (Lester Ward, 1898), broadly answers to what is here called the planetary, the solar, and the cosmical, and thus to sense, meaning, and significance (1983 [1903]: 28–29, n. 3)].

with earth-kindled lamps and populated not only by cloud-cuckoos but by all manner of (reflected) animals and men, and furnished with a convenient psychological zodiac.

To such a mind, then, the attempt to show that the most deeply ingrained usages of language may have, as Dr. Tylor says, more significance than we suppose, seems fantastic, just as its 'heavens' in fact do to the rest of us. So does the idea that our appeal to the high, the wide, the deep, the great, though merely quantitative, is also indicative of a vague instinct that there is an actual less and more within the limits of experience. But the mind that recognises three types of experience, 1) answering to 'touch,' 'smell,' and 'hearing' and therefore practically confined to earth and its atmosphere, 2) answering to 'feeling' which transcends this (*we feel*, though we cannot touch, or hear, or see the heat of the sun), 3) answering to 'sight,' the only sense by which we respond to the sidereal universe – such a mind will not fall into this primitive error. It will understand that the response which is here compared to 'sight' is given to a significance which may be compared with, and in another sense constitute, the value of the mental and moral as of the physical cosmos. What we may in a true sense *see* (as e.g. we see Sirius) may yet be beyond all other sense.

Thus we reach what is here expressed by the term significance; a conception which in recent times has become translated into that which used to be known as the mystical element, as though it were an unconscious conversion of that element into modern modes of thought. For it is again science which, having warned us of our dependence upon sense for working knowledge, seeks in the observation of fact for that 'meaning' which, as bringing us truth, is to be the 'value' of her inquiries and experiments, and the interpreter of the messages of sensation. It is science which finally impresses upon us the duty and prerogatives of that scientific imagination which can dare all because it can and does control all, and which therefore points us beyond the sense of things, beyond even, the meaning of things, to their significance, their highest value for us.

It is indisputable that we live and perceive on the three levels or in the three spheres now suggested, though only in a narrow sense.⁴ No one would dispute that we touch, smell, hear, and see on the earth and in its atmosphere; that we do not touch, smell or hear in the solar world, but that we feel and see therein; that we do not even feel though we see in the sidereal universe. As sight is the only sense which literally transcends all the limits of the other senses and carries us out into the 'infinite' universe – we use vision by valid analogy as the main metaphor of thought. Probably it is our liability to visual illusion which has given the 'visionary' and the 'speculative' their meaning of the fanciful and the dreamful. Otherwise what we most need is of course more vision, more clear and distinct 'speculation.' Error arises from some degree of blindness, or of distorted vision, or of darkness or fog. Physical science has emphatically been an extension of the power of

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4. [Curiously enough, though we do speak of the meaning of a word, we never speak of a man of meaning, or of common meaning. To avoid possible confusion, the word 'intention' has been used, throughout these Studies, as the main sense of 'meaning.' But 'intent' would often, for some reasons, be preferable.

It may be desirable here to anticipate a probable objection. We may be once more told that words are quite indifferent; that every one is ready and able to consider and adopt or reject any idea, no matter what the terminology used; and that therefore the appeal to language must be futile or misleading, at least in practical life. The witness to the contrary I have found, however, to be overwhelming.

To cite one instance (taken at the moment and at random) we find the *Daily Graphic* saying in one of its pithy articles, 'It will probably be found that by... making a concession to popular sentiment in the matter of nomenclature the introduction of the metric system will be enormously facilitated' (22 January 1903) (1983 [1903]: 31, n. 1).

true seeing, which in its turn was originally an extension of 'touch.' (Welby 1983 [1903]: 27–31)

Welby developed her evolutionary view of meaning, knowledge and communication in constant dialogue with progress in the sciences. She kept up to date on all new theories, researched extensively and was always ready to examine any literature she could access. In addition to biology and natural sciences generally, she also focused her attention on such disciplines as astronomy and cosmology (see Ch. 2, below). Relatedly to her meaning triad 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance,' she also proposed a theory of consciousness in three grades: the 'planetary,' 'solar,' and 'cosmical' which, progressing from the 'direct' to the 'doubly indirect,' describe the expansion of perception, experience and knowledge, of expression value and psychic life generally through the interpretive-translative activity of signs. She introduced the concept of 'ex-citation,' that is, the capacity for response to something beyond mere adaptation (which may also be associated to the notion of 'exaptation' as used in biosemiotics [see Sebeok 1986b, 1991b]), as well as the distinction between the concepts of 'generation' and 'self-creation' or 'origination.' In the light of such concepts, human life is viewed as a dynamic response in the continuous flux of life and energy, where conceptions themselves are responses and interpretations received, passed on and developed in the larger flux. Again from *What is Meaning?*:

It has already been suggested, and may here be repeated, that our only fully developed articulate world is planetary, which is also satellitic. To adopt, therefore, within the lines already laid down, the comparison between the sense-world and the planetary, the meaning-world and the solar, the world of significance and the visible universe which includes both, let us see how it vindicates itself in working out.

All 'planetary' knowledge is directly acquired either through observation and experiment, or through processes inductive or deductive. We are in full 'touch' with the world we inhabit. 'Solar' knowledge, on the contrary, is one remove from this. We can indirectly explore both our sun and sister planets in a way impossible in the case of the suns which used to be called fixed stars, and the unsounded depths beyond even these. Thus 'cosmical' knowledge is in a sense doubly indirect, as though we needed a third instrument corresponding to the spectroscope to give us the spectra of the stars found recorded on the photographic plate attached to the telescope.

A system of thought may be a means of relation, of interpretation, of emancipation; it may absorb other systems by recognising their validity, and by perceiving its own inadequacy except from a specified point of view or in a specified sense. All systems here formulable are presumably planetary; the burden of proof that they are more falls on the thinker. This proof must depend on the predictive as well as on the harmonising and absorbent power of any system. [.]

Whatever our view of (the whole of) things knowable may be – whether monistic, dualistic, or pluralistic – whether we are materialist, realist, or idealist – we are compelled, at least, to speak of the mental and physical as though they were different spheres. And the absence of any recognised criterion of analogy, and therefore of metaphor, the confusion of the equative with the comparative, of both with the illustrative, and of this with the merely rhetorical, tends to confound what may be reflection with what at best may be refraction, or an image of no more value than the baby's picture of man or the 'signs' of a fabulous zodiac.

Thus, though it has to be said, first, that the three grades or levels of consciousness (and therefore of experience) here suggested as the human heritage are, on the one hand, 'grades' of the physical, and on the other 'grades' of the psychical, such a suggestion must be understood in the sense above indicated. And we may postpone the misused word spiritual

because 1) it assumes too much; and 2) it embodies obsolete conceptions of nature, though by no means these alone. With this proviso we may repeat that the planetary consciousness is for all practical purposes fully developed. Whether we are aware of it or no, this world is the measure of our ordinary experience and our ordinary ideas, conceptions, and theories. The 'struggle for existence' has secured this. The only reservation here necessary is caused by the extraordinary backwardness of our rational thought of the world, as betrayed, and fostered, by the falsities of civilised language. In ancient days man's thinking accurately followed and corresponded to his physical conceptions; it was everywhere consistent with the current view of the cosmos; with the accredited ideas of matter, of light, of heat, of life, etc. Now everywhere our thinking, as language shows us, is more or less false to the facts which, by the agency of scientific method, we know as we never before knew them.

The 'solar' answers to the scientific activities, made possible by the leisure and protection of civilisation, and stimulated by more and more complex demands upon brainwork. The astrophysicist has become the representative 'solarist'; but he is not content to stop there. He is always exploring and endeavouring to interpret the 'depths' and contents of cosmic space. Thus he also has a lesson for us – one of the upmost significance.

It is a fact curiously overlooked, that whereas Christianity has been condemned on the score of being geocentric, and we are always being reminded how completely the Copernican astronomy discredits the notion of this little earth becoming the centre of Divine attention, modern psychology has taken its place, and works throughout on the assumption that 'mind' does originate on this planet. What if this be the reason for the comparative barrenness of its results as yet? What if the assumption – merely for the sake of argument – that 'mind' is essentially derivative, and that its conditions answer to those of light and gravitation and to those of the world on which it is found, should give us a clue hitherto wanting, and go far to explain what seems now simple aberration in the long story of human 'belief' in spirit or in revelation? What if here, as elsewhere, what we need is translation in the widest sense – the power to master the many dialects of thought, and interpret men to each other by learning their thought-tongues? (Welby 1983 [1903]: 94–97)

[. . .] In Significs we are not, therefore, claiming to add one more to the historical systems or methods of thought already existing. Rather does it aim at and indeed imply the assimilation and translation of all modes of arriving at truth – to be a Way which is the interpretation and co-ordination of all ways. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 99)

Of course man must always interpret the Cosmos in terms of his own sense-experience. No other is available. He has no choice but to 'project' his own sense-scheme on to his surroundings. And he cannot directly know, he can only infer what transcends that sense-experience; beginning with perception he conceives, constructs, concludes, 'creates' his world in rational order, which implies its analysis. But having done this the post-Copernican principle begins to tell. The sense-scheme itself is presumably derived like the world on which it is found.

Physiology warns us that even the term 'motor' is dangerous as implying 'spontaneous origination of forces.' 'A centre is an organ of return of action, and the type of all motor action is a reflex act.'⁵ This principle is recognised by all leading physiological workers, e.g. by Hitzig, Munk, Bastian, Foster. All action is literally ex-cited – called from beyond; all physiological phenomena are generated, not self-created. The presumption, then, is that

5. [Dr. A. Waller, 'On the Functional Attributes of the Cerebral Cortex,' *Brain*, Parts lix and lx: 345 (1983 [1903]: 101, n. 1)].

we do not originate and then ‘project’ our highest conceptions; we receive and pass them on, though it may be in woefully childish dialects.

We have to credit the sun with the constituents of the earth. But we no longer suppose that these have been bestowed on the sun by the earth. When we say that given gases are in the sun, we are only giving back intellectually what we have received materially. The cosmos and our sun in particular endows us with all our ‘gases,’ our liquids, our solids, and all our energies.

Once more the presumption is all against the geocentric view that our little satellite is the mental centre of the universe; according to the post-Copernican order the human world cannot be centred on itself. Man is heliotropic, he is beyond that cosmotropic, moving round a moving centre on a way beyond his ken. The primitive mind, much closer than we are to its mother-life in the protozoon, may well have been organically ‘conscious’ of its ultra-earthly origin – its nervous system restlessly thrilling with survivals of primordial pulses which have trembled into life upon our cooling planet. The promise and potency of all mind as well as life have lain within the swathes of cosmic cloud, the nebulous embryos of a million worlds. Man is evolved through zoophytes from the interaction of the atomic forces in a nebula. As G.H. Lewes says, ‘A stream of molecular energy flows through the organism from the great cosmic source, and returns to the ocean whence it came. For the organism is but an unit in the great sum of things. The continuity of Existence admits no break. Our life is a moment in the larger life.’⁶ How then can we seriously suppose that what we call ‘mind’ or ‘intelligence’ is so absolutely independent of ‘life’ that there is no greater mind to be its cosmos or even its special sun? Yet the same writer can say that ‘we are the centres to which the intelligible universe converges, from which it radiates,’ and insist that ‘the human point of view is in all respects absolute and final for us.’⁷ So, with more excuse, said the ancient cosmologists of their tiny world. But science has at last exploded that theory; and as we are in any case confined to analogy, we are bound to keep as long as we can to those furnished not only by astronomy, but also by biology, and especially by that plant-life which so wonderfully grasps and embraces, so to speak, the radiant energy of the sun, and transfigures it into leaf and flower and fruit. John Fiske may well say that here we reach something deeper than poetry. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 101–103)

Furthermore, returning to the question of figurative expression, Welby made recurrent use of a repertoire of images from optics and astronomy, with particular reference to vision and sight supported by such refined instruments as the telescope:

Two things must, of course, be borne in mind. One, that when we use analogically the physiological processes of vision, we are bound to take the true ones so far as they are known. Thus we have no right to speak of the eye as though it were adjusted to the near, and needed to strain with painful effort to discern the far (as we so often do when contrasting philosophy with science or practical life), but rather as ‘focussed to infinity’; while what requires muscular effort is the vision of – the tangible. Another, that not merely do we look through our sense-window at a vast star-peopled universe as real as our own world – a universe of which the telescope reveals further depths but no limits – but also that we can devise a mechanical eye (the sensitive plate) which shall ‘see’ and record a further world of suns and nebulae beyond even the power of the telescope to reveal to the human eye.⁸ That is a triumph of indirect evidence. And after all, as Professor Tait says, ‘it is

6. [‘Problems of Life and Mind,’ vol. ii: 463 (1875) (1983 [1903]: 102, n. 1)].

7. [Ibidem: 16 (1983 [1903]: 103, n. 1)].

8. [The invention of the telescope is to me the most beautiful ever made. Familiarity both in making and in using has only increased my admiration. With the exception of the microphone

to sight that we are mainly indebted for our knowledge of external things. All our other senses together, except under very special conditions, do not furnish us with a tithe of the information we gain by a single glance.⁹ (Welby 1983 [1903]: 103–104)

An important aspect of Welby's work was her plan to develop an adequate theoretical-linguistic apparatus in a signifi- cal key to review and re-evaluate the history of the development of the human species and account for the development of human behaviour, beliefs, and expression. A determining condition for the evolution of sensual perception, experience and expression in the human world is the ongoing development of the capacity to signify. Proceeding in this direction, Welby's studies on problems of language and meaning pushed well beyond the limits of a philological-historical approach to semantics as ideated, for example, by Michel Bréal (1832–1915). While confronting her own position with others (see Ch. 3), Welby focused on language and meaning as part of the broader context of signifying processes beyond the verbal. Accordingly, she did not limit her studies to the strictly linguistic or verbal sphere, characteristic of semantics, or to approaches tagged today as 'speech act theory' or 'text theory.' With her studies on the relation between signs and life, signs and evolution, Welby anticipated contemporary developments in biosemiotics (see, for example, Thomas A. Sebeok [1920–2001] and his 'global semiotics' or 'semiotics of life'). Welby studied the organic in light of the inorganic, human signs in light of nonhuman signs, verbal signs in light of nonverbal signs, the life of signs in light of the signs of life.

In Welby's view the bad use of language implied the bad use of logic, incoherence and confusion in reasoning which deviated evolutionary development (see Ch. 4). Consequently, she invested the 'critique of language' not only with the task of diagnosing the maladies of language, but also with the therapeutic power of recovering and reinvigorating linguistic expressivity. Coherently with her signifi- cal perspective, she theorized the need for regeneration on an expressive, logical and behavioural level, but interconnectedly with the ethical level as foreseen by the architectonics of her thought system. She elected children as a model for humanity, being critics *par excellence* thanks to their enthusiasm, curiosity and natural sense for exploration, experimentation, and interrogation (expressed in their continual hows?, whats?, and whys?) (see Ch. 4). With abundant examples from literary writing, from the aesthetic domain at large, as well as from the scientific, Welby contrasted the order of discourse and its monologic constrictions to the provocation of questions, criticism, the plurality of different voices and viewpoints, the capacity for creativity, invention and innovation.

of the late Professor Hughes, which enabled one to hear otherwise inaudible sounds, sight is the only sense that we have been able to enormously increase in range (Professor W.H. Perkin's Presidential Address, Brit. Assoc., 1900) (1983 [1903]: 103)].

9. ['Light,' *Encyc. Brit.*, 9th edit. (1983 [1903]: 104)].

1.5. The spreading of her ideas and significs

There's some that will welcome Significs,
 Since that will ban puzzle and trick;
 But there's more that will favour the Sniffics,
 The sign of the skulls that are thick.

The pretender fights shy of Significs,
 Which shows up his plausible score;
 The worker despises the Sniffics,
 For that is the pride of the bore.
 (V. Welby, Box 37, file 10, WCYA)

That Welby and her significs were not completely forgotten during the twentieth century is due to the fact that her name comes up in relation to other scholars, more than to the intrinsic value of her studies which are not necessarily familiar to researchers, at least not officially. For example, she is known to Vailati, van Eeden, Russell, and Peirce scholars because of her correspondence. And, in fact, as anticipated above, though the corpus of her letter exchanges is still mostly unpublished, with exceptions as in the case of her correspondence with Peirce, small collections are available here and there (see Vailati 1971; van Eeden-Welby 1954; for Welby's exchanges with Russell in German translation, see Schmitz 1995; for excerpts in Italian translation, see Petrilli 1998a; in English see Ch. 3 this volume).

Included in Russell's autobiography is a letter of 20 July 1904 to 'Goldie' (alias Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, 1862–1932), in which he mentions Welby:

I have never read Lady Welby's writings, but she sent me some remarks on my book, from which I judged that she is interested in a good many questions that interest me. I doubt very much, all the same, how much she understood my book. I know too little of her to know whether I should understand her or not. (Russell 1967: 195)

The book Russell was referring to is *The Principles of Mathematics*, 1903, analysed by Welby and reviewed by Peirce in 1903 in relation to Welby's own monograph, *What is Meaning?* In spite of his perplexities, Russell's correspondence with Welby lasted from 1904 to 1910. The first letter is dated 1 February 1904: as Welby recounted to Peirce, she had approached Russell with her considerations on his *Principles*. Russell responded as follows:

... Since I wrote my book, I have come to think the questions connected with meaning even more important than I then thought them: the logical nature of description seems to me now about the most fundamental and about the most difficult of all philosophical questions. ...

I agree entirely with what you say about language and making it do its work better. For definitely mathematical purposes, the symbolism which has been developed out of Peano gives an ideal of precision, but it will only express mathematical ideas. A similar work ought to be done for other ideas: but I feel that a technical language, without unphilosophical associations, is almost indispensable, e.g. verbs without tense are necessary to a right philosophy of time ... (Russell to Welby 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 128)

Welby was also in contact with French philosophers such as André Lalande (1867–1963) and Louis Couturat (1868–1914), as well as with the Germans such as the sociologist Tönnies: all envisaged an international language (an idea to which Welby did not fully subscribe), and shared an interest in the critique of language with special reference to philosophical and psychological terminology (the ‘Welby Prize’ awarded to Tönnies was dedicated to such issues, see 2.8, below). Welby’s approach to the critique of language may be compared to that of Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923), author of *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* in three volumes (published between 1901–1902 and reedited in 1912) and of the philosophical dictionary *Wörterbuch der Philosophie. Neue Beiträge zur einer Kritik der Sprache* (1910–1911, reedited in 1923). Important also is the connection between Welby’s significs and the Signific Movement in the Netherlands, which it originated through the mediation of van Eeden (see Ch. 7).

The thesis that Welby significantly influenced her contemporaries and cultural environment is feasible if we keep account of the extension and theoretical consistency of her epistolary exchanges. However, despite explicit traces of her ideas in the writings of others, she remained mostly unacknowledged. Scholars like F. W. H. Myers (1903), Oliver Lodge (1903), Samuel Alexander (1909), and Conwy Lloyd Morgan (1912)¹⁰ referred to her triad or three levels of consciousness – the planetary, solar, and cosmic (see Welby 1983 [1903]: 90–96; and Schmitz 1985b: cviii–cxi). In his book *Cities in Evolution* (1915), Patrick Geddes uses Welby’s meaning triad ‘sense,’ ‘meaning’ and ‘significance’ without recognizing his source, except privately in his correspondence.¹¹

10. Excerpt from a letter by Welby to Sir Oliver Lodge:

The rest of your Paper (*Hibbert Journal*, July, 1903) is virtually an application of the thesis of my book. There are two conceptions of the universe, both as mental and as physical. One is in fact Ptolemaic; the other is post-Copernican. Certainly I do not conceive ‘life and mind’ as independent of matter and unlimited in individual duration. I would relate life and mind more definitely to motion; and I would suggest that our present ideas of time are more archaic than we think and are responsible for some at least of the controversy which you describe. (in Cust 1931: 95)

Excerpt from a letter by Welby to Ferdinand C. Schiller:

As you say, the triad has a familiar form, but I am interested in your reversal. [...] I cannot help wishing (judging from his letters to me) that Myers had begun a littler higher up. I used to inflict on him an early and crude form of the ‘cosmic’ triad and also translation. But he seemed still to think in planetese (instead of in planets). (Cust 1931: 105–106)

Excerpt from a letter by Schiller to Welby:

I heard Professor Lloyd Morgan’s discourse at the Psychical Society, and he used, you will be interested to hear, some of your phraseology to indicate the various levels of psychic process: instinct, perception and conception = ‘sense,’ ‘meaning’ and ‘significance.’ I sat next to him at dinner afterwards and taxed him with it, whereupon he owned up. (Cust 1931: 216)

11. As Patrick Geddes writes to Welby:

Hence, to clear up your logic and see what meaning is, I want you to look at each signific point (word, element) through the synthetiscope. *Per contra*, to straighten out my philosophy, you want me to tackle it afresh through the signifiscope! Isn’t that it? Note, I beg, that for the two tasks there is in my mind now only one instrument – only we look in at opposite ends! You see, in short, that I am gradually creeping after you (though your ‘self’ in ‘time’ eludes me still!)

P. S. – Will it reassure you a little that (while gymfriscopes must remain for a time

In contrast, the Italian scholar Alessandro Levi (1912) publicly acknowledged Welby in his inaugural lesson delivered at the University of Ferrara on 5 November 1911.¹² In his groundbreaking study on Welby, Schmitz (1985b) devotes an entire chapter divided into ten sections to Welby's influence on as many contemporaries. In order of appearance these include: Lalande, Tönnies, Stout, Baldwin, Peirce, Russell, Schiller, Ogden and the novelist H. G. Wells with whom too she exchanged letters from 1897 to 1910. According to Max Fisch (1986), Welby influenced the orientation of Peirce's studies during the last decade of his life, from the time of his Lowell and Harvard Lectures of 1903 through to his death in 1914. On the relation between Welby's signifiacs and Wells's novels, which seems to have escaped the attention of his critics, see Schmitz 1985b: clxxxiv–clxxxix. And if we extend our gaze beyond her direct contacts, the hypothesis of her indirect influence on such personalities as Wittgenstein is also feasible and certainly interesting to explore (see Nolan 1990; and Ch. 8, this volume).

The 'rediscovery' of signifiacs today is largely (though not exclusively) a consequence of Welby's correspondence with Peirce. The 1977 collection edited by Hardwick (see Ch. 3) was a particularly important editorial event, and reinforced the fact that if Welby was not entirely forgotten in semiotic circles throughout the twentieth century this was largely due to her relations with Peirce (see Sebeok 1976; Walther 1974, 1983; Weiner 1962). Through Welby's mediation, Peirce was introduced to English scholars including Russell, Schiller, Stout, Baldwin, and Ogden. In relatively recent times, from approximately the 1970s onwards, renewed interest in Peirce's research and in American pragmatism generally has, in turn, contributed to the rediscovery of signifiacs. From this point of view, the volume by Horace S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action. A Critical History of Pragmatism*, of 1968, has special merits for its reconstruction of the influence exerted by Welby over Ogden, Schiller, Peirce and Russell, for its description of the relation between Vailati's semantic analysis and signifiacs, and attribution to Welby of the massive interest in England for questions of meaning during the years between the publication of *What is Meaning?*, in 1903, and *Signifiacs and Language*, in 1911 (see Schmitz 1985b: xv). From this perspective another excellent volume specifically on the early history of pragmatics in Europe and America between 1780 and 1930 must now also be noted, a monograph by Brigitte Nerlich and David D. Clarke entitled *Language, Action, and Context*, 1996.

Charles K. Ogden and Ivor A. Richards included an excerpt from letter exchanges between Welby and Peirce in an Appendix to their book of 1923, *The Meaning of Meaning*, renowned as an epochal study on language and meaning, which contributed to Peirce's official introduction to the scholarly reading public in England. A selection from the correspondence between Welby and Ogden, edited and commented by myself, was published in *Semiotica*, in 1995 (see Ch. 7, this volume). Even if indirectly, *The Meaning of Meaning* recalls the work of Bréal, author of *Essai de sémantique*, 1897, on one hand,

at least of esoteric interest!) I have been guilty of putting the sequence of 'sense, meaning, significance' into my penny popular guide to the *Outlook Tower*? In fact as my current explanation of the 'outlook' altogether? (Cust 1931: 272–273)

12. Where in his comment on the need to examine the precise meaning of words and ideas, he signals Welby's own research with specific reference to her 1911 monograph, *Signifiacs and Language* (see Levi 1912: 19).

and is continued under certain aspects in the research of Charles Morris, on the other. An English translation of Bréal's book by Victoria Welby's daughter was published in 1900, with a Preface and an Appendix by John Percival Postgate (1853–1926), who also wrote the introduction to the first edition of Ogden and Richards's 1923 volume. Morris author of such books as *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, 1938, *Signs, Language and Behavior*, 1946, and *Signification and Significance*, 1964, may be placed in the same tradition of thought as Peirce.

Welby's name also appears in relation to studies on meaning in the direction of General Semantics (in particular for the ethical aspects of language). Representatives like Stuart Chase, Alfred Korzybski (1950) (for a detailed critique of Korzybski's semantics, see Schaff 1960), and Charles S. Hayakawa (1954) make explicit references to Welby (see Neuberg 1962). By contrast with Korzybski who does not interpret general semantics as deriving from signifiacs (he claims to have outlined his own system in 1926, before discovering Welby's research), Hayakawa describes *The Meaning of Meaning* by Ogden and Richards as a continuation of Welby's signifiacs, and general semantics as originating from signifiacs, on the one hand, and from *Principia Mathematica* (published from 1910 onwards) by Whitehead and Russell, on the other (see Schmitz 1985b: xiii).

Further references to Welby's work, even if fleeting, are not lacking: for example, Charles Morris cites *What is Meaning?* in *Signs, Language and Behavior* (1946); Colin Cherry reminds scholars of semantics about signifiacs in his book of 1957 on human communication; *What is Meaning?* is listed by the Polish scholar Adam Schaff in his 1960 study on semantics, *Wstęp do semantyki*; Frank Palmer mentions Welby in *Semantics*, 1976; Eschbach includes Welby's works in his 1974 bibliography of semiotic studies; her name appears in *Semiotica. I fondamenti della semiotica cognitiva*, 1979, an anthology of Peirce's writings in Italian translation with excerpts from Peirce's correspondence to Welby on the classification of signs and his existential graphs, now part of the larger volume collecting Peirce's writings in Italian translation, edited by Massimo A. Bonfantini, *Opere*, 2003.¹³

1.6. The archives, her unpublished materials and re-editions of her works

Welby wrote over a period of approximately sixty years including her child's travel diary of 1852, her unpublished poetry, and her published and unpublished scientific writings. These materials have been mostly organized in two different archives: 1) the Welby Collection at the York University Archives and Special Collections (Scott Library), York University (North York, Ontario, Canada), which preserves the bulk of her unpublished writings, articles and essaylets (in some cases privately published), and her correspondence with over 450 people, which is mostly unpublished; and 2) the Lady Welby Library, University of London Library, Senate House, which includes approxi-

13. For re-editions and translations of Victoria Welby's writings, see the section below; for an update – without claims to exhaustiveness – concerning publications on Welby or somehow relating to her, see Reference section, 'Writings on Welby, the Signific Movement and current developments,' this volume.

mately 1,000 of the original 3,000–4,000 volumes (counting books and journals) from her private library, often closely annotated by Welby in handwriting on the page margins. We also have news of scientific papers by Welby through her correspondence, such as her unpublished essay ‘Mental Biology’ (now in Ch. 2, this volume), amply commented and discussed in *Echoes of Larger Life*. Most of her private writings, including diaries and letters to her family are missing. Other materials at the archives count the biographical volume *Wanderers* by her daughter and the two volumes of correspondence *Echoes of Larger Life* and *Other Dimensions* (see above). Writings by different authors are also present in Welby’s archives, collected, studied and annotated by herself, testifying to the great variety and comprehensiveness of her interests. (For a detailed description of the Lady Welby Library at London University, see Baker 1990: 279–287; and of the Welby Collection at the York University Archives, see Bowsfield 1990: 275–278).

A catalogue entitled, *List of Books in the Lady Welby Library, Presented by Sir Charles Welby*, describes the books Welby had in her possession, being books she herself had annotated and catalogued according to the following main subject areas: Religion, Philosophy, Physiography, Ethnology, Anthropology and Folklore, History, Biography, Sociology, Education, General Science and Physics, Mathematics, Astronomy, Biology, Medicine, Physiology and Hygiene, Botany and Zoology, Art, Philology, Literature. In addition to these volumes from Welby’s library, thus catalogued and distributed according to subject throughout the London University general library, the Lady Welby Library counts 25 boxes, *Uncatalogued Pamphlets*, numbered from 1 to 31 (Box numbers 5, 7, 22, 23, 26, and 28 are not related to Welby), presenting materials that have not been catalogued: these include writings by others in the form of essays, articles, abstracts, pamphlets, extracts from journals, newspaper cuttings, sermons, lessons, conferences, poems, narrative, mostly sent to Welby by the authors themselves. The subject areas covered include: language theory, etymology, philology, literature, history, history of the Church, topography, geography, travel literature, religion, philosophy, psychology (human, animal, general and experimental), the occult sciences, medicine, logic, ethics, aesthetics, jurisprudence, political economy, social problems, the social condition of women, education, mathematics, and much more. Newspapers and journals consulted by Welby, to which she also contributed her own writings, include: *Quarterly Review*, *National Review*, *Parent’s Review*, *The Nineteenth Century*, *Mind*, *The Monist*, *The British Quarterly*, *Fortnightly Review*, *The New Review*, *Critical Review*, *Awakened India*, *East & West*, *Lux Mundi*. Another four unnumbered boxes (A, B, C, D) collect copies of Welby’s own publications.

In the Welby Collection at the York University Archives documents are distributed among 42 boxes, some of which are available on microfilm. Almost half of them, from Box 1 to 21, contain Welby’s correspondence for the years 1861 to 1912 (the two volumes edited by her daughter, *Echoes of Larger Life*, 1929, and *Other Dimensions*, 1931, cover the years 1879–1891 and 1898–1911, respectively). The remaining half of the boxes are numbered from 22 to 42 and ordered according to the following Subject Files: *Biology*, *Education*, *Ethics*, *Eugenics*, *I and Self*, *Imagery*, *Language and Expression*, *Life*, *Logic*, *Mother-sense*, *Matter and Motion*, *Number Theory*, *Philosophy*, *Poetry*, *Art*, *Music*, *Primal sense*, *Psychology*, *Significs*, *Sociology*, *Time*, *Translation*. These documents are written in various discourse genres: in addition to a significant quantity of typescript studies ready for publication in the form of articles and books, they present

critical annotations, extracts from different sources, philosophical reflections, notes, quotations, abstracts, speeches, sermons, aphorisms, parables, lessons, work plans, titles for essays and books to write, interviews, critical comments by Welby on publications by others and vice versa, etc. This collection includes a large file containing Welby's poetry, also worthy of publication. Furthermore, studies are included relative to Francis Galton's research on eugenics, also to the 1896 'Welby Prize,' as well as to Italian philosopher and mathematician Giovanni Vailati's research and writings. Other items include a catalogue of books originally from Welby's private library (and now in the London University Library), book reviews, translations by Welby and copies of some of her publications. The constant characteristic of this multiform intellectual laboratory is the unity of Welby's signifi- cal perspective.

A selection of unpublished papers on mother-sense, imagery, ambiguity, subjectivity, eugenics, biology, time, education, translation and signifi- cals has been included in the present volume: these papers were mostly written between 1903 and 1912 and in many cases had been edited for publication. At the time of her death, Welby was still planning to publish a series of volumes, including *What is & What Might Be* described in her correspondence with Ogden as her 'last book,' 'the crowning volume,' 'the more important volume of the Signifi- cal series,' promising important developments from a signifi- cal viewpoint for education (Welby to Ogden, 20 September 1911, WCYA Box 11, now Ch. 7, this volume, see also Petrilli 1995a). Other projects in the making have emerged from the archives: in a letter to Schiller dated 15 March 1901, Welby mentions another book she was working on entitled *Signifi- cals: Its Method, Its Applications, Its Products*. The file *Signifi- cals-Ambiguity* (WCYA, Box 30, File 44, for other projects from this same file, see Ch. 4) includes a provisional 'Table of Contents' for a book in two parts, the first of which was subdivided into five chapters, sent to the editor of *The Mathematical Gazette*, William J. Greenstreet, as Welby's supervisor for this particular project. The typewritten page begins with a series of annotations followed by the book plan:

W. Greenstreet's Programme, January 1912 [in handwriting]

Sketch of provisional Preface for the new book. State clearly in what respect it differs from those already published (Encyc. Brit. Article, &c.).

Send to Mr. Greenstreet materials for selection for each successive chapter according to provisional Table of Contents.

Query. How to contrive that only hitherto-unused-material be sent to him?

Immediately after these notes follows the scheme for a book which Welby never published, a Table of Contents covering issues that she had researched extensively over the years as testified by her writings in the archives. This particular manuscript is dated January 1912, exactly the month Welby fell sick, never to recover, dying soon after, in March that same year:

 Contents

 Part I

- I. Significs provisionally defined,
sign, sense, signification, significance, meaning, interpretation, &c*
- II. The Need for Significs
- III. Analogy, Metaphor and Imagery
- IV. The Power, actual and potential, of Expression
- V. The Method of Significs.

 Part II

 Applied Significs

- I. Translation (Vailati, &c)
- II. Philosophy
- III. Science
- IV. Education

*Its relations to new subjects and questions: e.g. to Eugenics.

A book mentioned by Welby in a letter to Ogden of 11 November 1911 would seem to correspond to this plan: 'I am very hard at work starting the new book with the editing advice of Mr. Greenstreet. It will be emphatically a book of reference on the subject. I should like to give you an idea of the mass of virtual appeals from all sides for what I am doing my best to supply until worthier workers arise. But cannot hope to retain full powers for hard work much longer' (WCYA, Box 11). Jacob Israël de Haan (1881–1924), a Dutch Jew, poet and giurist, examined Welby's manuscripts as one of her followers during a visit to Harrow with van Eeden a few months after her death (see Ch. 7, this volume). According to his report in an article (in Dutch) of 1915, 'Nieuwe rechtstaal-wijsbegeerte' (p. 458), the proposed title for this book was *Handbook of Significs* (see Schmitz 1985b: lxxv and n. 114).

Other editorial projects are described in the Welby Collection at the York University Archives. A file entitled 'Personalialia ("Projects of Draft Schemes of Books")' (Box 28, Subject File 29) presents a series of brief typewritten notes, dated between 1896 and 1910, drafts of book plans, and suggested titles of essays which Welby intended to write herself or have others write. The meaning of the term 'Personalialia' is explained in a handwritten note as follows: "'Personalialia," i.e., I. Personal Psychology and Point of View; II. Projects, or Draft-Schemes of Books, etc. Put into Chronological Order, January 1907.'

Miscellaneous Earlier Notes, dated and undated, November 1906

Heads of my subjects and proposed sections of book on

- 1) I and self and the need of new definitions of conscious identity and new distinctions within it.
- 2) The approach to this and all similar problems from the idea of motion and the dynamic, instead of Matter and the static.

- 3) Time as distinctly derived from Space as Room + motion, Change and succession.
- 4) The consistent use from this point of view of the inevitable analogy between 'body' and 'mind'; which at present ignores the primacy of function and the implication of a mental brain.
- 5) The tendency to triadism. What does it indicate? A more primitive method of numeration than that now accepted?

Heads of possible second book

(‘Notes on *Applied Significs* and various others,’ November 1906)

Introduction:

Development and illustrations of ideas suggested in *What is Meaning?* Answers to critical objections. Examples of the application of Significs 1) to theoretical, 2) to practical problems.

Sections on

- 1) I and self and the need of new experimental definitions of personal identity and new distinctions within it already (in English) idiomatically but inconsistently made.
- 2) On the substitution of the dynamic for the static mode of expressing this and all similar theses.
- 3) On Time as an idea strictly derived from Space + Motion (change and succession). Experience as the real meaning of much that is now called temporal.
- 4) On the consistent use of the inevitable analogy between 'body' and 'mind'; involving the disuse of some of its inherited forms and the adoption of others only now become scientifically permissible.
- 5) Inquiry into the main and the secondary sense of terms like Mind, Spirit, etc. (in English usage) as revealing or suggesting the mental attitude and its [illegible] and growth.
- 6) On the tendency to triadism in human thought; its causes, its advantages, its dangers.
- 7) Short miscellaneous Notes, psychological and social. (E.g. the germs of the telepathic idea: the difference between the impulses of the isolated individual and the unit of a human 1) group, 2) crowd, 3) nation and finally race. The mental infection of mental as aggregation: fanatical sects, panic, corporate 'courage.' The dishonesty of the honest man in some 'corporation' or committee or 'board.' Efficiency in community and in isolation. The necessity of learning to subject consciousness to any test or form of experience desired and to exchange 'points of view' at will. Also of learning to read animal experience better than we do – having begun this by studying the Child)

Parables. Aphorisms.

The Unborn Church which when born shall draw all men unto it, drawing out of them by an unfailling attraction all that is most human and best in them; a Community set on a hill and in the full light; not 'believed' in but recognized and trusted as the divinely natural ideal. (Box 28, Subject File 29)

Immediately after, the same file presents the following typewritten draft of what would seem another book plan, on a single page and incomplete (the immediately subsequent page is missing from the file, at least as it was sent to me):

Significs

Very inadequate, December 1906 (date of typing)

[Handwritten annotation on top of the page].

1. Method
2. Applications

Educational
 Psychological
 Philosophical
 Linguistic and practical

3. Products of Method

Suggested advance in outlook or mode of perception; and in use of physical analogies: the ‘binocular’ and the heliotropic: the ‘three grades of consciousness and experience.’ The metaphor of curve as primary and of straight line as secondary; those of motion before those of matter, of function before structure; of biological ascent through the spinal to the cortical, etc. (Also the reversal of the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ mind).

4. Significs as a critique of meaning and therefore of analogy and imagery supplies the principle of philosophical equation: i.e.
5. Translation: transformation, transmutation, transfiguration (the ideally figurative); and careful distinction between these.
6. Possible results of fresh perspective in thought (outcome of the Signific method): of ‘indirect’ inquiry: of ‘refraction’ added to ‘reflection.’ The scientific use of the indirect as method of observation, translated into thought.
7. Fresh applications of Significs (in the light of what has now been brought forward) to the question of the primitive mind. Its dependence upon Sense: its inexorable logic, the urgency of the reflex order of psychological response which is the legacy of the early life-form. The true human query; Is there a break? The apparent paradox, etc. Evidence for the view there suggested.
8. The moment of human arrival at the idea of the Three; the first odd; the indivisible; that is, we can no longer divide as in the case of Two. Different forms ancient and modern, of apprehending this and dealing with it. The enormous and largely neglected or misunderstood influence of this unique. . .

Other files in the Welby Collection present diagrams, photographs, and Welby’s literary writings – mainly unpublished reflections of a philosophical and scientific order in verse, ready for publication, as in the case of texts contained in Box 37, file 10, ‘Poems of Victoria Welby: *Thoughts in Rhythm*.’ As mentioned in the Introduction to this volume, Welby’s poems recall the *wisdom poetry* of Charles Morris (see Morris 1966, 1976; Sebeok 1981), and both recall the poetry of Walt Whitman (1819–1892).

Archives relating to other authors also preserve writings by Welby or on Welby and her significs. These include: the Giovanni Vailati archives, University of Milan, which presents the correspondence between Vailati and Welby; the Tönnies archives at the Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesbibliothek in Kiel, Germany (see Zander 1980): Welby’s letters to Tönnies are lacking, but there are letters which testify to his contribution to the spread of significs in Germany and France through his correspondence with Otto Neurath, Rudolph Carnap, Harald Höffding, André Lalande, Rudolph Eucken, Wilhelm Dilthey and others; the archives at the Frederik van Eeden Museum, Amsterdam University Library (see van Eeden-Welby 1954). (For a general description of archives connected with Welby and her significs, see Schmitz 1985b: xvi–xxii; Petrilli 1998a; and Appendices).

Welby’s work has been remembered in its own right with two important editorial events after a prolonged period of relative silence: the new edition of *What is Meaning*, published in 1983, edited with a Preface by Achim Eschbach for the book series *Found-*

dations of Semiotics, John Benjamins; and *Significs and Language*, 1985, edited and introduced by H. Walter Schmitz. The latter includes Welby's 1911 book by the same title, her essays 'Meaning and Metaphor,' 1893, and 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' 1896, a series of previously unpublished 'essaylets,' and a series of short texts written between 1907 and 1908 from the Welby Collection at the York Archives. These materials focus on two important subject areas in Welby's research: 1) the concept of 'mother-sense' or 'primal sense' with the essaylet 'Primal Sense and Significs' (originally 'Mother-sense and Significs,' see Welby 1985a: cclxiv, n. 1), dated 15 April 1907; a *post scriptum* of 18 August 1907; another text of 30 June 1908, in which Welby explains why she replaced the expression 'mother-sense' with 'primal sense'; an excerpt from a letter dated 2 October 1907 from Schiller to Welby with critical comments on 'Primal Sense and Significs' in its original version; and, lastly, Welby's reply dated 20 October 1907 by her daughter (see Ch. 6, this volume). The second subject area concerns: 2) the influence exerted upon language and expression in general by social context with the text 'The Social Value of Expression,' dated 1908. This important collection of Welby's writings opens with an introductory essay by Schmitz entitled 'Victoria Welby's Significs: The Origin of the Signific Movement' (pp. ix–ccxxxv), a real and proper monograph (circa two hundred pages) which describes materials available in the archives, reconstructs the history of significs, focuses on its theoretical concerns, and also presents aspects of Welby's biography. The volume is complete with a bibliography of writings by Welby and of the secondary literature on Welby and her significs, as well as of writings somehow inspired by her (see also the bibliographies included in Schmitz 1990c and Petrilli 1998a). Schmitz has authored numerous papers on Welby and her significs, or relating to this area of study; furthermore, he has also edited the volumes *Essays on Significs*, 1990, and with Erik (Albertus Frederik) Heijerman, *Significs, Mathematics and Semiotics: The Significs Movement in the Netherlands*, 1991, which collects the Proceedings of an International Conference held in Bonn in 1986.

Essays on Significs is a collective volume published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Welby's birth, which develops an editorial project dedicated to key concepts in significs, originally conceived by George F. Stout and John W. Slaughter, the editors, and approved by Welby. Contributions were scheduled from Höffding with a paper entitled, 'Identity and Analogy,' Giovanni Vailati and Mario Calderoni with 'Pragmatism and Meaning,' Charles S. Peirce with 'Assurance from Reasoning.' Further contributions were scheduled from Ferdinand Tönnies, William W. Carlile, Philip Jourdain, Alfred Sidgwick, John P. Postgate as well as from the editors. Stout planned to write the introduction. Though most essays had been collected at the time, publication was repeatedly postponed until the project was definitively abandoned with Welby's death in 1912 (see Hardwick 1977a: 176–177). The 1990 edition of *Essays on Significs* includes essays, here listed in alphabetical order, by Sylvain Auroux, P. M. Baker, Hartwell Bowsfield, Paul Chipcase, Gérard Deledalle, Simone Delesalle, W. Terrence Gordon, Erik Heijerman, David Hughes, Johann G. Juchem, Rita Nolan, Susan Petrilli, Augusto Ponzio, Timothy J. Reiss, H. Walter Schmitz (for further information on the history of this project, see Schmitz 1985b: lxxv, cxli–cxliv).

Some of Welby's writings are now available in Italian translation by myself, in the volumes *Significato, metafora, interpretazione*, 1985, *Senso, significato, significatività*, 2007, and *Come interpretare, comprendere, comunicare*, 2009. These include her impor-

tant essays of 1893 and 1896, her encyclopedic entry ‘Significs,’ 1911, and a selection of excerpts from the books *Grains of Sense*, 1897, *What is Meaning?* 1903, and *Significs and Language*, 1911. Some of these translations have been anticipated in the journals *Idee. Rivista di Filosofia*, directed by Mario Signore, and *Athanor. Semiotica, Filosofia, Arte, Letteratura*, directed by Augusto Ponzio (see Welby 1990, 1998, 2002, 2005). An interview held by myself with H. Walter Schmitz on ‘Victoria Lady Welby and Significs’ is available in *The Semiotic Web 1987* (see Petrilli 1988b), thanks to Thomas A. Sebeok who had always promoted my work on Victoria Welby and her significs. This interview is also available in Italian translation in the volume *Significs, semiotica, significazione* (see Petrilli 1988a: 79–93). My research and writing in this area has been ongoing for approximately 30 years now and, in addition to my translations into Italian, has resulted in my Italian monograph, *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio*, published in 1998, and now the present volume. I have also published numerous essays, in English or Italian, as chapters in collective volumes, including ‘Women in Semiotics,’ 1999, co-authored with Thomas A. Sebeok, and others in journals such as *Semiotica. Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies* and *TTR. Traduction Terminologie Rédaction* (see Petrilli 1996a,b, 1997a,b, 1999a, 2001d, 2003a,b,c,d, 2004a,d, 2005a,d, 2006a,b,c, 2007a,b,c, 2009a). Other writings by myself include: the dictionary entries ‘Significs,’ and ‘Welby, Victoria Lady Welby,’ commissioned by Paul Cobley for *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, 2001 (and, also, Cobley ed., *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*, 2009); the entry ‘Welby, Victoria Alexandrina, Lady Welby (1837–1912),’ commissioned by the *Oxford New Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; the encyclopedia entry ‘Significs,’ in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, 2005, commissioned by Marcel Danesi; and the entry ‘Victoria Lady Welby,’ in *Enciclopedia filosofica*, 2006, promoted by Augusto Ponzio. Beyond writings dedicated specifically to Welby and her significs, her work is cited throughout much of my writing, as in, for example, the essays collected by initiative of John Deely in a monographic issue of *The American Journal of Semiotics*, entitled *Sign Crossroads in Global Perspective*, 2008.¹⁴

14. Readers can consult the bibliographies appended at the end of this volume for a more complete list of writings not only by Victoria Welby, but also on Welby and significs or somehow related to this area of study.

The texts

Correspondence from the archives

1.7. A selection from her unpublished correspondence in alphabetical order (1887–1911)

This selection of letters from the unpublished correspondence in the Welby Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections, Toronto, Canada (WCYA), includes excerpts from Welby's correspondence with the following authors, presented in alphabetical order: Edwin Arnold, Andrew C. Bradley, Francis H. Bradley, the brothers Henry and William James, Benjamin Jowett, George F. Stout, with the addition of a few exchanges with the latter's wife, Ella K. Stout. Instead, the correspondence with the following personalities is distributed in the chapters indicated: Michel Bréal, André Lalande, Bertrand Russell, Chapter 3; Giovanni Vailati and Mario Calderoni, Chapter 4; Ferdinand S. C. Schiller, Chapter 6; Charles K. Ogden, Chapter 7. This selection is related to the issues I have highlighted and discussed in this volume. The materials presented were either collected by myself during a brief visit to the York University Archives in 1990, or kindly sent to me subsequently by qualified personnel at the Archives, whom I take the opportunity to thank once again for their precious assistance. Much more material worthy of publication for both theoretical and historical reasons is available in the archives. For the complete list of correspondents, see Appendix 3, this volume.

The dates indicating the duration of each collection correspond to the date of the first and last letter in the files, however materials in the archives are not always complete. They consist of the original handwritten letters, drafts of the originals, or typewritten copies. Often typewritten copies are available, while handwritten originals are missing. In some cases, several typewritten copies of the same letter are available, with variations (photocopying had not yet been invented). Typewritten copies of letter texts are not always full transcriptions of the original or of the draft of the original, nor are omissions always signaled. Paragraphs sometimes run into each other. Opening addresses and closing courtesy formulae are often lacking. They have not been included in the present selection even when available. Extracts of longer letters are sometimes included in the files with the complete version. A type of shorthand is recurrently used that consists in transcribing words partially or leaving out vowels (e.g. 'Phil. Dict.' for 'Philosophical Dictionary,' 'wh' for 'which,' 'questn' for 'question,' etc.): this has been avoided in the present edition to render texts more legible.

My own cuts and interventions in the letter texts (whether the handwritten originals or typewritten copies) are placed between square brackets.

*Between Victoria Welby and Edwin Arnold (1887–1889)**

‘Death – and Afterwards’¹⁵

(Notes written at Prof. Tyndall’s request on an article by Edwin Arnold with the above title, in the XIXth Century, 1885).

That which has been ‘born’ must ‘die.’ The two are one: birth and death one event which ‘happens’ to a being, but which is cleft in twain by a little fissure we call life... .

Why is life a problem at all? Why is there no categorical explanation (of our consciousness of Divine life) necessarily accepted by every sound mind of sane intelligence? Is it not because a scientifically exhaustive answer cannot be given in the terms of time and space as we now realise them?

When instead of masters they become servants, when instead of blank prison-walls they become open doors and pathways, shall we not enter a new mental world, though one firmly linked in continuity with the present? We need to translate the facts of physical nature into these of moral, mental and spiritual nature.

We need to repudiate with abhorrence the whole machinery of magic and sorcery and *unnatural* prodigy which we have confounded with that which is most natural, most healthy or holy – most sound and whole; that which is to our mind and conscience what the Brain is to our physical structure – its director and its interpreter.

Most truly Mr Arnold says that the highest must belong to the lowest in an unbroken chain. And we are often rebuked by finding the highest type of beauty and fitness in the most despised or ‘lowest’ of microscopic organisms or even particles.

On the other hand, the visible is not necessarily ‘gross’ except in the sense of coarse-grained, *large* in scale; our whole region of sense-perception may represent but one fibre of the tissue of consciousness. Let us try to realise that the current phraseologies only mislead when supposed to embrace *actual fact becoming accessible first to conception, then to consciousness and experience*.

The general tendency of observed order seems to suggest that we have a ‘planetary’ consciousness, or one which naturally starts from this earth as a mental centre; that since the Copernican era began we have been gradually developing a ‘solar’ or ‘systematic’ consciousness, and are already beginning to refer many verified facts to a mental sun as a centre; and that a complete generalization, or satisfying answer to the problems which as yet baffle us, need a ‘cosmical’ consciousness, of which indeed the fore-gleams may be discerned in the very questions we ask, in the very doubts suggested to us, in the very paradoxes of which Nature is full.

* [The correspondence between Victoria Welby and Edwin Arnold (1832–1904) is stored in Box 1, WCYA. This consistent corpus of mostly handwritten letters covers the years between 9 September 1887 and March 1889, of which just a few exchanges are reported here. Some letters are typewritten and bear editorial comments, though only one, dated 30 September 1887, from Arnold to Welby, was included by Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust, in her 1929 volume of Welby’s correspondence, *Echoes of Larger Life*. The letters here presented revolve around Welby’s comments on Arnold’s article ‘Death and Afterwards,’ written at the request of John Tyndall, and which Arnold wished to include in the reprint of his article. Arnold wrote poems which reflected his experience in India, the most renowned being, ‘The Light of Asia, or The Great Renunciation’ (1879)].

15. [Comments written by Welby on Edwin Arnold’s text ‘Death – and Afterwards,’ 1885, as requested by Prof. John Tyndall, and enclosed in the file containing the correspondence between Welby and Arnold. See also notes 16 and 17 below. Arnold effectively published Welby’s notes in the 1887 reprint of his text].

Or we may consider the same order as the cellular, the functional, and the organic consciousness. A nucleated cell might be: (1) conscious of its own nucleus and of the cell-world only; (2) conscious of the ‘heart’ or ‘lung’ to which it belongs; (3) conscious of the complete Living Organism which is the explanation of the two first, and their actual *raison d’être*. Such a consciousness in the three grades would be strictly related and strictly natural throughout. But of course the second and third would successively appear, and indeed in a true sense would *be* ‘super’ natural (that is, extra-normal) to the first, as long as this first consciousness (the planetary or cellular) was supposed to include and to supply terms for the whole accessible sphere of fact. Many other similar illustrations will occur to us. ‘Cellular’ consciousness of the individual ‘I’ may be compared to the first ‘dimension’ in space – one line only; or to the lowest level in the triad of the physical (or mechanical), the chemical, and the vital order, as given by Clifford, Littré, and all the host of scientists. Or it might be illustrated by the ‘gaseous’ as compared to the liquid and then the solid condition of matter (whatever *that* may be) – or perhaps to the three responses to light and heat – first surface reflection, then absorption, then radiation. But of course all this takes us into the dangerous region of analogy; – dangerous surely for the very reason that the general consciousness is so embryonic; needing therefore rigorous test.

Let us at least recognise the utter futility of discussion or controversy which treats the average or commonly-accepted notions of root-questions at issue as really adequate or representative. No wonder that we can’t make head or tail of this or that, when in the nature of things there are none to make! But it does not follow that because the vertebrate order cannot be described in terms of the protozoic, that we should deliberately relapse into ‘agnostic’ bits of jelly, and denounce bone, muscle or nerve as ‘metaphysic’ or ‘mysticism’ – two of the worst of names to hang a dog by.

Let us faithfully and patiently cultivate the dawning ‘Copernican’ consciousness. Assuredly we shall thus find all our ideals transformed by being ‘lifted up’ into the real. And we may be sure that if our notions are rectified and enlarged and deepened, language will soon begin to follow, and their practically fruitful application to problems of conduct, social and individual, will become possible in a sense hitherto despaired of by most of us.

*Victoria Welby to Edwin Arnold*¹⁶

9 September 1887

Professor Tyndall has just given me your letter¹⁷ with its very kind expressions about a rough note of mine upon your brilliant Article, made at his desire and as I thought for his own eye alone. . . You

16. [This letter with variants is included in *Echoes of Larger Life*. The bionote on Arnold reads as follows: ‘Poet and journalist, author of *The Light of Asia*, etc. The book in question, *Death and Afterwards*, had a considerable success, and he was soon writing: “. . . You will be pleased to hear that the publishers have sold 2000 copies, so that your noble ideas, which I consider the golden border to my ‘coat of frieze,’ have now gone far and wide” (Cust 1929: 185)].

17. [Here Welby is referring to a letter from Arnold to John Tyndall, dated 5 September 1887: ‘But I beg permission to retain the notes you have conveyed to me, which strike me as immensely suggestive, and reveal a mind of very high and wide insight, with great power of lucid expression. I should like to be allowed to print those notes when I re-publish the Article; but I will not, of course, do this without sanction; and should not allude to their origin in any but the most indirect way. As however the rest which you are taking is sacred to all who feel the gratitude and respect for you which I feel, I must avoid entangling you in any further correspondence. I will therefore beg leave after a fortnight’s interval to take silence for a consent – on the part of the writer of the notes – to any employment of them anonymously as the ground for a few supplementary and illustrative paragraphs’].

are more than welcome to make any use of my little suggestions you like, as long as the writer remains unknown.

... I feel more than ever how entirely wide off the mark, for want of some such light as this, most of our controversies as to 'personality' (and the persistence of that force which we know as 'identity') really are. Such expressions as 'immortality' as we understand and use them do not merely fail to cover the ground. They are but half-lights – like the half of a man cloven in two – unless completed by corresponding terms like 'in-natality.' We think of eternal as something which begins and does not end: but the fallacy of this becomes evident if we try to think conversely of something which ends though it does not begin. . .

Edwin Arnold to Victoria Welby

30 Sept 1887

I have been long risking the appearance of an ingratitude which was impossible, by deferring my acknowledgment of your most kind note and welcome enclosure, until I could send you the little Reprint in its public form. Before many days have elapsed I shall have the pleasure of doing this; and you will find your notes reproduced in the pages of which they are the chief embellishment, precisely as you sent them to me.¹⁸ I am greatly struck by more than one passage which they contain; and doubt if ever before, in a few strong and simple words, the underlying 'supernaturalism' of our daily life has been better emphasised. I allude especially to your remarks upon the ultimate basis of physical things in the play and interplay of forces and measured motions.

Believe me that I esteem it an honour to have encountered an intellect so powerful and delicate at the same time; and to have obtained your aid in my little excursus. [. . .]

(In answer to a remonstrance from V.W. as to the strong expressions he had used, he writes 'You must permit me to be respectful and grateful. . . to my teachers. . . I feel certain that the light of your large thoughts will spread far and do real good.')

18. [See Welby 1887a, but the publication by Arnold first appeared in 1885. In the 1887 reprint, Welby's comments, as announced, are included anonymously, and listed in her bibliography as follows: 'Remarks on "Death – and Afterwards." Taken from Letters to Professor John Tyndall and Edwin Arnold.' In Edwin Arnold, *Death – and Afterwards*. Reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review* of August 1885. With a supplement, pp. 41–49, 62. London: Trübner & Co.

The following excerpt dated no more precisely than November 1887, without indication of the addressee, is included in the correspondence between Welby and Arnold: 'The history of my connection with this little book is as follows: – During this summer (1887) while in Switzerland, Professor Tyndall brought me Mr Arnold's original article (which I had not seen since it first appeared) and asked me to give him my thoughts upon it, as he was going to write himself to Mr Arnold and wished to know before doing so, in what light it struck me. I answered that I feared I could not do this; but I would try to jot down some points which had long been in my mind on the same subject. I was too unwell for some time to do this; but at last I noted down in a rough form the first Paper which has been now printed, and sent it to the Professor, as I supposed for his own eye only. Hearing no more, I supposed it was forgotten and forgot it myself, when one day the Professor with many kind expressions brought me a letter to him from Mr Arnold expressing a strong wish to print the Note with his own Reprint; the Professor having sent it to him anonymously without my knowledge. I therefore sent Mr Arnold a revised copy of it, and he has reproduced it as well as another of mine at the end of his own Article'.

Victoria Welby to Edwin Arnold

1 October 1887

The sympathetic warmth of your words only deepens my reverently thankful sense that the truths of which such things are spoken are the heritage of us all, shortly to be entered upon and practically utilised, and in no sense ultimately referable to the most defective ‘individual’ source through which in this case they are suggested.

My wonder, therefore, that words like yours should so often be used of thoughts which come through me gives way to the joy of realising that such spontaneous recognition in many different directions witnesses to the universality of these clues, and encourages the hope of an approaching expansion and intension (if I may use that word) of our consciousness, and thus our knowledge and our faculty, which shall give the answer to some at least of the heart-wringing and mind-baffling questions which are pressing in upon us with clamorous persistence, unstilled by the vain protest that they are unanswerable, and unsatisfied by the half-answers which nowhere rim them round. I shall gladly look forward to the Reprint you have kindly promised me. . .

Edwin Arnold to Victoria Welby

3 January and 7 February 1888¹⁹

. . . You will be pleased to hear that the publishers have sold all the 2,000 copies, so that your noble ideas, which I consider the golden border to my ‘coat of frieze’ have now gone far and wide.

. . . ‘Metaphysical’ views ought not to be coloured by personal circumstances; and yet how constantly they are! How I should like to inscribe on the tombstone of the saddest woman that ever died those lines from ‘The Gentle Shepherdess’: –

Doe not feare to sette thy feet
Naked in the River, Sweete!
Doe not think that newt or tode
Will pinch thy fleshe where thou hast trode.
Whenne the waters bubble high
Doe not pant, nor sobbe, nor crie;
Doe not shrink to travell through
Not one wave shall injure you!

Victoria Welby to Edwin Arnold

6 March 1888

. . . I wanted to be allowed one little protest against one line of the verses you sent me the other day:–

‘Better drink the honeyed cup of Hope, though it at last deceive.’

Now that seems to me the collapse of all that makes life worth living. A Hope that deceives ought to be known by a different name from the Hope that is the issue and outcome of Truth. But probably the writer does not realise something better than Hope; any more than the inveterately geocentric thinker can realise something worthier than a ‘basis’ for a world; something more potent to support a solid sphere, than any fixed foundation it could have.

We take in the *Spectator*, and I was going to cut out the three articles to read with the book itself, which I bought at once and am just beginning. I wonder whether you have sent Dr. Martineau your ‘Death and Afterwards’? I was waiting to do so till I had read the book he told me he was

19. [See note 15, above].

writing. He is a wonderful old man; although great as his thought is, it bears the marks it seems to me, of belonging to the generation which is just passing away.

I fancy we are just nearing the crest of a thought-wave which may land us on a very unexpected shore.

I have just lately been looking carefully into the principles of binocular vision, and find therein what seem such curious reflections of the present stage (as one between two others) of spiritual faculty, that I am trying to make a rough and I fear crude 'Note' about it, which if it stands competent (specialist) criticism I will venture to send. But that will not be at present.

Meanwhile in another direction, I am greatly interested in the turn things are taking with reference to Mission-work in India. I have long had a strong, as it were instinctive feeling, that one of the deepest obstacles to the progress of Christian Thought in India was the impression in Eastern Minds that we do not understand our own religion, and therefore can teach Orientals only what we can assimilate in what is to them our alien Western mind.

If we could show a little of that teachableness we inculcate on others, and try if there are not aspects of the CHRIST-character and elements in the Divine Nature and features in the spiritual order which only the best oriental minds can teach us. [...]

Edwin Arnold to Victoria Welby

3 May 1888

I never turn a page of your MSS without sidelights of all imaginable attractiveness and brilliancy starting up. Your thoughts and theories are like the beams of a revolving electric lamp: they flash such rays into the dark! A hundred times I long to stay the hand of the engineer, and to focus a passing point or region. Notably so, when you speak of 'seeing problems in the solid.' Notably again, when you touch on 'the Fountains of the Must.' Your great theory illustrates itself in my feelings as I follow your noble and profound speculations. I am a 'skin-cell,' full of sensory potentialities: always touching, feeling, trying, seeing, imagining. I long for your 'brain-cell' gift of harmonizing, binocularizing! If only poets and prophetesses could work with one pen.

I will not attempt to discuss your splendid passages of meditation and suggestion. To do so with such scant leisure as I possess just now, would be intellectual irreverence. . .

Victoria Welby to Edwin Arnold

3 July 1888

I do hope you or someone as capable, will give some answer to the Article on Buddhism by the Bishop of Colombo in this month's *XIXth*.

It may be my fault, but it seems to be another instance of the failure to enter into the oriental 'mental region' which is as characteristic of the western mind in general, as the eastern's failure to understand why we should always be in what to them is a fever fuss of restlessness, with a mania for literalising.

Sir William's Paper on 'Our Missionaries' is very interesting; but its tone again surely betrays a very 'outside' view of the religious condition in India. One passage I have ventured to comment upon as it is rather a typical expression of the alternatives to which one is supposed to be confined. I should much like to be allowed to send it to Sir William and ask him if he had found that 'Christianity' was being taught in India from that – circumference (if the phrase is permissible) of view.

I must take this opportunity of telling you that I saw Dr. Mercier (the distinguished psychologist and alienist and pupil of Dr. Hughlings Jackson) in London; and he told me that the trend of recent

discovery and inference on the higher nervous centres bore out my general position to a greater extent than I had dared to hope; so that I might even have been bolder.

That verdict, added to those of biologists and philosophical thinkers of various schools, has greatly encouraged me. But of course I should remodel the Paper entirely by the help of the various criticisms and suggestions so kindly sent me. I don't know whether you know that after all, my interview with Sir J. Lubbock never came off, being prevented by a series of accidents! But he wrote me a kind little note of general approval. And now I am studying his books. [...]

*Between Victoria Welby and Andrew C. Bradley (1899–1900)**

Victoria Welby to Andrew C. Bradley

17 May 1899

Mr. E. Nettleship told me the other day he thought you might like to hear from me on the subject of his brother of Balliol. Unfortunately I knew nothing at all of the real direction of his thoughts until his Memoirs were published, when to my amazement I found in the first volume among his 'Thoughts' & letters some of the very same ideas which had been mine for many years, which I had found great difficulty in making anyone understand. These in Mr. Nettleship's mind had the warrant of a scholar's knowledge which, alas, I lack. My object in writing now is to ask you whether there is any chance of your being in the neighbourhood of Oban during the summer? If so, it might be possible to arrange a meeting, as we shall be in Glen Creran. I should much value the opportunity. To save trouble, I venture to enclose an addressed envelope.

Andrew C. Bradley to Victoria Welby

19 May 1899

I am much interested by your note and am much obliged to you for it. I am afraid there is little chance of my having the pleasure of meeting you this summer, as in all probability I shall go abroad as soon as I am able to and shall afterwards be in the South of England. But I hope I may some day have the pleasure though my own pursuits have withdrawn me for a long time now so much from the thought on which my friends used to talk to me that I fear you would not find me a very intelligent listener.

Victoria Welby to Andrew C. Bradley

16 April 1900

You may perhaps remember a short correspondence which we had last May respecting passages in the 'Remains' of R. L. Nettleship closely concerning ideas & writings of my own.

I saw Mr. Herbert Paul the other day & he suggested my again writing to you with a view to arranging if possible a meeting. I am anxious to hear of some one of experience & literary power who could so to speak edit some of my Papers for me. I could then utilize these as suggestions for some young fresh mind. (This has already been done with practical results). Of course it is the *subject* (the development & organization of Expression) and not my share in the work upon it which is valuable & fruitful: I can only hope to show how much (for the next generation) may

* [The correspondence between Welby and Andrew C. Bradley is incomplete. It is available in Box 2, WCYA, with files containing the correspondence with Francis H. Bradley. Just a few exchanges have been included in the present selection].

be expected by inquiries into the very principles of Significance and by new conceptions of the place and work of Definition.

I shall probably be in Oxford for a few days in May: if so, is there any one there interested in Mr. Nettleship's line of thought to whom you could and would kindly refer me? But beyond that may I ask if I could have the pleasure of receiving you here in the course of the summer? I am to be at Invercreran again in June & July but shall be back here before the first of August [...]

27 April 1900

[...] I will only venture to repeat what I am often obliged to say, that while my own main interests can only in the broadest sense be called philosophical, my subject, that of expression (in whatever form) and its significance, is precisely that which cannot without mischievous results be ignored or neglected by literary workers in any field, or indeed by workers in any field of human activity.

How different even would have been the course of the war if our officers had been trained to detect and appraise the subtle or fleeting signs on the significance of which their safety and success depended! I will not pursue this line of thought but only mention that after R. L. Nettleship, Stevenson would have been pre-eminently the man to whom I should have gone for understanding sympathy. This however refers only of course to the subject of what I should like called sens-ifics. Mr. Nettleship did practically apply its principles to philosophy; but it is significant that he only did this in private notes or letters, since the subject and its value were alike unrecognised. And yet on that subject and our mastery of it, all else absolutely depends! No wonder that explorers are amazed at the natural 'Sherlock Holmes' type which they find in the wilderness: possessing an acuteness and delicacy of perception and inference of which we are sadly in need in the intellectual world. Even the animals possess powers of reading the phenomena of change which if recovered by man in translated form (as in other cases) would 'solve' much now 'insoluble.' [...]

*Between Victoria Welby and Francis H. Bradley (1887–1903)**

Victoria Welby to Francis H. Bradley

17 January 1887

Judging by the tenour of your *Principles of Logic* I feel that I am only carrying out your own wish when I venture to trouble you with the enclosed papers: 1) a rough informal 'Summary' of the chapter called 'The Final Essence of Reasoning'; 2) a note upon the same; and 3) that which the note refers to – an attempted outline of what seems to be a profound and significant law both of mental growth and structure: one which, if as widely applicable as I suppose and rightly worked out, ought to interpret and help to co-ordinate many things now unintelligible or apparently disconnected, bringing us, we may hope, within sight of the end (among reasonable and conscientious men) of many an interminable and hitherto inconclusive controversy.

I ought to mention that I have frequently been urged to publish a thought which has already been recognised as fruitfully suggestive and well worth serious attention by thinkers of all shades of 'view': but my sense of a disqualifying lack of training and culture makes me very unwilling to risk in any degree discrediting a really pregnant and helpful suggestion by a crude and inadequate presentation.

I must not mislead you into supposing that I have been able to follow out the trains of reasoning in your book. I could only by means of 'woman-wit' seem to see certain of your more striking points and discern – or think I discerned – your general drift. And now if (in view of the important

* [All letters have been included except for a few brief notes dated 23 May 1888 (F. H. Bradley to Welby), 8 June 1893 (F. H. Bradley to Welby), 12 June 1893 (Welby to F. H. Bradley), and 28 May 1903 (F. H. Bradley to Welby)].

issues involved) you would be good enough to tell me frankly whether you see any serious flaw in my application of your principle, and whether you can suggest or make any needful correction, I should be sincerely grateful.

I have been struck by various examples of the working of the ‘threefold law’ which I have seemed to find indicated or implied in such writers as Jevons, Huxley, Clifford, Herbert Spencer, and even Schopenhauer (little as I know of their works): and I feel that if we can really trace its action in the tissue of the logical process itself, we shall have one more reason – and an emphatic one – for thinking that in some form it holds good throughout the realm of order known to us or conceivable by us.

The Paper I venture to enclose might perhaps form the nucleus of an Essay for publication (after private subjection to all available criticism); but I need not say that it necessarily gives but an imperfect view of the subject at best, since for obvious reasons I have endeavoured carefully to avoid unnecessary assumptions, and thus, e.g. have not dwelt at all on the religious aspects of the question, fundamental as, to me, these are [see section 3.12, this volume].

I ought perhaps to explain that the first part (as you may, indeed, observe) corresponds to some extent with the definition given by Comte of a supposed ‘threefold law’ which I paraphrased for private use from a translated quotation some time ago, as it seemed to me that it only needed the light thrown upon it by the larger thought, in order to run true to nature in every sense and win a common acknowledgment; and that thus interpreted it might help to show the power of this law to act as a link between apparently incompatible theories.

I must not trespass further on your time and attention, and will only repeat that the conviction of your own desire to be of service in this direction is what gives me courage to trouble you thus, although a stranger with no claim on your notice [...]

Francis H. Bradley to Victoria Welby

*8 February 1887*²⁰

[...] With this I am sending you back the papers you so kindly lent me. I am sorry that for various reasons I have been unable to give my attention to them before.

I have read them with much interest, both the original paper and the remarks on part of my book [*Principles of Logic*]. As to the latter I think you have fully entered into my meaning as to the unit of the two processes. I also share your view as to the one-sidedness of mere thinking. Just as at the beginning of your life there is no separation between feeling, thinking, and acting, so at the end, if we could reach the end, doubtless these would be re-united in a fuller way of life. Had I been writing with a different object, I should have laid still greater stress on the fact that even in a process like analysis, the central unity is only latent, and I should have gone on to argue that the demands of thought itself can only be satisfied by going beyond itself. But I must hope for another opportunity.

I quite agree with you that the stage of mere truth-seeking is transcended more or less in all our lives. But as to the degree and the possibility of doing this completely and the ways of doing this, I must admit that my opinions are in an unsettled condition.

And that is why I find it difficult or rather impossible to criticise your paper. If I dissented in principle I could easily say so or if I had definite views I could compare your sketch with them. As it is I am very much in sympathy with your general point of view and too uncertain as to details to feel myself able to judge. I certainly think your conclusions true in the main and also ‘very necessary for the time’ and I cannot doubt that by developing them and publishing them you would be doing good service.

20. [Also in Cust 1929: 167–168].

The philosopher with whom, as far as I know, you have conclusions most in common is Hegel. I say this naturally because if I were not so largely indebted to him, I should probably not agree with your views to anything like the extent to which I do. Hegel had no doubt too great a bias in favour of thought and tried too much to make a logical law, or what he considered such, the main principle of the universe. But that is but one feature of Hegel and unfortunately the one most dwelt on. To see the world and man as a whole that makes 'de' differences as mere means to its fuller unity; to show that all abstractions and onesidednesses live only in and through this concrete living whole, this was his inspiring principle. I think if you were prepared to get through his rather repulsive exterior (as I infer you have not yet) you would be gratified to see how much you could endorse (indeed what in my book has pleased you is really Hegel's), though I am far from saying that what you would find would satisfy you or meet the wants which our paper is directed to satisfy.

I have thought it right to say this about Hegel because it is proper that your attention should be called to it. But I do not mean to say for one moment either that what you say has been said before as you say it, or that your views are not thoroughly original in the best sense, that is as coming from your own reflections on your own personal experience. I am convinced that they are so and that with the freshness and force with which you would set them out, their publication would be likely to be of service to any who read them. As to how many would I can't judge at all but enough certainly I should say to make it worth your while to write. But on this point, that is the number of readers, I feel that the opinion of others will be worth more than mine.

Thanking you once more for the pleasure which reading your paper has given me, and trusting that you will appreciate the reason which makes me shrink from detailed criticism on such a wide principle where my own views are in confusion [...]

Victoria Welby to Francis H. Bradley

11 February 1887

I must thank you most sincerely for the trouble you have taken.

Your recognition of the general validity of the principle in conjunction with that of others who are without your bias in favour of Hegel's theory, is a great encouragement to me.

My real difficulty is how to set forth the principle I desire to see admitted and utilised, in such wise as to show plainly that whatever points of contact it may have with definite or specific philosophical theories or systems, it embraces and includes the larger truth within them all. My attention was called (some time after the reality and range of this law had dawned upon my mind) to the enclosed summary of Hegel's position as to 'truth.' That and Prof. Caird's little book is all about him which I have seen.

I should not like to attempt even an elementary study of his writings without also studying Spinoza, Kant, Descartes, etc. for fear of creating some partiality of view. I think I am better on my own ground of frankly untrained 'intuition.' I see that Caird at the end of his essay defines Hegel as 'at best only the last writer who has made a vitally important addition to the proof that those ideas which are at the root of poetry and religion are also principles of science.' But he points out that here again the truth 'has to die that it may live,' and in the process must needs be so far transformed as to be unrecognisable except by one who has touched the essential product which is to remain after complete dissolution of form and structure. Hegel's formula being at most one of many possible applications of the more general law, one could scarcely I suppose even broadly speaking illustrate or interpret it in analogy with natural fact or order such as the three dimensions of space or H. Spencer's 'matter, motion, force,' or the three states of matter, or more in detail the three functions of a root, or the three sources and actions of heat: or compare it with three probable layers of consciousness, corresponding to bark, wood, and pith, to rind, pulp, core, to shell, albumen, yolk, and possibly distinguishable as planetary, (solar-) systematic,

and cosmical. And I should like to know whether his idea of the ‘opposite’ or the ‘contradictory’ corresponds to contrasted ends or directions, or to lines at right angles to each other. I am told that we have already seen the wedding of mathematics and logic registered by Boole and Jevons: may we not in the ‘third volume’ of the tale of life (is even this a homely echo of the triad-loving instinct?) find other unions possible without losing distinctness of sphere and character?

I am very glad to find that your thought is yet plastic; for it seems the necessary condition of our day, if the plague of ‘isms’ & mutual labelling and protest is to abate.

I must not presume on your kind attention, but venture to enclose one or two notes and quotations and another way of suggesting the law which I am told should be embodied in the paper when expanded.

Though any further criticism would be gratefully welcomed, I hope you will on *no* account think an answer necessary. [...] (Enclosed: Clifford, Hegel on Truth, Huxley, Ganot on Heat, Littré)

Francis H. Bradley to Victoria Welby

23 February 1887

[...] I ought to have replied to your letter sooner. I certainly should not venture to recommend the study of Hegel to anyone who was not prepared to be lost in it for some time. I doubt if it is of much use reading about him. It’s only by seeing him actually at work that one appreciates his greatness and his defects. However though the difficulty of reading him is usually much exaggerated it is impossible to deny that he is very difficult and often unnecessarily so.

My difficulty with respect to any criticism on the law of triplicity in any form is that attempting to say anything about it I run up against questions which at present I can not answer, nor clearly define to myself in all respects. And further my difficulties are probably in great part only *my* difficulties and have nothing, if I could see it, to do with the question. Hence I must advance very indirectly and I feel it impossible to criticize the law in general at present.

However I trust that you will not feel that I really have any doubt about there being a great deal of truth and of important and even necessary truth in it, and I feel confident that by proceeding as you propose you are likely to do good service. [...]

Francis H. Bradley to Victoria Welby

22 May 1887

[...] I am returning you your paper with this. I have read it, and also your papers on the Secret of Life and the Evolution of Heliology with much pleasure. I must ask you to excuse my sending you any detailed criticism on them. There are a number of metaphysical difficulties in my way which are not in yours and which, so far as I can judge, need not be in yours. I must struggle on by an indirect route, and I fear can do nothing at present which would be of any use to you.

However I feel no doubt at all that it is well worth while for you to try to get your views into shape for publication. I am sure that they would help many persons towards a larger way of looking at things, even though not many copies were sold and the book did not seem to succeed. So that I trust you may see your way to go forward with so good a work. [...]

Victoria Welby to Francis H. Bradley

8 November 1894

I am afraid you will hardly remember me, as it is some years since I had the pleasure of seeing or hearing from you. But Professor S. Alexander has repeatedly urged my sending to you a paper

called 'Logic & Significance' wherein I have tried to collect the evidence in modern English logic both of the absence & the need of more explicit treatment of the subject of 'Meaning'; with an investigation of the ideas which the various terms supposed to be its synonyms convey or express. For the last year however my work has had to be laid aside & I have been obliged to forego all fresh correspondence. And the last two months have been wholly occupied with the drawing up of another summary of evidence – in psychology & philology – of the lack of attention given to Interpretation & its processes.

I have read your *Appearance & Reality* with the greatest interest & admiration of its force & originality; but cannot of course claim to have followed all its subtle & complex chains of argument. But I hope to read it again, as it is of special importance to me from the point of view I am trying to suggest. Meanwhile I now venture to forward the paper, in which you will find some characteristic notes by Sir F. Pollock. Please forgive anything of mine which looks like criticism; my object is to obtain as much correction as I can before even attempting to embark on publication in 'Mind' or elsewhere.

The subject on which I originally wrote to you has had to be put on one side until these preliminary questions had been dealt with. I cannot help thinking that when they are, some 'solutions' may prove more accessible than they now are & some barriers might vanish into 'thin air,' while 'impassable gulfs' turned out to be mere ruts or groves of our own making, however useful from some points of view these might be [...]

I ought perhaps to add that Professor H. Sidgwick has kindly submitted the paper to the Cambridge Logicians for me & to Mr. Bosanquet. I enclose an additional short paper also, on the so-called synonyms of Meaning.

Victoria Welby to Francis H. Bradley

[Illegible] 1894²¹

Forgive me for writing once more, but I must in thanking you for words which greatly encourage me, explain that I never dreamt of looking on these typed papers as anything but selected material and evidence, with comments only intended for criticism by the few thinkers and teachers to whom I might have the privilege of submitting them. The paper I sent you, 'Logic of Significance,' loses half its 'significance' without its Psychological (and Philological) companion, now being finished.²² And I am sure that it will be necessary to do the same thing, however tentatively and briefly, under the heads of philosophy and science. For while the typical philosopher and metaphysician has hitherto invariably claimed questions like 'What is Meaning' as his own, the typical man of science has hitherto assumed that in *his* world at all events there was no confusion, because no 'metaphysical' puzzle or lack of consensus, and therefore no need of such a question; and that science was the true refuge and the true paradise of all who desired that uniform congruity, consistency, and precision which in his eyes is the sure sign of clear and coherent thinking and of touch with actual fact. But the philosopher now sees that the question of meaning and its interpretation must pass through the fire of psychological if not physiological analysis before he can sift it to the bottom in *all* its aspects: and the man of science is beginning to realize forcibly the extent to which his own work is hampered and its recognition retarded by the present chaos even of scientific terminology.

21. [Of the two typewritten copies of this letter (the original is lacking), one is dated May 1887 and the other 1894].

22. [Reference is to the texts assembled by Welby in her essay 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' published in two parts in the journal *Mind*, in 1896].

Also it will be absolutely necessary to indicate something of the degree to which this state of things tells upon all literature (and especially journalism) and through that upon all education and all conduct.

Finally I hope to see the subject of ambiguity taken up on a much broader than the merely linguistic basis. We outsiders need to learn the ‘ambiguity’ of organic impulse and activity and of muscular movement: to see this illustrated e.g. by the blunders of infancy, and utilised e.g. by the conjuror, but also conquered by the athlete and acrobat, and by all which we call in handicraft and art ‘exquisite skill.’

But not only that. We need to learn that ambiguity is found everywhere when the narrowest technical limits are overpassed, and is indeed the first stimulant of mental ascent. The very amoeba either ‘learns’ the ambiguity of sensation and acts upon its lesson, or suffers for the refusal and is eliminated. So throughout the animal ascent in scale. Only, in its lowest form survival and development prove that it *is* successfully met and triumphantly overcome. The animal if not the plant, becomes so to speak an expert in the art of interpretation, which issues, or results in adaptation (Biologists all now put it thus). Experience is no less ambiguous on the higher than it was on the lower plane; but as the organic world learns more and more perfectly to deal with that ambiguity, so in the highest of all its forms, I hope we may yet learn to meet and overcome it. This however will certainly *not* be attained by reversion to lower because more mechanical and therefore less intellectual methods; certainly not by reducing language to the level of an arithmetical notation. For once more it is not merely or solely in word or phrase that we must face the fact of ambiguity. It is ingrained in the very spring of our thought. What you and other thinkers plead – that you use ambiguous words hoping that context will define them and believing we shall always have to do it – is surely true of most of the ideas which linguistic symbols are intended to convey. Ideas have always more or less inherent ambiguity, and the more complex of the more living and powerful they are, the more of this we shall find. Context of course is one means of meeting it. But I hope that more than this may be looked for – and worked for.

If I find that I can do it as it ought to be done, I may still write for publication: but I had far rather appeal only to the inner circle of teacher and thinkers and leave further treatment to more competent hands. Think for instance of the terrible disqualification which total ignorance of Latin and Greek is! I don’t want my ignorance to discredit and perhaps bring ridicule on so vital an inquiry as this and deter others from taking it up.

Meanwhile I feel sure of your sympathy in this preparatory work and must thank you again for your words.

Francis H. Bradley to Victoria Welby

11 November 1894

[...] Many thanks for your letter & for the papers (3) which I return by this post. [...] I have perhaps not given enough attention to be quite clear what you are aiming at. The question you raise as to the meaning of ‘Meaning’ is surely the whole question as to what ideas & truth are in their relation to the mind and to things. You can hardly expect logicians to agree as to that, & the difficulty comes, I should say, to but a very slight extent from words.

On the other hand I think you are quite right in believing that the question about ‘Meaning’ would have important results if answered. Only I think you would find that it involved all that I mentioned above.

I doubt the use of setting out at length the divergencies of writers. What would be of interest would be to find out how many differences there are on the whole, what they are & how connected. From that you could go on. I do not see much or any advantage in a large number of extracts. And *are* the divergent senses so very many after all? Why not have enumerated them?

I think also that you seem to demand a verbal accuracy which is not practicable in actual writing. However opinions on this point are likely to differ. I am myself perhaps too sceptical on this point. But it's the idea & not the mere words that are muddled & its with the ideas one must I think begin.

I fear this is a discouraging letter. I do not mean it to be so & if I had been able to give more time to your papers I think I should have appreciated them better [...]

Victoria Welby to Francis H. Bradley

15 November 1894

I am loath to trouble you again even with thanks, feeling much sympathy with the over-worked. But you will understand my desire that you should not remain under a misapprehension of my aim & hopes mainly no doubt due to my clumsiness & crudeness, but also partly I think owing to the very hiatus to which I hope to draw attention of all who teach. So may I just say first that I entirely feel with you that words used confusingly generally mean muddled ideas, though in many cases such an explanation is grotesquely inappropriate. Then I certainly do not demand any degree of verbal accuracy which is not easily practicable *when its importance is realised*. Then, though it is just because I see the profound ultimate issues of the question of the meaning of Meaning, that I long at any cost to raise it in, as it were, a fresh context I also see that it must be first raised on the simplest & most elementary grounds available. Among these of course come the elements of Logic as of Grammar.

I will add no more but venture to enclose a copy of a letter which I think tells its own tale. It is only one example out of many of the extent to which this inquiry is admitted to be needed & to be likely to have valuable results [...]. If sometime when less pressed, you could let me have one line to say that I had now removed or met some part of your objections I should take it as a real kindness & help.

Francis H. Bradley to Victoria Welby

16 November 1894

[...] You could not have a better authority than Prof. Adamson but I quite agree with what he says. I cannot now recall precisely what I wrote but that was about what I meant.

The paper is 'the groundwork &c' but taken as it is it does not seem to me to be more. Why not make it more? Why not extract these various senses of meaning supporting yourself by as many extracts as you think necessary? That's what I meant to say and that, I take it, is what Prof. Adamson means.

But as to reforming terminology, I am very sceptical. I myself constantly use words which I know are ambiguous hoping that the context will define them and I believe we all must do this and will always have to do it. Still I dare say I am wrong.

As to the fundamental clearance of the enquiry – how could I ('especially' I feel inclined to add), doubt that? Begin on this line and there is logically no stopping. I am fully aware of it.

What I mean to say is this. You can, without going very far, make an interesting paper by putting together the ambiguities in common use. You can also go as far as you please, that I do not think you will get on at all by collecting more extracts – at least I doubt it. But I am a very bad judge for others.

Is an idea what it means and, if not, what is the difference? Is what it means and what it 'stands for' the same or do these differ from one another and from the existence of the idea itself – and how? These in my opinion are not questions of language and terminology at all.

I am sorry I can spare no more time. I have no doubt you can make an interesting and valuable paper out of your material. [...]

Victoria Welby to Francis H. Bradley

26 May 1903

[...] I have gone far since our short intercourse of 16 years ago. And my course has been an inquiry – as penetrative as my poor equipment could make it – into the nature of that ‘meaning’ which we assume so lightly and apply so vaguely, and which never seems yet to have been treated as a complex conception to be carefully studied instead of a simple primary condition to be taken for granted. Now I am not the right person of course to do this as it ought to be done. But the very fact of the necessary crudeness of my treatment may have an incidental advantage: or it may be that some rushing in is necessary in this case in order to induce the angels to tread at all – to recognise that there is anything to tread!

And really books like e.g. Myers’ *Human Personality* seem to give additional point to the question, what is that which we so lightly and readily assume, infer, endow experience and its world with? In ‘personality’ or ‘self’ are we ‘intending to convey’ a tradition which may still be valid or may be obsolete, or is there a sense in which it is an involuntary assumption – a sense of the existence of an inscrutable identity? Or again and supremely, has the idea a significance for thought and action as yet imperfectly apprehended by most of us, partly because it can only be expressed in really antiquated and falsifying language?

‘For whether there is progress or not, at all events there is change; and the changed minds of each generation will require a difference in what has to satisfy their intellect.’ Yes: and notably in its modes of expression. But we must see that such change leads ‘onwards’ and ‘upwards’ not ‘backwards’ or ‘downwards’ – as long as we use these dimensional metaphors at all.

I venture then to send you a copy of my book [*What is Meaning?*] and need hardly say that if you do me the honour to look at it any comment that occurs to you would have great value for me.

Between Victoria Welby and Henry James (1892–1911)

*Henry James to Victoria Welby*²³

23 June 1911

I take it most kindly of you first to have caused my name to figure with honour on the title-page of *Significs*²⁴ and then to have sent me that so deeply suggestive and interesting volume, which I have read with earnest attention and rich profit.

You have so many ideas, and you launch and start so many, that mere recognition of your freighted vessel seems but a poor form and yet any overhauling of the cargo a formidable job. I must content myself with assuring you, all responsively, that nothing in the world appeals to me more than the question of expression or leaves me more dismally wonder-struck than the neglect and dishonour in which it languishes – at the same time that as a would-be artist I am oppressed

23. [Also in Cust 1931: 341–342].

24. [Henry James is referring here to the title page of Welby’s book of 1911, *Significs and Language*, where she quotes the following passage from his little volume, *The Question of Our Speech*: ‘All life therefore comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other. . . The more it suggests and expresses the more we live by it – the more it promotes and enhances life. Its quality, its authenticity, its security, are hence supremely important for the general multifold opportunity, for the dignity and integrity of our existence’].

with the difficulties (distraught and half-paralysed by a sense of them) with which all 'ideal' and extensions of the matters bristle: and the sweep of *your* extensions is sublime.

The Universe so seems to me to strain its expression itself to breaking that I ask myself how such a cockle-boat of a compromise as Art can pretend to live in such a sea. For *there* is the hitch – that one somehow feels (at least I in my feebleness do) that expression is, at the most insurmountably, a compromise. Hasn't it, in the interest of finite form, to *keep* compromising, ever; for the sake of certain effects that *quand même*, our poor, human, limping, fallacious *associational* values? That is, I mean, in the said – so very ambiguous after all – world of art; which isn't the greatest of all things, I seem to make out, but only the second greatest! Poetry strains expressions to the cracking point. I mean the greatest *has* done so, with Dante and Shakespeare it cracks and splits perpetually, and yet *we like* it so tortured and suffering. Doesn't that mean that its very weaknesses (with the great waves and winds of reality beating upon it – upon *them*), may have a beauty, or a value for life, or a power for interest, that would make of the adequate or infinite reflector – comparatively – a great splendid *sterile* victory?

However I mustn't venture on too deep waters – further than thus to show you how brilliantly you attract pursuit there. I feel the matter but as an intensely ingenious prosier who adores the medium – it's impossible to adore it more – but for whom that precious property resembles rather a vast box of relics and heirlooms and old wondrous stamped ducats and doubloons than – what shall I say? a bank-book of blank cheques signed for me with whatever solvency!

I return to England, however, a month hence and it's a pleasure to me to think that I may then have more news of you from Mrs. Clifford and perhaps even enjoy the opportunity of seeing you.

*Victoria Welby to Henry James*²⁵

5 July 1911

[...] It is difficult to thank you enough for such a letter. I am sure you will remember that to me apart from the few giants to whom no restriction of means apply – since they can paint heaven with the mud of earth and sing a heavenly melody with catgut and a bow – all our best speech means fighting an artificial and recently constructed obstacle. You confess to 'adoring' the 'medium.' Well, I would have it cleared of imposed and often gratuitous confusion. For I too am a user, however stumbling, of the Way which passes through truth to life expressive. Language should be as a very Logos, a universe articulate, to us. Our utterance should be as that of one whose voice beats and trembles with the larks and the fountains and shimmers with the stars; but also with the solemn roar of ocean, cataract, gale, and even with the aching moan of the sufferer, the whisper of his breathing, the longing of his eyes, and again with the homely rhythms of activity and rest.

All this in its simple way the child would naturally see – the marvellous true child to whom nothing is inexpressive. Hence his unwelcome because unanswerable questions. In harmony with him, you say that nothing in the world appeals to you more than expression, or leaves you more dismally wonder-struck than the neglect and dishonour in which we allow it to languish. And then you go on in inspiring words to say that the universe seems to strain its own expression to breaking point, so that we fall back upon the notion of compromise. But is not that falling back a failing, too? 'Speak for yourselves!' the universe might cry. To me it does so cry. The essence of poetry in the deepest and widest sense means to me that its expression can never be a strain to breaking point: surely that is *our* grievous fault? It pours its treasure forth in the child's eyes; and it shares with them the hint of boundless and transparent heavens.

Of course I confess that all this may seem to smack of bombast. But what is one to do? It is horrid to be compelled to denounce the needless desecration of the only expressive temple that we have. Of course I am saying this unworthily. But it is no question of personal levels of power.

25. [Also in Cust 1931: 342–343].

The question is, not of some immaculate monstrosity of triumph which would rather replace than release the true humanity of language. All creators – and speakers and writers ought above all to create and reflect creation – have one and all unconsciously shown us that they belonged to the true order of significians. But how often they have only found either silencers or sceptics!

I hope anyhow that you will let me urge that it is not sublimity but clarity, penetrative and interpretative, that I chiefly hope for. Expression seems to me no rigid rock or even tree-trunk to crack and split, but boundlessly vital and organic, on a level higher than the vegetal.

When we begin really to educate children – to *educ*e the aspiring treasures of our race – we shall discover and exploit a formant power. At present we only *induce* second-hand habits of thought and speech which of course have a value of their own. But meanwhile I am thankful to have had no education in the conventional sense. I was taught by going over the world and through many hardships and dangers. Can you wonder at the sense of reality and of the unreality and poverty of conventional speech, which this has given me? Can you wonder indeed that on undeveloped significance I lay a stress which seems exaggerated? Our toleration of its lack, our content with a dulled sense of penetration, our paralysis before problems of life as it were urging us to solve them, will be impossible for a generation which from the first has had the human eye for the true significance of human experience. The complexities of trained experience ought not to baffle us as they do. Those of binocular vision do not baffle our eyes! We are in short below an attainable, really a normal, level.

I hope the defects of this attempt at an answer will not to you obscure the points which I have striven, though most inadequately, to bring out.

Between Victoria Welby and William James (1905–1908)

Victoria Welby to William James

22 May 1905

[...] Will you excuse the liberty I take in addressing you as if we had already met? But ever since your brother said to me some years ago, alas, ‘You ought to know my brother; of all men he would understand what you are trying to say’ I have been hoping that somehow this would come about. For I have of course read everything I could find or hear of, that you have written. But I have always for one reason or another been defeated; and now I venture to make an earnest appeal to you to come and see me.

One thing I promise; it shall not tire or ‘take out of’ you; you see my way of seeing things naturally makes for the restful and the healing; I speak out of the race-motherhood and however imperfectly, the things of mother-sense.

There also I venture to think, lies the ultimate secret of your own crusade.

All this I fear sounds highly presumptuous; but indeed that sound is misleading, for I would disavow pretention of every kind and wish to be reckoned as the humblest of ‘privates’ in the army of pioneering workers. I see with you a ‘curious unrest,’ an ‘interest in new suggestions, however vague,’ but also with you, signs of the ‘imminent upheaval of more real conceptions and more fruitful methods.’ Once more then I beg you to make it possible for us to meet before you leave England.

I would gladly offer to do this at Oxford or in London, but in the first place I cannot make things clear briefly when away from my references and also every attempt to move about now means physical suffering which entirely defeats any profitable work.

To give you some idea of the position I take I venture to enclose a reprint of my second little contribution to the Eugenic discussion by the Sociological Society. The first one is included in the published papers.

William James to Victoria Welby

26 May 1905

[...] You are extremely friendly, and I should like above all things to make your acquaintance, although I am ashamed to say that long as I have known [...], so to speak, of your writings, I have not even yet attained to reading them. I am a slow reader and the pile of books deferred grows higher and higher.

I am hastening back to America, being far from well. I may have to sail on the 2nd, which will give me only two days in England, and make it impossible for me to get to Harrow. If I stay, as I hope to, till the 9th, I shall communicate with you in time to make an appointment for a call upon you at Harrow. [...]

*Victoria Welby to William James*²⁶

4 April 1908

[...] My long illness has put me for the time somewhat out of touch with university and other events, so I have only just now heard from Mr. Schiller that you are to be in Oxford after Easter to give some lectures there. I hope you will kindly remember that you owe me a visit? I should be sorry indeed to miss a second opportunity as I have long hoped for the pleasure of receiving you here. And the subject I want to have some talk about with you ought (apart from the failures of its present advocate) to be of special interest to the pragmatist; while in that character I am sure you will admit its claim that there is no human being whom it does not nearly concern.

I am glad to be able to say that it has now received the honour of recognition as implied in its embodiment (in brief summary of course) in an article for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for which I was asked in spite of the rule that only subjects generally recognised are there included. I was limited to 1,500 words but found it impossible to compress my statement within 3,500 which the editor now says is exactly what he wanted; a great relief to my mind! [...]

William James to Victoria Welby

9 May 1908

[...] This is in reply to yours of April 4th received in America before I sailed. You don't know what a dolt I am about all matters of nomenclature, or how unconvertable to anything rational. Nevertheless I deplore the fact that the chief reason why philosophic discussion is so nugatory is that the disputants understand words quite differently and often oppositely.

I may possibly have to return to America very soon after my lectures here are finished. If so, I shall, probably get no time for Harrow. But if not, I shall certainly come to see you. But the date will now have to be left uncertain, since my brother claims us at Rye, and if I find that I am able to spend the summer in Europe most of our time will be upon the Continent. [...]

Victoria Welby to William James

10 May 1908

[...] Indeed, I am really an *aboriginal* pragmatist, for, many years ago – long before the name came into use – I was seeing more and more clearly that 'intellectualism' was now feeding upon husks and turning upon itself, engendering nothing but fresh and abortive controversy; and also that words like 'make' (on the use of which much argument about truth turns) were terrible traps for the unwary. That has led to my plea for the recovery of what I am calling (for want of a better

26. [Also in Cust 1929: 246–247].

term) the Primal sense, the inborn and generative alertness to danger and profit in mind which answers to that wariness which has enabled the race to survive the formidable dangers of early life: that 'fittest' in unerring response which has been 'selected.'

Victoria Welby to William James

11 May 1908

[...] Then I shall still hope for the pleasure of seeing you here. Please don't disappoint me! And remember me to your brother and remind him how he told me years ago that we ought to meet. I have never forgotten his enthusiasm about you, tho' probably he has forgotten me. I am afraid I can't agree about the doltness or doltitude – which? – that you plead! And it is certain that I am a primitive pragmatist, since for the years past I have been clear that 'intellectualism,' great though its true work is, was now mainly turning upon itself, engendering nothing but fresh and abortive controversy kept alive by linguistic confusions from which no thinker or writer seems to be free. And these we carefully teach each generation in childhood! One leading term of that kind is 'make,' on which much argument about 'truth' seems to turn. Forgive me for this little outbreak which indeed requires explanation.

Victoria Welby to William James

24 May 1908

We greatly need the distinction between 1) rigid and plastic, 2) static and dynamic 'Truth.' Things are just as real, and their account in symbol just as *true* (or untrue) in the one case as in the other. But we couple life and lie! Having lost or failed to gain the sense of the supremacy of motion over its product matter, and of the solidity attained by intensely rapid, minute, confined motion (of some 'third' element, apparently 'ether'?), we make a ruling fetish of stuff, although in English we couple it with *nonsense*. Much of what we call truth is essentially unreal. And we confound truth and fact, truth and reality. In truth, truth from having been 'what a man trows,' has now become moral honesty, honour, scruple, trustworthiness, faithfulness. Most of the 'pragmatic' controversy is vitiated by the almost universal neglect of this point of view.

*Between Victoria Welby and Benjamin Jowett (1891–1893)**

Victoria Welby to Benjamin Jowett

25 March 1891

On the strength of a mutual friendship with Lady Airlie, I am venturing to write without a formal introduction, to ask if I may quote the enclosed passages from your Introduction to the *Cratylus*. My reason for troubling you thus is that I am told you are preparing another edition of your *Plato*, and I am not sure whether you would wish to anything here said to be omitted or modified, in consequence of the advance in linguistic knowledge.

Though conscious of great unfitness for any such enterprise, I have been urged to write a paper suggesting the need of a line of (psychological) linguistic enquiry hitherto greatly neglected, and it was Dr Sayce who recommended my quoting part of your very pregnant and predictive utterance.

* [The corpus of letter exchanges between Benjamin Jowett only consists of four letters from Jowett in illegible and fading handwriting, and three letters from Welby reported in this collection. The letters by Jowett are dated 25 May (year is lacking), the remaining letters are from the years 1880, 1891, and 1892].

But I felt that if you are re-editing the whole work, it would not be right to use any of it without your sanction. Of course it can be entirely omitted if you wish, though with keen regret on my part!

To save trouble I enclose an addressed envelope.

Victoria Welby to Benjamin Jowett

27 October 1892

I ventured before the publication of the new edition of your *Dialogues of Plato* to write & ask whether I might safely quote from your Introduction to the *Cratylus* some passages about Language which were very valuable to me. You kindly told me that I might. The idea of publishing my paper was however given up for the time. I have now given the new edition to my daughter and once more venture to write, this time to express a deeper & warmer gratitude than before. I only wish that your essays upon Language & Significance would be at once printed separately. I have been sorely tempted to ask if they might not be privately printed & circulated. They are indeed a gift to me. My paper under the title 'Meaning and Metaphor' will probably appear in the *Monist* an American Quarterly, in the spring; & at this end I have ventured to quote you at some length. Perhaps I may be permitted the honour of forwarding a copy of this. Meanwhile I venture to enclose two little printed memos bearing on the question. Pray however do not let them trouble you: that would be an ill return for what I owe you.

Victoria Welby to Benjamin Jowett

3 June 1893

Before writing you my thanks for your very kind reception of me last Monday, I waited until I could enclose the curious instance of a quotation reversed in meaning of which I told you. One certainly would not have expected it of Mr. Mark Pattison! Probably seeing it written will remind you that you know the quotation well, & I notice that it is coming into a wider use – always with the fatally reversed Meaning. Is not this a parable in its way? I believe Mr. Huxley is now with you, & if so it might interest him. Please remember me to him: he was very kind to me on a certain occasion & also arranged for me some years ago an interview with Herbert Spencer which has had may consequences for me. I have a long letter from our dear mutual friend Lady Airlie today; she is so kindly glad I have been to Balliol & tells me she is going to Carlsbad. With renewed thanks for your kind welcome which will always be a much cherished spot in my memory [...]

I cannot resist enclosing another curious instance of misquotation which I sent through a friend to the *Athaeneum* before the cases found were nearly so numerous as they are now. The only person I can find that has noticed this curiously persistent error is Mr. Bowen in his *Modern Philosophy* & he points out as I had ventured to do, that it perverts Locke's meaning (p. 11–13).

*Between Victoria Welby and George F. Stout and his wife Ella Stout (1894–1911)**

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

25 July 1894

[...] I greatly enjoyed reading your little book & I intended long ago to write to you about it. In the way of criticism I have little to say. It is not likely that many readers will catch your leading idea except in a partial & fragmentary way. But in the case of some the grains will no doubt grow & develop either into your own original thought or into something better.

I am at present writing about meaning in psychology. The acquisition of meaning I treat as a fundamental process more primitive than association & reproduction. I do not know how far I have taken hints from you. But I think that you approve what I say.

I have not so far heard of competitors for the Welby Prize. But I am not likely to do so until the time for sending in the essays arrives. [...]

4 May 1895

[...] I have in my hands a paper of yours on 'Psychology and Significance.' The point which you attempt to bring out appears to me to be of fundamental importance, and I am keenly conscious of having neglected it myself, though I do not think I am so bad an offender as some others [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

9 May 1895

[...] I will now try to explain more clearly how matters stand as regards the inquiry I hope to see started. In the first place, the paper you have (which please keep) is as you say simply notes and material for a possible article, which in its turn might eventually expand into a book. This paper however is only one of a series of similar documents of which the first, as I told you, deals with elementary Logic: and it seems to me of great importance that the *logical* aspect of the subject should always be taken first.

The third section – the philosophical – is just finished and I hope in the course of the summer to finish another on the scientific witness. There ought also to be one on Economics, Aesthetics and 'Pedagogics' (the latter being especially important, as the best hope of the dawn of a new era in the Signifying power of language lies in Education), one on Ethics, and lastly one on General Literature.

However, all this may be left for the present; and if you thought well I would endeavour to write an article which would direct attention to the subject both in its logical and its psychological aspects. Subject to your approval I should propose to begin with the addition made in Professor Keynes's new edition of his *Formal Logic*. Then I should touch upon your own *Thought and Language* and upon the 'Aristotelian' Symposium on the subject. Then I should try to give briefly the gist of what I have so far found bearing on the subject both in logic and psychology, pointing out also the growing tendency among philologists and grammarians to recognise the importance of the question, though not from the point of view which I would suggest. But of course I would gladly endeavour to carry out any alternative suggestion you were kind enough to make. It is true that I am so much hindered by health – and also of course by want of training – in the work of sifting and classifying my rather voluminous papers, that I should be most glad to hear of some one who could assist in the work and practically edit them. But I fear that it would be difficult to

* [This selection is from a large corpus of correspondence, including drafts and notes, consisting mainly of Welby's letters to George F. Stout, and a few from his wife Ella Stout who took care of his correspondence].

explain exactly what is needed unless we could meet; and in any case it would not be possible before the autumn to arrange for such assistance.

I venture to enclose two little notes. One is a passage from the philosophical section illustrative of the wide variety of ideas expressed by the 'meaning-term' which we are so apt to use differently: another is part of a letter to Mr. Shadworth Hodgson on an article which he had sent me. Do not trouble to return these.

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

10 May 1895

[...] It is probable that you may criticise points in my article on 'Thought and Language' which I have now given up or which I should express otherwise. However, I can communicate with you about this when your article is in my hands.

Are you not a little too hard on Mr. Shadworth Hodgson? You collect his metaphorical expressions from various parts of his book, in which they are used to illustrate different points. But the incompatibility can only create confusion when the incompatible figures relate not merely to the same thing, but to the same thing in the same aspect. When you infer that consciousness is by implication a Substance because it embraces all Being, you are surely attempting to make a parable walk on all-fours. The meaning simply is that all existence is objective to consciousness; viz. that objective relation to consciousness is a relation which applies to all existence. No existence can stand outside it, and therefore it *embraces* all existence [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

12 May 1895

[...] of course I quite agree that metaphors may vary as much as the aspect of anything which they are intended to illustrate. I have referred again to Mr. Shadworth Hodgson's article and I am confirmed in the impression that he therein deals only with consciousness in two aspects – as Knowing and as an Existent. The question therefore is whether or no these really justify the extreme discrepancy of such figures as [...] a stream, a point of view, a panorama, and a ground or field. It may well be that they do and that I am mistaken: even so my object is gained in so far as I have evoked the decision. Mr. Shadworth Hodgson himself quite understands that *he* is not attacked for following almost universal usage, and expressly writes to say that he wishes the case used among others for testing that. [...]

I should be the last to complain of Consciousness (or Mind or Thought) embracing all being or existence, since I always want to see the psychological described as the Outer and the physical as the Inner, if these terms are to be used at all to illustrate the broad distinction between 'mind' and 'body' or 'mind' and 'matter.' But my reason for this is the physiological analogy, and is 'another story.' And I can't help thinking we should gain by the mutual consent of psychologists henceforward to abandon the usage altogether. But that I suppose is rather Utopian! [...]

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

15 May 1895

I saw Mr. Sully on Saturday, and he mentioned your proposal for a conference. Professor Sidgwick and Dr. Ward were also present; and we all agreed that before any such meeting, it would be well to have a text for discussion; and that therefore an article clearly and definitely expressing your views would be an indispensable preliminary to any such meeting.

I should be very glad to have your criticism of my 'Thought and Language' article. I shall be surprised if it is as hostile as my own. Have no compunction about the matter.

I dare say that your strictures on Mr. Hodgson's language are justified. I scarcely know why I attempted to defend him. Metaphors are mischievous things; I think that if they are used at all they ought to be put in brackets, so as to make it easy to omit them on a first reading. After we have once caught an author's meaning in its plain and direct expression, it may become interesting to know what kind of mental pictures are floating in his mind.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

17 May 1895

[...] I wish your excellent suggestion about the use of metaphors (in important discussion) could be carried out! I see you contended in the Aristotelian Symposium that words don't call up mental images as a rule. I should have been very positively of that opinion a few years ago, but since I have tried, so to speak, slowing down my attending processes in retrospection, I have been struck by the analogy of 'a hundred photographs of a smile.' If one may be allowed a little reckless metaphor, does not the mental shuttle weave too quick for the working or natural memory, so that it all telescopes into an apparently 'imageless' result which we call 'understanding the meaning'? The effect of some drugs may partly illustrate this: as when a patient 'dreams' of a year's experiences in 5 minutes & takes hours to recount the remembered details.

I have no doubt it is best in any case that any conference should be postponed until there is something more definite to lay before it. Something is gained by its having been discussed at Cambridge. I will do my best meanwhile to make a start & will report progress as soon as I can. I wonder if 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation' would be a good title for the article?

23 July 1895

[...] There is one point against the use of 'inner' for mental and 'outer' for physical which as usual I forgot to urge when we discussed it, although it seems to me a fatal one. The whole point – or sense – of such terms as 'inside' and 'outside' is surely that they cannot 'in-vade' (or ex-vade?) each other. Put the external *within* and it must become internal, and conversely. (Here I want some day to ask how 'without' came to be used for 'lacking': but 'that is another story'). Now no one can deny that much which is non-mental and thus classed as 'external' is to be found inside skin and inside skull. Thus the contrast which is the only excuse for the metaphor is destroyed at once. 'Some outside is inside' would hardly do either for premiss or conclusion? Of course this suggestion has no reference to the 'sense' article and needs no answer. But it was so 'like me' to forget one of the very points which seemed to me the strongest that I felt I must mention it [...]

Since writing the above I have been reading J. Watson on the 'Absolute' etc. in the *Philosophical Review* in which he gives as a 'nonsensical question' why 'that which is outside' should be 'inside' (a given somewhat) (p. 366). [...]

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

27 January 1896

[...] Have you received the final proof of my book (up to slip 120) including the chapter 'Pleasure and Pain'? Whether you have or not, I should like now to see your notes on bodily and mental pleasure. I am very curious to know what you will say on this subject. I know that my own point of view is open to innumerable objections which cannot be met in advance, though I am compelled to believe that they will all turn out invalid.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

4 February 1896

[...] I feel that if you really care to know how I look on the 'pleasure-pain' question, I must inflict a private letter on you. And anything I thus say will need psychological translation. I begin by questioning the validity of the antithesis itself, in any sense I have yet seen taken. Certainly it is not one within my experience. I am very intimate with the pain we so well call 'harrowing' in many forms and cannot conceive life without it. *For me it belongs to instead of impeding life.* (Hence I cannot exclude it from my conception of heaven, while a GOD who does not suffer is not divine to me). I can therefore tell after a fashion what I understand by pain: but I know nothing about 'pleasure' except as an incidental concomitant of certain forms of activity. It never figures in my mind as smooth and prosperous progress towards attainment. It is for me nearly allied with amusement or rather with the 'pay' which is mere overflow and belongs to the 'happy thought' and 'by the way' order of ideas.

On the other hand the awareness of strong-running satisfied or 'unimpeded' life is often strangely bound up with an agony of shrinking. One almost longs for obstruction, for something to stay or slowen the rush, the appalling motor force of life. But there comes in what I understand by life – which has more than one sense. This is 'another story' and must wait till I can, if ever, deal with my 'triad' idea. Thus you see that while pain is with me a clear and definite experience, pleasure is by no means its true contrast, and may even fall within it (the popular craving for 'sickening horrors' seems to point to this). To me Pain is primary, pleasure secondary, and Pain covers a world of distinction, whereas pleasure is relatively simple. Therefore, *I can't translate my experience into any accepted psychological doctrine on the subject.* It may of course be after all a sensal question. In any generally received sense, the concept pleasure-pain may be just what you describe; or rather these words may be the best we have to describe furtherance-hindrance of life process etc. Only then you must give me another word for *what real sufferers suffer*: and if any antithesis to this, one quite different to 'pleasure.'

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

28 April 1896

[...] I have been long intending to write a reply to your communication on – Pleasure and Pain. I was greatly impressed by it; and I am quite willing to admit that here, as elsewhere, the subtlety to nature is infinitely beyond my powers of analysis. I may find occasion to go into the subject again at some length. At present I would only suggest that a pain which can be called 'precious' cannot be merely a pain. The pain of bereavement, for instance, may be 'precious,' but it can only be so where it brings home to us what is precious in the lives of those we have lost. I feel deeply that technical phraseology applied to such problems as these must appear to have something coarse and almost brutal about it. It is repellent because it is abstract, and because it appears to mechanically dissect the living reality.

I am glad you like the book. Your notes were of real service. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

3 May 1896

[...] thank you again for your words on my little 'Note on Pain.' I felt sure that the view I tried so lamely to express would appeal to you. But I find I must have been very *unclear* on one point. When I said 'The mer[illegible] sense "This is precious" brings a pang, the air seems full of threat,' I meant that whatever became to us a 'thing of price' thus brought a pang with it – the dread of losing it. But of course I know that the psychologist is not as such concerned directly with a view

of Pain given in a letter to a mourner. Yet indirectly, such witness, you will allow, does concern him: and the point of the extract lies, as you will have seen, at the end. Anyhow I did not mean to apply in the passage quoted the word ‘precious’ to pain itself, although I suppose that those who consider that pain in certain forms stimulates instead of hindering life – that ‘strenuousness through and by pain is primal,’ that awareness begins with a flash of pain which induces ‘effort’ [...] would reckon pain as in a sense ‘precious.’ And I own to sympathy with the view that life owes much to pain which seems to me true both in the ‘highest’ & ‘lowest’ sense.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

23 July 1896

[...] Le me congratulate – Aberdeen first, and as I hope you too – I had been looking out but had not yet seen the announcement. However I am quite in every way ‘behind the times’ just now as I look at nothing but the exquisite lights and shadows on the hills and pine forests, and flower studded fields and only use my brain and hand in the vain attempt to record their exploits of everchanging beauty.

Why do we trouble with ink printing or other? Let us forget all but Nature’s alphabet of loveliness, and *her* ambiguity will lead to no confusion or dispute, and is but the note of her boundless resource, her inexhaustible fund of variety! [...]

[...] I shall try [...] to get Dr. Ward to meet Mr. F. Galton [...] at end of September. Mr. Galton will I am sure like it [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

4 September 1896

[...] I thought that you and Dr. Titchener were in communication, so I did not write. He reports that he has obtained the consent of Professor Külpe, who only required a reassurance easy to give (I don’t know what). There is now therefore only the French ‘fauteuil’ to fill up! If M. Fouillée will find the right man & get him to join that will be best: but failing that I wonder whether the Editor of the *Revue Philosophique* would be a good person to consult? I think as you say that we may count on Professor Sully. I hope we shall secure the Frenchman in time for the issue of the advertisement in the October number.

I have been haranguing a Welby cousin, Inspector of Schools in India, on the subject & he says he knows of probable candidates there. Also I have made a difficult conversion: it was very instructive to have to meet one ‘fatal’ objection after another & at last satisfy the objector on all points; for he is a man of original mind & a strong sense of humour, who has many opportunities of influence. Meanwhile I am rather hampered in health ecc. (my ‘agraphia’ for instance is tiresome: my hand wants to write all the wrong words!) but am hoping soon to begin a course of ‘sensifics’ for my little grandson, which whatever else it may do, will certainly make him laugh (sometimes the best way of teaching?). Then I will keep notes of success & failure in the experiment [...]

Many thanks for letting me see the enclosed letter [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

18 September 1896

[...] I am greatly encouraged so far by the result of my opening lessons with Dickie in Sensifics. We are now doing ‘Talking Crambo’ & then mean gradually to do less & less, through ‘Dumb Crambo’ to mere change of facial expression or voice intonation all which ought to begin a training in the art of ‘Interpretation.’ Then we shall try various modes of Translation. All this makes a series

of fascinating games, so that a good teacher (which I am not) ought to find no difficulty in enlisting a child's interest. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

16 July 1897

I wonder if you ever got my letter and little book? [*Grains of Sense*]. I need hardly tell you how much I should value a word of criticism upon it from you. So far, it has been buried under the Jubilee so that there are only short notices, mostly in provincial papers. I enclose you an example of these which is more favourable than I dared to expect.

But what I most want to ask you is whether you have seen that remarkable article of M. Michel Bréal in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, 'La Sémantique, une Science Nouvelle'? He preaches part of my gospel with emphasis & scolds his brother philologists severely for tithing their mint and anise & neglecting weightier matters in language. I am grateful to him for saying that language is a voluntary function & that we ought to set to work & direct & control it & not be misled by the false metaphors which represent it as an independent organism. I can't help wishing he had been the French (Prize) Member!

I wonder if you have heard anything of the competition? I have seen no one in the philosophical world except Prof. Alexander & have been too unwell for any work; but we are just preparing to migrate for 2 months to Scotland where I hope to get up some strength [...]

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

25 July 1897

[...] I greatly enjoyed reading your little book [...] It is not likely that many readers will catch your leading idea except in a partial & fragmentary way. But in the case of some the 'grains' will no doubt grow and develop either into your own original thought or into something better.

I am at presently writing about 'meaning' in psychology. The acquisition of meaning I treat as a fundamental process more primitive than association and reproduction. I do not know how far I have taken hints from you. But I think that you approve what I say [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

28 July 1897

I am very proud of your approval & like to think it is given rather to the subject I want considered than to my treatment of it. Also I am very glad to hear you are writing up on it. I suppose you will point out that 'meaning' (primarily) implies 'intention' and therefore an 'intelligent agent' of some kind. (I have often been told that to postulate 'Meaning' in the universe is to be teleological in the mystical sense). Thus don't we want some other word, referring only to the percept & the perceiver himself, for that which is indicated, conveyed or suggested by percepts? Should it be sense? or Signification?

I suppose Meaning was the primitive idea? By analogy with his own activities man assumed that water was always poured, stones flung, fire kindled, etc. by somebody. So he was always pushed, or hit, or pinched by somebody – intentionally. Then he evolved the 'sense of sense': and this 'sense' was something that belonged to the objects or movements themselves; and next he began to arrive at the suspicion that he himself endowed all percepts with *import* (?): that Sign & Signification were *his* gift to nature; so that his own words became the pre-eminently significant – signs par excellence – though all on the side of intention. [...] The non-teleological mind will deny meaning, i.e. intention, to the cosmos but can't deny signification (though he might repudiate

Significance) without adopting the idiot's standpoint & ceasing to interpret or translate percept at all. Please forgive this fearful rigmarole: I don't know whether it conveys any sense!

Anyhow let us teach *every* child Sense and its conditions: from the psychological, philosophical, scientific & most of all practical standpoint & we shall give him the best of all starts. And he must be told with emphasis that whatever else he does he is bound to leave language better than he found it. Imagine 20 millions of men all growing up imbued with this idea & determined to work together for it! [...]

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

26 August 1898

[...] I have now communicated with all the adjudicators²⁷ of the Welby Prize. Their decision is in favour of the German Essay I recently wrote to you about. It turns out to be written by no less a person than Dr. Ferdinand Tönnies. I am sorry that you cannot read German; but an English translation will be published in *Mind* [...]. You have succeeded in catching a big fish with your bait. The Essay is very good and distinctly original. It strictly covers the problem proposed in the advertisement: in every way it fully deserves the prize [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

3 September 1898

[...] I was sorry not to be able to thank you myself for your kind letter about the Prize but Miss Meyer I think told you of our anxiety about my husband, who has had a trying attack of low fever, due partly I think to the unusual atmospheric conditions.

Although I cannot help lamenting that I can never see my Prize Essay except in translation, I am most glad to hear that so distinguished a scholar and thinker as Dr. Tönnies has thought the subject worthy of the highest powers – which indeed it is!

I shall look forward to the translation in *Mind*. Will there be any chance of your entrusting the task to Miss Meyer? She is proving herself an able translator I am told, and she would have a special advantage in being familiar with the aims of the Prize-giver as well as with Logic and Psychology. But of course you may have other views. I am this day sending to Dr. Tönnies a letter of credit for the amount I owe him: and I suppose you will kindly announce in *Mind* that the Prize is adjudicated and bestowed. I venture to enclose a little Pamphlet which was circulated at the Zoological Congress the other day and will be circulated at the British Association meeting – if a substitute can be found for the burnt-out Colton Hall!

My scientific friends are good enough to say that it is a useful piece of work: and are amused at the retort which it furnished to the 'unscientific' philosopher. But of course its pretensions are of the smallest.

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

21 February 1899

[...] I was very much grieved to see the announcement of Sir William's death. He stands out in my mind as a typical representative of all that is best in the English gentleman of the old school, full of frankness, manliness and kindness. I was especially touched by the delicate and thoughtful sympathy which he showed in your philosophical pursuits just because they were yours, though they could have little independent interest for him. His kindness and courtesy to myself left a very

27. [These include Titchener, Sully, Külpe and Boirac].

strong impression on my mind and I know that other philosophical visitors at Denton Manor feel as I do [...]

The 'Welby Prize' Essay is being translated by Mrs. Bosanquet. I hope to publish it in the July no. of *Mind*. It is an excellent paper and I have no doubt that it will attract much attention.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

17 May 1899

[...] I must tell you of the great interest and thankfulness with which I have read your *Manual* (vol. 1). I cannot but feel that a real step in advance has been taken in your analysis of primary 'meaning' and the acquirement of 'meaning.' But shall you think me exigent if I say that I still look forward to your warning the student reader that by 'it means' you mean (i.e. intend to say) 'it signifies' rather than means; and are dealing with signification rather than significance? I know that you consider that these are both important distinctions.

7 June 1899

I have at last been able to get through the proofs of the Prize Essay carefully once, but have been too unwell (and alas too blind) to do more at present. I hope however soon to be able to go through it several times; & feel sure that I shall only be the more struck with its ability. Surely it ought to do something towards giving us a really fresh start.

It is curious too to see how the idea of overcoming apparently insuperable obstacles to 'entente cordiale' by means of permanent conference seems to be in the air. On the other hand, I see many signs of an impending educational revolution: & of this I confess I have more hopes than of any amount of 'Academy.'

As soon as I can complete my study of the essay, I hope to write at length to Professor Tönnies. May I ask whether the original German manuscript becomes my property? If so, I should be very glad to receive it when done with, as I think I told you what an exceedingly able lady (niece of the great Rudolph Clausius) is now my grand daughter's governess. She could, I think, help me if she could read the manuscript in German, with my answer. I am greatly hoping that a discussion in *Mind* may ensue, for such a paper can hardly fail to arouse unusual interest. I am indeed most thankful for such a successful issue of our plan. [...]

George F. Stout to Victoria Welby

17 November 1900

[...] There are two points on which I think your article on Significs requires modification. First of all, in your definition you limit Significs so as to refer it only to the meaning of forms of study, and you add an opinion or doctrine, which, however true it may be, ought not to come into the definition, viz. the doctrine that meaning, or sense, etc. constitutes the primary and ultimate value of every form of study. Perhaps you might say: 'A proposed method. . . , aiming at the concentration of intellectual activities, or what is at present and indifferently called meaning or sense, etc.' One other point is that the references at the end ought to be more definite, at least in the case of those who have expressly dealt with the doctrine of meaning. For instance, the title of Tönnies' essay and the place where it is to be found should be given, and the same is the case I think with Eucken & Bréal. [...]

I think it would be good if you gave short definitions of 'sensal' and 'translation' as the word is to be understood in Significs. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout (Postcard)

19 November 1900

Many thanks. I will do as directed at once (quite seeing your point) and forward result to Prof. Baldwin and to you. I had been rather led astray by the occurrence in the slip-proof of phrases like 'it is not possible' to do this and that, and we 'must' keep within certain bounds, and lastly 'we recommend' a distinction which 'would go some way towards settling disputes,' etc. Surely these *are* opinions?

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

23 November 1900

[...] I now at last send you my 'Notes on the Welby Prize Essay' (is that too long a title) and Dr. Tönnies' very generous comment on them. I send you the typed copy as the original is only in pencil and difficult at first to read; but I can of course send you that. May I add my little paragraph of acknowledgment in small type at the end of his? I think Dr. Tönnies has accomplished a real feat in writing his paper so clearly and forcibly in English.

I also send the new definitions which have gone to Prof. Baldwin: one of *Significs*, and of *Sensal* and one of the wider sense of *Translation*, with examples of the widest use we yet have. I shall *long* to hear whether all these commend themselves to you.

Dr. Tönnies definitely engages to come over next October to our projected Conference and hopes to persuade Prof. Eucken to come also. He asks whether they may count on the offer of hospitality. But I suppose there would be no difficulty about that on so small a scale? Prof. Postgate writes in great enthusiasm to propose that we should 'start the century with the foundation of a Society to encourage the systematic study of meaning.' Well, would we start it better? The worst of it is that I should probably be the first person to be 'found out' and my poor little errors ruthlessly exposed [...]. Have any other foreigners been sounded yet about coming over in October? I hear the subject is really 'taking hold' in France. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

6 January 1902

[...] I used to say that space and time were only my 'offices'; never my home: now I should only say it of the second or of the first in the narrowest (planetary) sense.

As to the point, etc. we say, 'Do you see my point? or my line?' Why do we never say, 'Do you see my surface or my cube?' Why are we here one-dimensional? Of course I see points, etc. in our or say in the geographer's sense (of headland). But geometrically I only see a dot, an edge or a skin – all as sharp as you like – that is with my bodily eyes. With my mental, 'conceptual' eyes only, I see the geometer's 'point' for it has no 'extension.' I can't help hoping that, though you could not adopt my view of space and time, you will allow that it is worth advancing? If, however, you really think it is mere nonsense you will say so.

I can't say what a boon your kind patience and interest here was and how much I enjoyed our talks. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

6 May 1902

I would have written to tell you how great a success on my side Mr. Jenkinson's visit was, but I waited until I could take the book to a publisher. It is now in Messrs. Macmillan's hands, and

Mr. A. Macmillan says that he told the friend who is 'reading' it for him that you had seen it and thought it should be published, so I don't think there is much doubt of their taking it, especially as he said 'in a case like this we don't care about the selling'! Of course he meant that it could not expect to be popular.

I have been reading your Essay again with great admiration. I was only tempted to query one thing from the 'Signific' point of view and that was the indifferent use of fancy and imagination. I can't imagine a scientific fancy – or an imaginative – Fair! But of course you are in the best of company [...] Would not an unimaginative philosophy (or psychology) be as fatal as a fanciful one? [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

31 August 1903

[...] I now send you all the materials yet ready. We found that most of them needed to be re-copied and corrected. A few more will follow tomorrow or next day. We have left a margin for any notes you are good enough to make.

I had an interesting visit the other day from Prof. Vailati and his friend Dr. Calderoni who speaks English like a native and did some interpreting. It was very encouraging to see the genuine enthusiasm of both for it came out a good deal as they compared notes and made mutual comments in Italian which to some little extent I could follow.

I have been much stirred by various books lately, realising more clearly than ever the two strains in almost all serious writing now. That is, the strain of unconscious inconsistency arising from the misfits of language and idea, and on the other hand from the neglect of the psychological witness of language and the strain of involuntary response to the stimulus of the 'future'; that is, of the greater developments of experience as yet potential. A good example of the two strains is found in C. Booth's final volume, also in Dr. Maudsley's *L & M in Conduct* which I am now studying & which will I think suggest more 'marginal remarks'!

I send all the Lester Ward notes together. A. stands for Aphorism. I have reserved the letter extracts marked by Prof. Geddes as I think they are too personal for inclusion. I am in one awkward difficulty since reading Lester Ward. He claims that there is an almost universal confusion in the use of 'static' & 'dynamic' to express that which is 'at rest' or 'quiescent' & that which is in movement, and insists that 'static' should only be used for movements which repeat themselves in unchanged form while 'dynamic' should always be used for movements which produce as well as undergo change and development. This being so, what then is to be the term for what has hitherto generally been called the 'static' or the fixed and immovable? However I must not say more of this at present & have probably expressed myself wrongly as I cannot wait now to quote the passages in question.

Meanwhile I feel you are doing me a great honour and a kindness for which I am deeply grateful [...]

I nearly forgot to say that I enclose 2 little diagrams to ask whether you think it would be wise to insert a few with explanations? [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

3 October 1903

[...] I have taken advantage of a quiet time at Denton to restudy carefully your little Note on Self. I find it especially helpful [...]. So far, though it helps to clear, and exposes weak points, it does not seem to undermine my suggestion that in the most interesting of reflexive relations we have something more complex than any others. The transference of meaning surely does not enable

Self to cover the whole ground. If it did the ethical use of unselfishness would be impossible or at least inexcusable. The negation of the primary human prerogative could not have ethical value.

I clearly see of course that if we eliminate the ‘properties’ or ‘qualities’ of anything, nothing remains. But in the ‘I-sayer’ we have a unique case: ownership *expressed*. In all other cases the use of ‘My’ is to indicate what is not, in every sense or wholly, ‘Me.’ (The case is of course even worse in their language, e.g. French; where we have ‘mon moi’).

It seems to me that while on one side it would be instructive to restore the older usage ‘hissself’ (as herself) and theirselves, it would also be instructive to write, as in French, *same* for *self*. We should see more clearly the difference. For sometimes we do mean *Itsame* or *Isame*, *Me same*, and sometimes we mean a somewhat which ‘I’ can deny or destroy just as ‘I’ can destroy my eye or my body. The personal relation seems to me conveniently expressed by *I and self*; and the distinction justifies the ethical usage. But surely it is impossible for *Me* to act upon *Mesame*; we have here transcended the ‘reflexive relation’ and got back to that which creates or makes use of it.

I have put down a few more notes on this line suggested by your statement and now enclose them. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

15 November 1903

[...] I have had one of the great surprises of my life, in finding that Mr. B. Russell from the standpoint of Pure Mathematics is in his new book dealing with ideas mostly corresponding with primitive ones which I have for long held but found almost impossible to express intelligibly. I am reading the book a third time and making a series of special Indexes of it.

Then comes the enclosed Notice, coupling the importance of the question I raise in *What is Meaning?* with that of the questions Mr. Russell deals with!

Dr. Peirce’s letter is even stronger in endorsement than the review (in which he says he felt hampered by the conditions) [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

23 June 1904

[...] this morning taking up Bergson’s book which a mass of other reading had pushed aside, I found that with consummate ability he was drawing out the very points I was trying to express! Of course in such a case it is not fair by quotation to isolate a paragraph from a continuous argument. Still I can’t resist enclosing you one extract before I get any further in the book. For this is the very first time that I have come across anyone who saw the matter in the same light that I did. And Bergson is unaware or at least takes no notice of the fact of the entirely borrowed vocabulary of time. I shall go on to his treatment of ‘*Les deux aspects du moi*’ with double interest now.

Also enclosed 2 passages from *Le Dantec* as he seems to take part of my position about language. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

17 July 1904

[...] I have been studying the current *Mind* (as usual) with edification and came upon an unexpected find in the shape of Mr. Jenkinson’s excellent and kind review of *What is Meaning?* I had given up hope of such a notice, fearing that my presentation of the subject put it out of your court [now section 8.6 this volume].

Mr. Schiller has indeed roused up the Bradleyan lion, who finds out and makes the most, of course, of the weak places in *Humanism* although it seems a pity that such a critic should repeat what he condemns as 'extravagance and vulgarity' in a writer, by the very use of those terms in so personal a reference. Apart from this I fear we all feel that Mr. Schiller really does himself injustice sometimes in this matter of taste; and I have often had hard work to defend him.

I suppose Mr. Bradley is justified in saying that Will implies something other than will. But then what is there that doesn't? The truth surely is (p. 326) that an irrational and unintelligent will is not human at all. It is animal, it has an automatic trend, it is very near the mechanical 'must needs.' And it is true that nobody would resent more promptly than Mr. Schiller a remark that Pragmatism because practical was not a rational theory. He really holds that the most rational thing is to be practical, while I imagine Mr. Bradley holds that the most practical thing is to be rational. Also it seems true that pragmatism tends to exalt 'bare doing' with, one may add, bare results. The analysis of Fidget on one side and Hustle on the other with a general study of Fuss would be useful here! I suppose that in this controversy one side is tempted to say Do, no matter what, how, or why; and the other, Be, and do not anyway by any means or for any reason.

As to the Infinite I am afraid I am tempted to make short work with its usual irrelevant and inapplicable use. It seems to me to reek with confusion. Where Prof. Mackenzie (after criticising older views of 'infinity') finds in Wordsworth 'this note of infinity' (p. 361) I should rather find Allness; and intensity of Quality at the heart of the All.

We certainly think to 'scale heaven by a confusion of tongues' (p. 372). For as usual even after showing up the fatal consequences of using such prefixes as In- and Ab- for the supreme Positive, the writer speaks of the Perfect *or* Infinite as though it mattered not which we used. As to our reaching the idea of GOD as the Perfect through the sense of our own perfection, that seems to me almost a grotesque anthropomorphism, a rank deifying of a mere magnified projection. What really gives us the true idea of GOD is to see Him as what we would be but here and now are not: to see Him thus by the very force of contrast. True that this *implies* our potential 'perfection.' As I am never tired of repeating, the pessimist by his desperate discontent is our best because involuntary witness to the reality and the pressure of the idea which prompts it.

As to Mr. Wells, the value of his paper (apart from its biographical interest) is to me its strong 'significal' bent. He makes short work with the negatives treated as positives (practically worshipped as well as entitized – may I have this last word?). I am entirely with him about the *omnis*. But then I always see quantity as irrelevant to qualify except in so far as quality emerges from it; and the latter as the dominant note of reality. That I suppose is the woman's instinct; but it also tends to be that of the thinkers whom we call the 'greatest' even thus expressing quality by quantity.

Again, his reminder that we think only in two dimensions is an old idea of mine and so of course is his valuation of 'insight,' though he does not as I have done suggest 'insense.' One wonders what Mr. Bradley thinks of it all!

Your 'Primary and Secondary Qualities' is to me enormously suggestive; for as far as I succeed in following it (and if I fail it is entirely my fault not yours) it gives me just what I want in two directions: one that of identifying all sense-experience and all the 'facts' with which it deals, with *Sign* ('that which points beyond itself) and the other, that of deriving all our time ideas from space + motion. The world becomes the Significant. Signness becomes the ultimate 'predicate' and 'postulate' both of sense and of fact. Reality is that of which both are the sign; and the question always is, How far sign and how far merely symbol? Will you not tell us? I think I shall have to make a separate study of your paper; it 'means' – signifies – so much to me. But how to get through what I want to do? [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

25 November 1904

[...] I think you would like to see the enclosed document which came a few weeks ago as a letter to me. It seems to me of very great interest and I cannot help wishing that it could appear in *Mind*. You will see at the end that Mr. Peirce suggests its being included in a second edition of my book! [...] I sent a copy of it to Mr. Russell and enclose you a copy of his answer, which I have also forwarded to Mr. Peirce, as I am delighted to be the means of conveying to the one, the other's readiness for his criticisms. Who knows but that a similar rapprochement might be effected in the case of Prof. Cook Wilson! I feel quite like a 'Hague Commission'! You spoke once of the wild biologists among whom you feared to be devoured: but these mathematicians are if possible still fiercer; and it is something to have conveyed even one message of peace between them. [...] One curious point has been that while he [Prof. Cook Wilson] was writing about Oneness, Twoness, and Threeness, Mr. Peirce should independently write about Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness.

I have largely written my paper on 'Time a derivative' and among other things have taken advantage of your Aristotelian paper on the 'Qualities' which impresses me very much [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

28 May 1905

[...] I think you may like to know that I have a letter from Prof. James who is at Paris saying that he is so far from well that he has to give up his European engagements and hurry back to America. He says he may have to start on June 2nd, but if he finds he can stay in London till the 9th he will make a point of coming down here to see me. His letter is warm and kind and I hope we may meet.

One of the hundred things which I forgot or there wasn't 'time' to bring forward while you were here, was an article by Mr. Edward Dixon in *Mind* of October 1902 'On the Notion of Order.' I notice that Mr. Russell ignores his treatment of the subject. I wish I had asked you what you thought of the Dixon view! Meanwhile he has one – for me – pregnant phrase: '[...] in theory, "passing in review" does not take time.'

There is also in the same number some remarkable passages in Mr. Bradley's 'Definition of Will,' '[...] the self feels itself realised': and 'the self, beside thus feeling, must also perceive itself and so be self-conscious of itself [...]' (p. 438).

What would be said to us if we thus used any other term, especially a term symbolizing a conception of this cardinal importance?

I have just heard from Mr. Sargant (with whom I have corresponded!) the man who has been reorganizing education in South Africa and is much alive on that subject. He has just reached England and proposes to come and see me, whereat I am glad. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

5 June 1905

[...] I have just heard from Prof. Vailati who says, 'Je suis bien honoré par la proposition que me fait Prof. Stout, par votre moyen. Veuillez bien lui écrire que je m'occuperais bien volontiers de rédiger un article de sujet logique pour la Revue. Est-ce que celui conviendrait de le recevoir vers la fin d'Aout?'

Perhaps you may now communicate with him direct (address Istituto Tecnico, Firenze). I have had a very kind letter from Dr. J. Stoney and think it may interest you to see copies of two of his letters to me, one of which is biographical. Don't trouble to return, better destroy them. He is I am sure much gratified at finding his work appreciated by you.

I have also had a very nice letter from Mr. Hobhouse who wants to have a long talk about the notes on his book which I ventured to send him. He is so much run down that he has had to go away for some weeks but proposes to come over on his return.

I have been half killed by the heat since you left and in order to breathe had to take refuge with the electric fan. But today there is a sudden change and I am going away for a few days. I shall always be glad to remember that the weather while you were here was so perfect; and the memory of our talks abides with me. I am subject to such profound discouragement that in heartening me up you do a charitable work! (By the way I wonder who Lady Grove is? She has a remarkable and incisely expressed article in the June XIXth.

Hoping that the Diablerets [Switzerland] will be all you can wish for and be good for you all [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

28 July 1905

[...] Dr. Vailati [...] tells me he is sending me more numbers of *Leonardo* with, amongst others, a paper by Dr. Calderoni on 'The Sense of Nonsense'; which sounds rather in my line!...

Mr. Macdonald's services are proving invaluable to me. He has so completely recast my paper on time that its own mother doesn't know it. Meanwhile I have found a remarkable witness to a part of my view in an essay 'La genèse de l'idée du temps' by Guyau, with a warm endorsement by A. Fouillée, which I had never heard of. So now I shall have to correspond with M. Fouillée!

As it was really your doing that I had at last the courage to write to M. Henri Bergson and enclose my translation of his 'Introduction' or rather of the conclusion of that, I think I ought to enclose you now a copy of his really astonishing answer. If I get more such letters from minds of that calibre I am afraid I shall get a terrible attack of swelled head! Happily Mr. Macdonald is quite capable of dealing with that disease. Seriously however I am thankful indeed for such a witness from a complete stranger, and shall look forward with keen hope to the further letter which M. Bergson promises and to his annotations. What do you think about the publication of the whole article, and where should it be? [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

15 October 1905

[...] I have been much interested in the paper on Things and Sensations which you so kindly sent me. When I received the very interesting *Mind* for October, I sat down at once and wrote you the rough draft of a letter which now, alas!, seems to have disappeared entirely. As these things only come 'when they choose' and never come again, this renewed attempt will I fear be very pointless.

The subject of 'Things' has been occupying me a good deal lately and I have been guilty of some Doggerel which insisted on being written (though versifying is always against the grain with me!) and is now inflicted on you. That ferocious critic Prof. Cook Wilson says that parts (like those of the Curate's egg?) remind him of Goethe and Browning! So you see I shall expect you to go one better – or worse?

The first 'thing' I have to thank you for is the predication (?) of two distinct existences which interpenetrate each other so that there can be no question of apartness. Then I am grateful for an 'immediate experience' which radiates a halo (only *are* halves radiated? a corona?) of implications. But now are there not two interpenetrating yet distinct experiences both immediate, i.e. the phylogenic (genetic?) and the ontogenic (genetic?) – the racial and the individual? I agree that the independent not-self is known from the beginning but I should make it a question of Mother-sense. *Without this*, the great linkage of the race (vertical and lateral) which ramifies throughout all life

would be missing, and we should as you say be merely fragments in which case you would never have written your article!

But the immediate experience of all conscious life and indeed all sentient life (and where are the limits of this?) is a Beyond for our fleeting individual experience: and itself again points to a Presumable Beyond of its own. Yes, experience is that which essentially ‘points beyond’ itself. To what? Surely to an other, a further a greater or fuller form or status or type of Experience [...] Must this be nonsense, as it may sound?

Two more remarks: 1) The passivity of which you speak in the last page must I suppose share the fate of *Rest* which has been deprived of the dignity of being ‘equal and opposite’ to Motion and has become a mere phase of motion or even a mere fiction; 2) I am sad at *your* still using that horrid image of an ‘inner being’ and ‘inner states.’ For ‘inner’ is as purely spatial as ‘outer’; and yet it is only the ‘outer’ which we thus assume to be ‘in space.’ You will say I am rabid about this. Well I am a little! But you *have* admitted that we have here a bad linguistic habit: and to my great delight, Mr. Hoernle of whom you spoke with much appreciation, speaks in this *Mind* (p. 454) of ‘meaningless spatial metaphors about knowledge being “in” us and reality “outside”’ which is very near me: he also protests against falsifying an issue ‘by misleading analogies,’ and again insists that ‘the whole of our so-called “inner” experience is not in space, and the laws of geometry are in no way applicable to it’ – as they are to all internals and externals, ins and outs!

I have much more I should like to say about other parts of *Mind* and about Carveth Read’s Metaphysics of Nature which, so far as I have got, I find absorbingly interesting, though full of these inherited ineptitudes of imagery! I have also now got through Gomperz’ 5 vols. (as well as De Vries’ *Mutations*) with very great profit. How real and living he makes the Greek thinkers; and how dry and dead, in comparison, the other histories of thought mostly seem! I feel I have at last made friends with the Great Thinkers! [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

7 November 1906

[...] I have been severely ill and since recovery have been much hampered in endeavours to overtake correspondence and other work; else I should have written before to tell you that at last, urged by a remarkable notice of Mr. Greenstreet’s in the W. G. of a work on Analogy and another on Education, I wrote to him. I wish I had done this, as you suggested, years ago! But somehow the special occasion never seemed to arise: and I shrink from bothering people about nothing in particular.

However now we have started a friendship in good earnest, and I hope he will come and stay here during part of the Xmas holiday. For he is going to put ‘chunks’ of my work on Significs in the W. G. and asks if I mind being plagiarised. Mind? Why I only wish everybody would do it, so long as they improve upon the plagiarised material!

I know I may count on your congratulatory sympathy in the real onward start my campaign is now making. Dr. Lionel Tayler (who has already the ear of the public) has given up his practice and moved to Willesden Green in order to write with the help of my material a book to be called I think *The Study of Significs*. There are also developments in other directions with which I won’t trouble you now.

[...] Mr. Macdonald is now making a complete survey and classification of all my papers and ‘evidences.’ Mr. Greenstreet alludes to some tragedy in his life. May I know what this is? He says my writing has helped him. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

18 February 1907

[...] Herewith I return the *Time* article. What do you think ought to be its title? I have not hit upon one that seemed satisfactory. Some seemed too vague and others too cheeky and so on. You will know best what fits.

I hope it is really improved and a little shorter in spite of the Rutgers Marshall addition, as I have excised several passages [see section 4.11, this volume].

I am feeling much tempted to write to Mr. Hoernle but think I will let him off for the present. If I live and keep any wits, it ought to be much easier before long to make myself understood; for Mr. Macdonald is doing splendid work. He ought to be engaged as Critical Editor-General! He is getting the work into such lucid order that I am myself surprised to find how one part explains another and how far the whole makes a coherent system. His preliminary report is a masterpiece though he was in bed with influenza!

One thing I have set my heart upon and that is on you and Mrs. Stout and Alan coming here some time before the autumn for a real visit. There are so many reasons why I am anxious for this, though first comes the great pleasure it would give me [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

22 April 1907

[...] I am sorry I did not discover Morrison on Simmel's 'Schopenhauer and Nietzsche' in the current *Mind* till just now. There is much in it that finds me; and I note, top of p. 294, one of those many unnoticed paradoxes whereby, so to speak, *Nature* is drawing, demanding our attention to our own ethical ignorances and oversights.

Then I forgot a passage in the *Journal of Philosophy*, ecc. (Vol. 1, No. 20) condemning the barbarous practice of 'viewing paintings and photographs with two eyes'! Also telling us of an instrument called the *binocular Verant*, which is an excellent image among the many waiting for adoption!

Further, a very interesting notice of Kozlowski (*Revue Philosophique*, February 1904) on a deep 'contradiction' between intuitive and discursive thought, science and philosophy, between the asymptotic and periodical principles of change. Thus here again we are calling in question the 'basal' conception of logic and mathematics. And the question always recurs: will you have them in stale language or fresh? In secondhand or firsthand speech? In images that obstruct, and must now be ignored, or in images that really illustrate and validly suggest?

Victoria Welby to Mrs. Ella K. Stout

15 January 1908

[...] [Dr. Stout] will (I hope!) be interested to hear that I am engaged in answering a closely written letter from Mr. C. S. Peirce (an answer to one I wrote him about his article in the *Hibbert*) which covers 20 quarto pages! He is verily I think what Prof. James and the readers of the *Monist* consider him, the most original (and eccentric) genius in America.

[...] I am always hoping to write – or get written for me – a more adequate essay on Significs than has yet been possible. But it would have to be crammed with examples which will bring me I fear many enemies among those who would prefer to let sleeping dogs lie. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

7 December 1909

[...] Prof. Alexander has been here and we have settled that I should write from the significal point of view a paper for the Aristotelians next autumn, if life and wits last so long. I am proposing as a subject (already partly sketched out) 'Mental Experience in biological terms' pointing out that the latter should at least represent the advanced guard in biological knowledge. The bother is that it is difficult either to leave out or to include vital chemistry. The whole question is urgent both for Significs and Science, as I only wish someone more competent than I can be, would make manifest. Still there are hopes.

In the Translators' Note, in 'Eucken's Problem of Life,' there is a generous recognition of services wholly due to the significal standpoint and method.

One more hopeful sign is that the new Professor of Theology and Tutor at Balliol is coming here for a week (on Thursday) in order to go thoroughly into the applications of Significs on that side.

Meanwhile the cold is nipping. May you all have a joyful Christmas [...]

I feel the loss of Professor Vailati very much. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

12 April 1910, 5.30 a.m. (revised 10 January 1912)

I should like to put down some points with reference to your very useful challenge about the Primal Sense.

In the first place (whether I put it adequately or not) I have the *trend* of all present psychology, physiology and anthropology with me. I could give you a volume of indirectly witnessing excerpts as to this and have had some conversations in the same line with experts.

The truth is, if I may so speak and in a broad sense, that your own life and work reveal for me, not that primal sense is abortive in you, but that it has a formidable and despotic rival in an extraordinary development of the rational and conceptual brain. It is an accepted fact in the economy of things in the human world that any such immense preponderance inevitably entails some corresponding suppression, except possibly in those rarest cases of commanding 'genius' which have so far been reckoned in some sense superhuman.

But now I would take other ground. In my view, which I find increasingly though indirectly confirmed by the present study of the origin and nature of Sex, we have hardly begun in philosophical discussion to use the hints which the difference between Man and Woman (who are more than male and female or masculine and feminine) analogically furnished. The man is devoid of three crucial experiences, which in me have translated themselves (like others which are shared by men) into the mental sphere.

The first is the special form which adolescence in the girl physically takes.

The second is what, after conception (note here the thinker's use of 'conceptual') we call in noble expression the Quickening.

The third is that of 'labour' and of giving birth (normally followed by the suckling).

The last (giving birth) is peculiarly educative when, as in a case known to me, a highly elaborated nervous system and unusually active brain combine with an exceptionally unyielding framework; the penalty apparently of 'civilisation' and now probably obviated by active games and gymnastics, as originally by hard labour. This caused serious danger and such agony as could hardly be surpassed; and would in an ordinary instance have left permanently crippling traces. In this one it made for a deepening of Consciousness.

All three *constitute a link with the whole vital world* which the man lacks; and this factor it is I believe which has in mothers, actual or potential, preserved a primal sense which man also has, but from a different experience and in a different form.

The woman herself only has it in working form so far as she can shake off, not the natural conditions of life (which there is now a tendency to shirk) but the numbing and planing effect of high civilisation and conventional education – rather *inducation*.

But very few of us do shake it off. *These few become the mental fertilisers of men*. They have nothing to do with logical gestation. That is typically the man's function. The Sexual order tends to reverse itself in mind. I have written some rather vague papers about this. I can only give the bare suggestion. But it is well worth following up; and I don't wish unduly to press the difference between man and woman. Motherhood (in a wide sense) came before fatherhood which was so to speak extruded in favour of rising types of organic form which entailed sexual separation. I doubt whether we yet fully understand the potential fatherhood now lapsed; the Memory 'in my third sense' that *we* have delegated to *you*, and the forces which were the chief agents (in primitive form) in dividing and differentiating the sexes. I am putting this of course dramatically, but it is substantially true.

My attempts at bringing forward matters which, if I am right, in the main belong to the very springs of human nature, are of course lamentably inadequate. My greatest desire and my motif both in private conversation and correspondence and in reluctant publication is solely the hope of inducing abler treatment of my topics.

There is only one thing I can say with entire confidence. Those who seriously enter into the matter will find that the study to be called Significs is profoundly significant as to our very constitution, regarded as combining 'body and mind' in the supreme human union and developing through the primal sense and the creative and discursive intellect.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

19 April 1910

[...] Take the two cases of Root and Foundation, both admirably useful metaphors involving valid analogy and applications. We must send down reversed branches radiating into seeking twigs which shall gather nourishment from the teeming earth. They will also steady us and give us a stable support for upward growth. Foundation again is necessary for safe building. We may find it on a plateau of rock upon which we erect an edifice. But on what is our foundation founded? On some seething, explosive crater? We must go to the centre of the earth to find out. But arrived there, we cannot stop. Descent turns into ascent to an opposite surface; and for an ultimate *base* we must continue to rise till we reach our sun, when the same process recommences.

Thus we learn that all foundation and basis is secondary and provisional; that ultimate foundation does not exist. Instead, we have balance and gravitation, attraction and repulsion and all the cosmic conditions which, being those of our world and our life, might be enough for us as the mines and storehouses which our minds can translate.

At present our minds insist (through a false education) on expressing themselves through exploded or outgrown and misfitting theories. True that our present ones are also always in the melting pot and we must beware of petrifying them as alas, we have petrified the pre-scientific guesses. But we need not even thus, be gratuitously antiquated: we need not use 'root' and 'basis' and all such mere survivals in sense as false as if we called the moon a shilling in the sky!

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

20 April 1910

[...] I am always amazed at the wonders you and others like you mentally accomplish and convey, in surmounting the manufactured obstacles or the inherited misfits which as yet through our helplessness or neglect, language presents. This is a perpetual but unended *tour de force*. It is

almost like the feats of the conjuror who persuades us that the illusion produced by his actions is fact. Only you go one better for you give us no shams but realities: but to do it you have to go a long way round or acquire an expressive apparatus wherewith you surmount difficulties (in your hearers or readers) which ought not to exist. And after all, our ‘opponents’ don’t fully understand us, or, if they do, *don’t understand themselves*. Why should they? The wonder is that there is understanding enough for controversy.

It is rare indeed that there is enough for a solution acceptable to both ‘parties’ whose thoughts, if fully and adequately expressed would always be contributory factors even if destructively critical.

All candid minds would automatically recognise waste or rubbish when revealed; and uncandid minds would be silenced. But language must become ready and unfailing servant and perfect instrument for the pooling of human thought. At present we allow it to neutralise contributive power by confusing the issue or vitiating the argument through toxic secretions which remain undetected. Thus we are condemned through usages once vital but now obstructive survivals to remain semi-paralysed in the highest of all functions (that of expression) or else to be pathologically exuberant from lack of the more delicate forms of restraint or control which accepted phraseology refuses to supply or supplies in forms which arouse impatience at what appears to be carping or even ignorant innovation or restriction.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

21 April 1910

[...] There is of course great need that in order to render an idea or supposition or actual experience, a phrase or term should expand and contract, generalise and specialise at desire. Our mental sphere is or ought to be always growing in reach and span, and always richly developing in content. Enrichment and precision must balance each other just as they do on the one hand in the world of invented mechanism and on the other in the word of what we call ‘art’ – rather, creative beauty.

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

18 August 1910

[...] it is of you I think and to you I turn when my need is greatest and my impulses to make my exceptional experiences and their result on thought practically fruitful most urgent. I have many warnings now that though I may live on I cannot reckon – even at 5 am. – on the continuance of present powers, such as they are, of thought and work. With the help of those who really see my point and admit my premises I am bound to gather up forces and utilise material collected during so many years of steady work in order to make the position of Significs secure. Of course as I have often said I am under no illusion as to immediate result. [...] But I think it is time the work entered a second stage and became more definite.

The school world, the most important, is also the most difficult of the fortresses to storm. The idea that the boy and the girl are innately silly or stupid or else a virtually blank sheet to be written over still prevails, carried on from the nursery where either the child is snubbed into silence or praised for shallow pertness which is worse. Yet I find there is an uneasy suspicion that something is wrong somewhere. And that there ought to be a much higher average of intelligence of a penetrative and efficient kind which should be made the most of; one spontaneous and without that self-consciousness of which I have noted the increase even during my life. [...]

Victoria Welby to Mrs. Ella Stout

19 December 1910

At a time of mutual good wishes my thoughts naturally turn to you and yours who have been so much in my life and counted for so much in what to me is far more than life – my life's work. I hardly indeed require to tell you how warm are my wishes for you all, – for all possible good in your lives. Please tell your husband that under the editorship of Mr. Macdonald, the new book is making rapid progress; and little more remains now but my Introduction and a selection from my encyclopaedic and every growing mass of witness to the present need and lack and also to the growing sense (which I rejoice to recognize) of impatient disgust at the quite needless difficulties in expression which we so supinely tolerate. But I have better news even than this. A young Cambridge (Magdalene) man, C. K. Ogden, who came upon *What is Meaning?* by accident is prepared to take the subject up seriously and thoroughly and tells me (what indeed I had already suspected) that he finds much discontentment among his undergraduate friends both in Cambridge and Oxford with the general barrenness of discussions from the balking effect of needless ambiguity. I have therefore at last acquired a practical and young representative in both universities and have good hopes now of attracting for *Significs* some of the best young minds. I much hope that it won't be many days now before the 'Essays' are in the Publisher's hands, as I do not want to produce my book until I can allude to your husband's. [...]

Victoria Welby to George F. Stout

5 January 1911

[...] I am rejoicing greatly in a Cambridge neophyte for *Significs* – Mr. Ogden, Secretary of the Debating Club. He is here seriously studying my materials and shows a strong and practical interest in the whole subject. [...] [see sections 7.1 and 7.2, this volume].

22 April 1911

[...] I think the book *Significs and Language* will be out now in a week or two. It will be a slender one as I was advised to make it a sort of first instalment or general statement, while another book to follow would give applications and suggestions. But I suspect that will have to be done by a younger hand with my materials, which are now very ample. You see I am 74 next week and not feeling very strong; the violent changes of temperature have been very trying.

[...] Mr. Alfred Sidgwick & Mr. Jourdain have been asking me anxiously when the *Essays* are to appear, as they would like, if the plan was given up, to use the material. I have referred them to Dr. Slaughter; but he told me he knew nothing. I have made a fresh attempt to get at Mr. Peirce, but it seems at present hopeless; and I should be a little afraid that at his age the whole outlook is not very hopeful. Mr. Ogden (of Magdalene, Cambridge) has been here again and is very keen. I had a most satisfactory little conference (Mr. Ogden being present) the other day with the Headmasters of Eton and Harrow. They are both inclined to look into the question of *Significs* with reference to future developments of education. [...]

10 August 1911

[...] Mr. Peirce is now apparently very much 'all there.' In a letter just received he says 'I wanted to write an abstract of my entire system of logic. But in order to make sure of being within the limits of space and time, and to be readable – or as nearly so as I can ever hope to be – I must limit myself to *Logical Critics*; that is, to the quality of grade of assurance that the three classes of reasoning afford.' [...]

Early volumes

1.8. A selection from *Links and Clues* (1881)

In the Preface to the first edition of *Links and Clues*, 1881, Welby states that in her quest for truth, understanding and creativity she was not presenting a full theory or thought system, but suggestions uniquely inspired by her readings of the ‘Bible’ and the ‘book of Nature.’ These had provided her with links or clues which in turn were intended to stimulate further inferences and applications by others interested in the same problems. In the Preface to the second enlarged and revised edition of 1883, Welby expresses her gratitude for the ‘unanimous sympathy’ received by her book, which she attributed to the ‘inherent power of the truths’ she had striven to suggest in the context of a growing need for ‘larger and more uniting conceptions of Christian truth’: ‘We need, in the fast-spreading anarchy of thought, not compromises, not starved or partial “systems,” not patchworks of fancy theories or modalities, but something fuller than anything we have as yet apprehended, and thus the true alternative of the withering negations with which we are threatened; a completeness indeed, “objectively” ours already, fitting our needs perfectly and embracing them wholly, but which we are slow to discern and assimilate.’ (Welby 1883 [1881]: xii)

This second reviewed and amplified edition aims at rendering the volume more connected and intelligible, though Welby was always humble about her lack of a formal education (but she was also critical of educational systems, cf. Ch. 5): ‘But the book perforce remains as before, fragmentary and formless. Matured or worked-out thought or deduction are not in my province or power; and the sense of my exceptional ignorance warns me of the danger of any approach to definitely doctrinal inference, since to develop and expound theological truth in its due proportion and perfect balance, requires qualifications which I do not possess, and a position to which I can lay no claim’ (1883 [1881]: xii–xiii). All the same in this Preface she did not hesitate to defend her position against the accusation of ‘Universalism’: ‘there are three fatal flaws in that thought, as commonly held or understood. (1) It puts misery before sin, and joy before holiness, as the first or main considerations. (2) It puts time-words and time-thoughts into Eternity, as if adequate, or indeed relevant. (3) It does not sufficiently recognise the discordant duality within our identity – the contrasted “old” and “new” Man – and therefore, I venture to think, leaves unused a precious key to the mysteries of judgement’ (1883 [1881]: xiii).

Welby’s reflections in *Links and Clues* are organized into a series of entries on specific themes, such as the following, often supplemented with references to the Sacred Scriptures: ‘Perfection,’ ‘The Light of Love,’ ‘Love and Justice,’ ‘Two Conceptions,’ ‘Returning Good for Evil,’ ‘The Power of the Selfish Will,’ ‘Divine and Human Love,’ ‘The “Our Father” of Love,’ ‘The Holy Scriptures,’ ‘Higher and Lower,’ ‘Bear Witness,’ ‘Inspiration,’ ‘The Swallow Imprisoned,’ ‘The Living Word,’ ‘Two Kinds of Assurance,’ ‘The True Offence of the Cross,’ “‘What do Ye more than Others,’” ‘Conversion,’ ‘The Cursing of the Fig Tree,’ ‘He Is the Life,’ ‘Why is Barrenness accursed?’, ‘The Blessed Motherhood,’ ‘The Birthday of the World,’ ‘The True Child, our Pattern,’ ‘Learn of Me,’ ‘Extremes,’ ‘The Way,’ ‘The Door,’ ‘Recognition,’ ‘Honour,’ ‘Three Witnesses,’ ‘Faith,’

‘Shadow and Substance,’ ‘The Two Realities,’ ‘The “Now,”’ ‘Iconoclasm,’ ‘Substitution,’ ‘Reconciliation,’ ‘The Reversal of Thought,’ ‘Sin v Sinner,’ ‘Words,’ ‘Reverting,’ ‘Never discard: always transform,’ ‘Point of View,’ ‘Truth,’ ‘Duality within Identity,’ etc.

This booklet was well received by many and criticized by others. Many of the issues dealt with are discussed and developed in the letters included in the initial chapters of *Echoes of Larger Life*, 1929, the volume of correspondence edited by Welby’s daughter Mrs. Henry Cust. The second edition includes extracts from Welby’s letters to Reverend Charles Voysey, the well-known leader, for nearly thirty years, of the Anti-Christian Theists. He is described in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, reported in a note by N. Cust in *Echoes of Larger Life* (p. 35), as courageous and sincere, and as having profoundly influenced the religious sense of his followers. Some extracts from Welby’s letters to Voysey have been included in the present collection. *Links and Clues* did not escape attention, indeed was at the centre of public debate. Though met with approval by many, it was considered to be controversial and in some cases even scandalous. One of Welby’s illustrious correspondents was The Bishop of Durham (Dr. Lightfoot), described in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in the following terms: ‘His personal character carried immense weight, but his great position depended still more on the universally recognized fact that his defence of Christian truth was supported by learning as solid and comprehensive as could be found anywhere in Europe’ (Cust 1929: 47). In a letter addressed to Lightfoot, Welby stated that ‘... My ever-recurring difficulty is to persuade people that my “lines of thought,” however defective and incomplete, are really in harmony with Church teaching.’ That *Links and Clues* provoked discussion is testified by another letter to a friend, which Welby wrote from the Theological College in Leeds: ‘I introduced it here, and great controversy rages about it. D– is indignant with it, but last time I saw him he retracted “baneful” and suggested “possibly helpful” as an epithet. He has spent hours in trying to convince me of its unsoundness. But then his mind demands that facts of doctrine or revelation should underlie all books, and is, I think, naturally averse to all real speculation, especially mysticism. H– and I and one or two more stand up for it vigorously. There seem to me to be two answers to D–. (1) There are regions where you cannot base thought on facts, but on hypotheses. Such a book is not dogmatic but only tentative, suggesting an hypothesis to fit what facts we know. Intellectual pioneering of that kind is not only good but necessary, if our minds are not to go to sleep. (2) The force of the book rests quite as much if not more on its moral teaching, which is to my mind splendid’ (Cust 1929: 55).

The excerpts below from *Links and Clues* present considerations of a methodological and interpretive order, beyond more strictly philosophical or theological discourse. For example, the section entitled ‘The Holy Scriptures’ is entirely dedicated to the ‘principles of interpretation,’ and as such evidences the value of *Links and Clues* as representing an early phase in the development of Welby’s theory of meaning and interpretation (see Chs. 2 and 3).

The Light of Love

‘Flee from the wrath to come.’

What are we to flee from? Always from sin, from evil, from wrath and anger, and the kingdom of hatred and malignity, rage and fury. Whom are we to flee unto? To our Father: to the Source

of life, who is Love, Author of peace, and Father of all mercies. We are always to flee from the kingdom of hate to the kingdom of love; from the kingdom of darkness, away from Him, to the kingdom of light, His presence. Let us think of Him as the Sun of righteousness. Neither darkness nor cold in the sun, only light and heat. So there is only light and love – life and goodness – in the Sun of righteousness. But if we turn our backs on the benefits of the sun and dwell in the icy shadows of a polar winter, we shall find there all the things that belong to it, only we must not speak of the ‘bitter cold’ of the sun we have left. We must not say, ‘the sun freezes.’ So if we choose the realm of cursing, bitterness, and destruction, and turn away from the sun of our souls, we shall verily find the things of darkness; but let us beware of supposing that *they* are in the sun of life.

If we leave the blessed kingdom of light and air, and descend into the bowels of the earth, we there (away from the sun) find again the things of darkness, though not the bitterness of deadly cold. We find stifling, poisoning gases; but, again, we must not say that these things are in the open air and daylight we have left; they are in the absence from those things (*Rom.* ii.8). Yea: indignation and wrath – shame and horror – belong to unrighteousness only. If we obey the power of evil, instead of GOD Who is all and only Goodness, then we must reap his harvest, receive his wages, share his attributes. We have chosen wrath for our ‘father,’ we have turned away from GOD, and so cannot see Him. The pure in heart alone can see Him; and what do *they* see? Blessing and cursing, sweet and bitter, love and hatred, life and death? . . .

Let us think again of GOD as light. A man with inflammation of the eyes or brain has to be kept in a dark room; and if a ray of light is admitted it tortures and injures him. But no one therefore says ‘the *sun* is inflamed,’ or ‘there is inflammation in the light’! All know that the inflammation is in the man himself, and that the blessed light is always the same; the difference is in that which it touches. Let the patient’s brain or eyes be cured, and he will be restored to the kingdom of light from which his diseased state had exiled him.

‘Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.’

We all want to be perfect – some day. And we all ignore the lesson of the Cross more or less by deeming it only a time event, something that endures but for a time, that like the grass withereth and fadeth, giving place to resurrection. That was, we seem to say, an exceptional and temporal interruption of eternal glory and honour; the Master is really like an earthly king who once in his life for an hour assumed the garb of a slave to avert some great calamity.

We are naturally delighted to be ‘as’ a king; to be what we see here as royal, and honoured in sumptuous splendour. Which of us does not rise to the bait in one form or another?

True, the preliminary ‘hour’ of tribulation and self-denial daunts us. But even the stockbroker can and does lead a life of rigid self-denial with the prospect of thus becoming opulent and a great man in his old age.

Do we want to be ‘as He is’?

Do we want to be constrained, by the intensity of His love poured into us without stint, to leave gladly any glory, any heavenly throne we can conceive, and share in rescuing some perishing world *at the cost represented by the Cross*? And when one world is redeemed, shall we be ready for another with fresh forms perhaps of exquisite suffering, borne not with the armour of divine impassibility but with all the sensitiveness of creature-infirmities? Do we really want to see with His eyes? To recognise that the highest honour is to wash the feet of the lowest for the sake of pure and perfect goodness, not only here and now but eternally? Do we really want to be content with ceaseless work, with obscurity, with homelessness? Perfect? The son of Man is the One who hath not where to lay His head. And where He is there may we be also – if we will! and His words pass not away; true once, true always. When, when shall He come in clouds of real glory (not our counterfeit earthy gorgeous glories), too dazzling for the eyes of our selfish or at best childish souls, with all His holy angels eager and thankful to minister with Him, only not allowed like us the honour of sharing His Sacrifice-life to the utmost? The angels sang, ‘Glory to GOD in the

highest,' when we in their place should have wept and wailed over the utter extinction of that glory in the unspeakable humiliation of the mangerbirth. Glory! at the Ascension, yes; but never in that unsoundable condescension to the extreme of helplessness in the finite. . .

What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Is he indeed capable of rising to this? Surely; else would Thou not have come and lived the parable of sacrifice to show us, as it were, the nucleus of the only true life.

And Thy saints have shown it, though hitherto they have seemed unable to see that the selflessness which brought them close to Thy heart here, and made their very hunger, thirst, weariness radiant, was but the expression of Thine eternal nature, was but Thy deathless light shining through them.

Yet Thou hast verily visited the son of man as the Son of Man; and even we shall know as we are known, as He knew. . .

'Perfect through Thy comeliness': 'The Manhood taken into GOD.'

'GOD is love.' Do not all commands to us not only imply, but culminate in love? Why else is St. Paul's description of charity so divine? It is the description of Christ. Thus, over all these things we 'put on charity' (Col. iii. 14), though we seem to have done so already in the list he gives. It seems superfluous; but no, for it is the very bond of perfectness – that which encircles and includes all its parts. So he says, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. xiii. 14). Thus we 'put on love' – Christ, the love of GOD give to us. 'Blessed be Thy coming, O Heart of Heaven!' That was written on a Mexican temple. Yea, the very Heart of heaven beating for us, given to us, aching for us, bleeding for us, bearing our sins, our pains and sorrows, and griefs and sufferings. Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. xiii, 10), for incarnate love says, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD!' Thus it includes all other attributes *knowable to us* (that is, within the 'Be ye perfect as. . .'), and that could only be said of love. Before I saw that GOD is love, in a special sense greater and more inclusive than the expressions, He is just, pure, powerful, etc., I could not see why, without love we were not merely imperfect, but – *nothing*; however heavenly and great our other gifts, I could not see why, over all things, we were to put on charity – love. Why not equally truth, justice, purity? And why the highest of gifts? Surely prophecy and faith – insight into the hidden things of GOD – must be as high or cannot be as nothing without it. But now I seem to see that the highest meaning of love includes *all else that we can grasp*. Divine love must be true, just, holy, pure, beautiful, faithful, lowly, patient, pitiful, and all else that is good which we can understand. (This is surely the key-thought). Take any one of these qualities, and we shall find it does not inherently include or imply the rest. For instance, justice need not necessarily be loving, nor purity patient, nor truth pitiful (or forgiving), in the sense in which the highest conception of love includes justice, purity, truth, etc. Again, *is not love the only thing of which you can say at once that it is interpreter and that which is interpreted, revealer and that which is revealed?*

Surely, it is our dwelling on the idea of GOD as omnipotent (that is, on the unknowable) which makes the difficulty of taking to our hearts the precious truth, that indeed and in reality, He is perfect and boundless Love. How often we hear it said, and sometimes out of a torn and bleeding heart one longs to heal – 'Omnipotence, boundless power, can do anything. Why then not so order things here, that goodness might reign without suffering and sing? GOD "could" have done it, and if He had, it must have been right because He did it. Having the power to produce a perfect result, without exposing us to the horror of sign and suffering, He has willed, has chosen, to inflict evil upon us. Why are we not like the angels – no Agony, no Cross, no Juda (no suffering, no death, no sin)?'

That is the needless wail, the weary doubt, the baffling darkness, which surely flows from the conception of GOD as power, rather than as love. It comes from putting will, power, sovereignty first in our thought of Him: the ruler rather than the Father. But the son revealed the Father, not the Ruler, for man had evolved *that* for himself, and had failed thus truly to know GOD; for thus he is unknowable by us – beyond us. We put supreme will and boundless power and omniscience first, and love second – or even on a level with all other 'qualities' or 'attributes.' But if we put

love first, we are free to say, 'It could not have been otherwise (we can even almost dimly begin to see why), there 'must have been' the possibility of sin and evil, else no choice, no trial, no victory, no love. Here comes in our Lord's test: – 'Was it from heaven, or of men?' Does this 'savour of things that be of GOD, or those that be of man?' Are we so blind yet, though with the Light of the world to open our eyes, as not to see that for love to rule and conquer through lowliness and weakness even, for love to direct both will and power as instruments, is a thought which man could never have evolved for himself (being at once too unloving and too naturally a power-worshipper), and which is thus divine. GOD alone could have told St. John He was Love – unto us – rather than Power. That He is power, force, is man's natural conception of supreme Deity, derived from the analogy of human rulers: what more obvious than the reign of superior strength, of supreme will? *Man can know and do that of himself in his lower nature, apart from goodness even.* But for Love to reign supreme, ready to abdicate power and glory to come among us, and with the great might of sacrifice to succour us and serve us and give us the Kingdom – is not this thought blessed and life-giving, and high above the other as the heaven above the earth? *As we are constituted,* the idea of a point beyond which Omnipotence 'cannot' go seems inevitable (so surely the word is misleading): for instance, GOD 'cannot' make wrong right or evil good, or, at least, we must certainly say that Omnipotence 'cannot' destroy itself. But there ought to be no 'cannot' at all in abstract omnipotence, else the word is meaningless. Surely this and all kindred words are as the Bable of thought to us, the building of which brings upon us confusion of tongues and bewilderment of heart! All the 'cannots' belong to 'can' – to power. Love has no 'cannots,' so to speak, and no limits: the power of *love* may have limits and cannots, and so may the will, in a sense; but love itself we can conceive as boundless. How infinitely we gain thus. Power in itself is not necessarily loving; it might be either wanton or implacable, or even unjust. So with will – Supreme Will might have willed our destruction. The expression, 'imperious, wilful,' contrasted with 'loving,' will show us how we gain in association. When we think that evil 'might have been avoided' – forgetting that the highest type of holiness known to us is victory, which, so far as we can conceive, could not have been attained without it – then we are taking the name of Love in vain. . . *What is temptation unfelt – agony unknown – death suffered? Only an angel. What is temptation overcome – agony passed through – death conquered? The son of GOD.* How many of us know Him for ourselves as the One who, being Love, only and always overcomes evil with good, returns good for evil: mirrored for us in the beloved One, who, being one with the Father, our King and Lord, yet identifies Himself with the neediest and feeblest to whom we minister; yet washed in the garb and fashion of a slave, the feet even of the traitor and murderer He knew would use those feet *so washed* to go forth and betray Him to death?

Why can we embrace and press to our innermost heart (when our will turns true as the needle to the pole, and is not deflected by self and sin), the perfect will? Because it is the blessed will of Love. It is the heart and not the mind of the universe, so to speak, that we can bear to look upon without being blinded: yea, and unite our hearts unto. So it is that 'Thou shalt love' is the essence of the two great commandments which include all others, on which all else hangs: the root, the key, the epitome of the 'Be ye therefore perfect, even *as* your Father which in heaven is perfect.' Light, life, love – how these three thoughts, taken together, help us in conceiving a threefold perfectness, the Triune glory! But of the three, love alone fully includes the other two. We can conceive light without love, as knowledge; of light without life, only revealing, manifesting it. But we speak of the light, the life of love; and this is a fuller thought than the love of light or life – so that light and life, in a sense, are included in the 'bond of perfectness.'

The utmost glory of love would be towards us as though it were not, unless we had light to see it as it truly is, the root and source and comprehension of all perfectness revealed to us; so He is light to us in order that by Him we may see that He is love.

Faithfulness presupposes faith. And what does faith presuppose? The knowledge of GOD as love; whom for that very reason we may trust utterly and wholly. (Welby 1883 [1881]: 7–18)

Love and Justice

Is justice apart from love, or an integral element in it?

With us this is so. But in GOD I see Justice perfectly developed within Love; – in the form of fire inexorable.

In what seems to me the lower conception, i.e. the separation, the contrast between justice and love (the one balancing or limiting the other), we are surely shut up to this: – that the highest form of love may conceivably be unjust; if not actively, at least passively. That is monstrous; and does it not betray at once how inadequate, how thoroughly anthropomorphic in the bad sense are our natural ideas of that transcendent completeness? Were this so, St. John would surely have given us the necessary complement of ‘GOD is love’ – ‘GOD is justice.’

If a mother is only ‘just’ as well as ‘loving’; deals out justice as well as love, but separately: – If she requires to be reconciled *to her children*, or if any possible interposition could reconcile her *to their sin*: that surely is simply a proof that she is creature and imperfect, not Creator and Perfect.

Why are we not told that GOD is Justice? Is it not because justice is included in love and light and inherently implied by them?

Our love may conceivably tolerate evil; but His (blessed thought!) can never condone the smallest speck of it; for it is fire. Not that sentimental, fond, cruel indulgence which some of us call ‘love’! That, when we apply it, or anything distantly like it, to Divine Love, is only the deification of a mother’s weak falseness to and betrayal of her trust; of that which she is to her spoilt child (expressive epithet!).

Is it not true that while the purest love cannot be unjust, pure justice does not necessarily imply love, except by existing within and proceeding out of it?

‘Be ye therefore perfect even as’ . . . Let us really take this in its fulness, and we shall know that man would never devise or imagine a GOD whose character was a standing rebuke and reproach to him; whose perfection covered him with shame and self-horror. Man in his natural pride does not like to be humiliated. Therefore he always tries to keep down or to lower the apprehension of that glory; the highest revelation of GOD is too painful to our egotism. If we want to get nearer and see more divine truth we must lift up our hearts to do it; and that is an effort – worse, it cuts across our pride by implying our debasement. How often we hear that we are not justified in inferring some confessedly higher principle from the study of the perfect life ‘because not distinctly laid down in so many words.’ . . . Easy enough to feel we can interpret and understand Scripture so long as it is not beyond a natural standard, an ‘evil for evil’ level; but the moment it transcends that limit (as in the eternal return of good for evil, the eternal joy in giving, the eternal remembrance ‘though even a mother may forget’), then we instantly take refuge in our ‘ignorance.’ . . . Oh, that we should yet be ignorant after the lesson of the cross, in which we are to learn what GOD *Is*. Some have said of diviner conception: ‘Yes, that is pure, and high, and true; but cast not that pearl before swine; the world is not ready yet to dispense with lower terms and levels.’ (The offence of the Cross [Gal. V. 2]; always too high, too spiritual). Others (doubters or outsiders) say: ‘This or that is pure gold, it draws and wins: if you can convince us that thoughts like these are not yours only, but are in Christ and from Him, then the victory is won; but for a purer Gospel than we were taught to find.’

There is a sore famine in the land. But He who holds the key of the granaries will not let us see His face till we bring Him His youngest brother; the pure heart specially dear to Him which as yet knows Him not by sight, and whose separation from Him and estrangement from Him has been our fault and our doing.

O the fatal blindness of us! not seeing that we are some of us driving the purest hearts and most truthful spirits into the wilderness like hireling shepherds, by denying them the highest we can reach unto, the treasure expressly entrusted to us who bear His name for them. Can we not give our best and trust him?

Think of the Pearl of pearls, cast before, and set between what swine of thieves and murderers, jeerers, mockers, trampers, renders! – the Holiest given to the dogs – to those who cried, ‘Away with Him, crucify Him! Surely until we have seen that pearl our heart knows not its own swinishness. . . . ‘And many smote their breasts and returned.’ . . . ‘Truly this was the son of GOD.’

We are always ‘bringing down.’ When we make Him angry, jealous, changeable, vindictive – down to our level. When impassive, impersonal, loveless, ruthless, apart – below our level. But ‘He brought Himself down to our level.’ Yes, in order that we might in light and life mount higher towards His; and yet we grovel in our own, and read the Blessed One by its light! – Let us not read Him by our flaring, smoky, dim lamplight, but by His own open sunlight. The higher and lower meanings we may choose even for the same words are sometimes almost or quite like ‘He forgot Himself’ (meaning sacrifice) and ‘He forgot Himself’ (meaning disgrace). (1883 [1881]: 18–22)

The Holy Scriptures

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION. – How shall we choose the best? that is – (1) the truest; (2) the most fruitful.

Let us try several.

But first, we must bear in mind that we are looking therein for the word of GOD; for the highest, the deepest and purest, in one word, the most Divine truth we can bear, and for that which man would not have reached or apprehended by his own light and faculties alone – that beyond man’s highest natural standard. We must ask ourselves also, *Do we want to know what the Bible says only, or what it means?* If only ‘what it says,’ we shall assuredly be taken at our word and left, in confusion of tongues, to our barren text-banding. Do we want to know what is eternally true, and what true of certain ages and races – ‘temporally’ true; what the Holy Scriptures would say equally and in the same terms if written now, or 2000 years hence, and what they said at certain times, and to certain people, and in certain circumstances?

First, The literal. – Easy to show the utter shipwreck which this would lead to from one end to the other. ‘Thou wilt show thyself *unsavoury*’²⁸ or ‘froward.’ ‘Surely thou hast *greatly deceived*.’²⁹ ‘The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do.’³⁰ ‘The Lord thy GOD hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate’; and ‘If any man come to Me, and *hate* not his father and mother.’³¹ But, in fact, the passages are so many that the difficulty is to choose examples. Well may He say that the letter killeth; by contracting, and by deadly work of disunion, leading astray and hiding truth.

Secondly, The equal, the level (all passages in the Old Testament to be taken as on one level and of equal value, and all in the New Testament the same). – Here, have we not also the decision of our Lord? ‘It was said. . . *but* I say unto you.’ Of course, this referred to what all acknowledge more or less, the difference of level between the ‘first and second dispensation,’ the right of the ‘Word made flesh’ to expand and to fulfil the written word. But does not that establish in a sense the principle of difference of level? Lastly, if we grasp in its fulness the truth of our Lord’s divinity, His own words, as His life, must in some real sense stand on a higher level than any others before or after. The principle of the higher and lower requires no Scripture broken; it requires only our Lord’s own rule of interpreting and expanding the lower by the higher, the lesser by the larger, that which ‘hath been said’ by the greater truth which includes, and thus supersedes and replaces it. Sometimes Scripture has to be, not broken as disobeyed or cancelled, any more than law, but

28. Sam. xxii. 27.

29. Jer. iv. 10.

30. Ex. xxxii. 14.

31. St. Luke xiv. 26.

penetrated, broken through, to get at the kernel of spirit within the husk of letter; but that was not what He meant, that was part of His own work! If Scripture, as I seem to see, embodies the principle of Incarnation, some of it must be kept unbroken as representing and revealing GOD, some of it as representing and revealing man (N.B. *with all his limitations*). Surely Ps. lxxxii. 6 was quoted by Christ as one of the highest sayings in the Old Testament; a foreshadowing of the Incarnation, a direct witness to its principle: Man made Divine by the coming of the word of GOD, by the Word made Flesh, by the ‘taking of the manhood into GOD.’

Thirdly, The context. – Here we get on truer and more wholesome ground, and touch a higher principle. How different a text will often look when we have run our eye along the page, through the chapter or the book where it occurs! But it is often difficult to know where we are to draw the line in interpreting by context; where the context ends, and where we ought rather to search for parallels.

Fourthly, The tendency of the whole taken as whole. – Better still, and in one sense perfect. Yet we must guard ourselves from taking even this only, else we shall have to allow the lower element in the ‘old dispensation’ to depress instead of leading up to the divine height of our Lord’s own revelation. Might one not use this simile? – Two jars of fine wine, one yet imperfect, being not quite fermented; if we pour that into the ripened, perfect wine, we lower the quality of the whole, or at least lessen its value.

So at last do we not arrive at the highest, i.e. the most Christ-like principle of all, that of the higher and lower? Throughout nature we see this principle. Take the wave as an instance; the upward rush and curl, and the answering undertow, indispensable to produce another glorious curve and arch.³² Revelation must include the principle of Incarnation – surely the key of all knowledge and light, indeed the root of it. And what is the principle of Incarnation? May it not be expressed as the perfect union of the divine and human, the higher and lower? The written ‘word of GOD,’ must be even as the living ‘Word of GOD’ – the eternal Son, and must share our weakness and infirmity perfectly, to the uttermost, in a true sense. In order to be a true link, to reveal GOD to us, it must also reveal man. No need to say that we must not push the parallel too far. We must see that the ‘Word’³³ is always *the* Divine Word; the book being that wherein we find Him, and the conscience that whereby we recognise Him and all truth in Him. A person, a

32. It has been objected, by one of the ablest (and kindest) of my critics and correspondents, that this thought, as applied to Holy Scripture, is untenable. He protests against the simile of an undertow, ‘holding back or pushing against, the true revelation.’ And he admits that in a certain sense he stands in the second class of which I speak on p. 32 [page number refers to the original text, here see above], as taking all passages as if on one level and of equal value. But he virtually concedes all I am anxious for, by acknowledging in Old and New Testament ‘two elements or factors, the temporary and the eternal.’

Probably I have failed to draw clearly enough the distinction between lower in the sense of lesser, and lower in the sense of baser, – between what belongs to our state of limit and what belongs to our state of shame. Certainly the essential unity of the Bible is to me a truth so indispensable that I could no more think of the ‘undertow’ breaking it than I could think of wave-crest or wave-hollow as breaking the unity of the ocean. But of course no parallel of this kind can really be adequate or complete.

As to the specially interpretative value of some among the very ‘highest’ passages, – the words of the Word made flesh; may I venture to suggest ‘And lo! I am with you always’ (St. Matt. xxviii. 20), as interpreting ‘But Me ye have not always’? (St. Mark xiv. 7).

Those who have the strongest grasp of the reality of the abiding Presence of Christ, show thereby that they do practically interpret the second by the first of these passages, rather than the first by the second. (Appendix A, Note A)

33. St. John i. 1.

life, must always be the highest and most complete revelation here to us; higher than any means whereby we receive it. Do not some of us speak and write almost as if we had never read, or at least never pondered, the first chapter of St. John's Gospel? We should not dare to speak of the Bible as 'the word *was* GOD.' If it had been written from end to end by our Lord Himself, would it have been just what it is now?

The next question is: Suppose we accept the principle of the higher and lower as the true method of interpretation, and as that which our Lord Himself would have us use; how are we to apply it? In two ways. (1) By asking, in reference to every text or passage throughout Scripture, 'Is this attainable by man without special divine illumination? Has it been or is it, reached by those who are without the light we claim?' In other and diviner words, does this 'savour the things that be of men, or those that be of God?' 'Was it from heaven, or of men?' 'Do even the publicans and sinners' as much as this? 'Is it earthly or heavenly, natural or 'super'-natural?' and by taking as the higher, every one of which we can say, 'This is beyond and above any natural religion or standard.' (2) By using the higher, thus discovered and discerned, as a test and interpretation for all the rest. Thus we shall see how often seeming contradictories combine into the purest harmony and are really complementaries; for the larger absorbs the lesser, the higher draws up the lower into itself, and expands it; and surely we may hope to see this more and more, as we enter more and more into the spirit of the words – 'Judge not by appearance.' We can discern the *face* of the sky and the earth, the face of GOD's word and man's nature; but after all that takes us such a little way – it is but skin-deep! We cannot discern 'times, signs,' that which is under and behind the surface. There is one great parable which includes and interprets all the rest; the living, acted parable of the Manger, the Cross, the Resurrection; the parable of the life, death, victory. (Welby 1883 [1881]: 31–36)

Inspiration

One asked how the Bible can be inspired; since GOD as revealed by Moses, is 'so different from the Father revealed by Jesus, that both cannot be the true GOD.' Answer: What is inspiration? What is its sign and test in Nature? Where is the inspired creature? Man? But he is not inspired, or endowed, or gifted at birth or in childhood with the intellect, the wisdom, the knowledge of mature age! Yet would you, therefore (because he is undeveloped, and childish in childhood and his horizon narrow), say: 'He is no more inspired than other creatures, and has no higher gifts of reason and mind?' If Moses had indeed revealed the Father to us, then should we not have needed the revelation of the Son. But, indeed, no spoken or written revelation could have shown us our sonship and through Sonship, Fatherhood.

'Elias must first come.' He spake unto them of John the Baptist.³⁴ Instance of necessity for piercing through words; for what could be plainer than the reference to Elias? Yet it meant a totally different 'person' (as we count different). (1883 [1881]: 49–50)

The Swallow Imprisoned

A swallow in a room kept on flying at the window and dashing himself against the transparent pane he could not see, trying to escape. So we sometimes dash ourselves against the 'plain word of GOD' which lies clear before us. There it is on the page; yet, when we try to fly straight forward into its blue depths, we seem to come against a barrier invisible yet pitilessly hard, stopping us.

34. St. Matt. xvii. 11–13.

O that He then may take us gently in His hand away from hard glass panes of human boundings, limitings, enclosures, and put us through the open window; to fly by the one way, by the light and air of the one truth, into the glorious vastness of the one life; lying in endless radiance before us!

Too many of us have not only looked on Holy Scripture as one dead level of mechanical ‘inspiration,’ but have been content to accept and adopt, not only conventional, but even corrupt meanings of words: and if we would estimate the disastrous results of this, let us picture our own words subjected to the same treatment.

The Divine things which ‘shall be’ are future only to *us*; for the word ‘future’ belongs to mortality and time. O that we had an ‘eternal tense’! Thus we should say, Man falls in self and rises in Christ; not merely he did fall and he shall rise. And Divine truth must come to us through time-shadows: yet we never can too urgently remind ourselves that it only passes through these because of our infirmity, just as the Word took our weak finite nature because of our frailty and sin; and that the nearer we are to Christ the more clearly shall we see timeless realities.

The sinner (the carnal man) sees only the things of time; the saint sees them, and also sees a meaning and truth beyond and behind: Christ sees the universe of limitless eternity and the infinitely little fleeting shadows of this life and world in their true place; – passes through the one, lives in the other. . .

The Bible differs from all other books in this very thing, that while all other history concerns that which is past and gone, this concerns that which is more than ‘present and future’ can fitly express; and is written for our learning not only of what happened once and has had or will have results, but of what has neither beginning nor end. ‘My words pass not away.’ Words, the most fugitive of things! Yet truly no word from beyond the veil can pass away; even if less than directly divine.

We ought to be tender over other books as to a sinner; willing to be little blind to defects and dwelling on the best parts of them: but the word of GOD requires no tenderness; on the contrary, we are expressly told that it is like silver, tried seven times in the fire.

We might as well find fault with fire because alone it consumes only and does not create, as find fault with critics who destroy a belief and don’t give us a substitute! Truth is indestructible: walks in the midst of the furnace of criticism and denial unharmed like the three. . . for there is always a Fourth walking there also.

The page of the book is studded with stars like a clear night sky.

And the stars of eternal truth are really vast worlds, though to us they are specks even to the straining eye of love; we need not let the dark spaces between them occupy or hinder us.

The astronomer tells us that the deeper his researches the more is the perfect law and order of the starry heavens revealed to him; and the stronger our telescopes the fewer the starless spaces. (1883 [1881]: 50–53)

The Living Word

Do we not need more practically to recognise and realise that the answers to some of the things which most baffle and perplex, divide and distract us, and most sorely hinder the winning of souls for Christ, are contained and expressed, not directly in words, but in *Himself*: that the Incarnate Word *is* the Revelation?

We are ever tempted to assume that what is not revealed in ‘plain written words’ is not revealed at all. But running through every thought of mine will be found this main clue – the mother of many – that there is much implied in the words of Christ especially, and in Holy Scripture generally, which, not lying on the surface, is to be discerned by the light of what He *is*: and that we are not merely to learn from words alone, even thus; but also from what He revealed and manifested personally in character, life, acts; in His birth, baptism, fasting, and temptation, His passion,

resurrection and ascension, His ministry, and His miracles. He is Himself the Word of GOD; and therefore it is not record alone – precious and vital as that is – but *that* Word, *that* Holy Scripture, *that* Gospel, *that* Epistle, taken by the Comforter and shown more and more clearly unto us, which ought to reveal undreamt of glory and comfort to the childlike and faithful spirit which is ready to put aside all preconceptions of this meaning and is only longing to see by His light. For the Word of love and life interprets alike Old and New Testament, being the beginning and the end and the quickening essence of both. (St. Mark iv. 22.)

Thus with the parable. How seldom we see even an attempt whether successful or no, to interpret them by the Incarnation as a whole! We ever tend to interpret them by what our natural hearts (ruled by the unfaithful wills which resist rather than echo the divine will), would mean if we had written them; and sometimes we even think a more divine canon overstrained and fanciful. Take the parable of the Virgins. Which of us thinks of the sorrow of the bridegroom – and of the bride as one with Him – at the marring of the feast, the cloud upon the gladness, the shortened procession, the sound of exiled wailing, the silent empty seats? Our selfish hearts would not care – or at best would feel but a passing pang – being absorbed in their own bridal delight; and so we suppose that He cares not! We will not or we cannot read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Him, the open book of GOD; and so we cannot read His words, *or His most speaking silence*. But if we feel that the reading of Himself is indeed as yet beyond us; if we are sadly conscious how much of self would creep in even there and dim our sight, how blessed to know that the fire and light of the Holy spirit, searching and inexorable, but also quickening and manifesting, waits but our stronger faith and more united prayer to come upon His church in ever fuller measure: unfolding the unsearchable riches of Christ, and opening wider and wider the secret doors of His boundless treasure-house! (1883 [1881]: 53–55)

*Shadow and Substance*³⁵

There was once a shadow world inhabited by filmy shadow beings. No solid substance and no essential reality was found there; all was appearance, image, or picture, representation, phantasm, or illusion. Every object could be penetrated and passed through without hindrance; all yielded and dissolved or vanished like a rainbow or a mirage as you approached and strove to enter or to grasp it. And there came to one who dwelt in that world and knew no other, a messenger who told him of a wonder called Substance, which might in another life be his; something real, tangible, firm, unyielding, secure, able to give support or shelter instead of melting into emptiness. And when the messenger was gone the shadow being pondered how to represent to himself that strange and unknown unreality of which he had been told, and for which he might hope. And he thought – ‘I will lay down a million shadows, the most beautiful and the greatest and the best I find; and to them I will add million after million, for if only my supply is inexhaustible, and I may go on and never end my shadows, I shall thus at last have substance.’ Thus do we, when we think that Eternity is only duration without end, instead of being related to times as substance is to shadow.

‘Heaven is at present out of sight, but in due time, as snow melts and discovers what it lies upon, so will this visible creation face away before those greater splendours which are behind it, and on which at present it depends. In that day shadows will retire and the substance show itself.’

‘We should remember that this life is scarcely more than an accident of our being, that it is no part of ourselves, who are immortal; that we are immortal spirits independent of time and space,

35. I ought perhaps to say that when this was written I had never seen or heard of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave (*Republic*, Book vii), to which my attention has since been directed as conveying the same truth in another form – and with immeasurably greater force.

and that this life is but a sort of outward stage on which we act for a time' (Dr. Newman). (1883 [1881]: 149–150)

*The 'Now'*³⁶

Let us try the effect of putting ourselves into the 'Now' of GOD for a moment, and out of our own earthly past, present, and future, into eternity; out of the 'has been and shall be' into the IS – the Kingdom of being and life. Let us thus try to get a fresh view of all the great cardinal truths (putting aside for a moment their aspect as events), and we shall surely thus open a window into heaven itself. Thus at last we shall get *dimly* a glimpse of eternal Fact: the changeless, the solid, the immovable; we are freed for an instant from the necessary bondage alike of passing event or of passing thought, and reach with the end of an outstretched finger – or rather with the throb of an uplifted heart, to the verge of that which IS; and which, essentially *being*, must 'for ever' have been and 'forever' continue. Only for moments can any soul thus penetrate here the time-veil. That veil of thought, speech, life, is appointed us, and so we are obliged to think and speak of Divine things as if they were wholly and only what we mean by events, our little human occurrences past and over in a few years, days, hours – moments even: as if we could point to a clock-hand in eternity and say, Before that time was reached, before that hour struck, no redemption – no atonement *existed* or *was*. This or that began to be, took place at that exact moment in eternal time-keeping, and must now be exclusively spoken of even in the heavenly language in the past tense as over and done, as that which once happened, and of which we can only have the memory and the consequences. Here and now, while fettered by time barrier, we are obliged to think and speak thus; yet surely we might gain by realising now and then for ourselves that it *is* a barrier.³⁷

'All that came before Me.'

Understood of a time-coming only; surely no one could fail to see that we make these words prove too much, and include not only the prophets of the Old Testament, but even John the Baptist, His own forerunner!

Surely in persistently (though often unconsciously) confining the 'Me' of Christ to the temporary, human, phenomenal 'Me' of the flesh we make half our difficulties. He never meant 'Come to me' as *we* should mean in our self-loving, self-trusting, honour-seeking habits of mind, or even in an isolated sense. Of that 'Me' He said, 'I can of Mine own self do nothing.' We come to Him

36. A little book, called *The Stars and the Earth*, recently republished (with notes by Proctor), brings out with singular force the purely relative value of conditions of space and time. The author shows that we are able easily to conceive changes in the present physical order of things or rather in the point of view from which we regard them, which would entirely revolutionise our apparently most necessary notions of 'past, present, future'; and his suggestions seem to cut away from under their feet the whole standing-ground of the Pantheists.

37. 'Who speak thus do not yet understand Thee, O Wisdom of God, Light of souls; understand not yet how the things be made, which by Thee and in Thee are made: yet they strive to comprehend things eternal, whilst their heart fluttereth between the motions of things past and to come, and is still unstable. Who shall hold it and fix it, that it be settled awhile, and awhile catch the glory of that ever-fixed Eternity, and compare it with the times which are never fixed, and see that it cannot be compared; and that a long time cannot become long, but out of many motions passing by, which cannot be prolonged altogether; but that in the Eternal nothing passeth, but the whole is present. . .

'Who shall hold the heart of man, that it may stand still, and see how eternity ever still-standing, neither past nor to come, uttereth the times past and to come?' – St. Augustine, *Conf.*, Bk. xi. xi.

rather as the Word, the expression of GOD; GOD as love speaking to man through man, in absolute sympathy with man; drawing him upwards into the true and divine life and nature by the way, life, truth of Sonship.

He, the Christ of God, came it is true in time and in flesh; showing us in human life and death the glorious truths of the unseen, and revealing the ineffable and else unknowable depths of uttermost love towards us: but He comes also for ever and ever in spirit to every faithful seeking heart of man that hungers unselfishly for truth and righteousness – that is, for GOD.

‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ . . . ‘The Light which lighteth *every* man.’ That interprets the divine Me of the Saviour, surely. Some of us seem to think that the ‘came’ was only like our own comings – in time. We read it only to mean the moment of His earthly and physical birth. And there is of course a truth in that. . . .’ But Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.’ Did not our Lord come then to show it to his heart? Yes. In the eternal Now he comes. Only to our limitations it must needs be at ‘this time,’ in ‘this form,’ in ‘this place.’ May we not even say (though words express it so inadequately!) that even though the fulness of eternity is always there; that which was then revealed, is true in Eternity which includes time. (1) The eternal truth, ‘The son begotten of His Father before all worlds.’ (2) The event, and the becoming a manifested time-fact as well.

We look on phenomena and that which ‘stands under’ them as identical; and instead of recognising the ‘revelation of the eternal under the forms of time,’ we do not look through the forms of time to that which they show to us in material parable, but rest in the material parable itself, as ultimate and only fact.

‘It is finished.’ We often read ‘It is done with’ into these words. But is it not really that the *revelation* is completed; now begins the knowledge of the love-kingdom? When we close a subject or put it by we say, ‘Once for all I tell you this or that; and there is an end of it.’ But *His* ‘once and for all’ is once shown for all times; one as well as once, for all and for ever; at all times and places.³⁸ (1883 [1881]: 156–161)

Iconoclasm

The freer we are from the bondage of confounding sign with thing signified, event with essential truth manifested by it, flesh with spirit, the freer to use sign in the spirit of loving obedience, and he blessed in our deed through it. It is the shallow mind and the superstitious conscience, which, having found the true place of sign in the scale of realities, discards it and demolishes it as trammel or as bondage. It is as if we, like the Puritan iconoclasts, destroyed every picture and statue, because some have bowed down to them.

A man knows that his wife’s or mother’s love does not lie in pictures, or letters, or words yet he despises not her portrait or her letters to him, and would think you an idiot for proposing that he should discard and forego them all as unnecessary. If we give a higher value to spiritual reality, we shall not therefore undervalue physical, phenomenal reality.

The nearer to Christ we are, the liker to Him in our ministry, the more independent of material or literal contact. He cured the servant and the child while yet a long way off. It is we who require the physical medium, because we are so far from Him in our region of life. For the hardness of our hearts He must give Himself to us thus. And how we need the consecration of food! It is almost our only recognition of the holiness of ‘inorganic nature,’ the only honour we pay to the

38. ‘For what was spoken was not spoken successively, one thing concluded that the next might be spoken, but all things together and eternally.’ ‘For in the eternal, speaking properly, there is neither anything past, as though it had passed away, nor anything future, as though it were not as yet, but whatsoever is, only is.’

‘inert creation.’ But neither difficulty nor unwillingness to give Himself perfectly and wholly, alike through body and through spirit, is on His side, but on ours. Do we say that the body and flesh must be fed, and thus be made into His body? Yea; and it was bodily healing also which He did when yet at a distance from the sufferer, and thus without touch or contact like unto ours. (1883 [1881]: 162–163)

Words

Why do we put stumbling-stones in our brother’s way?

Let us hold fast for very life each fruitful word; but do we not sometimes cling to words of man’s devising, even at the expense of the precious truth they once conveyed?

Take ‘dogma.’ Once it meant positive truth, a vital necessity. Now it means with most men secondhand assertion, a thing of the past. Or, it is looked upon as the outcome of the ‘dogmatic’ spirit, the dictatorial or unsympathetic temper which creates or confirms resistance, and repels the heart which is longing for light and would melt at once at the touch of love.

Every word has now to show its credential of fruitfulness; else, however fair its leaves, it too shall wither in His presence (1883 [1881]: 223–224)

Never discard: always transform

When you see an idea which has been far-reaching as the human race, and always tends to break out again in a new form if discarded in an old one, ask yourself, What is the truth which underlies all this? Never so fix your attention on the abuse as to become blind to the use of a thing or a thought. Never let caricature disgust you with painting. Be not content with protest and denial, for in themselves they are dead and death-producing. Affirm and build; and all the things that are not of truth and life shall crumble as you touch them. Thus over-come evil with good.

The brightest light makes the darkest shadow. So, whenever you see a deep shadow of superstition or materialism in man’s heart, look for the light which causes it.

There seems to be an increasing tendency to protest against a lower without suggesting or pointing out a higher aspect of many fruitful truths. Thus many a fair building of spiritual doctrine and life is, as it were, swept and garnished; purged it may be of much that is false, unworthy, distorting, or degrading; even in a sense adorned and beautified with poetical or picturesque interpretations; but nevertheless *left empty*.

That principle – the negative – seems to be fatal; it is destroying instead of fulfilling. And the resultant void must follow nature’s law of vacuum; it must needs suck in with resistless force whatever presents itself; absorbing, it may be, some form of evil sevenfold worse than the one expelled. We cannot afford to lose one single crumb or iota of truth, however much it may have been defaced, perverted, misused, unworthily expressed or interpreted. The pioneer’s besetting temptation is to get rid of hampering difficulties and problems, to travel in light marching order, to ignore or dispense with things which nevertheless in their true place and highest form are precious – indeed often vital.

It is ever an unseaworthy or a leaking ship which has to cut away masts, throw overboard cargo, tackle, rigging, fittings, and in order to float at all, survive as a dismantled hull, however buoyant. The sound and perfect vessel needs no cutting away to rise to a wave or weather a storm; she only needs to be all secured in due *balance*; ballast, cargo, gear, all in their own place and use.

Thus my longing is to see all that has been found good, true, useful, fruitful – anywhere, by any one, at any time – in its right relation to all other good; in the purest form of which it is susceptible. It seems to me that this is carrying out the Divine method. For GOD takes us as we

are, and uses the basest material for the manifesting of His glory; nothing is too low for Him to stoop to, and in touching, to transfigure.

And we need to be aware of a tendency to increase the breadth of the Church *at the expense of her height and depth*. The Church is in truth the Body of Christ, and thus must reproduce His form – the form of true Humanity – which is perfect symmetry; the stretch of the arms equalling, but never exceeding, the upright measure of the stature of Man. However wide she may be, she must ever be as high and as deep. We need not only to enlarge borders but also to lay foundations deeper in the one rock; and to raise the ceilings and roofs of our thought that the House may be a statelier shrine of truth. (Welby 1883 [1881]: 233–234)

Point of View

As we can only have a point, let us use our neighbour's point as well as our own, and survey the same expanse of truth from as many 'points' as possible: thus may we get nearer to the Catholic, i.e. the universal view. And let us see that our points are as high as possible, so that our atmosphere may be pure and fresh, and that our rays of vision may take in what is all round us, like the rays of a star.

How it teaches one to be brought irresistibly to the thought of the divine all-sidedness, to the perfect harmony of divine comprehension, by the one-sidedness and inconsistency even of great men. And let us mark that the crucial difference between the anachronisms and inconsistencies of men and the apparent contradictions, the real *complementaries* of Christ is: (1) That the latter, when we look into them, always blend into a perfect whole; the deeper you penetrate the surface, the more gloriously this shines out. (2) That the former refuse to coalesce by any process into a harmonious whole; but tend to become ever more glaringly discordant. (1883 [1881]: 235–236)

The Sun is One

There was a man who was anxious we should understand there was but one sun – that the sun was one: so he denied the existence of the light of the sun, saying that it was inconsistent with the unity of the sun and so also was the heat which flowed from it. And he went and sat in the cold and dark to make sure he had the sun and nothing else; only, unfortunately, he was found there starved and frozen.

I can understand sun-worship better than nature-worship, for nature is but the living soul, while the sun is the life-giving power.

Take away the sun, and 'nature' here is frozen and dead; but take away what we call nature – the world and all that is thereon – and the sun shines on for other needs. Well may he rejoice as a giant to run his course! (1883 [1881]: 238)

Truth

The purest truth that we can see is to be our first aim. And what is that? We may think of truth as complete and incomplete. The former must be beyond our present ken, unless in one shape only. We cannot find out the *Almighty* unto perfection (Job xi. 7, 8, 9); but as ours is only a *point* of view (expressive word!) we can only see a too often distorted fraction. Is there, therefore, any one form of truth which we can see as a whole in a sense, and which will interpret for us all else that affects our higher nature, and expands in ennobling it? Is not Love that form? There we are not hindered by the fetters of our bounded state; there we have a Divine faculty wherewith to grasp Divine fullness. . . . In all else, our conception is in mosaic at the best; and the picture, the subject, is the universe. How can we step back far enough to survey the work as a whole? But in the Love

which has no flaw or limit – all-sided, we have but to do one thing; we have but to *put on*, as we are told we may and must, Christ: we have but to assume that true Life, to see with His eyes, hear with His ears, touch with His hands, love with His heart which is ‘charity’ itself; and then we shall live, and all things shall be ours.

Thus shall we see a boundless truth; that Love which is at once the water of life and the fire that kindles and purifies; the fertilising, quickening power of the universe.

How sternly *true* is nature! nothing plausible. No special pleading or expediency. No covering up of awkward fact. No gloss. No ‘Oh, that may be true, but it is “dangerous;” away with it’; just simple, eternal, awful, bare truth. Look, she seems to say, here I am, GOD’s loyal work; no shifting, nothing underhand, no dexterous expediency (even in His service), no exaggeration. Cold and inexorable I must be, as well as warm and fostering; but whether kindling under the sun or freezing under the moon, I am always utterly real. Learn from me: put by your evasions, your sophistries, your pleas of ‘danger’ . . . ‘What is true, is safe’ (Courtenay motto).

Truth only, is GOD only.

How miserably inadequate are our conceptions of the all-embracing greatness of truth! Imagine a number of people looking through separate telescopes at our earth – each having a radius of a few miles and unable to exchange telescopes. How tenaciously each would cling to his own theory (*quite true as far as it went*) to the exclusion of all others! One man would declare the world was covered with water, another that it was all forest or all mountain: each would maintain that his view and his neighbour’s were contradictory, and therefore would not both be true. And they would be so only because of that little word ‘all’ instead of ‘what I see.’ . . . (1883 [1881]: 242–244)

‘Danger’

Anything that strikes at the root of evil or error must always be dangerous, for the tree may fall in an unexpected direction, and in any case must crush a great deal.

May GOD keep us from rejecting any reaching, not because it is one-sided, distorted, perverted, unrighteous, false, but only because it seems to us ‘dangerous.’ Let us beware: for what was the most dangerous teaching the world has ever known, in the sense of disturbing existing landmarks, of causing doubt in widely accepted ideas, of revolutionising prevalent habits of thought? Our hearts will answer us. . . Living truth must be dangerous. It is expediency that is safe – *for the moment*. And why is truth dangerous? Because we build our houses not on the Rock which no discoveries can shake, no criticism destroy, but on shifting sands which give way under us. Our faith is a feeble plant that cannot stand fresh air, or it leans on the prop of another’s word only: on external authority.

Things, in order to unite in central truth, must come from many quarters, each the opposite of some other – the line of which, if carried through the centre, would join and run into its opposite. The unity of truth to which all must converge involves the diversity and thus apparent contradiction of converging paths to it.

Are not extremes discordant and divided because they don’t go far enough? (also because they are never extremes of self-distrust as to our power of seeing truth!). Are not ‘extreme’ thinkers opposed because they are unconsciously at the two ends of the segment of a circle of truth, so great that the curve is imperceptible by us; so that if they would only go on, on, they would all at last find the point of union? But let us beware of the one centrifugal force, self, else we are in danger of flying off the curve. Some one may say that on the world of truth, as on ours, only one side is in sunlight, and so if you go on, you will come to darkness; yes; but *never stop*, that is the one safeguard, for thus you come into light again, knowing at last its value! When we see the light in front (as in truth it always is), we shall know we are not reverting. (1883 [1881]: 245–246)

Opposites

When two truths seem to contradict one another, are there not three right ways of attuning, reconciling them, and three wrong ways? Right ways – (1) Try to find the link which joins; (2) Try to find that which includes both; (3) Try to find out which GOD intends to interpret the other (i.e. which gives most Divine light by which to see the other, which most raises our thoughts). Wrong ways – (1) To take half the one and half the other, and thus make up a poor and meagre whole; (2) To take the one and refuse the other, unless the one plainly supersedes by absorbing the other; (3) To interpret the high, the difficult, the Christ-like truth, by the one nearest our ordinary standard. (1883 [1881]: 246–247)

Suggestions taken from letters to an Antichristian Theist

You say, ‘Of what use is a revelation which is to you a glory, to me a shame?’ I answer that your own words of fervent devotion to and trust in your Heavenly Father are the fruit of an inward revelation, as you yourself would insist. But we know that this revelation also is matter, if not of shame, at least of ridicule and compassion, to many who sincerely think it a higher ideal to be devoted only to abstract goodness and truth; and to whom ‘father,’ except as applied to man, is anthropomorphic, childish, absurd, deluded. Of what use, therefore, is the inward light and monitor by which alone we grasp truth and respond to the divine, if that also can produce such opposite results in honestly truth-seeking minds?

Ambiguity is surely a fundamental principle of all training.

Think of the ambiguity of circumstance in our lives; they may mean a hundred things. All things seem to say what they do not mean, and mean what they do not seem to say. If ambiguity was to be excluded from the Gospel, at least surely our Lord would have written it Himself.

You say, ‘He spoke although he knew His words would be mistaken, and would even give rise to error.’ And if the mother knew her babe must first stumble and toddle and stagger, yes, and even fall and cry before it could really walk or run, would she withhold or discourage or forbid it the use of its legs? So we stumble and stagger and sway to and fro in the work of learning to interpret; but our power of rising nearer to His level of meaning will increase in proportion to our heavenward longings.

He sees all bare before him. He saw not only the first stammer, but the full speech: If He foresaw the narrowness of man’s inveterate tendency to degrade, He also foresaw the ever quickened and increased sense of that very degradation. And He knew that there is a certain keenness of appreciation which the discovery of higher aspects brings by contrast, and which is paralleled in practical life, in recovery from painful illness.

We sometimes feel that but for such revealing trial, we should never have known the pricelessness of health. And the prevalence of lower interpretation will serve, if we will, to give us a more vivid sense of the value of the higher.

See how usefully the principle of ambiguity is working in our own case now! But for that, your letters and mine would never have been written; sympathy in aim and desire for truth would have so far been unstimulated and unexpressed. Without ambiguity, the one would have loved truth and lived righteously, and the other would have preferred falsehood and iniquity (since all was as ‘plain as a pikestaff’), and there would have been thus no call and no place for mutual endeavours to uplift thought and purify conception. And even in the meetings of those who in all main lines already sympathise not only in motive but view, each has ever some fresh aspect of truth, some fresh light of interpretation to suggest or contribute. Would that this were even more the case than it is! But now, at least, the possibility of more or less truth, the blessing of two possible or many possible readings urges us to search out our spirits and try those that come unto

us, or are offered us, whether they be verily of GOD, or whether there be, even so, a leaven of man.

You ask: – ‘What is the value to me of a book which does *not* say what it means and does *not* mean what it says?’

‘And what is the value to me,’ the atheist will cry, ‘of a heavenly Father, all and only Love, who does *not* say either through man (in life, or word, or ‘book’ revelation), or through the course of natural law (when subjected to positive and exact methods of examination and induction), what you say He means, i.e. the reign of love, the victory of good; and does *not* mean what He says in such thundering tones of unsparing flood and fire, desolating earthquake, decimating pestilence, triumphant cruelty; i.e. that there is nothing for us real and sure outside the region of the sensuous and the tangible, but pitiless law and stern despair?’ He will say, ‘I have only your word for this pretty fancy of a mystical, mythical Parent, who leaves all but a favoured few in darkness of soul and misery of body, and in momentary danger of utter destruction?’

We have (1) The principle of choice in the domain of action; and (2), the principle of choice in the domain of interpretation.

Both are educational; both testing.

You say (1) That moral evil is indispensable as training and test; I should say, not moral evil, but the unfettered choice which involves the possibility of moral evil. (2) That the apparent cruelty and immorality of natural law are an unsolved problem, tending to good in some unseen way and in some remote future.

So also I may say (1) That (not the ‘moral blemishes,’ but) the ambiguity which renders misinterpretation of written or spoken words possible, is indispensable as training and test. The ambiguity is not the same thing as man’s error any more than free-will is the same thing as this sin. (2) That the ambiguity which offends you is actually often caused by the very fact on which in Nature-revelation you rightly insist; i.e. that the great spiritual, essential, eternal issues revealed in the Bible are not matters which are worked out under our eyes or in a few generations: ‘and we have only a few brief years at most in which to inquire into their causes and their purposes, or their full scope and meaning.’ Yet if we will we may learn therein, as thousands of Christians have found, not only enough to give us abundance for the utmost need of our souls, but also enough to give us a far echo of inner loveliness before which the soul melts into adoring tears of joy.

You ask me why I should care by what Name you speak of GOD, since it cannot make any difference to Him. But I think somehow that it should make a difference to you, if you took any interest in me, to find me calling Him ‘Force’ or ‘Juggernaut.’

A name in the highest sense is representative; it is as far as possible from a mere label, but is indeed a manifestation in itself, and implies far more than it expresses; so that we may lose infinitely thus. [...] (1883 [1881]: 290–295)

1.9. A selection from *Grains of Sense* (1897)

Grains of Sense, 1897, is an appeal to scholars to adopt a more scientific approach to all areas of study and research, for the improvement of our powers of interpretation, ultimately of human thought and action. The issues dealt with in this booklet are amply discussed in Welby’s correspondence with foremost scholars of her time (in addition to *Echoes of Larger Life*, 1929, see also *Other Dimensions*, 1931, both edited by her daughter Mrs. Henry Cust). Welby emphasized the need to improve our expressive devices, therefore language and communication generally, in order to avoid misunderstanding. She promoted the human capacity for understanding and interpretation through the development of an adequate linguistic consciousness. Most importantly for Welby this

meant to work for the improval of interpersonal relations and human behaviour generally, to affirm the principle of mutual cooperation among different peoples and nations beyond barriers and separations, linguistic and nonlinguistic, for the construction of a world consecrated to the health of life and peaceful living. In the era of global communication today nothing seems more real and concrete than the prospect of global conflict and its many faces. On the connection between communication, on the one hand, and the prospect of peace and war, on the other, between communication and the health of nations, Welby's foresight is astounding! (See, in particular, 'Final Note,' at the end of the present collection).

Similarly to *Links and Clues*, *Grains of Sense* is also divided into a series of short 'Sections' numbered from 1 to 93, containing reflections in the form of aphorisms, stories, dialogues, anecdotes, paradoxes, critical commentary, etc. The section titles are interesting in themselves: '1-3. An Urgent Need; 4. The Wise Writer; 5, 6. Law and Lucidity; 7-9. Sign and Sense; 10, 11. Sir G. C. Lewis and "Lewis Carroll"; 12. Sir J. Seeley's "Delight"; 13-15. Savagery in Language; 16. A Linguistic Intelligence Department; 17. A New Journalism; 18, 19. Short-tongue: Unicode: Logotype; 20-22. Prof. Flinders Petrie's Crusade against Writing: *Times* and *Punch* on This. 23, 24. Mr. Leslie Stephen on "Accumulation"; 25, 26. Mislocution; 27. The Signs of Awakening; 28, 29. "Clearing the Air"; 30. Education; 31. Illustration; 32, 33. The Deaf-mute; 34. Prof. Mahaffy's "Modern Babel"; 35. Mr. H. Spencer on Gesture-language; 36. A Composite Glossary; 37. Prof. Mahaffy's Appeal; 38. Bishop Wilkin's Philosophical Language; 39-43. Spelling: Its Vagaries and its Tyranny. 44. Mr. Chamberlain on Meaning; 45, 46. Prof. W. Raleigh on Words; 47. Prof. Croom-Robertson on Malapropism; 48. Misused Words; 49. Cobbett's Political Grammar; 50-52. Language as She is Spoke; 53. Handles and Spouts; 54. The Farmer and his Boy; 55. The Overseer of Evolution; 56. Losing Senses; 57. Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown; 58. The Breeze of Dawn; 59. The *Athenæum* on L. Housman's Diction; 60, 61. The Inexpressible; 62. The Word; 63, 64. Limitations; 65. Mind and Speech; 66. Incoherent Development; 67. Mr. J. Morley on French Synonyms; 68. R. L. Stevenson on Fleeming Jenkin; 69. Hobbes; 70. Speech and Gesture: Mrs. Meynell. 71. A World of View; 72. An International Court of Appeal; 73. The Seer Succeeded by the Critic; 74. The Medicine-man Replaced by the Meaning-Man; 75. Ennius, Lucretius, Cicero, Virgil, as Makers of Speech; 76. Linguistic Developments in India and Japan; 77. An Appeal for United Effort; 78. The Sententious and the Prig; 79. Dr. Weir Mitchell's Experiment and Nansen on the Eskimo; 80, 81. Light and its Meaning; 82. Sound Money and Free Silver; 83. Mr. Morley's "Salt"; 84. Metaphors of Consciousness; 85-87. Bulls; 88. The Schoolmaster - at Sea; 89. A Figurative Conscience; 90-93. Literal Absurdities.'

These sections are preceded by an opening parable entitled, 'The Clearer,' and closed by a series of other seven parables: 'Eye the Mystic,' 'The Animal Critics,' 'Interviewing an Impassable Gulf,' "'So-to-Speak", and "As-it-Were", 'How to Stand Upright,' 'Changing Views,' 'The Evolution of Heliology.' These are followed by a 'Final Note.'

What follows is a small selection of passages chosen arbitrarily from the reflections formulated by Welby in this exquisite little volume, others could have just as well been included. In any case, in her own words, 'at least the drift of the whole can hardly be misconceived.' The notes to the texts are Welby's.

The Clearer

The Talker and the Writer went off arm in arm in a great fuss – they often are in a great fuss – to consult the Wiseacre about the messes they were always getting into. ‘Here I’ve got three law-suits on my hands,’ said the Writer; ‘and my lawyer declares he can’t define one of the terms on which they turn, so they’ll probably last a lifetime and cost a fortune.’

‘And I’ve made ten new enemies by the speeches I made to clear the air,’ answered the Talker; ‘and they threaten to ruin my career, while one of the papers says I mean black and another says I mean white.’

‘Do you think after all,’ said the Writer thoughtfully, ‘that the Wiseacre *is* the best person to go to? He never seems to have anything fresh to say: he only looks solemn and it’s always, in pompous accents, “Take care of the thoughts and the words will take care of themselves”, or else, “Whatever you do use plain words with plain meaning that nobody can possibly contrive to mistake”. And then we go and try, and we find that it’s rather the other way up: take care of the words or you’ll find that the thoughts are not worth speaking of, and sometimes the plainer the words the less plain the meaning: while you must have a poor opinion of your fellow-creatures if you think they can’t contrive to mistake whatever you say. O dear, there seems only one motto for language or its dictionaries and grammars and spelling, and that’s “Confusion worse confounded”.’

‘Well,’ replied the Talker, ‘I believe there is another Adviser round the corner; suppose we try him? They say he keeps some sort of tabloid or pilule which, when you swallow it, really does clear up everything. Anyhow, he can’t be a worse quack than the Wiseacre, and I never heard that he advertised or got money out of anyone.’ ‘What’s his name?’ asked the Writer. ‘I never heard that,’ answered the Talker. ‘I fancy he don’t care for calling names, or for those that most of us give or bear.’ ‘No wonder,’ returned the Talker laughing: ‘what we call a thing is often exactly what it isn’t.’ At this moment they found themselves at an unassuming little door with these words over it:–

The Clearer

Whoever wants to make the most of his words may knock here. No charge

So they knocked and were admitted. When they had explained their trouble and their wishes, their host put his hand into a small bag on the table and pulled out a very tiny round thing which they could hardly see. Holding this with his thumb and finger he said, ‘Here, my friends, is the only thing I know of that can help you. Take this, which is one single Grain of Sense. Apply it vigorously to all the questions of language, rub it well on every page of the dictionary, touch the alphabet with it and soak all the grammar books in some water in which you have boiled it, and you will find they will all begin to change very much for the better. Then swallow it yourself and it will begin to work inside you till you feel a glow of meaning and “reasons why” spread over everything, and things which now seem impossible will turn out quite feasible. You will find, like the girl in the fairy tale, that instead of the slugs or adders, or the bits of fluff and waste that used to flow from your mouth or pen, now there drop pearls and diamonds and all manner of precious things, throwing light upon whatever they touch. But though you are welcome to my poor little grain, remember that my own store of them is very scanty. When they multiply a hundred-fold, as they do in the right mouths and pens – which of course are yours! – please remember to send me back a few to keep my own little bag full.’ So the friends promised they would, and went away together. ‘But after all,’ said the one to the other, ‘now we come to think of it, a grain of sense is a very common thing; and we might have picked it up by the roadside and left the man with the little bag alone. Anyhow let us try his plan and see what comes of it’ (Welby 1897: 3–4).

1

If 'we are none of us infallible, not even the youngest,' it is also true that we are all of us ambiguous, even the eldest. (1897: 5)

2

If a little knowledge is dangerous, much is fatal: and indeed at a trial experts usually contradict each other and often in good faith. What we want is not so much more knowledge as more interpretation of what we already have, and enhanced powers of symbolising it. (Welby 1897: 5)

3

It is surely time we applied to all means of expression and communication the elementary truth that man *is* man is so far as he can use for his own ends the 'raw material' of Nature; in so far as he voluntarily directs and controls both 'himself' and the 'not-self' for intelligent ends. We ought to be simply ashamed of our toleration of the prevalent helplessness: of the chaos in which we still leave expression: of the hap-hazard developments of language. We have enormously developed all means of communication *except the most important of all*. (1897: 5–6)

4

As things are it often takes a wise writer to read his own writing: perhaps it takes a still wiser one to read his own meaning. (1897: 6)

5

For instance, the Law, exactly the case in which at great cost we are supposed to secure the most rigorous definition, conspicuously fails to read its own meaning. The *Daily Graphic*³⁹ is quite justified in saying that 'to an intelligent foreigner the spectacle of five judges, with the help of some of the leading lights of the Bar, one of whom has occupied the position of a Secretary of State, solemnly trying to make up their minds as to what constitutes a "place", would be productive of open-eyed and perhaps even contemptuous wonder'; especially if besides that, he heard an eminent lawyer say, 'I declined, my lord, just now to define a house, and I must also decline to define a structure.' The only definition satisfactorily arrived at on this occasion seems to be that of a welsher by Mr. Justice Hawkins, as a man who is present in the morning and absent in the afternoon. (1897: 6–7)

6

But the law also perversely keeps up distinctions which have ceased to have any value and are actually misleading; for instance, that between the sentence of imprisonment and the sentence of penal servitude. The term 'hard' added to labour 'has no particular meaning, and its employment in the sentence makes no practical difference.'⁴⁰ When will a linguistic conscience begin to prick us and insist upon more respect for Sense? (1897: 7)

7

Sense? What is Sense and what do we mean by it? Seeing and hearing and smelling and touching? Or what belongs to words and phrases? Or the quality which we so value in each other when we say with relief, that is a man of sense, that was a sensible thing to do, I can see the sense of that?

39. 21 December 1896.

40. Sir E. du Cane on Convict Prisons, quoted in the *Review of Reviews*, September 1896.

Or that subtle thing which we call the sense of a meeting, the sense of disapproval, the sense of duty, the religious or philosophical sense of an age or race? When this question was first put, a protest was raised against there being any traceable connection between the 'sense of touch' and the 'sense of a word.' Now it has been shown by Dr Murray that such a connection probably exists. So when we ask what Sense is, there may be some new answers to be given. We want men of sense in a new sense. (1897: 7–8)

8

The worm wasn't content even with building his world. He wanted to see it; and he grew eyes and gave his world an inverted image. Then he grew a little Sense and put some in his world. So he became a Man. And he filled his world with signs and symbols and knew that it was Significant. But it was a long time before his man-self learnt the lesson of the ancestral worm-self and found out how little we know, how much we can do if we try – and all try together – and how many worlds as we climb and climb we may learn to see and to interpret. And unhappily he meanwhile invented non-sense. So it was longer still before he found out – what like Mr. Jourdain he had been acting upon all his life – the fact that nothing signifies except what really signifies – the Sign: and that Sense alone gives this and is its value too. The Sense of Sign follows the Sign of Sense. (1897: 8–9)

9

Some would tell us that in this world we are saved by our want of faith; but it is perhaps more certain that we are lost by our want of sense. Walpole's epigram, 'don't read me history, for I know that it can't be true,' might be applied much more widely as long as we ignore the difficulties of 'meaning.' (1897: 9)

14

Or again, we may say that in the all-important matter of expression we are like a mere horde of savages wandering over jungles and prairies, gathering nuts or edible weeds as we happen to find them, and devouring animals raw. The expression-horde which lives from 'hand-to-mouth' (successors of paw and maw) and has not even the orderly coherence of a flock of geese or a shoal of herrings or a pack of wolves, protests that nothing better can be hoped for, and that civilization of *whatever* type is impossible, or if possible undesirable, as destroying freedom and mechanising life. What is the result of this attitude? The linguistic Bushman, who by his remarkable artistic exploits, shows that he both has and could use profitably the 'higher' powers which he leaves undeveloped. So with the 'Bushman' of language, which Man is still content to be. In this sense, assuredly, 'the primitive Aryan is with us now.'⁴¹ (1897: 14–15)

16

Do we care for art, for science, for philosophy, for religion – for the solution of social or 'economical' problems? Are we poets or mathematicians, musicians or astronomers, painters or tradesmen, missionaries or manufacturers, philosophers or politicians, novelists or journalists or explorers? In every case the first need is to develop immensely the power of Communication between 'mind' and 'mind': and the corresponding power of interpreting, understanding and finally *translating* expression of every kind and of every degree of complexity and subtlety. Thus we get to the idea of a sort of 'Staff College': to a spider's web of Mutual Interpretation with lines running in every direction; and to an 'Intelligence Department' of the human army. We want to train the Messenger, the Scout, the Patrol, the 'look-out man.' But the man whose duty it is to keep us in intellectual touch with each other and with what is passing beyond the intellectual camp, must not be expected to do anything else or more. (1897: 16–17)

41. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, p. viii.

And how can we hope to become aware that we are the victims of ‘stale sophistic rot’ while we think it can’t matter except for the pedant, the pedagogue, or even the prig, whether we make the most or the least of language: even whether we talk of meaning or of sense or of import or of significance, or what these distinctions are worth? How can we wonder that we ‘make a mess of most things that need thinking’ as long as we are impatient at the very idea that there is anything that *signifies* to be learnt about signifying? What in the world does it signify? we cry, and so close the discussion – by giving ourselves away. But some day perhaps we shall be taught from our childhood that what signifies more than anything else is that true significance which is the whole and sole value of life and of all that it brings to Man the Master of meaning, Man the Autocrat of sense, who is yet a wretched slave – to his own poor and crude and barbarous Expression. Some day perhaps it will dawn upon us that the endless complaints and lamentations about the failure of language to express *this*, the tendency of language to confuse *that*, the tremendous power for good or harm which a word or phrase has over us: the constant mutual accusations of misrepresenting, misapprehending, misreading, misunderstanding; have, if as yet no conscious intention, at least a profound and practical significance. Perhaps further it will even dawn upon us that it is mostly a needless and cruel waste; that if we had made up our minds that we could never hope to write, we never should have written; that it is largely our taking for granted that language cannot be raised to a higher level and become more expressive which causes our bondage to its barbarisms; and that, once we make up our minds that we intend to be masters and not abject serfs of our speech – the most ‘intelligent’ and ‘voluntary’ of all organic activities – a most wonderful and undreamt-of change will begin. Slowly we may learn to realise that a generation specially trained to express and to translate expression, to expect more expression-power, to work in every language to this end: trained to signify more and to interpret better, will even thus have gone a long way towards healing the cruel ‘misunderstandings’ which divide us in mutual suspicion and even hostility, or at least paralyse our mental action; and which help to poison with unreality, our highest and truest ideals. A generation thus educated – thus ‘brought up’ – will begin to see solutions of familiar problems which, as we are, are indeed beyond the hope of the wildest optimist; and will have, at first silently and tentatively, then articulately and definitely, started on one of the greatest advances which the human race has ever made – *an advance in the power of mental inter-communication.* (1897: 24–26)

To anyone who has begun to realise the supreme significance of what we call Meaning, nothing can be more striking than the signs and symptoms on all sides of the gradual rising of a wave of interest in the highest link between mind and mind. One thing is certain: the subject of ‘significance’ and of the comparative failure of established means of expressing sense or meaning – import or intention – is ‘in the air.’ One can hardly take up a paper, a review or a magazine, without discovering that. Among so many cases, it is difficult to choose: but for instance we have the discovery supposed to be made that the earth-waves, long and short, which, in their monotonous sequences and phrases, had baffled us so long, were the symbols of a language. ‘A language, I say, for we have no other word, but a language far transcending all spoken languages in directness and simplicity. . . . In the light of this new and obvious scheme of expression, the invention of the alphabet, whereby the activities of the mind of man are tied down to the foolish noises that he makes with his throat and teeth and lips, seemed to me the clumsiest of mishaps’:⁴² and the similar discovery of ‘Albigo, a language . . . discovered, as the result of years of research, to exist already, and everywhere, as the base, the common principle, of all known languages, and . . . extracted, in its original simplicity, from the overgrowths which time and separateness have allowed to accumulate upon it. Albigo: the tongue which all men speak unconsciously: the universal human

42. ‘Human Bacillus’: Prof. Walter Raleigh, *New Review*, November 1896.

tongue.⁴³ Then we have Wallace⁴⁴ on ‘Expressiveness in Speech,’ and the answer in ‘Baby-Talk of the world’:⁴⁵ the *Quarterly Review*⁴⁶ on the ‘Art of Translation’: an excellent article by Eucken⁴⁷ on philosophical terminology: many articles on the possibilities of ‘style’ as exemplified in Robert Louis Stevenson, Walter Pater and others: one ‘On an Author’s Choice of company’:⁴⁸ another on ‘The Genesis of Expression’:⁴⁹ the suggestive article in which Olive Schreiner says ‘The Taal has made the Boer in 200 years’:⁵⁰ and innumerable passages containing complaints of ambiguity even in the ablest writing not only in philosophy but in science.

These last cannot be dealt with here; but if only a few of them were put together they would effectually dissipate the curious delusion that the man of science lives in a paradise where none but plain, fixed, consistent and scientifically valid meanings can enter. We should see that the doorkeeper is sadly given to slumbering at this post! (1897: 32–34)

30

Again, if it be answered that much which vitally concerns us could never be put into words, it may be fully conceded that it is so. But to repeat what has already been said, some of the ‘incommunicable’ is dumb because it is below the level of speech, whereas some at least is so because it is as yet above that. In truth Expression, in the largest sense, ranges from the quivering of a mollusc to developments which we can work for without being able yet even to imagine. At least let us make a start in this direction. For the true principles, applications, methods, aims of Education are also ‘in the air.’ We are seeking on every side for a method ‘by which teachers may teach less but learners may learn more.’⁵¹ From many points of view the theories and the practical systems which now compete for our acceptance are discussed; and there is no doubt that the principles of Comenius, Pestalozzi and Fröbel’s ‘Kindergarten’ are gradually inoculating, directly and indirectly, the teaching world. But if we are to bring out – to educe – the best in the young: to make the most of such little wits as they may have by using such little wits as their teachers may have, we must begin by knowing more about meaning, about sense, about significance: we must learn to act together and in full accord on the questions which are most of all significant. For here too, while we wrangle the children are wronged (1897: 35–36)

31

The present ‘rage’ for illustration of every kind everywhere and on every scale is owing to the same sense of the comparative failure of writing to which Prof. Flinders Petrie gives such paradoxical expression. Pictures help the reader – or ought to help him – to interpret the flat, monotonous type. But unluckily the very writing which most needs such help – that which deals seriously with the most difficult subjects – is just that which cannot be ‘illustrated’ in the literal sense. But there is another significant tendency nowadays – the tendency to use diagram. Now you find this in places where even twenty years ago no one would have dreamt of looking for it. Why not apply the same principle more widely; why not call in the aid of indicative symbols, marginally or in the text itself? Let us learn to give writing something of the colouring of the ‘lecture’ and the ‘speech’; and acquire typographic or pen-gesture, as we have already acquired mouth-gesture.

43. ‘Friend of Man’: H. Harland, *Yellow Book*, October 1896.

44. *Fortnightly Review*, October 1895.

45. *Fortnightly Review*, October 1896.

46. *Quarterly Review*, October 1895.

47. *Monist*, July 1896.

48. *Century*, March 1896.

49. *Westminster Review*, May 1896.

50. *Fortnightly Review*, April 1896.

51. ‘The Great Didactic’: Comenius, trans. by Keatinge.

If we are tempted in this and similar cases, to plead that however desirable the emancipation of language from its obsolete swaddling clothes may be, there is no hope of breaking down the hard crusts of custom and prejudice, let us remember what has happened in other cases, e.g., in the journalistic world, where we learn that ‘... as commonly happens in cases where restriction has been founded upon prejudice and usage rather than upon solid reason, as soon as a breach had been made the whole line of resistance collapsed at once.’ Here also we may reasonably hope for this result, since there is certainly no section of the community not vitally interested in some aspect of the question. (1897: 37–38)

40

Happily the *Times* itself – that stronghold of literary conservatism – has invited letters⁵² pleading for (in every sense) a more sensible states of things; and admits in a leader that the present system is wasteful and unprofitable, that it occupies youth at the most receptive time of life to the exclusion of matters much more important, and that nobody is a gainer by the rigour now in force.

These are admissions. They do not point, however, either to some arbitrary and mechanical substitute for the present convention, or to individual license in spelling, which would terribly increase the burden of the reader, already too great. They really point to a keener and worthier sense of the value and a more adequate treatment of the whole question of Sense, and how best to convey it. They really imply the introduction throughout the whole course of education of systematic training in the art of being significant with voice and pen, and conversely the art of discerning and interpreting ‘meaning.’ (1897: 49–50)

45

It will surely strike us some day as amazing that we should have trained our children – or professed to do so – in everything except the first thing needful, and left the royal power to express perfectly and the imperial power to interpret consummately, to undeveloped natural gift. ‘Let no one say,’ says Prof. Raleigh,⁵³ ‘that “reading and writing come by nature”, unless he is prepared to be classed with the foolish burgess who said it first. A poet is born, not made – so is every man – but he is born raw. Stevenson’s life was a grave devotion to the education of himself in the art of writing.

‘The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Thassay so hard, so sharp the conquering.’

Those who deny the necessity, or decry the utility, of such an education, are generally deficient in a sense of what makes good literature – they are ‘word-deaf,’ as others are colour-blind. All writing is a kind of word-weaving; a skilful writer will make a splendid tissue out of the diverse fibres of words. But to care for words, to select them judiciously and lovingly, is not in the least essential to all writing, all speaking; for the sad fact is this, that most of us do our thinking, our writing, and our speaking in phrases, not in words. The work of a feeble writer is always a patchwork of phrases, some of them borrowed from the imperial texture of Shakespeare and Milton, others picked up from the rags in the street. We make our very kettle-holders of pieces of a king’s carpet.’ (1897: 55–56)

46

To care for words lovingly, to choose them for the beauty or spiritual value of their form, sound, or associations, is indeed ‘not in the least essential’ to all writing or speaking; but to care in

52. 17 December 1895.

53. R. L. Stevenson, Royal Institution, 16 May 1895.

another sense, to remember what Cornwall Lewis told us of the too easy poisoning of the wells of converse; to care also that groups of words – phrases – should be fitly chosen and combined, *that* is essential to all true speech. A patchwork of phrases will never give the royal carpet of sense which all language ought to represent. As to single words, even in this very passage, can we defend the ‘poet born *raw*’? Would anyone suppose him born cooked – like the defaulter’s accounts? Certainly better to cook accounts than to cook poets! However, here a new defence might be set up. How many cases we have like the ‘impertinent’ which ought to be but isn’t the negative of ‘pertinent,’ the ‘impassable’ which is far from being the negative of ‘passable.’ So it might be plausibly denied that cooked was the converse of raw. Still, the ‘raw’ poet is hardly worthy of the use in such a context of a writer of this caliber. (1897: 57–58)

48

As to ‘misused words,’ about which we often see letters to the newspapers, they would demand a dictionary to themselves. Only unluckily most people think other people’s usage is the wrong one: ‘orthodoxy is my doxy’ here too. And all sorts of tests are applied; some people protest against a new meaning, some against an old one; some against one derived from slang, some against one derived from the laboratory. Some appeal to history, some to grammar: in short the ‘Modern Babel’ is nowhere more conspicuous than in our very attempts to emerge from it. The question, what really is misuse? seems to want settling first. Nothing can be misuse which increases our resources, nothing which gives us a fresh distinction or a fresh aspect of things; and on the other hand, nothing which tends to economy or consistency, nothing which involves more wealth or more concentration. Everything is misuse which tends to poverty or debasement, which crushes thought within outgrown limits, which kills or stunts the growing points of mind, which silences the whisper of a dying memory or sacrifices as trivial or antiquated some pearl of great price; everything which blurs the lines that map out without enclosing or obstructing the mental world: above all, everything which makes for confusion and anarchy, cruelly defeating the end of the splendid gift of speech.

But this is itself a poor attempt indeed at setting forth a thesis which needs, if we would do it justice, the best powers of the highest minds. (1897: 59–60)

72

What seems most wanted is the evolution of an international court of voluntary appeal on all questions of expression. This would be far more effectual than any Academy, while free from its objections. In cases of senseless fashion we find consensus easy enough. We all go to the glazier for our houses, we all crowd into the same boat, wondering that it promptly capsizes and drowns us; and almost fight to be tarred with the same brush. Yet when it is a question of acting all together for a mighty effort to get clear of smashed glass houses and sunk boat, and of making a bonfire of the tar-brushes, then of course nothing can be done. But would it not be real common-sense to get some common consent to a common sense for language? We are striving for common consent to a voluntary Court of Arbitration for international questions: and in time, if such a Court may be, not imposed, but evolved as government and law have been, and become binding as they are in civilised nations and as ‘custom’ is in barbarous countries, we may be far more hopeful about an International Court of Linguistic Arbitration. For we are such unwilling victims of linguistic war! And there is no glory to be won on *that* field, no jealousies to appease or ambitions to satisfy. (1897: 82–83)

73

The Thinker was once called the Seer, or the Magician and the Wizard, then the Prophet, then the Philosopher, then the Mystic; whereas now he is proud of being called the Critic. Let us hope that

in the future he will be called the Interpreter or the Translator, and that there will be 'chairs of Interpretation.' Yet even then words express but poorly the rising hope that libraries of meaning wait to be read and rendered. Even now, one man will teach and another learn more in half an hour, and over one page or one 'example,' than others in a month. It is quality that we want, and we are getting mainly quantity, masses of fact, expanses of theory. More central points in investigation, more touch with the core of our subject, that is the need. (1897: 83–84)

74

The Medicine-man must become the Meaning-man; the Soothsayer must become the Sense-sayer. We want language farms and gardens, and Scholarships of Expression, Interpretation and Translation. He who expresses most and in the best way: whose definitions are the most adequate, his descriptions the most graphic, his explanations the most lucid, his epithets the aptest: he who brings us most out of least and in least time or with least brain-expenditure: he who most discards intellectual padding and phrase-making, and yet captures and holds his hearer's or reader's attention and interest best, making attention most interpretative: he who can state a thesis in most dialects of thoughts, and point out best where translation is impossible and why, – will graduate in sense *in a new sense*. (1897: 84)

80

We probably think that so long as we confine ourselves to good plain homely words like 'light,' in use by all and understood in the same sense by everybody, we must be safe. It would be obvious nonsense to talk of a 'pitch-dark' room full of light. 'Invisible light' is clearly a paradox and surely a bull: we might almost as well adopt the famous remark that the moon made everything as light as a cork. What man has named 'light' or its equivalent in all languages, is that which can be 'seen' and which makes 'seeing' possible, and is nothing else whatever. Here at least there is no ambiguity. It seems hardly credible that the scientific world is at a lower level in the use of this word than the popular world. It actually writes about black light, Le Bon's 'lumière noire' (*Nature*, 13 August 1896). And while Dr Lassar-Cohn very truly says ('Chemistry in Daily Life') that the Röntgen rays 'are not light because we cannot see them,' Prof. Thomson (Rede Lectures, *Nature*, 30 July 1896) talks of the 'invisible ultra-violet light'; and says 'by light I mean transverse vibrations propagated with a definite velocity'; and thus includes electric 'waves' which traverse walls and bodies, etc., of nearly a mile of densely populated streets. Prof. Newcomb told us nearly four years ago (*Nature*, 30 November 1893) that we had much better banish the word 'light' from physics. He suggested the very simple term 'radiance,' which as he says, seems just what we want. And he pointed out that the derivatives would be readily formed. The verb 'radiate' would mean to emit radiance: Radiometry would mean the measure of radiance: while instead of talking of transparency (or translucency, etc.) we should speak of the *transradiant* or *transradious*. Others wrote to plead for the same distinction in other cases, and one writer suggested (*Nature*, 22 February 1894) *irradiate* instead of 'illuminate.' But Lord Kelvins's decision on the matter ought to make further discussion needless. In his 'Six Gateways of Knowledge' he says that 'if we distinctly define light as that which we consciously perceive as light . . . we shall be safe. There is no question that you see the thing: if you see it, it is light.' When the frequency of heat vibration exceeds a given limit, 'it is not light since we cannot see it; it is invisible ultra-violet radiation. . .'

The discovery of the X rays has made the distinction more valuable than ever. Yet we see that it is entirely ignored. Even the Christmas Lectures for children at the Royal Institution for 1896–1897 were on Visible and Invisible light, as if it was expressly desired by Science that the children's minds should become hopelessly confused as to the meaning of one of the words now clearest to them! (1897: 92–94)

And we must not forget another very important sense of the word ‘light’ which would be falsified by this change of usage. We have been crying for ages ‘more light, more light.’ Now the answer is surely come. It is command to change our prayer and to cry ‘more sense, more significance’: and light will follow. But then this is the light which is visible and exists only within the visual range; Just as ‘sound’ carries hearing, so ‘light’ carries seeing. At present mental light seems one of the truest metaphors we have. Let us husband, not destroy our resources. (1897: 95)

Mr Literal’s immediate connections were somewhat homely, and belonged to the Fact family, who are the Browns if not the Smiths of the practical world. But he claimed cousinship with the powerful clans of the Real and the Actual. Thus we see that Mr Literal had an immense sphere of usefulness of his own, and helped with his cousins to furnish one of the most convenient of contrasts – that between his own and the aristocratic, poetical, but sometimes flightily and fanciful Metaphor family. The Metaphors belonged of course to the most illustrious of races – that of Illustration; though unfortunately some of their scions were black sheep and devoted themselves to obscurity (to smudging their fellows), instead.

Now Mr Literal, like the rest of us, had his weak point; and that, alas, had been found by a certain Miss Metaphor. He fell, of course literally, head over ears in love with her; though how he did it remains a mystery, as unluckily no one was present to Kodak the operation for us, and X rays were not invented. Now it was always understood that this young lady would never admit to her society any one who could not boast an illustrative descent or a figurative character; and our friend’s knowledge of this fatal obstacle to his hopes tempted him to sacrifice for the charmer’s sake his ancestral integrity and self-respect. He began, at first feebly and in a half-minded manner, but soon more boldly, to climb into that high and select region of the Figurative, to which he had always formed so instructive a contrast, and of which his very existence was the needed foil. How he managed we must not ask. Some experienced interviewer, exploring our sad secrets in disguise, might reveal the process; but one thing is certain, there at last he was. And most ludicrous looked the honest creature in his borrowed skins and feathers; for all that made his value and even his dignity, to say nothing of his Sense and Meaning, were gone. The flowing draperies, bright colours, fantastic designs, fanciful forms, which were the natural trappings of the world of the illustrative, only made him look preposterous. But alas, the courtship is still going on. The evidence of this is crowding upon us; and it may not be too late to call the poor man’s attention or that of his family to the fool he is literally making of himself in prosecuting his hopeless suit. (1897: 109–110)

‘So-to-Speak’ and ‘As-it-Were’

‘So-to-speak’ and ‘As-it-were’ were in a great fuss one day. They could not make out why some things were dedicated to them and others not, though they came under the same category. And moreover, they had heard people protesting that analogy and metaphor were all very nice, but after all they taught nobody and proved nothing.

‘What was wanted’ said these people, ‘was to know what was really the case and to arrive at solid fact.’ (Now, thought our friends, as these are not acknowledged as ours, they must be literal. So, said one to the other, ‘Is the *case* an empty one do you think? And is a *solid* fact a block of wood or of what?’). Analogy and metaphor, people went on to agree were capital as fancy ornaments, so long as nobody took them seriously, or supposed that there could be or ought to be the smallest likeness between the things thus compared. But serious writing ought to be free of them. So poor So-to-speak and As-it-were felt very shy and small finding themselves in the

awkward position of witnessing by their very existence, as respectable phrases, to the unreality of all analogy and metaphor alike. And they felt their own existence thus undermined. Indeed it was really fatal to language itself, as the very idea of meaning attached to a noise or a mark carried both analogy and metaphor in its very essence. Every word ought by rights to be dedicated to one or other of the friends. But indeed the more they thought about it the more puzzled they grew. For here were all the greatest thinkers and men of science writing big books, each from his own point of view to instruct his fellows, and these books were crammed from one end to the other with metaphorical and analogical expressions and phrases. And then if, wanting to be accurate, you went to the etymologist and philologist, they only enforced the lesson.

Every now and then a 'sop to Cerberus' ('this belongs to our friend the Myth,' remarked So-to-speak), was thrown to the two friends, whose names were stuck in as saving clauses ('Why, that's mine too,' said As-it-were). And sometimes their various connections, Illustrations, Simile, Symbol, Figure, and last but not least, the relation they most admired and revered – Parable, were invoked in order to strengthen an argument or convey an impression.

But as the discussion to which the two were listening proceeded, they could stand it no longer. They left off listening. 'What's the meaning of wiseacre,' says So-to-speak? 'O, it's the field one finds at one's wits' end,' says As-it-were. 'Let's sit down in it then; for I am sure I am at mine, and the people we've been listening to seem very far afield!' (1897: 123–125)

Changing Views

There was a once a Planet which was always going round a moving sun and turning upon itself meanwhile, so that 'up and down' and 'right and left' were ever being reversed to it, as also 'to and from.' And on it, there was *life*. Now this planet had a meteoritic friend, who thought that no other condition was reasonable or desirable for any mass of matter, but that of a detached and aimless Meteorite; independent of its fellows, but ignorant of the *whence*, the *whither*, and the *why* of its own course and of theirs; abjuring all 'teleology' of solar genesis, and knowing not itself as really grain of sun-stuff. So the Meteorite-friend came to visit the Planet one day, after a long interval. And as they talked, and the Planet spoke of what it saw from the point it now had reached in curving orbit, the Meteorite said, 'Why, you've quite changed your views since I met you last! You seem to have lost sight of the constellation-forms you used so to admire and point out to us; you seem to see the universe from quite a different position. Now therefore surely you must know 'fixed' centres, bases, or foundations as but our childish fancies, now outgrown; as I and those like me have learnt to do. And of course now you don't believe in all the antiquated notions we meteors so despise, about being 'a planet bound in an orbit round a sun' as the condition of producing something known as 'life.' You see now at last that 'planet' and 'sun' and 'life' and such-like things are but the outworn dreams of a fetish-era or a myth-stage, don't you? You see like us that the very idea of a solar system is itself a mere survival of exploded fable; and that after all we are nothing but meteorites, swarming and rushing, and jostling in the dark – 'light' too being really nothing but a fancy bred of trembling hopes and fears?' But the Planet stared. 'What can you mean?,' it said. 'Why, how could one be a planet at all or have an orbit related to a sun, without changing one's position and one's views in ceaseless movement and in countless revolutions? I get fresh views, of course, from every point I reach in my concentric spiral orbit. And know you not that when I come again to the point where once you found me, the universe will no longer seem the same, even thence. Our Sun is wending on a way of glory; drawing his own along with him on an unknown solemn journey; leading us all some whither in the degree of silent space. . . And on my breast throb life and light and love, as on my Sun, with all my sun-linked brethren, I fix a steadfast mind; constant, unswerving, fearless, on the Planet's ordered way.' (1897: 126–128)

Final Note

As any ‘grains of sense’ which may be found embedded in the sections of this little book certainly point to a plague of misunderstanding which is fatally raging amongst us, the author, even apart from obvious personal disabilities, has no right to assume that its implications are unmistakably plain. But at least the drift of the whole can hardly be misconceived: and few would deny that, supposing that the nations of the earth could be brought as near together in mental as they already are in physical communication, such an achievement would mean nothing less than a new era in human thought and action.

If anyone thinks it futile to point out the disastrous effect upon the welfare of the world which linguistic barriers may involve, let him ponder well some pregnant words used the other day by Sir John Lubbock:⁵⁴ ‘I do not think,’ he said, ‘that at any time in the history of the world the modern language teacher has had functions so important as he has at the present day. If you look back upon the year which has elapsed . . . and cast your eyes over Europe, what do you see? You see there the six leading powers of Europe, all of them desiring to act in a certain way and with certain purposes, and yet not a single one of them daring to act, because each of them is afraid of what the ulterior motives of the other five may be. Now, that is a state of affairs which, whatever our political views may be, I feel quite sure that we all realize to be a most deplorable one in this civilisation of ours of the nineteenth century. It is just because the different nations of Europe, on the one hand, have been brought by modern means of communication so close to one another that one of them cannot act without affecting the others, and because, on the other hand, intellectually and spiritually they have not been brought so close to one another that they are able to understand and to trust one another, that we are in this terrible difficulty to-day.’

He then went on to say that ‘the grave question which confronts us – the gravest question perhaps that has ever confronted peoples in history – is the question of whether we are going forward to the United States of Europe or backward again into a time of barbarism, from which we shall have slowly to build up a third or fourth great civilisation of the world.’ It may be feared that the mere acquirement of the various tongues which are dominant in what we call European civilisation would, in all but a few rare minds, consume too much time and energy to leave much for utilising the tools thus acquired. For it must include languages so difficult as Russian, and – so long as Turkey and Egypt form part of the problem to be solved – even perhaps Turkish as well as Arabic. But at least here we find in the mouth of one of the most practical of teachers a full recognition of the need, and an emphatic warning of a danger which we disregard at our extremest peril. The mutual deafness, dumbness and blindness which is the mental condition of our ‘Modern Babel,’ but which leaves us only too free for mutual collision, quarrel and destruction, must indeed make terribly for war, and even, through mutual hatreds thus engendered, for reversion to barbarism. As we cannot speak with each others’ tongues, we cannot hear with each others’ ears or see with each others’ eyes; and thus the natural human jealousies and rivalries are without an equally natural corrective.

It must be admitted, however, that another view of the matter exists and cannot be ignored. It has lately found a powerful advocate in Lord Salisbury, who holds that the barrier presented to mutual understanding by difference of language has acted as a non-conducting medium for the irritating poison generated even by merely ill-natured comment. He suggests in fact that if any one language became generally understood and used, the ignorant or unscrupulous mischief-maker with his irrepressible telegram would become more dangerous than ever, and might plunge us into war over a hasty word which had roused an uncontrollable storm of popular anger.⁵⁵

54. Address to Modern Language Association, 23 December 1896.

55. Lord Mayor’s dinner to Mr Bayard, *Times*, 3 March 1897.

But to this it may be answered, that the remedy keeps pace with the disease; that the power to disavow and counteract by contradiction or explanation would be correspondingly greater. There remains however the objection that words once said always leave their sting, and that no repudiation can cancel their effect absolutely, or ensure that it shall never be revived in ignorance or malice. Therefore we are once more brought face to face with the broader question. If the fomentors of quarrels and creators of discord are to be victoriously met by those who represent and make possible human civilised society and co-operation: if the forces of international law and order are to triumph over those of anarchy and mutual extermination as they have already done within the borders of each national organisation, it must be done by arming them with weapons of expression of far greater power and perfection than any yet attained. The weapons we need must be to those we now have what the modern weapons of war are to the primitive axe, spear, and arrow. The peace-maker of the future must be able to make his appeal ring high and clear over the medley of clashing interest, and his words must fly home with unerring aim and resistless force to the real 'heart' of the matter in dispute. Language must no longer remain the too ready and efficient ally of moral or intellectual drawbacks in himself or his hearers.

These, however, are hopes which can only be realised in the distant future. Meanwhile, he who should do something seriously to raise the question of clearer, more intimate, more sympathetic mutual interpretation, from a mere aspiration into a working international agreement, would in the first place undoubtedly deserve, if he did not actually win, Dr. Nobel's prize of \$10,000 'to be allotted to whomsoever may have achieved the most or done the best to promote the cause of peace.' Few things indeed would be likely to do more to further the prospects of universal peace, than a general expansion of the limits, and regeneration of the conditions, of linguistic converse between all civilised nations. But in the second place, as already urged, he might give the first impulse to a work of unique greatness. He might be the pioneer in exploring and annexing new worlds of expression. He might be the first to give us access to much that is now still beyond the power of words to convey, and yet is often that which beyond all else needs to be expressed. He might be the apostle of a significance which would, in senses which as yet lack their adequate signs, reveal the secrets of life itself. His work would cover the whole ground of human interest, and would be significant in a sense which must itself be enriched and expanded. (1897: 136–142)

'Essaylets' in chronological order

1.10. Questions for Teachers (1885)*

1. Why is Hope one of the three supreme virtues? In other words, why is it, rather than, e.g., truth or purity, exalted with faith and love to a special pre-eminence beyond all other fruits of the Spirit? And as our natural thought of hope (like peace) is as a gift and permitted comfort rather than a duty, what does this exaltation imply, in questions not directly answered in revelation?
2. Why is the 'day' of Genesis not 'morning and evening' but 'evening and morning' involving night as a passing stage within it; and what light does this throw on the subject of death?
3. Why, in the nature of things, should we expect Holy Communion to be instituted in the evening, and now celebrated in the morning?
4. Why does our Lord say, 'I am the true Bread' (not corn) and 'the true Vine' (not wine)?
5. Why is it only 'body and soul' that are nourished in the Holy Communion?
6. Why is the third element of complete typical ingathering – corn, wine, and oil – absent in our Eucharistic Service, and what reference has this to the spirit?

* [First printed privately and anonymously, see Welby 1885d].

7. What difference would it have made in the scope and results of Incarnation and thus of Communion, if the flesh and blood of mankind had been different *in kind* to that of the higher animal creation?
8. How would it affect our ideas of human 'free-will' if the movements of the whole animal world had been automatic like the sequences of the inorganic order, instead of being voluntary?
9. Why are the consecrated elements chosen from the plant-world instead, as in the Passover, from the animal world?
10. Is the 'Benedicite omnia opera' merely 'rhetorical' or is it the expression of the actual fact, bearing upon this question?
11. What is the difference between soul and spirit, and between immortal and eternal life?
12. Why are Air, Light and Fire the highest natural types of God?
13. What follows from the truth that all such types must be governed and interpreted by the supreme revelation of God as Father, made by and through the Son, not merely in words, but in the very fact of His Sonship?
14. How do we gather from this that whatever question rises within us in our purest moments implies the answer when we are ready for it, and that we are not intended to suppose that any such question is futile or unanswerable?
15. Why did our Lord speak of new birth to the theologian and teacher, and of worship to the woman; whereas we should naturally have expected the order to be reversed?
16. What are we meant to understand in the ascending scale of type in relationship – silver coin, sheep, servant, disciple, friend, bride, – in the Parables; and why is the highest type feminine?
17. Why does the Church consider specially the 'four last things' in Advent and just before Christmas? And what connection has this with question 2?
18. Why do we suppose that earth passes away and heaven abides?
19. Would heaven still be heaven to us, even though it must pass away, or though sorrow entered there? Did the angels who ministered to our Lord in the Passion feel sorrow or not?
20. What is implied by the ascension of Christ far beyond all heavens, in connection with 'Where I am, there shall ye be also' and 'I go to prepare a place for you?' And how does this interpret Ps. cii. 25–27?
21. Why can the prayers of our Lord be used as revelation or creed in a sense in which none others can?
22. What difference is there between saying 'My words are spirit and life' and 'my words are spiritual and living;' and how does that bear on question 18?
23. What is the essential difference between Christ's only revealing or giving the Way, Truth, Resurrection, Life, and actually being all these? Is it possible to *be* an act?
24. Why is equality the condition and consummation of Divine unity?
25. What does our addressing the Trinity as 'Thou' imply as to the Personality of God?
26. Why must all ascription to the Triune God be summed up in the Unity? (as in Litany, Ath. creed, collects, &c. in Prayer-book).
27. What is the distinction between resurrection *of* and *from* the dead?
28. What is the difference between a revelation of and from God, and between faith as a grain of mustard-seed, and faith as a fossilised deposit?
29. What do we mean by 'Omnipotence?' Are there not things no power can do? And if so, is not the word misleading, unless qualified?
30. Why would 'God is power' be less true than 'God is love?' What is the difference here between attribute and definition?
31. Why is all judgement given, not to Christ as Son of *God* but as Son of *Man*? And what is implied by the Judge interceding with the Father, instead of the tenderness of Fatherhood deprecating the severity of impersonal law?

32. Why in the same way is it the Son of Man who ascendeth up *where he was before*; and what does this involve as to the eternity (not only immortality) of Divine Humanity, and thus of our origin therein?
33. What difference would it have made if in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the images used had been 'marriage,' a *state*, instead of 'Wedding,' an *event*; and 'darkness' an unlimited term involving no after light, instead of 'night' which implies a coming dawn and 'day,' superseding all lamp light?
34. What is the true order and ground of mission appeal? Man primary, God secondary, God means and man end, or the order of the Lord's Prayer and of S. Matt. xxii. 36–40?
35. Why must true prayer always be objective first, i.e. the Voice of God within man, before it is subjective, the voice of man outside God; and what follows from the reversal of this order, or from the actual omission of the primary element?
36. Why must right love of our brother always be love of the Divine spark or germ or seed within, the being which lives and moves in God, and therefore can respond to His call, and not love of the lower nature or selfish self which does not so respond; and how does this apply to evangelising work?
37. What bearing on current theories to Atonement and Redemption have the words 'The Son can do nothing of Himself *but what he seeth the Father doing, for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner?*' And what difference in the meaning of Atonement would it have made if the words had rather implied that the Father sent the Son to do what as Father He could in no sense do – e.g. expiate sin and suffer for sinner?
38. As kingdom implies king, and bride implies bridegroom, what must birth, when used as parallel, imply?
39. What is the difference between miraculous and supernatural?
40. Why does the idea of miracle as outside the sphere of natural law, lead to its being reckoned as un- natural law- lessness, and what definition of miracle prevents this?
41. Where do we find in Scripture the distinction made between literal water and spiritual fire? On what ground in Baptism do we assume the one to be material and the other not? Is the 'water' in S. John iv. 10 and vii. 39, material or not?⁵⁶
42. Which of all the words we use to describe human identity and personality is the only one before which we cannot (in earnest) put 'my' or 'your' or 'his'; in short, which expresses the Possessor who is never possession?
43. Why do we suppose that 'past and future' have any more real existence or are any less reversible, than 'above and below, over and under?' And how does this bear upon questions of 'eschatology?'
44. Is it not true that three false assumptions underlie most controversy on endless torment v. universal restoration, vitiating both theories equally; i.e. 1. That suffering and not sin is the worst evil, so that there cannot be heaven where pain is, or hell where pleasure is. 2. That time and space are extended, not superseded, in eternity, and that a thing which begins and does not end, can exist and is 'eternal.' 3. That the at-one-ment of our personality is actually perfect, so that we are in no sense two *men*, one to die and the other to live?
45. What form of revelation corresponds to light rays, what to heat rays, and what to 'actinic' rays of the sun which typifies the source of spiritual life?
46. Is anything right, true, or vital at any time or place, outside our thought of Christ?
47. What do we really mean by current terms, such as 'nature,' 'faith,' 'soul,' 'science'?
48. What is the cause and inference from the fact that present unbelief too often represents the revolt, not of the vicious but of the virtuous, not of the dishonest but of the sensitively sincere from current theology, reversing past experience?

56. Also, see S. Matt. Iii. 11; S. Mark iii. 16; Acts ii. 3.

49. Why do the highest aspirations of such men often remain unsatisfied, although they can really have but one source and object?
50. What might we hope would be the effect upon this, of a greater hold (among teachers), of central principles which could not fail to commend themselves to every honest heart and clear mind?

1.11. The Unity of Creation (1885)*

What God hath joined together (in revelation through type and parable) let no man put asunder. Organic and inorganic, mineral, vegetal, animal, are ONE. Distinct, it is true; not to be confounded; but never to be divided or separated.

Christ is our Rock, and out of Him flows living water, our God is Light and a consuming Fire, and we are to be the salt of the earth so that not merely the 'organic' as e.g. the Bread of life, the true Vine, the Lamb, the Dove – but all things which in any sense exist, share in the glory of being used as types of the Eternal life of GOD, and may rightly be called upon to join in blessing the Lord their Maker, and in praising and magnifying Him for ever.

And in some sense it is true of the 'nucleated cells' – of the seeds in the fruit and the grains of corn in the granary, – that they also 'must be born again.' Not enough to be 'born' in the fruit and then to lie long ages secure and intact in some sealed sacrophagus as perfect seed or grain; – 'Ye must be born again.' Why? Because it is a law; re-birth succeeds to and corresponds with re-generation. And as still-birth is possible, so of course there may be frustrated or arrested development at any stage of existence. But there is no escape from the trials of birth except by dissolution back into what answers to the inorganic sphere, and belongs to GOD as Fire and to His life as Water, in His breath or Air as Spirit, there to be again combined and moulded by the one Life-Power into 'organic vitality.'

It may be necessary in any individual case that the law of losing life to find it should be carried out to the uttermost, and the structure de-composed, de-destroyed, dis-solved, dis-integrated, before the Divine touch can kindle it again into what we know as life. That which is of earth or heaven, of time or space, of matter or limit, may begin and may pass away. But that which is Spirit and Life (more than spiritual and living) passeth not away; because except in outward sight or sound it beginneth not.

Thus the law holds good after the new as after the old Birth. We have no right here or anywhere to leave parabolic analogy mutilated, still less to strain or deflect it to suit our preconceived notions, so largely (if unconsciously) tainted by the self-ward instinct. We have no right to shirk its ordered sequence, *substituting arbitrary inferences of our own*, derived as we should find if we honestly analysed them, from the 'Adam' or earthward nature and its disloyal will. In all 'birth' which can be typically used, – all birth which we know here – *that which is born ipso facto dies*; this is the one invariable fact common to all organic life which can be assumed and predicted with certainty. Thus if we use analogy simply and faithfully, we find that a second birth *as* birth inevitably carries with it and involves a second death. But that which is OF and IN and UNTO the Eternal, the Infinite; of the Alpha and Omega, the 'I AM;' the things which are THROUGH and By the Living Word of GOD, die not; because the Outflow is no longer a question of the finite, whether in date or place. Whatever is in Him is before all worlds, even the world of what we know as 'birth' or 'death.'

* [First printed privately and anonymously, see Welby 1885e].

1.12. Death and Life (1886)*

‘And the evening and the morning were the first day.’
(Gen. i., 5).

May not some of our difficulties as to the origin of evil partly arise from not grasping or accepting the deep truth that even apart from sin, all real life in some sense passes through a death; and that it is not an evil or a penalty but a glory that this should be so? Are we not to learn from revelation that the evil of sin and self is the refusal to believe, to consent to, to act on, to rejoice in, and give thanks for, this Divine law? For us, as for all creation, true life must be lost in order to be found. The source of our perplexity as to this ‘hard saying’ surely is to be found in the innate tendency of our lower self-ward nature to reverse this. In spite of the Gospel, which does not confirm but crosses our false conception, we persist in speaking of death as only coming after life, instead of before it. We think only, so to speak, that a man could not be truly ‘dead’ unless he had first been ‘alive;’ whereas it is rather that he cannot be truly alive unless he has first been dead.⁵⁷ We rightly speak of the ‘ebb and flow’ of the natural wave. But in the spiritual sphere we wrongly think of ‘flow and ebb’ – reversing the true order. We imagine that the drawing back of the bow of life succeeds instead of preceding the shooting of the arrow. In short we talk of ‘life and death,’ morning and evening; instead of recognising the order revealed alike in Scripture and science, of evening and morning – death and life. Once let us see and accept this truth – that the evening and the morning are indeed the true day of life, both in creation and redemption; that we must needs lose life to find it, *sin or no sin*; that the planted corn or seed is only buried in order to rise and ascend in the glory of leaf, flower, fruit; and do we not see light in this? In this aspect it is the death of Christ in Incarnation as a whole rather than His yielding up the spirit’ as Man (commended to its true home, the Father’s Hands) which brings us remission of sins. In a deep sense He died in being born in coming for our sakes into our lifeless state; in all that belongs to this world of phenomena. And in giving up the spirit He resumed a living glory. Is not this earthly life, apart from sin, the true counterpart of the embryonic life of the seed, sown in the ground away from light and air and all the glories of colour, form and sound? The earth in its degree and kind is ‘good’ no doubt; a true home for the seed; but that which we call ‘death’ is the rising above the soil of the plant-life which has burst its narrow husk. ‘Mortality swallowed up of life. . . . Clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven. . . . Absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord!’ We prove our inverted sin-blind state by our very name for that! But for sin, we seeds, knowing of our glorious nature and destiny, would patiently and faithfully germinate in a soil prepared for us, full of blessing and peace, and in sure and certain hope of expanded life in the glad and sunny air; looking forward as St. Paul did to ‘death’ as simply a door, a gate. As each sheath opened and fell away, letting the real being within shoot up towards its true home and burst forth into its true life, the yet remaining germs would watch it with thankful joy, knowing how short was the time of waiting, and happy in such a conscious oneness with each other that they could not mourn with any bitterness a separation which after all was but an outer one. The embryo plants would *feel* that they had not lost their pioneers; and their growing life would own a tie and bond with those now risen forth, which was but made nearer and more intimate by the breaking open of one of the two shells or husks which in this life – in their unborn state – had kept them rigidly apart. And the decay of the bodily frame would be seen to correspond to and typify the decay of the self-ward life; withering and perishing before the advance of the true heavenly life which shall be born within us, and at last expiring in a supreme throe, a final yielding up of the will and the whole being to GOD. Our state of deadness might be called a state of ‘wilful unborn-ness’ or arrested development. It is the refusal to develop into a life the crown of which is

* [Originally printed privately and anonymously, see Welby 1886a].

57. That is, ‘death’ to one order of things is the inherent condition of becoming alive to another.

fruitfulness and its culminating point the yielding of its heart's blood to nourish other lives; after which the sap sinks down, the leaves wither, the plant *dies* in the only eternally true sense, the sense of sleep, of natural rest from its labours of life ('the night cometh when no man can work') the quiet pause which is ever the prelude of fresh life and renewed work. May there even be some sense, as yet hidden from us but one day to be manifested, in which the descent into a temporal but innocent life – into a phenomenal 'paradise,' a garden of joyous purity – may be to the giant labours and the 'heat' of the eternal day, what sleep and rest are here; may refresh the immortal spirit and strengthen it for renewed service and sacrifice? But to the Lord of Life, death out of the life and light of Divine glory into our earth, was not only the sharing with us an embryonic home, to be welcomed as a conscious seed would rejoice to be laid in mother-soil, knowing that thus it will germinate and develop into perfect plant or stately tree, nor a natural rest to be welcomed by the strenuous worker none the less because he glories in his labour of joyful love. For Christ took upon Him our sin, inherited, innate, and its consequent infirmity. That assumption brings with it agony. The sinless brow of the very 'Lamb of GOD' whose glory is sacrifice, must needs be sprinkled in anguish with His own life-blood, for that burden involves the '*Not my will but Thine be done.*' But for that, would it not have been, instead of the '*Not my will but Thine be done*' rather '*Thy will be done BEING MINE ALSO?*' *Would there have been the Not and But?* Are they not the marks of that, to bear which was such untold agony to the well-beloved Son in whom the Father was well-pleased, His Name glorified, His Nature perfectly revealed? The true Son's will like His nature is perfectly at-one with the Father's; the will which He prays may not be done belongs to the alien 'life' we have to renounce. To that reversed life, physical 'death' – really the stepping forth into free air and sunshine, – becomes a dreaded fate, the ultimate penalty, an extinction of life. And He endureth once on our behalf – once that He might in all points be tempted like as we are, once only lest we should despair – that veiling of the Blessed Presence, which is the deadly fruit and apex of our sin-dead state. So also He, as one with us, bears even the involuntary sense of recoil from the will and from sacrifice; that recoil which is at the root of our need to learn obedience by the things which we suffer, and to be made perfect through suffering; that curse of instinctive revolt, that 'no' of our discordant nature, which prevents our feeling as even the martyrs felt when freed from pain they washed their hands in the midst of the flame, singing and giving praise, their true life invulnerable and rejoicing. But for that recoil, *that missing of the mark of life*, we should verily count all things but loss, so that only in winning Christ we might win our own true soul, our own true life. The two apparently opposite things, our own welfare and GOD'S will and glory, would become one and inseparable. In our secret hearts we may even have thought some of St. Paul's language on this subject to be but rhetoric and metaphor; thus we see it as a reasonable statement of actual fact. He literally counts all mere 'things' (no wonder!) but loss – or worse – for the excellency of the knowledge and possession of Christ, their only value and essence. And the gain includes not only the power of His resurrection, but equally the fellowship of His sufferings, the becoming conformed unto His death. In Him, we are dead to the real dissolution, alive to the one life, dead to self, alive to love, dead to darkness, alive to light, dead to Satan, alive to GOD.

It is our fault and belongs to our fall that sacrifice, else a Divine delight, became a sorrowful and bitter passion. 'Let this cup pass away from Me' . . . the cup which was the Father's own gift! Should He – the Son – not drink *that*? Yea; but *we* had made it bitter, *our* rejection of it was heavy upon Him – He had assumed an unfilial shrinking, an unnatural reluctance – for on His sinless spirit was laid *our* iniquity and *our* infirmity. And just because He knew and loved no sin, the sense of a discord of which we are too sadly unconscious, our dishonouring thought of the perfect will as something less to love and accept with thankful joy than at best to endure and submit to with patience and resignation – must be intolerable to Him. Thus it was as dying on a cross in a true sense when He took upon Him our flesh; the cross of that perverted state which crosses the will of love and makes it grievous unto us, and which is parabled by the material cross. And again,

sin was crucified in Him on the life-long spiritual cross, and we in Him are crucified thereon to sin. Does it not follow that the victory over physical death of the Eternal Word made Man, was not so much His changing anything in 'death' itself (the giving up of the spirit) as His exalting it to its rightful place, depriving it of that misplace horror in our eyes which chiefly comes of our refusal to lose life in order truly to find it, and revealing it to us as a waking, a birth, a shooting-up above our prison-earth? If so, resurrection *as event* changed only (through and in Him) the relative position of humanity, and thus the true attitude of man towards 'death.' Now it is indeed our own fault if we look upon death itself, *instead of our inverted view of it*, as the punishment of sin and the result of the fall, since we ought to use sleep as the type of death ('She is not dead but sleepeth' and see St. John xi, 12–14) and death as the type of birth. Let us beware lest we are found with those who laugh His view of death to scorn when He calleth it a sleep.

It is of course profoundly true that the reverse side of death as it were – what we perceive through out-ward sense here – is, like withering and corruption, a type of 'life without GOD.' We live in a world of appearance. And apparently – to the natural eye – physical death is a loss and evil pure and simple. It breaks off work, cuts short a career, quenches hope, severs love or friendship, ends all that we can see or feel. And thus in the appearance-world by which, thank GOD! we are forbidden to judge because such judgment is ever unrighteous or untrue, it *is* a penalty – the penalty of sin. But One who sees through appearance and judges righteous judgment, calls it a sleep or a deliverance. How significant is the chosen topic, the special theme, in the glory of transfiguration! Not resurrection or ascension but death in its most repellent and repulsive aspect, and that called 'exodos.' Yes, from the land of more than 'Egyptian' bondage. We may know death now (as being His,) to be but a gate of larger life, and this life a training-ground for that. We may know both service and suffering to be things which owe their pain and toil, their sting or bitterness or burden, to our unlikeness to GOD, our self-ward loveless state. It is *that* which makes the losing life to find it seem an unbearable doom. Thus the 'going forth' as death endured in its most terrible form by the Sinless One, becomes the needful expression of god's uttermost gift of His own life to us. Once only, on the Mount, did the soil of this life become transparent to the disciples and the 'future' life shine through; but was He not ever transfigured, to eyes that had learned to see? And but for our shame should we not see that the only kind of 'death' which fits and deserves our epithets for it, is the inherent revolt of the will, the disastrous reversal of true thought, the devotion to this outward life, the slavery to self and thralldom of sense which is the real penalty of sin? Thank GOD, in Him we have died to the one and thus rise to the other. For the death to sin is new birth to righteousness, as the death to that which only appears is new birth to that which really IS. But it needs faith to look for a sure and certain dawning, since our mirror is dark with our deathly shadows. And our deadness is shown in the refusal to become one in heart and joy and nature with that love which delighteth in giving what costs all, which could not be content even with the throne of all glory and blessedness while one heart was aching or desolate, while one will was wandering astray, while one soul was lost.

Thus we begin to understand how it is that our LORD'S words (St. John vi.) were and are such 'occasions of stumbling.' For do they not show that some form of surrender of the glory of life in order to give it forth, to communicate it, to quicken and to nourish with it, is an essential and eternal – a divine – principle? And this is not only seen in the loneliness of the unsown, unburied seed. For when fruit is not gathered and eaten, it only drops off on to the ground and there sadly rots, and one could imagine its being endowed with a consciousness which should make it rejoice rather to be gathered when ripe and taken into a nobler life than its own, running through the veins in glad thankfulness at being thought worthy to share in the glory of the organism into which it was incorporated, even though that glory were the shedding it, the sprinkling it, the cleansing of all impurity with it, the nourishing of all life with it, the quenching of all thirst with it – 'Drink ye all of this' – in lavish and royal gift.

'On a remarkable piece of Saxon sculpture the other day I saw a most significant arrangement of scenes from the LORD'S life. The Infant in the Manger pointed to by human spectator, was

next to the Risen Lord borne aloft in the sacred Vesica by angels. This expresses your thought in a symbol. In the same sculpture the Crucifixion was represented simply by a Lamb laid unbound upon a cross. Surely the workman was more than a poet.' (Dr. Westcott to 'Vita').

'Evening and morning' – seek not thou to change it,
Order immutable and fixed above,
'Evening and morning' making up the glory
Of His eternal day Whose name is LOVE!

1.13. The Ministry of Women: A Suggested Eirenicon (1886)*

In such a question as the ministry of women,⁵⁸ surely the first thing to do is to clear the ground. We need to define the sense in which we are using the terms 'man' and 'woman.' Are we speaking of 'man' as denoting sex, or as designating Humanity? And are we considering 'woman' in her separate individuality, or as representing an essential part of human nature?

Is it not true that if we want to learn the place or work of anything in the concrete, it is best to begin with some knowledge of its abstract or general character? If, for instance, we are to determine the proper use of a particular form of light, – say sunlight, or electric, or lamp-light, – it must be governed by our idea of light in general; else we shall be setting it impossible tasks, or depriving ourselves of some of its most useful services: perhaps even confounding it with a will o' the wisp, and warning each other against following *any* light, or letting it guide us under any conditions!

To find the true place of Woman in Society or in the Church, to ascertain her real work or function in the world, her power and her weakness, her gift and her defect, we must see that we are thinking on a true basis as to the nature and law of womanhood and motherhood. And as Christians we are specially bound to consider it with reference to the Incarnation, as well as to creation. We must not forget that the Magnificat is deliberately put into the mouth of each one of us – man or woman – by the Church; and Scripture gives us the clue to what ought to be the Christian conception of womanhood, by its use of type or metaphor (as e.g. Prov. viii. and Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 11), and by such parallels as the 'new birth.' In the words of one of the deepest thinkers of our day, 'when woman learns to read her own riddle, we may hope for light on many things now dark.'

Without her venturing to offer a definite solution of the problem, or an answer to the question as to what outward form womanly ministries may most fittingly and fruitfully take, or how in any given case, her gifts may best and most widely be used, I may perhaps be allowed, though with much sense of inadequacy, to suggest what seems to me the direction in which such solution or answer may be found.

When we consider womanhood as a principle included in manhood, that is, as it was before being 'taken out of' the first manhood, or as an essential element of the Manhood taken into GOD – distinct but not separate, – it is seen in two opposite aspects: as Eve, or the feminine principle *through which temptation or trial is felt by humanity*, and as Mary, or the same principle, overshadowed by the influence and power of the Holy Spirit, *through which redemption reaches it*. Womanhood as separate in its Eve-character is derived from man, and in its Mary-character is alone the means of the advent of the Divine Humanity. Man (in the collective sense) needs therefore special care in the use of that element in his nature which woman represents: the *sensitive* part; that delicate consciousness, of which I suppose the lower form is instinct, the higher intuition, that being the channel alike of trial and of victory, and thus at once, a danger and a glory. When man

* [Originally printed privately and anonymously, see Welby 1886e].

58. See two papers on the subject, in the *Contemporary Review*, for Jan. 1884.

is called the 'head of the women,' are we not to understand among other things that her special spiritual gift corresponds in some wise to the sense of touch, feeling, or consciousness by contact? The head of course shares this sense with the rest of the bodily organism, but is the special seat of the sight, hearing, smell, taste, and finally of the brain, the reasoning faculty, the governing will, and the articulate speech. Yet the peculiar importance of the sense of touch is shown by what I believe is a known fact, that its total loss while the others remain in active function, tends to result in madness, which is not the case with the rest of the senses.

Men who are orators or preachers – and especially perhaps evangelists, – are tempted to forget that there is an abiding principle in the subordination of the womanly element in their nature, both in the mutual relation and the indissoluble unity of the Head and the Body, and in the illumination and direction of the 'heart' by the 'mind.'

And women also need to remember that however abundantly they may share in and possess those gifts of reason and judgment which belong to the head, their distinctive though not separate glory lies in those which we attribute to the 'heart.' In short the 'emotional nature' with its passionate feelings and impulses, will ever do well, in all deep questions which are related to and affect our whole being, to consult its 'husband' the informing mind, 'at home.' Some revivalists need to be reminded that we find this principle throughout the Scriptural appeals, which are based not upon feeling merely (though vibrating with the noblest emotion), but upon truth spiritually apprehended by the whole being of humanity. Without this, the influence of preaching, having no root in the wisdom and knowledge of GOD, must presently wither away, however lovely its flowers of eloquence, however sweet its savour.

Thus the need of warning, of control, even of repression and subjection, really belong to the 'Eve' against whom we need to be on our guard; while perfect trust and loyal reverence are due to the sanctified womanhood which is the appointed means of the world's salvation; both alike in some sense implying the 'veil' which in the one case is a safeguard, and in the other a mark of the special consecration of that which is sacred as the life *hidden* with Christ in GOD.

To repeat: – in what may perhaps be called her Evehood – taken out of man-woman is only derivative and partial, and can bring nothing good into the world without his initial energy. But in her Maryhood – if such a word may be allowed – she alone, through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, gives to the world the Heavenly Man.

The Eve is mother of Cain as well as of Abel: but the Mary is mother of Christ, and not of Judas.

Of course this involves her full share in the intellectual faculties. And we can only distinguish, we must not separate Body and Head, which by analogy form one Organism; but the blessed truth remains that it is the pure heart and not the subtle intellect which 'conceives and bears' the divine life generated through the Holy Spirit; the reason being used in the apprehension and ever fuller realization of its spiritual treasures.

Thus if we would really understand woman's position in Scripture and S. Paul's words about her, we must surely begin by recognising two distinct aspects of her being; and seeing that the underlying principles must ever remain the same, ask ourselves not merely what S. Paul would say *now* as to given forms of action, but also what S. John – who has 'tarried' long, but whose day we may hope is at hand – would tell us, of the true application of natural law, no less that of its revealed analogue.

However I may have failed in expressing it, I earnestly hope that this view of the subject will not be dismissed as 'mystical,' or *in a fanciful or futile sense* (which to Christians at least it certainly ought not to be); for it really suggests an enquiry into what we *mean* by 'man' and 'woman' which ought to precede the question of 'ministry' or function, and which lies in fact in the region of practical reasoning and life, and of the laws of nature and true development; both in the ordinary and in that larger sense which includes the spiritual, revealed or manifested both by the inward voice and by the central truth of Incarnation.

1.14. The Secret of Life (1887)*

A certain solid treasure, unique and priceless, was once given into the hands of a chosen company of loyal ones, to be guarded by them and their successors, in such wise that no fraction or particle should be lost. And they gladly watched and jealously preserved it, for through that alone, they knew, there would some day be a marvellous spark kindled and a wonderful power awakened within them, called 'Life'; infinitely higher than the existence they had already, although of a nature like unto it. Thus it was laid up reverently in a fast-locked crystal casket, through the shining sides of which it could be seen. And as generations came and went and the years rolled on, its form and brightness and beauty were taken by those to whom it was entrusted as the archetype of all perfection: since indeed it was the gift of One all-perfect. For ever in each heart there stirred a germ of witness that therein lay hidden verily the secret call to life; and they knew that was their need and longed for it. But they knew also that patience must needs have her perfect work. So, rejoicing in their precious 'pearl of price' and knowing it secure, its guardians went their way in peace and did their daily duty, returning many times to gaze upon it and to compare with it all which they found, or learnt, or made. And they told all strangers with confidence and exultation that come what might, this one thing *could never change*. It had been delivered to them once for all as fixed and solid substance, and they made sure that it would continue thus for ever. Other like gifts would sooner or later prove flexible, they said, with blurred outline and shifting weight; this alone, kept truly, would abide. It was the one imperishable *substance*, the type of all *solidity*, and in its changeless firmness lay its coming gift of Life.

But one day, when they came as usual to the sanctuary, they found that a strange thing had happened. They could hardly believe their eyes. Instead of the sharp-cut, varied outline they had known and prized so long, and the well-remembered crystals as of snow, they found now a smooth surface, and the substance had taken the form of the casket in which it rested. Moreover it had become transparent, and quivered and trembled when they touched it. They opened the shrine and tried to grasp it; and lo, it poured through their fingers and – as they watched aghast – took the form of whatsoever it touched. With anxious troubled care they kept it from escaping; and bringing a golden chalice, collected every drop. For alas, their cherished type of all solidity had melted into 'fluid.'

No longer could it give its form to mould or cast or covering: it took all shapes alike. Things which could have rested on it now sank *through* it unsupported. And it could no longer stand of itself, but needed a cavity wherein to lie quiescent. In sad wonder and perplexity and much soreness at heart the custodians of the precious gift sought to account in some way for this unlooked for calamity. Some said that this unstable 'liquid' could not be the ancient treasure; some enemy had surely stolen *that*, and left them this in mockery. Others lamented times gone by and reverted to the age in which the treasure yet was perfect. They declared that the guardians on duty at the fatal moment must have betrayed their trust; that an easy careless watching had resulted in this loss. Meanwhile some despaired, and one said – 'We have been deceived, it was no treasure after all, and never could have given us Life as we foolishly believed; come, my brothers, and let us fling away the hope of that empty chimæra we called "Life," and be content with the bare existence which is real'...

But the one who had first discerned the change – not wholly new to him – came nearer in rejoicing awe, and drew a long deep Breath. Was this then LIFE at last? Could it be that after all the Treasure was transformed, but still inviolate? Was it indeed the very GIFT which they had known as 'solid,' even though now formless, impalpable – blank to all the senses? Or after all, might it not in truth be the vacancy it seemed? Were not the others right and they and he deluded and disturbed by some passing wave of feeling or of fancy, which would only make the keener

* [Originally printed privately and published anonymously in 1887, see Welby 1887f].

that sense of desolation which must follow the vanishing of the life-giving substance into vague and misty 'air'?

But even as he wondered and half-doubted, that air was doing its work. The lungs within him, *of which he had known nothing*, swelled and shrank in breathing – wondrous rhythm! – and the air transformed the blood; for a heart began to throb with the pulses of the stars, and the brain began to work in mighty force. All things were new to him. And a strong inrush of love and longing for his brethren, came upon him, so that he went hither and thither entreating and persuading them to return. With joy he saw that those who came were transfigured and new-quickened like himself by the vivifying air. For the first time fully alive, really born into the universe of that Breath which is the Spirit, they began to enter into all things through a new and living Light. What they had read and heard and spoken of as mystery inscrutable, accepting it as belonging to times gone by or future, or to some different place and order, now burst forth and *lived* before their eyes. The power of the Gift, now first completely theirs, was vitalising all truth, interpreting all problems, unifying all nature. And when they looked back to the state of mere existence, from which they had in error judged a Life, remembering how they would have done their utmost to keep their treasure in its inert state for ever, they marvelled and were humbled, for they saw in shame the want of faith in which they had resisted the teaching of life through death which was their truest hope. Looking back they saw how clearly this had spoken to them in many unheeded signs, and how those among them who had dimly discerned that thus it must be, had been rebuked and accused of unfaithfulness to trust, and of wishing to reduce the solid gift to vapour or worthless void. But now all that was over; and moreover the influence of the Life-giver awoke fresh needs and powers.

Thus the eager Breathers reached a further mystery. They saw again their treasure as of old, yet now in form and nature wholly new. No longer locked away, inert and sterile, it came to them in answer to another new-felt need. They knew it now as Food, they ate, they drank; it was absorbed into a hungering, thirsting nature, to nourish and to build up growing life. . . .

But here we will not follow them as yet, for faint in us are dawning gleams of life-light. . . and strange as yet to many is even Breath, unthought of such a meaning to our doubts, our pain, our loss – such reason for eclipse of hope in some, such answer to our questions and our prayers. . .

But others would not listen, and sought earnestly for means to restore the lost 'solidity,' appealing to all who were faithful and true to combine for this holy end. It was the fatal atmosphere of luke-warmness, they cried, which had at last dissolved it. If the type of all foundations, the basis of all hopes, yielded and was supple, having no longer firmness, shape, or outline of its own, what then was left? So one urged that as warmth had relaxed it, a return to the icy temperature of other days would work the needed change. Another thought that a burning heat would harden; some moisture must have softened it. Some even sought in chemistry – or was it alchemy? – some element wherewith to re-crystallise or at least petrify the swaying, dripping liquid. One said this and another that; but all agreed that the one pressing and paramount need was restoration; the bringing back of blessing they had lost. So they went their several ways, some disputing and others anxiously devising sundry means by which to regain their solid treasure as at first.

But one who yet was silent, pondering long and deeply, drew near again as he found himself alone, to examine more closely the nature of the change. For many a time had questioning come to him in quiet hours. Would not some great change and seeming loss be the heralding sign of the near fulfilment of all hope – the Advent of the Life? He had even striven to give expression to his thoughts, reminding others that everywhere they saw a law of gain through loss, which might mean Life through Death. But they for the most part only stared and smiled or frowned, calling it paradox or windy 'vapouring.' And some warned him that he was in danger of denying and letting go the sound tradition, the plain facts handed down to them – and indeed, they said, self-evident – that the Treasure must be kept wholly and entirely as received, if they would have it give them Life. And thinking on these things, he lifted his eyes and fixed them on the casket. But what was this? . . . Surely his eyes deceived him? Where was the precious gift? There was the

shrine – and within it stood the chalice – but *nothing* could be seen. . . All was empty! One swift thought, thrilled him through. . . ‘Can it indeed be as I think?’ . . . and then he ran to find the others – ‘O brothers, come’ he cried; ‘another change is here, and surely Life at last must be at hand. . .’ But they, hearing of ‘change,’ came quickly in, and seeing nothing left, stood stricken around the casket, wringing hands and wailing in despair. ‘Our pearl of price is gone’ they moaned; we have lost it utterly and we know not where to look for it! We are ruined and undone. . . We might have known that if we allowed the rigid grasp of the frost of early days to relax, the one thing needful would not merely melt to plastic, mobile ‘liquid’ but would vanish into empty useless ‘vapour!’ Why did we not bring ice at once and bury our treasure deep in the heart of it, so that it might be safely frozen again? It is clear that *this* has been our sin – ‘to let the sun-warmth in!’ ‘And the sun-light too’ added one; ‘for do we not know that the things of Life are mysteries, and must ever be shrouded in shadows and kept from the touch of profaning solar rays? We ought to have seen it only in the dim light of the sanctuary lamp, tended by one appointed.’

But they opened the ‘empty’ casket, and then, and then. . . what was this that rushed sighing out? What did they feel surrounding them, entering at every pore? Why did their throats open eagerly to suck in something fresh, sweet, pure beyond their utmost thought? What did they feel running through them with a force and gladness wholly new? What was this strange energy, this glowing warmth and vigour thrilling within them? Were they going mad? Was this delirium – intoxication? Terrified, they fled in all directions, recovering as they went the old dense sluggishness – and feeling safe once more.

Solidification of Oxygen

‘At the Royal Institution. . . Professor Dewar exhibited for the first time. . . the method he employs for the production of solid oxygen. Last year the Professor gave a lecture. . . on liquid air, but although he and other experimenters had made liquid oxygen in small quantity yet no one had succeeded in getting oxygen into the solid condition. The successful device employed at the Royal Institution depends upon allowing liquid oxygen to expand into a partial vacuum, when the enormous absorption of heat which accompanies the expansion results in the production of the solid substance. Oxygen in this condition resembles snow in appearance, and has a temperature about 200 deg. centigrade below the freezing point of water. A supply of this material will enable chemists to approach the absolute zero of temperature and to investigate many interesting changes in the physical properties of bodies under the primordial condition of the temperature of space.’

Times, 1886.

‘The only gas which has this property’ (that of supporting life) ‘is oxygen; an animal deprived of this gas, even for a short time, soon dies.’

‘Matter assumes the solid, liquid or gaseous form according to the relative strength of the cohesive and repulsive forces exerted between its particles.’

From *Popular Natural Philosophy*, Ganot, pp. 105–106.

‘The oxygen of the air is as necessary for the life of men and animals as it is for the burning of candles.’

‘Thus. . . we have learnt (1) that animals take in the oxygen of the air into their lungs; (2) that there the oxygen goes into the blood and (3) that there the oxygen is used to burn up the waste carbon of the body, forming carbonic acid, and thereby giving rise to animal heat.’

‘More than half the weight of our whole earth consists of oxygen. Oxygen is necessary for the life of animals; they breathe it, and use it to oxidise and purify the blood and to keep up the animal heat.’

From *The Chemistry Primer*, by Prof. Roscoe, pp. 14–16, 62.

1.15. New Wine in Old Bottles (1890)*

Christ said: 'No man soweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filleth it up taketh away from the old and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled and the bottles will be marred; but new wine must be put into new bottles.'

What Christ's meaning was when he spoke these words we can hardly guess, for the context in Matthew (ix, 16, 17) as well as in Mark (ii, 21, 22) appears to be corrupted. Christ, as reported in these passages, said these words in answer to the question: 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?' This part of Christ's answer does not fit to the question. But, whatever Christ meant, it is certain that, if these allegories mean the renewal of old ideas, the rejuvenescence of a dying faith, he himself did pour new wine into old bottles. He did not reject the truths of the Old Testament, but he adopted them, he perfected them, he brought out their moral purport, and showed the spirit of their meaning. If the simile is to be interpreted in this sense, evolution is a perpetual repetition of putting new wine into old bottles.

What is the progress of science but a constant remodeling of our scientific conceptions and terms and formulas? What is the progress of national and social life but a constant alteration and improvement of old institutions and laws?

What enormous changes has our conception of God passed through! How great they are is scarcely apparent to us now, at least our orthodox brethren are not much aware of it. It is known to the historian; and we can given an idea of these changes by pointing to the fact that the idea of evil passed through the same phases. The crude anthropomorphism displayed in the history of the idea of the devil is fresher in our minds, and is better preserved in legends.

How often have the orthodox on the one hand, and the infidels on the other, declared that if the word God means anything, it means and can mean only some one thing. How often did the former conclude from such a premise that everyone who did not hold their opinion was an atheist, and the latter maintain that his conception being wrong, there was no God at all. How often was the conception of God changed, and how often had the dogmatic believer to shift his position.

There is a point of strange agreement between the old orthodox believers and their infidel antagonists. Believers, as a rule, declare that religion means nothing, unless it means the worship of a supernatural divine personality; and atheists, accepting the latter definition of relation, conclude that religion, therefore, should be rejected as a superstition.

This agreement between believers and infidels is at first startling. In my childhood I sided with the former, in my youth with the latter; but, when I became a man, I freed myself from the narrowness of both. I now know that some errors they have in common.

Oponents have always something in common, else they could not be antagonistic to one another. Thus the orthodox believer and the infidel disbeliever stand upon the same ground, and this ground is their common error. The infidel speaker on the platform, appears to me, in principle as well as in method, like an inverted orthodox clergyman. He agrees with his adversaries in the principle – and he always falls back upon the dogmatic assertion – that there is no one who can know: no one who can solve the religious problem; no one who can prove or disprove whether there is a God and an immortality of the soul or not. But the infidel inverts the argument of the orthodox believer. While the latter argues, 'I must believe, because I cannot know, I must have faith, because it is beyond the ken of human reason;' the infidel concludes, 'because I cannot know, I must *not* believe; and I must reject any solution of the problems of God and the soul because the subject is beyond the ken of human reason.'

Weighing the pros and the cons of the question, I became convinced that both parties were one-sided, that, misguided by a narrow definition, both had become so ossified as to allow of no evolution to a higher standpoint. Therefore, I discarded all scruples about using the words

* [First published anonymously in *The Open Court*, see Welby 1890e].

Religion, God, and Soul in a new sense, which would be in conformity with science. It was, perhaps, a new path that I was traveling, and there are few that find it, but it is, nevertheless, I am fully convinced, the only true way that leadeth unto life.

The adherents of the new religious conception are in the minority: and there are the theists on the one side, and the agnostics on the other, both uniting their objection to a widening of ideas that have become too narrow for us now, both declaring that old definitions should not be used in a new sense.

Strange! is it not? It seems so, but it is not. The agreement between believers and unbelievers is easily explainable from the law of inertia. The law of inertia holds good in the empire of thought just as much as in the empire of matter.

When Lavoisier discovered that fire was a process of oxidation, he met with much opposition among his co-workers. It was plainly told him that fire, if it meant anything, meant a certain substance, scientifically called phlogisticum; the qualities of which could be perceived by our senses. This phlogisticum, it was maintained, possessed, among other properties, the strange property of negative weight, and the argument seemed so evident, since all flames tend upwards. If fire meant a mere mode of motion, would not that be equivalent of denying the real existence of fire altogether?

We now all know that the definition and the meaning of the words fire and heat have changed. Neither have the words been discarded, nor have we ceased to believe in the real existence of fire, since we have given up our wrong notion of the materiality of fire. On the contrary, we now know better what fire is, and in what consists the reality of a flame.

Concerning religion let us follow the example of Christ, and break the fetters that antiquated definitions impose upon us. Not the letter giveth life, but the spirit; and let us preserve the spirit of religious truth, if need be, at the sacrifice of the letter, in which the spirit is threatened to be choked.

Christ's words about the new cloth, and the new wine, it seems to me, meant that certain religious institutions, that ceremonies and forms will wear out like old garments, and like old bottles. Antiquated institutions, which have lost their sense, should not be preserved. For instance, the sacrifices of lambs and goats, which were offered by the Jews, as well as by the Greeks and the Romans, were abandoned in Christianity: they had lost their meaning, and Christ's religion would have been an old garment with a new piece of cloth on it, if the old cult had been preserved. Indeed, even the Jews are so much imbued with the new spirit that they have given up their sacrifices forever.

It will be the same with the new religion that is now dawning upon mankind. Some of the old ceremonies have lost their meaning, they will have to be dropped. But the whole purport of religion, the ideal of religion and its mission will not be gone. Man will always want a guide in life, a moral teacher and instructor. Man must not allow himself to drift about on the ocean of life, he must have something to regulate his conduct. Who shall do that? Shall man follow his natural impulse to get as much pleasure out of his life as he can? Shall he follow science? Or shall he follow religion?

Man might follow science, if every man could become a scientist; and in some sense, this is possible. We can not, all of us, become specialists in the different sciences, but we can, all of us, to some extent become specialists in ethics. What is religion but a popularized system of ethics? And this religion of ethics will be the religion of the future. All of us who aspire after progress, work for the realization of this religion.

Let the religion of the future be a religion of science, let religion not be in conflict with science, but let the science of moral conduct be so popularised that the simplest mind can obey its behests, not only because he knows that disobedience will ruin him, but also because he has learned to appreciate the moral commands, so as to love them, and follow them because he loves them.

1.16. Breath and the Name of the Soul (1891)*

In his article in *The Open Court* for June 11th, upon the discovery of the soul, Prof. Max Müller tells us that if we follow the most revealing of vestiges – those of language – ‘we shall find that here also man began by naming the simplest and most palpable things, and that here, also, by simply dropping what was purely external, he found himself by slow degrees in possession of names which told him of the existence of a soul.’ I venture, not to object or differ, but to ask here certain prior questions which are by most of us more or less begged, but on the answers to which it seems to me depend all our ultimate inferences. What then is the ‘purely external’? Certainly not the heart or brain, for they are literally internal, – inside the ‘body.’ And when by an unexplained wrench of paradox, early man begins to reckon the content of his skin-boundary (which is the most ‘purely internal’ thing he knows) as ‘external’ why should he ever ‘drop it’ at all? Surely as well ‘drop’ language to think, or colours and paper to paint, or violin and bow to ‘play’!

However by means of this strange and paradoxical instinct to ‘drop’ the first and foremost and most emphatic reality, the external and internal which are simply as the inside and outside of a nut, we come to the conventional conception of the soul as ‘an invisible, intangible, immaterial object.’ But may I suggest that the moment any expression for We, Us, I, Me, began to emerge, they did so simply as the symbols of that personal identity which is the only value of a ‘soul’? Their appearance, as the philosophical philologist has taught us, was due to that growing self-consciousness which learns more and more clearly to distinguish between owner and owned, between what we have and what we are. The distinction has from the first been provided for by the contrast of I or We or My or Our. Whatever we can properly place after a My or an Our is ipso facto thus relegated to a secondary or derivative place, as a belonging, not a being. Thus we come into sight of what I would suggest as one of the most prolific sources of confusion in that chaos of ambiguity, modern civilised language. Even when we say Our or My father, Our or My GOD, we invert and cannot help inverting the relation expressed, since Our or My imply as their principal the We or the I. And the fact that we do not notice or intend this no more effects the facts than our not noticing or intending that our retina should invert the position of external objects. Now all modern western words for soul or spirit, even for self, admit the Our or My before them. But so far as we can (if at all) speak of My Ego we are simply degrading that term to the second rank. ‘I AM that I AM,’ not what I HAVE. If we want to express that which we ARE, that which possesses or uses a self, a soul, a mind, a spirit, a life, a body, and all else which we may be said to *have*, we must use the term Man itself (since only in joke or metaphor can we say Our or My Man) or simply We and Us or I and Me, as we cannot say Our we, Our us, or My Me.

But (it will be objected) as all words to denote what we now call the mental or spiritual or rational can (if analysable at all) be traced back to a material origin, the We and Us and the I and Me must always have meant primarily that entity which can be felt, which resists, suffers, etc. Thus as the need for distinction grew, a word was wanted for the activity or power which moved ‘from within’ that feeling, or resisting, or suffering entity. ‘From within’ took on the meaning, ‘from it.’ How then are we to name that which is not merely the ‘within’ – since that implies no difference of nature from the ‘without’ – but something that apparently ‘lives’ inside and sends out ‘orders’? Prof. Max Müller here gives us what is constantly ignored, the claim of the blood or heart to furnish the first name for the spiritual self or soul. But he goes on to suggest as better still the breath. . . ‘which went in and out of the mouth and the nostrils.’ But now comes the question, why? What was it that the primitive mind saw to make it prefer Breath before all other possible terms, – even those of blood or heart which must so constantly have obtruded themselves as the essential marks of life? If we say that this breadth was from the first conceived as an object, a thing, like in nature to those which could be taken up in the hand, or on which one could stand, against which one could learn, and so on, then this supposed object was invariably found alternately passing in

* [Originally published in *The Open Court*, signed Hon. Lady Welby, see Welby 1891b].

and out of nostrils and mouth. But do we ever find this idea among the endless complexities of early animism? If such a notion existed – in however elementary a form – it would follow that in the pause after expiring a deep breath, the man's 'self' would be supposed to be outside his body, and we should find warnings against hurting the man's spirit which for that moment was sitting somewhere in front of his chest? But do we really mean to credit the early man with thinking that the soul as breath walks in from outside and departs again at every breath? For so why should it be reckoned as any more within the man during life than without him? It would be all against the grain to ignore the breath as drawn in from outside, and only notice it as coming forth from inside. Experience would be incessantly re-affirming the contrary.

What then shall we postulate as the real reason why breath was chosen as representative of life and identity? The word 'chosen' of course does not here involve any intellectual process but rather a sub-conscious automatism, the descendant of that 'rhythm of motion' on which Herbert Spencer lays so much stress. In this sense then was not the choice of breath originally owing to its being the most obviously conspicuous example of the interaction between what we now call 'organism' and 'environment'? When this 'give and take' (which it actually is) ceased, so did the activities of the animal. At all events one thing is plain; we thus come to a possible explanation of the choice of breath (or pulse) as the main term for animal or vital energy, which, in accordance with the whole drift of modern thought, is given in terms of the dynamic instead of the static. The 'spirit' is thus no entity but a rhythm, a beat, a thrill, a sequence of throbs. And this stops instead of departing at death. If we hold that some 'immaterial object' – the 'psyche' – is inside the body during life and outside it after death, then the infant must have been inflated with a breath-soul at birth and at once well corked down until at the moment of death the cork was drawn and the breath-soul rushed out! But if ideas of this class were of later accretion and the earliest and simplest thought was that not of 'dropping' this or that among the conditions of reality in order to acquire a 'spiritual' world, but of giving motion and not matter the primary place in trying to express the essential 'self' or 'soul' of things, then the way is cleared for further inquiry on the same 'dynamic' line which may prove to be rich in suggestion even if, as yet, in nothing more.

1.17. A Royal Slave (1897)*

In the world of Symbol – the only one that signifies – Sign and Speech in grand array, with Talk, Scribble, a crowd of little Letters and Syllables arranged in groups, a few Colons and Commas curling and dotting gaily about, and a pompous Full Stop, sat holding a Meeting. They had called it to consult as to what fresh orders they should issue to their Slave of all work, Man. But as usual, the moment they arrived, quarrelling began. Sign tried to take the Chair, Speech disputed his right to it, while Talk and Scribble and even Spelling and Grammar joined in the fray. The showers of paper covered with signs were blinding, and the hoarse medley of sounds was deafening. Talk stormed the platform, but was knocked backwards by Scribble, who had been sitting ready to record the proceedings. In the midst of the uproar Language arrived with an Alphabet of office in one hand and a rod of iron in the other. He commanded attention at once, and the combatants sullenly subsided into the nearest seats.

'The Slave will be here directly,' said he; 'the only business before the meeting is the question, What notice are we to take of his appeals, and then what orders we have for him; these must be given at once.' As he spoke he quietly slipped into the Chair, Sign and Speech making a formal protest, which nobody backed up. Then they discussed the orders; though as every word, and even every letter, wanted to be talked or written at once, the proceedings were very noisy and disorderly. Finally, however, they decided that an application which the Slave had made for permission to spell in a consistent or intelligible fashion should be refused; rejecting also a petition which he had

* [Originally published in *Fortnightly Review*, signed V. Welby, see Welby 1897b].

presented for leave to add some letters or accents to the Alphabet, and to shorten some linguistic forms which he thought cumbrous or ugly. Even Language forgot his assumption of dignity here, and bawled with the best of them. 'The barefaced impudence of the Slave!' he shouted, 'why, he'll be using me next' (and proceeded to use himself with regrettable freedom). 'And then perhaps he'll begin some of that old nonsense about having trained us all up from our infancy, and having a right to some voice in our decisions! Rank anarchism I call it.' . . . But at this moment the Slave appeared. All his Masters tried to look as if they really were legitimate authorities and rulers, and quite properly engaged in deciding what orders to give him. As he stood there humbly and silently, the Clerk, who had been sitting in a dark corner buried in papers, emerged with one which he gave to the Chairman, who hurriedly read out, 'The first order is that you are to say "phenomenal" when you mean "exceptional."' The Slave winced and murmured, 'But phenomenal is. . . ' 'Don't interrupt and don't contradict,' cried the Chairman, 'and understand that we refuse all your petitions.' 'Most mighty Masters,' said the Slave, bowing low, 'your will is law; but one or two of the appeals I intended to make are urgent, and I fear that unless you listen your interests will suffer.' 'Speak on, then,' answered Language haughtily; 'but be brief.' 'I wanted to say, Sirs, that I have found some beautiful and valuable words which my forefathers used—' 'Your forefathers used?' screamed a dozen voices together. 'How dare you say such a thing? The words used your forefathers as we use you to-day, remember that.' The Slave flushed slightly, and even drew himself up. But he quickly resumed his humble attitude. 'Then I want to be used by these noble words I have found,' said he gently, 'and I badly want some new words to express new facts and new ideas, and also to put aside some others which, I find, only obscure meaning or vulgarise thought or perpetuate error.' But the Meeting lost all patience. 'Kick him out,' cried one. 'No, shut him up', shouted another, 'and sentence him to talk and write no more for a year.' The Chairman's voice rose loud above the hubbub, and he pointed at the Slave, now standing erect with a dawning expression of self-scorn on his face. 'Go, Slave,' he said, 'and let us hear no more of this. So many verbal questions have called for our attention that at the moment we have nothing ready for you except the order to take "phenomenal" to express what it doesn't mean; but as usual we have rows of other words which we shall insist on your mixing up or muddling. We will send for you again soon. It is clear that your burdens and your puzzles must be doubled; you are getting much too forward and forgetting your place. Grammar has been making hay of some of his Definitions for you; and Spelling declares that he means to be as despotic and inconsistent as he chooses.' (Hear, hear from Spelling.) 'In fact,' continued Language, again forgetting to be pompous, 'we're just going to play any little game we like without consulting you; and if you don't obey orders without question it will be the worse for you!' 'O, let's have a lark!' squeaked the Commas, beginning a game of post with Brackets, Hyphens, &c.; while Words, Syllables, and Letters as well as Rhymes and Metres were soon in a wild romp. In spite of the frantic shouts of 'Order, order, resume your seats!' from Language, the chivy soon became general, and the meaning began to run out of the words at the crosses of their t's and the tails of their y's; while the dots on their i's tumbled over the Full Stop, making that stout and sedate person black with rage. 'Stop this,' he roared; and as nobody had heard him speak before, the rumpus came to a sudden end. And as the Slave (who had been buffeted and almost trampled upon in the scrimmage) passed out, Language said to his companions, 'We must stand none of his nonsense, but all take care to be as ambiguous as we can, and see that he is well confused; or he will be getting some clear ideas of his own and some notion of his own power: and where should we be then?' There was a chorus of 'Where indeed?' as the Meeting dispersed.

But as the Slave went his way in deep thought, with a troubled look of questioning wonder growing in his eyes, he was joined by one who seemed to concentrate in his countenance and movements all that vitality of thought could give. 'My name is Expression,' he said, seeing the look of doubt in the Slave's face; 'and I am come to ask you to take me as your faithful servant till death.' 'My servant?' asked the Slave amazed. 'Yes, my motto is the royal one, "I serve,"' said Expression. 'But remember, of course, that I said Servant. No slavery for me! If you treat me as

a slave and abuse my powers, you will lose me and I shall leave you Meaningless. For Meaning goes with me; and well you know what *that* is in your life.' 'It is all there is worth living for,' murmured the Slave; 'there would be neither good nor truth without it.' 'But if you persist in your present shameful abasement you will forfeit the splendid gift of Significance,' Expression went on; 'then the world will be struck senseless, and it will be your doing. Take, then, what I offer and mount your true throne, and the world and life will grow full of Meanings which you little dream of yet. For how can the new Senses come and help to make thought truer, as long as there are no words to use in them?' 'And there are so many precious Meanings and Senses too,' sighed the Slave, 'entreating me to express them! But I have to shut them all out: Language would refuse to admit or convey them. . . .' 'But *I* should not,' answered Expression eagerly. 'And I am not only grieved to see you, the king of nature, degraded into a mere drudge of that lawless rabble yonder; I am grieved for them, too, when I see what might be made of them if you would but rise in your might and take command of them and organize them. They are all your own, after all. And it is a splendid empire that you thus give up to the ignorant caprice of those who, like me, could serve well, but were never meant, and are not fit, to rule. O, why did you ever resign your noble heritage and allow yourself to be thus enslaved, you the Man without whom all Sign and Speech, all Language, all words and letters, and indeed I myself in every form, are nothing in this world!' The Man began to show some awakening sense both of unused power and of shame. 'You know,' he said in a low voice, 'I do sometimes fling words about in despair of the contradictory and often imbecile orders of Language; but, of course, I see the horrible waste of it all, and I confess that I have been very much to blame. Well, I promise that with you to serve me faithfully, I will make a serious effort to bring Language and his crew to their Senses, and assume my rightful authority.'

V. Welby

1.18. 'The King's English' (1906)* **

If we fully recognise language as before all else symbolic and significant, it will be difficult to better the opening sentence of 'The King's English.' 'Any one who wishes to become a good writer should endeavour, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid' (p. 1). But unhappily we constantly and strangely ignore the central character and value of articulate expression, and so far as this is the case, it is of little avail that we should attain simplicity, brevity or vigour.

It may be said at once that the painstaking and comprehensive exposure by the authors, of blunders which one would think impossible to anyone even moderately well read, even if without any grammatical training, calls both for gratitude and admiration. The only question is whether in attacking such noxious weeds the writers have resisted the temptation to go further and to uproot much which makes for richness and for delicacy, for quaintness and for force.

They admit that 'if no new words were to appear, it would be a sign that the language was moribund'; but add that 'it is well that each new word that does appear should be severely scrutinized' (pp. 18–19). Yet they fail to give us the same warning about phrases and idioms. And new words are thus supposed to 'appear' in the linguistic nursery like the baby which the doctor takes out of the gooseberry bush. As usual, our ideas of the evolution of language are confined to the mysterious and casual 'appearance' of new words or names; it seldom seems to occur to us that it ought to be possible to trace good reasons for their advent, and that the crowding in of sporadic little strangers ought to be effectively controlled and directed.

On this ground, then, one is grateful for the patronage extended to a word like 'Intellectuals,' for 'the fact that intellect in any country is recognised as a definite political factor is noteworthy'

* [Originally published in *The University Review*, signed V. W., see Welby 1906b].

** *The King's English*, by H. W. F. and F. G. F. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 5s. net.

(p. 22); and perhaps its absence in the vocabulary of home politics is significant. 'Closure' appears to have been safely added to the verbal family, 'for which we may be thankful'; and 'if only someone had thought of it in time' we might have succeeded in obtaining some other olive branch. The doctor must hunt the cabbage beds as well as the gooseberry bushes.

Occasionally, however, somebody (or a newspaper) chooses to let the right to a word like 'fall' (for autumn) lapse; and then to use the word becomes 'no better than larceny.' However, some words may be 'extremely efficient'; but what matters that, if they smack of America? We must jealously exclude 'American words and phrases' (p. 25), whatever, apparently, may be their expressiveness and fitness. How plainly in this one seems to hear the faint echoes of a pre-Chaucerian day when even Chaucer's innovations must have seemed to a monkish author of a previous generation as bad as the proscribed 'American.' One may be all the more thankful for the deliberate commendation of *naivety*, which until now has been vigilantly outlawed.

Some other things we may be thankful for: we are not forbidden to produce, or encouraged to 'coin,' words. We 'form' them, as we may invent or combine or fashion them. And we are bidden to hope for the speedy dissolution of 'phenomenal' for unusual or exceptional. It is curious how few people seem to know that this last usage started with the newspaper fashion of forty years ago, of heading short 'pars' recording any notable *appearance* (an aurora, a swarm of insects, etc.) by the simple heading 'Phenomenon.' The true use and sense of the word, as usual, soon got corrupted. But the widespread absurdity of the present usage is hardly more than ten years old.

With regard to slang which is assumed to be 'bad,' while idiom is 'good,' we may suggest that the reverse is often true. We continue the use of many a 'bad' idiom such as 'how do you do,' and 'I could not help it,' while excellent slang, e.g., 'for all it is worth,' is proscribed by our monitors. Well, of slang we are to choose 'only that part which (the idiomatic writer's) insight assures him has the sort of merit that will preserve it' (p. 53). But how carefully his education has blunted that insight – the birthright of all of us! For the merit seen by the original writer, unless his personality is a powerful one, may easily for the rest of us be guilt. Still 'than whom,' we are told, is not to be ruled out, since to do so would amount to 'saying that he man is made for grammar and not grammar for man' (p. 64); a concession of wide application.

Evidence of our amazing linguistic supineness abounds throughout the book. Touching the use of 'more than I can help,' e.g., we read that the phrase really means 'more than I can *not* help': but 'to say that, however, is by this time impossible' (p. 74). Of course it is, when our mentors and tutors say so!

The authors are 'quite aware, however, that in the first place a language does not remodel itself to suit the grammarian's fancy for neat classification; that secondly the confusion is not merely wanton or ignorant, but the result of natural development; that thirdly the change involves some inconveniences, especially in hurried and careless writers.' On the other hand they consider it 'certain that the permanent tendency in language is towards the correct and logical, not from it' (p. 110); and a hope is expressed that the instances given may attract the attention of unwitting transgressors. But in this there is danger to the majority, who think they are quite independent of figure but all the while show indirectly that they are in fact more or less influenced by the figurative. 'A language does not remodel itself' – how could it? This is an example of such danger, for it involves a false psychology. Language obviously cannot remodel itself. As well say that sculpture cannot remodel itself. The idea is a misfit. One doesn't explain that a statue cannot brush its hair. In many cases the personifying habit does no harm, as e.g., when we speak of a ship or a colony as 'she'; but in the case of language what we need to have urged upon us is that *we* the users must remodel the most precious of all appliances. 'Opportunities for ambiguity are so abundant in English, owing to the number of words whose parsing depends on context, that all aids to precision are valuable' (p. 120). But the fact that there are different kinds of ambiguity, or that a passage may be ambiguous in more than one *sense*, is not hinted at. In one form, that of flexible connotation, ambiguity is of course excellent. As I have heard many an old villager say,

the wonderful thing is that there are many parts of the Bible in which if they are read out, everyone who hears will find something for himself, not at all the same as what the others find. Thus the Bible is virtually credited with an extreme ambiguity, yet one consistent with 'inspiration' and wholly good in effect. In truth all great human speech and writing has more or less of that quality of being 'all things to all men,' and finding men each in his own sanctuary of need and response.

The part of the book, however, which has most interest from the present point of view, is the section on metaphor. We are usefully reminded first that 'strictly speaking, metaphor occurs as often as we take a word out of its original sphere and apply it to new circumstances. In this sense almost all words can be shown to be metaphorical when they do not bear a physical meaning; for the original meaning of almost all words can be traced back to something physical' (p. 200); though of course it must not be forgotten that many words seem first to have been, perhaps inevitably, applied to human experiences and activities, and then transferred to 'nature.' That process is indeed still going on in modern poetry.⁵⁹

Still the psychologist is perhaps somewhat biased in this direction; and probably the processes were in fact at first simultaneous; the human and the physical movements were originally, as need prescribed, translated backwards and forwards. It seems likely in short that this primitive example of a kind of translation urgently needed in more and more exalted and comprehensive senses, was the earliest of all. The importance of metaphor or analogy – in fact the translative aspect of language – is however, so great that it needs separate treatment. Here it is only possible briefly to notice one or two points.

First, the curious one that writers who analyse metaphor scarcely ever notice inconsistency in the use of one of the most important of all; the 'literal.' Strictly of course this means an extension of the textual. And, 'what I have written I have written.' The 'Written Word' has a specially binding force. Incised in stone or clay, this is originally and naturally the most direct and the most obligatory of utterances. If the proposal to restrict the 'literal' to what, being written, can be proved by the production of inscription or document, may seem pedantic, we must remember that, after all, we also have as alternatives the direct, the original, the actual, the practical, the physical (or the material, or organic) and the real, as well as the historical and the demonstrable.

Seen in this light (one in which our authors have seen other misused figures) surely 'literal sight' and 'literal meaning' are absurd or at least wasteful of valuable distinction, when we can so easily say 'actual sight' or 'organic sight' and practical, direct, or original meaning. And a literal army (p. 205) ought to mean a Haldanian Army on paper only. So 'nucleus' cannot be literally a kernel, though it may be 'literally' used to express a vital centre, and means physically a kernel. In truth the starting-point of the use of 'literal' seems to be the 'literal text'; it means first and last 'in the letter,' scored by actual pen or chisel; and surely it would greatly conduce to practical clearness if we made that our ruling test. One can clearly see how the present misuse arose from the legal insistence on the Written Testimony, that is on documentary evidence; this having descended from the most ancient of all appeals and witnesses.

59. For instance:

'... jet-black night;
It stares through the window-pane;
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light. . .'
(R. L. Stevenson: 'North-West Passage')

'Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.'

(Tennyson: 'Tiresias and the Other Poems,' pp. 182–183).

We have in 'The King's English' an attempt to track cases of confusion as well as of solecism to their linguistic source, and to bring to bear on usage a sane and practical criticism; surely it would have been well to take advantage of this opportunity in such a case as the 'literal.' But instead of this, we read (p. 207) that 'dilemma' is an 'incorrigibly literal word'; an 'abstract noun' and a 'brand' are also literal. Well, if in all these cases the idea includes or implies that of a label or writ or document of any kind, then, but then only, we have a legitimate 'literal.'

What, however, is to be expected when in so able and searching an essay on such helpful lines we come at last to a moment when the page-heading 'Grammar' yields gracefully to – shall we say its better half – 'Meaning'? But it is only a heading. We have no introductory words; and there is no real difference in the cases cited or in the critical comment.

At the end we have the heading 'Meaning, Ambiguity,' and are warned that it is 'most annoying to a reader to be misled about the construction, and therefore most foolish in a writer to mislead him' (p. 345). Is it mainly then a case of annoyance in a reader and foolishness in a writer? To mislead is to lead astray when at the best the right way of interpretation and inference is hard enough to find. Unpardonable rather than foolish seems the needed word in cases where construction may deceive. As to ambiguity, it seems here to stand pretty much for whatever is incorrect. In fact not only 'The King's English' but most of its critics virtually ignore in language any further value than that which the builder, designer or composer deals with. The whole criticism might be not so much translated as transferred to music or architecture in their technical aspect. Every sequence of note, every tone and every melodic scheme and phrase: and again every detail of built-up service, beauty, dignity, is in art paramount. In language on the other hand, all this is still important but always secondary; the main value lies in the consequences and values of expression, in its creative results, in its suggestion by one mind to another, through articulate symbol, of all the ideas which experience and inference, imagination and discovery bring us.

The preconception of the book appears to be twofold. First, that ideally, language is to be as near as possible the same (on what in an expressive jargon we call a dead level) at all times, in all places, and to all; and second, that so long as we secure this uniformity and precision of form, the symbolic, yet more the indirectly suggestive, function of language may be practically left to take care of itself. Like the 'stylists,' though from quite a different point of view, the writers tend to perfect everything in a sword except the edge of the blade, everything in the telescope except the lens, everything in the compass except the needle.

Now it is true that so long as you encourage an ordered freedom and richness in language, a generous variety in linguistic expression analogous to that of the highest organism under the laws of variation, you cannot be too scrupulous in making its every detail as perfect as possible. But though on occasion we may devote ourselves to the euphony or the syntax of speech, one would think that care would always be taken to remind a reader that these are only emotional or decorative suggestions; and that to be fitting and where possible dignified and beautiful, is in the last resort the true value of language, because it helps to bring out a deeper import or purport, to convey a truer or fuller drift, tenour and bearing, in short, to give us more sense, more meaning, above all more significance; and to give these more worthily and more clearly.

1.19. Moral Education. Definition and Method (1908)*

Nobody was ever 'trained' in Morality or 'taught' to be moral or 'instructed' morally, except in the lowest – the legal or conventional – sense of the word. Taken in this sense, from this standpoint, the Moral in the truer sense may (as in the case of the Christian Gospel) be at first classed by

* [The complete title is 'Moral Education. Definition and Method. Enlightened, Attractive, Effective Example – and thus Fecundating Influence, Moral Fertilization.' Privately printed and signed V. Welby, Duneaves, Harrow, 24 September 1908. See Welby 1908b].

the authoritative Teachers of the time, as immoral. In the higher and worthier sense we *evolve* morality and we *educate* it, *induce* it in others; we generate and disseminate it by the order and beauty of our own aspirations, and by our endeavours to embody these in our lives.

This is a hard way, granted. It is so easy and satisfactory to have 'definite' moral theories; to be able to say to each other at all times and in all places, of things that *we have had* successfully imposed upon us, things that we may have even gained prizes for getting up accurately, Praise this and Condemn that. There is nothing about which we are more willing to 'lay down principles' or 'prescribe conduct' than – Goodness! But true Morality is spontaneous and vital purity of *motive*, unselfishness and honesty of *life*: it is each for all and all for each: it is the hallowing of emotion and ideal; it is that Uprightness, that upward-looking attitude which is organically distinctive of Man. To use another figure, it can only act by the sowing of seeds which reproduce an all-conquering organic energy; one both wholesome and holy, aspiring, purifying, exalting; the very Norm and Example of all that is veritably, divinely human.

What you 'believe' may or may not be really, worthily, upliftingly, Moral; it is here a neutral attitude. Everybody believes – something. And 'belief' may sterilise rather than fecundate. But are you – would you under all conditions remain – *faithful* to the death for the best you know, for what you see as good and as true? Then, even though you be mistaken and called idolater, dreamer, materialist, even atheist – yes, even criminal – your *mistake*, made 'in good faith' (pregnant phrase), is never Immoral; only bad *motive* can be that, as good motive must be, in action, as in principle, the essential condition of morality. The very word 'morality' may here however itself mislead us, as it is of course an 'abstraction'; whereas there is nothing more concrete than the Moral, either as an inspiring Atmosphere or as a transfiguring Activity.

What then, we may ask, from this point of view, is the relation of Morality to Religion? At present it is possible to speak of an immoral religion and an irreligious or at least non-religious morality. But perhaps we do not sufficiently realise that in this as in so many cases we unconsciously betray destructive confusion of thought fostered by current misuse of terms. To *distinguish* between Goodness and Truth is one thing; to *divorce* them is another. And we may discriminate between the ethical and the devotional or orthodox as claiming the sanction of verity; or again, between the ethical and the scientific with its strict canons of experimental warrant.

But goodness must be true, and Truth must be good. All men not morally and rationally insane would admit this. What then follows?

While a good man may be *mistaken* (and probably in some direction we are all this) and his witness may be erroneous or defective, or again may need re-statement and be in those senses untrue, one whose thought bears the strictest investigation and criticism, whose reason is a compass, whose motive is pure, whose life is service, cannot fail to find response in every personal being in the world who is not mentally or morally diseased. Such thought, reason, motive, life, is still but a contribution to the human treasury, needing supplement or it may be balance, and subject to further discovery or discernment. The tendency to suppose that the thought of the greatest teacher or the conduct of the noblest of men can be a closed curve, final in every sense of that word, and thus embalmed by tradition and for imitation in perpetuity of unchanging formula and programme, is in fact an ominous witness of decay in the greatest of man's responsive functions. It may be expressed in the difference between the rhetorical or technical Moralist and the man whose life through many changes *rings true*. It points to the relaxation of his normally unflinching re-action to the touch of a vital reality, and to the desecration, rather than consecration, of change and growth, as the very conditions both of life and thought.

This then is what Morality and its crown, Religion, as our vital Touch with the greatest, the highest, the truest and the best, ought to be. Divided in all else, here we must be one and whole. Not of course in mechanical or numerical conception, statement, or formalised profession. Not by what has been called 'catechetical and memoriter' methods, only applicable to categories other than living or mental; but as a pregnant unity in a consummate diversity, in a wealth of

contributory variation. Thus we cannot be formally trained, or preached, either into Morality or Religion. Properly using the term, we are not in either case merely 'converted'; rather we naturally send upward our growth-points, open our petals, incubate, develop the seeds and kernels of our central and essential vitality, at the call of the Sun of Man's being; in short we are transmuted and transfigured into a purer and nobler humanity. And in proportion as we are thus faithful to the consecrating call, our Moral education will become that of – Example. And in this way will the Moral, as one with the Religious problem be solved.

(Any comment on the above, addressed to V. Lady Welby, would be gladly received).

1.20. 'Jesus or Christ?' (1910)*

In so momentous an inquiry as this, would it not be well first so ask *in what sense* the alternative, the 'or,' can here be maintained? Would it, for instance, correspond broadly to the difference between man's body and his mind, between the manly and the human, between a man and Man – that is, between his personal character and his racial characteristics as inherited through a thousand generations?

Mr Roberts and his critics alike assume a 'real' Jesus, in the sense of One whose actuality could be and was tested during his life *by the senses*. In postulating an 'ideal' Christ, we inevitably admit unreality, *in the context of the senseworld*. But what if we are here suffering from an unrecognised reversal of thought which vitiates the whole issue as between the 'real' Jesus and the 'ideal' Christ?

I am glad to be allowed to draw attention to this question, since in my book *What is Meaning?*, published some years ago, I ventured to urge the injurious effect on all discussion of the geocentric position which is unconsciously held in all modern thinking, and which tells especially on theological controversy. This unrealised Ptolemaic survival in thought has now been pointed out by Professor Alexander in the *Hibbert Journal* itself. It inevitably more or less invalidates this whole discussion. We seem to make a distinction (not an alternative) between earth and sun, not wholly unlike that which many, perhaps most of us, vaguely make between Jesus and Christ. The first is solid and central, the second is its 'luminary' source of moral light and heat. Now, of course, we can do without neither. But in fact the earth is derivative, and so presumably are all the existences upon it. Whereas for us the sun is originative, even though itself secondary in a cosmic sense.

Let us provisionally assume that vitality and its mental crown in some form or degree, not necessarily ours, exists or is potential throughout our solar system. Some obscure instincts which we call spiritual, but which many of our ablest minds suspect to be illusory or merely emotional, may thus ultimately be solar and even sidereal. For there are no 'impassable gulfs' in Nature as discovered by science. There are only distinctions and differences: everywhere the gaps are in our own present knowledge. The difficulty which Mr Roberts raised, and the various writers of the Supplement attempt to meet, thus takes on a wholly different aspect.

Beyond this, however, there is a supreme though unrecognised reason for beginning, not only here but in all questions, higher up. It can be shown that we are everywhere adulterating our expressive resources, and thus the conceptions and conclusions which can only be verbally discussed. Volumes might be written on the incredible recklessness with which we waste our main means of communication, as of revelation, in expression, especially in its crowning, its articulate, form? a recklessness which can now for the first time be easily proved to the challenging critic.

The ether, as science is revealing, is the unfailing way, the medium, whereon and whereby the light itself reaches us. Now 'Self,' again, is properly a Way, a Medium through which we energise and act, though alas, with our unconscious selfishness, we turn it into an End and identify Man with that. Yet, even as it is, we do not praise a man when we call him selfish. One who knows his

* [Originally published in *The Hibbert Journal*, signed Victoria Welby, see Welby 1910a].

self not as end but as means alone understands the highest form of identity. For the true Man is first and last the way through truth to life in a mentally Copernican sense, and through consciousness and tested observation, to knowledge. In such a way there must be no flaw, no slit, no gap or chasm. In this sense Man as a way is individual, that is, not divided or broken.

Let no one confound this mode of thought with fancy, still less with mysticism, that consecration of mystifying and deceptive shadows. Imagination? Yes; but image like that in a still or at most a faintly rippled pool; more truly, *image on a mental retina*, which must become as loyal and unfailing as the healthy physical one, clearly seeing mystery as ignorance to disperse and as obstacle to overcome. True imagination *reflects* in creation; it is the highest type of reactive work. Fancy, on the other hand, deflects and distorts reactive response: at best it is the merest play, claiming no kind of authority or assured validity. Now, as long as we ignore and neglect the study of Natural Significance – which at once classes the super-natural with the super-real and the super-true – any such attempt as this Symposium to break the nets which entangle and imprison our ideas, or to clear the issues in expression now choked with the detritus of the ages and the refuse or overgrowths of our own times, must seem futile. But through the mastery of Natural Significance – for which in one form only, the experimentally scientific, we are yet adequately or consistently working – we earn the right to speak, as of Mother Nature, so of the Divine Nature; so and no otherwise. In truth, the method we call experimentally scientific has more than a merely physical or mechanical value. It is the lack of this in *translated form*, which has brought the penalty of enslavement to fossilising dogma. A provable statement cannot be too strongly asserted. A probable one cannot be too severely tested. Let us anyhow see, in using such phrases ‘Mother Nature’ or ‘Divine Nature,’ that the analogy involved is a question of reflected reality or at least of relevant image, and not of errant or ambiguous fancy.

To take one instance of what we are unconsciously but most really sacrificing by our toleration of unworthy expression in the supreme sanctuaries of life, let us think of the historical parentage, and, even in present usage, the common associations of the name ‘God.’ We are content to use it for the Essentially Perfect Being, the Highest Identity, the Purest and Fullest of Energies; for the Central Significance of all we rightly see as real, as true; as blessing and consecrating a cosmos of which we are but beginning verily to grasp the simplest elements. And that name ‘God,’ be it noted, is the same name that we give to the most grotesque image of stone or wood, even the grossest or basest idol – the symbol, it may be, of lust and infernal cruelty. If we really knew Perfect (by contrast only, of course), we could never again without a shiver use that name. Theos or Deus are, of course, for us on a different and higher plane. We do not, e.g., call Juggernaut divine (though divinity is often meanly used). But god is hopeless; even man is higher.

Such discussions as this, called ‘Jesus or Christ?’ touching the very heart, the very nexus of man’s life, will, I venture to suggest, take on a higher value among all men of goodwill when we begin by recognising the initial condition of all fruitful controversy, that our means of expression should, mainly through a regenerated education, be freed from much that quite avoidably hampers and defeats us. Without this we may fear that we shall end only in supplying one more learned and eloquent repetition of the well-worn solutions given in a deceptive freshness of phrase, but in some cases involving an unintended throw-back, a recrudescence of forms of thought once apposite, but to which we no longer have the right. We cannot vindicate such a procedure, any more than we can now be justified in translating into the mental sphere the Ptolemaic explanation of the relation of our world to its sun, as though this were still valid.

I therefore venture to put the present need thus: –

1. To make sure that the symbolical forms of expression used have the same value for all the Essayists, and presumably for all their readers; and that such value is the highest available for us and for our day.
2. To be as faithful and therefore fearless as the men of old whom we venerate as inspired, in creating the phrases which we now call ‘Sayings’ or ‘Texts.’

3. To see thus that these phrases are as pregnantly living and fresh as those which we call inspired, and therefore are not dependent on any crystallised form.
4. To understand and allow for the drag of a necessary reaction which an often deserved disappointment causes; a disappointment which is the natural source of our distrust of hopes often conventionalised if not literalised, but demanding translation and worthier expression; hopes which, lacking this, become dangerously like those of the fanatical visionary who misinterprets and misuses his own power to heal, comfort, strengthen his fellows out of really illimitable, though scarcely tapped, sources.
5. To understand the nature of the insight we call spiritual (i.e. the analogue of the advent of sunlight through the medium of atmosphere and optical mechanism); and fully to recognise the real fount of scientific method, which was in a true sense the needed and divine message of the nineteenth century.

Choice and alternative will always, of course, be, on their own level, inexorable. But that level will be seen, not as ultimate, not as the highest Way to the supreme goal of Man, but provisional and at best embryonic. Scepticism and agnosticism must always have their necessary function in guarding us against the dangers of passionate consciousness of illumination all the more perilous because in a true sense valid. The study of the conditions of fully significant intercourse reveals at once that we can, if we will, learn to clear our dust-laden windows of expression, and perceive with *couched* eyes the realms of unexplored but waiting significance. But such eyes must be as inexorable as the scientific method which rends its loyal user, and as simply penetrative as those of the little child, before whose spontaneous insight our sophistication may well wince, but from them we may learn much which makes for the drawing together of all candid minds on the highest of human grounds.

Chapter 2

Moving towards *What is Meaning?*(1903)

No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel,
or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand,
that those who enter may see the light.
For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest,
nor anything secret that shall not be known and come
to light.

Take heed then how you hear;
for to him who has will more be given,
and from him who has not,
even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.

(Luke 8, 16)

‘A philosophical distinction emerges gradually into
consciousness; there is no moment in history before
which it is altogether unrecognized, and after which it
is perfectly luminous’

(Charles S. Peirce, *CP* 2.392)

2.1. Ideas in the making. Echoes of larger life

Welby formulated much of her critical thinking in epistolary exchanges with significant personalities of her time. A noteworthy part of this corpus of materials was collected in two volumes edited by her daughter, Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust. The first, *Echoes of Larger Life. A Selection from the Early Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby*,¹ was published in 1929, and covers Welby’s correspondence from 1879 to 1891. The focus of the present chapter is on this volume considered as representing a preparatory phase leading into her writings of the 1890s, and ultimately to her book of 1903, *What is Meaning?*. The second volume, *Other Dimensions. A Selection from the Later Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby*, was published in 1931 and covers the years from 1898 to 1911. Together with the correspondence collected in the present volume, these materials contribute to tracing the extension and consistency of what may be ideally identified as the ‘Welby Circle’ or more topically today, the ‘Welby Network.’ All those interlocutors who entered this circuit contributed to an ongoing debate among ideas, evolving in concentric circles

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1. This title was established by the editor of the volume, Mrs. Henry Cust. The expression ‘echoes of larger life’ recurs throughout the letter texts and evokes the title of Welby’s early essaylet of 1885, ‘An Echo of Larger Life’ (now in Chapter 3, this volume), written in the form of a dialogue between ‘One’ and ‘Another’ who live in an extralocalized dimension of life, outside the worldly limits of time and space. In their light-hearted discussion of theological, philosophical and scientific issues relating to truth, knowledge, goodness, the sense of the divine, being, subjectivity, language, etc., they observe that the potential for human development is far greater than the levels so far attained. The integral introduction to the volume *Echoes of Larger Life* has been included in chapter 1 of the present volume.

where voices were sometimes close, sometimes distant, in accord or in contrast, even radically critical of each other, but in most cases ready to accept the challenge of inquiry and interrogation, intended as the main characteristic of such dialogue.

As testified by her early publications and letter exchanges, presented in *Echoes of Larger Life*, with such figures as Andrew Jukes, Rowland Corbet, the Bishops Talbot and Wescott, and with the ‘anti-Christian theist,’ Reverend Charles Voysey, that is, with theologians, mystics and representatives of the Church (of different, even divergent faith),² Welby’s attention in the initial phases of her research was largely dominated by religious concerns and theological issues. Among Welby’s theologian correspondents there also figured a woman, Mrs. Brewster Macpherson, author of the volume *Gifts for Man*. Welby’s own attention during the initial phases of her research was largely dominated by religious concerns and theological issues. All the same, she tended to focus ever more on problems of a philosophical, pedagogical and scientific order without failing to underline their relevance to the religious sphere. She delved into different fields and took up specific problems from the special perspective of the signification ultimately concerned with the question of meaning, interpretation and reasoning method. Other personalities with whom she corresponded at the time also counted travelers, men of letters, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, and logicians, etc.³ Some supported her ideas, others were critical. We know that Welby elaborated her thought system in dialogic confrontation with her listeners and interlocutors, whether in accord or in contrast with them, and given her status as a noblewoman from the Victorian era, her attitude in official circles was easily judged to be inappropriate, atypical and certainly unfeminine.

The letter texts collected in *Echoes of Larger Life* are not dated individually but are grouped together chronologically and distributed across six chapters: Ch. I, 1879–1882; Ch. II, 1882–1885; Ch. III, 1885–1886; Ch. IV, 1886–1888; Ch. V, 1888–1890; Ch. VI, 1889–1891. Many letters by Welby were considered too long to be included unabridged, others were missing, in some cases only drafts were available in the form of handwritten notes that were often illegible, and others still were returned to the editor by Welby’s correspondents on request. Letters received by Welby are reported extensively when they evidence some aspect of her ideas. Sometimes excerpts from different letters by the same correspondent are merged together or associated on the basis of reference to a common theme or problem. Except for sporadic biographical information (mostly from

2. Fragments from her exchanges with Reverend Charles Voysey were added by Welby to the second 1883 edition of her volume, *Links and Clues* (1st ed. 1881), see Ch. 1.

3. To the names listed in Ch. 1, Section 1.2, this volume, others that recur in Welby’s correspondence include: the philosophical historian and positivist, Harald Höffding, the psychologist Frederic W.H. Myers – a founding member of the Society for Psychic Research – the jurist Frederick Pollock, the economist and literary writer Richard H. Hutton, the geologist Charles Lyell, the philosopher Herbert Spencer, the biologist and sociologist Patrick Geddes, the philosopher Karl Pearson and the biologist George J. Romanes, the zoologist Edwin R. Lankester, the physician Oliver J. Lodge, the editor of the journal *Mind*, George Croom-Robertson, Paul Carus, the anthropologist Arnold B. Taylor, the philosopher John Sully, the psychologist Edward B. Titchener, and the philosopher and classical scholar John Cook Wilson.

the *Dictionary of National Biography*⁴), the correspondence is not annotated. In some cases correspondents are identified with initials, while bibliographical information in the footnotes is mostly incomplete. All the same, as a source of documents that would otherwise be irretrievable (many of the letters have since gone lost), *Echoes of Larger Life* is a precious volume testifying to a whole era in cultural history.

2.2. Language, meaning, and translation in Welby's correspondence

Welby's research is characterized by an approach that is unbiased, free of prejudice, open to doubt and confutation as she moved from one universe of discourse to another, from one field of research to another, identifying connections and investigating signifying processes in an ever expanding world of signs and senses. In what follows, we shall evidence some of the issues discussed by Welby in her correspondence, some of which in turn will be presented more fully in the subsequent chapters forming this volume.

Welby elected verbal language as her object of study, and did so in relation to non-verbal signs pervading the entire signifying universe. Nonverbal signs are recognized as providing the larger context for verbal interpretive processes which can only be more fully understood in this light. And as her research progressed and her interests broadened, she elaborated her project for 'significs,' the term chosen for her theory of meaning (see Ch. 3).

Interpreted in relation to her original concept of 'mother-sense' (see Ch. 6, this volume), language as described by Welby does not only indicate the capacity for communication, interpretation, and understanding, but is also recognized in its function as a special 'modelling device' (though she did not use this expression), specific to human beings (Petrilli 2006b, 2008a, b; Petrilli and Ponzio 2001, 2002b, 2005; Sebeok 1994, 2001). Language as modelling highlights the human capacity for generating new senses and worldviews, and for critique. In semiotics today, apart from the communicative function the term 'language' is used to indicate a specifically human modelling device, and as such is the condition for ongoing development in inventive, cognitive and expressive powers. Language as modelling, what Welby indicates as 'mother-sense,' subtends and is the condition for the human propensity to identify connections among different aspects of the existent, among different phenomena, experiences, and behaviours. But what I wish to underline in the present context is that this *connective capacity* which has been identified by recent developments in cognitive linguistics as characterizing signifying processes at large, and in particular the figurative dimension, had already been identified and studied at length by Welby in such terms in the 19th century (see Ch. 4, this volume; see also Danesi 1993, 2005; Sebeok and Danesi 2000; Petrilli 2001k; Ponzio 2006a). In fact, in her specific studies on verbal language, Welby not only recognized the aesthetic or decorative value of figures of speech, metaphors, images, analogies, associations, of 'comparing and combining,' but she also theorized the theoretical and the ethical value

4. An entry dedicated to Victoria Lady Welby was published in the new edition of the Oxford *New Dictionary of National Biography* for the first time in 2004 (see Petrilli 2004c), now in Section 8.12, this volume.

of such discursive devices and their vital role in the development of cognition and human behaviour generally. As she stated in a letter to Lucy L. Clifford (wife of the English mathematician and philosopher William K. Clifford):

And the power of true analogy – of comparing and combining what can really be compared and combined; the power of making the ‘known’ teach us about the ‘unknown’ – is, after all, the secret of any difference in ‘mental’ or ‘scientific’ power between the human and what is less than the human. (Welby to Lucy L. Clifford, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 250–251)

In the same letter Welby criticizes the tendency to hypostatization and analyzes thoughts and words in terms of relation and activity. Thoughts and words are not separate from thinking and speaking; they belong to the sphere of activity. Meaning is not fixed once and for all but is generated in the relational dynamics of speaking and thinking. In her ‘study of language,’ Welby underlined the connection between language, thought and action, and hence the interrelational and open character of meaning, and of the processes that engender meaning. In this framework, she reorientated the question of false problems or conceptual fallacies – such as the opposition established between the concepts of ‘free will’ and ‘determinism’ or between ‘freedom’ and ‘necessity’ – to problems of language and interpretation. In fact, she began formulating her ‘critique of language’ and denouncing ‘the chaos of figurative language’ in this early phase of her research. She aimed to recover expression value as formulated in relation to all sign systems, with a special focus on verbal language which needed to be released from the residues of obsolete theories and practices. The two excerpts below exemplify her reflections on such issues: the first is the complete version of the letter to Lucy L. Clifford cited above, the second is from a letter to George Croom-Robertson, first editor of the prestigious journal *Mind*:

... I want you to know what it is to see as whole and complete, to realise as a manifold unity, what else could be seen but ‘a stroke at a time.’ It is weary work to argue about paint-dabs, when one has once seen a picture! And we are but paint-dabs of people. ... That is the ‘common sight’ which I want raised to a higher perception (the picture-whole) by the power which makes and transforms ideas, and which in various degrees is common to us all, and ought to be far more developed than it is. . . . You know the stress I have always tried to lay on the importance of the whole subject of sign, its scope and its processes? It is wonderful to me now to find Hertz speaking to us of the ‘ether’ in optical terms, and even suggesting the eye as an electrical organ, and Dr. Hughlings Jackson exhorting all the doctors to make themselves – beyond all – masters of eye-lore, as containing the clue to so much else!

Of course we are as yet but in the infancy of greater and fuller types of life than (except provisionally) we mostly know; and infancy too which cannot itself be fully ours till this time of searching and sifting be over and past; and it is inevitably useless to demand definite explanations too soon. A new language is a riddle before it is conquered, a power in the hands afterwards. To me every riddle is a challenge, and every chance of new power a divine opportunity to be seized. . . . Only I am determined to remain undazzled by the ‘revelations’ of any kind of magic, and do not want to join any unheard choirs of unreal voices. That utterly ‘unseen’ thing called Life is truly holy and precious: a thing – or rather a form of energy – not to be despised because eye cannot see or ear hear or hand grasp it, but to be used with patience and joyfulness. . . .

Whatever is to us the highest that we can know or be, can serve, obey or love, we have to see that it is verily a living spring of action; a principle to be worked out, practised

upon, used to win victories over nature (if such an expression may be passed) and to put new vigour into thought and action too. For 'thou shalt live and not formulise.' And the power of true analogy – of comparing and combining what can really be compared and combined; the power of making the 'known' teach us about the 'unknown' – is, after all, the secret of any difference in 'mental' or 'scientific' power between the human and what is less than the human. . . .

Of course it isn't thoughts or words apart from thinking or speaking man which is of value. They are not 'entities' and have not any existence apart from the Living Being of us, each and all. But remember your own beautiful parable of the wicket-gate you are to stay at. Don't turn it into a stone wall with a Living Love walled up in it! I sometimes think that behind that strange atrocity of burying a human creature alive under a foundation (notably, I believe, a bridge) was an unconscious acknowledgment of the deep truth that the undermost of all 'foundations' and the most ultimate of all 'bases' must be the living human being; that personality must be the secret of support and steadfastness, especially of what is to span or connect and do away with 'gulfs.' (Welby to Mrs. W.K. Clifford, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 249–251)

Our conversation showed me with more force than ever the need of realising more fully how risky and dangerous (to use your own terms) our present 'figure of speech' chaos is, and how much good may be hoped for by calling attention to it more definitely than hitherto, with the aid of psychological philology. Would that I could find a philosophical Joule! As he found equivalence where before him no 'common ground' was detected, so I think we may do in other cases. And what if the 'ether' (becoming less inscrutable every day) should turn out to be the 'missing link' between 'matter' and 'spirit' in the received sense of those ill-used words? What if herein should lie after all the secret of the risk and danger of our metaphorical communism and anarchism? What also if *there* should lie the secret of the long procession of illusions leading to fanaticism of every type, and all pulled up in turn by the inexorable 'no thoroughfare,' represented in philosophy by Kant's *Kritik*, emphasized to the breaking-point by Herbert Spencer, and almost carried into caricature by Lewes and Frederic Harrison? . . .

One real test of the reality of a mind-relation answering to the solar and the cosmical relations to the earth, and involving the principle of ethic and religion at their very core, such a mind-relation, realised and acted upon – would be the power to interpret to some extent at least each type of thought to each other one; to distinguish the relative validity of each, and to unify them, so to speak, from their own ground and by their own means, by incorporating them in what is best expressed in organic terms. (Welby to George Croom-Robertson, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 263–264)⁵

In a letter to Alexander Macmillan (publisher of *Links and Clues*), Welby underlines the need to critique language, to highlight the signifying power of words and expressions, and to better define their meanings in light of the context of discourse which they somehow include – the terms 'person,' 'self,' 'life,' 'religion' are signaled as examples. Reference to the larger context is necessary for the purpose of minimizing the negative effects of misunderstanding and improving the work of conceptualization. Welby critiques the concepts of 'common sense' and 'common place.' Behind the mask of 'simplification' and 'clearness,' they engender obscurity and confusion as a consequence of reducing plurivocal meanings to a single univocal meaning. In fact, it is necessary to

5. ['Professor of Mental Philosophy and Logic. First editor of *Mind*' (Welby to George Croom-Robertson, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 263–264)].

distinguish between a reductive understanding of the expressions ‘common sense’ and ‘common place,’ on the one hand, and their orientation towards ‘universalism,’ on the other. With the latter expression, Welby was alluding to an *a priori* in signifying processes, what she was to theorize as ‘mother-sense,’ or ‘primal sense,’ that is, a necessary condition for the human signifying capacity, therefore for the ability to connect ideas that may even seem to contradict each other, and to identify ‘common elements’ in relations of reciprocal ‘understanding,’ rather than of ‘compromise’ or ‘reciprocal suffocation.’

In her mature writings Welby developed her theory of the polyvalency of meaning and dynamical nature of signs and interpretive processes more closely in linguistic and philosophical terms. However, the germs of her later writings were already present in the earlier phases of her research, and in fact she had already conceived her critique of the concept of ‘plain and obvious meaning,’ of ‘plain common sense meaning,’ for example, in 1881 with *Links and Clues*. We know that she understood the expression ‘common sense’ in a double sense: negatively as acritical reduction to simple, plain, or ‘mythical’ meaning; but also in a positive sense as the *a priori* of language. The text, the Sacred Scriptures in the first instance, must be freed from the prejudice of interpretation understood in terms of univocal decodification. Welby criticizes the fallacy that a text can evolve in a single, absolute, definitive reading valid for all times. She recognizes the polysemic, dynamical and polylogic dimension of meaning and theorizes the interpretive process in which meaning is generated in terms of the capacity for responding to signs creatively and critically. To theorize interpretation in terms of the codification and decodification of set meanings fixed once and for all is no less than a monological oversimplification (see Petrilli 2008b: 49–88). Welby’s critique of the ‘plain meaning’ fallacy was a leitmotif throughout all her research. As she wrote in *What is Meaning?*: ‘For one thing meaning is not, and that is “plain” in the sense of being the same at all times, in all places, and to all’ (1983 [1903]: 143).

Among the letter exchanges reported below, in her letter to Thomas H. Huxley Welby draws attention to ‘the common meaning of all human or natural utterance’ beyond ‘merely technical or secondary meanings,’ the ‘sectional diversity of speech.’ Mention is made of *The Focus. Magazine of Comparative Suggestion* which she had planned, but never actually inaugurated. *The ‘Focus’* is also the title of one of her essaylets (see Ch. 1, this volume) in which she described her project and intended aims, underlining the vital nature of language and the connection between human life and expression:

In spite of the battering-ram wherewith I was greeted to-day, I am convinced that what is essential in the idea of *Focus*⁶ will come to pass and do good in this weary world, though very likely under auspices and in shape different (‘phenomenally’) from mine in details.

6. [*The Focus* was intended to be an occasional Magazine of Comparative Suggestion on vital questions affecting the well-being of man. ‘The utmost divergence of view will find a place in its pages. No endeavour will be made to connect prematurely lines which in fact cannot yet meet; but it is hoped that something may be done towards bringing together ideas now found in opposition, and emphasising their common elements: not by compromise but by comprehension.’ Bishop Lightfoot, among many others, welcomed the project. ‘... Your scheme has my most hearty sympathy. I hail especially the prominence which you propose to give to definition. I believe that half our theological quarrels would vanish if we were only careful to define our terms. It is often a warfare, not of principles, or thoughts, or ideas, but of terms...’ (Welby to Macmillan, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 83–84)].

I do not think I laid enough stress on the work it might do in clearing the ground as to words. Professor Max Müller agreed that to take ill-used words, e.g. 'person,' 'self,' 'life,' 'religion,' and to give even a few definitions, supplied by average 'educated' people, with comments by himself on their history, etc. would do much to open eyes to the real source of much controversy between even such men as Pusey and Maurice...

...As to Maurice, do you not agree that the reason why he is called obscure is that in one sense he is too clear? his thought is too delicate and too free from the trammels of 'phenomena,' his engine runs more smoothly and grinds less than ours; thus he slips out of the mental grasp of others to whom apparatus and machinery are as an integral part of the work it does, and are necessary to enable them to realise that work is being done. Again, I do think that he 'doth protest too much.' We are told on almost every page of his love for the common-sense, even the common-place, aspect, in terms almost appropriate to the 'Bishop Ryle' type of mind; and though one knows it is a protest against the fantastic unreality with which all spiritual thought is apt to be credited, still one wishes there were less of it. However, his thought is as the deep sea, and it is only water that he has in common with the shallow pond. ... (Welby to Alexander Macmillan, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 83–84)

Your remarks about Maurice are, I think, just and interesting. Without telling him who wrote them, I have had them copied and sent to his son. ...

I feel humiliated that any words of mine should have merited the epithet of 'a battering-ram.' I meant nothing less than to hinder work such as you are doing and doing so well. But I did feel, and do still feel, that such focussing as you aim at cannot be achieved by many people, however able and sympathetic with each other. The rays of light, weak and strong, must be gathered together by one lens: otherwise they remain mere gleams. I venture to think of you as this lens, and whenever I can in any way add a small scintillation of light to your work I shall be glad and grateful. ... (Alexander Macmillan to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 84–85)

Yes. We have decided at last upon *The Focus*: 'Focus, a point where light-rays meet; also a hearth; hence a centre of fire.' Does not this express, not only the needed concentration and radiation of lines of thought which converge towards and diverge from the central 'sun' of truth, but also the quickening and purifying powers of fire? while the thought of a hearth, with a wide welcome for every wayfarer and a special sanctity for the dweller at home, expands the term from a scientific technicality to a much-embracing symbol. ... (Welby to Mrs. Russell Gurney, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 85)⁷

If I were trying to talk your language it would risk the absurdity – worse, the confusion – of 'English as she is spoke'; but may I not ask you in virtue of what underlies all sectional diversity of speech, to look through my language as I look through yours, putting aside merely technical or secondary meanings, and seeking the common meaning of all human or natural utterance? [...] so that my Truth was speaking to me in and through your voice when you said that the one question was – 'What is real truth and fact?' and the one most pressing need, that our thought and ideas should be clear. ... When I come upon the statement of some elementary law or fact and find that it corresponds to some spiritual conception which I had already seen as true, such witness (so far as it goes – no further)

7. ['Emilia Gurney, widow of Russell Gurney, was a leading member of the Mount-Temple circle. Possessed of a singularly beautiful nature, "she loved," wrote her cousin, Caroline Stephen, "to sit at the feet of religious and artistic teachers"; as she once said to me, "I have an intense pleasure in being converted"' (Welby to Mrs. Russell Gurney, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 85)].

must have power. But ‘face things as they are.’ Do any of us face them? Such phrases as ‘the ghastly horror of ultimate collapse’ and ‘the victory of hopeless, blank despair’ can lose none of their present meaning, but may well acquire greater fullness with the expansion of knowledge and consciousness, and the ever increasing sensitiveness of our complex organisation. Thus our danger is lest we waver, linger, stop. No one goes far enough for me. . . . So far as we are content with the ‘Unknowable’ what we call virtue or morality is assuredly as much a passing and changeful phase of emotion or fancy or temporary expediency as any hypothesis or dogma of unseen things can be. As even ‘personality’ (ill-used word) is relative to us, though the highest form of expression yet know, so goodness and truth are only unchangeably good or true as related to what includes and summarises them in a ‘rainbow’ of light divine.

[. . .] I feel that to antedate a coming time, when we may learn the universal scope of the ‘principle of translation’ and share each other’s truth as we speak each other’s tongue, may be to risk the violation of one of the deepest of divine laws. (Welby to Thomas A. Huxley, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 102–103)

In her letter to Huxley above, Welby uses the expression ‘principle of translation.’ This expression indicates the process of signifying expansion, that is, of continuous shift from one sign to another without interruption in the generation of meaning, understanding and experience, from one sign system to another, in open ended interpretive sequences. In Welby’s theory of meaning signs do not stand as alternatives that exclude each other but as witnesses to each other in relations of reciprocal implication and empowerment. As she wrote to H. Scott Holland,

[. . .] when we have mastered the principle of translation in spheres of thought as we already do in those of speech, we shall find the range of this truth ever broadening and its power increasing. The languages of thought must remain distinct until the full time for their combination is come; but, as we learn to make each witness to the others, we reap the treasures contained in all. (Welby to Holland, 1879–1882, in Cust 1929: 61)

In a letter to Mary Everest Boole (see below), Welby also introduced the expression ‘principle of levelling up’ to indicate the process of continuous progressive development in the relation among signs as the subsequent sign responds to the preceding, recognizing the germs of the unknown in it and developing it further:

There is no ‘break’ or ‘gulf’ anywhere, as the scientists are beginning to discover. What we need is the principle of levelling up. Upward and expanding tendency is the very essence of what I suppose Darwin’s truth to mean; so the lowest contains the elements of the highest in the order of ascension . . .’ (Welby to Boole, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 154)

In the human world the interpreter, or better the interpretant (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 8–10) responds to the previous sign, interpreting and translating it in ongoing signifying processes with the capacity to transcend the intentional signifying source. Through interpretive/translative practices the object of interpretation can be made to resound with new meanings, which originally were never intended or were not foreseen (see Petrilli 1998a; Petrilli and Ponzio 2005). Knowledge and understanding, indeed the signifying universe at large are enhanced through ongoing interpretive/translative processes. The term ‘translation’ is used here in an extended sense beyond interlingual translation, that is, to indicate the capacity for interconnectedness and interdependency among signs, senses and different ‘dialects,’ as says Welby, beyond the verbal signs of the same language. Translation implies the ability to look at signs with the eyes of the

other, and developing them further across different sign systems, verbal and nonverbal. Interpretation implies translation thus understood, the capacity for recognizing relation and interconnectedness among signs, which is no less than decisive for the generation of sense, meaning and significance:

Our fault or lack is that we have been unable to translate. We have over and over again repeated our message in the same dialect. Some have understood; a few have gone and lived it out. But to most it is either a matter of course or convention; or a passionate and glorious dream, fading as it arose; or simply – like other fanaticisms – an obsolete and incongruous survival. It is so much easier to be impatient of an apparent perversity than to let patience have her perfect work in trying to understand. But the reward of that, though hidden and unseen is great. . . .

One of my difficulties, indeed, is the extent to which I realize the interdependence of various subjects. . . . (Welby to Thorold, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 254–255)

One real test of the reality of a mind-relation answering to the solar and the cosmical relations to the earth, and involving the principle of ethic and religion at their very core, such a mind-relation, realised and acted upon – would be the power to interpret to some extent at least each type of thought to each other one; to distinguish the relative validity of each, and to unify them, so to speak, from their own ground and by their own means, by incorporating them in what is best expressed in organic terms. (Welby to Croom-Robertson, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 264)

2.3. Femininity, subjectivity, alterity: For a critique of the identical

Welby's correspondence reveals an attractive world in the feminine: a consistent community of women often in direct contact with each other as a consequence of their common connection to her, women variously involved in public life and in writing. Welby's ideas were sometimes accepted, sometimes challenged, giving rise to impassioned disputations, never indifference, in writings that travel through the worlds of philosophy and science at exquisite levels of poetic expressivity. These exchanges also transpire with a profound sense of humanity.

At a time when the idea of female emancipation and feminist movements were still nascent, Welby and her writing companions were aware of the enormous discrepancy between a woman's capacity for critical reflection and social change, on the one hand, and opportunities to act in public and official worlds, on the other. This difficulty was mentioned by Welby in a letter to Richard Holt Hutton, editor of the journal *The Spectator* and notorious for his influence over public opinion:

. . . You must bear in mind that nothing which I try to express is ever to me otherwise than complementary. I always see any point, so far as my dim glimmer goes, *plus* other – perhaps more central, often more generally acknowledged, and sometimes apparently contradictory – aspects. And defined and formulated doctrine is a region which I draw from or work towards, but desire to touch not. . . . How difficult to express even this! Words are so ambiguous. . . . When talking or writing I always feel strongly: 'Let us clear away, higher up the stream.'

The question which you seem to me to be one of the few able to tackle is: how are the noble hearts, how is the sound and true element in human society, in these days, to be ranged to the side of Christianity! We are busy trying to win the lower type of character

and leaving the higher types to drift into antagonism, passive or active. This ought not to be and need not be, and must not be any longer tolerated. Would that I could put it into the hearts of men such as you, who can see deep things and can write and speak and teach, so to show Christ unto men as to compel every truth-lover to come to the light. I am helpless: a woman cannot do man's work. . . . (Welby to Hutton, 1879–1882, in Cust 1929: 27–28)

Welby's correspondence is characterized by interests of a theoretical order, developed in dialogue with men and women alike, often with an official status in the intellectual world. The problem of knowledge is a recurrent topic in her exchanges with Lucy L. Clifford. Together these women reflect on the relation between events, things and their conceptualization, between knowledge and evidence, assertion and proof. Concepts such as (intellectual and moral) 'greatness,' 'goodness,' 'affection' are indicated as examples of the difficulties involved in finding appropriate terminology to describe progress in experience and understanding, the unending stratification of senses. Polemicizing with the representatives of positivism, 'a parody of true and living fact,' Welby criticizes the concept of identity, that is, the tendency to confirm the identical on the basis of recourse to blind 'evidence,' which she describes as a fallacy of the 'persistent Ego.' By contrast, she theorizes the hypothetical and relational character of signs, including the signs of subjectivity. Reasoning, and therefore the relation to objects about which we reason, is oriented by a plurality of senses and by the multiform and ambiguous nature of the existent. Nothing, whether thing or thought, can be reduced to a straightforward fact of outside evidence, but takes on sense and consistency in the interpretive relation among signs:

[. . .] What is greatness? What is goodness? What is affection? Are they real in the sense of being worth believing in, reverencing, and living for? Take intellectual or moral greatness, where is the outside evidence? Can a surveyor or civil engineer measure or weigh it? Can a chemist analyse or a surgeon dissect it? Black marks on paper and a given number of copies sold. What else is there when you come to outside evidence, common to Shakespeare, Darwin, Martin Tupper, Bradshaw. . . ?

Take 'goodness.' Take the best to which the better is the way. Dear friend, shall we make a compact? I'll give you outside evidence of my 'light beyond' and 'nucleatic life' (a million times more delicate in grain and powerful in ray-force than any sense-known vibration, a million magnitudes beyond any microscope our eyes could use) when you give me substantial proof (such as we hang criminals by) of there being any such thing as good at all in your sense – worth striving for, because real, as well as altogether lovely and desirable. Take affection: your love for your child. What real evidence can you give me of it? The actress can give me all its outward signs; and if you appeal to life-long acts of devotion, how do I know the motive is what you say it is? It might only be the old selfishness in a new form or a mere animal instinct. . . . But more. Even if you prove your love, how can you prove that the object of love is not a mere figment of your thought, but real and worthy? What is ultimate – outside or inside, outward or inward? Is not all we know like layers of husk – outside in relation to one thing, inside to another? When you say to me 'there's no proof of anything you say, it's all your fancy,' may I not say 'and there's no proof of there really being anything to prove it to' – no proof that the very idea of proof at all does not rest upon a fallacy (a survival of the days when a persistent Ego was postulated or assumed) and will not soon itself become an exploded superstition or obsolete fancy? . . .

Of course we are far apart. I rejoice to know it. That is why we want each other. . . .
(Welby/Lucy L. Clifford, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 80–81)

In her letter exchanges, Mary Everest Boole, one among the several interesting women populating Welby's correspondence, expressed her admiration for Welby, giving the impression of wanting to seduce the latter into the web of her own discourse and viewpoints in the context of a relation that was at once friendly and problematic (Petrilli 2009a). In addition to acting as secretary over a period of nine years to her famous mathematician husband George Boole, discussed among others by Charles S. Peirce, Mary E. Boole was a philosopher, mathematician, educationist and writer in her own right. She authored a series of volumes (for a selection see Boole 1931), including *Logic Taught by Love*, *Symbolic Methods of Study*, *The Forging of Passion into Power*, which at the time were signaled as foregrounding psychoanalysis (cf. Cust 1929: 86, n. 1). The correspondence between Welby and M. E. Boole fully conveys the sense of profound social and cultural transformation of the day. A recurrent theme in their letters, which contradicts the myth of Babel and the biblical malediction, is the multiform nature of the existent and potential expressivity of a plurilingual world. Progress in science, knowledge and experience are only possible on the basis of dialogue among differences capable of confronting each other, of relating to each other on the principle of mutual understanding and reciprocal enrichment. Through interpretive-translative processes the unknown is revealed in the known and significance is made to emerge beyond meaning intention. The criterion for the verification of knowledge and truth is 'translatability' into different languages and universes of discourse. But it is the writer, that is, the artist who is capable of perceiving truth beyond the limits of convention, who is endowed with the highest degree of perceptive sensibility and expressive capacity beyond the limits of the known. Writing, that is, literary writing, is recognized as the place where creative interpretation and expressive potential are at their highest:

. . . I think that there are some things that no one but a writer ever can feel (I mean an artist). Did you ever see a great thinker – too much over the heads of the people to be understood – and you, just an artist, catch his thought and write it out, so that he recognises it as exactly what he meant? Did you ever see the smile that comes over the face of a great, lonely, not-understood genius, when he sees that he has found an interpreter? The awful shock of a great stillness that comes over one when one sees that look in a man's face. There is no tie like it in the world. . . . Well – you have the artist power to interpret Jesus. And you tell me you are fussing because you cannot do – I don't know what it is you are wanting to do!
(Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 106)

As part of her commitment to teaching logic, Boole declares that 'I shall try to make the men realise that rhythmic pulsation is a stronger force than an explosion' (Boole to Welby, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 156). To this provocation Welby responded that 'woman' is neither a 'sex' nor a 'creature,' but rather 'within undivided humanity': a guardian of 'differences' or 'distinctions,' of 'what makes logic possible.' Femininity is the condition for development of a type of logic where differences and distinctions do not imply separation, recognized as the ultimate cause of discord and chaos. On the contrary, differences and distinctions must interrelate dialogically, but never be confounded. Femininity resists all attempts at reduction or assimilation similarly to the

eternal with respect to the temporal, the infinite with respect to the finite, the unknown with respect to the known:

About woman and logic, I often think of woman as within undivided humanity (a principle, not a 'sex' or creature); and I am sure she is thus the special guardian of what makes logic possible and supplies its material, but which stands towards it as the eternal towards the temporal. But of course I am only thinking of what ordinary people mean by 'logic.' I think that to muddle up the 'differences,' or rather distinctions, which seem (like the difference between organs in our bodies) to be the very condition as well as an integral part of the fullest and most perfect or holy unity we know, is the most fatal of blunders: some day I hope you may see how this applies to the Supreme Form of Unity as conceivable and as adorable by us. But let us repudiate the false idea of separation or division; that is the very root of discord and chaos, of idolatry and adulteration and lawlessness. . . . (Welby to Boole, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 159)

Another recurrent theme in *Echoes of Larger Life* is the problem of subjectivity, one of Welby's principal research areas during the last decade of her lifetime, as testified by a file collecting her unpublished papers in the Welby Collection, York University Archives (see Ch. 6, this volume). In these writings, Welby proposes an interesting distinction between 'self' and 'I' or what with a neologism she calls 'Ident.' But in fact she had already underlined the need for different terms to describe subjectivity in its various aspects in her early correspondence: 'we need some word like "self" to stand for what we are made to conquer and transform, and another totally different one to express the essence, the root and the constructive nature of our true and conscious being' (Welby to Max Müller, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 150).

Welby related the problem of subjectivity to her conception of signs, language and meaning, orienting her studies in the direction of what today with French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) we identify as the 'humanism of otherness' by contrast with the 'humanism of identity' (see Levinas 1972). Welby criticized egocentric identity insofar as it is based on sacrifice of the other to self, on denial of the other. On the contrary she theorized the structural role of otherness in the constitution of the subject. Subjectivity is generated by the logic of otherness, in the dynamics of the relationship between self and non self, between self and other. In her letters to Welby, Julia Wedgwood (author of *The Moral Ideal*, *The Message of Israel*, also great-granddaughter of Josiah Wedgwood and niece of Charles Darwin) describes subjectivity in terms of the 'dislocation of self.' This approach highlights the importance of difference or distinction among the various dimensions of identity – where boundaries are never delimited once and for all –, while criticizing the tendency to division, separation, the creation of alternatives, which provoke no less than the death of self.

Welby herself used the expression 'multiple' personality to indicate the subject's identity understood as a 'plurality,' as a community of selves that may even contradict each other, whether reference is to the identity of a small community, for example, the single individual, or to the extended community of a whole social group. With Boole and with essayist and novelist Vernon Lee (pseudonym for Violet Paget), the concept of 'community' is described as a plurality of components dialogically interconnected by relations of mutual understanding, which do not imply relations of mutual neutralisation. Other concepts explored by Welby with her correspondents include 'solidarity,' 'humanity,' 'condivision,' 'pleasure,' 'good,' 'truth,' 'order,' 'happiness,' 'freedom,' 'love,' and

so forth. Boole describes the bond of love as ‘the tie which grows up between those who have been victims of each other’s errors.’ Of the following three excerpts on such concepts, one is from a letter to Welby by Julia Wedgwood, the other is from Mary E. Boole, while the third is from Welby to Vernon Lee:

I cannot but feel grateful to you for all you have been to Mrs. Boole. . . . Spite cannot live in her atmosphere for more than a very short time. She is as noble a being as I have every known, though streaked with what is not noble: the streaks are so thin that I quite forget them when I do not come upon them. . . . The combination of so much nobility with extraordinary arrogance that one sees in some people makes one feel as if there were in our present condition something in what we mean by self that is a dislocation – something that will not bear any kind of pressure. I have a haunting hope of awakening hereafter to some new condition of the balance between the self and the other – some discovery of mistake or deadness in the division, only with the ‘I’ there more distinct to make the discovery. (Wedgwood to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 96–97)

. . . You do believe in the solidarity of humanity, don’t you? Not in expiation, but in a common circulation which enables one to do for another what he is debarred from doing in his own person. You ‘ought’ to be living a simpler, less costly life: you can’t: let me do it for you. James Hinton ‘ought’ to have seen and accepted the impossibility of getting into simple conditions: he could not: you do it for him. A redeemed humanity is a united humanity, not one in which each individual lives a true human life, but one in which each individual contentedly accepts and acknowledges his own defects and is content to put into the common stock the virtues which he has, and to take from it what he has not. Some day we shall see that the truest bond of love is not what we call affection, or obvious help, but the tie which grows up between those who have been victims of each other’s errors. You know it, I am sure. (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 107)

I think that you are as conscious as I am of ‘multiple’ personality: at times the opposite tendencies which I inherit fall apart within me so completely as to seem like two contrasted identities; the problem is how to prevent their neutralising each other instead of combining in result. [. . .] I long to show that there is not an atom of difference ultimately between self-seeking as a unit and self-seeking as an aggregate, or between the idea of pleasure as end-and-aim, or liberty as end-and-aim, or power as end-and-aim (whether for individual, or race, or ‘greatest number’), instead of means. Of course you are right that pleasure is good and ought to be noble. And utility is good and ought to be consecrated. And order is good and ought to be venerated. Pleasure has no meaning to me except that which precedes, qualifies, succeeds the YES of the Universe, the Amen of divinely purified nature. I am sorry for the poor word ‘pain,’ which like ‘blame’ is so ready to serve us in evolving Good.

The utilitarian convicts himself when he confesses – as he must confess – that to seek for happiness as ultimate aim defeats itself: to seek for good and truth does not. Do not let us sum ourselves up, or allow others to sum us up in any -ism or halfness. Let us be spontaneous and determined (I am determined to be free!), dogmatic and mystical, rational and spiritual. Let us be human in the Divine and no lower or less worthy sense. (Welby to Vernon Lee, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 124–125)

According to Welby subjectivity is generated in the relation among a plurality of selves in dialogue, so that individual identity can only be conceived in the relation with the other. Peirce shared a similar view and with Welby has contributed to redefining the subject. Though Peirce did not produce a corpus of systematic writings on subjectivity, the topic was often at the centre of his attention and is indirectly accounted for

through his sign theory. Theory of subject and theory of sign are closely related in Peirce and Welby, to the point that both ground their theory of subject in their theory of sign (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 47–56). Insofar as it is a sign, that is to say, a dynamic and developing sign, the subject is a dialogic and relational entity, an open subject in becoming in the relation with other signs. The boundaries of the subject-sign are not defined once and for all; nor can they be defined if not in the dialogic encounter with other signs. From this perspective identity is not the starting point in the development of subjectivity, but rather it is the point of arrival, an outcome, an open result which at any given instant is always provisional, hypothetical, tentative. The following passages are exemplifications of Peirce's reflections on subjectivity from some of his best known papers, respectively 'Some Consequences of Four Incapacities,' 1868, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear,' 1878, and 'What Pragmatism Is,' 1905:

there is no element whatever of man's consciousness which has not something corresponding to it in the word; . . . It is that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an *external* sign, proves that man is an external sign. That is to say, the man and the external sign are identical, in the same sense in which the words *homo* and *man* are identical. Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought. (CP 5.314)

The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation. This is man,

'. . . proud man,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence.' (CP 5.317)

When we come to study the great principle of continuity and see how all is fluid and every point directly partakes the being of every other, it will appear that individualism and falsity are one and the same. Meantime, we know that man is not whole as long as he is single, that he is essentially a possible member of society. Especially, one man's experience is nothing, if it stands alone. If he sees what others cannot, we call it hallucination. It is not 'my' experience, but 'our' experience that has to be thought of; and this 'us' has indefinite possibilities. (CP 5.402, n. 2)

Two things here are all-important to assure oneself of and to remember. The first is that a person is not absolutely an individual. His thoughts are what he is 'saying to himself,' that is, is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time. When one reasons, it is that critical self that one is trying to persuade; and all thought whatsoever is a sign, and is mostly of the nature of language. The second thing to remember is that the man's circle of society (however widely or narrowly this phrase may be understood), is a sort of loosely compacted person, in some respects of higher rank than the person of an individual organism. It is these two things alone that render it possible for you – but only in the abstract, and in a Pickwickian sense – to distinguish between absolute truth and what you do not doubt. (CP 5. 421)

We know that Welby criticized ontological conceptions of the individual, and thus the principle of sacrificing otherness on the altar of a unitary identity that has been defined once and for all. By contrast with the tendency towards entification or reification, she

theorized identity in terms of otherness, dynamism, energy, activity, movement. Analogous to the irresistible forces of nature which she described as gravitating towards the outside, the forces regulating subjectivity are ‘centrifugal’: a truly human self gravitates towards the other and is not an egocentric self which instead would make for a ‘false’ self, an ‘inhuman’ self. The inhuman false self is governed by centripetal forces and as such is reduced to gravitating tediously around its own egotistic center. This means to contradict the forces of life, human and divine:

The gravitation of life to life, of truth to truth, of good to good, of the satellite to the parent orb; the attraction of the springing corn by the light- and heat-forces which draw up, develop, fructify it: become in the spiritual as in the natural world resistless – except to the inhuman false self which gravitates but to itself and is attracted mainly or only by its own centripetal force. . . . (Welby to Bishop of Lincoln [Dr. King], 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 205)

If identity is the expression of centrifugal forces grounded in the logic of otherness, a projection towards the outside, generated in the dialectic and dialogic interrelation between self and other, it follows that an adequate understanding of identity requires that the cognitive gaze stretch beyond ‘the self-dissecting tendency,’ beyond introspection, towards the outside, extrospectively towards the relation with the other. And given that the individual is generated in strict interrelation and interdependency with the other, Welby was critical of approaches to subjectivity based on the concepts of ‘autonomy’ and ‘independency’ where these implied isolation. Nor did this mean to deny each individual’s uniqueness or singularity.

Welby also theorized the polidimensionality of subjectivity, therefore of thinking and acting. Reasoning is analyzed in terms of the capacity to project oneself forward in the act of prediction, or of venturing backwards through the processes of remembering beyond fixed and rigid memory. She also contrasted polidimensionality to mere bi-dimensionality – which most often was not even ‘binocular,’ but only ‘monocular.’ The ‘material of self’ is ‘reticular,’ it implies ‘passion for individuality,’ ‘passion for sympathy and for awareness and for acting as a link.’ Energetic, creative, generative, transformative and polidimensional forces move the universe and are also the forces that move the investigative and dynamical subject that inhabits it. To recognize as much is the basis for the development of critical consciousness.

The excerpts below from Welby’s exchanges with different correspondents enquire into some of the themes so far mentioned:

. . . In your sense, I do see that the ‘unit’ – one far beyond our utmost means of direct perception or analysis and therefore definition – is the one important life-centre of each of us. It is truly a wonderful thought that the ultimate core of all which is passed on through all generations and manifests itself in the ‘personal character’ of each of us, evades at present every form of observation, and certainly cannot fall under anything we have hitherto called ‘death.’ . . . But, as units in my sense, we are but motes in our brothers’ eyes and beams in our own: – though here again both mote and beam are world-makers (like the worm, which is our type of the impotent and despicable), while motes as ‘particles’ reveal by reflecting the light in which they float and stream. Make the individual a starting-point or element, and the universe of energy – whether in ‘mind’ or ‘matter’ – is ours. But make it a goal or consummation, and it naturally fails to understand even itself (I remember the King of Point-land in *Flatland!*) or rightly to work out its own meaning and aim – only

too often hindering the views of others. The secret unnamed content of the ‘nucleolus’ is not a less perfect individual but a more perfect one through its continuity with the larger ‘plasm’; the individuality of the cell is no less secured than that of the sand-grain; only the first has potential and collective powers owing to coherence with its fellow, which are the very converse of the typical limits of the sand particle in its boasted ‘independence’! (Welby to James Crichton-Browne, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 190–191)

Dynamical for stactical is the key. We have thought of the ‘I’ (of personal identity) as a thing, a substance, an entity. We must learn to think of it as an energy, an act, a movement. Suppose that all being and personality is, in fact, first a means of advance or growth in some sense; then a realisation of the fact of advance and what is thus gained, followed by analysis of the results of such advance; then an attainment of fresh starting-points for a greater advance (in the moral and aesthetic sense of greater)? (Welby to Henry Drummond, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 196)

... I wish someone would do for time what the author of *Flatland* does for space, and tell us of creature with memory and sense of the present, but no foresight whatever; or with present and future clear to them, but no memory at all; or, again, conscious of the present moment only. I can easily put myself back into the region where a third element seems unknowable or inaccessible or even ‘inconceivable’ (transcendental of course!): the world, e.g., where the pendulum lives, all unaware of the time-story it is telling, or the world where hydrogen and oxygen live, unwitting of the water they can become, to say nothing of the world of line and surface, innocent of cube! And indeed I suspect (because facts seem thus to be accounted for more fully than in any other way) that much of our thought, philosophical or theological or other, is still but two-dimensional; and most of it not even binocular but only monocular. And it is curious that our power of foresight should be so very unequal to our power of recollection, although one might think they should correspond like forwards and backwards in space; we talk indeed of looking backwards on the past and forwards to the future; but except in the one case of astronomical prediction, we have knowledge of the one and but guess at the other.

I sometimes think that our present mental position is like the physical relation of the animal race to the inorganic sphere. It would starve in the midst of plenty – could not indeed conceive how or where food could be obtained – but for the plant-world. To the animal the food-world (as among us, to questioners, the answer-world) is problem insoluble and mystery impenetrable. ... We may be ‘vegetable’ at one time in our mental or spiritual history and ‘animal’ at another. ... Is the ultimate element of ME-stuff (1) vesicular or (2) reticular? Do some of us represent – in our passion for individuality – the vesicle, and others – in our passion for sympathy and consciousness and for acting as link – the fibre? I would be the fibre. (Welby to Frederick Pollock, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 197–198)

2.4. Between religion, science and philosophy: From biblical exegesis to *significs*

All that part of Welby’s research leading to her general theory of meaning and interpretation, her philosophy of significance, translation and interpretation, what she named *Significs*, and which found mature expression in her two monographs, *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance*, 1903, and *Significs and Language. The Articulate Form of our Expressive and Interpretative Resources*, 1911, has its starting point in her quest for an updated interpretation of Christian doctrine in the light of progress

in the sciences. Welby wrote at a time of cultural revolution largely determined by the theory of evolution, fully responding to interests at the heart of debate in the 'age of science and criticism,' an age when the relation between human beings and the rest of the living world was in the process of being completely revisited. Welby was critical and at once supportive of religious discourse, which it was not her intention to deny, but to interrogate and reread in a new key. Peirce too had made a similar attempt at putting together a theological and a scientific vision of life. Welby believed that it was possible to free the Sacred Scriptures from the bottlenecks of history and its prejudices by establishing live analogical relations with all aspects of life in the present. Interpretive potential of the Sacred Scriptures needed to be fully explored and developed in the light of contemporaneity. Only in this way could these texts from antiquity at last breathe with new life; could their sense, meaning, and significance, in the last analysis their quest for truth, be safeguarded. Though Welby was committed to promoting institutional reform in the Christian Church, she was mostly interested in issues of a theological order, as testified by her correspondence in *Echoes of Larger Life*, and devoted special attention to the interpretive potential of the Sacred Scriptures.

Welby had already focused her early work of the 1880s on the relation between signifying and interpretive practices, and on the need for critical reinterpretation, laying the foundation for her future work on problems of meaning, interpretation and understanding in philosophical-linguistic terms. Her volume of 1881 *Links and Clues*, a collection of reflections on excerpts from the Holy Scriptures, was often the object of discussion in the correspondence collected in *Echoes of Larger Life*. In *Links and Clues* she had already set out four principles of interpretation. These referred to 1) the problem of literal meaning; 2) the risk of leveling sense; 3) the importance of context and dialectics as a condition for unity; 4) the essential role of contradiction and complementarity among the different levels of sense in the configuration of a thought system (cf. Welby 1883 [1881]: 31–36; also Ch. 1, this volume). At this early stage, she had already conceived the need to broaden her conception of meaning beyond words and intention, to include such aspects as utterance, discourse, text, nonverbal sign systems, unintentionality and context in light of which alone could language and communication ever be adequately understood (cf. Ch. 3, this volume).

In *Links and Clues* Welby had already evidenced the importance of meaning ambiguity in language and behaviour: 'Ambiguity is surely a fundamental principle of all training. Think of the ambiguity of circumstance in our lives; they may mean a hundred things. All things seem to say what they do not mean, and mean what they do not seem to say' (Welby 1883 [1881]: 291). A single text, even a single word or expression may generate different interpretations, stimulating experimentation in alternative meanings and progress in discernment. This, however, does not imply that textual meaning is arbitrarily determined by subsequent interpretations. Welby evidenced the otherness that is structural to any text with respect to a given interpretation, what in our terminology is the 'signifying' or 'semiotic materiality' of a text (see Petrilli 1990c,d, 1998a: 5–6, 45–48, 2008c: 137–158; Petrilli and Ponzio 2005; Ponzio 1990a, 1993, 1993a). In a paragraph of *Links and Clues* entitled 'The Living Word,' she warns against the tendency to interpret parables according to 'what our natural hearts. . . would mean if *we* had written them' (Welby 1883 [1881]: 54). Her analysis of the construction of textual sense in terms of the dialectics between the text's meaning before it receives a new interpretation, on the

one hand, and the meaning generated through new and different interpretive sequences, on the other, connects her reflections to current debate on the question of interpretation (see Derrida 1967b, 1999–2000; Eco 1990).

The excerpt below from a letter to the anti-Christian theist, Charles Voysey, presents her considerations on the challenge Welby had set herself to critically reinterpret the Holy Scriptures:

You say that you ‘do not envy me the task’ (1) of reversing the prevailing interpretations of the New Testament and (2) of reconciling the spirit and meaning of the whole with our reason and conscience. But if we both live, I pray that I may yet see you helping *not* merely to reverse but rather to raise and expand the prevailing interpretations. . . . That it is hard to rise above, or to purify and deepen, popular or surface notions of truth is of course a truism; it is surely hard even for you also to enforce that truth which you do now see on those whose level of thought and life is one of content with the visible, the present, the easy. . . . The condition of receiving progressive, ever-enlarging perceptions of truth is that of intellectual and moral patience, not with falsehood or with evil, but with incompleteness; a faithful waiting for the fulness of time. . . . Remember that the raising, the expanding (what you call reversing and in a certain sense you are right) of thought is no less necessary, with advancing light, in natural things than in spiritual. ‘The sun rises’ . . . ‘the air is heavy and oppressive.’ . . . In both these cases, taken at random, the under-truth is really the ‘reverse’ of the popular expression: and the ‘judge not by appearance’ (or sensation) is justified. Believe me, letter surface-judging is barren alike in attacker and defender. . . .

In conclusion: if what I have said has given your heart but one faintest misgiving as to whether you have after all yet seen and known and understood the true Christ, then, my friend, think whether you might not righteously and safely hold yourself a little more in suspense. . . . Give yourself at any cost a time of retirement and prayer to see if conceivably this thing may be of GOD and true. . . . (Welby to Voysey, 1879–1882, in Cust 1929: 39–40)

In methodological terms, Welby took scientific reasoning as her model, therefore the drive to transcend the limits of vision through the power of inference. The metaphor of light as truth and knowledge, as illumination, develops the idea of seeing beyond vision, knowing beyond knowledge, inferring beyond the description of the immediately tangible datum. In fact, the search for truth is conducted through a retroductive movement, that is, by reasoning backwards from evidence on the basis of hypotheses (which recalls abductive or retroductive reasoning theorized by Peirce). True knowledge cannot be regulated by the principle of authority, but can only derive from interpretive and critical procedures that are not vitiated by prejudice. The acquisition of knowledge is an ongoing and open-ended unfinalizable process. Beyond the fixity of dogmas, canons, and conventions, truth can never be defined once and for all. The existence of planets like Uranus and Neptune were intuited on the basis of the power of inference (see ‘Zadig,’ Welby 1883 [1881]: 251–252). ‘Uran and Neptune were discovered not directly but by inference,’ as Welby also wrote in a letter to Lynn Linton on the relation between light and knowledge as opposed to the tendency to mystification in the name of faith:

I also dread mysticism and spiritualism, for I believe that ‘mystery,’ in the sense of what ‘mystifies’ and baffles – of what seems a mere inscrutable puzzle to us – is exactly what GOD is revealed as Light in order to make clear. GOD being Light, does it not follow that every intelligible question implies an intelligible answer, and that we are intended not to rest content until we find it? If we were incapable of receiving an answer, we should be

incapable of conceiving the corresponding question. Each seeking 'why?' is put into our hearts by the very Light whereby we are at least to learn the answer.

Our measure of what Light can do for us, morally, intellectually, spiritually, are too often poor and contracted; and thus the advancing growth of men's awakening faculties, the increasing area of scientific, historical and general knowledge, tends to deprive us of what little light we have; we tremble and we dare not look GOD's own facts in the face; we shiver in a darkness miscalled faith. Yet even what we are not able yet to see we may sometimes, if we will use GOD's gifts, infer. Uranus and Neptune were discovered not directly but by inference. Whole worlds of truth are surely hidden in the depths of the Living Word, ready for the patient and faithful inquirer, who uses fearlessly the instruments which GOD Himself has given him, and as Light shall enable him to apply. (Welby to Linton, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 174–175)

As stated above, Welby underlined the need to interpret and update religious discourse itself in the light of progress in science and philosophy, that is, in the light of acquired knowledge beyond fixed beliefs and traditional canons, beyond dogmatism and orthodoxy. By contrast with ideological monism, the unquestioning acceptance of dogma and received truths, she conceived religion as a system of ideas that interacted dialogically with other systems of ideas in a continuously changing world. She believed that appropriate solutions to theological and doctrinal issues could only be reached through ongoing dialogue with *avant-garde* trends in all fields of research. Against passive acceptance she promoted critical interrogation. In fact, she interrogated doctrine reflecting on such concepts as life, human and nonhuman, divinity, sanctity, finity, infinity, love, knowledge, truth, freedom, responsibility, justice, forgiveness, compassion, patience, humility, simplicity, peace, goodness, faith, and so forth, even challenging standpoints she did not approve with straightforward and polemical overtones.⁸

Welby condemned the spokesman of divine compliance and wrath, just as she critiqued self-satisfaction for the salvation of one's soul and egocentrism as promoted by such a view of life. Instead, she praised the courage of knowing, even if eccentric and imperfect, the capacity for investigative orientation towards new horizons. This also implied the capacity to establish links among the different fields of knowledge and research, to the end of regenerating all forms of discourse, including the religious, as preannounced by the title itself of her 1881 volume, that is, *Links and Clues*.

Just as she criticized lay social institutions when they maintained a condition of ignorance, resisting progress in science, art, philosophical thought and history, she spoke out against ecclesiastical authority, evidencing the lack of self-criticism and real interest in truth and knowledge. She denounced censorship practiced by official organs of the Church, the short-sighted tendency to assert orthodoxy, dogma, and canons of non-illuminated thought, and to silence 'rebel' thinkers. It was important to stop mechanisms of 'alienation' and 'estrangement' set in motion against the 'pioneer' and 'revolutionary mind,' which she described as 'the most open and honest and clear-minded of our day.'

8. On these issues particularly interesting are Welby's exchanges with such figures as Bishop Edward Talbot, Norman Pearson, Rev. Aubrey Moore, Bishop Wescott, Edwin Arnold, Henry Drummond, James Crichton-Browne, Rev. H. Jeaffreson, James Martineau, Julia Wedgwood, Max Müller, Earl of Denbigh.

Some of these themes are explored in the following excerpts from *Echoes of Larger Life*:

I have been trying to act as a 'link,' and to bring Jukes and Westcott to understand each other better. . . . Undoubtedly there is a mystical reaction arising in the Church. It is beginning to be seen that dogma as mere prescribed and reiterated assertion is very arid and unproductive soil. What we need, and may soon hope for, is scientific interpretation of mysticism. I was amazed to find Jukes clinging to received versions and texts as though 'interpolation' was fatal to one's faith. How crucial, indeed, is the necessity of passing out of the stage which clings to attestations and warrants of truth and life, to the stage in which we recognise both. . . .

. . . But when shall we at last begin to see that the Church *must* still be divided? When shall we learn to thank GOD for, instead of lamenting, a disunion which in fact prevents the greatest of calamities? Think of a Council representing the whole external Church *now* decreeing permanent sainthood, or according exclusive inspiration to this or that utterance of to day! Imagine some 'Third Council of Westminster or Rome' *now* solemnly affirming and ratifying for all humanity a Canon of certain documents – not as a provisional safeguard, but finally for all time and in all senses – as the one only holy or inspired Writing in the world!

Of course all these things were needed before the growing faculty of discernment had assumed its rightful sway. But all growth produces change. Do we not feel that the most intensely living of the holy men who at the 'Third Council of Carthage' solemnly ratified the Canon, would have said – being warned that the spring of life was thus sealed up for ever – 'GOD forbid! We are obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which we were delivered, but it is not ours to embalm or to petrify. Are *we* to deny the Church's life? Who dares to say she shall not live and grow: that canon and creed are but the last will and testament of a dead mother? Rather are they earnest of the broadening light of GOD, pledges of the Holy Spirit's work. . . .' (Welby to Rev. F. G. M. Powell, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 134–135)

As to faith, it is, as you say, a grace, and the answer to the prayer it inspires. And our possession of it is not proved by our own claim to faith, but by its work. You would be the last to wish me to suppose that it were possible to bring souls to the love of God or to give true spiritual comfort of any kind, or true light in any form of darkness except by that faith which is the actual touch of finite being with the Infinite, of the creature with the Creator, of the human will with the Divine Spirit. (Welby to Denbigh, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 199–200)

I must confess myself so confused by the phraseology you adopt (I suppose it is the one in vogue among the agnostic school to which you have been so long accustomed) that I get confused and perplexed. I recognize at once that the simplicity of faith is wanting, and I feel like a man wandering in a fog, only now and then recognizing some object that I know. There is too much of the mystical element in you to enable you to descend to hard practical facts. . . . What you want is prayer to the Holy Ghost for humble faith. Light comes with that. Without faith we grope about in the dark, and generally find ourselves on the spot where we started from, like a man that loses his way in a pathless forest. (Denbigh to Welby, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 200)

I am afraid it was not in the region of mysticism (deep as is my reverence for that as we see it in St. John, and indeed in St. Augustine and St. Bernard) but in that of hard logic

and common sense, that there seemed to me a want of force in the book.⁹ Very few writers are conscious of the inner edge of their arguments: very few see how often a telling point proves too much. The very wide range of my touch with minds, the great variety of 'lines of thought' which personal confidences bring home to me, make it difficult for me to write conventionally [...] With all my heart I echo your words as to faith. When I see the undercurrent of skepticism which barricades the open ways of truth, and find some who think that guarantees and safeguards will do the work of faith – of utter trust in the very Sun of truth – I realize more and more what faith is and the need of it.

May we all have grace to help each other! Then shall we see the reason why we are not meant all to speak or think alike: we are to love and live alike in Him. (Welby to Denbigh, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 200–201)

... I almost wish we had the word 'through-sight' instead of 'insight,' which a false idealism is apt to confuse with introspection. Do you think it would be true to represent the faculty by which we perceive GOD as identical with that by which we perceive the personal self in man? There is the physical organism, the subject of physiological science, and the personal reality which is apprehended by and through it – 'the spirit which giveth life.' ... Just so there is the physical universe, the subject of all the sciences, by and through which is apprehended the great Personal Reality – 'the Lord and Giver of Life.' This certainly satisfies the condition of faith laid down by you that it should begin from the dust. The great mistake of pseudo-theologians which brings them into fatal conflict with men of science is that they forget the dust which the watering-cart of a false spiritualism can never lay. The mistake of the pseudo-scientific man is that he will persist in going against the wind of GOD, which consequently drives the dust into his eyes and blinds him. (Welby to J. Simpson 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 201)

I only wish I had more letters like yours! The Church's spokesmen so often seem to put her in a false position. She is even sometimes made to represent blind and obstinate resistance to that Will which has given us and is giving us, through science and criticism, such wonderfully increasing light on the method, spirit and aim of her teaching, as herself a living, breathing, growing 'organism' in the fullest sense of the word. The question must always be, what attitude would the Apostles, Prophets and Fathers take now? They are ever pioneers and leaders – the first to absorb, assimilate and interpret fact. We diligently scrutinise what they said in those days. But that, except in its eternal nucleus, is just what they would be the first to transcend now, with the light of a fresh and widening glory – not destroying, but fulfilling the word of old. We know now what we never knew before, that, beyond all we see as 'fixed' or 'stationary,' there is Motion – in every molecule as in every solar-system. Thus we see that all our thought of the spiritual has been riddled through as by dry-rot, with a world of metaphor which does not square with the world of GOD's creation, and therefore cannot truly represent His will for us. ... (Welby to Rev. W. H. Simcox 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 202)

... Surely on every side there are only too sad evidences (though not to the cursory or superficial observer) that with all the roused activity of every kind throughout the Christian world, there is what I expressed by 'rotteness' (or rather dry-rot) at the heart of it all. I mean what is shown to us more and more sternly and clearly by the increasing alienation of those who are full of the very spirit you express and describe as breathed in the Church's liturgy. True that there has always been, in one form or another, this 'dry-rot.' But that is surely the more reason for not condoning or tolerating or even ignoring it. And surely it takes a more

9. The book referred to is *Ancient Religion and Modern Thought*, by W. S. Lilly, see footnote to Welby's letter to The Earl of Denbigh, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 199.

dangerous form than in supine days, when – as now – concealed under so much that passes for a really living energy. . . . What strikes a chill into many a devout and earnest heart is the general trend of things. We do not enough realise the fast-growing estrangement, not of the cynic and the scoffer, not of the selfish and the easy, but of many of the most open and honest and clear-minded of our day. I cannot say how deeply I am impressed by the whole-hearted desire for truth at whatever personal cost in many of those who are driven by our failure into dry and barren deserts. It brings back the pregnant words of the Archbishop at the Church Congress: ‘When the Church really knows her own power and its full extent, the world will assuredly know it too’ (or words to that effect) ‘and, if the world, how much more those who are the very salt of the earth. . . . (Welby to Hutton, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 203)

. . . No doubt incredulity *is* now to a far greater extent than we often realise the instinctive attitude of men. That is, if one may say so, the automatic result of the atmosphere of ‘uniform sequence’ in which even the most backward minds now live. But, if you watched that marvellous correspondence about ‘luck’ in the *Daily Telegraph* a few months ago (which I have kept, like the equally curious one about medicine in the *Times*), you would see another kind of product in full bloom amongst us. So you would among the various crazes, spiritualistic and other, of which one and all I have kept entirely clear. . . . And as to the ages, one hundred – even fifty – years ago things were accepted as quite to be expected and the proper thing, although supernatural, which now Dean Burgon himself would wince at. A real thinker among Churchmen once told me he believed we none of us had any idea how emphatically what most of us mean by miracle would be repudiated and disowned (or at least subjected to the most hostile question) by many of those who are now keenly (historically and in the abstract) on the side of ‘supernaturalism.’ It would seem to the type of worshipper that we find, say at St. Paul’s, so obviously but another form of ‘occult’ or ‘hypnotic’ phenomena, etc. Forgive me. These things seem life and death to me, knowing what I know goes on all round us. (Welby to Hutton 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 203–204)

To take one point in your letter which strikes me as representative, you say: ‘To me it seems easier to prove a harmony between philosophy and religion than between religion and science, the latter dealing more with phenomenal aspects of Nature than with realities – although of course I must admit that there is a correspondence or relation between them if it can be found; but, like the hypothetical fourth dimension, though it is a truth, it seems as difficult to get to it as to rise to the spiritual heaven by mechanical means. Your application however somewhat modifies this view, showing that by analogy of natural symbols the spiritual may be inferred and confirmed.’

Here I think we have a key at once to the main need of the day. In our days of strict test, philosophy shares to some extent with theology the suspicion of futility; the fatal words ‘transcendent’ and ‘mystical,’ firmly fastened on the one, hover round and often settle on the other. But science is emphatically THE ground of the man of the day: that man to whom the message of Christ is more specially due and applicable now at first-hand. Other men may, perhaps ought to, be able to take that message in more or less obsolete forms. For it must be remembered that mysticism shares this drawback with dogma and ritual to a greater degree than we are aware of. I have been startled to find how archaic sometimes were its intuitive translations of Divine things; how little conscious most ‘mystics’ are of the changes which are passing over our whole mode of conception. That is partly if not wholly, it seems to me, due to the fact that the man we agree to call the mystic represents a type of mind which leaves science and its logic out of account; to him, e.g., the study of language is absurdly irrelevant to his subjects. And though he is fond – sometimes perhaps too fond – of taking some science like chemistry as a mine of illustration, he is content to take stray facts in isolation, apparently supposing that they are so independent and capable

of such absolutely final statement, that he can use them as axioms (proving and ending in) themselves. To such a man the very idea of an 'anti-Euclidean geometry' is pure and simple nonsense; so also, except in a sense of his own, is such a revolutionary thought as evolution applied to the mental or moral powers of man, or indeed to man as 'spiritual' at all.

But to the man of science the smallest flaw in the root of evidence is fatal. Truth, he says – and rightly – must, at any cost, come first. Let us suspend our judgment where no certain conclusions seem yet possible or safe; let us abjure dogmatism, as much in its scientific as in its theological form. And thus he is naturally suspicious of the apparent evasion implied in our protest that science can do nothing for us morally or spiritually 'because it deals only with phenomena': and is perhaps made impatient by the often-repeated platitude, that you cannot go upstairs to a high moral standard. More and more indeed is the typical materialist finding himself in the same boat with the illogically speculating spiritualist. Every new writing on science I take up contains some direct or indirect repudiation of that class of idea, and insists on a real and well-marked distinction between the physical and the psychical.

Now may I touch on my own hopes? At the core of my thought lie certain genetic points, or, let us say, spores. I feel more and more that I myself can only hope to leave these presumptively linked together and, as you would say, 'at-oned' to religion, philosophy and science in the widest sense of all three terms, as well as to human experience in every stage and shape. I can but hope that they may thus prove themselves in real touch with Revelation in the only full sense – that is, the unveiling or manifestation of truth and fact and reality in the 'outer' and 'inner' cosmos. Therefore my whole energies are bent on a process which I hope may be found to bear a similar relation to the ordinary attempts to find 'spiritual' and 'natural' (or 'material') analogies, and thus to 'reconcile' science and religion, as the newer developments of brain-theory bear to phrenology. Phrenology was vitiated and rendered untrue by isolation. Now we are recovering its element of truth in relation; but only on the side of 'science.' We need to relate it thus to morality in a very different fashion to anything which has yet been done. So the analogies of natural law have been vitiated by unconscious assumptions due to inherited bias and tendencies, powerfully influencing surroundings, etc. We cannot of course hope to outgrow or transcend these entirely. But it is indeed a great step gained when, like yourself, we begin frankly and simply to allow for it, and thus to acquire the power borrowing, so to speak, the eyes and minds and special faculties of others wherewith to correct, complement, and supplement our own. . . . What right have we now in this day of reversals to go on saying (as it was needful to say once, when our physics and astronomy were out of joint) that this series of phenomena is material and that spiritual; that the two belong to absolutely different worlds; that the similes taken from the one to express the other can never give us anything but the merest accidental likeness; that it matters nothing what analogy we use or what metaphor we choose, since all are equally conveniences only and of equal non-validity and non-worth – all alike incapable of any actual reflection of fact, since between 'revelation' and 'nature' is a great gulf fixed? . . . It is the ordinary matter-of-fact Christian who is mystical in the most dangerous sense, since he never dreams of those implicit speculations of the most visionary kind of which his thought is full. He has got so used to it all, that his self-contradictions never strike him except when they are actually pointed out, and even then he is apt to think that the fault lies in the nature of things rather than in his own second-hand thinking – I vague and loose, yet on the surface deceptively clear-cut and dogmatic. Do you not feel that if some of the thoughts of the prophets, and indeed of the apostles, were put before us in non-biblical language, the most orthodox among us would be tempted to disavow them as unchristian?

Well, perhaps before long we may begin to look for our keys in directions we have little thought of as yet. . . . (Welby to J. W. Farquhar, 1888–1890, in *Cust* 1929: 217–220)

Welby closely referenced the Sacred Scriptures for the metaphor of light and its meanings in various sections of *Links and Clues*. The metaphor of God as light is considered as one of the most significant religious analogies of all. The presence of God is repeatedly described as coinciding with the kingdom of light and love (see, for example, 'The Light of Love,' 1883 [1881]: 7–18; 'Love and Justice,' 1883 [1881]: 18–22). Anything less belongs to the kingdom of darkness and is associated with sin, evil, anger, wrath, scorn, indignation, hatred, malice, curse, bitterness and destruction. Where there emerges a situation of incompatibility with light, the problem is not with light, that is, with God, but with whoever cannot stand the light any longer, like someone who has an eye inflammation and consequently is banished from the sunlight by his own illness. Light is contrasted with shade to illustrate the relation between truth and understanding, on the one hand, and fallacy, false consciousness and mystification, on the other (see 'Never Discard: Always Transform,' 1883 [1881]: 233–234).

The problem of truth is analyzed in *Links and Clues* in relation to a dynamical and generative conception of signs, meaning and language. According to Welby an epistemologically valid approach to truth requires the continuous work of revision and updating with special attention for linguistic formulation. Contrary to the fallacy of reassuring monologism, the same truth must be surveyed from as many different viewpoints as possible. The tendency to freeze truth in definitions, dogma, doctrines and definitive formulae is contrasted to the capacity for critical creativity and innovation. Truth worthy of the name must coincide with life in its multifaceted unity, which implies neither uniformity nor relativity (cf. 'Words' and 'Point of view,' in Welby 1883 [1881a]: 223 and 235–236; and Ch. 1, this volume). In 'The Sun Is One' (1883 [1881]: 238), Welby characteristically continues her discourse in the metaphorical tones of the parable. She criticizes the tendency to elect any given conception to the status of general truth, instead of admitting its partiality, guarding against the fallacy of exchanging the part for the whole. Light is used by Welby as a metaphor for polyhedral and plurivocal truth, truth as involving 'the diversity and thus apparent contradiction of converging paths to it' (1883 [1881]: 245). Welby makes a point of underlining that this conception of truth (which she theorized more closely in her later writings) is supported by findings in scientific discourse (see 'Truth,' 1883 [1881]: 242–244; 'Danger,' 1883 [1881]: 245–246; 'Opposites,' 1883 [1881]: 246–247).

Her critique of monolithic truth is related to her critique of monolithic knowledge, of the egocentric self, of the logic of identity which exclude the other, and with the other the plurality of different voices. She used the metaphor 'GOD is Light' to criticize the imposition of dogma and the conventional canons of knowledge, therefore authoritarianism not only in the Church but also in lay institutions. She criticized obscurantism, the official detainers of 'truth,' representatives of 'religious' power and its abuses. To impede dialogue in the search for truth and knowledge, to impede awareness of the presence of many voices and viewpoints meant to impede the development of critical consciousness, the capacity for interrogation and ultimately the perfection of humanity (see Welby 1983 [1903]: 196–197).

We have also mentioned that Welby's conception of truth is also connected to her translative principle, and as such is generative and dynamical. In Welby's description truth is the modifiable expression of complementary points of view. She preferred the concept of 'complementarity' to 'contradictoriness' to explain the development of

knowledge, experience and consciousness. As she wrote in a letter to Richard Hutton (see Section 2.3, above): ‘... nothing which I try to express is ever to me otherwise than complementary. I always see any point, so far as my dim glimmer goes, *plus* other – perhaps more central, often more generally acknowledged, and sometimes apparently contradictory – aspects’ (Welby to Hutton, 1879–1882, in Cust 1929: 27).¹⁰

In Chapter XII of *What is Meaning?*, 1903 Welby associates the metaphor of light to ‘solar knowledge,’ therefore ‘solar consciousness’ and ‘solar experience.’ ‘Solar knowledge’ (‘solar’ means ‘binocular’ and ‘indirect’) is the second term of a triad, the first being ‘planetary knowledge’ and the third ‘cosmic knowledge.’ She related her triads of knowledge, consciousness and experience to her theory of meaning, specifically the triad ‘sense,’ ‘meaning’ and ‘significance’ (on her triads and correspondences, see Appendix 6, this volume). In *What is Meaning?* the meaning of light is referred to intellectual, rational and moral needs, and is translated from the religious sphere to science, philosophy and theory of knowledge. The summary below from the Contents presents the main issues treated in Chapter XII, the opening paragraphs of which are cited in Chapter 3, this volume:

Our only fully-developed articulate cosmos is planetary, and the knowledge of it is originally acquired through touch

‘Solar’ knowledge, on the contrary, is one remove from this, and ‘cosmical’ knowledge is doubly indirect

Xenophanes has here a lesson for us

Language compels us to speak of the mental and physical as though they were different spheres. This drives us to analogy, which as yet is liable to be arbitrary and chaotic. The ‘planetary’ consciousness, as we have seen, is secured by the struggle for existence. The ‘solar’ answers to the scientific activities, made possible by leisure and protection, and stimulated by increasingly complex demands upon brain-work. The astrophysicist has become the representative ‘solarist’ and ‘cosmicist’

But, in defiance of the scientific example, this planet is still mentally for the rest of us a universe-centre – still flat, fixed, founded; whereas all the ancient thinkers were true to such conceptions of their physical ‘world’ as had been arrived at

Modern psychology works throughout on the assumption that mind originates on this planet, just as the older Christianity supposed this earth to be the centre of Divine attention

What if we should here find a clue to some apparently gratuitous aberrations of primitive belief?

The religious world is first and essentially ‘spiritual.’ It belongs to the very ‘breath’ of our life. Yet the highest of all religious analogies is found in ‘God is light.’ Without the Divine light we should not even see GOD as love

Our accepted use of ‘light’ corresponds to the proposed use of ‘solar.’ It is more than a mere rhetorical device. In this sense a really valid scheme of thought must be ‘solar’ to us

In science physical or exact we have this solar quality

Therefore any system of ‘philosophy’ which only appeals to a certain order of mind is self-confessed to be secondary

10. On these issues see also her letters to G. F. M. Powell, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 70–71; J. Martineau, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 145–146; F. Pollock, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 149; Edward Clodd, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 212–214; E. Maclure, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 214–215; J. D. Philpot, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 216–217; J. W. Farquhar, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 217–220.

Our aim is thus not to construct a new system, but to assimilate and translate all modes of arriving at truth, by opening up a Way that is a method, a mode, a means, a medium, a 'manner' even, which is the interpretation and co-ordination of all ways (Welby 1983 [1903], Contents, Ch. XII: xviii–xix)

In addition to *Links and Clues*, other writings by Welby on similar problematics include an essaylet entitled 'Light,' printed in 1886, a parable 'The Evolution of Heliology,' also printed in 1886, and 'Light and Its Meaning' (see Ch. 1, this volume), all these are amply discussed in Welby's correspondence. In 'The Evolution of Heliology,' Welby develops the metaphor of light as knowledge and criticizes the myth of the sun. However, this paper was received controversially, as testified by *Echoes of Larger Life*. Her volume of 1897, *Grains of Sense*, is a collection of thoughts, aphorisms, stories and parables focusing on problems of language and communication, with special reference to the relation between terminological precision and conceptualization. In it Welby continues to reflect on the different meanings of the term 'light' keeping account of progress in science and the implications for philosophical discourse.

In her essay of 1888, 'Truthfulness in Science and Religion' (now in Ch. 2, this volume), which too is amply discussed in her correspondence, Welby continued her reflections on truth considered as a process, an open-ended orientation and dialogic expression of the relation between the scientific and religious spheres. Here too she conceptualizes the hypothetical, dynamical and critical character of truth, and of inferential procedure used to search for truth while describing dogmatism and authoritarianism as the foundation for ignorance and obscurantism. The relation between science and religion is not a relation of identity for as much as these two spheres relate to each other, in Welby's view they by no means converge. Instead, the relation is of interpretive extension: that is, a relation oriented by 'interpretive otherness' and resulting in reciprocal empowerment.

The concept of truth remained at the centre of Welby's attention to the end of her days. The following excerpt from *What is Meaning?*, Chapter XII, theorizes truth in the context of the relation between science, philosophy and religion:

In science physical or 'exact' we have this solar quality in a central assumption, such as the theory of gravitation, which is readily owned by all. Variation, of which we cannot have too much, as long as it enriches by distinguishing instead of impoverishing by dividing and excluding, comes in development of the thought-germ. Therefore it is that any system of philosophy which does not appeal to Man as Man when he has attained a philosophical level of intelligence and a scientific criterion of knowledge, is self-convicted, not of being untrue, but of being secondary; of being really only one of many possible solutions of ultimate problems, or at least of being a condition of these. In Significs we are not, therefore, claiming to add one more to the historical systems or methods of thought already existing. Rather does it aim at and indeed imply the assimilation and translation of all modes of arriving at truth – to be a Way which is the interpretation and co-ordination of all ways.¹¹

11. [The main characteristic of the present day is the enormous development of the literal Way – of means of locomotion and physical communication; also of means of exploration, examination, analysis; of instrument of apparatus, and of industrial machinery. Is this a translation of a growing but obscure Sense that the idea of the way reveals the secret of our nature? We must, however, beware, on this line of thought, of exaggeration. As there is a well-known Questioning mania, so there may well be a Signific disease, a morbid development of interpretation such as we apparently see in the Bacon-Shakespeare craze. It is too seldom remembered that

It explains and accounts for the widespread desire for universality, and the feeling that this must somehow play an important part not only in securing our recognition, but also in constituting the validity, of any truth under examination. It is in virtue of the secret working of this agency that men instinctively suppose that philosophy on the intellectual, and religion on the emotional side, if really worthy of these names, must bring us the significance of all facts given by experience and verified by scientific method – must act as automatic crucibles wherein to test ideas. And it must be borne in mind that the significance is infinitely rich in its aspects, yielding a word of delicate reactions to the complexities of varying mind in races, societies, and individuals. But, as we have already seen, significance must not be confounded with the meaning or intention of acts and events; it is rather their value for us, that which makes them signify for us, that which constitutes their importance, their moment, their consequence for mankind.

Both philosophy and religion, therefore, are absolutely free to vary in presentment to any extent, so long as they remain loyal to certain conditions which are not ‘fundamental’ (because neither wisdom nor goodness can be ‘built’ of mere mental stone or brick as e.g. systems of notation, of machinery, of law, can), but are rather germinal – the energy of the generative cells of thought and feeling. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 99–100)

In ‘Truthfulness in Science and Religion,’ Welby criticized false ideologies and mystifications produced by a certain type of mysticism, and was equally critical of false spiritualism, pseudo-theology and pseudo-science. Throughout her writings she underlined the need for ‘materialism of science,’ the ‘instruments of logic,’ and healthy ‘common sense’ for an adequate understanding of the existent, the spiritual sphere included. In a letter to the Bishop of Lincoln and in accordance with the description of spiritual life in terms of creative and regenerative energy, she wrote that God’s traces were to be sought in the external world, and not introspectively in one’s self. In fact, Welby criticised anthropocentrism and guarded against oversimplifying ‘anthropomorphic’ even ‘infantile’ conceptions of God-father, our ‘celestial father,’ conceptions that insisted on God made in man’s image, and man made in God’s image. Her exchanges below with Max Müller and James Martineau explore the concept of God and the difficulty in saying God, of contemplating the divine with the gaze of the human, of reaching out to infinity from the borders of the finite. Evoking Levinas (cf. 1961, 1978), we may claim that saying the divine may be associated with the concept of saying beyond the word, significance beyond meaning, writing *avant la lettre*, otherwise than being as the very condition of the possibility of being:

In the ordinary sense of knowledge, we cannot have any knowledge of GOD: our very idea of GOD implies that He is beyond our powers of perception and understanding. Then what can we do? Shut our eyes and be silent? That will not satisfy creatures such as we are. We must speak, but all our words apply to things either perceptible or intelligible. The old Buddhists used to say, ‘the only thing we can say of GOD is “No, no!” He is not this, He is not that – whatever we can see or understand, that He is not.’ But again I say that kind of self-denial will not satisfy such creatures as we are. What can we do! We can only give the best we have. And the best we have or know on earth is Love.

Depend upon it, the best we say is but poor endeavour [...] and yet if it is the best we have and can give, we need not be ashamed. And we should feel the same as to the language of other religions. Their language may strike us as very imperfect, but at one time

this danger is always in proportion to the value of any idea and any form of method (Welby 1983 [1903]: 99).

or other it was the best they knew. Many old and savage nations saw GOD in the dawn, and, from what you write, I think you can sympathise with them – suffer, so to say, the same language which they suffered. They knew nothing greater and higher in the world, and I believe they were right. And that name for dawn was sometimes used by them for the feeling of love also: ‘it dawns’ meant ‘I love.’ There is some truth in that too – not the whole truth, that we shall never grasp in words – but some spark of it. (Müller to Welby 1879–1882, in Cust 1929: 29–30)

... Supposing that we could ‘know GOD in the ordinary sense of the word,’ we should surely lose, as long as we are what we are. He must be infinitely less than All, to be within our knowledge; and such ‘knowledge’ would turn to dust in our polluting hands. Even our friend’s heart we cannot know by dissecting it. ... There is a true lowliness and pridelessness in the Divine which we could not have learned to know except through GOD. There lies an excellent greatness, which, when we see it, prostrates our hearts before its majesty.

Our anthropomorphic idea of Deity is so different! We despise simplicity. But He is too great, as George Macdonald says, to despise. He is beside the sparrow’s dying bed:

‘Therefore it is a blessed place,
And the sparrow in high grace.’

I feel keenly that the name of ‘Christian’ means not privilege, but simply an awful responsibility – the obligation to reflect the Light of the World in life as well as in words. I, too, ‘dare not call myself a Christian’ in your sense. ... (Welby to Max Müller, 1879–1882, in Cust 1929: 30)

With my less excursive wing of speculation it suits me better to keep nearer than either Arnold or you would approve to the base of human principles of knowing and thinking from which all estimates of the possible, the probable, the beautiful, the good must be measured, however far we drive our inferences beyond the limits of the finite. In this sense I accept the charge of anthropomorphism, and am not ashamed of its reproach. (James Martineau to Welby, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 192)

[...] I would not have you think that I am not wholly one with all thought which has its heart-strings in the being of man, in life, and truth and nature. I entreat you to believe that on that side, too, I am as thoroughly ‘anthropomorphic’ as you could desire.

I will say no more, except that my efforts are all directed as you would have them, towards the awakening of the ‘rank and file’ of our Church to the sense of our present lifelessness, and to the ideal of a Church which shall be a truly living spiritual Organism, evoking spontaneous and invariable response from all that is best in man, everywhere and always; alien and repellent to none but those who are disloyal to truth and goodness or indifferent to right. (Welby to James Martineau, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 193)

When the Church, in her members as well as in her Head, realises the stupendous range of the Spiritual Life in its spring and in its outcome and in its creative, regenerative, transformative energy – then, as the Archbishop so significantly – almost prophetically – told us at the Church Congress, the world will know it too. [...] (Welby to Bishop of Lincoln [Dr. King], 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 205)

Welby continued her studies on problems of meaning, knowledge and understanding in her later writings shifting her reflections, as stated, from the more strictly religious and theological spheres to the linguistic and philosophical, coherently with her ‘translative method’ (see Ch. 5, this volume). In *What is Meaning?* translation is described

as including transformation, transmutation, and transfiguration, making translucent and transparent, recognising as the medium of all mediums that Expression which, alas! we have been too content to leave opaque and dense in a sense which might almost be said to confine us within previsual limits. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 153)

Welby believed that the signifying and expressive capacity of signs is augmented through transmigration processes from one sign system to another, from one text to another, from one field of experience to another. In her unpublished correspondence with Ferdinand C. S. Schiller (deposited in the WCYA, now partially available in Chapter 6, this volume), she discussed how the psychological sciences could contribute to debate on theological issues including the problem of immortality. She neither spared Schiller her criticism nor hesitated to praise Bertrand Russell for his rigour (her correspondence with Russell is included in 3.6, this volume, below):

I think it a real misfortune that thinkers like you – in the van, on the crest – should have handicapped yourselves with such a misleading and effete idea as immortality. [...] One of the priceless services for which I am grateful to Mr. Bertrand Russell is his warning against absurdities like “man is mortal”. Anyhow that disposes of the immortality either of man or of the individual or of the race. (Welby to Schiller, 12 November 1903, now appended integrally to Chapter 6, this volume)

In 1901 Schiller sent Welby a questionnaire from the Society for Psychical Research (American branch) involving her in an ‘inquiry into human sentiment as regards future life.’ Though Welby was critical of Schiller’s approach (see her letter to him of 1 December 1904) as much as of William James who in 1897 had also published ‘The Will to Believe,’ she promptly answered (her unpublished correspondence with James available in the Welby Archives, is now too partially included in Section 1.7, this volume). In her correspondence with Schiller Welby stated her belief that the whole system of inquisition by question-begging question was fallacious:

I am glad to hear that your inquiry promises to be more fruitful than I thought likely, and will willingly do what I can to help you if you like to send me some copies of the questionnaire. It would of course have been easy to criticise the wording, and indeed to maintain that it throughout misses the true point, but that would require discussion which even if desirable would not probably be expedient. (Welby to Schiller, 18 May 1901, Box 14, WCYA)

I may of course be wrong, but my strong impression is that you will receive abundant answers from people who either will not or cannot give you their true attitude on the subject. The others, I fear, will have to be classed among the refusals, unless they are allowed to be very cryptic [...] meanwhile I only note that in the opening statement we have the religious and psychological world contrasted with the human world and are left to suppose that neither the psychologist nor the moral exhorters are men. Surely this is an extreme extension of the proof that the psychologist often credits the world with what are idiosyncrasies of this own. (Welby to Schiller, 16 May 1903, Box 14, WCYA)

Instead of ‘immortality’ we need mortality as the condition of persistence. Identity is indestructible. That which is recognized exists, and only comes into, is revealed in given forms in space and its product time. All science (physical) protests against the absurdity of disappearance, dissipation, dissolution, &c. being confounded with abolition. ‘Extinction’ is the result of addition. It is when the air is ‘clearest’ that is it most loaded with ‘moisture,’ &c. &. (Welby to Schiller, 16 September 1901, Box 14, WCYA)

Alas! Although I have sent or given all but about 3 copies I have only one answer to contribute and that is by my cousin Lord Welby whose view ought to be worth having. I may yet send you answers but I doubt it. The reason for refusal even to let me give you names of refusers is certainly not indifference: it is mostly the same feeling that would make a man refuse to answer a Questionnaire as to his exact failings towards his wife (or hers towards him). I have pleaded your case quite honestly. But it won't work. In truth I believe the whole system of inquisition by question-begging question is fallacious, though I don't deny that your results will be interesting.

You will ask where my own answer is. Well, I have written volumes – and then torn them up. On have still one pencilled attempt which I will show you if you will come here, but I can't send it.

Did you notice the Spectator's astounding definition of religion [...] 'only the study of what is to follow after death, and how to make the state which succeeds death pleasant or unpleasant!!! *There* is unconscious revelation. (Welby to Schiller, 22 September 1901, Box 14, WCYA)

The Questionnaire under discussion asks six main questions:

- I. Would you prefer (a) to live after 'death' or (b) not?
- II. (a) If (a), do you desire a future life whatever the conditions might be?
(b) If not, what would have to be its character to make the prospect seem tolerable?
Would you, e.g. be content with a life more or less like your present life?
(c) Can you say what elements in life (if any) are felt by you to call for its perpetuity?
- III. Can you state *why* you feel in this way; as regards questions I. and II.?
- IV. Do you now feel the question of a future life to be of urgent importance to your mental comfort?
- V. Have your feelings on questions I., II., and IV., undergone change? If so, when and in what ways?
- VI. (a) Would you like to *know for certain* about the future life, or (b) would you prefer to leave it a *matter of faith*? (enclosure appended to a letter from Schiller to Welby in 1904, Box 14, WCYA)

One of the main causes for inadequate conceptualization in the religious sphere was inadequate formulation (which was also true of other universes of discourse). Misunderstanding often resulted from the lack of dialogue between religious discourse and more progressive spheres of knowledge and experience, which obstructed renewal and regeneration of religious discourse itself. Another cause for misunderstanding was the lack of linguistic conscience and awareness of the polysemic nature of meaning, of the essential ambiguity of words, where 'ambiguity' is understood in a positive, creative sense. General ignorance of meaning ambiguity opens the way to the tyranny of dogma and orthodoxy, to the tendency towards what has been described as monologism, monolingualism and monoculturalism. Instead, ambiguity understood in a positive sense as 'semantic plasticity' favours the development of expressive potential and critical consciousness.

Throughout her writings Welby theorized the need to develop an adequate 'linguistic conscience' from childhood, a necessary starting point for the enhancement of signifying value and appropriate development of human behaviour. A good linguistic conscience implies the ability to avoid 'linguistic traps,' and is a condition for successful signifying and interpretive practice, for critical discernment and the development of knowledge

(see Ch. 4). Among its various aims, a training in significs would focus on achieving such competencies. As she stated in *What is Meaning?*:

It is unfortunate that custom decrees the limitation of the term diagnosis to the pathological field. It would be difficult to find a better one for that power of 'knowing through,' which a training in Significs would carry. We must be brought up to take for granted that we are diagnosticians, that we are to cultivate to the utmost the power to see real distinctions and to read the signs, however faint, which reveal sense and meaning. Diagnostic may be called the typical process of Significs as Translation is its typical form; and the combination of these must make for the detection of lurking confusion or specious assertion in directions where the discipline of formal logic would help less directly and simply. But this form of study, so far from superseding or displacing or even distracting attention from the disciplines already recognised, would rather render them more effectual because more vitally significant: more obviously related to ordinary experience and interests. It would also bring out the moral value of a greater respect both for the traditions and the future of language, and would, in fact, while preparing the ground for an expansion of the limits of articulate expression as yet scarcely imagined, tend to create a linguistic conscience which must beneficially react upon thought; thus bringing about gradually and naturally a spontaneous consensus in definition, which shall provide in orderly freedom for all contingencies of growing need and widening knowledge. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 51–52)

Welby reflected on the relation between science and religion to the end of her days. In a paper of 1910, 'The Message of Paul to the Present Age,' she again theorized the capacity to put aside preconceptions and listen, the capacity to transcend dogma and fixed beliefs, the letter, to put aside prejudices and welcome the other. She developed her critique of literal meaning, maintaining that all meaning is substantially metaphorical and connective to varying degrees (see Ch. 4, this volume). Open-minded interpretation based on comparison, confrontation and interconnectedness characterizes the 'scientific spirit,' described as deriving from the 'truly religious spirit' (remembering the etymology of the term 'religious' from 'religare,' 'to connect'), and is the very condition for the acquisition of knowledge in all spheres of life, religious and scientific. This is the lesson Welby drew from St. Paul and discussed in her paper as well as in her correspondence (see *Other Dimensions*, Cust 1931). According to Welby in 'The Message of Paul to the Present Age':

The power to interpret the order of the world has manifestly passed to science (although as yet in halting and tentative form), since the scientific spirit is the heir of that truly religious spirit which says, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,' without stipulation as to the conformity of the Word to our desires and preconceptions, personal or inherited. This is also the condemnation of that 'letter' – that *literal* – to which we are enslaved. (Welby 1910b)

2.5. The correspondence with Mary Everest Boole

Welby and Mary E. Boole joined forces in the appeal for mutual understanding, fusion of interests, criticism of prejudice, and reflection at a community level against the generalized monologic dogmatism of Christianity, a characteristic of the orthodox Church and cause of conflict and war. In their correspondence they also discussed the need to reinterpret Christian values and criticized Church authority for interfering with progress

in science. In fact, like Welby, Boole too was interested in the sciences and opposed interference from ecclesiastic authorities (Welby's friend, the jurist Frederick Pollock spoke critically of 'ecclesiasticism' in his correspondence to her). On the contrary, they praised the ability to speak to different people in different languages, in different sign systems, to translate among different languages, prefiguring a possible solution to the problem of antagonism between science and religion in dialogue and translation. A pivotal concern throughout Welby's writings, which resounds in her exchanges with Boole, is the human capacity for reasoning and reasonableness, therefore the practical forms of reasoning in everyday life, as well as in 'scientific' discourse. This was connected to their interest in pedagogical issues, and in fact they theorized the need to improve reasoning processes and to favour their development in others through appropriate educational methods from early childhood (see Ch. 4, this volume).

Other issues analyzed by Welby and Boole include the role played by relations of similarity and divergence in the capacity for critique. Possible parallels are suggested between 'intellectual fidelity' – which implies sharing with one's husband or wife thoughts developed with others – and 'carnal fidelity,' with playful reflections on eventual implications for our choice of values and social behaviour: 'what reflex light this truth may have to throw upon physical unions, I do not know; and do not feel myself to be the right person to think about it. But of the principle itself I am perfectly certain' (Boole to Welby, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 156). They read Charles Darwin and his evolution theory which they criticized under certain aspects and even parodied, as in the case of Boole's musings about the English gentleman considered in the light of his monkeyish origins:

And ever since *The Origin of Species* was published we have felt intensely that the Father of our King of Science may have been a monkey, but must have been a gentleman. (I always feel as if he had been given that grand gorilla-like face on purpose to teach that lesson). (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 88)

But Boole was shaken by an even profounder conviction:

that the Nazarene Carpenter was, if possible, even more a gentleman than our Charles Darwin; and that he cannot allow his name to be mentioned in the same breath with that Infinite Snobbishness who in Church is called "God."... The Deity set forth in our ritual is no kin to that product of the "religious" imagination, which a gentlemanly gorilla would blush to call "Father". (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 88–89)

The following are excerpts from the correspondence between Welby and Boole from *Echoes of Larger Life*. The letters included are mainly from Boole to Welby repropounded here for the same reason stated by Nina Cust in her introduction: 'the letters written to her [Welby] seem sometimes to give indications of the many-sidedness of her personality more vivid than those written by her, and they have been for this reason rather lavishly used' (Cust 1929: 13). And beyond illuminating aspects of Welby's personality, these letters offer an interesting eyeview on her ideas:

... It seems to me that we are on the verge of a terrible civil war (so to speak), and that much depends on just a few who see the danger, and whose efforts are directed not towards this or that side being triumphant but towards mutual understanding and a fusion of interests. So far, I have met with no one but Julia Wedgwood, who sees the danger as keenly as I do, and is as anxious to avert it. But I hope that we have found a true ally in you. I know no

man who can understand our anxiety to promote mutual understanding. (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 86–87)

You said the other night that you wished I would explain about the feeling which underlies materialistic revolt against religion. [...]

GOD speaks to different people in different languages. He teaches different men to love different languages. It is good for men to learn each other's tongues, but each has his own native speech and GOD speaks them all, one as easily as another. But the assumption of 'religion' has always been: GOD will not (or cannot?) tell spiritual truth in the language of materialistic science. And the heart of materialism has revolted in protest against this blasphemy. It has made its protest in the wrong form; passionate conviction, taken by surprise, is apt to hit at random. [...]

Voilà: there is the point on which turns the drama of the antagonism between science and religion. Obviously it is a tangle which needs some woman's fingers to unpick. We did hope, at one time, that F. D. Maurice might have done it; he personally had the grace and refinement of the most sensitive woman. But he got, somehow, pledged to a party, and was forced to talk down to their level. They never succeeded in vulgarising himself, but his 'God' was odious. If two such women as you and Julia Wedgwood cannot do such a piece of work as that, what is the good of exquisitely womanly instinct? I long to see you try what you can do in that direction. (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 87–90)

More and more I grow awestruck at the revelations which come of the power of any friendship, of any contact between two minds. One never knows where its influence may reach, for good or ill. 'Its time is the forever, and its space the infinite.' [...]

I wonder if you realise how many difficulties are caused even by the mere fact that I was for nine years a logician's secretary! How one's brain is polarised to the mere habit of detecting minute differences needlessly! (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 90–91)

My husband charged me to remember about speaking the truth in love. You are one of the very few to whom it is morally safe and right for me to speak the truth; for, as a rule, I do not like the Christians whom I know enough for the fear of paining them to be any check on random talk. [...] First I was half tempted to be sorry that you had come and spoiled my pleasure in democratic explosions. Afterwards I remembered that it is always good – if sad – to have one's heart in the enemy's camp. (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 103–104)

Try to realise what it is you are doing. It will be time enough to think of those to whom you can interpret the Master by and by. You have got to see that you interpret Him to Himself to His own satisfaction, first. If you cannot lose yourself in the feeling that that is enough for the present, you are not the Artist I take you for. Learn first of all to realise that you can tell the Master things that He does not know yet about His own thoughts. [...]

Your lesson now is to learn to realise that you can teach the Master something fresh about the Beauty of His own thoughts. Till you thoroughly understand what that means and involves, you are to be quiet, and not try interpreting to other people, or you will *chanter faux*, and blunt the fine edge of your genius. How do I know? Oh! that is one of the secrets of the art of thought-integration, which can be learned only slowly. There *are* things which native genius will not do and plodding will. I tell you I know; the same way as I know where a hyperbola goes to when it goes out of sight, by integrating its equation. ... (Boole to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 104–106)

[...] I ought never to have passed over the letter you wrote some time ago telling me I interpreted Jesus to Himself. The truth is I felt I could not trust myself not to write too

strongly and give you pain. It seems to me marvellous that you should suppose that I have had, or that Mr. Jukes would encourage, such experiences as you describe [in letters not given here]. Such things are utterly foreign to me; every really spiritual teacher I have read or known, deprecates them and points out their dangerous tendency. . . . It is *you* who are in danger. I pray that you may see it. You dwell incessantly upon 'Jesus,' upon 'Messiah,' upon a concrete idol, upon *a* man. It may be good for some but it is bad for you. Try to blot that out: try to realise that GOD is Spirit. Think of Him as the way of all true and healthy thought or deed, as the Truth of all mathematical and other science, as the Life of all which is not dead. Gather up everything that is pure and lovely and venerable and of good report, and concentrate them into a Sun of holy perfectness, the light which, recognised or not, lighteth every man: and then you will begin to know how to pass *through* things temporal (your notions of 'Jesus' included) that you finally lose not the things eternal (which *I* mean by 'Christ'). You will know that the good things prepared for them that love GOD do indeed pass man's understanding; the love of GOD will be poured into your heart and you will realise that the Love which includes justice and truth, light and life, does indeed exceed all that the heart can conceive or the mind define. (Welby to Boole, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 107–108)

The doctrine that affirmation is nearer the truth than negation is therefore a misleading one (though sound in itself) unless balanced and kept in check by this other doctrine which is its counterpart, namely, that classification, i.e. the recognition of similarity, needs to be corrected by a perception of divergencies. Between two people of whom one asserts similarity (i.e. denies differentiation) and the other denies similarity (i.e. asserts differentiation) the latter is usually right. I do not mean that the latter alone is a safe guide; but that the true canon of criticism for judging controverted points must include both. [. . .]

It seems to me that the spirit pours out on any given age some one truth in polar-opposite-halves. Those to whom the half-truths are communicated ought by rights to lay their half-truths together. But if they could, they would be perfect. They cannot. Such as you and I can do it for them. A man like Huxley, whose nerves keen and quivering with the instinct to detect minute differences of structure everywhere, cannot go through the process of sitting and talking seriously to a man like Mr. Jukes; the nervous strain would be too great for both parties. You and I can do it for them.

Try to realise how it would be if one man's eyes neutralised yellow and another's neutralised blue! Or rather I should say almost neutralised. So that when one looked at grass he saw hardly anything but the blue which was also in the speedwell, and the other hardly anything but the yellow which is not in the speedwell. Try to realise the effect of two such sitting down to discuss the advisability of calling the speedwell 'green'! I believe that this latter is the truer figure and the best to keep in mind in judging of the merits of any controversy. Not one but both parties are colour-blind. Next time you see two people who cannot come to an understanding on a question where science and religion are concerned, put to them this question: 'Suppose the universe is to be divided by a line or gulf never to be passed; that St. Paul is to be on one side and Mr. Darwin on the other, for all eternity. With which would you elect to spend eternity?' The question would reveal a radical double colour-blindness; and generally I think help the disputants to realise the nature of their own deficiencies. (Boole to Welby, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 151–153)

Yes, I suppose the mutual colour-blindness is a good analogy. But it implies the existence of white light, as much within the reach of our perception as the colours of which it is composed. The great thing is to recognise a region (accessible) beyond alternatives which are usually false. We can prove that the sensation red is latent in the sensation green by a very simple process: but that doesn't interfere with their distinctness. . . .

Is not this a clue? We are obliged to use negative words to represent what in fact contains or is a positive fact. So Professor Huxley insisted to me that he knew nothing in Nature which was either passive or inert. (It struck me very much as indicating that the negative or privative aspect of evil is not exhaustive: there is some kind of perverted 'force' which needs not – cannot – be destroyed, but needs to be converted and transformed.)

There is no 'break' or 'gulf' anywhere, as the scientists are beginning to discover. What we need is the principle of levelling up. Upward and expanding tendency is the very essence of what I suppose Darwin's truth to mean; so the lowest contains the elements of the highest in the order of ascension, of which perhaps resurrection represents the step from undiscernible to discernible structure, the coming 'out of' what we call death 'into' what we call life. You see I am taking a bird's eye view of your thought, which is all I can do now without brain-work. . . . (Welby to Boole, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 153–154)

. . . I do not agree with the Duke of Argyll that the animal kingdom is 'faithful to law.' That is the dictum of a man who looks on from the outside, not of one who knows Nature by the Pantheist consciousness. In one sense we are all 'faithful to law'; i.e. all action brings its results. But the idea that our aberrations and their punishment have no analogue among animals and plants and planets is a figment of human reason, not a dictum of inspired genius. Grady shows that. Darwin shows it more clearly, I think. . . .

I have been 'ill': just like a woman after childbirth, prostrate and in a state in which the least exertion caused fever. Now is not this absurd? One has a baby; one has to 'labour'; and when it is over one is prostrate and obliged to take time to recover. That is 'normal.' But if contact with someone gives one a thought-child, the process of putting it into the world is very similar; and the temporary symptoms. That is 'abnormal' according to the doctors. Don't you call that absurd? The only abnormality in either case is, that if you choose to ignore facts and behave and eat and work as if nothing had happened and as if your everyday life could go on as usual, you will get into a really 'abnormal' condition of fever. And the moral of that is that you should acknowledge thought-conception, and thought-labour, and thought-childbirth as facts, and treat them as a normal part of life. (Welby to Boole, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 154–155)

. . . I hope that some day you will find work exactly suited to your true mind. That is the best cure for over sensitive nervous systems like yours and mine. You are mistaken in supposing that you are personally bad for me. Any false position is bad for me. I was born (mentally and morally) on the *Place de la Bastille* My father took me there when I was a tiny child and told me it was the sacred place of the world. When I am among your set I cannot speak of things that have been axioms to me ever since I could speak at all, without everything I say seeming like some new freak. I cannot utter things that were among the commonplaces of my nursery, without being supposed to have suddenly gone mad. Things that Mr. Bradlaugh and I would say to each other in a kind of sacred shorthand, and which his children and mine knew as soon as they knew how to say 'Mother' – which my grandfather knew and all my cousins are born feeling – those things seem to you some new wild theory! All our clergy and teachers are paid to keep the world in ignorance of truths for which my progenitors lived – and died. And when I come into contact with such teachers I see the *Place de la Bastille*; and women – my ancestor, perhaps – dancing the *Carmagnole* in streets running with blood. Possibly we may see such scenes in England. I most devoutly hope not. If I add that it is more for your sake than for anyone else's, you will realise that you are good for me. (Boole to Welby, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 156–157)

I have not tried to tell you what a moral help to me it is to be able to write like this to you. You may think I am inconsistent in saying that I dislike giving you pain, and yet writing

in a way which must pain you. But I have learned to feel that one is never safe or right in speaking in a way to give pain, except to people whom one does love. The longing to be friends with you keeps my thinking in check, makes me see things I should not see if I were addressing people I did not care for. You are too brave to mind the pain to yourself. I begin to see that I have not allowed enough for the effect of our whole system of training. It is years since I imagined that the axioms of Euclid or the statement of arithmetic are true – true enough to say in Church where we are supposed to be serious. Everyone about me is familiar with the idea that mathematical axioms are convenient fiction, which are useful in practical business, and not wrong so long as we do remember their falseness: but which have to be discarded before we approach the Throne of Truth in our thoughts. I never reflected till yesterday how that fact must affect my judgment about other things. Dear, shall we make this bargain: you shall teach me charity, by letting me say what I like to you and scolding you. And I will teach you enough mathematics *à la* Boole-Hinton for you to be able to see why the very axioms of Euclid are only not falsehoods when they are recognised as fictions; and why they are in any case unfit to be uttered in a Church where we seek Truth, and why they are demoralising whenever the teacher states them as truths.

Did you notice the Collect to-day? ‘That we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal.’ Did it not strike you that that is the change I want to bring about in the teaching of science? Science is concerned with a few truths and a great many fluxion-truths, or well-arranged fictions which are to the truths as scaffolding to a building. What is amiss is that our pupils, instead of passing through these fluxions or fictions, mistake them for truths, become entangled in them and stay in them; so losing the ‘things eternal’ which they are meant to help us to. We want to teach them to ‘pass through’ these fictions without being detained by them, that so they may not lose the truths themselves. If teachers had been simple and true, the muddle could never have arisen. Fiction is easier to state than fact, scaffolding more easily run up than stonework; you can make a great show of your pupils by making them bring forth fictions as truths. So the whole thing has in the course of ages grown compacted into a great mass of mingled truth and fiction; and few, very few, know which is which. I had nearly said ‘an indistinguishable mass,’ but it is not so. Very perfect symbolic logic would be such an instrument as need only to touch the mass to make the scaffolding fall to pieces and show the building. That is why we are aiming at creating such an instrument. You said to me once that logic hinders a woman from knowing truth. Some day I hope to make you repent of that blasphemy! (Boole to Welby, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 157–158)

Indeed I did ‘notice the Collect,’ not for the first time. . . . All you say about ‘fluxion’ surely applies to what you say about ‘divergencies.’ They too are among the things ‘temporal’ which we are bound not to stay in but to pass through (a very different thing from ignoring them – which I join you in deprecating).

I like to remember that this world being a ball (I believe in the mental as well as the physical sense!), the deeper you dig, the nearer to each other you must needs get: dig deep enough and straight enough and you meet in the centre! It is only on the surface that we can be far apart. Again, I like to remember that rays starting from a common centre of light and absolutely identical in nature, must needs be ever diverging more and more widely. Thus we see that the truth must combine the two thoughts of meeting in a centre and radiating from a centre; and if divergence were the ultimate thought, the space between the minds would widen into complete and final estrangement: one by one the links must strain and break till even the most delicately elastic filament was snapped. I do not think you mean that! [. . .] (Welby to Boole, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 158–159)

2.6. On signifying processes between philosophy and science

‘I am only a Physicist’ ever he said –
‘Nothing but physics concerns me;
‘If these I have got I care not a jot
‘Though meta-physicians all spurn me!’

‘And what do you mean by your physics, my friend,
‘And where does the “meta” come in?’
‘Every baby knows that’ he impatiently cries
‘It’s the difference between thick and thin.

‘All else is an airy vapour, you know,
‘Though good in its place and way;
‘I can’t waste my time on irrelevant things
‘I care only to measure and weigh!’

‘And by all means do both as well as you can,
‘A more useful work cannot be found;
‘But remember to weigh and measure its *worth*
‘It applies to life’s lessons all round.

‘We come to your work-room for figures, you see;
‘And you use them yourself without stint;
‘So that questions of meaning should interest you –
‘Pray forgive such an unneeded hint!

‘After all you are more than a measuring tape
‘And more than a scale or a fibre;
‘Or precedence were yielded too much to the Ape,
‘Your mind’s of a higher calibre!

‘So contribute your share to the science of Man,
‘O Physicist arduously toiling,
‘And see that while working at problems you love
‘The rest of your life isn’t spoiling!’
(V. Welby, ‘To a Discoverer in danger of catching the
new Specialism Disease,’ Box 37, file 10, WCYA)

Astride of the 1880s and 1890s Welby’s correspondence was ever more oriented towards the scientific-philosophical debate of the time with outstanding personalities like Francis H. Bradley, George Croom-Robertson, Frederic Harrison, Shadworth Hodgson, Hughlings Jackson, Andrew Lang, Oliver Lodge, Charles Mercier, Conwy Lloyd Morgan, Norman Pearson, Frederick Pollock, George J. Romanes, John Tyndall, Augustus Waller, beyond the already presented Mary Boole, Max Müller, Lynn Linton, etc.

For Welby all scientific-philosophical research was a quest for ‘wisdom,’ ‘knowledge,’ and ‘truth’ according to the logic of open-ended continuity, ‘unfinalizability’ and indefiniteness, to say it with Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895–1975). In other words, by contrast with affirmative–prescriptive trends in philosophy which ground the sign in the logic of closed identity, Welby’s thought system was oriented to the logic of otherness (see Levinas 1961): she even went so far as to propose a philosophy of ‘surrender,’ in consonance with Peirce (see Petrilli 1998a: 141–164), implying the condition of ‘sub-

jectum,' 'being subject to' the other, understood as the capacity for listening, hospitality, and dialogic interrogation. As she wrote in a letter to Pollock, reported below: 'I have surrendered everything, even my own surrender. Existence itself to me is a provisional working hypothesis' (Welby to Pollock, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 267). Peirce shared a similar position as emerges in the following statement made independently from Welby: 'The great principle of logic is self-surrender, which does not mean that self is to lay low for the sake of an ultimate triumph. It may turn out so; but that must not be the governing purpose' (CP 5.402, fn. 2).

A determining influence in Welby's studies during the 1880s was a volume by William K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, 1879. This helped reveal the inferential process of 'inductive reasoning' to her, that peculiar form of inference described by Giovanni Vailati (1898, 1987) as the hypothetical-deductive or experimental method, and by Peirce as abduction or retrodution (Petrilli 1998a: 106–132). In her effort to explore the existent and its capacity for the generation of infinite senses, and referring to abductive inference as her model, Welby was aware of the need to transcend mere deduction as she proceeded from the result to case, retroductively from philosophy and psychology across biology and physics in her search for the primary elements of the existent. Her research confirmed the need to place the problem of meaning at the centre of her studies. The excerpt below is from a letter to Pollock:

Let me begin by repudiating, with all the energy I have, the imputation that I am looking for or think I have found a 'philosophy.' The very word, as used for some specific method or system which cannot be allowed by a consensus of all clear thinkers to cover the whole ground, or be found on trial to account for all experience, is to me an abuse of terms. I am only a lover of wisdom, prizing the love of wisdom in so far as it implies the love of knowledge, and this again only in so far as it means the love of truth. Even if you press the 'scientia-scientiarum' sense, I must adapt it to the above meaning and strip it of all glamour of finality and of all special relation to the 'wisest men.' Mine is a true atheorism so far as surrender goes. I have surrendered everything, even my own surrender. Existence itself to me is a provisional working hypothesis; and 'right and wrong,' 'true and false' take their place with the rest of our figures and have to vindicate their absolute validity: we have to ask ourselves here and everywhere, what do we mean in mind and speech; and we have everywhere to test what comes of this or that tentative assumption, postulate or solution.

Two or three years ago I discovered that I had begun (so far as explanation went) at the wrong – the deductive – end of things. So I forced my way back and down step by step; nowhere satisfied till I had got to what I saw must be admitted as primary by all. Having descended from philosophy and psychology through biology to physics and the very elements of experience, I found that below these even there still everywhere arose the prior question: *What do we mean* by time and space, motion and mass, body and consciousness, and so on? *What do we mean* by 'mind' and 'self' – by 'reason' or 'moral sense'? And to my amazement I seemed to find that no one had ever asked the question in my sense or even explicitly recognised that change in some sense underlies all continuity. It is not enough to meet such questions, as scientific men admit, by a mere restatement of the ordinary positions, however able and brilliant: for they are worthy of notice only on the assumption that they may thus come from a deeper layer of experience, bringing us new and vital messages. So that as a preliminary – giving us the 'prolegomena' to true knowledge of reality – we need a new science, the science of meaning in its changes, or 'Semantics' ... (Welby to Pollock, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 267–268)

Philosophy, for Welby, must be moved by the spirit of research and investigation and not by the will to confirm acquired truths; philosophical thought must present itself as an open system subject to verification, and as such is scientific research. Motivated by the desire to discover what is not yet known rather than defend truths already possessed, the true philosopher is always ready to interrogate and betray the previous utterance. In harmony with a holistic view of the universe, Welby considered the multiform nature of both ordinary experience and scientific discovery as different and interconnected expressions of signifying processes at large. In other words, the different aspects and dimensions of knowledge and experience, of different concepts, values and practices – ethic, aesthetic, philosophical, scientific, etc. – are complementary to each other and develop together in open-ended sign processes.

As mentioned above, Welby introduced the principle of translation from one universe of discourse to another as a criterion of verification for the validity of any given truth. She even translated the implications of progress in science and mathematics in terms of ethics and aesthetics and vice versa. In fact, Welby conducted a philosophical-linguistic experiment on the translative method during the 1880s and early 1890s, whose results she only published in 1903, in her book *What is Meaning?* This experiment consisted in translating a text in neurology, the ‘Croonian Lecture’ by Hughling Jackson, into the language of philosophy, ethics and theology, as a test of its validity (see Welby 1983 [1903]: 130–139). In the excerpt below from a letter to Arnold Taylor, Welby theorizes a relation of interdependency between philosophy, science, art and life. She believed that if art is to be worthy of the name it must be immersed in life just as true life must be imbued with art. Similar to Peirce and his synechism (see *CP*.565–578; and Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 50–52), Welby too theorized the logic of continuity and together of transformation in continuity. This theme is present like a filigrain throughout all her writings as in her exchanges with Max Müller and others reported below, including the already mentioned Hutton, or the lawyer philosopher Norman Pearson. In the last analysis, such a conception is oriented by the logic of alterity, movement towards infinity, unending semiosis and critical creativity. Some of these issues emerge in the letters reported below:

How close is the link between East and West; how futile seem the nicknames which label us and draw us into deadly waste of the precious energies which make for living unity. [. . .] And are not time and space but two forms of the law of limit, which is only the husk of things? I do not believe in lives or work broken off by physical death. The only-brokenness is in the quality of a life, surely? If that is sound and whole time and space do not touch it, and as for influence, is not that specially the region of paradox? Nothing takes us more by surprise, being often found where least looked for, and lacking where expected. [. . .]. (Welby to Müller, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 72)

There is no break anywhere: change there will be, but change is impossible unless something unchangeable remains in which all changes take place. . . . Why do we not include death in the thought of our life, while we include our birth and even celebrate our birthday? [. . .]

You see, human nature will have its way, even with Buddhists. What is most interesting is that this Buddha Amitabha was once an ordinary mortal, and rose to his supremacy by endless lives devoted to virtue and truth. That supremacy may in fact be reached by everybody; only it would take a few eternities to reach it. There is a truly human element in all religions and in all philosophies; and it would be very strange if honest thought

should not lead everyone of us to the truths of Buddhism, or Platonism, or Christianity. The great delight of comparative studies is to find ourselves again in others. (Müller to Welby, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 72–73)

... I wish that ‘continuity of consciousness’ could be looked at from a larger point of view. [...] it seems to me that our standard of consciousness is very thin and poor; and that Scripture teems with indications of a larger thought which might be ours. May we not conceivably ‘forget’ beyond this life exactly as we fail to ‘foresee’ *in* this life? It may well be that our life is a greater thing even physically than we fancy, and that it may have embraced other ‘ages’ or ‘worlds’ than this: although as yet we may not be ready for the remembrance of them any more than we are for predictive power as to the ‘future.’ ... (Welby to Hutton, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 73–74)

... As in itself Eternity is endless, so it is beginningless. But we commonly think of eternal life not as a Person – ‘I am the Life’ – but as merely continuous existence which we think had a beginning in us. But surely the same law applies equally to past and future, since there is neither except to finite creatures. Take the corresponding idea of measure and space. We shall be in a boundless infinite sphere. But shall we therefore be omnipresent? Heaven is not a place; yet we do not suppose that the individual soul loses its finiteness in every sense; therefore there must be a limit of some kind to our reception – to our glory or shame, our joy or misery. ‘For ever.’ How suggestive that the most evanescent of things, used constantly in the Bible as type of the fleeting – ‘dew’ and ‘showers’ – are exhorted to bless Him ‘for ever!’ ... (Welby to F. P. Fletcher, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 74)

I venture to go further than you and to suggest that beginning and end are so to speak halves of one idea and absolutely inseparable, like, e.g., up and down, or backwards and forwards. It belongs to the order of words in which whenever the one is used the other is implied: a principle constantly overlooked, to great confusion of thought and language. We shall realise this better if we try to reverse the order and speak of things having an end but no beginning. In either case it is like supposing something to be spherical – and straight at one end! ...

[...] To me law and order are essential conditions of freedom; lawlessness or anarchy connotes the worst of slaveries to your own or others’ arbitrary wilfulness; it is liberty *versus* licence.

[...] we don’t yet realise that the freest thing in the world is that choice which works in and through and by and out of perfect and inviolable order. As yet this seems but paradox – as the thought of accessible antipodes must once have seemed to our remote forefathers. Our choice is determined because free, and free because determined. [...] But I don’t want to confound determinism in this sense with fatalism or whatever is the word that enthrones senseless mechanism, paralyses moral energy, and reduces us to automata. ...

And here is, as it seems to me, another mischievous confusion of thought: (1) the identification of ‘miracle’ with the arbitrary and lawless – in short, with anarchy; and (2) the confusion between ‘miracle’ and ‘supernatural.’ [...] It is obvious that there are both colours and sounds which do not touch our present eyes and ears; they are, in fact, supernatural to us as we are; we can only infer them. But they are not miraculous, being without the moral and intelligent sphere. (Welby to Pearson, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 180–182)

Philosophy and science appear to have been wasting a great deal of time upon you, since neither has been able to show you the secret links with them which alone make art – true! So far as temperament goes I am altogether with you. But we want the whole man. ... As to the place of art in making life deep and great, take the old triad; the true, the beautiful,

the good. In our day science practically stands for truth which can never simulate and thus mislead: while beauty and good can (in a certain sense of course). Truth is the test of the other two. All (true) beauty is good. All (true) good is beautiful: but we cannot say, in the same sense, all (good) truth is beauty. All (beautiful) truth is good. Truth is the essential factor which makes the beauty of good and the good of beauty. I am putting it badly, but I wish you would work it out right. I have just been re-reading Leslie Stephen's *Plain Speaking*, where he says that no art (as no poetry) is noble unless perfectly linked with true thought on all that is real. He is right¹² it becomes artifice whereby to cheat ourselves with a pasteboard sky – and ventriloquism. I wish you would read Karl Pearson's *Grammar of Science*. It is almost like an essay on the science of significance which applies alike to science and art. He is no poet; but I believe we most need – and are near to – a true marriage of the poet with science. (Welby to Taylor, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 278–279)

Welby studied mathematics and physics, and focused on problems relating to space, time, motion and dimensionality. She worked on number theory and favoured triadism which recurs throughout her theory of meaning with her tripartition between 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance,' and correlated triads. On the level of reference she distinguished between the 'verbal,' 'volitional,' and 'moral'; psychic processes are classified into 'instinct,' 'perception,' and 'conception'; knowledge and experience are analyzed according to the triads 'consciousness,' 'intellect,' and 'reason'; consciousness is 'planetary,' 'solar,' and 'cosmic,' etc. While criticizing Hegel, whom she accused of petrifying the vitality and transformative capacity of the triadic system, thereby reversing its sense, Welby used triadism as a method for an adequate understanding of the existent. She underlined the pervasiveness of triadism variously theorized in philosophy, but characterized by the tendency to exasperate technicalism. This meant contradicting the vitality of signifying processes and life processes at large, instead of contributing to a better understanding of language and communication, and developing interpretive systems (see Ch. 3, this volume).

While committed to her intense epistolary exchanges, Welby also wrote a series of scientific papers which she submitted to her correspondents for critical readings. An essay on triadism, variously referred to as 'Threefold Laws,' 'Law of the Three Stages,' 'The Triad,' 'The Tendency to Triads,' remained unpublished, but is available in the Welby Collection in the form of galley proofs dated 1886 (now in Ch. 3, this volume). In this paper Welby applies the law of evolution to habits of behaviour, development of the mind, ethical and metaphysical issues, and to the relation between thinking, feeling and acting. These issues are discussed in her correspondence as in her letter exchanges with the English philosopher Francis H. Bradley (1846–1924), author of *Principles of Logic* and *Appearance and Reality*, and theorizer of the principle of contradiction.

Welby discovered the dynamical order of the universe and believed that the same laws regulating its development applied to the human sphere (a specification in the larger context) in all its expressions – the biological, social, psychological, economical, ethical, cognitive, epistemological, etc. She critiqued use of the term 'foundation' in philosophy to conceptualize the absolute, and concurrently to legitimize the concept of truth as defined once and for all: the fixity of meaning, the idea of the existent as coinciding

12. ['There would no doubt be a difference between us; but I think a difference partly of phrase and partly of sentiment, rather than of definite opinion (Sir Leslie Stephen to V. W.)' (Welby to Taylor, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 279)].

with a preconstituted and static order, the principle of irreversibility. In this connection Welby's essaylet, 'The Evolution of Heliology,' 1886, was at the centre of current public debate concerning the heliocentric view of a universe devoid of foundations and a parallel condition in the cognitive sphere. Such issues are discussed in the excerpts below from letters by Victoria Welby to Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Julia Wedgwood and Conwy Lloyd Morgan. The concepts of idealism and materialism were also at the centre of discussion and inevitably came up in Welby's epistolary exchanges, as we see from her letters below to Lynn Linton and to Reverend Edmund Maclure:

[...] we shall perhaps realise for the first time how much of our perplexity really depended on our unreal notions of duration and extension; on those very ideas of 'time and space' which can be clearly shown – even on our present lines of thought and within the limits of our embryonic reason – to be solely relative, and which have in fact none of the kind of existence or reality which we attribute to them.

Of course you may say that we have no more reason or right to assume that a million years will seem as one moment or the trial of a whole race as those of one of its individuals, than the converse. But so long as our telescopes reveal more and more clearly the comparative minuteness of our planet and scale of life, this cannot apply. Expansion of range is everywhere the note of our progressive knowledge. [...]

Meanwhile even now we can at will transport ourselves by a mental act, either into a sphere (or plane) in which our present life and its troubles are seen immensely magnified (in duration and extension, which we wrongly identify with importance) or into one which contracts it to a fraction by comparison. Thus the range of our conception (though not of our experience) is shown to include equally the minute and the colossal, and is no longer confined within our present outward limit. More than that, do we not faintly discern that while it is after all *scale* which is really the sharpest sting of evil, that very scale has in fact no real existence? [...]. (Welby to Wedgwood, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 98–99)

... I have read the papers with much interest, both the original paper and the remarks on part of my book (*Principles of Logic*). As to the latter, you have fully entered into my meaning as to the unity of the two processes. I also share your view as to the one-sidedness of mere thinking. Just as at the beginning of our life there is no separation between feeling, thinking and acting, so at the end, if we could reach the end, doubtless these would be reunited in a fuller way of life. Had I been writing with a different object, I should have laid still greater stress on the fact that even in a process like analysis, the central unity is only latent, and I should have gone on to argue that the demands of thought itself can only be satisfied by going beyond itself. ... I quite agree with you that the stage of mere truth-seeking is transcended more or less in all our lives. But as to the degree and the possibility of doing this completely and the ways of doing this, I must admit that my opinions are in an unsettled condition. ... I certainly think your conclusions true in the main and also very necessary. (Bradley to Welby, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 167)

... What Hegel has done is to take a triadic nerve-system [...] and make astonishing cats' cradles and magic 'squares' out of it: then dipping all these in a petrifying solution which has turned them all to stone. Thus he has reversed the triadic message. Instead of giving us in philosophically scientific form and terms a way, a means, a method whereby to pass through the realms of actuality and reality to an enhanced awareness of nature [...] he has fossilised the essential energy of thought itself in what becomes a sort of magic ticket to be affixed to all experience [...]. (Welby to Charles F. Keary, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 170)

... You asked me what difference it would make if we realised that in the very nature of things there can be no 'fundamental basis,' and no permanent fixity as ultimate terms in relation to us: that the very notion out of which the metaphor sprang depends on what we now know to be false: that its real origin is the primitive idea of the earth's being immovably fixed, and established on a base or absolute foundation. Why, surely this.

We have all alike to learn that what seems to us the vaguest of vacancies, that which seems to us incapable of 'supporting' a fly, much less a pebble, that void in which there is not even an atmosphere in which to breathe and by means of which to move – is in the last resort just all the foundation which we have. That which safely bears us in the gulfs of space is no base or basis, no motionless central rock, but throbbing energies in complex and manifold action, in swing and wave and thrill, whirling us on in mighty sweeps of rhythm to which our hearts are set. So therefore not solidity of base or fixity of status is our vital need, but moving power beyond our ken or senses: known to us in energising action and working through blue 'void': impelling us in rings of spiral orbit round a moving sun on which we are dependent. What then? Is fact less fact, or life less life, or the real less real for that? No! the revelation of the dynamical order succeeds that of the statical only to give fresh and ever fuller witness to the living Truth: the Way of Life, itself, like the spinning world, bears us along more swiftly than we can journey on it; and even beyond our best there ever arises a better hope – a hope which can only fade into the white and perfect light.

... I do long for what I call 'cube-thought' and binocular mental vision – we see things so entirely in the flat! (Welby to Mrs. H. Ward, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 173)

... You have not got hold as yet of my ideas as to materialism. I do not believe that there is any such thing, though no doubt there is such a thing as earthiness, and even that may be, as well as fertile, a patent purifier and deodoriser. But there is also soil with an expressive verbal use. ... All we know of matter is resistance. Now as Spirit is Ultimate Energy it implies resistance: that is, the idea of matter lies within that of 'Spirit.' I am a much more thorough 'materialist' than you are, for you credit with 'reality' a mere sense-impression which you cannot verify, and which both dreams and delirium teach you to distrust. ... There is no 'may-be' in the true Fact which lies before us, and which is beyond the skin-deep appearances of space and time, while including all they teach. (Welby to Linton, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 175)

We must accept the difficult lesson, that instead of demanding the basis which lies under the world of faith, we have to ask for the balance of the force of gravity, for the rhythm of attraction by which the whole world sweeps in forward spirals round one 'sun' among a myriad, 'baseless' itself and endlessly in movement? ... (Welby to Lynn Linton, 1886–1888, in Cust 1929: 177)

Mine is the ideal realism which absorbs and digests materialism and turns it into life-tissue. Part of the process is the transformation of the central concept from matter into motion, from the static which is secondary, episodial, incidental, contributory, into the dynamic which in every sense of the words is original and originative, directive and structural, evolutionary and executive. Thus my ideal realism becomes the real idealism. It repudiates the 'idea' which, constrained to advertise itself, depreciates the value of fact, and is punished by becoming the fancy and the natural prey of pessimism or of dogmatism or of sheer insane self-worship. It touches the heart of that scientific idealism which consecrates induction as the mental link with reality, as the sacrament of knowledge: induction, whose sacramental rite is observation, hypothesis and experimental verification.

‘Will’ thus becomes the translation into the conscious world of that impulsive and propulsive motion in potential and kinetic forms which we see and can measure in the physical world, evolving like the primitive organism into ever greater and more delicately responsive complexity. And here again we may use the digestive analogy. [...] (Welby to Maclure, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 232–233)

To know our vocation and its limits, *quâ* cell-unit, is one of the most valuable of qualities, but without its complementary, the organic sense, it is one of the most misleading. . . . Experience shows that you cannot isolate the fields of mental activity, except in the most superficial or conventional sense. And physiology is surely a field in which this is specially true. We cannot build walls of impermeable concrete between physics and meta-physics. [...]

If ‘theology’ or the ‘spiritual life’ became the science of the Why of right and good: if we found a body not of rhetorical but of fundamental metaphor, connected with it, which science was every day vindicating: if we found little by little a body of analogy as valid as that which every branch of science presents more or less with every other: if, more yet, we found a body of parallel answering to that between objective and subjective mathematical form: then no man of sense, let alone moral sense, would decline to consider the matter as one which came within the scope of practical inquiry and test. And its specialists would find themselves in perfect touch with all other scientific specialisms. (Welby to Augustus Waller, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 262–263)

Your instance of top and bottom is one of typical relation; and the relation between them always admits of reversal. Surely no up and down, over and under, high and low, top and bottom is absolute in the sense of irreversible. The conception is a survival from the time when it was supposed that the earth was fixed. Astronomy has undermined that ‘absolute’ stronghold and our citadel of illustration has crumbled under our feet! So your own parallel implies that, as every known top may become bottom and *vice versa*, so ‘mind’ may become ‘matter,’ neurosis change places with psychosis, etc.

Nevertheless that is not how I should put it. And I do see that at any given moment, however brief, to us the distinction is irreducible, inviolable (some word like that is surely safer than the desperately ill-used ‘absolute’!): it is a condition of thought, though of secondary rank and derivative in character. I rather appeal to my ‘supremacy of the principle of curve,’ in which I daily see a deeper significance and a more strictly practical bearing. The whole question to me in the last resort comes to this; do we take straight line – and therefore infinite parallel – as our ultimate mode of thought, or do we take the curve as our governing fact? Is our thought figuratively curvilinear or rectilinear: to which class of figure do we turn when wishing to push abstraction to its highest limit? The conditions of the figurative are inexorable. What we call the spatial, the temporal and that third factor for which I never know what word to choose – intensity? rate? quality? What? – are all our ultimate expression-quarries. And if we choose the secondary to stand for the primary, on our heads be the consequent confusion and mutual misunderstanding! Now in that expression-quarry, call it experience or nature or external reality or simply the scheme of mental symbolism to which we are limited (if our symbols are to ‘stand for’ fact not fancy, are to mean knowledge, not nonsense), I venture to suggest that every straight line presumably crosses or diverges from every other, either somewhen, somewhere or somehow; in other words is always, in the longest run or the highest abstraction, within and subordinate to some curve. That is the root of my monism; for two can never be the master-thought. (And here the history of the ‘mystical’ views of number which have prevailed among mankind are curiously suggestive; also the Aryan ‘semasiology’ as given

e.g. in Darmesteter's little book. For the same reason the inner and outer is a strictly secondary image.)

But there is another point I want to lay stress upon. To me it makes a real difference whether your original diagram is static or dynamic. For what I have been saying of course applies to a line. But if we make it a vector and refuse it any but a 'mode of motion' existence, then there are no sides or aspects at all; there is only direction, distance and velocity to use as our figures. Am I right?

One more point. Granting (as I do fully) that metakinesis is inseparable from kinesic though – not absolutely but – practically and relatively distinct: at what point of coarseness do or can we suppose that it develops into psychosis? Supposing that our means of analysing the ultimate constituents of what we call the 'physical' body were a hundred times more delicate and thorough than they are, and we re-found the representatives of all the constituent parts of our frame on a scale enormously below or above our present perceptual range, thus enlarged by the new aids: should we not expect to find that the accompanying psychosis was just as much more exquisitely sensitive? That it had escaped our ken by reason of its delicacy, as even the quartz fibres escape the casual eye? . . . (Welby to Lloyd Morgan, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 275–277)

Though she did not dare say so openly at the time, Welby revealed that she had confuted all of Euclid's axioms at a very young age, on the conviction that the possibility of producing infinitely parallel lines was inconceivable. In a letter to Welby of 1885–1886 (reported above), Mary E. Boole proposed the following: 'I will teach you enough mathematics *à la Boole-Hinton* for you to be able to see why the very axioms of Euclid are only not falsehoods when they are recognised as fictions; and why they are in any case unfit to be uttered in a Church where we seek Truth, and why they are demoralizing whenever the teacher states them as Truths' (Boole to Welby, 1885–1886, in Cust 1929: 157). After many years, Welby found confirmation of her views in a volume by the English mathematician William K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*. In it Clifford identified the secret of the structure of the universe in the principle of curvature, while the straight line was only considered as a secondary segment.

By analogy to the discourse of mathematics, Welby described thought processes as developing in curves and spirals in an open progression towards the infinite. She believed that the primary principle of curvature in space found correspondence in the curvature of thought. Furthermore, the spiral movement of the planet Earth, the plurality of the sphere, the stratification of surfaces were all described as being related to the structure of sign and sense, including the structure of interpersonal relations. Multiplicity and curvilinearity in unity: in fact, true monism is tri-unism, says Welby in a letter to Oliver Lodge. Some of these issues are discussed in the letters reported below to Lodge, but also to Reverend H. A. Boys and Clifford's wife Lucy:

May it not be that our planet, as a sphere with two movements combined – with that of a wheel or coiled spring and a spiral (or screw-like) progression, the sphere itself being infinitely multiplied from every point of its surface, and on the innumerable surface-layers of which it is composed – is the most approximately perfect figure of our mental and moral (or spiritual) relations to each other and with each other: the more when we add to the symmetry of a sphere the dissymmetry which is the beauty of the living curves of which living organisms, notably the highest, are composed? Till now I have been afraid to ask this question because I thought the 'laws of space' mathematically required a straight line which remained straight, however far we might 'produce' it; so that when we start

on a journey on lines divergent from each other, that divergence must go on increasing to infinity. But yesterday for the first time I discovered that Professor Clifford himself suggests that there is no such thing known to us as a really or ultimately straight line in space, but that there is 'positive curvature'; the result of which would be that, start where you may and in what direction you like, you will come round again. . . . Surely then our minds must be constituted in accordance with this; and the law of opposites, or action and reaction, etc., must be secondary to the law of endless unclosed curve (which would be circular but for universal motion which necessarily opens the circle and any closed figure). And if 'inner and outer' reflect each other, as we know they do in mathematical principle, ought not this to modify profoundly our metaphors implied or expressed, as to 'lines' of thought or conduct?

When I began to study Euclid (at twenty-three) I found I could not accept one of his axioms. To me parallel lines produced to infinity were inconceivable. Try as I would I could not keep out the idea of defection, of curvature, however distant or slight. Straightness appeared to me as a result of relative smallness: as if it only needed 'Alice's' power of telescoping indefinitely, in order to see that my straight line was but the section of a curve. So I thought (as in the case of motion before matter, heliocentric v. geocentric, etc.) that this was my fault and defect. Now, years afterwards, I have come upon Clifford's Essay on Gauss and Lobatschewsky and Helmholtz, etc.¹³ . . . The axioms of geometry are only what we find in nature abstracted and reasoned from. But we don't find the straight line infinite. That belongs to the pre-copernican flat earth era. Euclid had to work from that received assumption which he shared with all men. This means so much to me. . . . (Welby to Boys, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 110–111)

I have at last had time to go carefully through the *Essays*, and am thankful indeed to have done so. For years it has been dimly in my mind that the secret of the structure of the universe must lie in the principle of curvature, and that the failure to use this clue was leading us astray or at least keeping thought barren. But always I was confronted with the Euclidean axioms and never dared to broach it; and whenever I tried to use curves, spirals, etc., to illustrate what seems to me to be our mutual positions and interrelations in the unseen, I feared that there might be a flaw at the core of the thought which would vitiate the parallel altogether. Guess then what I felt a few days ago when I found, what until then I had never suspected, that so rare a genius as your husband – one whose mathematical insight was reckoned so great – should actually have suggested, in the face of Euclid himself, the possible curvature of space! (Welby to L. L. Clifford, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 112)

More and more does the question of meaning, of the scope of such terms as 'physical,' urge itself upon us. Science is fast becoming just as question-begging (not to say question-burgling!) as any form of 'spiritualism.' How can it be otherwise, indeed, when her exponents are from no fault of their own the victims of effete psychology, out of which we are just beginning fairly to struggle? . . . Take for instance the figures of 'space' which we apply to 'time.' How curious the inconsistency of doing this on basis of one dimension only (for we never conceive either of the breadth or the thickness of 'time') without ever asking why in that case we should ever have borrowed space-terms for expressing 'time' at all! If it be a question of the dimension-metaphor applying in any sense, why only in this impossibly mutilated sense? Why is time conceived as so far behind space in this respect; such a much poorer thing? What if the answer be, that we have here been developing on a line which can but land us in our present deadlocks of the 'inscrutable,' and that we need to take up an earlier thread altogether to accomplish a more fruitful evolution? Such

13. [In *Lectures and Essay*, by W. K. Clifford (Welby to Boys, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 111)].

an address as yours cannot fail to bring us nearer to reality by suggesting the need of such fresh starts. The 'intermediate region' to which you point must help to counteract the fatal tendency to break experience into two and rest satisfied short of that third factor, the outcome or the totality which they form – which is the only justification for splitting original unity at all. Not merely in sex-duality but in some sense in all, the doubling must mean richer result and greater variation: the true monism is in fact tri-unism. (Welby to Lodge, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 273–274)

I must thank you at once for your letter and its alarming enclosure (paper by Professor Herschel)! It can't be more 'beyond' you than 'beyond' me! . . . It does seem as if the very notion of 'tapping the ether' for which you and other great physicists are responsible, has set brains vibrating perilously to new and subtle influences. But all that will doubtless 'range itself' in 'time.' I did not mean to attribute to you the idea that time itself had one or more 'dimensions.' I only wanted to suggest the inconsistency of the popular view in giving it 'one' and no more. The idea of at least two more (as yet unexplored!) directions in which 'time' could 'pass,' etc., has, I own, fascination for me; but your own thought of it does all I want, which is to undermine the artificial barriers and the yet more artificial controversies created by the ordinary notions of 'time.' (I must tell you that in going through my notes on his *Time and Space* the other day, Mr. Shadworth Hodgson disavowed one after another of his own positions as no longer in his eyes tenable.) Meanwhile, as all our terms for 'time' are borrowed from one-dimension space only, would it not seem likely that we are in a sort of 'Line Land' in time answering or comparable somehow, as you suggest, to a fourth dimension in space? In that case it would itself be rather the first of a further series than the fourth of an experience series; and my own underlying instincts will thus be accounted for. (Oh, I do hope you are not wondering once more whether such a thing as 'meaning' is anywhere about!) (Welby to Lodge, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 274–275)

In a letter to Edmund Maclure Welby delineated a research program based on seven principles she intended to develop, which summarize some of the problems so far discussed in this chapter:

. . . I have had certain ideas all or nearly all my life which I am now finding day by day to be in unexpected general correspondence with the present lines of scientific advance. (I think I have told you that it was the Essays of Professor Clifford that first caused me, so to speak, to begin all my thinking from the other end.)

Some of these principles or notions are the following:

- (1) Reversal. Treat any thought or idea as a reversible instrument or engine; apply it backwards to test it. I only discovered the other day that physicists tell us that the reversible engine is the perfect one.
- (2) Translation. Every part of experience, while evolving a dialect of its own, ought to be capable of translation into the others, and of being tested by this means.
- (3) Three layers or grades in 'mind'; these ideas of the nervous system, which I now know as worked out by Dr. Hughlings Jackson, applied to the mind.
- (4) An organic stratum of prompting and impelling (or gently suggestive) force, working in the borderland between the literal and the metaphorical (see (organic memory, what Hartmann calls 'the Unconscious'). This brings us to the New Science of
- (5) Language – figure, metaphor, etc. – which again brings us to man's thought-history and his thought-processes. . . .
- (6) The curvature of space. I have always felt that the curve must be a more ultimate idea than the straight line, because if you produce the apparently straight line far enough it might prove to be a curve; whereas however far you produce a curve, it will never turn out

straight. Also, I see the curve as always the third or highest kind of motion and the secret of imagery, because the organism is all curve, and only the inorganic angular. Thus my diagrams of human nature or history would always be curved and always open.

(7) Replacement of the static by the dynamic. Everywhere for a lump of stuff called 'substance,' read a complex of energy. The 'stuff' is always secondary and provisional; the motion is always primary and permanent. There lies the secret of identity, the secret of the 'form' – and of those 'characters' – whereby we identify and gradually realise personality. ... (I have always felt, e.g., that I was no lump, but a movement; and I was distressed by the old idea of oxidation. Now that I know I am a furnace and not, so to express it, a box of fuel, I am content.)

So we come back to 'the Way, the Truth, the Life.' What is 'the Way' but the principle of the transitional, the means; left behind in proportion as it is rightly and fully used – as onward path? And Truth? Is that a fixed product superseding progress, a static goal at which the way comes to an end? Is it a lump, a thing, to be preserved in stony unchanging death? No, it is a complex of ever-changing activities. ... And Life? Is it not activity which distinguishes Life from the 'lifeless'? Is not Life a pulse, a beat, a thrill, a breath, a manifestation, an expression, a Word? ...

Everywhere and on all sides I have found that these thoughts, crude though they be, ring true to the discoveries of the pioneers of science; of men like Clerk Maxwell, Thomson, Hertz; like Burdon Sanderson and Mendeléeff; – to say nothing of other names as great, e.g. Huxley, Tyndall, Karl Pearson. ... (Welby to McClure, 1889–1890, in Cust 1929: 265–266)

Another trajectory in Welby's research unfolds along the margins of philosophy, linguistics, ethnology and anthropology. She published three substantial essays in this area: 'Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?,' 1890, 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution,' 1891, based on the former and announced by publication of 'Abstract of "An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution",' also 1890, and finally the essay 'The Significance of Folk-Lore,' 1892 (see below). As testified by her exchanges in *Echoes of Larger Life*, Welby was in the habit of distributing her papers among her correspondents for a critical reading. The main ideas in the essays in question flow into Chapters XXII to XXVI of *What is Meaning?* which are signaled by Peirce in his 1903 review of the latter (Peirce 1903a). In these chapters the evolution of humanity, the development of mind and intelligence are interpreted from a signficant perspective, as a fact of translation across different levels in the generation of sign, sense and meaning. The excerpt below from a letter to the biologist George J. Romanes (1848–1894) is part of a discussion on thought processes in the animal kingdom. These are analyzed in terms of differentiated levels in sign activity, where analogies and differences are identified with respect to human beings (see Romanes 1888):

... I have been greatly interested by your article on Aristotle which sets one thinking once more on the question as to how far his marvellous power may have depended on a rare touch with both ends of mind-power; that with which men started – fresh as it were from the very mint of nature (till then, what we call 'unconscious' and 'speechless') – and that towards which man is now toiling by the help of science, her methods and her appliances?

Hitherto we have averted our eyes from our ascending ancestry; we act as if we thought there was some ultimate barrier of mud to which we could be traced back – there to stop, as there could be nothing beyond. But that is geocentric, and we have no right to be geocentric now! Yet we and our complex theories of emotion, volition, personality, etc., are far enough from the 'nature' which has nursed us. We look with an alienised and critical

eye at marvels of natural process which at bottom after all thrill ‘molecularly’ with our own unknown subtle vibrations. But our first ancestors had but just left the mother’s lap. No wonder they fell into ‘animism’ or any other crudeness, in obeying the overmastering instinct they brought with them, that Life was the true secret and life was everywhere and inviolable! The cult of the dead? Why the whole point of it was that what we now call the self-conscious organism was the embodied message and witness of life; the pressure of this life-impetus was so strong as to overcome even the natural craving – else so irresistible – for full sensuous evidence, making them ‘abstract’ on this one point before their time. How eagerly they must have searched (one may suppose) for means of translating this imperial ant imperious instinct. How they must have realised, Living we came and did not begin; Living we go and do not end. . . .

In the new Paper¹⁴ I have asked three questions, all interconnected: (1) What causes the very first welcome of the ghostly or animistic (the first notion of dream); and if merely the play of ‘variation’ in mind, why is it so consistent and persistent? (2) May some current modern theories depend on the survival of geocentric modes of thought in unsuspected forms? And, (3) What really is meaning, and what do we really mean by our symbolic acts and statements or our equally symbolic protests against given acts or statements? (Welby to Romanes, 1889–1890, in Cust 1929: 269–270)

2.7. Metaphor, ambiguity and critique of terminology: From everyday discourse to philosophy and psychology

By the mid-1880s Welby was ever more committed to the study of signs and meaning and to establishing an adequate expression for her own particular approach. In 1896 she officially introduced the term ‘significs,’ as she stated in her Oxford Dictionary entry of 1911 (see Ch. 3, this volume), which she only chose after examining a series of other possible alternatives. She refused ‘semantics’ as developed by Michel Bréal (1897), and still other terms including her own ‘sensifics,’ but also ‘symbolics,’ considered as an alternative to ‘semantics,’ or ‘semasiology’ as introduced by Arsène Darmesteter (1846–1888), etc. (see below, Ch. 3). As she wrote in a letter to Norman Pearson: ‘One reason why I am so “enigmatic” is that I know we are not ready (and have no right yet) to redefine our highest or best, Semantics – or, if you like, Symbolics – first’ (Welby to Pearson, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 239).

The only assumption one could take for granted according to Welby was that the whole universe is pervaded with meaning, which she considered its connective tissue. The entire course of her research, in fact, was committed to discovering the generative dynamics of the signifying and interpretive universe. She described a world expanding with signs and senses, and investigated the translative thrust towards ever new phenomenal and signifying horizons, analyzed in terms of the mechanisms of ‘excitation,’ a term she

14. [V. W. was by now distributing a variety of papers for criticism, all bearing on the same or kindred subjects. It was in this year (1890) that the paper called ‘Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?’ was read before the British Association at Leeds, and another version of the same, under the title of ‘An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution,’ at the Anthropological Institute (Cust 1929: 270 n. 1)].

borrowed from the language of biology.¹⁵ In Welby's view, a primary task for scientific discourse was to describe transcendent forces operating in the universe: beyond the 'geotropic,' she explored the 'heliotropic' and the 'cosmotropic' dimensions in the thrust towards infinity. As she wrote in the following excerpts from letters to Charles Voysey and Bishop Talbot:

I start with no assumption at all, except that in some sense there is such a thing as meaning, and therefore in some sense there is what we call Truth. My guiding principle in life is a Way which necessarily has to be left behind in proportion as it is used. As I advance on my Way (you seem to have lost yours on the surface of your mind, not, I feel sure, in its depths) I find myself passing through a country of Truth which is a desert yet more terrible than Sinai, for it is a veritable furnace of white fire. But well I know that there lies the only road to Life in a sense which it takes a whole race adequately to realise: the individual *quâ* unit can only realise directly its own infinitesimal element thereof, though, as 'member' or constituent part, it is 'in touch' with the whole life and thus with the mind and meaning of it.

Please do not think I want to be enigmatical: what I do want is that we should really ask 'the prior question' before we embark on hopeless mutual recriminations. And the psychologists are right when they tell us that 'the way to a deeper understanding of the order of our ideas lies in the direction of cerebral physiology.' That too is included in my all-embracing way of advance. . . . (Welby to Charles Voysey, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 221)

... The first man who felt what Tar-â-mi ('I pass beyond') expresses represents to me in one form what we need now for an impetus which shall overcome the fearful backward and downward drag of our modern geotropism. . . . What – alike from the side of belief and the side of question – I would metaphorically claim for my thought is – cosmotropism. For are we not in danger of making what answers to heliotropism ultimate? As if, while we had outgrown the stage of making earth the originating force, we could not outgrow that of making the sun of this tiny system central to all things? (Welby to Bishop Talbot, 1888–1890, in Cust 1929: 230).

In 1891 Welby published a pamphlet entitled *Witnesses to Ambiguity*, being the first of a series of three dedicated to the 'critique of terminology' and to the distinction between ambiguity understood negatively as generating confusion and ambiguity in a positive sense as a condition for expression and communication. A collection of excerpts from writings by different authors is presented in order to evidence the need to agree on terms and their meanings for correct usage. As she stated in her presentation, Welby was convinced that poor linguistic usage was connected with the bad reasoning which it influenced:

The following confessions of a misleading or paralysing ambiguity in expression, (where it is often least suspected and most harmful), are merely samples chosen out of a much larger number, themselves but a tithe of what might easily be collected in standard and

15. The relation between the language of biology and the language of semiotics is developed throughout the twentieth century by such scholars as Charles Morris and Thomas A. Sebeok after him and in fact finds its most advanced expression in 'biosemiotics' and developments of the latter under the banner of so-called 'global semiotics' (cf. Brier 2003; Cobley 2001; Danesi 2001; Petrilli and Ponzio 2002b, 2007, 2008; Ponzio 2006b; Sebeok 2001; Posner et al. 1997–2004).

representative modern literature. It will be seen that the instances are drawn from widely varied sources. The object of printing them is to help in making known a state of things constantly ignored and even denied; but which is a main cause of much of barrenness in current discussion, of confusion on matters of pressing importance, and of hopelessness as to the possibility of any real solution of 'enigmas' which perhaps depend on some unrecognised survival of, or change in, meaning.

Certainly until we do realise how much perplexity, bewilderment, and even bitter controversy may be traced at least partly to this cause, we cannot hope to see it remedied. And whether remedy is possible or no, it must be a gain to know how things really are in this matter. Half the present mischief lies in the general assumption that 'of course' so and so means such and such, and that there is no more to be said. (Welby 1891c)

In 1892 Welby presented another pamphlet entitled, *The Use of Inner and Outer in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, with extracts from publications by pre-eminent authors. This pamphlet was distributed among participators at the International Congress of Experimental Psychology in August of that same year, and was discussed there. Welby intended to demonstrate that inadequate linguistic usage compromised precision in the formulation of ideas (which did not mean to be a 'precisionist,' as she clarified in her future writings), and ultimately led to the formulation of false problems. The extracts were commented on by Welby with reflections on the use of figurative language, particularly metaphor and analogy and their importance in the very formation of the psyche. In particular, she focused on the negative consequences for progress in psychology and philosophy of the wrong use of metaphorical expressions such as 'inner/outer,' 'interior/exterior,' 'inside/outside' to designate the opposites 'psychical/physical,' 'subjective/objective,' 'thought/thing,' 'conscious/nonconscious.' The following excerpt is from her introduction which opens with a citation from George Croom-Robertson:

'The argument has this moral: that, if mental philosophy must use a language devised for purposes other than philosophical, it cannot be too careful about the inferences it founds upon the words. Even the objective sciences, as they advance, drift farther and farther away from the use of popular language expressions, and beget a technical language of their own. Psychology only, though as subjective science it can least of all be served by common speech, developed as that has been with an almost exclusively objective regard, tries to work without such technical aid . . . The consequence is that while popular conceptions and misconceptions do not gain a footing in the objective sciences, or can be easily extruded if they do, mental philosophy has always been more or less tinctured by an admixture of popular opinion not rendered more philosophic by being refined upon. There have been writers of no small repute who never could place themselves at the philosophical point of view, and there are no thinkers who, when it comes to expression, do not find it difficult or even impossible to maintain consistently the philosophical attitude. With language what it is, this must always remain so; but the greater is the need to signalize the difficulty and the danger.' ('Action of so-called Motives:' Prof. Croom-Robertson, 'Mind,' October, 1882)

It has been suggested that the difficulties widely felt by the general reader in following psychological argument, especially at a time of rapid change and development like the present, might be somewhat lightened if the attention of the Psychologists could be called to certain metaphorical usages as the source of needless perplexity and in some cases of wrong inference, especially among students unused to thinking in the abstract, and among outsiders interested in problems which beyond all others in science, touch us personally at every point.

Of these, only one example is dealt with in this little Pamphlet, as to attempt more would expand it into a book; besides which the author is keenly sensible of unfitness to do more than barely suggest with the unavoidable crudeness of the 'outsider' one branch of an enquiry which in competent hands would yield a rich harvest.

The metaphors of Internal and External, Inner and Outer, Within and Without, Inside and Outside, Inward and Outward, have been used at least for many centuries and very widely, to express the contrast between the psychical and the physical, the subjective and objective, thought and thing, the conscious and the non-conscious. If the history of this usage from the earliest days were carefully traced, it might surely throw light on some difficult points in psychological enquiries. Meanwhile it is respectfully suggested from the outsider's and general reader's (as well as the student's) point of view, that its present use in psychology often leads to confusion rather than to clearness, and that it could generally be dispensed with without inconvenience if not with positive advantage, since it is constantly added to words which already express the idea which it is supposed to convey.

A large number of cases in which this seems to hold good have collected from the most various writers, and mainly those distinguished in psychological research. A few of these are here presented, not of course as examples of defect in the writers concerned, but as instances of the danger inseparable from the use of this seriously inconsistent and anomalous metaphor. Some instances of implied or explicit protest against it are also given.

What makes its peculiarly confusing character is this: – In every other case in which spatial imagery is taken whereby to express mental fact, both terms which belong to each other (in the sense that the one implies the other as contrast or complement), are equally used. It is recognized that you cannot, so to speak, take any half-word to express a complete idea, while keeping its other half to express another of entirely different order. Take for instance the figure 'high and low.' Motive, aims, standards, etc., are figuratively equally the one or the other. So we have broad and narrow views, acute and obtuse perceptions, heavy and light hearts, and so on. We should see the point at once if we called the psychical *upward* and the physical *downward*, or backward and forward respectively. Long and familiar usage makes us callous to the gratuitous absurdity of the inferences involved in the Outside and Inside metaphor. We might as well (and in some cases had better) call mind short and matter long; thought high and thing low; self narrow and not-self broad; consciousness obtuse and nature acute; the psychical thin and the physical thick, the soul light and the body heavy! (or in each case, the converse). In every such instance, each on occasion is both – or neither.

Again, the danger of this metaphor is twofold. First it places one part of 'experience' *inside* and the rest *outside* an entity unnamed, suggesting ideas like the walls of a house, the sides and lid of a box, the husk of a nut, the skin of an animal, or, in more abstract form, ideas of surface, outline, boundary, dividing point. But this is a view of humanity or personality which consistently taken would surely involve curious results. And as in using the antithesis of inner and outer we have omitted to provide for a 'median layer,' we are reduced to the level of pure abstraction. 'Mind' and 'matter,' 'thought' and 'thing,' embrace all that is, all reality, all that has meaning and therefore importance or consequence. But to 'us,' mind and thought are Internal; we are bidden (or forbidden as the case may be) to 'look within' for them; matter and thing are External; we are to look without, or outwards, for them. As a fact (the only warrant for a *figure*), this last is all we can do – eyes don't turn on a swivel!

Or do we take refuge in Self as the inner and Not-self as the outer? Then, what is Self the inside *of*, inner *to*, or within? And what is Not-self outside of, outer *to*, – without? Are not both self and not-self thus without¹⁶ something else – that is, Meaning? We appeal to

16. [For 'without' has the additional drawback of an ambiguity not shared by 'within:' a proud privilege! (Welby 1892b: Introduction)].

Sense; but is there thus any sense in either? Lastly, should we tolerate such metaphors as a wall, a hull, a bag, a skin, for *that* to which there is an external and an internal world? If not, why not? And when we ignore all this, as the impatient reader would naturally have us do, as futile literalism, and plead that spatial relations must be carefully left out of account, what is left? Why, nothing at all! The expression is emptied of all significance and becomes merely a misleading excrescence which might surely be got rid of, and with it much common confusion, by a consensus among leading writers on Psychology no longer to use this figure except in the rare cases where no substitute is at present possible, and yet some word must be used.

Secondly, it actually reverses the evolutionary order, so far as that furnishes an analogue. And if language has wandered into such reversal, is it really neither possible nor worth while, even to realise and to warn unwary readers of the fact? Are we forced thus to cherish survivals of obsolete notion still powerful to sway the ordinary mind? As there seems now a general agreement that the presumption is everywhere against the entire independence of 'mind and body,' ought we not to use any obvious biological analogy rather than reverse it in linguistic usage?

In the case of 'inner' and 'outer' there is surely just such an analogy in the 'gastrula' stage of embryonic development: To quote, as one of the best and most recent summaries of the subject, Prof. Romanes' 'Darwin and after Darwin,' p. 141–142, – 'The point to remember is, that in all cases a gastrula is an open sac composed of two layers of cells – the outer layer being called the ectoderm, and the inner the endoderm. They have also been called the animal layer and the vegetable layer, because it is the outer layer (ectoderm) that gives rise to all the organs of sensation and movement, viz., the skin, the nervous system, and the muscular system; while it is the inner layer (endoderm) that gives rise to all the organs of nutrition and reproduction . . . The outermost layer afterwards gives rise to the epidermis with its various appendages, and also to the central nervous system with its organs of special sense . . . the innermost layer develops into the epithelium lining of the intestine, with its various appendages of liver, lungs, intestinal glands, etc.'

Leaving the analogy of the 'median layer' as belonging to a further stage, especially as 'the exact mode of its derivation is still somewhat obscure,' the higher or 'animal' layer is the outer, the ectoderm, and the lower or 'vegetative' layer is the inner, the endoderm. The skin (and therefore the special senses, the original 'means of knowledge'), the nervous and muscular systems (means of thought and action, concept, word and deed; condition of 'conduct'), belong thus biologically to the outer world; while the digestive and reproductive systems belong to the inner world. The 'outer' is thus responsible for the brain and with it intellect and 'moral sense;' while the 'inner' is responsible for what is below the 'rational' level.

In short we may broadly say that if used at all, the 'inner' would be used in true analogy, of that side of life and nature which man shares with the whole animal kingdom (and in a more general sense with the whole plant kingdom), the side of nutrition and reproduction; while the 'outer' would be reserved for that which in its higher or more complex forms is especially and preponderantly by man – reason and intellect. Thought is thus linked to the external and the outward: feeling to the internal and the inward. And curiously enough, though he makes no more allusion than anyone else to this biological analogy, Prof. Höffding affirms that 'mental, like bodily, vision is from the beginning directed outwards. The eye apprehends external objects, their colours and forms, and only by artificial, roundabout ways, sees itself and what is within itself. And even in respect of external objects, the eye is always naturally set for the vanishing point, the greatest distance of sight. While we are conscious of a certain effort when the eye has to accommodate itself to nearer objects, it is with a feeling of relief and ease that we direct the glance from nearer to more

distant objects. In like manner external objects occupy our attention long before we think of the sensuous perception and conception through which alone external objects exist for us. . . . The inner world of mind is denoted by symbols borrowed from the outer world of space.' ('Outlines of Psychology,' p. 2)

But why not say 'tangible and visible objects;' and why add 'inner' to 'world of mind' or 'outer' to 'world of space?' Surely we might as well speak of the 'narrow' or 'low' world of mind and the 'wide' or 'high' world of space? As the terms are confessedly borrowed for mind from space must we not borrow 'outer' as well as 'inner' for expressing the mental, if the term is to have any relevance, point, or use, at all?

After all what do we rightly want to do in describing the mental or psychical world as Inner and the material or physical as Outer? Do we not want to emphasize distinction while preserving continuity or even identity; to give intension in the one case and extension in the other? Cannot these be equally secured by more abstract terms, like subjective and objective?

When we order Experience to fit such assumptions as that which some uses of 'inside' and 'outside,' 'within,' and 'without' betray or create, it refuses to endorse false analogy and punishes us, it may be, by becoming inscrutable. Every question wrongly put, we are often admonished, is unanswerable. We must learn to put more reasonable questions. May it be that the general and 'time-honoured' use of this 'figure of speech' (with others not here touched upon) tends to falsify if ever so slightly the main issues of Psychology, and with them, those of philosophy, ethics and indeed of science itself, to say nothing of the ideas of the 'practical' man who accepts them without criticism and acts upon them with disappointing if not disastrous results?

The following examples have words like 'external' and 'internal,' etc., in italics, in order easily to catch the eye. The first twenty quotations are from various witnesses to the difficulties liable to arise from the use of this often needless metaphor.

A numbered key with the references to Authors, volumes, pages, etc., is printed, and can be separately obtained. It was thought better that the cases should be first taken simply on their own merits. (Welby 1892b: Introduction)

At the congress on experimental psychology in 1892 Welby met James M. Baldwin with whom she corresponded until 1908. This encounter led to publication of the entries 'Sensal,' 'Significs,' and 'Translation' in his *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes*, in 1902 (see below). At the same conference Welby also met Dutch writer, reformist and psychologist Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) who introduced significs to the Netherlands. This encounter gave rise to the Signific Movement in that country which developed in various phases during the first half of the twentieth century (see Ch. 8, this volume).

Welby's 1891 and 1892 collections were followed by another of 1893, *A Selection of Passages from 'Mind' (January, 1876, to July, 1892), 'Nature' (1870, and 1888 to 1892), 'Natural Science' (1892)*, in which she continued her reflections on ambiguity as the cause of confusion, emphasizing the importance of a critique of language for the sake of successful communication. Her introduction reads as follows:

In the view of the little-suspected confusion caused by the ambiguity in the meaning of terms and phrases used in ordinary intercourse (and especially in ethical and religious discussion), it may be useful to give a brief selection from the witnesses to this disastrous state of things, contained in seventy-four volumes of 'Mind' (from January, 1876 to July, 1893), in 'Nature' during the last few years, and in 'natural Science' for 1892. A similar collection might easily be made from the Encyclopedia Britannica and Chambers' Ency-

yclopedia, also from the medical journals.¹⁷ ‘Mind’ has been chosen, not only because of the authority of most of its writers or their position as accredited teachers, but because of its compactness as well as the wide range of opinion which it has hitherto covered. Moreover, its subject, as a whole, concerns us very closely; affecting some of our most familiar ideas, and through them our lives and conduct. ‘Nature’ on the other hand deals with what is always supposed to be the most exact of subjects, – physical science. But science is obliged to borrow her terms to a great extent from current philosophical and from ordinary usage, and is complaining more loudly every day of the inconvenience and often mischievous results of this necessity. Thus we are unable to take refuge without misgiving, even in the apparently precise and rigid definitions of science itself; since these are being challenged more and more freely.

As a fact we are always informally and loosely discussing, with reference to practical business and family life as well as to morality and religion, the very points which in ‘Mind’ and ‘Nature’ are more or less technically or formally handled. We are expected to conform ourselves to standards of conduct or custom which are powerfully affected by the terms in which we express them. Such terms however often call up in men’s minds associations very different from any consciously intended by those who use them. We are constantly taking strong views and making positive assertions on all kinds of subjects, without a suspicion of the hidden confusions which may well be the real causes of many of our disputes and failures.

Many a time evils persist and successfully defy all efforts to remove them because, owing to these confusions, those who make such efforts suppose themselves bound to obstruct and defeat each other.

Meanwhile few indeed, except some experts and those who are now striving to call special attention to the matter, have any idea how many of these ‘irreconcilable’ controversies which keep us helpless, depend on the way in which they are expressed. If the general mind could be thoroughly made to realise how things really stand in this matter, the remedy would begin to work of itself. A great deal more attention and space would be given to the inquiry as to how far we really know what we mean. It would be taken for granted that a man’s first duty was to recognise the vagueness and shifting meanings of most of his leading terms, and if he could not find better ones, at least to warn his hearers and readers of the traps which surround them. Much more trouble would be taken to detect some underlying ambiguity, before ‘opposite views’ were taken and upheld in a mutually exclusive sense.

The first thing to do, however, is to bring forward in a compact form some evidence of a state of things which, without it, anyone might be excused for refusing to credit.

Of course, this little attempt to supply in a private form such an obvious need, is defective and inadequate in many ways, and can only serve to suggest something more satisfactory. The difficulty of selection has been great; many instructive passages have been necessarily omitted, because of the amount of context required to make them intelligible; and even some of those inserted may require references to the Articles or Notes to which they belong in order that their full force may be apparent. And condensation has been even more difficult. Indeed an apology is due to those writers who may find themselves inadequately paraphrased. But there is after all very little either of condensation or of comment. It is hoped that the extracts will speak for themselves. (Welby 1893a: i–ii)

Welby’s seminal essays, ‘Meaning and Metaphor’ and ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,’ soon followed, respectively in 1893 and 1896 (see below, Ch. 3).

17. [E.g. the strong Article on the subject by Dr. Jonathon Hutchinson (*British Medical Journal*, 22 October 1892: 881–884)].

2.8. For a critique of philosophical and psychological terminology. Ferdinand Tönnies and the ‘Welby Prize’

In 1896 the ‘Welby Prize’ was advertised in the journal *Mind* in Welby’s effort to draw the attention of the scientific community to her appeal for significs and its concerns. This important initiative involved the collaboration of a series of pre-eminent figures such as Edward B. Titchener (1867–1927), George F. Stout (1860–1944), James Sully (1842–1923), Oswald Külpe (1862–1915) and the French philosopher Emile Boirac (1851–1917). Welby offered a prize for the best analysis of the causes for lack of clarity and terminological confusion in psychology and philosophy, with suggestions for practical remedy. The call for papers read as follows:

A prize of \$50, to be called the Welby Prize, is offered for the best treatise upon the following subject:

‘The causes of the present obscurity and confusion in psychological and philosophical terminology, and the directions in which we may hope for efficient practical remedy.’

Competition is open to those who, previously to October 1st, 1896, have passed the examinations qualifying for a degree at some European or American University.

The donor of the prize desires that general regard be had to the classification of the various modes in which a word or other sign may be said to possess ‘meaning,’ and to corresponding difference of method in the conveyance or interpretation of ‘meaning.’ The committee of award will consider the practical utility of the work submitted to them as of primary importance.

The Essays, which may be written in English, French or German, must be typewritten and must extend at least to 25,000 words. They should be headed by a motto, and accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name of the writer. They may be sent to any member of the undersigned committee of award, and must reach their address not later than October 1st, 1897. The right of publication of the successful treatise is reserved.

PROFESSOR SULLY, I Portland Villas, East Heath Road,
Hamstead, N. W.

G. F. STOUT, University, Aberdeen, N. B.

PROFESSOR TITCHENER, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

PROFESSOR KÜLPE, Würzburg, Germany.

Arrangements are being made to add a French member to the Committee. (Welby 1896b)

The prize was assigned to German sociologist, philosopher and professor at the University Kiel, Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936),¹⁸ for his monographic study, *Philosophische Terminologie in psychologisch-Soziologischer Ansicht* (Philosophical terminology from the psychological-sociological point of view). This led to the inauguration of Welby’s correspondence with Tönnies, who not only took a personal interest in significs

18. Ferdinand Tönnies was one of the founders of sociology in Germany with Georg Simmel (1858–1918) and Max Weber (1864–1920) in addition to being an internationally recognized scholar of English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Tönnies distinguished between ‘community’ (based on natural will, for example the family unit) and ‘society’ (based on rational will and a sort of social contract). In fact a major work by Tönnies, of 1887, is entitled *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (now 1997). He developed sign theory in relation to systematic sociology (on Tönnies, his works and influence on contemporaries, see Schmitz 1988b).

but also acted as intermediary between Welby and other important scholars of the time in Germany (thanks to Tönnies, Welby was listed in the German Year Book), France and Austria, with which he contributed to the spread of her ideas in those countries as testified by the correspondence with Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap, Harald Höffding, André Lalande, Rudolf Eucken and still others (see Zander 1980). It was thanks to Tönnies that Welby's book, *What is Meaning?*, also reached Wilhem M. Wundt, Benno Erdmann, Friedrich Paulsen, Carl Stumpf and most probably Wilhem Dilthey (on Tönnies and Welby, see below, Section 3.4).

Tönnies's essay was published in the journal *Mind* in 1899–1900 in English translation (and only subsequently in the German original). This was followed in 1901 by a critical comment by Welby entitled 'Notes on the "Welby Prize Essay"', published in the same issue with a reply from Tönnies, 'Note by Prof. Tönnies' (both texts are appended to the present chapter).

The letter exchanges below between Welby and Tönnies are from *Other Dimensions*, but the corpus of their correspondence, which is still unpublished, is deposited in the Welby Collection, York Archives (see Appendix 3, below) as well as in the Ferdinand Tönnies Archives, Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesbibliothek, Kiel, Germany (which however does not include letters by Welby to Tönnies):

I have just received your book. . . . The impressions which it will make upon my mind cannot fail to be deep ones; for it is since the first dawn of my reflections upon mental problems, that I have felt and realised the importance of your theme, and, as I have penetrated more and more into your thoughts, I have felt myself enriched and encouraged to follow your path. . . . (Welby to Tönnies,¹⁹ 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 68–69)

Welby was interested in logic and read such authors as Peirce and Russell for their logical analyses of signs and language. However, it was her intention to transcend what she considered as the limits of logic in the direction of metaphysics which, all the same, was anchored in logic, as she emphasized from her signifiical perspective. To transcend the limits of logic did not mean to give up rigour, clarity or exactness of expression, but to enhance them in light of the relation of signs to values, sense or significance, which meant to develop the human capacity for expression and communication. This approach was formulated by Welby in various places of her correspondence collected in *Other Dimensions*, as in the excerpt below from a letter to Tönnies:

At present only the few, the very few, have the transcendent power required for bringing order into the chaos which language presents, and for extracting real meaning out of bewildering confusion or the threadbare verbiage to which convention and ignorance confine us. It is as though no one had ever bestowed an alphabet upon the world to which spontaneous allegiance could be yielded, so that we had to use marks which were sometimes pictorial and sometimes symbolic and always liable to ruinous confusion, besides being incapable of anything approaching the permutative power of our present alphabet. Or, it is like attempting to construct musical symphonies with the aid of an equally poor and chaotic score-system. . . . After all, what else is man himself but the expression of the

19. [Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kiel. Winner of the Prize given by V. W. in 1898 for the best Essay on Significs. 'You have succeeded in catching a big fish with your bait.' (Prof. Stout to V. W.) Author of *Der Nietzsche-Kultus*, *T. Hobbes*, etc. (Welby to Tönnies, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 68)].

world-sense, world-meaning, world-significance? Is it not a glorious thought that the dumb world depends upon us for expression, and a pathetic one that she depends upon us for expression, and a pathetic one that she has bred and trained us at such tremendous cost to give her message and to raise and transfigure ourselves and her in the doing; and then we are content to use this transcendent fit in oceans of platitude, to leave it a thousand years behind our steam and electricity, even to dishonour our mother by our blind perversities and pessimisms, while all the while she is pointing us to a fatherhood waiting for the articulate cry of conscious childhood. . . .

If I am accused of wanting to break off with the past, to which we owe so much, and to preach revolution, I do so just as the earth does in her orbit, and just as man himself does in his development, ontogenetic and phylogenetic – no otherwise (Welby to Tönnies, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 89–90)

The following excerpt from another letter by Welby to Tönnies should be read in relation to Chapter 6, this volume, on the concept of ‘mother-sense’ or ‘primal sense’ and the relation with subjectivity:

Day by day I have hoped to be able to write and thank you for the pamphlet of the *German Year-book* and for the generous way in which you allude to me in it. I feel sadly unworthy of being mentioned in the same paragraph with so great a genius as Francis Galton! Yet my subject when it gets into fitter hands will be found, I think, to be bound up with his: the improvement, even the transfiguration of the race.

I wanted, too, to give you some idea of the progress both of my own work and of the newly-founded Sociological Society. I am glad indeed that Mr. Galton and Prof. Karl Pearson have been drawn into this movement. The mere fact of man’s attention being turned to the possibilities of an indefinite rise – in power and worth together – of the whole race will in subtle ways make for that result. We have not half realized what miracles ‘suggestion’ may bring about. At present we are little more than playing with it; and alas, as all the finer powers tend to do, it has too much fallen into hands which exploit it or ignorantly abuse it. We much hope that this Society will become a meeting-place for all those who are honestly working for the good of mankind and the furtherance of true social ideals. At present the lack of touch between workers (including of course thinkers) had sad results. And thus we do not utilise each other’s experience. . . . (Welby to Tönnies, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 189–190)

2.9. The dictionary entries of 1902: ‘Sensal,’ ‘Significs,’ ‘Translation’

Welby aimed at obtaining a wide consensus for the term ‘significs’ as recognition of her special approach to the study of meaning, language and communication. The year 1911 brought an important editorial event favouring the recognition desired, with publication of the entry ‘Significs’ by Welby, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (now in Ch. 7, this volume), and of the Oxford dictionary entry, also entitled ‘Significs,’ in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (see Ch. 3, below). However, let us remember that official recognition had already come in 1902, with publication in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes*, edited by James M. Baldwin, of the entry ‘Significs,’ redacted with Baldwin and George F. Stout, which presents Welby’s meaning triad, ‘sense,’ ‘meaning’ and ‘interpretation’; plus another two entries proposed

by Welby as technical terms in significs: 'Sensal,' co-authored with George Stout, and 'Translation,' by herself.

With Significs, Welby intended to surpass traditional approaches to the question of meaning which she considered in terms of interpretive processes rather than, for example, of the relation between form and concept. She defined significs in a nutshell in various places in her writings as the science of the expression of significance – in language as in life generally. Welby's primary focus was on the relationship between signs and interpretants, actual and possible. Her work on significs was also closely related to concerns of an educational, social and ethical order, and was intended as a method for improving communicative, expressive and interpretive potential.

The dictionary entries below are presented in alphabetical order: 'Sensal,' by Welby and Stout, 'Significs,' by the same two authors with Baldwin, and 'Translation,' by Welby.

Sensal [Lat. *sensus*, a sense]. 1) SENSUOUS (q.v., also for foreign equivalents); belonging to or derived from sense.

J. Grote speaks (*Explor. Philosophica*, ii. 156, 158) of 'sensal' intuition and knowledge; he used also the term sensitive.

2) Concerned, not with the sound or form, i.e. the strictly verbal character of a word sentence or question, but with its import or purport.

Aristotle's division of definitions into 'verbal' and 'real' might be more properly translated 'sensal' and 'real.' So in J. S. Mill's contention (*System of Logic*, chap. Vi, §4) that 'an essential proposition. . . is one which is purely verbal,' i.e. concerned merely with the sense in which it is used, 'verbal' would become 'sensal.' This meaning is suggested by the present writer. See VERBAL (also for foreign equivalents for meaning 2). (V. W., G. F. S.)

Significs: Ger. Bedeutungslehre; Fr. théorie des significations; Ital. teoria delle significazioni (the foreign equivalents are suggested). 1) Significs implies a careful distinction between a) sense or SIGNIFICATION (q.v.), b) meaning or INTENTION (q.v.), and c) significance or ideal WORTH (q.v.). It will be seen that the reference of the first is mainly verbal (or rather Sensal, q. v.), of the second volitional, and of the third moral (e.g. we speak of some event 'the significance of which cannot be overrated'; it would be impossible in such a case to substitute the 'sense' or the 'meaning' of such event, without serious loss). Significs treats of the relation of signs in the widest sense to each of these.

2) A proposed method of mental training, aiming at the concentration of intellectual activities on that which is implicitly assumed to constitute the primary and ultimate value of every form of study: i.e. what is at present indifferently called its meaning or sense, its import or significance.

Significs affords also a means of calling attention to the backwardness of language in comparison with other modes of human communication, and to the urgent need of stimulating thought by the creation of a general interest in the logical and practical as well as the aesthetical value of all forms of expression. And it provides a convenient general term under which to work perhaps for an international consensus, and for a natural check upon wilful waste or misuse of the existing resources of language, by bringing to bear upon it a certain deterrent of social and academic 'constraint' (see the Editor's Preface, viii).

Significs makes practically for the detection of lurking confusion or specious assertion in directions where the discipline of formal logic would help less directly and simply. But it is suggested that this study, so far from superseding or displacing or even distracting attention from the disciplines already recognized, would rather render them more effectual because more vitally significant: more obviously related to ordinary experience and interests. It would also bring out the moral value of a greater respect for the traditions and

the future of language, and would in fact, while preparing the ground for an expansion of the limits of articulate expression, tend to create a linguistic conscience which must beneficially react upon thought, thus bringing about gradually and naturally a spontaneous consensus in definition.

Much work is already being done in this direction. Significs as a science would centralize and co-ordinate, interpret, interrelate, and concentrate the efforts to bring out meanings in every form, and in so doing to classify the various applications of the signifying property clearly and distinctly.

Literature: A. SIDGWICK, *Distinction and Criticism of Beliefs*; KARL PEARSON, *Grammar of Science*; MAHAFFY, *Modern Babel*, in *Nineteenth Cent.*, November, 1896; EUCKEN, *Gesch. d. philos. Terminologie* (1879); and *Monist*, July, 1896; BRÉAL, *Essai de Sémantique*; JESPERSEN, *Progress in Language*; F. TÖNNIES, *Welby Prize Essay*, *Mind*, January and April, 1899; BACON, *HOBBS*, and later WHATELEY, G. CORNEWALL LEWIS, and J. S. MILL are among those who have discussed the general subject. See also E. MARTINAK, *Psychol. Untersuch. z. Bedeutungslehre* (1901). (V. W., G. F. S., J. M. B.)

Translation: [Lat., *trans* + *latum*, part. of *ferre*, to bear, carry]: Ger. *Uebersetzung*; Fr. *traduction* (*transposition*); Ital. *traduzione*. 1) In the literal sense, the rendering of one language into another.

2) The statement of one subject in terms of another; the transference of a given line of argument from one sphere to another; the use of one set of facts to describe another set, e.g. an essay in physics or physiology may be experimentally ‘translated’ into aesthetics or ethics, a statement of biological into a statement of economic fact.

“‘Mrs. Carnac’ is the subject of one of the best and most highly prized of the mezzotints made under Sir Joshua’s eye; it is interesting to learn that the pendant of this picture, Gainsborough’s miraculous ‘Mrs. Robinson,’ has just been *translated* in the same medium by one of the most accomplished of the modern revivers of the art, Mr. Gerald Robinson, president of the Society of Mezzotint Engravers’ (*The Times*, London, June 23, 1900). ‘Lord Rosebery, as we have said, displays in a marked degree what may be called a theoretical knowledge of Imperial conditions. If he feels within himself the capacity and the energy to *translate* the knowledge into a practical programme, the way is plain before him’ (*Times*, London, Nov. 19, 1900) See SIGNIFICS. (V. W.)

This chapter is conceived as delineating the main outlines of Welby’s intellectual formation and research trajectories foregrounding her book of 1903, *What is Meaning?* Together with her outstanding achievements as she ventured into territories that were new to her and largely unexplored, Welby’s life as an ambitious researcher was also marked by obstacles, doubts and dead ends. She believed in the importance of confronting her ideas in dialogue with the international community of researchers, though she worked independently from academic institutions. In spite of the advantage of her social position and remembering the disadvantage of her status as a woman operating in the Victorian era, Welby found it problematic at times to practice freedom of expression and unprejudiced criticism, though a challenge she was always ready to accept with fresh enthusiasm and undetering determination.

The texts

Essays and notes in chronological order

2.10. Truthfulness in Science and Religion (1888)*

Controversies which on a hasty glance seem to be merely of an ephemeral character are very often found to involve and even to imperil principles and verities of the greatest value, which cannot be too often asserted or too vigorously defended. It is on this ground we proceed to consider, somewhat tardily, an Article in the *Nineteenth Century* of the last year, which we think furnishes ample illustration of the truth of what we have been saying.

Setting aside the part of Professor Huxley's article which is of a personal character, its general teaching seems to be epitomised in three passages. At all events, these passages are so full of meaning and hang so closely together that they are well worth considering by themselves.

The first is an assertion of the principle that science and theology cannot be kept apart:

There is another portion of the Bishop of Bedford's sermon which I think will be warmly appreciated by all honest and clearheaded men. He repudiates the view of those who say that theology and science occupy wholly different spheres and need in no way intermeddle with each other. (p. 627)

The second is a claim on the part of men of science to set as high a value as any one upon the spiritual elements of the Christian faith.

It does not appear to have entered the imaginations of these people that outside their pale, and firmly resolved never to enter it, there are thousands of men, certainly not their inferiors in character, capacity, or knowledge of the questions at issue, who estimate those purely spiritual elements of the Christian faith, of which the Bishop of Manchester speaks, as highly as the Bishop does, but who will have nothing to do with the Christian Churches because in their apprehension, and for them, the profession of belief in the miraculous, on the evidence offered, would be simply immoral. (p. 632)

The third is an indictment of the unscientific character of the evidence for the Christian miracles.

I do not know of any body of scientific men who could be got to listen without the strongest expressions of disgusted repudiation to the exposition of a pretended scientific discovery, which had no better evidence to show for itself than the story of the devils entering a herd of swine, or of the fig-tree which was blasted for bearing no figs when it was not the season of figs. (p. 632)

Professor Huxley appends a prophecy and an imputation. The prophecy is as follows:

I venture to warn this preacher, and those, who, with him, persist on identifying Christianity with the miraculous, that such forms of Christianity are not only doomed to fall to the ground, but that, within the last half-century they have been driving that way with continually accelerated velocity. (p. 631)

The imputation (justly so described on account of the comparison implied in its concluding words) is this:

There is one moral benefit which the pursuit of science unquestionably bestows. It keeps the estimate of the value of evidence up to the proper mark; and we are constantly receiving lessons, and sometimes very sharp ones, on the nature of proof. Men of science will always act up to their standard of veracity when mankind in general leave off sinning; but that standard appears to me to be higher among them than in any other class of the community. (p. 632)

* [A critical comment by Victoria Welby on an essay by Professor Huxley entitled, 'Science and the Bishops,' published in the journal *Nineteenth Century*, November (London) 1887. Originally this paper by Welby was published anonymously in *The Church Quarterly Review*, see Welby 1888b].

Some of us do not believe in this prophecy nor admit the justice of this imputation. We think that Christianity will survive, and survive in a miraculous form; and we hold that those who believe in a miraculous form of Christianity are not for that reason liable to the imputation of using a lower standard of veracity than men of science. It is for the purpose of justifying these opinions that we propose to examine the three texts above quoted from Professor Huxley: it being well understood that he is only responsible for the texts, and not at all for the expositions, the correctness of which must be left to the judgment of the reader.

It would be an unheard-of thing to expound a text which was not accepted as true; and Professor Huxley's three propositions appear to us all perfectly true. Science and theology cannot be severed; and multitudes of scientific men, while rejecting the miraculous, accept the spiritual elements of Christian faith: the evidence upon which the miracles of the New Testament are received is such as could not be admitted for scientific purposes, and the most convinced Christian would probably be greatly taken aback if he saw them recognized as data in a scientific treatise. The question, then, is not whether these propositions are true, but what they mean.

I. The impossibility of severing science and theology does not depend upon an identity either of subject or method between the two pursuits. Science can be separated from life and from personal intercourse. Theology in its very name introduces us to personal communion with a living Being. And this connexion between theology and life appears more strongly still when we consider the relations of theology with religion; how useless and objectless it seems unless it is constantly used for religious purposes; and how the Bible, from which our theology must be taken, is not a book of science, but of religious life. Now, nothing can be more different than the attitudes of mind which are assumed in science and in religion. In science (by which we are here to understand physical science) the mind observes, registers, and classifies phenomena. In religion it thinks, feels, and wills. The man of science notes and records his facts. Those which offer themselves most readily to his purpose are found in what we call the material world; and there is a tendency in science to make as much of this class of facts as possible. But we need lay no stress upon this point. There is no reason why facts other than those of matter and motion should not be deemed physical facts and subjects of physical science, if only it be certain that they exist in nature. But the recognition of immaterial phenomena would not at all abolish the distinction between the acts of mind implied in science and in religion, or assimilate their subject matter. Religion is thinking, feeling, and willing. But even if science were to busy itself about thinking, feeling and willing, the very attempt to consider them would show that thought as a fact subjected to the observation of science is not the same with thinking considered as the living exertion of the mind. Will, as offering itself for inquiry, is not the action of willing. And feeling, the substantive, which is the only thing that science can examine, is not feeling, the participle, which denotes, not a thing, but an act. The examinations of science must always be *post mortem*. Even if the same person furnishes the mental phenomena to be studied, and himself conducts the study, he can never catch the mental action as an action. When he runs round to that end of the glass to which he must apply his eye he *ipso facto* vanishes from that end of the glass at which the object must be placed. He cannot be subject and object at once. Other people, indeed, he can observe while they are willing, thinking, and feeling. But then an impenetrable veil hides them from him and presents to him acts as facts – a difference which, though it be but of one letter, is immeasurable in its importance.

Let us imagine a physician in communication with a patient. He is the man of science. And first he studies the material phenomena of the case: he feels the pulse and tries the temperature. He does this part of his work with the utmost care and confidence, and very likely finds enough in it, without going further, to determine his prescription. But perhaps he does go further. He asks the patient about his feelings and experiences. But here the confidence with which he observed the material facts forsakes him, and he is cautious and distrustful. For he knows that the patient is not a man of science accustomed to note and remember facts; and even if he were, that it is impossible for the mind to grasp feelings as felt. Even the patient can only bring them before

himself as thought of or remembered, while in passing from him to the physician they lose still more of their life. And with all that he can do by observation or inquiry the man of science must confess that the feeling of his patient, as such, is in the nature of things outside of his science.

Thus if it be true that religion is an affair of thinking, feeling, and willing in the most perfect way attainable by man, while science is an affair of observing and registering facts with correctness, nothing can be more different than the two spheres; and what is it then that unites them so closely that they cannot be severed?

There are connexions which are, as it were, accidental, yet by no means unimportant. The man of science striving to take account of all the facts and sequences of phenomena which are real and genuine is struck by the existence of religion among men as an obstinate and persistent object to his view. Scientific men have recognized this of late years, and religion as a fact in the natural history of man has been frequently treated by them as a fit and important matter of inquiry. On the other hand, religious men, whose business it is to think, feel, and will as rightly as they can, have acknowledged that they never could do so if they neglected the truths which science has brought to light: it would be immoral and irreligious to shrink from them. But these connexions are not essential. The sphere of science is so wide that no scientific man deserves his title the less for leaving the science of religion aside in his attention to other parts of the field. And though in our particular age and circumstances science forces itself upon religious people, there have been times when this was not the case; yet we look back upon those periods as displaying a peculiar purity of religion. And men of science and men of religion have entertained feelings of mutual dislike and suspicion of each other's pursuits without being thereby considered to forfeit the praise due to each in his own sphere.

But there are connexions which are absolutely essential and which must render for ever impossible the attempt to cut off from each other by a dividing wall these two domains so different in their nature and their productions. Although science considered as the observation of phenomena and their sequences is something wholly different from thinking, feeling, and willing, yet science considered as the act of observing carried on by living minds imperatively requires the whole three. The difference is great. Observation is one thing, the act of observing is another; no observations help us to know what the act of observing is and how it is done, and the ideal instrument of observation would seem to be some automatic machine by which facts of all sorts should be registered without any of the failures and uncertainties which attend the use of human faculties. But as it is, observations can only be made by observing. And the science of the most rigidly scientific man is thereby brought into the same sphere of thinking, feeling, and willing to which religion belongs. It is in this way that science often becomes a kind of religion to those who follow it, both in respect of devotion and of moral power. They endow their science with a kind of personality and they imagine that all this emotion and moral influence is part of the science, when in reality it is the effect of science or of the pursuit of it upon powers of human nature which have no essential connexion with science. Science in itself is the same whatever the spirit in which it is pursued. When we take up a scientific book it is absolutely unknown and indifferent to us what the motives of the author were in making his observations and recording them, and what the emotions were which accompanied the task. That he had some motives and some emotions is certain, because he was not a disembodied or a self-acting intellect, but a living man. But neither of them have any business in his scientific book, and it would be excessively unscientific to give them a place in it. Whatever they be, they belong to a totally different class of literature: that which treats of feeling, thinking, and willing as living acts, not of the conditions under which they arise, or of the facts they produce. If science claims to exert a practical power over men, it is thereby claiming a kind of influence which is moral and not scientific. Its effects on man, being moral and spiritual, must be judged of by moral and spiritual, not by scientific, standards; and it must submit to be compared in respect of its practical power with other influences of a purely moral and spiritual character.

When we regard the subject from the side of religion we equally perceive the impossibility of divorcing it from science. Religion is a matter of thinking, feeling, and willing, while it hands over to science the whole body of facts. But we find that feeling, thinking, and willing are dependent upon facts. Certain conditions are necessary before these acts of the mind become possible; and when science informs us that no act of the mind can in our present life be performed without a corresponding material change in the brain, there cannot be a doubt that the information is of high importance to religion. When religion leads us to think about God, to love Him, and to will what He wills, it is implied that God exists, and that His will can be known to men, and these are facts. Religion requires a theology, and theology is a science which cannot renounce connexion with other sciences, or refuse to accommodate herself to them. The thinking, feeling, and willing, of which religion consists, must be attached to facts either past or future, either in heaven or earth: from facts these actions must set out, and to facts they must tend. And no fact can be wholly withdrawn from science.

Is science then the only source of truth? The magnificence of the claim staggers us. We cannot but see that as things are we should, if left dependent on the truth which science can originate or even test, be barely furnished indeed. Whatever concerns the action of the mind in ourselves or others is outside its reach. It may lead us up to the actions of the mind, but cannot accompany us through them. The whole of our living intercourse with living men, our loves and hatreds of people, and even of things, arise independently of science, which has no methods for providing them. It is possible to imagine that science should be able from a consideration of a man's constitution and circumstances to predict exactly how he will behave; so that we should choose our friends, as we choose horses and dogs, by their points. We should be able to know what a man is and what he will do by an induction of facts, and an inference therefrom, with the same certainty as we can pronounce on the properties of a chemical compound by analysing its composition, or foretell the direction in which a stone will fall by observing its weight and the forces which bear upon it. We may choose, if we please, to imagine that a similar power of foresight would be ours in the case of man, if only we were able to observe his constitution with more accuracy. And indeed the body and the mind of man, and the social influence of men on one another, have all been claimed as subjects of scientific study; and results of the most solid value have been secured in all the three departments. But this does not tell us clearly what is the practical connexion between science and the actual life and action of man, singly or in community. Does science consider that everything in man's life and action is a proper subject of its inquiries and of its authority, and does it conceive its methods to be for every purpose the best? Does it aim at the prospect of one day giving a scientific account of every movement of every sort to which the body, soul, or mind of man is subject – the transports of the lover, the devotions of the saint, the thoughts of the poet, all alike? And does it, moreover, also hold not only that these human activities are proper subjects of scientific inquiry as to how they come to pass, but that also they all should, as far as is possible, be scientifically done: science affording not merely the account of the action, but the model method of carrying it out? Is she supreme arbitress of human life?

Now, we do not want to refuse an entrance to science anywhere throughout the whole region of matter or mind. And as all life concerns itself with matter or mind, or the relations of either to the other, it is hard to say where in all life science may not hope to find facts upon which to found her advance. Ascertained movements in the brain lead in an invariable sequence to results in the world of mind; physical changes in nature are connected by a never-failing experience with results in the feelings of human beings subjected to them. There is no limit to the discoveries in these directions which the past progress of science may lead us to expect in the future. Yet no past experience leads us to imagine that science could ever actually conquer the whole kingdom of facts concerning man, so that nothing more should be left her to explain, but the whole conditions and occasions of every part of the active life of man should be made plain to it. No rule or claim of religion, or any other power whatever, forbids science to proceed with her search and her explanations, but she herself stops short for want of power to go on. In the higher movements of the mind the

experiments necessary are impossible to her, and while she knows that she could conceivably go much further in physical explanation than she has done, she confesses that the science which shall do so must be one better provided than she is.

But even if science had come to know everything which belongs to the domain of science, the larger part of human life would still remain entirely shut out from her. She would have, indeed, to confess that while she knew all the conditions of life, life in itself and in its acts was hid. Where life begins to work she has to let go her hold. There is something in the very nature of science which must ever prevent her from making any essential change in her position towards life and its action.

Now in his department, which is thus shut out from the reach of science, a great deal more than mere feeling is included. All morality belongs to it. To be sure, science can observe the facts in human history and in the constitution of man, on which human morality depends. But it views them and the facts which constitute human immorality with equal eye. It has nothing to do with what ought to be, but simply with what is. If it has any moralizing tendency upon man, it is not as science that it possesses this tendency, but as a serious and unselfish occupation of the mind, which keeps it well employed and out of mischief – merits which are not scientific but moral. The truthfulness which Professor Huxley claims for it may or may not be extended beyond the limits of the laboratory. It may or may not have any moral tinge in it whatever. This truthfulness in scientific matters is a professional instinct, like the obligation of the lawyer to give a sound opinion, or of the physician to make a true diagnosis. And as sound lawyers have often been scoundrels, and good physicians have often behaved in a manner which was not for the general health, so it is perfectly conceivable that an able man of science might in matters unconnected with science be most untruthful. The sort of evidence which is required in his science is so different from that which is required in affairs, the whole sphere in which his mind moves during its occupation with science is so different from that of practical life, that his pursuits might actually unfit him for attention to the considerations that operate in life and to the conclusions which should be drawn from them. And accordingly it will be found that Professor Huxley's opinion of the superior general truthfulness of scientific men has by no means passed into general experience. As a security for truthful behaviour in the intercourse of life and for truthful judgments upon its occasions, almost all men would prefer genuine religion, or the practical moral habits which are as unscientific as religion, to scientific eminence. The two claims combine in many cases, but that must not lead us to confound them; and if sometimes religion is considered an insufficient security for truthfulness, that is only because religion sometimes becomes mere science: knowledge without feeling or willing.

But it might seem that at all events there is one department in which scientific evidence must be supreme and scientific methods the best for weighing it, namely, that of physical fact. Where something is said to have happened or to be about to happen in the visible world, there science is in its own domain, and judges of matters peculiarly its own. How then can any kind of proof in this department be complete which does not appeal to science? and how can those who understand scientific proof be expected in matters of this kind to content themselves with any lesser?

Now it is certain that scientific evidence in matters of physical fact is the highest that can be given. If Professor Huxley discovers a fact in the world of sense, he has a right to feel more sure of it than he could be in any other way. We are more sure of physical facts the physical evidence of which is before us than of any facts in the moral world. Yet it is certain that there are vast numbers of physical facts which we all believe, and feel it our duty to believe, of which no physical evidence can be given. Most facts which depend on human will are of this kind. Science cannot tell us what the will is going to do, nor what the will has done, except in the cases, of which there are very few, where actual experiment is possible. There is something in the connexion of will with its effects which is quite beyond the reach of science. Cases meet us constantly in which all facts known would have led us to expect an act of will of one kind, yet in which the act turns out to be of another. And physical effects follow the act. If miracle is to be taken to mean a wonder, the

appearance of which in the visible world is not apparently due to the existing visible causes, then the word miracle is applicable to every act of human will, for in none of them are the physical circumstances enough to account for the result, and in none of them can the mysterious agency of their production submit itself to the understanding in its nature or its methods.

But it will be said that, even though this wonder-working power of the will be recognized, it still works within certain limits which science is capable of defining; and while we have no right to make our anticipations the measure of what human wills can do within these bounds, we are incapable of believing that it has done anything beyond them. We answer that the will must work through nature, and cannot use nature against nature's laws. But we are daily learning to be cautious in coming to a conclusion what particular facts this principle permits us, and what it forbids us, to accept. All we know is, that when something which we never should have supposed possible for the human will to effect has been done, we shall not say 'here is something done by the will against nature,' but 'here is something which by means of nature the will was able to do.'

And thus we are constantly believing physical facts as effected by other men to which no scientific test has been applied or could be applied. Not things to which scientific tests are inapplicable, for it is impossible to give that description of any fact; but facts which science cannot get at with its tests, and which depend on a power it cannot gauge, namely the will. Is it untruthful to believe those things? It would be absurd to say so. Life would stop short if we did not believe them. Their evidence cannot be pronounced equal to that of scientific facts; yet nobody is accused of falsehood for attaching to them a credence practically equal to that he gives to any facts of science.

What, then, is the evidence upon which such facts are accepted? It is various in its character, and a great deal of it depends so much on feeling and instinct that it cannot be expressed in words. There is the evidence of human testimony; the evidence of conformity to the character of the agent; the evidence of consistency in the story of the fact, and in the whole history of its antecedents and its consequences. And there is the nameless evidence of sympathy which identifies us with the person, and so shows us what he could do. There is room, as every man in his senses allows, in this unscientific acceptance of facts for every sort of carelessness, credulity, and untruthfulness; but there is room also for just as much of these very qualities in rejection.

The evidence which is applicable in such matters is called moral evidence, a term which, if we mistake not, is used in different senses. For sometimes it means merely an amount of scientific evidence which, though less than might be demanded, is yet sufficient to lay on us a moral obligation to act on it. But the proper meaning of moral evidence seems to be a different thing from this, namely, a kind of evidence which does not belong directly to the physical world at all, but to the moral. This evidence comes to us in the active play of life, in the use of our feelings, conscience, and affections, as well as our reason. It is the kind of evidence upon which we form our judgments of character, our expectations of the future action of others, and in many cases our belief as to their action in the past. It is absolutely impossible to class this kind of evidence in the same category as the scientific, and equally impossible to replace it by that of science. And it is the species of evidence on which the larger part of life is conducted.

And the relations of science to that living action of men in the present which is daily making history show us how far we can allow its claim to be a judge of man's history in the past. Science cannot absolutely withdraw its claim to a voice in any part of human history. For, after all, what is man's history but the natural history of man, the physical facts in which his nature is displayed; and why should it be withdrawn from the observation of science, any more than the natural history of ants or bees? It is conceivable that the history of mankind should be written as a natural history,²⁰ that is to say, that every movement, action, and event should be traced to their natural causes and placed under physical laws. But this has never been done, and it is not probable that with

20. See *Darwin's Life*, vol. iii: 99.

our present powers it ever could be done. Here and there science can interpose with a decisive judgment as to what can have been effected, or can in the future be effected, by man. Where it can do this its judgment is final. But it can do so very seldom, and if it could interfere oftener, those who read history with human sympathy, and still more those who are making history by living, would feel that in the scientific view the most important part of history was left out. Between the facts which led up to each act of will and the effects which follow upon it – both of which are physical events and fair subject of science – intervenes the act of will itself, which science cannot reach. And this gives us two points of view from which to regard human history and life: one as a series of acts of free will, and the other as the operation of laws without any will at all. Each of them, while you regard it alone, is apparently quite complete and sufficient. And no way has yet been discovered of marking off a boundary between them; sensible people can only allow to each its proper value and place without permitting it the liberty of devouring its antagonist. It is possible that if we knew the inner life of even ants and bees, they might protest that their natural history was not the whole of their history, and that if they themselves tried to act as if it was the whole, the very spring and source of life would be taken out of their existence. But we men are able to speak for ourselves, and protest that we cannot be rightly treated as the creatures of matter and motion, and that you will not be able to judge of the facts of our existence in the past, nor to predict them in the future, if you omit to take account of the action of will. And this protest cannot be accepted without limiting the claims of science, which knows nothing of the action of will.

Now religion is a part of human history. The alleged facts of revelation are facts alleged in human history, and the consequent acts of thinking, feeling, and willing demanded from man by religion are the materials out of which other facts in history are made. And while science must be allowed a voice in respect of them, she cannot be allowed a supremacy as to the facts of religion, which does not belong to her in the general history of man's life.

II. We come now to consider Professor Huxley's claim that many scientific men estimate as highly as any one 'the purely spiritual elements of the Christian faith.' Professor Huxley is justly celebrated for making things clear; but the meaning which he here attaches to the expression 'spiritual elements' is not clear. If we were to take the words in their ordinary meaning, we should consider the word 'spiritual' as implying faith and devotion towards a being above nature. It is quite true that great numbers of scientific men do feel and practise this faith and devotion. And we should all gladly welcome the permission to include Professor Huxley's great name among their number. But it is to be feared that he intends his words to be taken in another meaning: that, namely, of a morality very lofty in its claims, deeply tinged with emotion, and depending on a highly sublimated view of matter, but still all natural, all physical, and all material. However, in order to be sure of not going wrong, we shall consider the words 'spiritual elements' first in the one of these meanings, and then in the other.

Taking the words as excluding the supernatural, it seems impossible to say that a man whose faith is of this kind estimates highly the spiritual elements of the Christian faith. He may claim to have a faith and a spiritual faith: that point does not come under our discussion. But the Christian faith has essentially depended on a supernatural belief, and fed itself and spread itself by the power of this. A faith which does not include the supernatural, whatever other elements of Christianity it may reproduce, has no right to say that it includes the Christian spiritual element. Materialism sometimes claims a kind of spirituality of its own. Materialists suppose that they are abolishing, or at all events softening, the contrast between the new and the old by using the language of idealism and protesting that we are not to attach to matter that low and coarse conception which a former generation held, and which was derived from a contrast with mind which does not really exist. Matter, they tell us, is only known to us through mind, and is a mental, and if you please a spiritual, thing just as truly as a material. But if the practical issue of the business is that our power of will vanishes into matter and motion, and that we ourselves are nothing but forms of matter, with the aggregations of which we began to exist and with the dissolution of which we are to perish, it

signifies not a straw whether this matter, in which we are drowned both here and hereafter, be gross or spiritual. When Professor Huxley attributes an inferior veracity to non-scientific people, he means, of course, by the expression only an unconscious failure to look facts in the face. He will not, therefore, resent our saying in the same sense, that he cannot have a deeper feeling of the unconscious unveracity of theologians in any fiction they try to pass off on themselves, than they have of the unconscious unveracity of men of science in attempting to dress up matter to look like spirit.

If, therefore, we are to take the spiritual elements which Professor Huxley values to mean elements which may exist without belief in the supernatural, we pronounce with the utmost confidence that they are not the spiritual elements of the Christian faith. Professor Huxley does well to appeal to the 'imagination of these people' to recognize the existence of spiritual Christians who believe in nothing but what is physical; for the imagination is the only faculty of man which is capable of accepting such a paradox.

But let us suppose that Professor Huxley means by spiritual elements not those which are purely physical, but such as make some recognition of a supernatural world: not so definite as those who believe in miracles believe in, but still real. It is certain that there are a very large number of such persons, and that their faith enables them to appreciate the spiritual elements of Christianity in a quite different fashion from those who are absolute materialists, and who can but value the outward conduct to which Christianity leads, while regarding its inward principles as pure error. They call themselves agnostics, but that word does not in ordinary use express an absolute denial that we can know anything of God. It rather denotes a knowledge, vague but real, which enables us to know that there is something beyond nature, but forbids us to characterize it. The knowledge that there is even something there is real knowledge; and it is probably impossible for one who holds so much as this to help going further and making some application of it in history. He believes that, if not as a certainty yet as a possibility, and if not in particular events yet in the general course of nature, he can recognize the work of the great Something which he will not claim to know. Mr. Herbert Spencer talks of 'the naturally-revealed end towards which the Power manifested throughout Evolution works,' an expression which implies a revelation of the divine will to man as real as that taught by St. Paul.

The principles of one who entertains such a faith as this differ from the Church not so much in kind as in degree. His agnosticism admits of revelation; nay, positively believes in it, and makes it a practical and important element in a genuine spiritual life. And if he advances on the one side to meet Christianity, it on the other side advances to meet him. There is a large infusion of agnosticism in Christianity. It is over and over again declared in the Bible, and recognized by the Church, that we cannot know God with completeness. 'No man hath seen God at any time,' is certainly not spoken of bodily sight alone; nor is St. Paul's description of Him as dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen or can see. The very boldness of the human images under which God is presented in the Bible seem often to imply a feeling that the subject in itself is beyond reach, and, because it is beyond reach, resorts to whatever images will make this inaccessible truth practical for man.

But can men who have a vague but real faith in the supernatural adopt the language of Professor Huxley and say that to them a belief in the miraculous, on the evidence offered, would be simply immoral? The expression 'the miraculous' appears to show that the writer is not simply thinking of the particular miracles of the New Testament, but of the appearance of a miraculous element in the world at all. He holds no abstract principles rendering his belief in the miraculous impossible; he is diligent to impress on us that it is to him pure matter of evidence. But looking at it as pure matter of evidence, can the believer in the unknowable really set the miraculous at an utter distance, and reject it in the name of truth and morality? If the unknowable has no connexion whatever with the world known to us, how do we come to be able to know that there is such a thing? If the human brain and the human mind have worked through all time upon material impulses, and under a material system of causation, where or how has this element of so different a character found

room to make itself felt by them? And if the unknowable, either by acting through matter and force, or by some influence outside matter and force, has become known to man, this amounts to an interposition of the supernatural in nature which prepares the mind for miracles; in other words, it is evidence that the miraculous is possible. It will not be found possible to recoil from the miraculous with the absolute repugnance which Professor Huxley shows, without shutting ourselves so completely within the circle of our sensible experience that we ought to cease to talk about the unknowable, or pretend even to know that there is such a thing.

Perhaps it may be replied that the knowledge that there is an unknowable, with the reasons of this knowledge, belong to the sphere of the mind, while the miraculous belongs to the outward world. But the distinction will not stand. It will not stand when it is used for the defence of religion, as, for instance, to find a sphere for answers to prayer, without supposing God to interfere in the processes of external nature. For the connexions of mental changes with material movement in the structure of our frame, have been established so far that it is untruthful to presume that they are not complete. There is probably no thought of the mind of any sort whatever which has not its accompaniment and counterpart in motions of the matter of our frame, motions connected with physical causes preceding just as much as any other part of the world of nature. Whatever argument stands good as a defence of prayer for mental influences, stands good as a defence of prayer for rain, for it involves equally the expectation of an influence brought to bear upon matter. The brain or the clouds, what is the difference? Unless indeed we pray to a God who we know cannot answer, for the sake of exerting a subjective influence on ourselves: a make-believe and an unreality which honest men should be ashamed to resort to. But if the solidarity of the physical circle is true for one purpose, it is true all round. There are no gaps in the circle, but whatever notion reaches us from beyond, were it but the idea of the existence of the unknowable, serves to show that, in some wonderful way inscrutable to our understanding, the supernatural can make its way into nature without infringing law.

And this, then, is our comment upon the second text from Professor Huxley. We do not doubt in the least that there are many scientific men who, without accepting belief in miracles, value the spiritual elements of the Christian faith. But if they mean by spiritual elements that morality tinged with emotion which may exist without belief in the supernatural, especially in a community in which the influences of supernatural belief are spread even among those who do not personally share it, they are mistaken in supposing that this materialistic spirituality is really the Christian spirit. While, on the other hand, if they mean by spiritual elements such forms of moral thought and action as come from a sense or feeling of the supernatural, this cannot exist except on the supposition of some kind of revelation of the supernatural within the life of man, drawing with it in principle the same interposition of the infinite in the finite, which goes by the name of the miraculous.

When Christians speak of the spiritual, they mean something which is dependent on supernatural influences; and when they speak of the supernatural, they do not mean a something entirely out of relation to themselves, a non-existent existence, an unpractical dream, if that is even a dream which takes no forms; but they mean something which they know to exist, and which, therefore, bears a real relation to their minds. Whatever be the reasons by which those for whom Professor Huxley speaks are moved to believe in a spiritual element, whether it be the universal consent of mankind or the imperative demands of their own moral nature, are reasons with Christians for believing in God. Are they to be accused of untruthfulness in this? 'To them' it would be absolutely immoral to stop short of believing in God. They do not dare to palm off upon themselves that which appears to their thought nothing better than an unreality and a deception.

III. God's connexion with the mind and life of man being thus assured as a basis, Christ builds upon it. No one has ever claimed for the religion of Christ that the evidence of it is scientific. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that this admission throws Christianity upon sentiment for its support. It is the most comprehensive example of that species of belief on which our active life

depends, and which grows and strengthens by its adaptation to our faculties in their use. It takes up and completes the affections, the hopes and fears, and all the complicated system of motives upon which our moral life depends. It brings nearer to us Him who is already not far from everyone, for in Him we live and move and have our being, and it makes better known to us Him whom we already know. It uplifts to communion with the eternal the soul of man, which is already full of vague thoughts and longings for the eternal. And the facts by which this great system calls out our faith and love are fitted for its purpose as a body of living and active truth. It is witnessed to by the words and lives of a number of men of extraordinary powers, moral and intellectual, of very various characters of mind. It connects itself with a long series of human history. It takes up and satisfies the religious wants and observances which have shown themselves most strongly and permanently in various early religions, but especially in the greatest and deepest of them, the Jewish. It quickens the hopes and fears of man by extending his prospects beyond this world. Above all it embodies itself in a perfect human life, in which ever since it was seen on earth the best men have found that which raises them higher, and the bad not only reproof for their selfishness, but also the hope and opportunity of amendment.

Now the miraculous forms an essential element in the life of our Lord. It is not a separable accident, but part of the texture. There is no room for doubt that He claimed to work miracles; many of the sayings and acts in which His moral treatment of men and the spiritual character which has attracted faith to Him come out best, accompanied His miraculous cures. Even were this not so, the facts of His own history, which place Him in the relation to men upon which His power over them depends, are miraculous: a Christ who never rose would not be the Christ of Christianity. And even if neither of these things were the case, the spiritual elements of the life of Christ, in the most complete separation from outward events that could be made, would still be miraculous. All thinking, feeling, and willing have the nature of miracle. They rise up amidst the series of material causation without our knowing how they arise; and they produce great effects in the world of facts without our understanding how they produce them. But we see this miraculous character in the thinking, feeling, and willing of our Lord more plainly than in any other case; and should see it even if those events which we ordinarily call His miracles could be removed from His history.

Thus His miracles appear to us to be in Him just what the great deeds of great men are in them. These men would be great even if they did no such deeds; but such deeds are the natural effect and testimony of their greatness. The belief in the great deed depends in some degree upon our knowledge that there was a great man to do it; but our knowledge of the greatness of the man is also built up from the greatness of his deeds, some of them producing vast effects in the world, and some of them only consisting of a word or a gesture, but all of them contributing to the impression of the whole.

It may be said of any such deed that our certainty of it is inferior to that which we have of a fact tested by science. The evidence is of a different kind. The one is physical evidence, as far apart from man's moral nature as the forces which act upon his body. The other appeals to him as a living spirit, and all his living powers come into play in the act of believing it. And it is universally felt that to call for scientific tests in these matters of life and action is not reasonable so long as you have as much of the other kind of testimony as ought to suffice. Our moral qualities and our affections are educated by constant acceptance of belief in deeds past or present, all of them outrunning the physical causes of which we are aware. And we feel that the call for physical evidence would change the attitude of the mind from a condition in which the deed which we believe passes at once into use for purposes of feeling and example, to one in which it becomes the subject of speculation, and is very likely never to be anything else. We consider it an absolutely untruthful proceeding to separate the fact from the person who performs it, and consider its evidence as if it stood perfectly alone; only less untruthful than it would be to determine that we will believe the fact without evidence because it seems to us what might be expected of the person.

As we view the matter, the whole history of man's moral and spiritual life prepares us for Christianity, and Christianity is miraculous. Professor Huxley compendiously states the evidence for the miracles as he views it, by resting it upon the word of the unknown authors of the Gospels. But he leaves out the whole spiritual preparation for Christianity in the mind and the history of man, and omits the acceptance of the Gospels by the Christian Church of their time and ever since, as the basis upon which this great working system recognizes itself to be founded, and upon which its life proceeds. It is no more the part of truthfulness to disregard this portion of the evidence, than it would be to consider the doings of men apart from their character and, from the effects we know them to have worked.

Professor Huxley warns those who persist in identifying Christianity with the miraculous, that their systems are destined to fall to the ground. The prophecy would be more intelligible if he or any one else had never presented to us a form of Christianity which is not identified with the miraculous. What is the use of getting rid of a few miracles from the Gospels, even if that could be done without fatal injury to faith, if after they were gone the most etherialized version of the religion could not be given without somewhere or other involving an influence of spirit on matter which is beyond science?

Miraculous Christianity will never be expelled except by a form of religion which will do the positive work for souls which it now effects. Its work appeals to spiritual wants of our nature which are the deepest things in us, and which we cannot disregard without gross untruthfulness. And as the years of absolute free speech about religion, in which we are living, pass over, and no one produces to us the better religion which is to supersede Christianity, the conviction grows stronger and stronger in our mind that it cannot be produced. Positivism, with a courage and sincerity for which we cannot be too grateful, attempted a new religion at which the mass of mankind only smile. The religion of the Unknowable has never proceeded even so far as to establish a tabernacle. The religion of the Unconscious is equally far behind. The Eternal, not ourselves, is the creed only of an individual or two. And while these unsuccessful ventures have at least issued some species of prospectus, even that cannot be said for the spiritual elements of the Christian faith which Professor Huxley claims to hold while excluding the miraculous. No blindfold adherent of any priesthood ever accepted a creed so undefined as this. And Professor Huxley would be the last man to say that truthfulness can consist in accepting a form of words the import of which we cannot understand.

2.11. 'Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?' (1890)* ²¹

Religion has been defined as 'consisting wholly and solely in certain acts of deference paid by the living to the ghosts of the dead.' But how does the savage come by the idea of 'ghost'? If evolution consists in a gradually increasing range of adaptation to environment, why should the correspondence between mental evolution and the environment become less complete? The introduction of the idea of 'ghost' marks mental degeneration.

If intelligence thus ceased to adjust itself to fact, the law of elimination should assert itself here as in all other cases. The consequences would react on the physical welfare, and the descendants of the superstitious would, on the whole, give way before those of the stronger-minded.

No such aberration of instinct can be traced amongst the animals. We find there no suicidal sacrifice of time, labour or victims. Why should primitive man be in this so far below their mental level?

* [Read at the Leeds Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Leeds, 5 September 1890 and published in the relative report, see Welby 1890a].

21. See *Jour. Anthropol. Inst.* 1891.

It may be urged that the imaginative or figurative power of the savage, like that of the child, lacks a corrective which is subsequently supplied. But why should this corrective have lapsed at all, since we find it throughout organic development in the automatic and increasingly complex form?

When, then, in the developing consciousness does the link with nature fail, and the answer to stimulus go astray?

And even if the majority of primitive men had failed to carry on the organic tradition of adjustment, why was not the tendency preserved amongst a dominant minority? If such a dominant minority is to be found in the early priests and seers, how comes it that they have not left clearer traces of this really valid knowledge? The truest ideas (however simple and even vague) of the elements of experience ought to be the most widely transmitted. Why, then, was the general tendency towards persistent illusion? The growing 'mind' must have lost the primordial ability to penetrate through mask of any kind to reality. But to have thus lost touch with nature ought to lead to the non-survival of the false thinker. Fatal waste of precious opportunity and energy as well as more positive mischief must needs result.

And, further, the tendency to understand and utilise experience must have been universally inherited. Why, then, should it have so generally failed when we come to the imaginative stage?

If the idea of 'spirit' had its origin in primitive man, it would have to undergo the most primitive tests, viz., *contact*, *odour*, and *flavour*. Failure to meet these would mean destruction to the idea, which could not long be supported merely by the evidence of dreams and hallucinations, inevitably conflicting. And yet these ideas, which seem scarcely to be a natural stage in an orderly and continuous development of mental power, *are the concomitants of a brain growth which certainly is both orderly and continuous*.

Reasoning from the analogy of evolution generally, we should surely have expected that the human mind would have been first matter-of-fact and practical, then imaginative, that is, pictorial, image-producing. But the ghost-theory tends to ignore the practical stage, to turn orderly imagination into desultory and riotous fancy – which is at once stereotyped in persistent and often harmful practice – and to restrict the accurate to modern times. But this is at variance with at least some recent discoveries (e.g., the drawings of the Cro-Magnon cave-men).

Finally, *why should the cult of the living, which had been the very condition of all organic advance, give place to such a monstrous paradox as the cult of the dead?*

We are left with two alternatives.

(1) To suppose an absolute break and reversal in the evolution of mind, wherein a permanently distorted picture of the universe is created, and the real and significant suddenly abdicates in favour of the baseless and unmeaning.

(2) To ask whether there is some reality answering to these crude conceptions, which thus form part of a continuous mental development, and may be described as faulty *translation*, rendered inevitable by the scantiness of primitive means of analysis and expression.

To adopt the first alternative is to strike a blow at the doctrine of continuous ascent in evolution. To adopt the second might lead us to conclude that what we want is greater power of interpreting primitive ideas as expressed in myth and ritual, notably in relation to recent developments and present researches in psychology itself, and the psychological aspects of language.

2.12. Abstract of 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution' (1890)*

1. At the root of the idea of evolution we find:

- a) Appropriate reaction to stimulus.
- b) The tendency of this to foster life.

2. To postulate departure from or reversal of this order involves a leap requiring to be justified by irresistible evidence.

3. What then, in mental development, does investigation tend to show?

Complete correspondence, followed by its apparent failure. No organic tradition of an earlier correlation seems to modify the collapse. Man has to begin with a blank page; the result being that in practical common-sense he falls relatively below the sub-human animal.

4. If it be suggested that from lack of means of correction early aberrations were stereotyped, why has the earlier correspondence been powerless to prevent this? The pertinacity of regulative organisation has often been pointed out.

5. The senses which enable the organism so to respond to environment as to accomplish the organic aim, are related in man to a specially developing brain which (as typically evident in the ocular processes) is the link between what we call 'thing' and what we call 'thought.'

6. Physiologically, the response is practically unerring; psychologically it is apparently casual guesswork. Temporary crudeness and error must naturally attend early tentative efforts: yet human intelligence ought not to begin by wholly losing *that power of passing through appearances to reality* which has been throughout the condition not merely of survival but of existence, and indeed of every form of reaction.

7. To use the illuminating theory of three grades of the nervous system, it would seem that the lowest and highest mental centres – represented respectively by the reflex and the mathematical – are in unbroken touch with reality. The middle centres, whose office is mainly pictorial, fall into parody as though that touch were lost.

8. But the inherited tendencies which thus re-appear at the higher end of the scale, reinforced as they must have been by the despotism of early experience, ought to have prevented, not the occurrence of the erratic, but its *perpetuation*. And the early supremacy of the sensible would intensify this conservative factor. How then do we suppose all this at once overcome with the advent of the ghost?

9. If however we assume this ghost, we shall find that, beginning with the idea of breath, and going on through those of echo, shadow, reflection and dream, there is apparently everywhere a chasm which seems to have been overlooked or ignored.

10. *E.g. the corpse of a sacrificed victim continues to cast shadow and reflection as before.* And as the primitive dreamer's outer and inner 'man' would be what we know as skin and mucous membrane (as even modern colloquialism illustrates), he would on waking insist on the familiar sense-tests. The incoherence of dreams would also stagger him; for the automatic level of mind demands uniformity; and *all mental advance is the concomitant of an unbroken continuity of cerebral development.*

11. The evidence of early feats of mind both intellectual and aesthetic constantly accumulates. But everywhere we find the same apparent paradox. *From the earliest organic moment we follow the cult of the living, until a point is reached where we begin to trace its deliberate reversal, the cult of the dead.* What are the ultimate implications of this?

* [See Welby 1890b. 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution' is the title of a paper by Welby published in 1891, based on another short paper entitled 'Is there a Break in Mental Evolution', of 1890. Both are included in this volume].

12. The idea of the ghost leads to that of the god. We are told (e.g. by Prof. Robertson Smith) that the earliest conception of the relation of gods and men was that of a *strictly literal* family. Where then is the missing link?

13. If we appeal to the analogy of the human child, we must of course admit that it falls below the young of the subhuman animal in muscular and neural adjustment. But the child does not caricature either; and its mental experiments, when erratic, are essentially fitful and desultory. Also, it does not dwell upon the phenomena of physical death, and it is consciously dramatic.

14. How, in short, did man go astray? We are apparently reduced to two alternatives:

- a) We must postulate a complete break and reversal in the evolution of mind: or
- b) We must seek further than we have yet gone for an explanation of the gaps or positive deflections which give this impression.

15. If we choose the former it follows that primitive man largely concentrated his attention on and sacrificed his welfare to that which all ancestral energies must have tended to ignore. An elaborate civilization does loosen direct ties with outward nature; yet it is the highest product of this, – the scientific mind – which regains the apparently lost touch, and gives us what is now called scientific truth.

16. But if we accept the latter we may find that much of what seems wholly baseless or morbid may prove to be faulty *translation* of underlying fact: that the continuity of natural link is in truth unbroken: and that what we need is a closer study of *signification* in the light of recent developments of psychology; more especially on the side of language and of expression in the most general sense.

2.13. An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution (1891)*

Two facts seem to be indispensable to the idea of evolution:

- 1) Appropriate reaction to stimulus, direct or indirect;
- 2) The invariable tendency of such reaction on the whole in the direction of the development, preservation, and reproduction of life.²²

If, therefore, we suppose a general and grave departure from, and even in some cases an actual reversal of this order, we become responsible for a tremendous leap. We are bound to justify this by irresistible evidence that the facts on which we rely are really accounted for by our theory.²³ And we have also to ask whether they could not be as well accounted for on some hypothesis which

* [Paper read at the Anthropological Institute on 9 December 1890 and subsequently published in *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, see Welby 1891a].

- 22. 'Each requirement serves as a stepping-stone to the next and each new response is made easier by those previously rendered possible. In this way the correspondence between the organism and the outside world gradually becomes as Herbert Spencer has urged, both more precise and complex. By slow degrees a more and more harmonious relationship between the two is brought about, the degree of complexity of which we are left to gauge principally by an estimate of the character of the movements executed in relation to the stimuli from which they immediately or remotely proceed.' Bastian, *Brain, Organ of Mind*. 'The tendency at any one moment is simply towards more life, simply growth; but this process of self-preservation imperceptibly but steadily modifies the self that is preserved.' Ward, 'Pysch.,' *Encyc. Brit.*, p. 72. See also Brown-Sequard, *Forum*, August, 1890: 643; Maudsley on 'Cerebral Cortex and its Work,' *Mind* 58: 168, 169.
- 23. 'Of the origin of animism perhaps no perfect account has yet been given. It can hardly be said to be obvious why, in uncultured races or individuals, there should arise that invariable tendency to represent natural forces as conscious and anthropomorphic. There remains, however, the difficulty of understanding by what process this rudimentary doctrine of the soul has

involved an unbroken continuity from the earliest to the latest phases of development.²⁴ Looking at mental evolution from this double point of view, and taking such reliable traces or evidences as we have of the working of primitive minds, what then do we actually find? We begin with an 'environment,' and an organism in perfect 'touch,' the external world everywhere impressing itself and its practical meaning on the organism, and the penalty of non-survival everywhere attaching itself to the crime of non-response.²⁵ But suddenly, just when a certain form of organic energy – that which we call brain-power or intelligence – has reached a given point in complexity, this tie apparently breaks.²⁶ The energies, till then so economically employed and always making for life, become fatally spendthrift and reckless.²⁷ All the long and severe training in appropriate reaction and orderly adjustment counts for nothing; elimination falls into abeyance; and except in the lowest levels of response – like that of selecting proper food – primitive man has to begin from the beginning to understand the world he lives in, and to act accordingly. The result naturally is that the sub-human animal surpasses the human in the very characteristic which gives the man his point of advance, intelligent reaction to reality. For no animals waste time, health, energy, hard-earned food, and shelter on the non-existent, much less on the positively 'dead.' Still less are they so imbecile as to immolate in terror or in honour thereof the finest specimens of their race. But this (under the idea of 'ghost' and its equivalents) is just what early man is credited with doing; not fitfully or accidentally, but deliberately and persistently.²⁸

Still, it may be objected, there is no doubt of the facts. The imagination of 'early man' did really play him false in this wanton fashion. Everywhere we find ghost or spirit, fantastic and grotesque animism, fetish²⁹ or totem, cult and myth. And so it may be urged, we are justified in accepting this strange anomaly; vaguely referring it, perhaps, to the analogous fact that the human child's muscular adjustments are less developed than those of the young of sub-human animals both at low and high organic levels. But then the baby does not try to suck with its nose, or later, to crawl on its

grown into the great system of developed animism; a system of thought so comprehensive as to hold all nature in a web of vital action and spontaneity; so multifarious as to invent some new spirit-race for almost every fresh order of phenomena; so coherent as to create a perfect plexus of ideas that mutually support and interpret one another; finally, so persistent, that even its more extravagant developments can survive for ages in defiance of accurate knowledge.' Oughter Lonie, 'Animism,' *Encyc. Brit.*, pp. 65, 56.

24. 'In this organisation of experiences which constitutes evolving intelligence, there must be that same continuity, that same subdivision of function, that same mutual dependence, and that same ever-advancing consensus, which characterise the physical organisation.' Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 388. See also Ward, *Psych.* ('Theory of Presentations'), *Encyc. Brit.* p. 192 Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, pp. 162, 163; Ladd, *Phys. Psych.*, pp. 18, 19, 199, 618; Foster, *Text Book of Physiology*, part 1, p. 8.
25. Lloyd-Morgan, *Animal Life and Intelligence*, pp. 243, 300. See also Darwin, *Descent of Man*, pp. 94–96.
26. Darwin, *Descent of Man*, pp. 82, 83.
27. 'To such an extent is this provision for the future life of the deceased carried, as, in many cases, to entail great evil on the survivors. Concerning some Gold Coast tribes, Beecham says, 'a funeral is usually absolute ruin to a poor family.' Spencer, *Princ. of Sociology*, Vol. I: 202, 203.
28. E. Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, p. 304, *et seq.* See also Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, pp. 208–213. Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, p. 171, *Ewe-Speaking Peoples*, p. 117, *et seq.*
29. It will, however, be borne in mind that, as Major Ellis shows, 'the confusion which has resulted from the improper use of the term "fetish" is extreme, and is now probably irreparable.' *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, p. 178.

back; and the child does not cringe to its own toys, or feed its own shadow.³⁰ No doubt it makes great mistakes and requires to have them corrected.³¹ But these are not circumstantial, consistent, and elaborate as in the case of ancient superstition, nor do they include a morbid attention to or delusive inferences from the phenomena of death. And so far as children are 'animistic,' it is distinctly, as Mr. Herbert Spencer points out, on the dramatic ground.³² They are born mimics and 'actors.' Still it may be pleaded that as man in his childhood had no elders to teach him better, he stereotyped his fancies, and they have become, like other habitual tendencies, organised and perpetuated. But even thus we have to show why the yet earlier correspondence has become so ineffective as to permit such perpetuation; and why the nascent figurative power should wander so far astray.³³ Mr. Spencer often dwells on 'the pertinacity with which the oldest part of the regulative organisation maintains its original trait in the teeth of influences that modify things around it'; but here we have to wonder at the fatal ease with which it is lost. The work of the senses is to relate our notions and actions rightly to our environment, and enable us so to respond to it as to accomplish the organic aim. But these senses in man are related to a specially developing brain.³⁴ Leaving questions of 'design' on one side, we find a gradual emergence of ever higher types of activity, depending throughout on unbroken correspondence between thing and thought. We know at least that this is the secret of the optical process; it ought to be that of the 'visionary,' or at least of the 'speculative' process.³⁵ But the metaphors of seeing often express to us, by a suggestive paradox, the most dangerous forms of blindness. Why? A physical touch goes from the skin-point to the proper nerve-ganglion and back again on another line; appropriate muscular action follows. But a touch of 'emotional' experience seems to go to some 'imaginative' centre at random, generally therefore setting the wrong mental muscles in motion. Where then does the imaginative message lose its way, strike the wrong line, evoke inappropriate response, and remain unable even to right itself?³⁶

The link with nature and fact that the developing gift which we call 'mind,' seems at one stage to have lost, is the power to pass through appearances to reality, in the sense of ignoring illusory and detecting actual characters.³⁷ The animal which is deceived by illusion or simulation is in the long run 'eliminated.' The animal which survives is the one that penetrates all deceptions of appearance and escapes being ensnared by them. And the same is of course true in a more mechanical sense of the plant, and below that again in a purely mechanical sense, of all inorganic substances.³⁸ Why then did not this primordial order of things translate itself inevitably into the mental process at its first inception, balancing and directing the budding representative power?³⁹

30. 'A child's mind is like an animal's; it is intensely practical. Ideas, as such, do not appeal to it. The thing, the action is what the child is after.' Dewey 'Logic of Verification,' *Open Court*, 24 April 1890. See also E. Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, p. xii.

31. M. Foster, *Central Nervous System*, p. 1069. See also Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 409, 410.

32. Spencer, *Princ. of Sociology*, Vol. I: 144.

33. Spencer on 'Space Consciousness,' *Mind* 59: 320. See also 'Maudsley on Cerebral Cortex and its Work,' *Ibid.* 58: 179.

34. Foster, *Central Nervous System*, p. 1033.

35. James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. XI: 179, 180, 306. See also Ladd, *Phys. Psych.*, pp. 455, 456; Ribot, *Psych. of Attention*, p. 11.

36. 'The process is in fact much less simple than this, and the term "reflex action" is now explained of on this ground.' Comp. Foster, *Central Nervous System*, p. 906. See also Crichton-Browne, 'Hygienic Uses of Imagination,' *Brit. Med. Journ.*, 24 August 1889; Maudsley, *Theory of Vitality*, pp. 298, 311, 312.

37. James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. II: 384, 385, 387. See also Ladd, *Phys. Psych.*, pp. 464-467.

38. Lewis, *Problems of Life and Mind* 69: 118, 119.

39. Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.* Vol. I: 317, 353.

We have here no question of scientific or logical acumen, or of any of the subtle products which belong to a later stage of mental growth; no question of 'knowing' why or how, or knowing a 'self,' that knows, but simply of organic correspondence with natural fact in full and healthy work.⁴⁰ Man is closely related to all nature, and his ancestry does not end with the animal or even with the organic order; 'within' him as 'without' are found the same vibrations and the same elements.⁴¹ Thus it ought to be difficult for mere appearances to mislead the primitive mind.⁴² Everything fosters the tendency to persist in old grooves; a new departure involves a distinct and even painful effort.⁴³ And the delusive ideas which prompt wasteful or injurious action would always lead indirectly to the non-survival of the false thinker.

Comparing then the respective developments of the individual and the race, it would seem that the lowest and the highest centres are firmly linked to and controlled by natural reality, the influence of which vindicates itself in all their varied forms of activity.⁴⁴ Just as the retina gives us a faithful picture of external objects, so the geometrician or mechanician draws us a trustworthy diagram of abstract or concrete forms or paths which 'matter' and 'force' actually take.⁴⁵ But between the two there lies this fatal zone of falsity, of untrustworthiness, of record, and report. Why do the 'middle centres,' that is, the imaginative, the emotional centres, run wild in unwholesome beliefs and practices, so deeply implanted in the mind-tissue of the race, that we can identify some of

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40. 'There is an ambiguity in the words "know", "knowledge", [...] "to know", may mean either to perceive or apprehend, or it may mean to understand or comprehend. Only when we rise to intellectual knowledge is it true to say, 'no one could understand the meaning of a straight line without being, shown a line not straight, a bent or crooked line.' Ward, 'Psych.,' *Encyc. Brit.* ('Theory of Presentations'). '[...] what is in consciousness is not necessarily in a clear analytic consciousness; and that we may by a process of deductive reasoning be sure that certain elements are present as factors in a given mental state, while we are yet quite unable to call these elements into a clear analytic consciousness, separated from certain other elements bound to them by long association and habit.' Fullerton, *Mind* 42: 192. See also Lloyd-Morgan, *Animal Life, &c.*, pp. 308, 365; J. Solomon, *Mind* 58: 264, 265, Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 122.
41. Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*, Vol. XI: 46, 48, 355–357. See also Fiske, *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*, Vol. I: 408, 415; J. McK. Cattell on 'Wundt,' *Mind* 51: 436, 437, 439; Winwood Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, pp. 462–467; Ellis, *Tshi-speaking peoples*, pp. 325, 327–328.
42. 'Animate beings are conceived by every individual, at a very early stage, as possessing internal activity similar to his own, but there is no necessity whatever, nay everything speaks against it, for his also investing with such an activity things moved only by animate beings.' J. Pikler. *Mind* 59: 398. 'The paramount influence which surrounding nature has on the development of the human being is unquestionable. It is the more powerful the nearer the people is to the uncultured state, and diminishes in proportion as human art and science gain the power over the forces of nature. For this reason a primitive people ascribe spiritual agencies to those results of nature's laws not understood by them.' Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, pp 385, 386.
43. '[...] the origin of attention is very humble, and its primitive forms have actually been bound up with the most exacting conditions of animal life.' Ribot, *Psych. of Attention*, p. 32. James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. II: 415–441.
44. Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, Vol. I: 145.
45. 'But what we mean by the universe is the sum of our actual and possible impressions [...]. Form and number are mere names for certain relations between matters of fact; unless a man had seen or felt the difference between a straight line and a crooked one, straight and crooked would have no more meaning to him, than red and blue to the blind.' Huxley on *Hume*, p. 118.

them even now?⁴⁶ The highest centres at every stage are in some senses centres of control. Relax them and you release the next lower in grade to over-act their part.⁴⁷ Do we suppose then that the race has really passed everywhere through a stage of promiscuous and disorderly mental action, out of which or through which it nevertheless has dragged intact the sound root of accuracy and order?⁴⁸ Every mental image would presumably be saturated with what we are now told to call ‘organic memories.’ No doubt we could not expect that this would carry man far in acquiring knowledge. But surely it would have checked and tended to starve out, after a brief reign, the senseless versions of natural fact which we find stereotyped for long ages in the history of man?⁴⁹ Baseless vagaries would of course have arisen, but they would surely have withered for lack of nutriment, either in organic tradition or from external experience, so imperious in those days and so rigorous in its penalties. They would have been essentially evanescent, and liable to clash with and efface each other. They would even lack the favourable conditions for survival that the civilised child’s fancies have. He is under no ceaseless danger pressure like that of the primitive youngster, dependent every moment, like his parents, on the keenness of his perception and the vigilance of his outlook. And he has not got to make his traditions and secure their acceptance and persistence! For the real crux lies in consensus and permanence.⁵⁰ The meeting fancy which comes and goes, incessantly shifting and changing, is a very different matter; and no extravagance in that need cause surprise or question. Further: the pre-intellectual test is first contact, then odour and flavour.⁵¹ Thus if the primitive individual mind has ever so vivid a dream or waking illusion, it must soon begin to fade and die out unless constantly revived by the sense-tests until then

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46. A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, Vol. I: 8, 9, 11, 29–30. See also Baldwin, *Handbook of Psych.*, pp. 217, 267.
47. ‘The doctrine of evolution implies the passage from the most organized to the least organised, or, in other terms, from the most general to the most special. Roughly, we say that there is a gradual “adding on” of the more and more special, a continual adding on of new organisations. But this “adding on” is at the same time a “keeping down”. The higher nervous arrangements evolved out of the lower keep down those lower, just as a government evolved out of a nation controls as well as directs that nation. If this be the process of evolution, then the reverse process of dissolution is not only “a taking off” of the higher, but is at the very same time a “letting go” of the lower.’ Hughlings Jackson, *Croonian Lectures*, 1884. ‘As we rise to higher and higher planes of function we enlarge the office of inhibition. Every higher order of motion regulates, or in other words inhabits, that of the order below [. . .].’ Clifford Allbutt, ‘Address at Glasgow,’ 1888, *Brit. Med. Journ.*, 11 August 1888.
48. Baldwin, *Handbook of Psych.*, pp. 158–160, 222, 223.
49. ‘A being had arisen who [. . .] knew how to control and regulate (nature’s) action and could keep himself in harmony with her, not by a change in body, but by an advance of mind.’ Wallace, *Natural Selection*, p. 325.
50. ‘Up to this point we have only examined, in our investigation of the mechanism of attention, the external impulsion arising from stimuli and surroundings which causes it to pass from one form to another. We now come upon a much more obscure question, namely, the study of the internal mechanism through which a state of consciousness is laboriously maintained in the face of the psychological struggle for life which incessantly tends to make it disappear [. . .] The whole problem consists in this very power of inhibition, of retention.’ Ribot, *Psych. of Attention*, pp. 45, 46. A. W. Howitt, *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, August, 1886: 26, 52.
51. ‘From moment to moment (the untaught human being) sees things around, touches them, handles them, moves them hither and thither. He knows nothing of sensations and ideas – has no words for them [. . .] His senses make him conversant only with things externally existing, and with his own body; and he transcends his senses only far enough to draw concrete inferences respecting the actions of these things. An invisible, intangible entity,

all-dominant.⁵² Sight is the highest and most intellectual sense.⁵³ The primitive man, obliged sometimes to search for food and evade enemies and dangers in the dusk, would rely much on smell and touch.⁵⁴ How do we suppose then that this condition can be satisfied when the 'ghost' comes upon the scene?⁵⁵ Let us however, assume this 'ghost,' and take first the most obvious of the ideas which it indicates, that which the word 'spirit' conveys, – Breath.⁵⁶ How did early man come by the idea of a 'breath' which survived, and could not merely exert force like wind, but for instance, listen, walk, and eat ? At what point did this gratuitous absurdity begin? Supposing a tribal 'chief' dies his 'ghost' leaves his 'body' as 'breath.' No doubt the concurrent departure of the 'breaths' of his wife and slaves might suggest a breath-community in a breath-world of which individual puffs or sighs might make up wind. And again, the smoke-columns of the funeral pyre, as they were seen to be gradually dissipated, might well be supposed to turn into air.⁵⁷ Why then do we not find everywhere a supreme Wind-Deity,⁵⁸ and a swinging fetish to represent the sacred breath-rhythm – and the heart-beat too?⁵⁹

Again. Taking certain features of universal experience as the possible source of the most conspicuous class of these vagaries, we have to distinguish the ideas of:

1. Voice and its echo.
2. Object and its shadow.
3. Object and its reflection.
4. The energy and matter, work-force and stuff of an object; its power to be useful and its tangible mass. All four contrasts are of course reflected in dream.⁶⁰

1. Here we have apparent separation in space but complete reproduction in character, although in lessening intensity. Before taking the other points, which are all more or less related to sight, it may be suggested that the primitive ear, rendered acutely discriminative by the constant presence of danger, would be less liable to mistake the echo for an independent voice than the civilised one would be. It could not fail to note the invariable repetition in every detail of sounds which could be accounted for in the usual way.

2. Here there is complete distinctness, but the shadow has only the outline produced by obstructed light; no idea of content is given.

such as Mind is inferred to be, is a high abstraction unthinkable by him, and inexpressible by his vocabulary.' Spencer, *Princ. of Sociology*, Vol. I: 147.

52. Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 387, 388, 390, 391.

53. Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, Vol. I: 131.

54. Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 362. See also Whittaker on 'Volkmann's Psych.,' *Mind* 50: 494.

55. 'Of course an insane person may make mistakes; and he is not less liable to do so than other people. But his insanity does not consist in making mistakes; it consists in his inability to recognise that they are mistakes, when the conditions requisite for making such a recognition are afforded him.' Mercier, *Nervous System and the Mind*, p. 261.

56. 'The act of breathing, so characteristic of the higher animals during life, and coinciding so closely with life in its departure, has been repeatedly and naturally identified with the life or soul itself.' Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I: 432. See also Croom-Robertson on 'Siebeck,' *Mind* 38: 293–295. Ribot. *Psych. of Attention*, p. 20.

57. Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, pp. 349, 351.

58. Since writing this, I find that Professor Max Müller (*Physical Religion*, p. 310), contends that we often do find the storm wind prominently deified. But as he himself subordinates it to fire and connects it closely with thunder, sky, &c., I leave the passage as it stands.

59. The further question as to the comparative non-use of words for 'blood' to express 'soul,' like many other such questions, cannot be here advanced for want of Space.

60. Spencer, *Princ. of Sociology*, Vol. I: 192–196, *et seq.*

3. Here we have reproduction in the flat or in the solid; e.g., in the mirror or in an artificial copy. The two are again separable.

4. Here we can no longer separate or even distinguish, except mentally.

It follows therefore that while it might well seem possible to distinguish and dedicate to the ghost the meat-shadow or meat-reflection or imitation-meat, the impalpable nourishment of meat could not be so dedicated because it could not be similarly distinguished, nor would it be perceptible as in the other cases by any of the senses. So with the weapon or tool.

But loss of work-power is shown by signs of wear. If the supposed 'ghost' deserted his super-sensuous sphere and took to using real weapons and tools and consuming real food, his devotee would find the first worn and blunted; while, if it was supposed that in this one case the ghost (or good) of the food could be taken and all the rest left, the food after use would acquire an abnormal appearance of which the natural analogue would be the waste product after assimilation. This, for practical reasons would strike the earlier more forcibly than the later mind.⁶¹ For advancing civilisation tends to ignore that side of life; besides which the increase of abstracting power tends to distract attention from the physically concrete. At all events we should expect to find everywhere traces of a simple and clear distinction between tangible things for actual men (or beasts) and intangible things for imaginary ones.⁶² In very early times 'visions' are procured by fasting or intoxicants; so that the idea of providing visionary food would naturally thus find expression. And would there not be attempts to provide with a dedicated object its shadow or reflection? (the effigy we do find in some cases). But that would not be enough with the food. The most deeply established test of the consumption of food would be its disappearance when devoured. Take a man who devotes part of an animal he has killed to the making of a meal for his dead ancestor, keeping the rest for his own family. Credit him with the supposition that the meat has a ghostly identity or double like that which leaves the body at death, that this is what does him good when he eats, and is what the ghost requires and consumes.⁶³ But the dedicator cannot help observing sooner or later, that precisely the same result happens in the case of the devoted and the undevoted food. The ghost has taken the good of the one, no one has taken the good of the other. Then let him profanely eat (as, under stress of famine, must surely have sometimes happened), and the food is found to feed him still; the food-ghost has not been consumed! The same thing applies to dedicated corn, if planted later under stress of starvation. And are we to suppose that the devotee makes a distinction between the usefulness of the slave and the usefulness of food? Or does he class the life of the one and the feeding-powers of the other in the same category? Is he supposed to notice that after 'breath' has left an edible animal another kind of 'ghost' remains, which is

61. 'In childhood we feel ourselves to be closer to the world of sensible phenomena, we live immediately with them and in them; an intimately vital tie binds us and them together.' Griesinger, *Mental Diseases*, sec. 50, 98 (quoted by James, *Princ. of Psych.*).

62. 'The savage thinks of (life) as a concrete material thing of a definite bulk, capable of being seen and handled, kept in a box or jar, and liable to be bruised, fractured, or smashed in pieces.' Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. II: 296. 'It is the doctrines and rites of the lower races which are, according to their philosophy, results of point-blank natural evidence and acts of straightforward practical purpose.' Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I: 496–502.

63. 'With regard to solid food, they believe that the gods make use of the spiritual part of it, leaving the material portion behind.' Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, pp. 78–84. 'One sequence of the primitive belief in the materiality of the double is the ministering to such desires as were manifest during life. Originally this belief is entertained literally: as by the Zulus, who in a case named said, "the Ancestral spirits came and eat up all the meat, and when the people returned from bathing, they found all the meat eaten up".' Spencer, *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, pp. 673–678. See also Huxley (quoting Lippert), 'Evolution of Theology,' *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1885, p. 355, note; and Tregear's 'Maoris,' *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, November, 1889: 120–121.

what the ghost ancestor or chief wants to absorb as a hungry man does?⁶⁴ Of course in one case the practical course seems obvious. The ghost-chief wants a ghost-slave. Then, say the devoted survivors, let us kill one, and release the ghost to go to his master. But they do not thereby send his shadow or his reflection to ghost-land. His dead body continues to cast both. How is it then that they jump to the conclusion (of which there is no evidence in the practical sphere) that the life-force, identity, or, 'breath' are gone there? Why did not these take with them what had always been associated with them and even reckoned in the same ghostly category.⁶⁵

But here we are confronted with the dream theory. The dead ancestor has been seen in dreams, therefore the descendants are sure that he lives somehow and somewhere, and all the rest follows.⁶⁶ Yet surely it would sometimes strike the immolators forcibly that it did not invariably follow that next time they dreamt the chief they dreamt the slave, to correspond with the new state of things. Dreams are not now and surely never can have been as coherent, consistent, invariably repeated as such an idea would require them to be.⁶⁷ Do we find anything to suggest that when a great chief died, he was dreamt by the dreamers as alone and destitute, while after his funeral with all its attendant ceremonies of provision, he was dreamt surrounded and provided as in life? If not, would not the waste of precious property strike men who had produced or acquired it at much

64. I had never seen this point noticed when the above was written. I now find the following passages in Ellis's *Tshi-speaking Peoples*. 'This word kra, though generally interpreted "soul", does not at all correspond to the European idea of a soul; for it is the man himself, in a shadowy or ghostly form, that continues his existence after death in another world, and not the kra. The latter is rather a guardian spirit, who lives in a man, and whose connection with him terminates at his death,' p. 149. 'We, too, have a very similar notion to this of the kra, and which is probably a survival of such a belief. A living man is believed to be tenanted by another individuality which is termed a soul, and which reasons with man through what is called "conscience". When the man dies, however, we make the soul to go to the next world instead of the shadowy man; but a good deal of confusion exists in our ideas on this point, and the belief in ghosts, the shadowy outlines of former living men, seems to point to a time when each of the two original individualities was believed to pursue a separate existence after the death of the man.' Ibid.: 155. See also his *Ewe-speaking Peoples*. 'This belief in every animate and inanimate natural object having two individualities besides its tangible one will perhaps help to explain much that is still obscure as to the origin of Nature Worship. It must be borne in mind that the kra is not the soul, for the soul, in the accepted sense of the word, is 'the animating, separable, surviving entity, the vehicle of individual personal existence,' whereas every kra has been the indwelling spirit of many men and probably will be of many more.' (This seems to imply the need for reconsidering the whole subject in the light of fresh observation). 'Europeans, holding as they do the belief in one 'soul' only, are naturally prone to misconceive a native's idea of two "soul", unless, which is rarely the case, they are aware that such a belief is known to exist among certain peoples.' Ibid.: 17.

65. Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, p. 19. See also *Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 105–106; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I: 430.

66. Howitt, *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, August 1886: 66. See also Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I: 478, 496, 602.

67. 'No class of psychical phenomena has received less illumination from science than dream. Some psychologists pass them by altogether, while others are apt to deal with them in a very hasty and superficial manner. The reason of this neglect is not far to seek. In the nature of the case the facts are exceedingly difficult to reach.' Sully on 'Delbœuf,' *Mind* 45: 115. 'The influence of dreams is so great upon the life of the American Indians that every act and thought is predicated upon this superstition.' Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, p. 61.

cost of effort, and who had the strongest reasons for laying stress on its absence or presence in all the world they knew of?

The primitive man's digestive process, so far as he was occasionally conscious of it, would surely be his natural 'origin' of the 'inner.' Cultured man connects 'dreams' as he does 'reflection' with an 'inner' which he has acquired metaphysically – in an advanced mental stage.⁶⁸ But to early man if not 'outer' reality the dream would only be 'inner' in the mucous membrane of the 'digestive cavity' sense.⁶⁹ And this sense of 'outer' and 'inner' may well be launched with us into the world of mind at its earliest stage, since as ectoderm and endoderm it belongs to the first differentiation of the starting-cell.⁷⁰ Therefore, everywhere touch, taste, and smell, would be the tests by which a visual impression would be tried and confusion averted, whether in the case of dream or spectral illusion.⁷¹

Again, one of the first traces one would expect to find of the organism's long reflex and automatic training would be an even keener sense in the primitive mind than in ours, of the incongruity of dream-events and objects.⁷² Our range of conception has so widened that there is always a vague reservation or suspense in face of the strangest 'surprises.' The possibilities have so multiplied. But to our early ancestors the utter dislocation of ordinary experience in dreams would have made it difficult deliberately to accept them as fact, except so far as there was disorder of mind.⁷³ For the more recent the emergence from the automatic level, the more inexorable

68. Reville, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 87.

69. Winwood Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, pp. 171–172.

70. 'The boundary between the internal and external was, no doubt, originally the surface of the body with which the subject or self was identified; and in this sense the terms are of course correctly used [...] Yet, evident as it seems that the correlatives in and not in must both apply to the same category [...] we still find psychologists more or less consciously confused between "internal", meaning "presented" in the psychological sense, and "external" meaning "not presented" but corporeal or oftener extra-corporeal.' Ward, 'Psych.,' *Encyc. Brit.*, pp. 37–38. 'The body becomes, in fact, the earliest form of self, the first datum for our later conceptions of permanence and individuality [...].' *Ibid.*: 56.

71. 'From the day of our birth we have sought every hour of our lives correct the apparent form of things, and translate it into the real form by keeping note of the way they are placed or held. In no other class of sensations does this incessant correction occur.' James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. II: 259–260. See also, Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. I: 121–123; Ward, 'Psych.,' *Encyc. Brit.*

72. 'The fundamental note of mental insanity, as of all errors of thought and feeling, is the want or loss of a just equilibrium between the individual and his surroundings; the disorder marking a failure of adaptation in himself which is often-times a congenital fault that he owes to his forefathers.' Maudsley, *Mind* 48: 510. See also p. 501. 'It is experience in the largest sense of that vague term – real apprehension, feeling and acting – that gives a place among things and indeed makes these things to be for us.' Adamson on 'Lotze,' *Mind* 40: 587.

73. 'As life is a condition in which an intimate correlation exists between the individual and nature, it is evident that whilst Plato dealt only with ideas the mind, his system must remain comparatively unprofitable; but it is evident also that since we have learnt to discover the laws or ideas in nature of which ideas in the mind are correlates, it becomes possible to find in nature an interpretation of Plato's true ideas. Once for all, it may perhaps be taken for granted that the ideas of genius can never be meaningless; for its mental life is a reflection in consciousness of the unconscious life of nature.' Maudsley, *Theory of Vitality*, p. 274. See also Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. 1: 468, 454.

the demand for the monotony of a normal sequence.⁷⁴ Is not this in fact (in some sense) the secret of the ‘logical consistency’ which Mr. Herbert Spencer, Dr. Tylor, and others, point out in primitive inferences.⁷⁵ Dreams and delirium alike mean abnormal sequence, and therefore would be less likely by the primitive mind than by ours to be confounded with that real experience of which the secret is continuity. At a later stage we generalise more broadly, and are prepared to allow for larger margins of the possible.⁷⁶ If then we find it difficult to accept the ravings of the primitive mind as a natural stage in an orderly and continuous development of mental power, the concomitant of a brain-growth which certainly was that, what in fact should we have expected to find? Surely the reign of the ‘matter of fact’; a practical attention to material needs and dangers certified by the senses, and a gradual enlargement of its scope.⁷⁷ The baby, never dreaming of efforts to turn somersaults or walk on a tight-rope, begins, when it is ready, to run, jump, dance, or climb, after it has achieved walking sedately, which is its first attempt beyond crawling.⁷⁸ We nowhere find random or spasmodic action, convulsion or contortion, although these would make admirable metaphors for much early cult- and myth-making. But sight gives us here perhaps the most significant lesson, for therein the ascending series seems especially gradual and unbroken; up to the moment indeed where even the eye is helplessly dragged into the whirl of folly and delusion – the point where we people nature with monsters, and de-naturalise the world we live

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74. ‘It is in fact one of the most fundamental truths in biology that the performance of functions, or in other words, the occurrence of actions of any kind in living matter, tends to occasion structural changes therein [. . .] We have at first to do with mere reflex actions; in higher forms of life these actions increase so much in complexity as to become worthy of the name ‘instinctive’; whilst in still higher organisms we have what are called “intelligent” actions in increasing proportion; though always intermixed with multitudes of others belonging to the “instinctive” and to the reflex categories.’ Bastian, *Brain Organ of Mind*, pp. 23–25. See also Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.* Vol. I: 580.
75. ‘We must set out with the postulate that primitive ideas are natural and under the conditions in which they occur, rational. In early life we have been taught that human nature is everywhere the same. Led thus to contemplate the beliefs of savages as beliefs entertained by minds like our own, we marvel at their strangeness, and ascribe perversity to those who hold them. Casting aside this error, we must substitute for it the truth that the laws of thought are everywhere the same; and that, given the data as known to him, the inference drawn by the primitive man is the reasonable inference.’ Spencer, *Princ. of Sociology*, Vol. I: 111, comp. *Ibid.*: 441–442; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I: 22, 23, 285, 286.
76. Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 425, 426.
77. ‘When the evolution of the living organism is traced upwards from the simplest forms to the most complete, and it is found that the evolution of mind proceeds *pari passu* with it, following the same laws and passing through the same stages, either evolution being expressed as a continual building up with the same elements, we have actual evidence that the one element goes with the other.’ Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, Vol. I: 291. ‘Incoherences in experience cannot produce perplexity unless they engross attention with sufficient strength and persistency. This depends on the interest which they excite, and such interest for the comparatively undeveloped consciousness is mainly of a practical kind.’ Stout, *Mind* 57: 29, 30. ‘Emotional excitement – and at the outset the natural man does not think much in cold blood – quickens the flow of ideas; what seems relevant is at once contemplated more closely while what seems irrelevant awakens little interest and receives little attention.’ Ward, ‘Psych.,’ *Encyc. Brit.* (The doctor or healer is thus more primitive than the priest on “practical” grounds). See Dorman *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, p. 354, *et. seq.* Cf. also James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. II: 258.
78. Mercier, *Sanity and Insanity*, p. 289.

in. We are accustomed to marvel at the feats of dawning intellect, e.g., in the use of fire and metals, in the domestication of animals, in the making of weapons and tools, which we all agree in ascribing to the earliest times. Nay, more, we are learning further to wonder at the high aesthetic level sometimes attained in those early days. Take the case of the Cro-Magnon cave-men, whose drawings put most of the more modern art to shame, not (as we might have supposed likely) in freshness of fancy, but in physiological accuracy. So with the precision in measurement and skill in erection shown in very early examples of architecture.⁷⁹ But here at once we are brought up short by the motive, the mental impetus to which these were due. Once more we find the rising line of mental development as it were deflected; the upward energy begins, if not to fail entirely, at least to start aside and spend itself in morbid and unfruitful forms. Much indeed is actual 'fall,' that is, reversal, degeneration. For we have just been following the 'cult' of the living, which in fact begins where the organic itself begins. Now we begin to trace the undoing of all this, the 'cult' of the dead.⁸⁰ And this, be it noted, just after we have begun to feel and express in a newly-acquired sense, the attraction of the one and the repulsion of the other.⁸¹ Modern research seems more and more to emphasize the paradox of elaborate wastefulness, even in cases where the economical bent of nature might be expected to exercise a specially inhibitive power; for example, those brought forward in Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* and elsewhere, of unnatural treatment tending to injure the future mothers of a community. And it cannot be said that here natural selection reverses itself, having worked to a point where the up-growth of moral sense and intellectual power makes for the preservation of the physically unfit. In waste of energy and the barren cult not merely of death, but of disease and suffering, nothing is or can be gained; not even, as might be claimed for some mythical conceptions, an extension of true imaginative power. We are rather making that impossible, by substituting for healthy imagination an anarchy of practical delirium which demoralises its energies, disorganises its tissues, and taints its very sources.⁸²

79. 'We have to act in conformity with geometrical principles before we have the slightest power of framing a geometrical axiom.' Leslie Stephen, *Mind* 54: 199. See also, Renouf, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 63.

80. A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, Vol. II: 82. See also Dorman *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, p. 164; Ellis, *Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 107, 111, 113.

81. Spencer, *Princ. of Sociology*, Vol. I: 142, 145.

82. 'However simple or complicated the circumstances, and however simple or elaborate the act by which they are dealt with, the same law obtains through out, viz., every movement that forms a part of conduct, every act that can be considered intelligent, is an adaptation of the organism to surrounding circumstances; or, briefly put, conduct is the adjustment of the organism to its environment.' Mercier *Sanity and Insanity*, p. 106. 'Insanity, we find, is a disorder of the adjustment of self to surroundings. This adjustment of self to surroundings is effected by the highest of all the nervous arrangements, and the central and primary factor in insanity is the disorder of those arrangements.' *Ibid.*: 138. 'When he (the lunatic) attempts to think out an elaborate course of conduct he falls into a state of confusion. When he attempts to carry out an elaborate course of conduct he gets astray; he does things wrong, he makes mistakes, he fails to appreciate the force, and to estimate the comparative value of circumstances, and his acts are wrongly directed, confused, and muddled.' *Ibid.*: 383. 'The doctrine underlying disease spirits and oracle spirits is the same, however strange it may appear. Many of those most diseased and abnormal and morbid have for the same reason become the great religious and prophetic teachers of humanity.' Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, p. 62. (From which it would appear that man is an animal which tends to reckon as the best and highest, that which it learns from the representatives of distortion and failure in the race). See also Maudsley, *Mind* 54: 179, 183.

One more point. We have been dwelling on the idea of the 'ghost of the ancestor' as though it were sharply marked off from any idea of a 'god' or 'gods.' But of course this would falsify the best evidence we have, and is indeed impracticable. As a fact, the difficulty is to draw any definite line between ghost, ancestor, parent, hero or tyrant, chief (and later, king), and god.

Professor Robertson Smith, for instance, points out that the relationship between gods and men was primitively conceived in the strictly literal sense of father and offspring. But as such a parentage could not be accepted on the same grounds as all other parentage known (since the main signs of physical reality were all missing), in what sense was the relationship conceived and accepted as 'strictly literal?.' How did gods and men make up a 'natural family'?⁸³ This thought takes us far indeed from the dream, the shadow, the reflection, the echo, the breath. Where, then, is the missing link? Our very idea of mental and spiritual inter-communion in any exalted sense is among the latest of mental products.

But are we not betrayed even by the ambiguities of language into ascribing such ideas to the primitive sense-bound mind?⁸⁴ Where and why do we suppose that early men broke away from the strongest ties they had – those to the actual – and where are we to look for the link which bridges the chasm between the sensuous and the non-sensuous, which in much early animism might well be spelt nonsensuous? Do not all the theories hitherto advanced really imply that the primordial mind had effaced all signs of its pre-intellectual ancestry and bequeathed to the earliest of its descendants of whom we can find traces, a practical *tabula rasa*?⁸⁵ Do they not one

83. 'To the negro of the Gold Coast, Nyankupon is a material and tangible being, possessing a body, legs, and arms, in fact all the limbs, and the senses, and faculties of men. He is also believed to have passions similar to those of man. This, however, is but natural, and to the uncultured mind the conception of an immaterial being is impossible.' Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, p. 29.

'Those tribes that have progressed and remember a former condition of greater savagery always describe that condition as one wherein they were animals. Of course the language is metaphorical at first; but this metaphorical language in connection with the many animal superstitions that have survived their lower state, tends to make fiction grow into reality. A number of travellers have acknowledged that they never clearly understood whether the Indians believed that at one time all men were in the form of beasts or whether they were in the form of men, but with the nature, habits and disposition of animals.' Dorman, *Origin, &c.*, p. 244, cf. p. 221. 'That metaphorical naming may cause personalisation [...] we have good evidence.' Spencer, *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, p. 685. 'Literal interpretation of metaphors leads to worship of heavenly bodies.' *Ibid.*: 692.

The inconsistency of prevailing inferences on this and like points seems curiously exemplified in the above extracts. The first describes what is surely, on the usual premises, indisputable; the only doubt is whether the premises are sound and what further inference is justifiable. But the others apparently reverse it and credit the earliest mind with that power of consciously using the figurative which we usually claim for the highest culture. Did this insight, then, desert the increasing intelligence? Was experience powerless to modify the loss? See also Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 30, 31, 83.

84. Dorman, *Origin, &c.*, p. 15. See also, Im Thurn, *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, May, 1882: 361, 362, 375; Risley, *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, February, 1891: 238, 250; Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, pp. 149–156; Ellis, *Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 101.

85. Differentiation implies that the simple becomes complex or the complex more complex; it implies also that this increased complexity is due to the persistence of former changes; we may even say that each persistence is essential to the very idea or development or growth. In trying, then, to conceive our psychological individual in the earliest stages of development we must not picture it as experiencing a succession of absolutely new sensations which coming

and all involve the assumption that primitive men had to begin from the very beginning in their responses to environment, instead of inheriting a tendency to right reaction or correspondence ingrained in them from protoplasmic days and in the protozoic nursery, a tendency, which has but to be carried over and utilised in every fresh departure in development.⁸⁶

No wonder, if we could believe in such a 'break' as this, that the most suicidal as well as grotesque and idiotic forms of cult should not merely have prevailed but have persisted, and not mainly or chiefly in theory, but in grim and savage practice. The marvel then becomes that out of such a seething mass of lunacy there should have emerged that very sobriety of exact thought which criticises it.⁸⁷ But if we cannot believe in any such 'catastrophic' collapse in the face of the overwhelming evidence of continuity throughout the organic ascent, then the checking force would be tremendous, and the follies would be stamped out as fast as they arose.⁸⁸ How then did we go astray? Of course it is not suggested that crudeness or vagueness were unnatural in the young mind of the race. Immature thought must needs be both; for it certainly cannot be an elaborate reproduction of an exquisite complexity. But the point is that growing intelligence, instead of flying off the curves of reality at arbitrary tangents and becoming fixed therein, would, in the long run, be broadly true to nature.⁸⁹ When we find a 'vestigial' organ carried on within us, like a gill-arch or a thumb-toe, we don't treat it as an analogue of the hunch-back and the squint.

out of nothingness, admit of being strung upon the "thread of consciousness" like beads picked up at random, or cemented into a mass like the bits of stick and sand with which the young caddis covers its nakedness. The notion, which Kant has done much to encourage, that psychical life begins with a confused manifold of sensations not only without logical but without psychological unity is one that becomes more inconceivable the more closely we consider it.' Ward, 'Psych.' ('Theory of Presentations'), *Encyc. Brit.*

86. Im Thurn, *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, May, 1882: 372. See also Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Man*, pp. 388, 389; Lloyd-Morgan, *Animal Life, &c.*, p. 419; Clark-Murray, *Handbook of Psych.*, p. 30; Hughlings Jackson, *Croonian Lects.*, 1884: 25, 27, 29.
87. In a true sense, however, 'the psychologist who essays to treat mind evolutionally has to begin at the top of the chain and work downwards; he cannot, like the biologist, begin at the bottom and work upwards.' Ward 'Psych. Princ.', *Mind* 46: 47. See also Spencer, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 408.
88. James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. II: 487.
89. So a man, on a road once traversed inattentively before, takes a certain turn for no reason except that he feels as if he must be right. He is guided by a sum of impressions, not one of which is emphatic or distinguished from the rest, not one of which is essential, not one of which is conceived, but all of which together drive him to a conclusion to which nothing but that sum-total leads. Are not some of the wonderful discriminations of animals explicable in the same way?' James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. II: 361. 'Framed as we are, we can have no *a priori* idea of a movement, no idea of a movement which we have not already performed. Before the idea can be generated, the movement must have occurred in a blind, unexpected way, and left its idea behind.' *Ibid.*: 580. 'Such instinctive analogies have, like other analogies, to be confirmed, refuted, or modified by further knowledge, i.e., by the very insight into things which these analogies have themselves made possible. That in their first form they were mythical, and that they could never have been at all unless originated in this way, are considerations that make no difference to their validity, assuming, that is, that they admit, now or hereafter, of a logical transformation which renders them objectively valid.' Ward, 'Psych.' ('Imagination or Ideation'), *Encyc. Brit.* The following is surely an instance of the curious inconsistency of some of our interpretations: we suppose that to the primitive man the stars are at once spangles and heroes: 'The principle underlying Sabaism is the belief that all the heavenly bodies are inhabited and taken possession of by spiritual beings, which

Even if we could not find a surviving animal which was enjoying swimming or climbing privileges denied to us poor 'humans' as we now are, we should still look for their fossil remains, and even for the water and the tree which fitted such organs.⁹⁰

Is not this, then, the gist of it all?

Either 1) we are to suppose an absolute break and reversal in the evolution of mind; a stage of gratuitous incoherence in which the developing imagination has let go all the organised reactive power which up to that stage had made its owner what he was, and proceeds to create a burlesque of the universe;

Or 2) we have, if not to assume that there is, at least to ask whether there may be in primitive cosmology and natural history an underlying element of true 'mental shadow' of outward fact; an unbroken continuity of response in consciousness answering to the unbroken series of structure, function, and organic reactions; a mine, as it were, of valid suggestion, carried on within us and prompting more and more definite expression.⁹¹

If we choose the former, if the imagination can thus wholly escape from the established grip of responsive control inherited from the first, then what inference are we to make? The beast teaches us the lesson and law which ought, according to evolution, never to have been lost or violated. As it fears its physical, it obeys its intellectual superior, when by controlling, taming, and training it he has proved his supremacy. But primitive man simply dreads and assiduously endeavours to propitiate the very objects of which his organic inheritance ought to have taught him the unreality, ever suggesting the safety of neglecting the merely fanciful.⁹² One can better

have migrated thither and made them their habitations. Ignorant as they were of astronomical knowledge they did not see any absurdity in animating a sun, moon, or star with a brilliant hero. In very truth, a primitive people consider the stars as little spangles stuck on the sky as ornaments, and the sky itself as no further off than the mountain that skirts their horizon. The sun, above all other natural objects, has become a mythical being among the most uncultivated tribes. "The original parent of the Comanches lives, they say, in the sun. The Chichimecs called the sun their father". The name for the sun in the language of the Salive, one of the Orinoco tribes, is, "the man of the earth above".' Dorman, *Origin, &c.*, p. 336.

90. 'This hypothesis of subconsciousness has been strangely misunderstood and it would be hard to say at whose hands it has suffered most, those of its exponents or those of its opponents [...] Half the difficulties in the way of its acceptance are due to the manifold ambiguities of the word consciousness [...] There would be no point in saying a subject is not conscious of objects that are not presented at all; but to say that what is presented lacks the intensity requisite in the given distribution of attention to change that distribution appreciably is pertinent enough. Subconscious presentations may tell on conscious life – as sunshine or mist tells on a landscape or the underlying writing on a palimpsest – although lacking either the differences of intensity or the individual distinctness requisite to make them definite features.' Ward, 'Psych.' ('Theory of Presentations'), *Encyc. Brit.*

91. 'We as yet understand nothing of the way in which our conscious selves are related to the separate lives of the billions of cells of which the body of each of us is composed. We only know that the cells form a vast nation, some numbers of which are always dying and others growing to supply their places and that the continual sequence of these multitudes of little lives has its outcome in the larger and conscious life of the man as a whole. Our part in the universe may possibly in some distant way be analogous to that of the cells in an organised body, and our personalities may be the transient but essential elements of an immortal and cosmic mind.' Galton, *Human Faculty*, p. 301. See also Reville, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1884: 231, 263, 264.

92. 'As pleasure and pain are only signs that certain of our tendencies are what is deepest in us; as they express the very depths of our personality, of our character, it follows that spontaneous

understand the ‘civilised’ mind doing things of this kind on a higher plane. That we should in some ways have less instinctive power now, after ages of artificial accretions to experience and the consequent weakening of our ties with outward nature; this seems an obvious probability. For instance, the predominance of mechanical inventive power might promote the carpenter or watchmaker idea of a Creator, and lead to His being called Artificer or Architect or Designer, &c. The life of a complex civilisation abounding in mechanical contrivances of all kinds, does tend to divorce us from simple community with nature. And yet we find that it is under these very conditions that we seem first to resume, in a critical or analytical form, the sober senses which had deserted us so cruelly in those early days just when their help was most needed. On the other hand, if we (provisionally) adopt the second alternative and proceed to test it by the materials now accumulating on all sides, we may find that some of the more grotesque parodies of nature, as well as some of the most repellent or ludicrous ceremonies and observances (religious or other) prevailing in early times, are largely failures of ‘translation’; failures to express worthily things which lie deep down in the centres of human experience, were true then and are true now, form part of natural order, and may soon for the first time be able to find scientific expression.⁹³ If so, what is first needed, here as elsewhere, is an accession of power rightly to interpret ‘myth, ritual, religion,’ and mysticism in general. And this, not according to any dogmatic ghost-theory, dream-theory, sun-myth-theory, or any other preconceived assumption, but on their own merits and in relation mainly – for this is what it is specially desired to urge – to the facts which the newer schools of psychology are collecting for us, and to recent developments of the study of language, its growth and development on the figurative and psychological side.⁹⁴

attention has its roots in the very basis of our being [...] It might be a subject of wonder that so evident and striking a truth [...] should not long ago have been recognised as a common acquisition of psychology, if indeed the majority of psychologists had not obstinately persevered in the exclusive study of the higher forms of attention, that is to say, in beginning at the end.’ Ribot, *Psych. of Attention*, p. 13. Hall and Donaldson, ‘Motor Sensations,’ &c., *Mind* 40: 572.

93. Burdon Sanderson’s, ‘Address at Brit. Assoc.,’ Sept. 1889, *Nature*, 26 Sept. 1889.

94. ‘As then we credit the original people with a stock of religious ideas, it follows that we may assume that certain rites and ceremonies of a religious kind were practised in the primeval period. I must, however, confess that I think their discovery is almost entirely reserved for the inquirers of the future.’ Schrader and Jevons, *Prehistoric Antiquities of Aryan Peoples*, p. 420. Comp. pp. 244, 415. ‘The creative period of language, the epoch of “roots” has never come to an end. The “Origin of Language” is not to be sought merely in a far off Indo-European antiquity, or in a still earlier pre-Aryan yore-time; it is still in perennial process around us.’ Dr. Murray, *New English Dictionary*, Prefatory Note to Part III. ‘The investigator [...] learns from the course of growth in each current hypothesis to appreciate its *raison d’être* and full significance, and even finds that a return to older starting points may enable him to find new paths, where the modern track seems stopped by impassable barriers [...].’ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II: 422; comp. Vol. I: 24, 25. ‘All these facts, taken together, form unquestionably the beginning of an inquiry which is destined to throw a new light into the very abysses of our nature.’ James, *Princ. of Psych.*, Vol. I: 211. See also Macdonald, *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, Nov., 1890: 119; Paul, *Princ. of Languages*, pp. xli, xlii, xlii; Geiger, *Development of the Human Race*, pp. 2–4; Lloyd-Morgan, *Animal Life, &c.*, pp. 374–376; Croom-Robertson on ‘Munsterberg,’ *Mind* 60: 530; A. F. Shand, *Mind* 59: 361, 365, 371, 372; Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, pp. 185, 186.

2.14. Discussion of 'An Apparent Paradox...' (1891)*

Mr. F. Galton: Lady Welby has raised two interesting questions, the one psychological, and the other social, that do not seem to have been directly raised before, and which deserve full discussion. The first question is why barbarians, who may roughly be taken to represent men whose reasoning powers are less developed by evolution than those of the more highly civilised races, should be apparently so much more superstitious and unreasoning than mere brutes, whose order of intelligence is considerably inferior to theirs. Certainly the scientific spirit has been late in making its appearance in the human race. Lady Welby's argument is that brutes are not fanciful, but are practical, and that highly civilised men are much less fanciful than barbarians, and are much more practical; how is it, then, that barbarians are so exceedingly fanciful? Moreover, the fancies of all barbarian races seem to run along parallel lines. Totemism, animism, fetiches, are almost, if not quite, universal among them. This is a psychological question, well deserving careful discussion. Speaking with diffidence, it appeared to him that the power of reasoning at all implies a considerable evolution of the imaginative or re-presentative power beyond the stage in which it is possessed by brutes, and further, that barbarians who possess that power and not much else, were as little competent as children are to distinguish with clearness between the subjective and the objective world. They are very apt to take fancy for fact. They look upon mental association as equivalent to physical connection, and they base logically enough upon these erroneous grounds, a vast superstructure of superstition. If we recollect that the barbarian is certainly not more logical than ourselves, and that we are often very illogical, there appears no great cause of wonder at the enormous amount and variety of superstition to which he is subject, and of which the members of this Institute have very frequent opportunities of hearing described.

The second question raised by Lady Welby is why the superstitious races are not crushed out of existence by those who are less so; why it is that natural selection fails to establish nonsuperstitious varieties of barbarians in the place of superstitious ones?

This is a question that should be answered by means of an historical inquiry. Is it, or is it not a fact, that in conflicts between races, those who are the most superstitious are necessarily at a disadvantage? He was by no means sure on *a priori* grounds that such would be found to be the case. Superstition and illusion are great factors in national life. Among other things they feed fanaticism, of which we have had not a little recent experience among the Arabs in the Soudan. They encourage belief in supernatural aid and in immunity from the weapons of the enemy. A body of men simultaneously penetrated by such feelings as these are formidable foes. Much might be said concerning even the experience of very recent years, and of the present day, such as of occurrences among the Zulus and just now among the Red Indians of North America, who expect a Messiah and are avowedly most dangerous antagonists. A painfully interesting account of the effect of calm superstition will be found in Mr. Jephson's recent book on Emin Pasha, p. 217–250, where he describes the address made to the Pasha's men by the Dervish ambassadors, who were afterwards martyred by those men. There is scope for an enquiry of extreme historical interest into illusion as a factor of society and of government.

In conclusion, it seemed to him that the two questions he had mentioned, as being raised by Lady Welby's paper, the one psychological and the other social, were eminently deserving of discussion and suitable for it.

* [This text reports a discussion of a series of issues raised by Welby in her paper of 1891 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution' (see above), with contributions from such personalities as Francis Galton, Sir Frederick Pollock, Mr. Lewis, Dr. Wilberforce Smith, Mrs. Stopes, Rev. Edmund McClure. Welby concludes the discussion with a reply to her readers's observations. This report was included immediately after Welby's essay, published in the same issue of *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1891: 323–329].

Sir F. Pollock was unable to agree with the general drift (so far as he was able to collect it) of Lady Welby's paper, or with the particular arguments, for the following reasons (now condensed and rearranged):

(1) The superstitions of archaic societies are not a reversal of the order of evolution. What we now call degradation may, under certain conditions, be as much in the order as anything else, and even, for the time being, the only alternative to extinction. It is so with some animals. Again, these (often elaborate) beliefs are not perverted imagination, but conclusions from false theories consciously held.

(2) The argument from 'survival of the fittest' is not admissible except where we know that there is effective competition. Thus, any Greek State whose armies had not troubled themselves about omens, &c., might perhaps have had a sensible advantage in the Peloponnesian War. But, as they were all about equally superstitious in this kind, their superstitions may be taken to have done one side no more harm than the other; though the scruples of Nicias (deemed excessive even then) did, in some measure, contribute to the disaster of the Sicilian expedition. In modern times experience shows that the less superstitious people, so far as there is a field of effective competition, do prevail over the more superstitious. Man, like other species, can afford to make mistakes until the conditions are realised which cause the particular mistake to become fatal or dangerous.

(3) It may be a curious and important question why archaic men should have wanted to make theory of the universe at all. But, since they did theorise, there is nothing to wonder at in their theories being wrong. It would be much more wonderful if they had not been wrong. Our superiority is chiefly in knowing (when we do know) how far we are from complete knowledge. The belief in ancestral ghosts, &c., was a quite plausible pseudo-scientific theory in its time. We can now make it look absurd; but this is equally true of all disapproved and discredited theories. Doubtless the generic resemblance of belief and custom among widely different races is curious and deserving of enquiry; but that is not the point proposed.

(4) A tendency to right reasoning on complex facts is quite different from a tendency to right (i.e., life- or race-preserving) organic 'response to stimulus,' and ought not to be admitted or surmised without proof. I see no reason for assuming it.

On the whole, I fail to see that there is any paradox to be accounted for. I am likewise unable to understand the 'second alternative' indicated at the end of the paper, or the sense in which the word 'translation' is used.

Mr. Lewis directed the attention of the meeting to the following papers, published in the *Journal of the Institute*, as showing the extreme vividness and reality which dreams possessed for savages:

Rev. Canon Culloway 'On Divination and Analogous Phenomena among the Natives of the Natal.' Vol. i, p. 163.

E. Im Thurn 'On the Animism of the Indians of British Guiana.' Vol. XI: 360.

A. W. Howitt 'On some Australian Beliefs.' Vol. XIII: 187.

He doubted whether they knew enough about the ideas of animals and of uncivilised men to say whether the 'break' that Lady Welby spoke of really existed, but he thought that so far as they did know the facts they were very much what Lady Welby considered they should be.

Dr. Wilberforce Smith admitted that in the absence of the authoress, all criticism must be discounted. He would nevertheless question the soundness of a link in her chain of argument, viz., the theory that a primitive savage might regard the benefit derived from his food as being of a 'ghostly' or spiritual nature. For if we might permit ourselves to guess at the experience and mental operations of the savage, we could not doubt, for instance, that he must have experienced times of scarcity or famine which diminished alike his own supplies and those of the surrounding animals. He must have perceived that loss of food involved loss of flesh alike to man and brute, a tangible material result which would disfavour any 'ghostly' theory of nutrition. He must have

further noticed that in a slight underfed condition, he was, as a rule, no match for a bigger, better fed antagonist. He would thus require no acute observation or reasoning to become persuaded of the advantage of the material substance afforded by his food. Only by an excessive stretch of imagination, could we suppose him to have regarded the benefit derived from his food, as being 'ghostly' or spiritual.

As to modern beliefs in the existence of a spiritual condition of being, the speaker was not sure if he correctly understood Lady Welby's paper to assume the absurdity of all kinds of belief in spirit or ghost (Greek 'Pneuma,' literally 'breath' or 'air').

Now the field of modern science, within which the authoress arrayed her arguments, included not a few labourers who had done logical scientific work of a high order, whilst their religious views involved in some form a belief in spirit, albeit such belief was not considered as a matter resting on scientific demonstration. Considering the existence of such believers, and arguing within the field of modern science, the authoress could not with propriety assume, offhand, that such men's religious belief was absurd.

Mrs. Stopes said that there were many interesting points raised in Lady Welby's paper that she would like to have discussed, but she must limit herself to one, that, though modified since she heard the paper at the British Association, evidently still remained the central idea, i.e., the question 'Is there a complete break in Mental Evolution?' Mrs. Stopes did not think there was. The conception of the idea of Evolution is that of a series of steps so gradual as to be scarcely recognised as steps, but as mere general progression. The evolution of a race much resembles that of an individual mind. That proceeds through perception and experience to the recognition of itself as a cause. But it soon finds that external to itself and often dominating itself, and other similar creatures, were other greater and more incomprehensible causes. Errors arise from the faulty naming of those causes, through the incomplete mental development that mis-translates signs. So with races at different stages. We, standing upon the experience of centuries of civilisation, translate from the secondary causes the forces of nature, and the truths of science, within which is our conception of the prime cause as Divinity, singular, spiritual, everlasting; they, with more limited experience and less trained minds, found their external causes many, and rendered false meanings in various superstitions. They do not harmonise their thoughts, but there is the same search after translation. There is no break, but a natural development by longer or shorter paths, through a lower to a higher stage.

The Rev. Edmund McClure also took part in the discussion.

Lady Welby has made the following observations in reply to the discussion:

I must begin by expressing my grateful sense of the indulgent attention with which the crude effort of an untrained outsider has been received, and especially of the kind words of the President of the Meeting. I am deeply sensible at once of the gravity and difficulty of the issues raised, of their wide ultimate applications, and of my own inability to do them anything like justice. I shall be more than satisfied if I have succeeded in calling the attention of some who are better fitted to deal with them, to questions which seem to me lie further back than any ground yet taken on the question of psycho-genesis, with reference to the primitive man's ideas about himself and the world he lives on. For instance, if we accept the view that the first development of imaginative power so overcame the sense of the tangible that the early man's world became subjective, and he took fancy for fact; we are surely assuming a sudden paralysis of what, till then, had been one of the most irresistible of evolutionary factors – the inter-relation and combination of functions, incessantly modified and thus incessantly corrected by the 'environment.' When we think what a slave the average man is even now to any 'habit' which has its roots in some physiological process, healthy or morbid, it seems inconceivable that in the days when the abstracting power was still in its infancy, the imagination should have enjoyed a freedom so entirely unhampered by its recent emergence from more 'automatic' conditions. Prof. Lombroso's recent plea for physiologically

derived 'misoneism' – the primitive repudiation of the strange or new – belongs to this ground. And as to the suggestion sometimes made that animals sometimes 'see apparitions,' all that seems to be established is their shrinking from and showing terror at whatever is conspicuously alien to their experience, and thus is to them contra-natural. And that instinctive protest answers to what we might expect to find as a primitive bar to the growth of gratuitous invention in a purely fanciful ghost-world. Sheer fright and literal aversion would tend to prevent the deliberate organisation of rite or elaboration of myth. Such superstition as there was would thus be mainly of a negative character; certain localities or practices would be avoided or ignored as recalling what was puzzling and thus alarming and repulsive. Again, if we admit that superstitions may have had a preservative and even an ennobling effect (as, e.g., in the case quoted, of the Dervishes) are we not altering the value of the word and suggesting that such 'superstitions' were not always so ultimately baseless as they seemed, however mistaken, grotesque, or even monstrous their expression? And in the question of 'illusion' which, as the President urges, calls for fresh and historical study and illustration, we must distinguish between a primary illusion – one lurking in the central processes of 'mind,' and modifying all its activities – and those secondary illusions which, depending on defective interpretation (leading to mistaken inference and consequent action), may nevertheless rest upon irrefragable fact. (This, however, brings us to the further questions: where does 'illusion' proper, begin? and, what do we include under the term?)

My friend Sir F. Pollock lays down a series of the definite propositions which are virtually able re-statements of the ordinary view. (1) He maintains that early superstitions do not reverse an upward or advancing tendency. But he does not touch the question of a 'cult of the dead' which I have ventured to raise as itself the expression of a paradox, and which cannot be denied, and is necessarily a reversal; unless, indeed, he means that there is no question of the 'dead' in any such cult, but that the use of the word was then, as it is now, an implicit contradiction (e.g., as in the title of a recent book, 'Our dead: where are they?' Answer – if dead, how 'ours' and why ask?) (2) Here there is, as yet, a lack of enquiry on the basis suggested, so that we must wait for an answer. (3) Here we come to a question which I venture to think worth more than mere statement. Primitive men, we may surely suspect, did not theorise at all in the modern sense, but strove hard for very good reasons (i.e., the relief of natural craving) to use their budding function of 'expression' – in whatever form – in conveying to each other certain primordial impulses running within them as strongly as the nerve or blood-currents, and as insistent in demanding outlet or prompting 'explosion' as the most fundamental of organic energies. Thus the 'generic resemblance of belief' becomes an important part of the point proposed; that would be the result of its actually generic character or origin, and its intimate links with the very starting points of life. (4) Of course a tendency to right reasoning (in the philosophical or scientific sense) is quite different from a tendency to right organic response to stimulus. But I did not intend to relate the two; what I supposed to be linked in an unbroken continuity was organic, rising to conscious and mental 'response to stimulus.' The real question seems to me here to be, where does the literal use of the phrase end, and the metaphorical begin? As to 'breath' taken to represent and express the 'dead' or the 'double' it seems, on the usual assumptions, absurd. But question these, and, of course, there may be good reasons for its symbolic selection, as there may be important realities which it symbolises better than anything else within reach could do. Everywhere the question recurs: Are we quite sure that our tacit assumptions are invulnerable? Have we begun far enough up in the stream of 'experience,' or penetrated far enough into the secret springs of 'mind' to justify them? This remains to be seen. But apart from disabilities, which no one can feel more strongly than myself, it is obvious that within the limits of a single paper, only the barest indication can be given of the line of thought suggested, and but few out of many points even touched upon.

2.15. The Significance of Folk-Lore (1892)*

It is, of course, a commonplace that as observation of facts becomes more careful and more wary of controversial bias, it is likely to reveal more and more of the unexpected, and to overturn some inferences which had been previously taken for granted. And this must be especially the case where attempts are made to unravel the meaning of folk-lore, which represents a mental condition so far from the modern civilized standpoint.

This must be my excuse for venturing, as an outsider, to bring forward some queries suggested by recent writing on the subject, the first of which could hardly, till now, have been asked with hope of profitable result.

In accounts of savage superstition a traditional bias has for long reigned supreme. Has it not been generally succeeded by an opposite one? Are we not inevitably more or less under the sway of reaction from discredited assumptions? If so, it may well be that the work, of which Dr Tylor's *Primitive Culture* was such an epoch-making example, may, itself, prove the introduction to a third way of approaching the subject, in great measure owing to such labours as his, and daily becoming not only more possible but more frequently adopted. This, of course, would neither be a reversion nor a revulsion, but simply a development.

Of the first method of interpretation (if it merits that name at all) any and every missionary record up to fifteen, or even ten, years ago will furnish endless examples; and, indeed, so would any ordinary traveller's report. Of the second, representing the reaction from this (as its misleading glosses become glaringly evident), there are also on all sides abundant instances. But the point is to ask whether some recent writing on the subject does not give ground for the hope that we may be entering on a virtually fresh phase of enquiry on the earlier stages of the growth of human intelligence, and one likely to yield important results. If so, it is needless to urge that social, and especially educational, questions may be vitally affected by researchers which now seem remote from practical outcome in that direction.

I venture, therefore, to point first to Dr. Codrington's *Melanesians* as a striking example of the pregnant change which is passing over the observer of contemporary savage life. We have here a masterly study of the ideas which underlie such life – so far as we can as yet enter into them – wisely beginning with misgivings, warnings, qualifications too rarely considered necessary either by the orthodox or the heterodox observer. And the following observations have had the great privilege of the author's own invaluable comments and corrections in a private letter.⁹⁵

Dr. Codrington points out that even systematic inquiries are liable to be made too soon, after which all observations are likely to be made to fit into an early scheme of belief. And a man may speak a native language every day for years and years and yet make mistakes. 'Pigeon-English' is sure to come in; e.g., a dancing-club is a devil-stick, though the Melanesian mind is innocent of the notion of a devil. He goes on to observe that 'the most intelligent travellers and naval officers pass their short period of observation in this atmosphere of confusion' (*Melanesians*, pp. 117–118). And we are reminded that 'besides, everyone, missionary and visitor, carries with him some preconceived ideas; he expects to see idols, and he sees them; images are labeled idols in museums whose makers carved them for amusement [. . .]. It is extremely difficult for anyone to begin inquiries about some prepossessions, which, even if he can communicate with the natives in their own language, affects his conception of the meaning of the answers he receives. The questions he puts guides the native to the answer he thinks he ought to give. The native, with very vague beliefs and notions floating in cloudy solution in his mind, finds in the questions of the European a thread on which these will precipitate themselves, and, without any intention to deceive, avails

* [Paper published in the Proceedings of the International Folk-Lore Congress, 1891, see Welby 1892a].

95. I'm allowed to quote the following passage: 'With regard to the general danger of the ambiguous use of words it is not possible for me to express too strongly my agreement.'

himself of the opportunity to clear his own mind while he satisfies the questioner' (p. 118). We are thus introduced to an extremely interesting account of what in Melanesia is called 'Mana.' And I have Dr. Codrington's own approval in deprecating the use of the word 'supernatural' with reference to it. He agrees that the uncultured mind has not acquired the idea which the modern civilised man expresses by Nature and the natural, and therefore knows nothing of a supposed world above nature, or superior to it. Thus what is believed in, according to this account (deducting what belongs to our own readings of experience) is simply *unseen power* which can be turned by man to his own benefit – as in the case of electricity or even wind. True that 'Mana' is defined (as we define 'will' and 'mental energy') as altogether distinct from physical power, and then again Dr. Codrington explains, as 'a power or influence not physical and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This "Mana" is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone' (p. 119). Once more; it 'works to effect everything *which is beyond the ordinary power of man outside the common process of nature* (italics my own); it is present in the atmosphere of life, attaches itself to persons and to things, and is manifested by results which can only be ascribed to its operation. When one has got it he can use it and direct it, but its force may break forth at some new point; the presence of it is ascertained by proof' (p. 119). How near this definition surely is to what we see at the exceptional crises of life when the ordinary energies are gathered up into a supreme effort! 'Thus,' we are assured, 'all conspicuous success is a proof that a man has "Mana"; his influence depends on the impression made on the people's mind that he has it; he becomes a chief by virtue of it. Hence a man's power, though political or social in its character, is his "Mana"; the word is naturally used in accordance with the native conception of the character of all power and influence as supernatural' (p. 120).

Perhaps the word which would best express what is here meant is still to seek. Anyhow man is conceived as akin to all which moves And this idea develops into that of beings full of this 'Mana,' but non-fleshly and called spirits; only, as Dr. Codrington, like Major Ellis, urges, 'it is most important to distinguish between spirits who are beings of an order higher than mankind, and the disembodied spirits of men, which have become, in the vulgar sense of the word, ghosts' (p. 120). He warns us that 'from the neglect of this distinction great confusion and misunderstanding arise' (p. 121).

But the anecdote that follows gives us a key which till now has surely been somewhat neglected. A certain chief, we read, 'told one of the first missionaries how he proposed to treat him. 'If you die first,' said he, 'I shall make you my god.' And the same Tuikilakila (would sometimes say of himself, 'I am a god.' It is added that he believed it too; and his belief was surely correct. For it should be observed that the chief never said he was or should be a god, in English, but that he was or should be a *kalou*, in Fijian, and a *kalou* he no doubt became; that is to say, on his departed spirit was invoked and worshipped as he knew it would be' (p. 122). How many current versions of primitive belief may be shattered by this unsuspected difference? How many such declarations have been taken for what we now call objective, when all the the speaker may have meant what is now defined as the subjective?

Animism in the ordinary sense appears not to exist in Melanesia; no spirit animates any natural object as the soul does a man (p. 123). A Vui or spirit has no form to be seen, and is apparently an intelligence, but can somehow be connected with a stone or other like object (p. 141). But in order to communicate with such a spirit there must be two links: the natural object and a human person – nature and man! Suppose we here call the spirit, Mind. Both are alike useful symbols, but have acquired a fictitious isolation and substance. 'The native mind,' observes Dr. Codrington, 'aims high when it conceives a being who lives and thinks and knows and has power in nature without a gross body or even form; but it fails when it comes to deal with an individual being of

such a nature' (p. 152). There lies the key, I would suggest. Has not failure followed the attempt to translate the generic into the definite, the individual, the concrete? Yet more, has it not resulted from the desertion of what may perhaps be called the dynamic mode of conception, identifying the meaning of life with its functions and activities, and linking these with all natural forms of energy? This seems, by a sort of intellectual degeneration, to have been succeeded by a static type of thought, giving us a world of shadowy replicas of substantial objects. But surely, as the earliest traceable form of language was mainly an expression of function rather than structure, of activities rather than substances, so the earliest stage of thought would share the same character. A being without substantial body, or even form, would simply be a moving force in nature, or life, or man. And this would be widely different from the complex conceptions of personality, or self-consciousness, which we are apt to credit the early mind with transferring to natural objects or to supposed spectres.

These later conceptions are now undergoing a severe sifting. And the labours of physiopsychologists, alienists, and students of hypnotism threaten, however little they may establish, to undermine much which has appeared till now impregnable. Who knows whether we may not end by finding that here also we have to revert, as well as to advance (as it were on a spiral course), to a dynamic, instead of a static, view of the world, and again enthrone motion as at once the primary and the ultimate fact?

Take 'spirit,' meaning breath. This needs a book to itself never yet written. But meanwhile even now it may be remarked that we use the words 'a spirit' not merely to mean a form, or a being in the sense of shadow, or double, or phantom, but as in some sense a motive force or spring of energy. When we say that the whole spirit of a man's work is right or wholesome, that some example is inspiriting, that the practical spirit which animates a given course of conduct will ensure success, our imagery is at least free from some misleading associations. And, after all, breath is first (like pulse) a *rhythm*.

But to return to 'Mana.' It is curiously utilised in what are called 'ghost-shooters.' A man, so to speak, puts his own hatred and will to injure (which he conveniently shelters under the neutral term 'Mana') into a bit of bamboo, waits for his enemy, and lets it out upon him; when, of course, the victim is stricken, probably to death, by the 'shock' or 'impression' thus made. A graphic story (p. 205) relates how, when the wrong man was thus nearly killed, he revived on being convinced of the mistake.

The author goes on to tell us that, 'What that is which in life abides with the body, and in death departs from it, and which, speaking of it in English, we call the soul, the natives find it very difficult to explain. Like people very much more advanced than themselves, they have not, in the first place, a perfectly clear conception of what it is; and, in the second place, like other people, they use words to represent their conceptions which they acknowledge to be more or less figurative and inexact when the precise meaning of them is sought for (p. 247). A tone like this is a positive relief after the cut-and-dry assurance with which we are so familiar. And why is the drift of existence, that which makes its force, its meaning, its value, expressed in terms of visible object? Not always, it may be, because savages are even as much wedded to material analogies as we are, but because 'thinking' to such minds 'is like seeing,' and thus must be expressed in visual terms as in one sense higher than the tactual or muscular dialects. And here Mr. Fison is quoted in the same sense. Strange that we should be so ready to credit the savage with the definite when we are so vague ourselves! Again, take 'Nunuai,' 'the abiding or recurrent impression' which, as we say, haunts us. This is reckoned 'not a mere fancy; it is real, but it has no form or substance' (p. 251). Thus the primitive thinker is in full accord with modern results; such persistence is a ringing on the strongly excited nerves; it is 'actually' still 'active,' gradually dying away as the 'clang' does. On page 269 a pertinent question is asked: 'When an English ghost appears in the dead man's habit as he lived, is it thought to be his soul that appears?'

But enough has been quoted to indicate what is meant. It is well to end such a helpful book with the story of Tagaro, who was tired of being asked pointless questions, and in such wise answered his literalist questioner as at last to bring about his untimely end, and so get rid of him and his inquiries. What a suggestive parable of civilised questioning of the primitive mind!

There remains, however, another recent utterance, not, indeed, on primitive theories in the rude or 'savage' sense, but on the sources and character of some of the deepest and most subtle of human thinkings – those which we vaguely call Indian, or, even more broadly, Oriental – worthy of the most respectful attention and admiration.

Sir Alfred Lyall, in his truly significant study of *Natural Religion in India*, defines the religion of which he treats as 'moulded only by circumstances and feelings, and founded upon analogies drawn sometimes with ignorant simplicity, sometimes with great subtlety, from the operation of natural agencies and phenomena. . . the religious feeling works by taking impressions or reflections, sometimes rough and grotesque, sometimes refined and artistic, from all that men hear, and feel, and see' (p. 14–15). He tells us that in Hinduism this 'can be seen growing; that one can discern the earliest notions, rude and vague' (p. 15), and 'follow them upwards till they merge into allegory, mysticism, or abstract philosophical conceptions' (p. 16). He even thinks that in India we may trace 'the development of natural into supernatural beliefs' (Ibidem).

This, of course, raises the unsolved question of the line between the two, and where the supernatural is supposed to supersede, to supplement, or simply to intensify, the natural; also how far these terms apply respectively to the objective and the subjective. The bewildering ambiguities caused by the varying mental attitudes of those who use the words, create a real difficulty. Innumerable shades of meaning attach to them, while, unfortunately, there is a widespread tendency to suppose the contrary. We all think our own must be at once the true, the precise, and the most generally held meaning.

Let us, however, seek for the answer in the lecture itself. Taking the current theory of dreams and ghosts as the sources of the earliest superstitions, Sir Alfred Lyall lays stress on fear as 'a primordial affection of the human mind' (p. 17), and maintains that much unreasonable terror of the present day is 'traceable backward to the times when our ancestors felt themselves to be surrounded by capricious or malignant beings. The fear of ghosts is the faint shadow still left on our imaginations by the universal belief of primitive folk that they were haunted by the spirits of the dead' (p. 18). The value of Dr. Codrington's account of the distinctions made with regard to this even by the rude Melanesian mind⁹⁶ is here evident. But next we get a specially valuable generalisation; that the underlying idea, the 'essential characteristic' of ghosts is that of *returning* (and therefore of resuscitation), as the French word *revenant* indicates. And the writer conjecturally connects this with 'the endless succession in Nature of Birth, Death, and Revival' (p. 19), by which last he must mean regeneration. Then we come to the early recognition, not merely on a pre-scientific, but, in a sense, a preimaginative basis, of that oneness on the one hand of 'physical' energies and on the other of the 'energies' of what we so little as yet understand, and so vaguely call life, animation vitality. 'To man in his wild state the same life appears to stir in everything, in running water, in a tree, and in a creature; it ends and disappears in everything at times, but it reappears again constantly, in shape, movement, and outward character so similar as to seem identical; conveying the inference that something has gone and come again; there is nothing around a savage to suggest that the animating principle of vitality suffers more than suspension or displacement. The analogy of Nature affords him no presumption that death means extinction, while his imagination supplies him with constant evidence to the contrary' (Ibidem). Yes, his 'imagination'; not an illusive 'fancy,' leading him ever further from such facts as the unity of nature, the conservation of energy, the continuity of natural process, the unbroken succession

96. As also Major Ellis's report of its existence in West African tribes (*Ewe and Tshi-speaking Peoples*).

of production and reproduction; but an image-power which, even in its worst failures, is a genuine attempt to render, in pictorial form, impressions stamped upon the very 'protist' in which all life alike had started, and constantly reinforced and enriched through the long evolutionary ascent in complexity.

Thus the term 'life' itself, it is obvious, cannot indicate in early life so sharp a differentiation as in our highly specialised days, from the stir and movement seen in everything. The presumption is always that which we *now* call the persistence or conservation of energy; while no bounds are set to its possible transformation. Sir Lyall then tells us that his conjecture is 'that a great part of what is called animism – the tendency to discover human life and agency in all moving things, whether waving trees or wandering beasts – begins with an ingrained conviction that some new form or habitation must be provided for the spirits of dead men' (p. 24); 'that at the bottom of all these imaginary changes lies the belief in survival, the notion that death is transmigration' (p. 26). This needs to be connected with what he describes as 'the habit of detecting human spirits everywhere' (p. 30). That 'habit' he considers to lead to 'the deification of humanity,' 'which is throughout so much the strongest element in the shaping of superstitious imagery that it gradually absorbs all other elements' (Ibidem). And is this not originally because man gathers up in the supremacy of his 'brain-power' all that he himself observes and experiences? And does he not thus realise on the emotional level the attraction of a human and divine gravitation, and dimly feel, that no more than the earth he lives on is he his own centre or his own pivot; but that his life is orbital and satellitic – though, of course, any such term must needs be taken in a simply symbolical sense? If so, what he is growing towards is the further realisation that such centre itself is but a unit in the vast universe of truth. 'The origin of the divine species, the descent of the deities from man' (p. 32), will thus be interpreted as parallel to the idea of projection which underlay so much ancient thinking about the earth and the stars. Therein man thought that he had himself thrown off the 'mental' lights which have lightened all mankind; but at last he finds that he and all his doings and thinkings are in a true sense dependent upon, and even produced by, the forces of this planet; excitation, the call from without, is recognised as the secret of all his activities.

So we return to the conjecture 'that the original bent or form of natural religion had been moulded upon the deep impression stamped on primitive minds by the perpetual death and reappearance, or resuscitation, of animate things' (p. 35). And the lecturer traces in the upper grades of Hinduism 'the full growth and maturity of these primordial ideas' (Ibidem). Here we come to something better than any mere analogy; we get a far-reaching and carefully thought-out application of principles which lie deep in the constitution of nature. Assuming that 'Brahma,' the creative energy, is too remote and abstract an influence for popular worship' (p. 36), the writer looks upon Siva as representing what he has 'taken to be the earliest and universal impression of Nature upon men – the impression of endless and pitiless changes' (p. 36). Pitiless? Only to that strange practical fallacy which is one of our most fatal obstacles to a valid optimism, the love of *fixity*; the love of that Unchanging which is only another name for Death; the cult of the static as the key to life which has to be replaced by the cult of the dynamic, if we would rightly interpret and apply even the facts which we collect or group under either term. Siva thus, according to Sir A. Lyall, 'exhibits by images, emblems, and allegorical carvings the whole course and revolution of Nature, the inexorable law of the alternate triumph of life and death – *mors janua vitae* – the unending circle of indestructible animation' (p. 36–37). But beyond even this vast generalisation, 'Vishnu, on the other hand, impersonates the higher evolution; the upward tendency of the human spirit' (p. 37). And these pregnant suggestions are summed up in the contention that 'we thus find running through all Hinduism, first the belief in the migration of spirits when divorced from the body, next their deification, and latterly their identification with the supreme abstract divinities reappear again in various earthly forms; so that there is a continual passage to and fro between men and gods, gods and men. And thus we have the electric current of all-pervading divine energy completing its circle through diverse forms, until we reach the conception of all Nature

being possessed by the Divinity' (p. 39). Here, as the lecturer shows us, we reach the limit of the doctrine of pantheism, which he takes to be the 'intellectual climax of the evolution of natural religion' (Ibidem). He puts first the adoration of, innumerable spirits, and sees these gradually collected into main channels, running into anthropomorphic moulds, and yet further condensing into the Brahmanic Trinity. 'And as all rivers end in the sea, so every sign, symbol, figure, or active energy of divinity, is ultimately regarded as the outward expression' of a 'single universal divine potency' (Ibidem). At this point comes an important reminder: the writer disclaims the theory that 'the deification of humanity accounts for all Hinduism; for in India every visible presentation of force, everything that can harm or help mankind is worshipped, at first instinctively and directly, latterly as the token of divinity working behind the phenomenal veil' (p. 40). How plain here, how obvious surely, is the connection of this feeling with our own sense of the wonder and the might of those inscrutable forces round us which science is everywhere investigating; finding each, as she advances, the prelude or the indirect witness to another which may or may not as yet come within her experimental ken!

Once more we are pointed to the inherent sense of hereditary unity which Dr. Weissmann's theory has done so much to bring home to us, whatever the ultimate fate of his own view of the matter; it is suggested that 'mourning in its original meaning partook largely of the nature of worship' (p. 42). The lecturer thinks that 'the prayers were not for the dead man, but addressed to him; that the funeral service was usually an offer or an attempt to do him service' (Ibidem). And with reference to the sacrificial aspect of this custom, he insists that, 'according to the votary's conception of the god, so is the intention and meaning of the sacrifice' (p. 44). Here we come to a fact which might surely become (after due investigation and analysis on the comparative method) the subject for another of those really deep interpretations of which we have in this lecture such helpful examples. 'There is one world-wide and inveterate superstition belonging to the sacrificial class, of which we have many vestiges in India – it is the belief that a building can be made strong, can be prevented from falling, by burying alive some one, usually a child, under its foundations' (p. 47). Is it not worth while to ask – examining the facts by the light of such a question – whether this may not have been a hideously perverted attempt at expressing a primordial impulse, at embodying an organic (that is, a pre-intellectual) conviction, surviving to this day in the purely abstract imagery of the poet? May it not have grown out of a fundamental instinct, that under or at the *beginning* of all which human intelligence can undertake to construct, *life* – indeed, growing life – must be found or must be placed; that whatsoever is not founded on life must be founded on death, and must fall thus into irretrievable ruin? Does this sound far-fetched? Perhaps that may be because it is too near us to be rightly focussed yet. Still it may be that *as yet* such questions can more safely be asked than answered.

But the main currents of the deep running stream which is touched in this lecture are on better-explored ground. 'The identity of all divine energies underlying this incessant stir and semblance of life in the world is soon recognised by reflective minds; the highest god as well as the lowest creature is a mere vessel of the Invisible Power; the god is only a peculiar and extraordinary manifestation of that power; the mysterious allegorical Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, at the summit of Hinduism, suggests and personifies its regular unchanging operation' (p. 61). Most truly there is a confession of the unity of 'spirit' and 'nature' and a reference of both to what lies beyond scale, which 'is ingrained in the minds of all thoughtful persons' (p. 58) in some form perhaps more widely than in India alone, while there 'the inner meaning lies everywhere close below the outward worship, and it comes out at the first serious question' (Ibidem). May we not here ask whether in this wider sense such a 'pantheism' must be exclusively regarded as the absolutely 'final stage in the fusion and combination of the multitude of forms and conceptions bred out of vagrant superstitions'? (Ibidem). If in one sense it is truly a *last* stage, may it not well prove, when transfigured in the light of that new world of knowledge now rising upon us in steadily increasing brilliancy, a *first* stage in the ascent of a reverence for the divinely natural and

the naturally divine which is but waiting for a real and living and universal recognition of God as Light; as the very Abolition of Darkness and Unveiling of Truth and Good, which is, as we are, best rendered by a 'personal' mode of expression which only fails by reason of lack and limit? And in so far as he is conscious of these ever-brightening rays and beams of living Truth, will may the writer remind us that 'every successive death does indeed interrupt consciousness; *but so does sleep*' (p. 60); and end by venturing 'to suggest that the upward striving of nature through the modifications of forms and species is reflected, as in a glass, darkly, by this vision of spiritual evolution' (p. 61), whatever its concomitant shortcomings. 'The discovery that all nature is imbued by one divine energy' (p. 62) may indeed be associated with much that is crude, that is fanciful, that fails to account for nature or life as we find them, or either to satisfy or refute the irrepressible cravings of what we agree to call the highest types of mind 'Pantheism' may even represent that most fatal of obstacles, the dead wall of a geocentric levelling down, like the outgrown idea that the suns in the sky were subordinate to this little lightless earth. But that one idea which is here indicated beneath it – the idea of continuity of link between all things at all times and in all places, continuity both simultaneous and successive; the repudiation of all unfathomable gulfs except in the one sense of distinction, not division; the frank acceptance of ties with the most humble or despised of nature's forms and conditions of existence, that may surely prove, when we have learnt to assimilate it, the starting-point of all ascent so worthy and so fruitful of all good, that it is difficult to find a word with pure enough associations to define it with.

This line of thought, however, as no one can feel more strongly than myself, is dangerous if not futile, as at best essentially premature. We have to earn and not to snatch result and reward. And the tangle of dead and decaying growths of theory with fungi of fallacy growing rankly upon them which surrounds us on every side, warns us at least not to add to the number and thus to hinder a healthier future harvest. They must be allowed time to form a fertile soil, and light and air must first be freely admitted.

But perhaps it may be wise sometimes to think of modern ethnological labours under the image of working a mine of exceeding and multifarious richness and immense depth and range. The machinery, the 'plant' is magnificent and embodies all that science can suggest. But in one part of the mine the floor rings hollow to the footsteps of some less engrossed than others with the task of working it. May it be that this means an insecurity dangerous only if ignored and neglected? May it be that yet below the great depth hollowed out there is a layer of air, or of water or of fire which needs dealing with before the work can safely now be prosecuted? Or, on the other hand, may some yet richer treasure lie beneath? Whatever form in which we put these queries, it is at least a matter of rejoicing, because of hopeful augury for the future, that there should be a manifest increase among our ablest thinkers of the tendency to look deeper than has generally been the case till lately for answers to the most vital of all the appeals and problems of human life.

2.16. Notes on the 'Welby Prize Essay' (1901)*

Part I

In attempting some notes on the admirable Essay which the Welby Prize has been so fortunate as to secure (*Mind*, N. S., Nos. 31, 32, 33), I shall confine myself to the simplest and most practical of the many aspects of its subject: leaving it to others better equipped for the task, to treat of its philosophical and scientific value and bearings.

* [Originally published in the journal *Mind*, signed V. Welby and V. W., immediately followed by a 'Note' by Tönnies and a brief comment on his note by Welby, see Welby 1901a].

The first point therefore to take is the Essayist's view of the best way of securing the objects to further which the Prize was offered. This is excellently well expressed in his contention that it is indispensable to create for thinkers (and I should add, for all men, since all are listeners if not readers, and all have to act upon what is said or written) 'at the beginning of their career, a clear and strong consciousness of their power over their material, of their free disposal, not only of sounds and other signs for the notification of concepts, but also of ideas for the formation of concepts' (p. 290, §1).

I have myself ventured to protest in many forms against the absurd assumption that from our birth we are inevitably delivered over to an abstract entity called language, occupying a throne of irrational despotism, and that we remain till death its hopeless slaves. For the practical result of this notion is that emancipation is only in the direction of slang, or deformities introduced by those least worthy to have any authority in questions of expression, and brought up in complete ignorance of the transcendent value of language and of its pressing concern for every one of us. Those who have begun to learn how great is the need for more intelligent general interest in this subject, must welcome an effort to restore to man a rightful power of will in this matter, both individual and social: especially when the idea of will itself is at the same time subjected to examination from a new point of view. And the authority to which some day we shall all, even the most *wilful* of us, be glad to defer, will, as Dr. Tönnies says, be found in that 'great alliance which runs through all nations, the Republic of scholars': since 'to work in and for this,' with all that such work implies, 'has always been the highest aim' (p. 291, §1) of the leaders of thought.

It would indeed be ludicrous were it not so pathetic to see men from whom we might expect better things, unable to imagine any organisation of the vast and largely unutilised resources of language which should not mean some artificially imposed and pedantic fixity of expression. As a fact the result of bringing an intelligent and conscientious social will to bear on questions now wrongly called 'verbal' (which has to do with form, sound, arrangement, etc., of words) but really 'sensal' (which has to do with their value) would be, that we should at once begin to acquire a freedom from conventional shackles which as yet is out of the question, as it could only lead to greater and yet greater confusion and impotence. At present, affecting to despise 'mere verbal points' and relegating the study of linguistics to the specialist whose interest is always narrow and often merely technical, we even tend, as Dr. Tönnies points out, to confound the power to form concepts at will with the 'mere determining of the meaning of a word.' And yet, as he declares, we have here the source of that command over the solution of ultimate problems of which hitherto we have – and no wonder – despaired. What is needed for this great work is no wealth of wayward fancy, no mere brilliant dreaming, but a noble, fervent, and loyal imagination: content to serve, to transfigure, to glorify scientific truth and experimental fact, thus endowing science herself with her highest powers.

The analysis of the nature of Signs must of course be psychological: and to say truth I am unwilling to see it carried very far until we have more fully realised the unfortunate tendencies of the only psychological metaphors which convention at present allows us to use. These of course were originally quite consistent with the accepted views of the world and of man, and therefore were not merely harmless but often vividly helpful. Now it is hardly too much to say that they one and all tend to vitiate instead of expressing or illustrating our thoughts or aspirations. It is not however either possible or desirable to enter here upon this large question, which presses for treatment on its own merits; and I will only add that no one would believe without long and special study how great and wide-spread may be the mischief done by the survival even of one obsolete metaphor. We are constantly told that inherited metaphors are rendered harmless by long use, as no one now attaches to them the mental pictures called up when they were first circulated. In one sense this is of course true: but in the first place most of them are still far more active in misleading us than we have yet discovered, as can easily be demonstrated by many examples of their effect upon the arguments, even of the ablest writers: while in the second place, language must increasingly suffer from the loss of this pictorial element.

For 'natural thought is metaphorical, that is, translates the unperceivable into sensuous pictures' (pp. 294–295, §3): and this process undoubtedly goes on, and actively too, when we least suspect or desire it. I have been amazed to find how little aware even thoughtful minds are of this. But then the attention of no one has yet been called, as a main part of mental training, to these sources of danger. And the loss thus caused is incalculable. May it soon cease! For to use a wrong metaphor is like using a wrong implement. Happily natural metaphors refuse thus to play us false (although of course our dulness may misinterpret them). Unless we morally train ourselves to act a part, the smile and the tear are true 'signs' of what we are 'feeling'; translating the unperceivable 'emotion' itself into visible 'expression.' Meanwhile I would venture to suggest certain considerations as to the proposition that 'a certain word has a certain meaning, i.e., it is a sign of a certain (perceivable or thinkable) object, according to the will of one or more persons' (p. 297, §13). For we here encounter the question of context. As the writer reminds us, the development of language from the gesture stage to the sound stage and thence to the writing stage (through the pictorial) stage, has involved a self-reversed relation. For written language lacks even the help of intonation and modulation: and custom and training alike forbid us to supply their places by any of the many devices which graphic methods would furnish. Mr. J. H. Choate's suggestion (that written language is still in the stage of musical homophony and that it is high time we initiated a system which answered to polyphony, to the chord and to orchestration) has at least the merit of illustrating the need and feasibility of similar developments.

This would greatly affect all questions of context. Even the German fashion which sanctions in the most serious writing the free formation of compound words and the use of different types to indicate the master-words, would do this better than our iron monotony, which, with a wholesome but often excessive horror of emphasis has only the weak-looking 'italics' for this purpose.

We seldom reflect how much imagination our writings demand from their readers: how much more of it than we suppose the average of these must have, in order to understand or enjoy writing at all. Unfortunately they demand also an amount of interpretative power which does not exist: hence some at least of the endless misreadings of which authors complain. Surely in this our highest form of expression we ought at least to recover the expressiveness of gesture. Something which makes for that much-needed quality may some day be hoped for. Thus the context would become illuminative and not as it often is now, merely coercive. But in any case it is coercive: so much so that surely it would be wise to say that a certain word (with perhaps some few exceptions) has but a certain *core* of meaning, from which indeed its variations in value must start. This of course is the condition of dictionary definition, which however itself generally leaves something to be desired. And above all it seems almost invariably forgotten that while we do, if we think of these things at all, make some allowance for the power of its context over the meaning of a word, we rarely if ever make allowance for the power of a leading word in a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter, on its context: although this corresponds to the influence of a 'shibboleth' or party-cry on a group of persons who are banded together in support of some 'cause.'

As to the part which individual 'will' plays in this connexion, I must confess that many of my own words are used with a silent protest: I am sadly conscious of the associations (the very ones which I desire to outgrow) which dominate them. My 'will' would incline often to use words and phrases which, as things are, could only sound perversely or ignorantly grotesque. And these would be thus useless: since no one now is prepared to suffer some strangeness for the sake of a new or good idea or of raising some question in an entirely fresh way which might bring us to unexpected answers. It is indeed not so much writers and speakers who have to be trained from the first years of infancy in the splendid work of developing our powers and means of signifying and interpreting, but the great world of hearers and the growing world of readers. It is most true that 'by understanding, a social will issues from the individual will' (p. 298, §13), and that social validity it must have. But here, alas, the greatest difficulty arises, except in that very case where difficulty would be desirable. Senseless changes, wanton waste of valuable association or analogy

and so on, are quite easily introduced, probably by those who are sophisticated in the worst sense: those whose minds are tainted intellectually on the one hand by forms of pompous conventional vulgarity, and on the other by the ignoble standards of speculative trade or even of the betting and gambling worlds. As to the perverse and mischievous changes, even scientific writers will for instance, use ‘phenomenal’ to mean exceptional, just as they now use ‘atom’ for some divisible particle, and speak of rudiment when they mean its converse, *vestige*: while philosophical writers or essayists of the first rank will confound separation and distinction, poetry and verse, fancy and imagination, imagination and conception, etc., etc.

But then the question, Why should this word be used and not that? as yet seems only to be asked either by those whose only idea in this is to keep looked the fetters of unintelligent convention for the restatement of second-hand idea in orthodox form: or else by those who, despairing of all beauty, greatness, widening truth of thought, substitute for these mere graces, skill, charm or ‘preciousness’ of Style, – the elaborate stained-glass window for the glorious landscape, the light and the air, which were the very reason for the making of windows. But after all, stained-glass windows have a glory of their own, and a use too where the outlook would only be on some squalid rubbish-heap. Only, as it has been well said, when language is to be used to conceal lack of thought, it is too often twisted and wrung out of the dictionary to result in the mere pleasure given by deft tricks and mannerisms. Even the proverb or current saying, simply reversed, attains the honours of epigram. Meanwhile the essential continuity of evolution in this as in other forms of vital activity, is still (as I have elsewhere urged) virtually if not directly denied. As Dr. Tönnies says⁹⁷, the idea of an absolute gulf between the language of man and that of animals needs for its completion that between men who write and men who cannot.

The significance of the existence of language within language: of patois, of dialect, of ‘patter’: language belonging to a school, even to a family of children: the ‘little’ language of mother and babe, the scientific notations, the professional vocabularies, the sailors,’ the shepherds,’ the costermongers’ lingos, the jargons, slangs, etc., is understood by few. The fact that we have language on many levels, some of them little differing from what may be called an animal one, at all events disposes of the absurd notion that, even if convinced of the advantages to be gained by adding to our store and modes of expression, nobody would take the trouble to do it. Even the recent development of a strong demand for dialect stories proves at all events that very few grudge the trouble of following unfamiliar forms of speech if only these are expressive and pointed, as dialect generally is.

If we would understand the different senses in which it may be said of words or other social signs that they have a ‘meaning’ we must also understand the nature of the social will. The contrast drawn in the Essay between that utterant will which acts from feeling and the one which works from thought, is instructive. The feeling and thinking wills have different ends, the former being mainly unconscious and the latter conscious.

The analysis of traditional superstition is luminous: as also the definition of the way in which we learn to give predictive meaning to certain signs (pp. 301–302).

The author’s description of the legislative action of science over its own technical terms may I fear be shown to be as yet but little deserved. Certainly in England, and equally in the translations of scientific writing which I have seen, nothing is more striking than the loose and inconsistent way in which many even leading terms are used. Many scientific men have complained of and rebuked this tendency, but so far, it appears, without much effect.

When we realise that in fact the crudest languages are just those ‘burdened with a superfluity of synonyms’ (p. 808, §42), we see that an advanced language ought gladly to utilise these ‘synonyms’ for expressing subtle distinctions the need of which is continually growing as the racial experience

97. Among which it now appears we must reckon that of fishes! See *Cont. Rev.*, August 1900: 218.

widens and new wants are created. But at present, as it would be easy to show, we are on all sides allowing this treasure to run to waste.

For what Dr. Tönnies calls a 'special or heightened meaning' (p. 310, §44), as the result not only of reverence or 'inspiration' but of a sense of great moral or rational issues, I would always reserve the noble word Significance. And here it may perhaps be suggested that while such a conception as the Logos may of course be held crudely and literalised or crystallised into 'dogma,' a time may come when we shall be glad to have seen at least in this form that the Word of the Speaker is more creative, more sacred, more powerful than our usual ideas of language imply. If the orator, even as we have him now, can awaken in his hearers a force of enthusiasm and resolve which may help to change the very face of the world and the whole course of civilisation, or may as we say 'melt the hardest heart,' – sometimes the harder task: – if the words in a Book can so sway mankind through the centuries as to be known par excellence as 'revelation' and to be almost worshipped by multitudes, we may be sure that Expression, in forms which as yet we can only dimly imagine, will in some sense justify usages in which at present we see either mere dogma to be unthinkingly accepted by faith, or the survival of naïve myth.

Thus again, while 'apart from its personification of the inanimate, the economy of language treats all processes after the analogy of animal' and human activities, and these interpretations, handed down in philosophy, 'penetrate deep into the sciences' (p. 312, §46) and are hard to weed out again, we may find whenever we begin to test and sift the comparative value of analogy and metaphor, of parable and myth, that with the weeds are hidden as it were rare and precious plants.

The question of extensions of language in the direction of unicones and other like 'signs of signs' all depending on the action of a healthy 'social will' cannot here be entered into. But this and all other indications now crowding upon us of a coming expansion of our means of mental intercourse – so far behind our means of material communication – cannot but be welcomed. Like other authorities Dr. Tönnies considers that for many reasons English is likely to become, especially for business purposes, a universal language.

The relation between a leading concept, its definition, its characteristics, and the use of metaphor to describe its nature, needs perhaps a special treatment by so able a writer as Dr. Tönnies. To take the case of what may be called the ruling figurative definition of language, that of *current or sterling coin*, we find him seriously defending the use of this image. It is indeed as he says 'almost traditional in philosophy to compare words with money': but he also claims that 'the analogy is far-reaching.' It is of course indisputable that 'it is essential to the word as to money that it is a sign and that it shall be valid.' But the Essayist carries his comparison much farther, and extends it 'to the different senses in which money like the word has "meaning"' (p. 324, §55). In the one case it is coined money, in the other, paper money. But we never speak of words in connexion with 'notes' or 'bills,' although no doubt word and money alike develop out of what is not yet either.

After his analysis of the evolution of modern systems of currency Dr. Tönnies gives us a classification of 'the many senses in which we can say of a word or other sign that it has meaning' (p. 326, §56). This is first of course, as he says, intention. Though curiously few know it, in English the very word simply 'intends to convey' this.

But there is no need here to follow this admirable exposition. I would only venture to suggest that the figure 'coin' as applied to the 'word' is unfortunately inapplicable in some important particulars. In the first place we do not arrange coins (or even cheques, notes, bills, etc.) with reference to resultant beauty or charm, or in ways answering to brilliant eloquence: then coins are not added to or shortened as words are and have no constituent letters to be modified in sound or spelling: they are without that multitude of varying associations which the first sight of words calls forth in different persons: neither do they change places as words – e.g., simple and silly – do. Again, coins consist of a number of objects of precisely the same value each in its own class, whereas words vary much in value within each class. As Dr. Tönnies himself reminds us, coins

are signs of a standard ‘unit of measurement,’ which certainly words are not. If the analogy held good, the meaning of words like the value of coins would never vary except in degree. Then you cannot alter the value of money by warmth or coldness of tone, by a tearful or stern or smiling face: or again by underlining it or printing it in capitals.

But a more important objection remains. We cannot reconcile this metaphor with what I venture to think the truer ones. Our own language considered as an ‘innate organ’ suggests words as its ‘cells’: language can be ‘damped and kneaded into a dough,’ which figure connects it with plant-life: ‘word-painting’ is anyhow quite inconsistent with the idea of coinage. Instances might be multiplied. But surely enough has been said to show that the analogy between money and language, coins and words, belongs to that large class in which we have one or two common characters or qualities which correspond, while many others, – some of crucial importance – differ completely.

These analogies may be allowed to pass in colloquial intercourse: but surely the only ones which philosophy or science or indeed any serious writing can rightly employ are those in which if not all, at all events the main characteristics of the two factors, are really analogous.

It might of course be rejoined that the analogy as worked out in the *Essay* is manifestly only applied to one special aspect of language, ignoring all others. But the fact that this is possible and even easy in this and many similar cases is surely the very thing which constitutes its greatest danger. The ordinary reader does not think of the narrow limitations of such a comparison: he applies it vaguely to the whole subject. And even the warning given us that one particular part of the analogy cannot be carried into detail must needs encourage the idea that in all other cases it can.

Part II

Having thus thoroughly examined into the nature of ‘Sign’ and its ‘Sense,’ we now inquire into the reasons for that disastrous obscurity and confusion which makes the study either of psychology or philosophy increasingly sterile. As the *Essayist* tells us, throughout Europe and America, even the ablest writers start from or work with concepts differently determined: and are not even constant to, or their arguments consistent with, their own definitions of their leading terms. This, as he shows, is an evil long since complained of: and he does full justice to that great but abortive effort to compel language to take on the automatic precision of mathematics, which the seventeenth century gave us.

In those days, as now, it seemed to the thoughtful that philosophical disputes would end ‘if only there were unanimity as to the meanings of words,’ since many disputants never understood each other at all. But Dr. Tönnies wisely remarks that then as now, much rarer was the perception ‘that a difference of thought lies hidden under the same expressions’ (p. 470, §66). That is indeed quite as frequent a cause of dissension as its opposite.

Again, much of the anarchy in philosophical terminology results from the unconscious absorption into philosophical systems of strong party views and theological or anti-theological prepossessions. And never shall we learn to allow for this probably inevitable source of difficulty until we have set ourselves in earnest to attack the enemy in his citadel and to master the whole subject of Sign and Sense in a new spirit.

The ‘remarkable interaction between the names for physical (objective) and psychical (subjective) processes’ does indeed from this point of view need a fresh and exhaustive study. At present we accept the traditional usage or we add arbitrary usages of our own apparently without a suspicion that all the time there may be groups of phenomena ‘mental’ and ‘material’ of which the correspondence is as ‘real’ in the sense of actually existent as that of the corresponding points in vision or the mechanical equivalence of heat, or indeed as that in any admitted equation. And

here we may especially note 'the habit of denoting a grammatical subject as 'thing' while thinking of things as spatially extended or corporeal' (p. 473, §68). For surely the predominance of the inherited tendency to static or spatial methods of describing the psychical is responsible for much of our difficulty in questions of the 'soul' or 'immortality.' These may assume unlooked-for aspects when we begin instead to apply the dynamic order of figure to the conscious sphere, and regard soul, mind, self, not as analogue of body in the sense of mass or structure, but as analogue of that primary complex-forming energy which (in whatever sense) we recognise as vital.

The loss of neo-Latin as a universal scholar's language is of course a serious one: but is there not reason to fear that its reintroduction might tend to create worse evils than even those which it was meant to cure? For it would accentuate the present tendency to use only archaic figures of speech: and would also, unless the greatest vigilance were exercised, fasten yet more firmly than at present the fetters of the formalist.

However of course a real new birth of interest in Expression, a real appreciation of the tremendous issues involved in its exaltation or degradation, ought to avert any such misfortune. With regard to differences of thought, 'differing, principles, opinions, theories' (p. 479, §72), Dr. Tönnies insists that a common terminology is not only possible but indispensable for arriving at any decision between them. There has undoubtedly been a process of simplification, alike of thought and language, due chiefly to the influence of the mechanical interpretations of physical science. 'The whole tendency opposes man to all the rest of nature' (480, §73). But 'a very marked reaction against the rationalistic-mechanical tendencies is just appearing. A vitalistic impulse is again disturbing the biologists' (p. 481, *Ibid.*).

Into this difficult and momentous question it would almost seem waste of time to go, until there has been a thorough revision of our means of expressing it and *therefore of thinking it*. For example, the concepts of Rest, Identity, Being (and all others belonging to the same category) are undoubtedly, as the writer says, being replaced by those of Motion, Change, Becoming (p. 485, §75). Only in both cases, the terms used, with associations aroused by them which have now only a historical interest, completely dominate our thought, with the result that we argue round and round in a circle and 'get no forrarder.' And 'it must be noted most carefully how' (for instance in the conception of life as the combination of reproduction and destruction, of the activities of life as a 'dying') 'the regenerated Aristotelian concepts harmonise with the concepts of modern physics. For what is energy, which is now accounted the true reality, but capacity, inclination, tendency (or whatever it is called) to perform work?' But most truly 'this whole renewal of thought is of the deepest importance for Psychology.' There is now 'no ground in the given facts for the separation of subject and object' (p. 486, §§75-76), still less for the use of the insufferable anomaly of the internal and external. Both are simply remnants 'of the old belief that the soul has its seat in the body as another being.' And at all events it is well that our falsities should be challenged by the assertion that 'the actual facts are sufficiently described by saying that the body perceives itself and reacts upon itself, i.e., as a whole upon its parts. We may give the body, so far as it is subject i.e., psychical fact, the traditional name of soul' (p. 486, §76).

I would venture to suggest that some objections to this statement will probably be found to rest upon those very survivals of even primitive animisms which the state of language prevents our discovering in thought philosophically or theologically or even scientifically orthodox. Others may be due to the too common confusion between separation and distinction. In any case a terminology really in harmony with the knowledge so far attained by mankind must be, as we are, in conflict with a terminology which belongs essentially to a bygone age and to discredited theories. As to the 'obstinate persistence of the view that intelligence belongs to the essence of the soul' (p. 487, §79), may it not be possible that here again we have a difficulty created by the very words in which the 'opposing views' have to be expressed? Remove the barrier which *separates* thought from sensation, leave only the distinction without which no discussion is possible, and you will find yourself able to redefine, nay, to reconceive the facts and relations of intelligence

and thought, in the light of the biological concepts of involution and evolution, of growth and differentiation: yes, and even perhaps of fertilisation and protective mimicry! For most assuredly there are innumerable processes 'which denote psychical life just as they do physical life'; but which, being left outside and unnoticed 'do *not* get their appropriate validity and naming' (p. 488, §80). And that, it must be remembered, starves not only psychology but the imagination and the vocabulary of the poet. Time that he too began to see the precious gems for *his* setting that lie in many a (to him) unknown, because 'technical' scientific treatise.

But 'it is chiefly the doctrine of the will which suffers from this as from the dependence of terminology upon customary language.' Most certainly this is so. And, as I made bold to suggest in 1887 (in an unpublished paper called 'Mental Biology'⁹⁸): 'A psychical organism within the soul, like the cerebrum within the body, is formed as a complex tissue of possible and actual connexions of sensations, a tissue of which the essential functions are the positing of likeness and difference, i.e., are assimilation and separation, reception and rejection, affirmation and negation, completing itself in man by the possession of a sign-system of words as the function of judgment, and so as thought' (p. 488, §80). I am indeed profoundly grateful that at last a suggestion which I saw long since must contain an important key to our chaotic ideas of soul and of will has now been thus recognised, ably expressed and applied to the ordering of these and like ideas.

The criticism of Prof. W. James which follows (p. 489, §81) seems to me entirely justified; for these 'arbitrary (and inconsistent) limitations,' largely owing to the failures of language, issue in sermons like those on the 'Will to Believe,' which are unfortunately vulnerable just where we most need their eloquently pleaded lessons. And the strictly scientific thinker is no better off. The physiologists' idea of the will virtually makes it 'after the fashion of the Cartesian soul, a rational person within the body': it sends orders, etc. Or, like Huxley, they class it as one the 'mere by-products of the vital process, reacting in no way upon it. They differ from the Identity-psychologists only in the obstinately maintained prejudice that only the objective or physical is "real" i.e., they differ fundamentally only in terminology; for no one has ever been able to say in what particular sense the former has a right to be called real, while the psychical "accompaniment" has not.' Yet I suppose that there is in fact one 'particular sense' in which the physical has an exclusive right to be called 'real.' It lies in the power to reproduce physical phenomena in the laboratory or its equivalent, without hindrance from the 'personal equation,' which must always introduce the element of uncertainty into every psychical experiment on volitional activities.

Dr. Tönnies has in any case fully understood 'the value of this concept for the understanding of undoubted facts, e.g., of the facts that for every one something becomes the sign or mark of something else, without being that by nature' (p. 491, *Ibid.*); while he warns us throughout that what we have to say is made very difficult by the fact that we can express ourselves 'only in words which already mean something else.'

Part III

Dr. Tönnies here begins by an assumption and a question. 'Terminology is a production of human will, but thought and knowledge itself are also activity wherein will expresses itself. If an energetic and homogeneous will of uniform aim were given to psychological and philosophical knowledge, then unanimity of thought would soon take shape in unanimity in naming. Why is not that will given?' (p. 46, §82). He rightly describes the absence of unanimity as pathological. And the general notion that it is easy to talk of our experiences and feelings, and that it does not pay to pursue the subject scientifically, fosters this state of things. There is no doubt also that physical science has so to speak invaded and devastated the realm which is supposed to include metaphysic: while

98. [Now included in the present volume, see Section 4.14.]

this again is conceived as a ghost- or dream-land which is dissipated like mists before the sun. But what is the consequence? Philosophy, credited with (or burdened by) forms of theology of which it is naturally independent, avenges itself by choking the harvests of science with rank growths of language-weed. Not merely the professed metaphysician but the scientist 'stumbles upon premature ill-considered judgments, owing to the lack of clarified concepts of those objects of thought the *names* of which are in every one's mouth, such as cause, end, necessary, fortuitous, possible, impossible, perfect, unity, true, order, space, etc.' (p. 47, *Ibid.*).

If Wolff were now living, he would, Dr. Tönnies thinks, be preaching a wide extension of our present idea of the possible functions and the ultimate limitations, of language. Probably however it is well that such a crusade, in the form it would then have taken, is no longer possible; as the march of events and the easier communication between various races all over the world, to say nothing of the development of physical science, must give a different and more hopeful direction to our efforts than has hitherto been practicable. And moreover such work will now as never before appeal to every man – to whatever type he belongs – who does not deliberately prefer the unmeaning and the senseless, or whose mind rises at all above the level of imbecility. But as it is, Dr. Tönnies rightly urges (p. 48, §83) that we have to fight as it were backwards: and shows the absurdity of being reduced to bad metaphysic because the way to valid thought is blocked on the one hand by science, and on the other by traditional theology. He gives an excellent analysis of the idea of 'responsibility' (p. 49, §84), which is itself 'responsible' for much false thought, and reflects itself in the fancy that men allow themselves to be determined in their practical relations by psychological theories.⁹⁹ But, as he remarks, 'the ultimate ground of this mistake is that lack of sociological, and therefore also of psychological, insight, which in its application to political maxims is still always held to be competence' (p. 50, *Ibid.*). Thus philosophy is accused of being both reactionary and revolutionary: and her history is taught, – as a catalogue of 'vague schemes and fancies' (p. 51, §85).

In considering the question of remedy for all these evils we must realise as above remarked the increasingly international character of the problem. Happily mutual understanding and co-operation are strongly promoted by 'the conditions and means through which the intercourse of the world is carried on to-day.' The United States are attracting 'the accumulators of the power of thought.' So also to some extent with the colonies of the British Empire. And 'in proportion as in the new world an inward concentration is gained for serious thought. Europe may expect a reflux of new results.' It is in truth 'inevitable that we should become more and more conscious of the hindrances of a different terminology, especially in so far as they have been conditioned by those national limitations; but also that we should feel more and more strongly the need of a common *language*' (p. 52, §88).

The proposals of Archbishop Wilkins, of Descartes, and of Leibnitz, who 'pursued these world-ideas with ominous confusion' (p. 53, §89) have as yet borne no practical fruit. But even in rational schemes once smiled at as Utopian (just as the idea of a great development and extension of linguistic facilities is now derided), we have seen rapid progress: e.g. 'the postal union, the metrical system, the Latin coinage convention,' etc. 'In all these cases we have to do with the relations of symbols to a more comprehensive system, with the determination of units of measurement by a more universal will' (p. 54, §90).

And all such ideas do inestimable service by pointing in the direction which promises good result. 'We must will the highest, we must seek the apparently impossible. A system of concepts is conceivable, which would present in their natural order all possible ideas in so far as they can have formal value in philosophical judgements, which would establish their relations to one

99. He alludes here significantly to 'those who speak under the spell of language.' This paralysing spell needs to be broken!

another, their dependence, kinship, contrast, but would develop all from simple elements which are accepted as belonging to the common consciousness of humanity' (Ibid.).

And as I have often ventured both to suggest and to illustrate, we must introduce the idea of assigning to the elements of such a system one of linear diagrams so that 'complex thoughts could be compounded out of them as geometrical figures, – plane, spherical, and spatial' (Ibid.). Other mathematical symbols would of course be available: but a symbolic system resembling the Chinese might also, as the present Chinese Minister has pointed out, be a useful auxiliary.

Of course for all this we must develop some centre of authority which shall register and circulate the results of all the best thinking on the subject of Expression in the whole civilised world. Such an authority would neither hamper nor override the freedom of true philosophy, of true science, of true literature: it would never dream of dogmatically imposing rules which tended to stiffen or to contract the energies of a 'living' and growing language. It would indeed even encourage in some directions a certain disdain for binding regulations which have really been forced upon us for the convenience not of the thinker or the man of action, but of – the Printer. It would admit that we might well allow some greater latitude in written correspondence than would perhaps be convenient or economical in printed books: it would rejoice even in the increasing tendency, at all events in England, to write the dialects of childhood and local forms of speech not merely in altered spelling, but without the disfiguring addition of inverted commas where letters were to be left out. And this last reform would appeal even to our tyrant the printer!

I will not attempt further to go into the great conception of an International Council of Reference (as, to avoid certain associations connected with modern 'Academies,' it might perhaps be called) which Dr. Tönnies gives us in his last pages: but will only quote with warm sympathy and gratitude some of his closing words. Under whatever form we acquire a nucleus for efforts to render language more efficient and its users more conscious of their linguistic obligations and privileges, it must 'by the fulness and wealth of its life' supply a vivid contrast to any dead machinery of official pedantry. Its programme will be based on an ideal of practical interest for all. 'Now this idea lies, as hardly any one of note among the sociologists can doubt, as it were in the air of our age. It is the overvoice to all the instruments which are played upon in the economic, the political, and spiritual life of our century. On the threshold of a new century it may perhaps give the note to this concert' (p. 56, §92). Whatever form again this new 'concert' may eventually take, we may be certain that if we work steadily and patiently for it, never losing sight either of the sublime greatness of a work which aims at nothing less than enriching and exalting man's distinctive power of speech and thought to an undreamt-of degree, or of the importance of details which we have too scornfully ignored or ignorantly neglected, our descendants will bless us for leaving them a heritage of which they will have learnt the transcendent value, and which must through the ages grow under their hands into a power which may even interpret afresh the ancient Figure of the Divine and creative Word of God.

Towards such a consummation, this masterly exposition of a theme which though as yet hardly recognise in its true grandeur will to coming generations be familiar, must tend to contribute. Let us hope that it will be the first of a long series of such appeals, arousing more and more of that active and experimental interest which alone can turn a fruitful conception into practical fact.

Note by Prof. Tönnies (1901)*

The writer of the Welby Prize Essay is very grateful to the author of these Notes (who is at the same time the donor of the prize) for having so carefully examined the Essay, and for enlarging, its purport by supplementary comments and some well-considered objections.

V. W. goes straight into the practical side of the subject. The critic's leading thought is emancipation from traditional forms of expression, no longer adequate to the very purpose for which they are destined. The general aspect of this idea did not seem to me to be an immediate object of the question of philosophical and psychological *terminology*. But I fully recognise that it may be represented in this way. The transition from the need for improving the technical idiom of thinking to the more general need for improving the language of conversation and literature is indeed an inevitable one, as long as the former is considered as a *part* of a given empirical and 'living' language. The language of chemistry, however, may keep free from all influences of common talk; for as common talk derives all its chemical knowledge and expressions from the science of chemistry, it gives very little, it receives almost all. Not so with psychology and metaphysics. Ordinary speech of educated people and general literature is full of psychological and metaphysical notions, not (at least consciously not) drawn from any system of philosophy, but claiming to be founded in nature or in common sense or – in language itself. Therefore, as long as philosophical language is not sharply marked off from general language – as long, in other words, as a writer uses words of this general language indifferently, as if they were sure to be rightly understood by any one *knowing* the language – so long the confusions and obscurities of this general language will go on to creep into the very systems of philosophy. And consequently if you appeal to philosophers to express themselves more strictly, more unmistakably, this appeal will fall short of success, unless a general rule be accepted to express themselves in all things whatever more strictly, more unmistakably, less ambiguously. It would, therefore, be an excellent object for a special research – more sociological than either psychological (that is referring to *individual* psychology) or linguistic in its purport – to inquire into the sources of lax and careless ways of speaking and of ensuing constant or frequent *misunderstandings*. In this place there may be said so much as this: All sorts of misunderstanding, whether intended by the speaker or no, if lasting and operating in people's minds are symptoms of a deep-rooted corruption of social life.

‘Et la pale famine et la peste effroyable
N'égalent point les maux et les troubles divers
Que les mal-entendus sèment dans l'univers.’
(Boursault).

And, like everything hurtful, it is made worse by the intent to do harm, *viz.*, by using words and phrases with a view of 'concealing one's thoughts' or at least with a wish and hope, that they (the words) will be understood so as to have a certain effect desired, although the speaker *owns* but a different sense and keeps himself free from all '*responsibility*' whatever (as in this case is very properly said).

As a matter of course, any attempt at improving language presupposes that we are determined to make ourselves understood and to understand each other, as perfectly as possible. Therefore it is only the misunderstandings, involuntary on either side, with which we are concerned. And here it is most justly and meritoriously emphasised by V. W. that very much might be done and ought to be done in order to avoid misunderstandings, (1) by developing and organising all modes of

* [Reply from Ferdinand Tönnies to Welby's comments as formulated in her paper above of 1901, 'Notes on the "Welby Prize Essay,"' *à propos* his essay 'Philosophical Terminology' (see Tönnies 1899–1900, 1906, 1988), awarded the Welby Prize. Tönnies's considerations are followed by a brief comment by Welby, see Tönnies 1901].

expression, (2) by training ourselves and particularly by training youth to the careful interpretation of these modes, for distinguishing the different sorts of sense, meaning and significance, for *evading* the dangers hidden in all imagery and rhetorical figure. I confess that I had not realised, ere I became acquainted with V.W.'s fervent aspirations, what a wide area here opens itself to *educational* improvement.

I also consider it to be a solid enrichment of my discussion on the validity of meaning, what V. W. points out as to the power of context (p. 190) and of leading words (p. 191) over the meaning of many words, that have 'but a certain *core* of meaning from which indeed its *variations* in value must start' (Ibid.). And it is true, what my critic says, that *written* language as it is (and perhaps English more than other) lacks nearly all the help for making 'sense' understood which spoken language possesses, and that here is a wide field for improvement. The critic passes by the question of *punctuation*, which was originally an instrument – rather a poor one indeed – for indicating the way a writer *wished* his sentences to be read. How little has been done to develop this instrument from its infant state! Even the *application* of this weak instrument is far from being regulated: it is by custom different in different languages; so that in order to read a foreign language correctly, although we need not learn, at least if it is a language of western civilisation, a new alphabet, we must learn a new punctuation, unless we are willing to forego its use altogether, as probably most people do. All this, however, concerns the meaning of sentences, periods, or as V. W. says, of context, and but indirectly the meaning of words. The critic returns to this theme (p. 8). As to the legislative action of science I wished to describe the ideal of it, not the reality, which however, in some at least of natural sciences, for example in astronomy and chemistry, comes near to what may be considered as a model. As to *synonyms*, I believe, it may be sadly confirmed from German experience, that 'we are on all sides allowing this treasure to run to waste' (p. 193). Especially as exaggerated and ill-advised aversion to 'foreign words' tends to expel these, and together with them the *specialised* meanings attached to those expressions, without substituting or forming indigenous words equally fit for carrying the associations needed.

I fully appreciate the elevated presage as to the Power and Significance of Word, indicated on page 194.

But in dealing with the 'Analogy of Money' I did not mean to defend the use of an *image* (p. 194); and I am, no less than the critic, aware of the mistake it would be to 'define language figuratively' (Ibid.) by that analogy. I only wished to point out, that among the many social symbols, consensual and conventional, all of which are very much *dissimilar* from words, are inferior to and even dependent upon them, there are some, and those playing a most important part in empirical civilisation, which have certain characteristic traits in common with words, and are well calculated to *illustrate* the essence and power of different forms of social will. These are the tokens of economical value, that is, of *value in exchange*. Like words themselves, they bear, in an *eminent* sense of the word, a *social* character. As words go from brain to brain, so tokens of exchange-value (money, its predecessors and its substitutes), go from hand to hand – carrying a *meaning* with themselves, besides what they 'are' – that is, requiring to be interpreted intellectually beyond what they appear to the senses – and, of course, this meaning signifies a reference to 'brain action' (that is to reasoning) as well in the case of money as in the case of words. This, indeed, I ought to have definitely stated, and in this respect I am grateful again to my critic for pointing to a defect of my exposition. The analogy certainly does not 'hold good' (p. 195) except in some general features, which perhaps might be styled 'external,' though this figure itself, as V. W. has so well reminded us, is very misleading. But if the critic maintains universally, 'that you cannot alter the value of money by underlining it or printing it in capitals' (Ibid.), I still venture to find some analogy to this in the *endorsement of bills*, which indeed heightens their value in that commercial circle where they have their 'currency' – though, to be sure, *hoc simile*, also *claudicat*. Perhaps it would be safer still to compare underlining to a special *warrant* of one who pays money, that

his coins are genuine or that they are full weight; this will not enhance their value absolutely, but (possibly) it will to the person who accepts them.

I ask pardon if I do not think the objection stringent, that the 'metaphor' cannot be reconciled with other ones, which the critic deems to be 'truer' (Ibid.). I should not describe metaphors as more or less 'true,' but as more or less illustrative and thereby useful. Furthermore, an analogy does not mean the same as a metaphor. The critic himself distinguished what I may be allowed to explain by an example. If I say this word has lost its currency, I evidently employ a metaphor, implying as little real analogy ('really analogous,' p. 196) as if I speak of the stream of life, or of the tooth of time. A real analogy means, if I am not mistaken, that there is more than one *point of likeness*, that there is a likeness in the *relation* of several characters to each other, as in a 'proportion' of mathematicians. And this I venture to uphold, there does exist between words as signs of sense and coins or other signs of value-in-exchange.

A danger certainly is annexed to all analogies as well as to metaphors, if they are not properly understood (metaphors of course are more easily understood). But the critic clearly shows that he has understood excellently well, by the concluding sentences (p. 196). And I may add, that 'philosophy or science or indeed any serious writing' (Ibid.) can hardly be intended to convince or instruct ordinary readers (Ibid.), who, as a rule, so thoroughly despise all this sort of 'learned cant,' and who indeed, as Plato warned pupils untrained in geometry, avoid 'my humble roof.' For, as the same Plato (in the *Republic*) so well says, no science or doctrine is able to inculcate itself into minds that are not seriously *willing* to receive, that is first of all, to understand it. And is not this *motto* the very *core* of what my generous critic himself is aiming at?

With respect to part II, I am discovering many valuable suggestions in the 'Notes,' tending to develop my own views upon the subjects of the 'evil and its remedy,' which I had only hesitatingly put forth.

In particular, I am grateful to the critic for averting to the 'too common confusion between separation and distinction' (p. 198). As to the term 'real' (p. 197) there certainly will be no objection against reserving it for the 'physical' world, as soon as there is a universal agreement that the 'Real' is not the only 'Existent' or even 'Being.' Everything here would be settled, if only *authorities* were recognised and *laws* were kept.

Part III, leads me to the concluding remarks, which only give me much pleasure by the free and full assent and appreciation my delineation of a remedy has found with so able a critic. I also agree that what I have styled an Academy, perhaps would be called more properly an 'International Council of Reference,' if this name were not too long.

A Council certainly it ought to be; it would have no coercive power; it would not work except by arguments and reasons. But the need of a universal language I consider to be imperative; this same need is very much felt at present by the existing national academies and learned societies, and it has been very remarkable to me, that only a year after I had written my essay (and before it was printed) a Conference of those Academies should have taken place, with a view of settling the question of restoring Latin to its ancient position as the idiom of the Republic of the Learned. I do not share the fear 'that its reintroduction might tend to create worse evils than even those which it was meant to cure' (p. 197); for it would be more flexible than any living language and might very well *counteract* 'the present tendency to use only archaic figures of speech' (Ibid.); and as to the danger signalled by the critic, that 'it would fasten yet more firmly than at present the fetters of the formalist' (Ibid.) why should not 'the greatest vigilance be exercised' to meet the danger?

Comment by V. Welby

By the kind permission of the Editor, I venture briefly to acknowledge with gratitude the understanding sympathy with my aims, the too generous appreciation and the valuable criticism of my work, in the foregoing Note by Dr. Tönnies.

I may perhaps be allowed to add that I fully accept the explanation which he gives of the use of the 'money' analogy in describing certain aspects of language, and that I admit that I ought to have spoken of metaphor as valid or legitimate or apposite or relevant rather than as 'true.' Metaphor is of course the product of implicit analogy, which (though too often merely fanciful) claims to represent a true correspondence in character.

I ought also perhaps to say that while I have purposely confined my Notes to the view taken by Dr. Tönnies (as by M. Michel Bréal and others) of the remedy to be applied to the present confused state of philosophical terminology, my own view is that any effort made by this generation to raise the general linguistic level must fail, unless it takes the educative form.

2.17. The Message of Paul to the Present Age (1910)*

When we are fully steeped in the spirit of the age which is making all things new, we may find ourselves in a fresh sense the representatives of Paul. Not of his despotic dogmatism; not of the antiquated 'scenery' of his mind; not of the imagery which belonged to his day. We shall owe little to the framework of thought and emotion which he inherited, nothing to the passionate prejudices which belonged to his race, nothing to the only translation he could then give us of the Divine message now being given in the pregnant name of a Nature, the witness to which lies in the very phrase already familiar to us, the *Divine Nature*.

As one reads, one hears through the echoes of the ages the pleading voice of a real Man, of a very present brother, who appeals to us to understand him, not as he had to be in his age, not in his narrowness of race or character, but *as we have all to become in ours*.

To that real Man we shall owe much: to the man of undying value, who tells us that unless we claim as not merely human, but natural, his vision and his inspiration; unless we labour patiently till we include what he had to tell us in what science has to tell us; unless we humble ourselves to learn the divine lesson in a divine way as faithful wayfarers through Truth to the very Life which is still to us a problem while we live it, we shall never know the significance of his message for the present day. Unless, again, we have, not mere beliefs – God forbid! – but faith, to do this in steadfast loyalty to the Real, we shall never know the salvation of which we so glibly talk, or reach the clue which is to lead us to a Christ who calls us onward into worlds that are to ours as the world we call human is to the world we call animal, or even inanimate.

We may find ourselves, then, in a new sense representatives or at least descendants of Paul: of the Paul who ever told us of newness of life, of deliverance from the body, of a death not truly ours, and above which we must rise; who knew that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the glory of which either they are condition or revelation. The whole world, indeed, waits for the revealing of sons of God, of children, not now merely of a pure atmosphere, a Holy Air which we are to breathe and thus grow divine, but beyond that of an Ether which we are beginning dimly to suspect. . . . But with patience we must wait for this.

For assuredly, in the true Humanity – in that which is the Way, through truth born with the higher brain, to a Life compared with which ours is still but vegetative – in *that* Manhood we are more than conquerors. Neither birth nor death – both processes of life – neither height nor depth, neither cold nor heat, neither barrier nor blankness, neither things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from that all-embracing love which is revealed in Man as the Way to Life.

* [Originally published in *The Hibbert Journal*, see Welby 1910b].

Well may he quote the cry: 'How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!' Glad tidings which do not ignore but interpret and consecrate the world's problems, its suffering and its death: glad tidings, not of 'glory for me,' not of a reward of eternal happiness and pleasure for a denial of nature here; not of a partisan heaven, with sectarian angels and a dogmatic, perhaps a papal, God: but glad tidings that on a really discovered pathway we are passing through a stern country of tested knowledge to a blessed country of eager, willing, illuminated service; the country of that self-gift of which at last science has, in radio-activity, discovered the natural witness and parable. There at last we must find Life, and remember this present Life as at best Incubation; as the hidden storage, the secret growth, which precedes a birth into the splendour of our Sun.

There is among us a self-adoring spirit of stupor, eyes holden that we should not see, ears that we should not hear. Now the fall of this is the riches of the world; self, from absorbing despot, becomes willing slave. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out.' But we, in our incalculable ignorance and our infallible though mutually destructive creeds, have been tracing, mapping them out in elaborate systems of doctrine to be 'believed' in fanatical fervour or mechanical exactitude. Would it not be better meanwhile to present our bodies and minds a living, whole, wholesome sacrifice? Not one of waste, distortion, or destruction, but such a sacrifice as food-stuff undergoes as it turns into that precious 'chyle' which is the pabulum of our life. May we all be that: – 'This is my body, my blood, given for you. . . .' For there is the note of divine vitality. 'Be not overcome of evil' – whether as iniquity or as ignorance – 'but overcome evil with good' – not only moral, but intellectual; by love according to knowledge. 'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' This is the message of science.

'Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.' Let us rather place for him stepping-stones or a ladder. Overthrow not for *any* sake the Divine work, but be one of its workers, filled with all goodness, filled with all knowledge, which is the fulness of the divine blessing. For 'as it is written' – 'they shall see, to whom no tidings of him came. *And they who have not heard shall understand.*' Yea, better than *we* do, who think we have the only heritage!

If we would express, however imperfectly, the simpler because higher and deeper Significance of Life and Mind, we are often driven to paradox. The very foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Things that the planet-centred worldling reckons 'wisdom' are brought to nought. He that glorieth, let him glory in the divinely, the cosmically glorious. And for this he must understand the Divine as the very Breath of our life, physical and mental, and see that here we have the essential factor of all existence. Yet even thus we must beware of glibness, of much talk. The kingdom of true divinity is not in word but in power. That alone is the test. There are diversities of gifts, of ministrations, of workings, but the same Spirit and Lord and God; the same essential power which we know as supremely vital. One has the word of wisdom, another the word of knowledge, another the gift of faith, which is thus but one of many gifts to be utilised for good. By implication, the steward of wisdom and knowledge may be without faith, and yet serve in the highest sense. But 'faith' here seems to mean only readiness to believe: true faith is seen in the divine: God is faithful. . . . That is, He is to be trusted from end to end. The truly divine never fails us. Let us see that we are trusty guardians and loyal servants – of unfailing truth.

Then we come to the famous definition of love. Yes, one may be the child of the Paul who wrote that: the Paul who knew that the childish things which we so carefully cultivate and make into a life-destroying framework of belief must be put away, at whatever cost to comfort and prejudice. With what a passion of self-spending that prophetic Paul would have rebuked our faithless terror of new light! Ay, indeed, and our careful garnering of *his* inevitable childishness; not childishness, of course, in his day, but assuredly that in ours. For thus we get the husk which makes for division: we miss the kernel which makes man one. Divine truth ever makes a new heaven, a new earth, a

new life; the old has the value of a hallowed record, but to force it on the budding, growing life is that worst of vices, the unnatural, abortive vice. In this day we are still doing that very thing – in the name of religion!

Above all, the speech we use must be to our own age significant: that which has helped to call out the latent powers of man, and has enabled him to resist degrading, reverting tendencies, has always been fully this. The old words are often noble and beautiful, so that we recognise the thoughts they embody as inbreathed from an atmosphere of life-giving purity. But there must be a power of interpretation and fearless translation into the terms of growing knowledge, beyond all that we have yet reached. Else our understanding is untruthful; our mind points backwards. Now Paul, who in this anticipated the very spirit of modern science, had rather speak five words with the understanding, and thus really to be understood, than ten thousand in the irresponsible jargon which we too often, as men did in his day, call spiritual. What a rebuke for too many of us who claim to be Christian, or even religious!

The power to interpret the order of the world has manifestly passed to science (although as yet in halting and tentative form), since the scientific spirit is the heir of that truly religious spirit which says, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,' without stipulation as to the conformity of the Word to our desires and preconceptions, personal or inherited. This is also the condemnation of that 'letter' – that *literal* – to which we are enslaved.

As yet, alas! There is a veil over the heart which calls itself religious; and this can only be taken away by that faith which means entirely fearless liberty, – the liberty, the free-thought which dwells in the very Spirit of the Lord of our lives. In this true freedom the unveiled human face reflects as in a mirror the divine glory, and is thus divinely transformed. Those whose faces are unveiled to truth must be seen by all as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of *life*; a word, that is, the truth of which could be denied by no reasonable being. For whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, those belong to the man whose unveiled heart, as in a mirror, reflects the divine reality. Thus, as having nothing of our own, we yet possess all things: nature becomes translucent; astronomy, physics, chemistry, and, above all, biology, have a revelation, a gospel, which is entirely one with all that has made for the greatness of man.

But we must frankly surrender the old to which we cling. Religion has always been a bringer of new light, and has involved an uncompromising, in short, a faithful and therefore drastic revision of the old. And because men as ignorant and prejudiced – that is, as not human enough – always resist the call to change which ascent must mean, always distrust and often repudiate the new and the young, therefore the heaven-light does not struggle through the clouds. We must no longer merely tolerate the sciences or the scientific method while protesting that they are entirely apart from religion. Everything they bring us calls insistently for translation into terms of religion. Only we must be patient, we must see that such translation is not premature: it must, indeed, be always provisional, always tentative. It is the 'earthly man' of Paul who constructs a fixed and final revelation, a framework which, being lifeless, becomes rigid and death-bringing, cleaving in two the world of immeasurably complex unity which is our true heritage.

To Paul, earth is no ultimate centre: the earthly man must give way to the heavenly man; our true centre is solar; we belong to a great 'heavenly' system, and that, again, to the illimitable universe. Before it is anything else, the Pauline appeal is unconsciously post-Copernican. It is indeed part of our strange blindness that we have missed in this passionate pleader the note of unconscious anticipation of Copernicus. Truly he was greater than we know, and in a greater sense than we think. He tells the men of Corinth that his mouth is open to them and his heart enlarged. Not in him were they, just as not in him are we, straitened, confined. We are sanctuaries of a living God; it is meet, therefore, to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit. And what is there that any of us can suffer which is not shared by this true messenger of human nature in its widest range? Who is weak and he is not weak? Well, if we glory, let it be in the very things which, in our blindness, we reckon weakness. For if the world were ashamed of its dependence

on its mother-sun for light, and tried to set up a rival light of its own, what wreck of life and order and beauty would ensue!

Again, what a lesson is here read us on our fatal literalism, which beguiles us into bondage of that 'letter' which, as may be shown from this very sense and context, is nothing less than a killing of the truth. 'I have been crucified with Christ.' What, on Golgotha, then? 'Yet I live'; but 'no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.' So, literally, there is no longer any Paul. Yet assuredly there is more than ever of the human gift to which we give that name. For, after all, nothing matters in the end but a new creation, a fresh start. Observance, tradition, have their value while they stand good; but chiefly as pointing us to the great example of the fearlessness of life, unresting, striving onwards into ever fresh regions, using the ended. Yesterday but as stepping-stone to the dawning To-day and the immanent To-morrow.

And so we come to the passionate outpouring which we know as the Letter to the Ephesians. The note sounded throughout the words of Paul, and rising above all that separates our present needs from those of the distant centuries, which we can no longer even picture rightly to ourselves, is that of the essential unity of the worlds in their Sun, whose Light of the World is the symbol of the Christ, that is, of the Man in Men, the Man waiting ever to be born again, and to die only to rise and ascend. No longer merely 'I,' or rather merely my Self. Someone greater than any Self lives in us; one who in a true sense sums up all things on our earth and in our heavens.

Then comes the wonderful prayer that the Fatherhood – which we in our day cannot be tempted to sever from Motherhood – may grant us to be strengthened with a new and consummate power; that we all, being rooted and grounded in love, may know, with all who in the world's history are saints – that is, are worthily human – 'what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,' that we may be 'filled unto all the fulness of God.' What more is there to be said? 'Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. . . . 'For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. . . . '

Have we even begun to see that this also is the lesson of Nature, as we are beginning to learn the a b c of her august revelation? Have we yet even discovered, much less taken to heart, the significant correspondence, coming ever more clearly into sight, between the highest utterances of religion and the greatest generalisations of modern astronomy and astrophysics? Have we yet penetrated to the unity which comprehends the difference between 'Nature' and 'Spirit,' and reinterprets them by uniting them? We have emphatically no right to tie ourselves finally down to any theory, however apparently invulnerable, within which science tentatively works in our own momentary day. But we have not only the right, we are bound in duty to fact and truth to give effective recognition to the greatest of all such revisions of cosmical assumption, that of Copernicus. We must at least recognise the natural presumption that the same order, in a broad sense, applies in our mental and spiritual experience. The Copernican discovery has been and is being succeeded by revisions made possible by revealing instruments – virtually extensions of human sense into the further environment – which man is always devising or perfecting. Have we yet discerned that all this has an intimate bearing upon the whole field of our thought and our faith?

If not, it is surely time that we seriously consider these matters, and realise that, if he lived again now, Paul of Tarsus would not fail to learn this God-sent lesson, that science herself being a revelation, what we owe first of all to the Divine Parentage of a spiritual universe is to live, not for the Passed, not for the Gone-By, but for that which is Coming to Pass, and in which the Passed is not lost, but for ever being taken up and transmuted. What else, indeed, is the keynote of all that we can value in Old and New 'Testament'? It is beyond all else a call to live for the ever new ages, fresh developments, and rising ideals which are symbolised by the dawn and the sunrise, by the world's return in its northern hemisphere to its sun at Christmas; and most of all by the mysteries of conception and of birth.

For in every sense we have to be, as in Nature we already are, born not merely again, but from above.

Chapter 3

A theory of meaning. Significs

The very first lesson that we have a right to demand that logic shall teach us is, how to make our ideas clear; and a most important one it is, depreciated only by minds who stand in need of it. To know what we think, to be masters of our own meaning, will make a solid foundation for great and weighty thought. (Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers* 5.393)

3.1. Why ‘significs’?

‘Significs’ is the term favoured by Victoria Welby to designate her special approach to the study of sign and meaning. She most probably coined the neologism in 1894 circa¹, but officially introduced it in her publications for the first time in her essay of 1896, ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation.’ This date is confirmed in the Oxford Dictionary entry of 1911, ‘Significs,’ published in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, redacted by the editors, and approved by Welby. The first edition of the Dictionary appeared in 12 volumes between 1888 and 1928, while the specific entry on significs appeared in volume IX, published in 1911.² The entry is now available online and reads as follows:

Significs. [f. Signific-ance, on the analogy of forms in *-ics* (see *-ic* 2). Introduced by Lady Welby in 1896.]

A proposed science and educational method based upon the importance of realizing the exact significance of terms and conceptions, and their influence on thought and life.

The terms *signific/al* adjs., *significally* adv., and *significian* sb., have also been employed.

1896 LADY WELBY in *Mind* (Jan.) 32 Taking advantage of the child’s endless store of interest and curiosity, it ought to be easy to make ‘Significs’ or ‘Sensifics’ the most attractive of studies. **1903** – Ibid. 161, Significs, then, will bring us the philosophy of Significance, i.e. a raising of our whole conception of meaning to a higher and more efficient level.

Another possible alternative to ‘significs’ was ‘signics.’ In her essay of 1893, ‘Meaning and Metaphor,’ Welby had also introduced the neologism ‘sensifics,’ and though it reappeared in her 1896 essay, where she gave it priority, we know that she was subsequently to privilege ‘significs’ (see above, Sections 1.3 and 2.9). As emerges from

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1. In that same year, 1894, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) introduced the term ‘sémiologie,’ as stated in an unpublished note reported by Engler 1980: 3–36 (cf. Auroux and Delesalle 1990: 106).
 2. See Welby’s correspondence below with André Lalande; cf. also Welby 1911c. Welby referred to this entry in a letter to Ogden, dated 21 November 1910, see correspondence appended to Ch. 7, this volume.

her correspondence, Welby had also considered the terms ‘semantics’ and ‘symbolics’ before making her final choice in 1896 (see her letter exchanges from the 1880s with Frederick Pollock and Karl Pearson, Section 2.7 above). However, in Welby’s view each of these alternative expressions failed to highlight the relation of meaning to value, the multiform signifying potential of the sign, its bearing upon human action and behaviour, and consequently were all eventually excluded.

With *significs* Welby intended to propose a new approach to the different sciences of sign and meaning, language and communication, including pragmatism as it was emerging at the time. Keeping account of recent findings in research, *significs* aimed to transcend eventual limits of approaches that she considered partial, and to develop a more comprehensive analysis keeping account of the different dimensions and their interconnectedness in the life of signs and interpretation, from the linguistic, philosophical, logical, psychological, anthropological, pedagogical, sociological, to the axiological, etc. However, despite all her considerations, the term ‘*significs*’ was still questioned by some of her contemporaries. The main contention was that other expressions were readily available. These included ‘semiotics,’ ‘semasiology,’ ‘sematology,’ beyond the already mentioned ‘semantics’ – the latter was officially introduced by Michel Bréal with his 1897 monograph, *Essai de sémantique* (on Welby and Bréal, see below Section 3.5; for their correspondence, which is also included in this volume, see Section 3.8).

In his dictionary entry, ‘Sémantique’ (reported below), André Lalande (1867–1963) observed that Arsène Darmesteter had already introduced the term ‘semantics’ in a publication of 1887, but that Bréal had used it in articles much earlier. In any case, Welby was not to be dissuaded from introducing the term ‘*significs*.’ ‘Semantics’ understood as the study of the development and transformation of the meaning of words was too restrictive with respect to her own project, though she did consider it a step forwards with respect to approaches that had been practiced up until then, as emerges in the following excerpt from *What is Meaning?*:

It ought to be needless to remind ourselves here that these suggestions have presupposed some recognition of the working of phonetic laws and of the history of language generally; and does not exclude, but adds interest to the ordinary lines of grammatical study, especially in its comparative form. (It will be remembered that this was urged in Chapter II.) But a teacher worthy [of] the name will have taken this for granted. Unfortunately, the study hitherto often called philological, sometimes even literary, is in the most technical sense linguistic only. Thus it has so far proved attractive merely to a small class of too often pedantic specialists.

Now, however, that some of the most distinguished experts in language – notably M. Bréal and Dr. Postgate – have begun to protest in plain terms against the prevailing neglect by linguistic scholars of Semantics, the ‘science of the changes of meaning,’ the outlook is more hopeful. (Welby 1983[1903]: 229)

The term ‘*significs*’ was ultimately accepted by English scholars collaborating with Welby, including Henry Sidgwick (1838–1890) and his follower George F. Stout (1860–1944). As she referred to Lalande in a letter of 7 February 1911, this term also met the approval of some of her French correspondents like Henri Bergson (1859–1941):

I have been prevented by ill-health and pressure of work from writing to you for kindly sending me your very interesting *Bulletin*. I take this opportunity of telling you that I now have an article on ‘*Significs*’ in the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and a section on

'Significs' in the new Oxford Dictionary as well as one in Prof. Baldwin's Philosophical Dictionary. Surely therefore you will be able to insert the definition of the term in your valuable Dictionary? Prof. Bergson and other French correspondents formally recognise the name, and only M. Bergson's overwhelming engagements prevented his writing an Essay on Significs (which he warmly recognises) for a collection of Essays on the subject which Dr. Stout intends to publish.

I am myself on the point of publishing the first of a series of books giving the result of my exclusive researches and work on the subject. I have been reading our correspondence in 1903 and feel confident that you will find the true solution of the difficulty which I quite understand, but hope will be overcome ... (Welby to Lalande, 7 February 1911, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, below)

The book alluded to in the letter above is *Significs and Language*, published in 1911. We know from her correspondence and materials at the York archives that Welby had several books in the making, but that they were never actually published because of her weak health and death in 1912 (see above, Section 1.6). 'Significs' evokes the verb 'to signify' which evidences the dual semantic valency of the concept of meaning, linguistic and valuative; and differently from 'semantics' and 'semiotics,' it was completely free from technical associations. As such, the term 'significs' was appropriate to denominate an approach that focused on meaning from the perspective of its interconnection with 'value.' In fact, the aim of significs was to extend the epistemological-cognitive boundaries of studies on signs, language and meaning, and take into account the relation between sign and sense, therefore between the sciences that study signs and those that study values. This general orientation was highlighted with Welby's concept of 'significance,' which converges with interpretation, but does not identify with it.

Welby extended the concept of meaning beyond the strictly linguistic sense, that is, beyond philological, historical, grammatical, lexical or phonetical aspects. She aimed to develop a perspective that was broader than that of early linguists, including the representatives of semantics even. Rather than limit her attention to the meaning of words, she focused on the meaning of whole utterances, whole texts, keeping account of such conditioning factors as psychological background, context, intention, implicit meaning, unintended meaning effects, etc. Furthermore, we know that she analyzed meaning into three levels—'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance,' which she also believed could contribute to a better understanding of the more technically linguistic aspects of the workings of signs and communication. As she stated in *Significs and Language*, offering yet another among the many definitions of her meaning triad, intended to highlight different aspects of signifying processes: 'the one crucial question in all Expression, whether by action or sound, symbol or picture, is its special property, first of Sense, that in which it is used, then of Meaning as the intention of the user, and, most far-reaching and momentous of all, of implication, of ultimate Significance' (Welby 1985 [1911]: 9).

Welby formulated a clear description of significs and its extensive scope in her Preface to the same book. The main focus is on the 'interpretative function' as it evolves and develops through use of verbal and nonverbal signs in communication, human behaviour, and social practice generally. The interpretive function is related to action. It is the condition for being in the world, and for the relation to the other. It is interconnected with the human propensity for creativity and expression in all its forms. Furthermore, we know that in relation to verbal sign systems in particular Welby underlined the need for

the critique of language as part of her project to enhance such propensities. In the human world the interpretive function is also connected with value systems and significance. And given her constant focus on the power of critique to be developed from childhood, significs was also particularly concerned with social and educational issues:

Significs may be briefly and provisionally defined as the study of the nature of Significance in all its forms and relations, and thus of its workings in every possible sphere of human interest and purpose. But the fact that this study is completely neglected even in education renders a fully satisfactory definition difficult at present to formulate. The interpretative function is, in truth, the only one in any direct sense ignored or at least causally treated. And yet it is that which naturally precedes and is the very condition of human intercourse, as of man's mastery of his world.

In reading the following pages two things must throughout be borne in mind.

First, that the plea for Significs can only as yet be written in that very medium – conventional language – which so sorely needs to be lifted out of its present morass of shifting confusion and disentangled from a rank growth of falsifying survival; and second, that the present writer has no claim to make that plea as it should be made by those whom, even as things are, could do it far better justice. [. . .]

It must finally be borne in mind that the suggestions here offered constitute little more than an elementary sketch of a vast subject. Even as contributed by the writer, there is abundant material for succeeding volumes, showing the practical bearing of Significs, not only on language but on every possible form of human expression in action, invention, and creation. (Welby 1985 [1911]: vii–ix)

The scope of significs is explained in a nutshell by Dutch significian (poet and lawyer) Jacob Israël de Haan (1881–1924) in an article of 1912 (in Dutch), written on the occasion of Welby's death and published in a law journal (see Ch. 8). De Haan presented Welby's significs to the Netherlands with another Dutch significian (poet, psychiatrist, and social reformer) Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) who was the first to introduce the Dutch term 'significa' for 'significs' in a paper of 1908 entitled, 'Is communisme een droombeeld?' (see Schmitz 1990b: 221; on the Signific Movement in the Netherlands, see Ch. 8, this volume). De Haan's article opens with the following reference to Welby and her 'philosophy of language':

On Saturday the 30th of March, 1912, Lady Victoria Welby, the founder of a new philosophy of language which she called significs – a name which has been adopted by English and American philosophers – died in Harrow on the Hill near London at the age of 75. The authoress characterizes significs as: *the philosophy of Significance*, that is: *the philosophy of the human capacity of expression*. Language is not the only means of human expression and significs therefore encompasses more than the philosophy of language: the philosophy of expression. For the student of significs, the other means of expression are also of interest: music, painting, sculpture, chemical and mathematical formulas, geometric figures, gestures. Yet verbal language is certainly the most usual and best known means of expression and (practically the same thing) of relations. For this reason, the significian is well advised to start with the phenomenon of language. (de Haan 12912: 480f, in Schmitz 1990b: 220)

For the French translation of the term 'significs,' Welby herself proposed 'signifique,' taking as her model such words as 'statistique,' 'economique,' 'dynamique,' and again 'sémantique,' 'phonétique.' However, Lalande objected to this proposal for etymological reasons, as he wrote in a letter to Welby dated August 1903:

Je suis tout à fait d'accord avec vous sur la correspondance de la terminaison *ique* en français avec la terminaison *ics* de l'anglais. Mon objection vient de la présence d'un *f* à la fin du radical. Je ne connais pas en français de nom de science qui se termine en *fique* parce que cette terminaison, équivalente au latin *ficus* (de *facere*), présente la signification très déterminée: *qui produit, qui fait être* [. . .] De toutes façons nous le proposerons comme radical international, le suffixe équivalente étant *ig* ou *ig*, ce qui ne peut plus créer aucune confusion. On écrira dans ce cas *signifik*. (Lalande to Welby, 28 August 1903, WCYA)

Lalande was one of Welby's three pre-eminent French correspondents, alongside Michel Bréal and Henri Bergson. She was in contact with numerous linguists and philosophers during the late 1880s, at a time when she was shaping and formalizing her own theory of meaning. She also had a brief exchange with the French mathematician Jules-Henri Poincaré, in 1905, consisting in a note from herself of 6 February 1905 enquiring after one of his publications, and the latter's reply with which he furnished the bibliographical information requested. Instead, the Lalande-Welby correspondence includes nine letters in all covering the period from 18 May 1903 to 28 August 1903, with a final letter from Welby dated 7 February 1911 (now published for the first time in this volume, Section 3.8).

Lalande never included the term *significs* as an independent entry in his own dictionary, his *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, originally issued in 21 fascicles in *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* between 1902 and 1922. However, he did mention the term in other entries such as 'sémantique' and 'sémiologie.' In both cases he refers the reader to the entry 'Significs' included in Baldwin's dictionary as well as to Welby's book of 1903, *What is Meaning?* Nor did Lalande introduce the French translation 'signifique' suggested by Welby, but preferred to maintain the English original. Lalande's entries read as follows:

1. SÉMANTIQUE, subst. D. *Semantik*; E. *Semantics*; I. *Semantica*.

Partie de la linguistique qui s'occupe du vocabulaire et de la signification des mots; en particulier, étude historique du sens des mots considéré dans ses variations. Ce terme a été créé par BRÉAL: voir son *Essai de sémantique*, 1897. 'Je prie le lecteur de regarder ce livre comme une simple introduction à la science que j'ai proposé d'appeler la sémantique.' En note: "Σημαντική τέχνη, la science des significations, du verbe σημαίνω, signifier, par opposition à la Phonétique, science des sons." *Préface*, p. 9.

Remarque

Locke a conçu sous le nom de Σημειωτική (il emploie le mot grec) une science des signes et des significations dont la *Logique* (qui est étymologiquement la science du langage) formerait la partie principale. *Essai*, livre IV, ch. XXI, §4. – LADY WELBY a donné le nom de *Significs*, ou théorie des significations, à l'analyse des différents éléments qui constituent le sens d'un mot. Voir *What is Meaning?*(1) Londres, 1903; et son article *Significs* dans le *Dict.* de BALDWIN (S).

Rad. Int.: *Semantik*.

2. Sémantique, adj. – Qui concerne la signification* des termes: "Variation sémantique, phénomènes sémantiques, etc." La *conscience sémantique* est le sentiment (en réalité plus ou moins conscient) que possèdent les individus de la signification d'un mot ou d'une expression. Voir "Compréhension subjective" sous *Compréhension**, D.

(1) Qu'est-ce que le *meaning*? (ce mot y est distingué par l'auteur de *sense*, *signification*, etc.).

The following specification is placed at the bottom of the page corresponding (in the style of Lalande's *Vocabulaire*) to this entry:

Sur **Sémantique**. – Ce terme se trouve, antérieurement à *l'Essai de Sémantique* de BRÉAL dans DARMESTETER, *La vie des mots* (1887), notamment page 88. Mais il ne s'en donne pas comme le créateur ; et, en effet, Bréal s'en servait déjà depuis longtemps : voir par exemple son article 'Les lois intellectuelles du langage, fragment de sémantique' dans le *Bulletin* de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques, 1883, p. 132 et suiv.

"SÉMIOLOGIE." – "Science qui étudie la vie des signes au sein de la vie sociale ; elle formerait une partie de la psychologie sociale et, par conséquent, de la psychologie générale." Ferdinand DE SAUSSURE, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Introd., §3. La Sémantique* n'en serait qu'une partie. – Cf. *Significs* dans le Dictionary de BALDWIN, et Lady V. WELBY, *What is Meaning?* (1903) (1). – On dit aussi *Séméiologie**.

(1) (Voir note à Sémantique*).

In a well informed essay of 1948, 'An Account of the Word "Semantics",' Allen Walker Read offers a descriptive survey of the historical use of the word 'semantics' in a range of contexts, extending from abstruse technical analyses of language to loose and uncritical references in popular conversation. In the third section, 'Rivals of *semantics*,' of the seven forming this essay, Read lists the following 'rivals' in chronological order of appearance, accompanied with the relative definition: 'A. Semasiology (a1829-),' 'B. Rhematic (1830),' 'C. Sematology (1831-),' 'D. Glossology (a1871-),' 'E. Comparative ideology (1886),' 'F. Sensifics (1896),' 'G. Significs (1896-),' 'H. Rhematology (1896-),' 'I. Semiotic (ca 1897-),' 'J. Semiology (a1913),' 'K. Orthology (1928-),' 'L. Science of idiom (1944).'

The entries 'Sensifics' and 'Significs' are presented by Read as follows:

F. *Sensifics* (1896). Problems of signifying engaged the attention of the Hon. Lady (Victoria) Welby, and in an important article in 1896 she called her system 'sensifics.'³ She said of Jespersen that he 'seems to forget that in order to have a really higher grade of significance, we must train a new generation in "sensifics"'. Indeed we even require to evolve skilled "sensificians" able to disengage the most subtle over-tones of sense from the complex note of expression.⁴ She also stated:

Beginning in the simplest and most graphic form: taking advantage of the child's sense of fun as well as of his endless store of interest and curiosity, it ought to be easy to make 'significs' or 'sensifics' the most attractive of studies. Following the physiological order, it would become the natural introduction to all other studies, while it would accompany them into their highest development; clearing and illuminating everything it touched,

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3. ['Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' *Mind*, n. s. 5. 24–37 (Jan. 1896); 186–202 (April 1896). In this early article, she gave priority to *sensifics*, using it exclusively in her summary, 202 (Read 1948: 83)].
 4. [Loc. cit. 193. She felt the inadequacy of the linguist's work, 200. 'Moreover, although philologists complain that Sematology 'the science of meanings,' and Semantics (Bréal, *sémantique*), 'the science of change of meanings' have hardly yet been touched, the importance of these and of the psychological side of language generally is rapidly coming into greater prominence' (Read 1948: 83)].

giving us a self-acting consensus where as yet that seems most hopeless, and suggesting, if not providing, solutions to some of the most apparently insoluble of problems. Loc. cit. 32–33.

Of vital importance. . . indeed is the whole question of language as raised by 'sensifics'; but this again for want of space cannot now be discussed. Ibid. 199.

Popularize 'sensifics' and the faddists would have a hard time of it. Ibid. 200. (Read 1948: 83–84)

G. *Significs* (1896–). Lady Welby in her later writings turned to the word *significs* rather than *sensifics* and continued to publicize it with urgency and cogency.⁵ In 1911 she stated that she regarded her *significs* as including semantics: 'Semantics may thus, for present purposes, be described as the application of *Significs* within strictly philological limits.'⁶ *Significs* was specially important, she felt, in child training: 'The most urgent reference and the most promising field for *Significs* lie in the direction of education. The normal child, with his inborn exploring, significating and comparing tendencies is so far the natural *Significian*.'⁷ The movement she started took root specially in the Netherlands and is chiefly associated with the mathematicians L. E. J. Brouwer and G. Mannoury; the Fourth International *Signific* Conference is scheduled to be held from August 26 to September 3, 1948. (Read 1948: 84)

In relation to the term 'significs,' Welby introduced other neologisms, or new meanings for established terms. These included 'significian' for the practitioner of *significs*, or simply for the everyday person generating meaning, or reflecting on its practical consequences and ethical implications; the verbs 'to signify' for meaning value in terms of significance; and 'to signalize' for the act of investing the sign with meaning. In her essay of 1896, 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' we know that Welby maintained 'sensifics' and the corresponding verb 'to sensify' as possible alternatives to 'significs' and 'to signify,' though she was to set them aside to avoid the risk of misunderstanding given their close association with the world of the senses. She also coined 'sensal' for the word's signifying value beyond reference to sense in prevalently instinctive and perceptual terms. 'Sensal' is contrasted to 'verbal' which more simply recalls linguistic value in terms of phonic and graphic form (see above, Section 2.9). Another key expression for Welby is 'interpretation' which figures in the title of her 1896 paper. Originally introduced to designate one of three levels in meaning, the other two being 'sense' and 'meaning' (for her meaning triad, see below), the term *interpretation* was subsequently substituted in *What is Meaning?*, with 'significance' on the principle that the interpretive capacity invests all levels and aspects of signifying processes.

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5. [Especially in her books *What Is Meaning? Studies in the development of Significance* (London 1903) and *Significs and Language* (London 1911) (Read 1948: 94)].
 6. [*Significs*, *Encycl. Brit.*, 11th ed. 25.79/1,2 (1911). And further, 25.79/I: 'The first duty of the *Significian* is, therefore, to deprecate the demand for mere linguistic reform, which is indispensable on its own proper ground, but cannot be considered as the satisfaction of a radical need such as that now suggested' (Read 1948: 94)].
 7. [See note 6 above (Read 1948: 94)].

3.2. 'The Social Value of Expression'

The excerpts that follow are cited from a manuscript by Welby of 1908, 'The Social Value of Expression,' from the Welby Collection in the York Archives (now in Schmitz 1985a). This text focuses on such problematics as the signifying import, interpersonal dimension, and social complexity of expression, exemplifying Welby's critical use of terminology and insistence on the theoretical implications involved in the choice of terms. Specific reference is made to terminology connected with the concepts of society, the social, the sociological which are all analyzed from a significant perspective. She also elaborates on the terms of her meaning triad, 'sense,' 'meaning' and 'significance.' Taking the concept of 'common sense' as her starting point, which is presupposed by 'significance' (see below, Section 6.1), the social is described as transcending eventual limits of the sociological, psychological, logical, philosophical, philological, and pedagogical orders, to englobe them all. In Welby's words, 'it is a question of the barest of common sense, of the very presuppositions of education: it is a question of practically securing the inferential harvest of even the simplest work-a-day experiences':

The Social Value of Expression

I

I suppose we must begin by asking what Society means. And the answer will be, That depends on the Asker.

This asker then would first suggest that here and always, we ought not, unless we desire to perpetuate confusion and defeat our selves, to ask the question in that form, except in its proper sense. And that is, what does human society *intend*, what is its *purpose* in countenancing and fostering this tendency and discountenancing and neglecting or suppressing that one?

The question then arises, Has Society any conscious intention? If so, 'it' becomes a dangerous pronoun. We need a personal one. For if we want to be clear and consistent we must never ask What does it mean, but what do I, you, we, he, she, and they mean by it?

Mere things don't 'intend': they don't 'mean' anything, they are meaningless. They signify; they indicate; they imply; they are significant: it may be profoundly and urgently so. If we say that they have 'sense' we must 'mean' – intend our hearer to understand – that they arouse in us a sense of their existence, presence, and character: the sense of a word is our sense of its special use, of what it signifies.

But this may itself seem to the reader mere word-splitting: or at least he may ask, What is its sociological reference or bearing?

Well, of all subjects of human interest, human society, – its nature and its possibilities – most insistently calls for a clear conception and description. Without this we manifestly grope in the dark or in the fog: not to know exactly what and who we are is to be ignorant of *where* we are. We must gain our bearings and we must thus become able correctly to interpret our social experiences, – the swirl of the social tides, the lines of the social coast, the depth of the social sea, the direction of the ship's drift which is to be counteracted by our steering. No metaphor, however, can fathom all the depths or give the whole urgency of the need, if we would become more truly social, of a thorough and careful study of the conditions and the methods of interpretation – indeed of the very nature of that crowning gift of man.

This is of course no mere question of psychological, of logical, of philosophical, of philological, of pedagogical, of sociological study. It is in truth all that: but it is also

something more: it is a question of the barest of common sense, of the very presuppositions of education: it is a question of practically securing the inferential harvest of even the simplest work-a-day experiences.

But this question of our mastery of the sense, of the meaning, of the significance of what life, whether individual or social, physical or mental, brings us, cannot further be treated here. It is enough now to point out that from our very babyhood this has been our first need; and also that it has been too much ignored and neglected. We have even perhaps too elaborately analysed the values of experience in some other directions; but in that of clearly apprehending its supreme value, – what its treasures and its lessons *signify* for us – we have made too little effort to advance. Except in the aesthetic and especially the poetic form, we have not really learnt to interpret experience: for we have in fact been content with vague and often inconsistent ideas of what interpretation really is, and of what sense or meaning or significance really are and may actually bring us.

I have however made these suggestions elsewhere; and our present interest is first to see what sociological lessons may be learnt from a study of current terminology undertaken on new lines, as well as what lessons on the possibilities latent in expression may be gained by the student of Sociology. [...]

III

[...] We cry, language cannot be controlled or directed: language compels us to this, refuses us that; whereas it is *we* who have shamefully failed to acquire, or rather who have idly let go of, the linguistic tiller or reins. But the very abundance of illustrative instances of current confusion easily to be culled from general literature bars the mere selection of a few, which is all that could here be made. Such selection would tend to over-emphasize the cases chosen. And the reader may perhaps have already felt impatient under the idea that he is to consider 'mere words.' What can they matter to me? he asks: surely that is the specialism of the professed philologist or at least only the concern of the purist and the pedant or at best of the 'stylist,' not of the sociological student or reformer, still less of the ordinary reader. One example of usage, however, that of 'verbal questions,' governs so much of our unconscious attitude towards the conditions of expression that it must be briefly noticed.

How if we have been calling one of the most pressing of all social questions – that of sense, – a merely verbal one? What if we have here been making a practically disastrous confusion? Have we never considered that the word 'sense' ranges from the first responsive quiver of the primitive organism to the sense of common interest or the sense of brotherhood or the sense of duty and honour which with other like 'senses,' make human society possible and may make it beyond hope noble? Have we forgotten not only the value of a common sense, but even the value of the sense of a word or a phrase? If we will only condescend for the sake of practical outcome, say of sheer economy of brain-work, to notice such things, we shall I think find that here we must demand a word, – the 'sensual.' We must recognise that a 'verbal' question is one only of the phonetic, the graphic, the alphabetical, at most the historical aspects of language. These are not what we may call *sensual* questions – questions as to the sense (insensibly changing) in which we use, or our forefathers used words and phrases. But unhappily they are almost invariably called 'verbal questions' and put aside as irrelevant to the matter in hand, or as pedantically petty. We class them with the fusses of the prig or at best with the technicalities of the grammarian. [...]

V

It will by this time be seen that I am not approaching the sociological problems on any of the usual lines. Neither am I suggesting any kind of social experiment: I am not even

expressing a preference for any outward form of social order which may in the future become possible. Still less am I advocating a return – a reversion – to any order which we have lost and would fain ‘restore,’ be it a communion or an infallible authority. I would rather here be understood as protesting against that uniformity of psychological judgment or belief (or assent) which makes of a body of living men, an aggregate of similar grains rather than one of differentiated and specialised units, each with its own identity and its own vocation, each with its diverse function and therefore diverse structure.

What then from the standpoint of this paper is the social value of Expression? That we are already essentially social, that our very humanity is that, needs here no proving. We are indeed social first in the animal sense of mutual dependence and in the power and need of consciously and rationally concerted action. But we are social next and pre-eminently in virtue of that power of expression for the development of which I plead. And we are social because only thus can we be truly individual: because we are bound to work for a future ‘collective’ intelligence and ‘collective’ conscience, of which as yet we have barely reached the conception and of which ‘collective’ itself is not an adequate definition.

But this is not the full answer. Can we even give it yet? Do we yet know what our selves are, in relation to *us*, – what the owned are to the owners? Does the human being, composite in heredity, composite in constitution, but ever tending to be *more* than merely composite – to be fully synthetic, – know yet what its units who call themselves persons really are, might be, shall be? Do we yet grasp the full significance of forms of religious consciousness? Do we yet know fully – in the scientific as well as in the emotional sense – what the religious man means by consciously living in and through a higher, to him a perfect, being? And does the religious man himself know in the scientific sense what may be meant by living *as* such a being here and now? Not as mere coy of a Personal Ideal, but as its actual and original fulfilment?

[...] So far the religious experience continues to express itself through (and thus to call up in the social mind) images which are hopelessly untrue to acquired knowledge and to our accepted views of ‘life’ and of ‘nature.’ Never before in the history of the world can such a failure have been so destructive. For in what we now know as science, each step is verified as it has never yet been verified; each hypothesis tested as it has never been, never yet could be tested. The result is thus a divorce between the intellect and the emotions, between knowledge and feeling, between light and live, which if it is to go on, must become fatal to the welfare of human society. It may still seem to many to savour even of bathos (here) to plead in that great name for a renaissance of Expression. It may still seem almost absurd to suggest that our first social need is the gradual transfiguration of language – through education – into a social organon as adequate and as powerful for its splendid work of humanising society and socialising Man, as those of physical science, whether intellectual or instrumental. But before all things, our way must lead through truth in every sense. And this it can never do while language is allowed to fail us where it could further us. For our very unconsciousness of the danger of our inherited imager, doing its subtle work in mistranslating experience and therefore reality, – a mistranslation pervading all philosophies and all social theories alike, – leads to the yet worse unconsciousness of the present falsity to *us* of much that was once true to our forefathers.

In truth, what it seems to me that the Sociologist needs first of all thoroughly to realise, is that we are all in a false position. We neither do not really know where we are, or we interpret that knowledge wrongly. Hence the impotent efforts, the impracticable utopias of the ardent idealist. Hence the ossified maxims and schemes of the mechanical realist who takes the name of common sense in vain. Hence he rigid structures with which merely technical training or official authority, mainly serving party exigencies, provide us, in great human questions like that of education. In this last some of us have discovered and

are crying that 'the children are forgotten.' Yes perhaps that is really the secret of our sociological chaos and of the terrible problems of poverty, of lack not merely of bodily necessities but of ideas, and of mental strength and clearness and control, which seems so ominously gaining upon us.

We have forgotten the children, or what is worse, we have remembered them in un-childlike ways. We have failed to realise our true position towards them and theirs towards us. We have hardly begun – though thank GOD we have begun – to set them in the midth and once for all recognise in them the very growth-points of humanity whose budding or exploring activities, whose insistent 'whys' are the signs of things of great price for us, and have much to reveal to the grown man who has not had his own child-powers starved out or paralysed by what we have called 'education.'

This subject however can only here be touched upon. Its relevance to our title must at least be obvious. We can never hope to realise a true social ideal unless we get our preconceptions clear, mutually coherent, true to experience and fact. At present the confusions, the mistakes, the stereotyped dogmas or their often illusory substitutes, which infest our primary assumptions and do their poisonous work in hidden and unsuspected ways, tend to invalidate alike all our ideas on the social welfare and the social potencies. Let us then see that at least we make a worthy effort to purify, to enrich, emancipate and also to control, – in short fully to humanise and socialize our means of particular communication. (Welby 1985a: cclii–cclxiii)

Similarly to Roland Barthes when he denounces the 'fascism' of language, or to Oswald Ducrot and his critique of the 'order of discourse,' Welby denounces the tyranny of language and expression in general, the tendency to 'uniformity,' to homologation and leveling on the same values imposed by a given linguistic and social system. On the contrary, human beings must cultivate the capacity for conscious awareness, for critical and creative thinking. In this text as throughout all her research and writings, Welby also theorizes the concepts of difference and singularity of each single individual. Each human being is unique, so that in addition to commonality given by the relation with the other in sociality, identity, as understood by Welby, is a question of difference based on the logic of otherness, that is, of difference responsive to and in dialogue with other differences and diversities. To repeat and emphasize her own words from the text just reported:

I would rather here be understood as protesting against that uniformity of psychological judgment or belief (or assent) which makes of a body of living men, an aggregate of similar grains rather than one of differentiated and specialised units, each with its own identity and its own vocation, each with its diverse function and therefore diverse structure.

Welby describes sociality in terms of 'mutual dependence' firstly in biological life, and beyond this as collective action, thought and expression. Sociality is obtained through the dialectical-dialogical relation between the collectivity and the individual. Indeed, individuality or singularity (which derives from the social), can only be reached on the basis of relations with the collectivity. Education is valued as the path to emancipation from subservience to homologating communication systems, therefore from social and linguistic alienation. Language, expression, and communication must serve to humanise society and to socialise humanity.

3.3. The three levels of meaning

It is downright bad morals to misuse words, for it prevents philosophy from becoming a science (Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers* 8.301).

Welby recognized a tendency towards triadism in the existent (independently of Georg W. F. Hegel [1770–1831] whom she read critically, see below), being a phenomenon she thematized from the early phases of her work. In Chapter 2 we signaled her unpublished paper of 1886, variously entitled ‘Threefold Laws,’ ‘Law of the Three Stages,’ ‘The Triad,’ ‘The Tendency to Triads,’ as well as the correspondence relating to this question (see above, Section 2.6). Her meaning triad involves three aspects or levels designated as ‘sense,’ ‘meaning’ and ‘significance,’ which may be present simultaneously in a given instance of human sign activity. These levels indicate a progressive increase, quantitative and qualitative, in the capacity for interpretation, signification, and expression, therefore in practical import, capacity for incisiveness and relevance in the ever more complex dimensions of life, whether in the intellectual spheres or in everyday life. The term ‘sense’ has different meanings: these vary from reference to the world of the senses understood in biological terms, the world of sensual perception, perceptual experience, to the properly human world of significance and its connection with values, ideology, and social programs; ‘meaning’ is the general term for signifying processes, as well as the second term in Welby’s triad indicating meaning intention; while ‘significance’ indicates the overall effect, import and value of signifying processes. Significs theorizes the relation among signs and the three levels of meaning thus identified. Welby reformulated her meaning triad continuously as she explored and developed its signifying implications. The following descriptions are cited from *What is Meaning?* (1903):

[...] When we have the sense to concentrate training on sense in every sense, we shall for the first time realise what meaning is and can be; and rise to the highest sense, – that of Significance. This is no mere play upon the word ‘sense,’ but a study of its range of meaning.

There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as the Sense of a word, but only the sense in which it is used – the circumstances, state of mind, reference, ‘universe of discourse’ belonging to it. The Meaning of a word is the intent which it is desired to convey – the intention of the user. The Significance is always manifold, and intensifies its sense as well as its meaning, by expressing its importance, its appeal to us, its moment for us, its emotional force, its ideal value, its moral aspects, its universal or at least social range. All science, all logic, all philosophy, the whole controversy about aesthetics, about ethics, about religion, ultimately concentrate upon this: What is the sense of, What do we mean by, What is the significance of, that is, Why do we care for, Beauty, Truth, Goodness? Why do we value experience? And why do we seek for Significance, and resume the value of innumerable observed facts under formulae of significance like gravitation or natural selection? Because we are the expression of the world, as it were ‘expressed from’ it by the commanding or insisting pressure of natural stimuli not yet understood. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 5–6)

The triad ‘sense,’ ‘meaning,’ and ‘significance’ replaced Welby’s original classification as proposed in her paper of 1896, that is, the distinction between ‘sense,’ ‘meaning,’ and ‘interpretation,’ given that the term ‘interpretation’ designates a function that in-

vests all three levels of meaning. Of the three concepts, 'significance' is that which most characterizes the novelty introduced by signification to the study of signs. With reference to signification, meaning is delineated in all its signifying valencies, and signs (verbal and nonverbal) emerge in their specificity as human social signs. 'Significance' therefore is the term that best expresses the overall scope and orientation of signification.

Welby further explicated the signifying implications of her meaning triad by formulating other triads, for example: 'tendency,' 'intention,' and 'essential interest' (1983 [1903]: 2); and recalling Oriental philosophy with reference to the *Vedantasara* (ed. by Colonel G. A. Jacob), 'Express,' 'Indicated,' and 'Suggested' meaning:

It must be remembered that Signification implies in more than one 'sense' a careful distinction between sense, meaning, and significance. This triad is found in many forms, of which perhaps one of the most striking comes from the East: 'The meaning (that may belong to a word) is held to be three-fold, namely, Express, Indicated, and Suggested. The Express meaning is that conveyed to the understanding by the (word's) Denotation; the (meaning) Indicated is held to be conveyed by the (word's) Suggestion. Let these be the three powers of a word.' (1983 [1903]: 46)

Other triads introduced to explicate the 'three main levels of meaning' or 'classes of expression' include: in correlation to 'sense' – 'tendency,' 'signification,' and 'organic response to an environment'; in correlation to 'meaning' – 'intention' and 'the specific sense it is intended to convey'; and in correlation to 'significance' – 'ideal worth,' 'essential interest,' and 'ideal value.' The reference for each of these three levels of meaning is, respectively: in relation to sense, 'verbal,' or, better, 'sensal,' also 'instinctive'; in relation to meaning 'volitional'; in the case of significance, 'moral,' or better 'ethical.' To sense, meaning and significance correspond respectively 'involuntary value,' 'intended value,' and 'inferential value.' From the perspective of signification, we need to interrogate not only the goals of human action, but also its meanings and signifying implications:

We have already touched upon some forms of this triad, which may also be put as signification, intention, and ideal value. From this point of view, the reference of sense is mainly instinctive, of meaning volitional, and of significance moral; we have a sense of discomfort, a thing is true in a certain sense, we mean (i.e. intend) to do something, and we speak of some event, 'the significance of which cannot be over-rated.' In such a case as this last it would be impossible to substitute the 'sense' or the 'meaning' of such event for its significance, without serious loss. Signification analyzes the relation of sign in the widest sense to each of these, recognising an ascending grade of practical importance. The term 'importance' itself witnesses, at all events in our language, that 'import' includes all with which we need concern ourselves. The science of Man must remain in some sense abortive unless we can master the secrets of what we vaguely call 'meaning'. We have looked for purpose; let us rather seek purport; we have sought the final end, aim, object of action or process; let us rather seek for its Sense, its Meaning, and, above all, for its Significance. (1983 [1903]: 46–47)

Welby developed an evolutionary and dynamical conception of meaning, understanding and expression in relation to progress in the sciences, with special reference to biology, though all sciences entered her sphere of interests – from mathematics, physics, chemistry, physiology, to psychology, anthropology, linguistics, but also astronomy, cosmology, astrophysics, and so forth. In such a framework and related to her meaning triad – 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'interpretation,' she theorized three levels in

‘psychic process,’ respectively, ‘instinct,’ ‘perception,’ and ‘conception’; with reference to the ascent from sensation through consciousness to intelligence, respectively, ‘consciousness,’ ‘intellect’ and ‘reason’; three grades or levels of consciousness, or three ‘types of experience’ or ‘types of knowledge,’ respectively the ‘planetary,’ which for all practical purposes is fully developed, the ‘solar,’ also denominated ‘Copernican,’ the level of ‘scientific activities,’ to which is associated the metaphor of light (see above, Ch. 2), and, finally, the ‘cosmical.’ Welby also related her triads to inferential processes described as ‘direct,’ ‘indirect,’ and ‘doubly indirect.’ Progressing from the ‘direct’ to the ‘doubly indirect,’ this triad describes the development of interpretive processes. Interpretation is enhanced with the development of perception, experience, and expressive value based on observation, experiment and prediction or hypothesis, therefore on deductive, inductive and so-call abductive processes (cf. Peirce). Development is quantitative and qualitative and involves participative understanding based on the capacity for metaphorical thinking and on the ability to identify relations and interconnections between the organical-physical and the psychical dimensions of life. Again, the following passage is from *What is Meaning?*:

It has already been suggested, and may here be repeated, that our only fully developed articulate world is planetary, which is also satellitic. To adopt, therefore, within the lines already laid down, the comparison between the sense-world and the planetary, the meaning-world and the solar, the world of significance and the visible universe which includes both, let us see how it vindicates itself in working out.

All ‘planetary’ knowledge is directly acquired either through observation and experiment, or through processes inductive or deductive. We are in full ‘touch’ with the world we inhabit. ‘Solar’ knowledge, on the contrary, is one remove from this. We can indirectly explore both our sun and sister planets in a way impossible in the case of the suns which used to be called fixed stars, and the unsounded depths beyond even these. Thus ‘cosmical’ knowledge is in a sense doubly indirect, as though we needed a third instrument corresponding to the spectroscope to give us the spectra of the stars found recorded on the photographic plate attached to the telescope.

A system of thought may be a means of relation, of interpretation, of emancipation; it may absorb other systems by recognising their validity, and by perceiving its own inadequacy except from a specified point of view or in a specified sense. All systems here formulable are presumably planetary; the burden of proof that they are more falls on the thinker. This proof must depend on the predictive as well as on the harmonising and absorbent power of any system. It must win on every side; it must appeal to all healthy instinct and all sound reason; and every year must increase its influence among all men of light and leading whatever their special tendencies may be.

Whatever our view of (the whole of) things knowable may be – whether monistic, dualistic, or pluralistic – whether we are materialist, realist, or idealist – we are compelled, at least, to speak of the mental and physical as though they were different spheres. And the absence of any recognised criterion of analogy, and therefore of metaphor, the confusion of the equative with the comparative, of both with the illustrative, and of this with the merely rhetorical, tends to confound what may be reflection with what at best may be refraction, or an image of no more value than the baby’s picture of man or the ‘signs’ of a fabulous zodiac.

Thus, though it has to be said, first, that the three grades or levels of consciousness (and therefore of experience) here suggested as the human heritage are, on the one hand, ‘grades’ of the physical, and on the other ‘grades’ of the psychical, such a suggestion must be understood in the sense above indicated. [...]

The 'solar' answers to the scientific activities, made possible by the leisure and protection of civilisation, and stimulated by more and more complex demands upon brainwork. The astrophysicist has become the representative 'solarist'; but he is not content to stop there. He is always exploring and endeavouring to interpret the 'depths' and contents of cosmic space. Thus he also has a lesson for us – one of the utmost significance. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 94–96)

Welby applied her meaning triad to the sphere of anthropology, describing the evolution of human intelligence in significant terms: from primitive to more complex forms, through *translation* processes across the different levels of perception and meaning, towards ever higher degrees in signifying power and practical import for human behaviour. Continuing from *What is Meaning?*:

It may then be suggested that while the sense-scheme of the primitive mind was for obvious reasons more exclusively dominant than it afterwards became, and may be supposed to have reacted to more subtle appeals from the various realms of nature (as to the spinal was added the specifically cerebral type of response), the meaning-scheme, now so highly developed, was still embryonic; while the element of Significance, as we now at least tacitly recognise it, was not yet assimilated. In other words, the primitive form of intelligence may be supposed to have been sensitive to certain modes of energy, modes which it was incited to translate somehow into cult of some kind and then into formal doctrine; just as it was impelled to translate the sense of hunger into the taking of food, and, in a higher stage, to translate the whole experience into articulate statement. Only, in this last class of cases, the translation, as life directly depended upon it, had to be the right one; in the case of the more indirect forms of stimulus, the translation was purely tentative, and was thus liable to be grotesquely wrong. Even where its principle survives, on the one hand in the highest scientific, and on the other in the highest religious, poetical, or philosophical thought of our own days, its earliest applications were repulsive as well as fantastic. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 193–194)

In his review of *What is Meaning?*, and with specific reference to the 'three orders of signification,' Peirce commented as follows:

The greatest service the book can render is that of bringing home the question which forms its title, a very fundamental question of logic, which has commonly received superficial, formalistic replies. Its vital and far-reaching significance has been even more ignored than usually happens with matters of universal and ubiquitous concern. To direct attention to the subject as one requiring study, both on its theoretical and on its practical side, is the essential purpose of the work. But in doing this the authoress had incidentally made a contribution towards the answer to the question, in pointing out three orders of signification. She has wisely abstained from any attempt at formal definitions of these three modes of significance. She tells us what she means only in the lowest of those three senses. To have gone further would have shunted her off upon a long and needless discussion. (Hardwick 1977: 159)

Welby believed that triadism as it characterized her theory of sign and meaning was a direct consequence of the 'triune character' of all thought and experience. The following excerpt is from a letter to her son-in-law Henry Cust, written around the time of publication of *What is Meaning?*:

I have been re-reading with special interest your brilliant article on *The Genesis of Germany* [in the *National Review*, July, 1899.] For you plainly see what most people seem hardly to suspect, except in the narrowest (mechanical) sense, that we are living just now by

centuries instead of years: so that, provided that an ideal and the effort to realize it are on true lines, we may always hope for success within a time which to our fathers would have seemed ludicrously impossible. But what naturally interests me most is the way in which you use one of my great leading lines of thinking – that of the naturally triune character of all thought and of all experience. . . .

You begin by taking three special years. You analyse three main national tendencies. You give us a threefold national task: and then you give us an ascending threefold scale of human influences. The task, you say, was to ‘make work willing, thought conscious, action responsible.’

Your first ‘Maker of Germany’ taught the individual his relation to the nation; your second taught him his relations to humanity; your third looked even beyond this to a postulated moral order of the universe, and taught the German that here lay his ultimate ideal, his mental destination. So, as I have always seen, man has three forms of experience, three types of consciousness, three horizons of outlook, three scales of mental (and moral) measurement: the planetary (which is satellitic), the solar (which is stellar), and the cosmic (which is ultimate). The first alone is fully developed (perhaps somewhat blunted by civilization); the second we call poetic and religious; the third, the region of answers, we can but dimly descry afar.

But in developing your thesis, how strangely predictive you become! Is this intentional? Do you really see that we too now are on the verge of just such a deliverance as you so well describe, only one that is to be world-wide, and that is to issue – after criticism has done its full work – in a ‘Beyond-Man,’ who shall be no desperate reversion to brute-hood, but a pioneer in that unknown but vitally real country waiting to be explored which we vaguely call heavenly and divine (and so drag down to the level of our own low clouds): that country of the sun where we and our world were generated, and which is physically as well as metaphorically our source and goal.

But I cannot write what I think about this. As things are, expression fails exactly where most needed, and thus significance escapes us. We can only prepare the way for the next generation. . . . (Welby to H. Cust, 1902–1904: 75–76)

‘Significs’ is the title of a letter dated 13 October 1904 to the editor of the journal *Fortnightly Review*, written in response to Herbert G. Wells (1866–1946) and his interpretation of significs as formulated in a text entitled ‘A Modern Utopia’ and published in that same journal. Welby and Wells corresponded between 1897 to 1910. Their letters too are stored in the Welby Collection, York University Archives. Welby rejected what she considered as Wells’s reductive interpretation of significs, explaining the meaning and sense of her terminology in light of the general orientation of her research. Her main focus was not on language but on signifying value – ultimately her appeal for significance – developed through human expressive systems, therefore verbal and nonverbal expression (cf. Section 5.4, this volume). Wells and Welby represent different faces of a common cultural context, with similar interests and orientations. The same themes and concerns recur in their writings. However, Wells continued to misunderstand the general drift of Welby’s theory of meaning and language, if the following passage from his book *A Modern Utopia* (‘a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other,’ Wells 2005 [1905]: 6), published in 1905 (a year after it appeared in *Fortnightly Review*), is any indication. This paragraph from *A Modern Utopia* presents his vision of the language of Utopia, and in this context he names Welby and her significs:

We need suppose no linguistic impediments to intercourse. The whole world will surely have a common language, that is quite elementarily Utopian; and since we are free of the trammels of convincing storytelling, we may suppose that language to be sufficiently our own to understand. Indeed, should we be in Utopia at all if we could not talk to everyone? That accursed bar of language, that hostile inscription in the foreigner's eyes, 'deaf and dumb to you, sir, and so – your enemy,' is the very first of the defects and complications one has fled the earth to escape.

But what sort of language would we have the world speak, if we were told the miracle of Babel was presently to be reversed?

If I may take a daring image, a medieval liberty, I would suppose that in this lonely place the Spirit of Creation spoke to us on this matter. 'You are wise men,' that Spirit might say – and I, being a suspicious, touchy, over-earnest man for all my predisposition to plumpness, would instantly scent the irony (while my companion, I fancy, might even plume himself), 'and to beget your wisdom is chiefly why the world was made. You are so good as to propose an acceleration of that tedious multitudinous evolution upon which I am engaged. I gather, a universal tongue would serve you there. While I sit here among these mountains – I have been filing away at them for this last aeon or so, just to attract your hotels, you know – will you be so kind – ? A few hints – ? [...]

Then the Spirit of Creation might transiently smile, a smile that would be like the passing of a cloud. All the mountain wilderness about us would be radiantly lit. (You know those swift moments, when warmth and brightness drift by, in lonely and desolate places.)

Yet, after all, why should two men be smiled into apathy by the Infinite? Here we are, with our knobby little heads, our eyes and hands and feet and stout hearts, and if not we or ours, still the endless multitudes about us and in our loins are to come at last to the World State and a greater fellowship and the universal tongue. Let us to the extent of our ability, if not answer that question, at any rate try to think ourselves within sight of the best thing possible. That after all is our purpose, to imagine our best and strive for it; and it is a worse folly and a worse sin than presumption to abandon striving because the best of all our bests looks mean amidst the suns.

Now you as a botanist would, I suppose, incline to something, as they say, '*scientific*.' You wince under that most offensive epithet – and I am able to give you my intelligent sympathy – though 'pseudo-scientific' and 'quasi-scientific' are worse by far for the skin. You would begin to talk of scientific languages, of Esperanto, La Langue Bleue, New Latin, Volapuk, and Lord Lytton, of the philosophical language of Archbishop Whateley, Lady Welby's work upon Significs and the like. You would tell me of the remarkable precisions, the encyclopaedic quality of chemical terminology, and at the word terminology I should insinuate a comment on that eminent American biologist, Professor Mark Baldwin, who has carried the language biological to such heights of expressive clearness as to be triumphantly and invincibly unreadable. (Which foreshadows the line of my defence.)

You make your ideal clear; a scientific language you demand, without ambiguity, as precise as mathematical formulae, and with every term in relations of exact logical consistency with every other. It will be a language with all the inflections of verbs and nouns regular and all its constructions inevitable, each word clearly distinguishable from every other word in sound as well as spelling.

That, at any rate, is the sort of thing one hears demanded; and if only because the demand rests upon implications that reach far beyond the region of language, it is worth considering here. It implies, indeed, almost everything that we are endeavouring to repudiate in this particular work. It implies that the whole intellectual basis of mankind is established, that the rules of logic, the systems of counting and measurement, the general categories and schemes of resemblance and difference, are established for the human mind for ever –

blank Comte-ism, in fact, of the blankest description. But indeed the science of logic and the whole framework of philosophical thought men have kept since the days of Plato and Aristotle, has no more essential permanence as a final expression of the human mind than the Scottish Longer Catechism. Amidst the welter of modern thought, a philosophy long lost to men rises again into being, like some blind and almost formless embryo that must presently develop sight and form and power, a philosophy in which this assumption is denied.⁸

All through this Utopian excursion, I must warn you, you shall feel the thrust and disturbance of that insurgent movement. In the reiterated use of 'Unique,' you will, as it were, get the gleam of its integument; in the insistence upon individuality and the individual difference as the significance of life, you will feel the texture of its shaping body. Nothing endures, nothing is precise and certain (except the mind of a pedant), perfection is the mere repudiation of that ineluctable marginal inexactitude which is the mysterious inmost quality of Being. Being, indeed! – there is no being, but a universal becoming of individualities, and Plato turned his back on truth when he turned towards his museum of specific ideals. Heraclitus, that lost and misinterpreted giant, may perhaps be coming to his own. . .

There is no abiding thing in what we know. We change from weaker to stronger lights, and each more powerful light pierces our hitherto opaque foundations and reveals fresh and different opacities below. We can never foretell which of our seemingly assured fundamentals the next change will not affect. What folly, then, to dream of mapping out our minds in however general terms, of providing for the endless mysteries of the future a terminology and an idiom! We follow the vein, we mine and accumulate our treasure, but who can tell which way the vein may trend? Language is the nourishment of the thought of man, that serves only as it undergoes metabolism, and becomes thought and lives, and in its very living passes away. You scientific people, with your fancy of a terrible exactitude in language, of indestructible foundations built, as that Words-worthian doggerel on the title page of Nature says, 'for aye,' are marvellously without imagination!

The language of Utopia will no doubt be one and indivisible; all mankind will, in the measure of their individual differences in quality, be brought into the same phase, into a common resonance of thought, but the language they will speak will still be a living tongue, an animated system of imperfections, which every individual man will infinitesimally modify. Through the universal freedom of exchange and movement, the developing change in its general spirit will be a worldwide change; that is the quality of its universality. I fancy it will be a coalesced language, a synthesis of many. Such a language as English is a coalesced language; it is a coalescence of Anglo-Saxon and Normal French and Scholar's Latin, welded into one speech more ample and more powerful and beautiful than either. The Utopian tongue might well present a more spacious coalescence, and hold in the frame of such an uninflected or slightly inflected idiom as English already presents, a profuse vocabulary into which have been cast a dozen once separate tongues, superposed and then welded together through bilingual and trilingual compromises.⁹ In the past ingenious men have speculated on the inquiry, 'Which language will survive'?

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8. [The serious reader may refer at leisure to Sigwick's *Use of Words in Reasoning* (particularly), and to Bosanquet's *Essentials of Logic*, Bradley's *Principles of Logic*, and Sigwart's *Logik*, the lighter-minded may read and mark the temper of Professor Case in the British Encyclopaedia, article 'Logic' (vol. XXX). I have appended to his book a rude sketch of a philosophy upon the new lines, originally read by me to the Oxford Phil. Soc. in 1903 (Wells 2005 [1905]: 20)].
 9. [Vide an excellent article, *La Langue Française en l'an 2003*, par Léon Bollack, in *La Revue*, 15 juillet, 1903 (Wells 2005 [1905]: 22)].

The question was badly put. I think now that this wedding and survival of several in a common offspring is a far more probable thing. (Wells 2005 [1905]: 18–22)

Welby's response to what she considered Well's misinterpretation of her work reads as follows, from her letter entitled 'Significs' to the editor of *Fortnightly Review*:

Sir, – As Mr. Wells has done me the honour to mention Significs in his article on 'A Modern Utopia' in your October number, will you allow me to point out – what is of great importance in my eyes – that, besides my own incompetence, the inevitable difficulty of wording an appeal for more vitally significant expression has caused him to mistake the whole drift of my work? It is not language but its *value* and that of expression of all kinds, which forms the subject-matter of Significs, as the very name denotes. In *What is Meaning?* I asked whether we had yet tried to make the idea of that value in its various forms practically clear to ourselves, and especially to children, who are naturally attracted to questions of expression, dramatic and symbolic. I tried to suggest that we habitually confounded 'meaning,' an intended value, with 'sense,' an involuntary value, and last with 'significance,' an inferential value. And from this standpoint, while of course appealing for really needed additions to our linguistic resources, I protested against a mere accumulation of terminology and nomenclature, which, indeed, however technically justifiable, would only make the ideal of Significs more unrealisable. Instead of making for economy and beauty, for terseness, incisiveness, translucency, and grace, it would make the dead load upon our thought yet heavier, and would tend to smother the stirrings of life even now to be found. On the other hand, if my hopes were fulfilled, Heraclitus, who broadly represents my ideal no less than Mr. Wells, would come, perhaps, to even more than his own.

I warmly endorse almost every word on p. 749. Like Mr. Wells, I say, What folly to dream of doing once more what we have already so disastrously done – 'provide for the endless mysteries of the future a terminology and an idiom,' so that our descendants should suffer from misfits of expression as cruelly as we do! Language, indeed, 'in its very living passes away'; only we have mummified it, and treat the mummy as though warm and breathing. What we want is 'a common resonance of thought,' a living tongue, 'an animated system of' conscious 'imperfections,' ever rising higher in the scale of concentrated significance, instead of as at present becoming an idolised survival, or a fatal bed of Procrustes. So far from becoming 'more profuse,' the vocabulary would be economised; would indeed in some directions approximate to a glorified short-tongue, suggesting, as true Art suggests, even more truth and beauty than it attempted laboriously to spell out. By concentrating attention, especially during youth, on the sense, the significance, the meaning of all experience, all nature, and all expression, we should gradually rise to the simplifying results of consummate method, and thus claim more and more of our true heritage of interpretation. (Welby 1904b)

3.4. Significs as an exercise in significance

I don't know why we always speak of love and beauty as though they were essentially diverse, and talk of the beauty of love and of the love of beauty as though the one were merely a quality and the other merely a form of activity or response, a reaction, a 'feeling.' What if what we call love and what we call beauty were really forms taken by a reality which belongs alike to man, to his world (including his sun), to his universe? What if they are fundamentally one so that the instinct which speaks of loveliness is right in the deepest of senses? ... (Welby to her daughter, Nina Cust 1908–1911, in Cust 1931: 348)

Significs is described by Welby as a philosophy of 'significance' where this term is understood in the sense of the third level in her meaning triad, the highest in signifying value and practical import for human behaviour. With her focus on significance, Welby contributed to a broader conception of meaning, that is, of the relation of sign to meaning, which in fact she developed in the direction of the relation of sign to value. The term 'significance' designates the value conferred upon something, the relevance, import, bearing and meaning value of signs, the condition of being significant, the propensity for valuation. Significance is connected with the pragmatic-ethical or operative-valuative dimension of signifying processes and is enhanced as translative processes develop across different signs and sign systems.

In her letter to Peirce of 18 November 1903, Welby maintained that *significs* is a 'practical extension' of semiotics, noting that the Italian philosopher and mathematician, Giovanni Vailati (1863–1909) (for the Welby-Vailati correspondence, see Section 4.8, this volume), developed his own approach to logic in similar terms. In other words, Vailati too extended his approach to signs, meaning and signifying processes beyond cognitive limits in the direction of the relation of signs to human behaviour, to social practice and the values which orient it. By drawing attention to the 'practical extension' of semiotics, Welby underlined the structural and constitutive interconnection between the pragmatic-operative and ethical-valuative dimension of sign activity in human signifying processes. Furthermore, with her theory of meaning or significs Welby transcended the old antithesis between 'matter and mind' showing how the real world and our ideas about it are inextricably interconnected. From this perspective, Welby is in line with the most advanced trends in twentieth century semiotic research which, with the concept of semiosis, bridge the separation long posited between the real world and our representations about it, therefore between realism and materialism, on the one hand, and idealism and spiritualism, on the other. Also, distinct from 'formal logic,' in the framework of a global view of the signifying universe, significs proposes an approach to the life of signs that is both diagnostic and therapeutic. From Chapter VI in, *What is Meaning?*:

Significance, then, fully resumes, in transfigured form, all this is summed up (1) in the idea of Motion, force, energy, activity, function, (2) in the idea of Sense (in all senses) and

in that of Meaning (intention, purport, purpose). The concern for reality is the ultimate tie between the 'plain man,' the scientific man and the philosopher. The 'ideal' of the artist as of the poet is but purged or potential reality; the Ought in the sense of the May be, Might be, Would be, Shall be.¹⁰ The attempt to reach an ideal order and connection by the dialectical method, as we see in certain schools of thought, easily becomes a snare. Our 'ideal' may be persuaded to conspire with us to coerce truth. The inestimable service of science is to support a natural correction of this tendency. It is the glory of the scientific army that it marches to victory over fields strewn with the fragments of dead theory, which is thus never allowed to harden permanently into obstructive dogma. Let us beware in sense, meaning, and significance of allowing the old antithesis 'matter and mind' to coerce us. Reality is monistic so far as ultimate division or separation or sunderance goes, but dualistic from one point of view and triadistic from and in another, pluralistic in and from yet another. The unity thus reached cannot be adequately formulated in our present terminology, which is cramped on every side by the outgrown shells of controversy once protective, now mere sources of danger to intellectual and moral life. For language is radically tainted by association, which, being mostly automatic, we do not realize. We cannot possibly talk the real 'twentieth century' philosophy, as we are trying to do, in the B.C. centuries dialects, or that of the twelfth century, or even the seventeenth, without at all events acquiring leading terms which shall (as in ancient days was a matter of course) bring fresh ideas, and shall rule out the stale ones and relegate them to their proper place, – at best a literary one.¹¹

It is unfortunate that custom decrees the limitation of the term diagnosis to the pathological field. It would be difficult to find a better one for that power of 'knowing through,' which a training in Significs would carry. We must be brought up to take for granted that we are diagnosticians, that we are to cultivate to the utmost the power to see real distinctions and to read the signs, however, faint, which reveal sense and meaning.¹² Diagnostic may be called the typical process of Significs as Translation is its typical form; and the combination of these must make for the detection of lurking confusion or specious assertion in directions where the discipline of formal logic would help less directly and simply. But this form of study, so far from superseding or displacing or even distracting attention from the disciplines already recognised, would rather render them more effectual because more vitally significant: more obviously related to ordinary experience and interests. It would also bring out the moral value of a greater respect both for the traditions and the future of language, and would, in fact, while preparing the ground for an expansion of the limits of articulate expression as yet scarcely imagined, tend to create a linguistic conscience which must beneficially react upon thought; thus bringing about gradually and naturally a sponta-

10. [Cf. *Problem of Conduct*, A. E. Taylor, 1902: 53–54 (Welby 1983 [1903]: 50)].

11. ['At present. . . our words have only confused meanings, to which the human mind has been accustomed for so long a time that it now possesses a perfect insight into hardly anything' ('Signs and Symbols,' Schroeder, *Open Court*, November 25, 1892) (1983 [1903]: 51)].

12. [Here General Baden-Powell's little book on 'scouting,' applied to the mental world, would be invaluable to the trainer. He would take examples like those on pp. 67–77, and the first giving out-door practice, would translate the method and use it in the detection and interpretation of meanings not obvious or 'on the surface,' and yet of vital importance for the future of the student. This would render him quick to detect self-contradiction, inconsistency, or fallacy, and lead him always to the central interest of the study. See also note X. (A), Appendix (1983 [1903]: 51)].

neous consensus in definition, which shall provide in orderly freedom for all contingencies of growing need and widening knowledge.¹³ (1983 [1903]: 50–52)

A few chapters later in *What is Meaning?*, Welby claims that:

In fact everything is and always will be ‘in the line’ of the Significian, since all converges upon it. Significs concerns the practical mind, e.g. in business or political life, more closely and inevitably than it does the speculative mind. For the thinker may go on through all life turning over his own or others’ thoughts and working them logically out. But the man of action must translate thought into deed as fast as ideas come to him; and he may ruin the cause he would serve by missing the significance of things. All signifies to him, ‘matters’ to him, interests him. As the word implies, ‘Significs’ sums up what for the ‘man in the street’ *signifies*; whatever does not signify, he will tell you, is nothing to him; and he well understands that the value of a sign is not that it may mean anything you like, and thus be used to confuse, bewilder, mislead, or that it means what is no concern of his, but that it means somewhat which in some sense has interest either for him or his fellows: he knows that it is his business to find out what this is. He knows that signs of all kinds must point beyond themselves, must in that sense ‘mean’ something, or they would not be signs at all. (1983 [1903]: 89)

With expressions that serve to highlight the different aspects and dimensions of signifying processes, Welby not only described significs as ‘philosophy of significance,’ but also as ‘philosophy of interpretation’ and ‘philosophy of translation’ (see 1983 [1903]: 89: 161). Most originally, Welby presented translation as a method of interpretation and understanding and as such related it to theory of sign and meaning (see Ch. 5, this volume). Significs is a dialogic synthesis of science and philosophy and proposes itself as a methodology: that is, a method of inquiry and experimentation based on the processes of deduction, induction, and a combination of both, what Peirce called abduction; ‘inductive and deductive methods in one process,’ says Welby (see below). More than a discipline in its own right, significs emerges as a trans-systemic, transcendent and critical methodology. This means to say that with the translative-interpretive method, significs transcends boundaries established by the logic of identity, and aims to overcome separatism among the sciences and different fields of knowledge, which presupposes the capacity for dialogic confrontation and critical thinking according to the logic of otherness and detotalization (see below). The following excerpts are from *What is Meaning?*:

Significs, then, will bring us the philosophy of Significance; i.e., a raising of our whole conception of meaning to a higher and more efficient level; a bringing cosmos out of the present ‘chaos’ of our ideas as to sense, meaning, and significance, and showing us that

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13. [One of a large mass of scientific witness to this which have been collected (and some of which were printed in pamphlet form in 1898, *The Witness of Science to Linguistic Anarchy*) may here be cited: ‘Objections to the use of the word neurone as a designation for the nerve unit have been offered by Kolliker, Schafer, and others. It is, however, so much more convenient a term than any other which has so far been suggested. . . that I think it must be accepted; if so, the use of the term ‘neuron’ as a name for the axis-cylinder process. . . is to be deprecated, and more particularly because a few distinguished teachers have been induced to continue the use of the term in this way, thus leading at times to considerable confusion’ (*The Nervous System*, L. F. Barker, 1901, m p. 39). A curious – and too common – example of the general helplessness (1983 [1903]: 52)].

we need to use these terms in a certain order of value and range. Its best type of metaphor is the 'solar,' its best mine of analogy is the biological; because, as implying an extension of purview given us in spatial form by (post-Copernican) astronomy, it tends to relate the idea of life to the ideas of motion and matter, and moreover to relate the idea of mind to both. Thus Significs involves essentially and typically the philosophy of Interpretation, of Translation, and thereby of a mode of synthesis accepted and worked with by science and philosophy alike; profoundly modifying what we wrongly call the 'root' ideas of religion, of ethics, of poetry, of art, and, lastly, of practical life in all forms. But if studied systematically it would be seen from the first to provide a method of observation, a mode of experiment which extends far beyond the laboratory, and includes the inductive and deductive methods in one process. There would never be any need to struggle that this view of things may supersede others; it could never be a supplanting system, and could never thus be attached to any individual name; it must necessarily be worked out by many co-operating minds. The principle involved forms a natural self-acting Critique of every system in turn, including the common sense ideal. But also it gives the gist, the vital centre, the growth-point of every existent organism of thought. It explains its own thinker to himself; it accounts for his thinking what he does as he does, and thus explains other thinkers to themselves. In fact, for the first time we gain a glimpse into what lies 'beyond the veil,' which both our own primitive and confused idea of Meaning and our modes of applying it have drawn over the world. The criteria thus reached will vindicate themselves alike to the most opposed of our thinkers.

As in the biological there is presumably in the mental world a tendency to recapitulation. Indeed, comparative mythology and folk-lore have brought to light what correspond to the miscalled rudimentary, really vestigial, survivals in modern thought. It would seem also that the present pre-Copernican character of science as applied to theories of life and mind (and called Positivism or Agnosticism) is a case of atavism. We may be supposed to have re-developed the Ptolemaic mode of thought (as we may revert to a lower level physiologically), having yet to reach in full mental use the Copernican scheme of cosmogony.

Thus our thinking is full of practical fallacy. We are unconsciously bound by a travesty of Euclid. And we have not merely to be true to Euclidean geometry in so far as it still holds good, but to advance with the geometrical thinkers who (as presumably he would himself now have done) are finding his limitations provisional.

To refer once more to instances already dealt with, we assume that the farther you go on a given 'line' of thought, the farther you go from your starting-point. But this does not follow. It will be objected at once that what the positive curvature of space symbolises is ultimately a closed sphere. Thus you instantly have to conceive another one outside of it which might be reached and traversed, so that the 'fallacy' is true again. No. The true idea of the content of the conception of infinity is not that it is merely quantitative; it not only means area after area of experience or of anything else; it means infinity in Change, in the sense of transformation from worse to better in our ideal of the universe, our theory of the knower and the known. It is a question of change in direction and change in quality; the fourth dimension, whether reached in tenable form or no, is a parable of this; so is 'mind' itself with reference to the organic, – it is 'infinite' to that: it is not subject to the same limitations, though it has some of its own:¹⁴ But then what a disgrace to have only a negative term for this! To the 'geocentrist' to stand over or upon; to the 'solarist' to stand under, and to the 'cosmicist' to stand within: these are the

14. [When the above was written I knew nothing of Croll's theory of direction *v.* force (1983 [1903]: 161–164)].

three forms of 'apprehension' which, fortunately, we do call under-, not over-standing. If only we were consistent in this! But all alike must learn to do more than stand, must learn to move and to advance and to 'rise.' Corresponding to this we have three forms of experience rendered by metaphors: one of line, one of surface, one of cube. No doubt the three are ultimately one; but to our great practical loss and danger we confound their distinctions.

That which 'transcends' in any sense the ordinary limits of experience is often rightly enough referred to the vague, unknown, unsafe, unreal. Well, that 'beyond' which the telescope and spectroscope bring us (especially the latter) gives us the basis of the most accurate predictions which science makes. The tree is known by its fruit. No one would protest against transcendence of that kind. Now think of the incredible power of projection possessed by plant and insect, as shown in the ejection of seeds, the jumping of grasshoppers, etc. This is at least a hundred times greater than our own muscular power. Suppose that by contracting into the scale of the insect we were to gain a tremendous projective power? Perhaps the demand for greater size as the invariable concomitant of fuller power to which we are so much addicted would thus be relegated to a truer place. The greater energy often belongs to the smaller body.

Again, in this region of greater intensity we find a minute world the existence of which we had not suspected; and here lie many answers to Whys that we have vainly sought in the expansive 'beyond.'

The truth is that hitherto we have been content to go to the root of the matter and the foundation of things. And when we have got there and described what we found, we are surprised and disappointed at the very partial welcome which our proposed solutions of life problems find. But it cannot be too often repeated that nothing (except indeed lateral rootless) springs from a root, and all that is greatest (or its symbol) is unfounded. There is, for instance, no basis for this present statement; it has to do with the worlds which roll in space, 'solidly' real and absolutely secure in an orderly orbit; and what is of ultimate concern to our thought is the whither of its Way. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 161–164)

Welby theorizes the deductive-hypothetical or abductive method of inquiry (see also Vailati 1889), though she does not use this specific term. Instead, she speaks of unity between deduction and induction, the method of 'prediction' and 'projection,' as in the excerpt above, to refer to inferential processes that reach beyond the limits of the already given, beyond systems that have already been fixed, and push towards the unknown, being the condition for 'qualitative' leaps in knowledge, discovery and innovation in the multiform spheres of experience. Welby advocates 'transcendence' which in the context of her discourse indicates the tendency to supersede the already given, the already known, towards what she indicates as the 'beyond,' according to what we have identified as the logic of otherness and excess. In fact, the human capacity for signifying, interpreting, and discriminating among the different levels of meaning and among the multiple meanings of the sign is ruled by the capacity for excess and deferral among signs, for the 'play of musement,' as Peirce would say – a capacity which distinguishes human beings from the rest of the animal world (cf. also Sebeok 1981). The tendency to transcend limits, seduction of the logic of excess also subtends the disposition for critique, innovation and creativity in cognitive, ethical and practical experience. From a dialectical–dialogical perspective, the very life of the instincts, the senses, flourish and develop retroactively as an effect of progress in the life of the intellect and human experience generally. From a signficant perspective, such concepts as 'body' and 'mind,' 'nature' and 'culture' may be described as concrete abstractions indicating systems that

are specific and at once interconnected, therefore without boundaries with respect to each other. Even the concept of meaning is a concrete abstraction if we consider that it can only be conveyed indirectly, that is, 'obliquely, inferentially,' as she wrote in a letter to Charles Whibley sometime between 1908–1910 (see Ch. 4, this volume).

In her reflections on sign and meaning, we know that Welby theorizes the need for critical consciousness and for awareness of the complexities and implications of meaning value. This led her to theorize the special capacity for interrogation specific to human beings, and to highlight the role of education in the development of such capacities (see Ch. 4, this volume):

Significs, as enabling us to deal afresh and in a practical form with the ancient problems, must therefore be considered first as a method of mental training, which, though implied in all true views of education, is not yet practically recognised or systematically applied. In a special sense, it aims at the concentration of intellectual activities on that which we tacitly assume to be the main value of all study, and vaguely call 'meaning.' Its instructive and disciplinary value must be secondary to this, as they are both ultimately dependent upon it. (1983 [1903]: 83)

Critique and responsibility are necessary conditions for progress, happiness and freedom not only in terms of intellectual work, but also at the pragmatic-operative level of everyday life. Ultimately we are all 'significians,' whether professionals or laymen, therefore we are all capable of interrupting the direct sequence of actions to reflect and deliberate on what we are doing. As Welby maintains in the opening pages of *What is Meaning?*:

Man questions and an answer is waiting for him. But first he must learn to speak, really to 'express' himself and the world. To do that he must learn to *signify* and to *signalise*. He must discover, observe, analyse, appraise, first the sense of all that he senses through touch, hearing, sign, and to realise its interest, what it practically signifies for him; then the meaning – the intention – of action, the motive of conduct, the cause of each effect. Thus at last he will see the Significance, the ultimate bearing, the central value, the vital implication – of what? of all experience, all knowledge, all fact, and all thought.

There is just now a marked tendency to confess that Experience is a concept which imperatively needs both expansion and enrichment. In a wholesome dread of illusion we have narrowed its scope too much. Experience can only be enriched through the acquirement in a broad sense of fresh symbols or fresh significance: expression needs development in the same way for the same reason. Thus it follows that, as already suggested, every conceivable form of human interest is centrally touched and transformed by Significs. The difficulty is not to make this plain, both to deal within any reasonable space with the evidence for it. The attempt even to show that the signfic attitude is essentially predictive, would employ a mass of illustrative reference which would swamp these Studies altogether.

The materials, however, have been collected and can always speak for themselves. Meanwhile it may be suggested that physical science – at present the dominant source of discovery by interpretation – best represents the signfic attitude. But when the man of science has been, as a matter of course, trained on Signific lines, his power of seeing through facts, his mastery of their relations or corresponding points, of their applications and indirect implications, and of the fittest expression of these, must inevitably be greatly increased. He will become once more the 'natural philosopher,' but in a higher and more adequate sense of both terms. (1983 [1903]: 6–8)

A specific feature of humanity is the capacity to ask questions, in particular ‘Why?’ The human instinct leads us to inquire after ‘the reason of things,’ as says Welby in Chapter XXVI of *What is Meaning?* In other words, the impulse to explore which is manifest across the whole spectrum of life in its various forms, must in the human being translate into the development of ‘explorative ideas,’ passing through the ‘What?’ and the ‘How?’ to the ‘Why?’ Welby maintains that for humanity that which has no import has no importance, that which does not signify is nothing at all. Consequently, taking development on a phylogenetic level as her model, she urged the need to educate people to interrogate and to search for sense, meaning and significance on the ontogenetic level from early childhood:

What is the first human query? [...] We are proposing to ask what, in the first place, are those forms of curiosity which are undoubtedly shared in greater or less degree by the whole animal world, and what are those which, gradually taking on the character of reflective wonder, are recognised by us as distinctively human? [...]

What then may be safely reckoned as the pre- or sub-human queries – carried on, indeed, into man’s highest development, but not specially characteristic of human intelligence? Is there not obviously, to start with, that for which our word ‘what’ stands? Attention is challenged by movements, or by object, incident or obstacle. The conscious organism responds. The reaction is represented by the words, What is this? Food? Danger? Etc. Next come Which (this or that) and Where (here or there), Whence or Whither. And then follow, Whether to exert itself, and How to reach, to capture, to escape, and so on.

A question here arises which seems as yet difficult to settle, Does the animal ask ‘when?’ Has it a time-sense as it certainly has a sense of locality, the same in kind as our own? Leaving this as possibly belonging to a borderland in the query world, and certainly needing separate discussion,¹⁵ we come to a significant moment.

It seems to be reasonable to assume that the animal *qua* animal cannot be said to ask Why. Why indeed should it? The only sense in which such an inquiry on the animal level would not be a mental irrelevance, would be that of an extended What or How. [...]

[...] Such queries as, Why is there nothing to eat? Why do I suffer? Why is this district barren? Why is the nest or burrow destroyed? or, Why has it collapsed? – still more, Why am I dependent on food or shelter? and Why should I seek for the one or make the other, or care for the needs of another generation and other individuals?, are plainly beyond the range of the needs, and therefore of the ken, of the animal. Indeed, they at once land us in the personal region, and suggest more directly than any others a self-conscious identity. Even if it may be urged – perhaps justly – that in some cases animals, especially those tamed and trained by man, show these signs of wondering why, for instance, man acts as he does, this might suggest the strivings of a predictive mental activity, – a ‘missing’ mental ‘link.’ Some biologists, e.g., Ralph of Leipzig, recognize something of this kind, and maintain that every new position gained by the organism in its progress is a limit beyond which it again strives to pass. The organic command is not to live normally, but to develop new needs and to satisfy them.¹⁶

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15. [Since this was written, ‘time’ as derived and inferential (space and notion being the originating factors) has been made the subject of a Study not included in this volume. The suggestion seems justified by the fact (which does not seem to have been noticed) that ‘time’ is the only category of which the terms are all borrowed. An answer to this question would thus be supplied (1983 [1903]: 197)].
 16. [Critical Notice of *Biologische Probleme*, by T. Whittaker, *Mind*, April 1885: German 282 (1983 [1903]: 198)].

Thus the first distinctively human query seems reached. Man might fairly be called the Why-Asker.¹⁷ He seeks a reason for everything: that is, not merely a cause of, but a meaning in all that happens and all that he observes and experiences. What he does has reference to that ‘reason why’; he is humanly intelligent, worthy of the very name human, in proportion as he desires and endeavours to learn and know it. Man has called himself among his many self-given nicknames, the cooking animal. But after all, he does not live in order to feed, but feeds in order to live, and to learn with his developing brain the *raison d’être* of cooking, and much else. The question, ‘What does it all mean?’ takes on the sense of ‘Why is it thus?’ He has grown, so to speak, a mental feeler, a tentacle with sensitive tip wherewith he explores his world. And this again means the entrance into that region of abstract conception which reacts upon, and endows with new value, the world of perception and action. More than that, it means the interpretation of this, the perception of its significance. The ‘whats’ of the animal acquire more and more general senses and an immensely wider scope. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 196–199)

The need for understanding the signifying value and practical consequence of signs not only in the life of reflection and experimentation, but also in everyday life is manifest with the simple question, ‘What does it signify?’ This expression is used by Welby as the title of a brief paper of 1908 included in *Semiotic and Significs*,¹⁸ the volume collecting the correspondence between Peirce and Welby, edited by Charles S. Hardwick:

What Does it Signify?

In defining of the subject, range and practical relevance of Significs, this question, here put in no careless or impatient sense, is more than suggestive. Though a popular phrase, it confesses and accentuates a profound, elementary, universal need, and the sternest and most inexorable demands.

Every in-existent, every proposition, every movement, every object, every incident or occurrence, every fact and every fancy, every presentation or representation of any kind; all that for any reason or in any way arouses attention or claims interest, excites response, suggests inference must be subjected to this introductory and exhaustive test.

First of all, what does it signify?

For unless in some sense or degree it *signifies*, we may ignore it; it is indeed waste of energy to consider it. In some sense and however remotely or indirectly, it must concern us all, be it only as somewhat to be denied, ignored, or neglected. However abstract or conjectural, even however irrational, it must needs have some bearing on our knowledge if not on our status or our conduct. It must concern if only some or even but one, of us. The barest gabble, the most purposeless antic, the wildest folly, the idlest dream must at least *signify* in some context, reference, direction, – sense. Many things may be senseless; many things are meaningless, – that is, – outside the purview of Intention, still more of deliberate Purpose and Design; many things may be un-important. But when we say that anything is in-significant we ourselves are at least ambiguous. For not only every fact or thing if it be one, or if we take it for one, somehow signifies, but nothing thus can be insignificant except in the sense ‘of no account in certain contexts; negligible for a

17. [‘Man only knows the Why, not the Wherefore’ (Vitelleschi, *Nineteenth Century*, September 1896: 452). [...] (1983 [1903]: 198)].

18. A consistent part of the correspondence between Peirce and Welby, covering the years 1903–1905 and 1908–1911, was also included by Welby’s daughter, Nina Cust, in the volume *Other Dimensions*, 1931.

purpose in hand, ignorable. Even thus its very predication acknowledges its signifying quality: the crassest mistake or merest omission must signify if only the absence or lack of somewhat.

It will thus be clear that the question so constantly asked when some unusual occurrence or condition is brought to our notice, and we do not see how it affects or need interest us – the question, What does it Signify? has the widest of applications. For the one function really elementary and universal in a world which for us in an inexhaustible mine of Signs, is to Signify; not merely in the conventional sense of affecting or modifying our personal or social requirements or welfare, but in that of Indication. In this sense, on this ground, nothing is for us any more complete in itself than the marks now made on this paper and grouped into words and sentences. They ‘embody’ and thus designate or suggest, denote or connote, indicate or imply notions or ideas, assumptions, ‘trains of thought,’ results emotional or logical, imaginative or actual. They symbolise at least the presumably or conjecturally existent.

When in infancy we begin to question and to distinguish and name the excitants where-with life surrounds the responsive sense-complex which we call the nervous system: when ‘mind’ at its first budding prompts the little one to ask What, How, Why, and so on, there you have the irrevocable confession, repeated with fresh and urgent emphasis by the leaders and pioneers of the race, that every impulse and impression, every appearance or stimulus to attention and action is *significant*; not of course necessarily in the sense of being especially and notable important or far-reaching and momentous (in predictable measurable consequence) but in the barest indicative or implicative sense.

Surely therefore it follows that Significs, the study of that of which all experience is the Sign: Significs, which seeks to clear our ideas of what that experience brings, offers, bestows upon us; Significs, which must be not only the best of all scouts but also the best of all watchmen to tell us ‘what of the night’ – of the shadows baffling and misleading us and the stars serene above them – is a very immediate and practical concern of everyone [*sic*] of us, at all times and in all places. The really strange thing is thus, not that we should discover this ingenerative factor and act upon our discovery now, but that Man should ever have overlooked or ignored a study so vitally central and so certain to enhance the value of all other studies to which he is impelled or can undertake, and of every possible form of healthy action, invention, industry, business, as well as all art, speculation, poetry; in short the value of all his interest and activities.

It is perhaps in education and in ethics and economics – in all that Sociology may include, – that the need and lack of Significs is most evident. The hitherto ‘insoluble’ questions of social welfare, with all the misery and conflict, bitterness and tragedy involved in them, are partly at least entailed by our want of grip on the germinal elements of the whole evolution of what we call civilization. The really first questions are rarely asked, and when they are they lack the true inspiration and context and remain barren. We need, again, flashlights on the social ‘situation’ and its problems; but we want them from many quarters, and that they should be met with such response that a general illumination shall be the result. We need to rise out of a state of interminable bickering and recrimination, all the more dangerous when it is too superficially logical and too dignified and apparently weighty to be recognised under such names. We need to begin at real beginnings and to ask the most ‘previous’ of all questions. Our attention, trained conventionally to act keenly or dwell persistently in some directions or on some grounds only, must be trained naturally to fix on all that first and most needs it, and especially to matters which for assignable reasons have been missed at least in some practical contexts as in theoretical explorations, but which are in fact often the unrecognised original sources of many of our worst failures and most crying evils.

At present it is no wonder that any suggestion that a fresh form of training, point of view, subject, is needed, should seem but as one more ‘visionary’ panacea for irremediable troubles. Yet the very number and insistence of the problems which beset us in the most prosaically practical of lives may suggest, does suggest, that there is something wrong somewhere. In the homely image of the ‘screw loose’ we do sometimes show a dim consciousness not only that all is not as it should be, but not as it shall be, must be, if social calamity or even ruin is to be averted.

If our inherited forms of education – now happily everywhere criticised and freely condemned – had not helped to stultify us in our most growing and explorative years: if, instead, the most had been made of our significating and interpretative powers: if we had been incited to make suggestions, however raw, and encouraged to express unusual ideas and ask apparently unanswerable questions: if our teachers, themselves trained in Significs, had in their turn done the same thing on a reasoned and experienced footing, how much higher the average level of ability would have been! A new wonderland with the birth-mark of orderly knowledge, verified reality, upon it; a new Open Gate to the Borderlands of experience, would be ours. We should gain a test and mastery of the ‘occult’ which would bring much from shadow-land to light-land. But at present we must begin both lower down and higher up and further in, to find in baffling or illusive mysteries the organic and embryonic simplicities. (Welby 1977c: 182–184)

To relate sign theory and value theory means to develop the question of meaning beyond traditional linguistic-cognitive limits, as systematically proposed in semiotics in the twentieth century by Charles Morris, in particular, with his own approach to the theory of signs (cf. Morris 1956, 1964). Welby emphasized the ethical dimension of signifying processes in the human world relating the study of meaning in semantic-cognitive terms to the study of meaning in ethical-pragmatic terms. With an attitude that recalls Emmanuel Levinas when he privileges commitment over cognition, or art, love and action over theory, and talent over wisdom and self-possession (Levinas 1960: 253–254), Welby, too, focuses on the ethical implications of meaning for the expressive, interpretive and communicating subject, and their translation into action. Translative processes converge with interpretation and critical awareness, including awareness of the bearing and import of signs for the single individual as much as for the collectivity.

In the context of the relation of signs to values, Welby makes an appeal for responsibility, and relatedly to the latter for the need to ‘moralise’ and ‘humanise’ knowledge, as she writes in her 1911 monograph, *Significs and Language* (see below), this being one of the ultimate aims of significs. In fact, a general theory of sign and meaning that is truly general must not only be founded in cognitive theory, but must at once open to the ethical dimension of semiosis, that is, the ‘significal’ dimension, beyond the merely cognitive and theoretical.

Welby’s approach has contributed to the formulation of ‘semioethics,’ an expression I have introduced with co-author Augusto Ponzio, also related to our proposal of a new form of humanism (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2003b, 2005: 535–549). Semioethics reflects the idea of semiotics recovering its ancient vocation as ‘semeiotics’ (or symptomatology), with its focus on symptoms. Semioethics concerns itself with the ‘care for life,’ but from a global perspective whereby semiosis and life coincide. Similarly to significs and recalling such authors as Levinas, but also Bakhtin, and others still, semioethics intends to summon the ‘semiotic animal’ (see Deely, Petrilli, Ponzio 2005), indeed better still the ‘semioethic animal’ to authenticity and commitment at a pragmatic level, the level

of action, beyond the purely theoretical, to participation and involvement with the other beyond individual separatisms and interests, to care and love for the other (see also, Levinas, 'Philosophy, Justice, and Love,' in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans.: 103–121). Art, talent is worth more than wisdom and self-possession, according to Levinas; beyond reason we must tend towards reasonableness, argues Peirce (*CP* 5.4). The following is a passage from the opening chapter to Welby's book of 1911, *Significs and Language*:

There are probably many who dimly realise, and would provisionally admit, that our present enormous and ever-growing developments of mechanical power and command are there to be interpreted in terms of psychology. This must presumably affect not only the very minds which are conceiving and applying them to such tremendous and apparently illimitable purpose, but also the thinkers concerned with the mental sphere itself, its content, and its range.

We may thus suspect, if not actually infer, that human thought also is on the threshold of corresponding developments of power, – developments to which the 'new birth' of scientific method in the nineteenth century was but the prelude and preparation. If, indeed, we deny this conclusion, or dispute this assumption, we may effectually hold such a development in arrest – or risk forcing it out in unhealthy forms – just as, three hundred years ago, the spirit of scientific discovery was fettered and retarded on the verge of its great career of achievement. The explanation is, in part, if only in part, the same now as it was then. For in the pre-Baconian age the study of phenomena, the inquiry into 'the causes of things,' was not more inhibited by theological prepossessions and denunciations than by the dominance of an intellectual nomenclature which ruled reality out of the universe and confidently took its place in all disquisition or discussion upon Man and Nature. The forward step taken was largely the result of a breaking of the barriers created by traditional terminology, a pushing aside of fictitious formulas, and a coming directly into the presence of things in order to learn whatever they had to say 'for themselves' – and for the Whole. All the conditions – especially the supreme condition, an urgent need – are now existent for a second and similar forward step, but upon another place and to higher purposes. For the fresh advance which now seems imminent, as it is sorely needed, should be no mere continuation of the Baconian search, the accumulation of data for a series of inferences regarding the properties of the material system as usually understood, but rather the interpretation, the translation at last into valid terms of life and thought, of the knowledge already so abundantly gained. While man fails to make this translation – to moralise and humanise his knowledge of the cosmos, and so to unify and relate it to himself – his thinking is in arrears, and mentally he lags behind his enacted experience. That we in this age do lag behind, and that we have thus far failed to achieve a great and general act of translation, is a loss chiefly due to our unanimous neglect to understand Expression, its nature, conditions, range of form and function, unrealised potencies and full value or worth and therefore the first message of what is now to be named Significs is that we must amend this really inhuman fault; that we must now study Expression precisely as we have long been studying 'Nature' and 'Mind' in the varying ranges of both these terms.

We must do this; for until we do it, not merely metaphysical theory but natural fact, as well as moral and social valuations and aims, must continue to be perpetually misinterpreted because mis-stated. Great tracts of experience, direct and indirect, remain without an ordered vocabulary or notation – and better none than those which many others have – exactly as great regions of natural fact remained without recognition and without name until man almost suddenly discovered that he had been looking for the whats and hows and whys of the world he lived in in the wrong direction and by the wrong method. At

last he saw his true way – that of faithfully interrogating Nature, and rigorously testing his reading of her answer – and rich has been the reward of following it loyally. But the proper complement of this wonderful step forward, its very issue, must be the opening up of another true way hitherto untrodden. It must be the recognition and use of a method, a mental procedure and habit, enabling us to perceive the treasures of truth, the implications of reality, that even now are only hidden from us by our contented subjection to the tyranny of misfitting Expression, – Expression, of course, of all kinds, but mainly expression in language, taken in its ordinary sense. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 1–4)

As a theory of interpretation, translation and significance, significs provides a perspective and a method for the study of all sign systems and languages at the human being's disposal, not just the verbal but also the nonverbal: gestural, musical, visual, technological, and so forth. Welby elected the verbal as her specific object of analysis because she considered it the prime bearer of signifying value in the human world, the most powerful in terms of signifying potential, and the most incisive in human expressive, communicative and practical experience generally. The following passage is from *Significs and Language*:

There is need of some great poet to write worthily, from a fresh view-point, on the Power of the Word – the word which we blow about as though it were but chaff, gravely explaining indeed that it is 'merely word,' and so implicitly of no moment. But our use of word is never that; for whether positive or negative, excessive or deficient, present or absent even, our words are of moment always. 'For the first time,' says a recent writer, 'there swept over him that awful sense of unavailing repentance for the word said which might so well have been left unsaid, which most human beings are fated to feel at some time of their lives.' Aye; but the author should have included the word unsaid, which has often helped or hindered, and in all human ways signified so much. Indeed, that word 'merely' is constantly misused and perhaps never more so than in conjunction with 'verbal.' Let us tread softly with our merelys, onllys, simpllys. . . and use them with fear and trembling. Yet even in silence there is no escape for us either from danger or duty. Silence is often a most significant declaration, and a most misleading one.

There is but one safety; and that is, to realize as we have never done yet what we are doing with speech, and what with significant silence. And we have to realize vitally, intimately, actively, the power of symbol not only in Word, as in legend, narrative, parable, name, and all social speech and all intellectual discussions; but also in act, as in ritual, ceremony, performance, posture, dance. There has been as yet no adequate, no thorough, no logical and scientific attempt on the wisest basis to deal with this central interest of man's expression and realisation of himself and the world through Symbol; no attempt, with this paramount object in view, to wed the sacred and the secular, the emotional and the intellectual domains and examples. But indeed it cannot be adequately done until we know what the Word really is; until at long last we begin worthily to speak; until we understand that the Word may be, as in our usage it often is, a mere articulate sound with a mean sense, a capricious, idle, abusive meaning, – or, as also a Child, a Son, a Divine Messenger, and Reason itself are bearers and expressions of the Significance of Life. (Welby 1911: 40–42)

Welby continued her appeal for the improvement of language from a significal perspective, that is, as part of her ultimate quest for truth and enhancement of significance, in the following terms further on in the same volume:

'Language in its present sense,' I have said. For be it confessed at once that I would transcend the level and limits of mere 'language.' A mere tongue does not satisfy me

except as a necessary compromise – a detail. What we now call language is but one, the most comprehensive and delicate, mode of expressing ourselves, of feeling and thinking together, of articulating our nature, our knowledge, our hopes, our ideals. All I care for is first and always that Significance which is reached through sense and meaning, and which (if you give these free play) must ultimately involve and induce beauty of sound and form. I am quite ready for the most drastic changes as well as for the most scrupulous and anxious preservation of our existing resources all over the world. I want Greek; I want Chaucer; I want Esperanto, or rather its worthier successor when that shall appear. I want the Zulu clicks; I want modes of expression as yet unused, though we must not say undreamt of, since there are many scientist's and idealist's diagrams, symbols and other 'thinking machines,' all ready and in order, to rebuke us.

It may be true that the larynx and tongue must remain the main means. Still, you have refinement of gesture and of expressive action, the potentialities of which are practically unexplored; and you have the whole field of 'written' symbol and of 'Morse alphabet,' of the artist's tools and the laboratory apparatus, open to you. Let us learn to think in radiations and in ether waves. Let us transfigure grammar and prosody. Already the poets give us hints of the plasticity and beauty and wonder of words. We analyse, yet we do not touch the secret; but why not catch at least some of the infection? And let us learn to use machinery in higher ways: let us annex it to the service of thought, of beauty, of significance. Let us indeed fearlessly accrete words and phrases from all forms of science. All the ancient philosophers whom we revere absorbed the scientific terminology of their day and used it seriously and exactly. Still more should we now do this, when science is giving us not only rudder and compass, but such turbines of mind as the world has never seen. Nay, is not acceleration itself just *quickenning*, and the whole of contemporary mechanical development one parable? Language must be regenerated. It must be re-conceived and re-born, and must grow to a glorious stature. Of what that may be and become if only we resolve that it shall be, the greatest words of the greatest thinkers give us but a hint. It is quite ready to serve us; it is only we who are too stupid and vulgar to the worthy of such waiting-on. We think in the pigmental, and get our 'colour' through mud. Let us think in the spectral, and get our 'colour' through the rainbow. The true Word, let us scrawl or stamp; it is the Logos, it is Reason. It is more than that. It is that which can truly say 'I am': it is the revelation of the Way through truth to life. (Welby 1911: 83–85)

As anticipated above, *significs* proposes a trans-systemic, critical and detotalized method, transcending boundaries that aim to establish artificial separations among the different spheres of life and expression. As the study of significance, *significs* is a method for life both in its everyday and in its specialized expressions, consequently it is also a method that concerns language as one of the special instruments of expression in general. From this point of view, we can fully subscribe to William Macdonald's words when in his obituary for Welby he claims that

it was with Life – Life more abundant here, Life unspeakable beyond the point where knowledge for the present ends – that Lady Welby was ultimately and always concerned, and only with Language as it was the means and attribute, the expression and the power of Life (Macdonald 1912, now appended to Chapter 8, this volume).

As a method, *significs* is oriented by the logic of otherness and dialogue, which implies fostering such values as critical creativity, responsibility, responsivity, freedom from prejudice and dogmatism. Welby was focused on questions of language and expression as her special sphere of interest, but ended up roaming extensively over other, very often distant spheres of life. This was not because she intended to develop a compact and

autonomous thought system with claims to being all-encompassing. Her aim was not to bind together different spheres of human experience in order to create a final totality. On the contrary, she reflected so profoundly on her special interest that other dimensions of knowledge and experience inevitably came into play. With her significs and her special quest for significance, and similarly to Mikhail Bakhtin after her (though independently), Welby proposed a detotalizing approach to the life of signs which involved interdisciplinary, or better, transdisciplinary inclusiveness. Here, ‘interdisciplinary inclusiveness’ is produced not by claims to totalization, but by the exact opposite. In other words, interdisciplinary inclusiveness is achieved through the avoidance of totalization, by resorting to what can be termed the ‘detotalizing method,’ even with respect to a single problem. This is exactly how Welby’s research proceeded (cf. Petrilli 1992f; Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 153–157).

3.5. Significs and semantics: Michel Bréal and André Lalande

In ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,’ her paper of 1896, Welby had already insisted on the need for more specific and extensive studies on signs, language and meaning. Polemicalizing with the scientific community, she observed that despite the pervasive presence and universal import of signs and meaning, these were rarely attributed the right value. She expressed her appreciation of efforts made, for example, under the banner of ‘sematology’ (‘the science of meanings’) or ‘semantics’ (*sémantique*) (‘the science of change of meanings’), as formally introduced and expounded by the French linguist Michel Bréal in his book of 1897, *Essai de sémantique. Science des significations*, but at the same time she also expressed her dissatisfaction with the state of the art, urging the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and development of research. From ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation’:

Communication is now so easy among the intellectual leaders of men that there ought to be no difficulty in obtaining it when its enormous advantages are realised. We have already specific studies of acknowledged value under names like Hermeneutics, Orthology, and Exegesis. Moreover, although philologists complain that Sematology ‘the science of meanings,’ and Semantics (*Bréal, sémantique*), ‘the science of change of meanings’ have hardly yet been touched, the importance of these and of the psychological side of language generally is rapidly coming into greater prominence. And as foreign scholars themselves admit the special fitness of our language for studies of this kind, may we not hope that before long a start may be made by English writers and teachers in the direction of a more definite and combined effort than has yet been made, to promote the development of the expressive and discriminative powers of language, and to give the study of its main value, ‘sense’ or ‘meaning’ a more prominent place in mental training? (1985 [1896]: 200–201)

In her entry ‘Significs,’ commissioned by the editor of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (now appended to the present chapter, Section 3.15), Welby distinguishes between ‘significs’ and ‘semantics,’ describing the latter as a branch of significs. She promoted the English edition of Bréal’s book of 1897, translated by her daughter and collaborator, Nina Cust, and published in 1900. In her own encyclopaedia entry Welby cited the following passage from *Essai de sémantique*:

Extraire de la linguistique ce qui en ressort comme aliment pour la réflexion et – je ne crains pas de l'ajouter – comme règle pour notre propre langage, puisque chacun de nous collabore pour sa part à l'évolution de la parole humaine, voilà ce qui mérite d'être mis en lumière, voilà ce que j'ai essayé de faire en ce volume. (in Hardwick 1977: 168)

This passage is related to the entry 'Semantics' from the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, edited by James M. Baldwin (1861–1934) (cf. Schmitz 1985a: cxliv–cxlvii). The hypothesis is that Welby influenced not only the plan of Baldwin's *Dictionary*, but also of Lalande's *Vocabulaire*): in Baldwin's dictionary, 'Semantics' is defined as 'the doctrine of historical word-meanings; the systematic discussion of the history and development of changes in the meanings of words.' In her encyclopaedia article of 1911, Welby formulated the distinction between signifiés and semantics as follows:

It [semantics] may thus be regarded as a reform and extension of the etymological method, which applies to contemporary as well as to traditional or historical derivation. As human interests grow in constantly specialized directions, the vocabulary thus enriched is unthinkingly borrowed and reborrowed on many sides, at first in indefinite quotation, but soon in unconscious or deliberate adoption. Semantics may thus, for present purposes, be described as the application of Signifiés within strictly philological limits; but it does not include the study and classification of the 'Meaning' terms themselves, nor the attainment of a clear recognition of their radical importance as rendering well or ill, the expressive value not only of sound and script but also of all fact or occurrence which demands and may arouse profitable attention. (Welby 1911b, in Hardwick 1977: 168, now below)

To my knowledge, Welby's correspondence with Bréal (available at the York University Archives Special Collections) has remained unpublished (apart from an excerpt from a letter by Bréal to Welby dated 4 March 1903 included in Cust 1931: 66), and the archives are incomplete. The corpus at our disposal includes ten letters in English from Welby and seven in French with a postcard from Bréal, exchanged between 20 July 1897 and 5 May 1908. What is available has now been appended below to the present chapter. As to conducting their exchanges in their own respective mother-tongues, Welby commented that 'our small correspondence is an example of the reform I hope in – that we may each write in our own language' (Welby to Bréal, 5 August 1897). Welby and Bréal shared a common interest in problems of language and meaning, recognizing their vital importance as much as of the sciences that reflect on them. They both focused on the problem of figurative language, analogy, metaphor and polysemy; dealt with educational issues;¹⁹ and identified a primary source for the renewal of expression in the language of the everyday man ('*le peuple*,' says Bréal, '*the man in the street*,' says Welby). 'On ne fait pas de la linguistique pour les seuls linguistes,' says Bréal in a letter to Welby of 28 June, 1897. Both commented on the imperfect state of the 'linguistic instrument,'

19. The term 'polysémie' was first introduced by Bréal who in his analysis of the processes through which words acquire new senses, observed that the new sense of a word does not cancel the preceding sense, but on the contrary continues to coexist with it. In fact, the same term may be used in the proper sense or metaphorically, broadly or in a strict sense, in the abstract or concrete sense, etc. To the extent that new meanings are added to previous meanings, a word seems to multiply generating new exemplars with different value though they be identical in form. The term 'polysémie' indicates the phenomenon of multiplication (cf. Bréal 1897).

and promoted the need for criticism – in the everyday speaker as much as in the sciences that deal with language and communication. All the same, in spite of common interests, Welby (already in 1900, the year of publication of Bréal's book in English) drew attention to the fundamental difference between herself and Bréal, considering her own approach much broader. In 1903 Welby sent a copy of *What is Meaning?* to Bréal with the specification that it was a study of a concept vaguely called 'meaning' in English, sometimes 'sense,' and other times 'significance.' She stated her intention to extend the study of meaning beyond the specialism of philology, beyond the study of transformations in meaning to focus on the nature of meaning and its relations to sign, behaviour and value. In Welby's interpretation, semantics proposes a study of the forms of language, which led her to consider it as a special branch of significs, given its more definitely linguistic approach. And, in fact, neither semantics nor for that matter sematology exhausted what she aimed for with significs, given that they were specialized disciplines, too specifically linguistic-philological with respect to her own approach to the study of meaning and value.

May I venture to tell you that my own humble efforts to suggest a special method of mental training are obtaining me definite recognition. It is now decided that this is to be called SIGNIFICS as the study of Sign, especially of course articulate sign, and its various modes and degrees of value which we call sense, meaning, signification, import, purport, Significance (and others). I venture to enclose a proposed definition for a Psychological Dictionary [Welby 1902b] as it is at last an attempt to describe Significs. You will see that it must include your own great study. (Welby to Bréal, 10 November 1900)

In 1900 Ferdinand Tönnies proposed that Welby use such terms as 'symbolonomy' and 'rhematonomy' instead of 'significs.' She responded by tracing the course of her research leading from the term 'semantics,' which she ultimately set aside, to formulation of the neologism 'significs' which she believed reflected her own original project more appropriately:

... I began, of course, with the word 'Sémantique' then not even naturalized in England. I believe that Prof. Earle was the first person to use it in English; but I had already seen it in Darmesteter, &c. Only I found that I could not make the word travel sufficiently far beyond strict philological limits, and was always met by the remark that my friend was not interested in linguistic research. (As if I was, in the old sense!) Then it was that I arrived at the Sensifics which you define so well. But I found this strongly objected to by philosophical friends in England on account of the special associations in philosophy of the word 'sense.' Then I resorted to the word Significs because it was free from this drawback and found favour at Oxford. But please note that what I really want is as usual a word which does not exist; a word which shall convey to the hearer or reader the combined ideas of Sign-and-Sense. (Welby to Tönnies, 6 August 1900)²⁰

20. Letter reported in part by H. W. Schmitz, and probably a draft judging from the numerous handwritten corrections (see Schmitz 1985a: li). It includes a reference to Earle, probably J. Earle, author of *Philology of the English Tongue*, 1887, and another to A. Darmesteter, author of *The Life of Words as the Symbols of Ideas*, which appeared in English translation in 1886, a year before its publication in the French original.

3.6. Significs and semiotics: Giovanni Vailati and Charles S. Peirce

[...] I must devote some time to the article on Significs which I am asked to contribute to the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It is a great encouragement to me that Significs should thus be formally admitted as a recognised subject and method in this country; and I cannot forget that you have been among the very first of European thinkers to encourage me in my most difficult enterprise, the need of which you had already felt. (Welby to Vailati, 28 December 1907, WCYA, now in Section 4.8, this volume)

Although Vailati fully endorsed Welby's approach, in a letter of 18 March 1903 he too suggested she replace the expression 'significs' with 'semiotic'.²¹ 'Semiotic' covered what he believed Welby understood with 'significs' and was already established by a tradition of thought that could be traced back to John Locke at least (see the exchange quoted in the Introduction to the current volume, page 3, and reprinted in full in Section 4.8).

Welby described her encounter with Vailati and his collaborator Mario Calderoni in a letter to Lalande, reporting their enthusiasm for Significs whose importance they fully recognized. The two Italian scholars traveled to Harrow in 1903 expressly to visit Welby and discuss their ideas: 'Prof. Vailati had preferred Semiotics, but is now entirely in favour of Significs, which seems to afford no difficulty in Italian' (Welby to Lalande, 20 August 1903, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, this volume).

In his review of *What is Meaning?*, Peirce interpreted significs as a branch of logic and while acknowledging the ethical dimension of her theory, established a relation between significs and logic in terms not undersigned, at least not unconditionally, by Welby:

Lady Victoria, however, does not wish the matter to be agitated in the logician's study alone. She urges that people do not sufficiently take to heart the ethics of language. She thinks that modern conceptions call for a modern imagery of speech. But we fear that she does not realize how deep the knife would have to go into the body of speech to make it really scientific. We should have to form words like those the chemists use – if they can be called words. In particular, she preaches making logic – 'significs,' she calls it, but it would be logic – the basis or core of education. [...] (in Hardwick 1977: 159)

As Welby clarified in a letter to Peirce dated 18 November 1903, she took her distances from logic and defended the appropriateness of the term 'significs.' She also made the specification that significs did not indicate a branch of logic, as Peirce thought, nor did it coincide with semiotic, as Vailati suggested, but rather that it was a 'practical extension' of the latter:

[...] Prof. G. Vailati, who shares your view of the importance of that – may I call it, practical extension? – of the office and field of Logic proper, which I have called Significs. For the latter seems to see as I do that the acceptance of such an extension will bring a time when no one with any sense will any longer say 'Oh, I don't care for (or, am incapable of) the study of Logic. That isn't my line.' For that would be to announce indifference not

21. On the relation between Welby and Vailati, see Petrilli 1989: 87–102 and Ponzio 1985a. For a revised and expanded version of the former in English, see Petrilli 1990a: 339–347. This paper considers the real relations between Welby and Peirce and the ideal relations between Welby and Bakhtin. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi also dedicated several studies to Vailati and collected his writings in an edition of 1967, cf. Rossi-Landi 1957–1958, 1967; and Vailati 1967.

merely to rational order, but also to the very attribute which may be said to give its human value to life, – that is (1) its ‘Sense’ and sense-power in every sense from the biological to the logical, (2) its intention, conscious and increasingly definite and rational, which we call ‘Meaning’ and (profess to) use language to express, (3) its Significance, its bearing upon, its place among, its interpretation of, all other cosmical facts. (Welby to Peirce, 18 November 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 6)

Welby explicitly juxtaposed the term ‘significs’ to ‘semeiotic’ as understood by Peirce in a letter to the latter dated 21 January 1909.²² She took her distances from what she considered as a purely descriptive approach to studies on language, knowledge and expression, which ignored the relation to valuation thereby losing sight of the ethical, aesthetic, and what today is identified as the ideological dimension of human sign activity.

For an adequate understanding of human semiosis, Welby repeatedly underlined, as in the continuation of her letter to Peirce, the importance of relating logic to ethics, therefore cognitive theory to axiology:

Of course I am fully aware that Semeiotic may be considered the scientific and philosophic form of that study which I hope may become generally known as Significs. Though I don’t think you need despair of the acceptance of your own more abstract, logically abstruse, philosophically profound conception of Semeiotic. Of course I assent to your definition of a logical inference, and agree that Logic is in fact an application of morality in the largest and highest sense of the word. That is entirely consonant with the witness of Primal Sense. Alas, there is no word (except religion) more dangerously taken in vain than morality. (Welby to Peirce, 18 November 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 91)

It was Welby who first contacted Peirce.²³ After reading some of his writings she sent him a copy of *What is Meaning?* in the hope of eliciting a critical reading from him:²⁴

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22. Max Fisch (1986: 322) notes that Peirce employed the term ‘semeiotic’ and never ‘semiotics’ to designate the science of signs. Thomas A. Sebeok (1991c: 62) recalls that Charles Morris preferred the term ‘semiotic.’ The Saussureans identify their own approach with the term ‘sémiologie,’ even though the term ‘signologie’ was also in vogue at the time, as observed by R. Engler (1968: 46). Today, as foreseen by Sebeok (see also 1976, Ch. 2), ‘semiotics’ is the most widely accepted expression prevailing over others. In Sebeok’s view: ‘The denotation of each of these academic jargon terms is, no matter how leaky, the “same”. But each harks back to a different tradition and, being overburdened by complex emotional resonance, carries different connotations’. Dialectical divisions of this nature are confusing for the public, of course, and have impelled some practitioners to concoct [...], and then attempt to impose, *post hoc* divergences in denotation’ (Sebeok 1991c: 62).
23. Welby was familiar with the entries written by Peirce for the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes* (see Baldwin 1901–1905). She inaugurated her correspondence with him, which was to prove extraordinary from a theoretical perspective, with a letter of 1903. Their exchanges lasted until 1911. Keeping account of Welby’s interests, Peirce announced the imminent publication of a text he was writing on logic (his pamphlet *A Syllabus of Logic*, see Peirce 1903), which he promised to send her, in addition to other texts on ‘British Science’ redacted for *The Nation* (letter to Welby of 5 November 1903, cf. Hardwick 1977: 4.5, n. 2, 3, 4).]
24. Peirce was already familiar with Welby’s work in 1898, when he received a copy of her pamphlet published that same year, *The Witness of Science to Linguistic Anarchy*, as results from a letter to him dated 1 November 1898 from the publisher of the journal *The Open Court* (Hardwick 1977: 1).

I have ventured to request Messrs. Macmillan to send you a copy of my book 'What is Meaning,' because if you do me the honour to read it any comments from you will be of special value in my eyes. I do not pretend to be able to follow the course of your technical arguments, being quite untrained in that direction; but I have constantly come upon points in your writings which have for me a keen interest from my special point of view. This is markedly the phase in your contributions to the Philosophical Dictionary. Among these I would mention what you say about 'Laws of Thought,' and especially about the 'contradictory' and the 'principle of contradiction.' Also about the lack of any definite meaning in philosophy of the word 'opposite.' Again, your criticism of the misunderstanding as to the proper meaning of 'axiom' and of 'postulate.'

But my book would show my reasons for warmly welcoming criticism of this kind, to which I am only too well aware that my own writings must be subject.

It is, unfortunately, one thing to see the needless traps of which language is full and quite another to succeed in avoiding them. In some cases indeed as you and others show, there is no commonly received alternative. (Welby to Peirce, 24 May 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 2)

Peirce reviewed Welby's volume for *The Nation*, associating it with another volume of 1903, *The Principles of Mathematics* by Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) (see Peirce 1903b, in Hardwick 1977: 157, now appended to the present chapter).²⁵ In his review he classified both volumes as 'Two really important works on logic,' and at the same time he signaled their total diversity:

Two really important works on logic are these; or, at any rate, they deserve to become so, if readers will only do their part towards it. Yet it is almost grotesque to name them together, so utterly disparate are their characters. This is not the place to speak of Mr. Russell's book, which can hardly be called literature. That he should continue these most severe and scholastic labors for so long, bespeaks a grit and industry, as well as a high intelligence, for which more than one of his ancestors have been famed. Whoever wishes a convenient introduction to the remarkable researches into the logic of mathematics that have been made during the last sixty years, and that have thrown an entirely new light both upon mathematics and upon logic, will do well to take up this book. But he will not find it easy reading. Indeed, the matter of the second volume will probably consist, at least nine-tenths of it, of rows of symbols. (Peirce 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 157)

Welby reported to Vailati about Russell and more than once mentioned her exchange of ideas with him, as was her habit, that is, of encouraging ideas to resound throughout the network of her relationships with her various correspondents (see below, Section 3.7; and for her correspondence with Russell, Section 3.8):

Since posting my letter to you, I have received, with a kind letter, a review of my book by Dr. C. S. Peirce. I know you think highly of his abilities and therefore will understand my gladness at this. He even speaks of 'two really important works on Logic,' the second being B. Russell's book! It is of course the question itself and not my defective treatment

25. Welby was pleased with the association for, as she informed Peirce in a letter of 18 November 1903, she believed Russell's book offered a more adequate formulation of her own ideas in technical terms (cf. Hardwick 1977: 5–6). All the same, in a letter to Welby dated 1 December 1903, Peirce expressed his reservations about this book by Russell which, by contrast with the positive evaluation expressed in his review, he described as 'pretentious and pedantic,' maintaining that the author was credited with merits that could not be accorded him (cf. Hardwick 1977: 9).

of it, of which he thus speaks. I hope soon to be able to forward a copy of his review (in *Nation* – New York). (Welby to Vailati, 15 November 1903)

Peirce's review led to regular letter exchanges with Welby of great theoretical interest. These only ended in 1911, the year Welby took ill, followed by her death in 1912.²⁶ Their relationship was to significantly influence the orientation of Peirce's own research in the last decade of his life to the point that, as maintained by the specialists (cf. Fisch 1986), his best semiotic expositions are formulated in letters to Welby.

Peirce related Welby's triadism to Hegel's three stages of thought (but Welby also signaled Comte's work):

One can see, though she does not remark it, that her three kinds of meaning correspond roughly to Hegel's three stages of thought. Her distinction, too, partly coincides with what was long ago said,²⁷ that to understand a word or formula may, in the first place, consist in such familiarity with it as will enable one to apply it correctly; or secondly, may consist in an abstract analysis of the conception or understanding of its intellectual relations to other concepts; or, thirdly, may consist in a knowledge of the possible phenomenal and practical upshot of the assertion of the concept. We might point out other interesting affiliations of her thought, sufficient to show that she must be upon the right track. (Peirce 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 159)

To Peirce's association Welby responded in the above mentioned letter dated 18 November 1903, clarifying that she had worked independently from the German philosopher's thought system which she knew well, but which she also criticized (see above, Ch. 2):

With regard to the relation between the triad I suggest and that of Hegel (also that of Comte) I may say that long before I knew anything about Hegel, I was asking myself why my thinking, when I tried to make it clear, fell naturally into triads. Then I looked round and found more or less the same tendency everywhere. At first therefore I was inclined to think that Hegel had got what the French call 'le mot de l'énigme.' But the more I studied all that could be read of his in English, and the comments of his followers, the deeper was my disappointment (Welby to Peirce, 18 November 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 7)

In any case, given that the triadic order was present everywhere, including in the objective reality of physical and biological phenomena, Welby hoped that her own treatment of this phenomenon would be taken into serious consideration, as she wrote to Peirce in another letter of 22 December 1903:

With regard to the triads, I am quite aware that error may take a triadic form and thus indeed put on a specious value. That seems to me an additional reason why the subject should be brought forward. I have hesitated long whether to send you enclosed proof of a sadly incoherent attempt to deal with triadism [Welby is referring here to her unpublished paper on triadism, now appended below], and to use it as a mode of expression or as an expressive order. You will however easily gather its general sense. I wish some competent mind would take up the subject on a really broad basis. For apparently the same tendency to a triadic

26. The complete correspondence is now collected in the volume *Semiotic and Significs*, edited by Charles S. Hardwick, 1977. Excerpts had already been presented by Welby's daughter, Nina Cust, in *Other Dimensions*, 1931, and another collection was presented by Erwin C. Lieb in 1956, only including letters by Peirce to the exclusion of Welby's (see above, Ch. 1).

27. [Peirce made a similar distinction in January 1878. See *Collected Papers*, 5.388–410 (Hardwick 1977: 159, footnote by the editor)].

order is found objectively in physical and biological phenomena. I have been much struck with this in my rather extensive scientific reading and was surprised to find that no one seemed to notice it. (Welby to Peirce, 22 December 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 14)

In a brief note on *What is Meaning?*, probably written in 1909 (now included in the *Collected Papers*), Peirce emphasized the importance of Welby's 'three modes of meaning':

A little book by Lady Victoria Welby has lately appeared, entitled 'What is Meaning.' The book has sundry merits, among them that of showing that there are three modes of meaning. But the best feature of it is that it presses home the question 'What is Meaning.' A word has meaning for us in so far as we are able to make use of it in communicating our knowledge to others and in getting at the knowledge that these others seek to communicate to us. That is the lowest grade of meaning. The *meaning* of a word is more fully the sum total of all the conditional predictions which the person who uses it *intends* to make himself responsible for or intends to deny. That conscious or quasi-conscious *intention* in using the word is the second grade of meaning. But besides the consequences to which the person who accepts a word knowingly commits himself to, there is a vast ocean of unforeseen consequences which the acceptance of the word is destined to bring about, not mere consequences of knowing but perhaps revolutions of society. One cannot tell what power there may be in a word or a phrase to change the face of the world; and the sum of these consequences makes up the third grade of meaning. (CP 8.176)²⁸

As noted above, Peirce believed that signification as a theory of meaning was part of logic. In particular, signification coincided with that part of 'semiotic' that was concerned with the relation between sign and interpretant. And, in fact, beyond eventual differences in their respective approaches, he identified a series of correspondences between Welby's meaning triad, 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance,' and his own tripartition of the interpretant into 'immediate interpretant,' 'dynamical interpretant,' and 'final interpretant,' as well as with the general tendency towards triadism he had already described in his own studies with such triadic categories as 'firstness,' 'secondness,' and 'thirdness,' and again 'qualisign,' 'sinsign,' and 'legisign.' In a letter to Welby dated 14 March 1909, Peirce proceeded to verify the extent to which his approach coincided with hers. His 'immediate interpretant' concerns the meaning of the sign as used ordinarily and habitually by the interpreter, the immediate response to signs, therefore it corresponded to Welby's 'sense.' The 'dynamical interpretant' concerns the sign's signification in a specific context; it more or less corresponds to Welby's 'meaning,' the second level in her triad. Even more interesting is the connection Peirce established between his 'final interpretant' and Welby's 'significance.' Similar to 'significance,' the 'final interpretant' indicates the sign at the extreme limits of its interpretive possibilities, the creative potential of signs, implying all possible responses in a potentially unlimited chain of interpretants. Moreover, this particular correspondence evidences how, for Peirce too, signifying potential was

28. According to Hardwick this brief text is not connected to Peirce's review of Welby's *What is Meaning?*, but rather was written in 1909 as part of an unpublished manuscript which was to serve as an introduction to a collection of essays on pragmatism (see Hardwick 1977: xi, and note 7). Instead, Achim Eschbach in his introductory essay to the 1983 reedition of Welby's volume *What is Meaning?* avers that this passage was written by Peirce in 1903 as part of a series of lessons he was delivering that same year at the Lowell Institute in Boston (cf. Welby 1983: xvi).

essentially a question of valuative orientation and pragmatic import engendered in the intricate interrelationship between signs, values, and behaviour. In his own words:

I wrote somewhat further about your Britannica article; but as I have, at odd moments, thought considerably of it since my last words, I prefer to begin that subject again. I propose to read it with the coolest criticism, because it is worth such treatment. I confess I had not realized before reading it, how fundamental your trichotomy of Sense, Meaning, and Significance really is. It is not to be expected that concepts of such importance should get perfectly defined for a long time.

By the way, I find in my portfolio some part of a letter, not the whole, dated December 28th. I suppose I sent you that. I hope so, because it seems, from the glance I cast upon [it] to be concerned with my gropings after the three kind of Interpretant. I now find that my division nearly coincides with yours, as it ought to do exactly, if both are correct. I am not in the least conscious of having been at all influenced by your book in settling my trichotomy, as nearly as it is settled; and I don't believe there was any such influence; though of course there may have been without my being aware of it. In reading your book my mind may, quite well have absorbed the ideas without my remembering it; and when I came to search for a division of the Interpretant, those ideas may have seemed to me to have been struck out by processes of thought that I thought then were presenting themselves to me for the first time, when the fact was that they were due to a bent of my thoughts which the perusal of your book had made. However, as I do not believe this did happen I feel some exultation in finding that my thought and yours nearly agree, for I think it is because we were both trying to get at the truth; and I should not wonder if you have the same feeling. But as far as the public goes, I can only point out the agreement, and confess to having read your book.

Let us see how well we do agree. The greatest discrepancy appears to lie in my Dynamical Interpretant as compared with your 'Meaning.' If I understand the latter, it consists in the effect upon the mind of the Interpreter that the utterer (whether vocally or by writing) of the sign intends to produce. My Dynamical Interpretant consists in direct effect actually produced by a Sign upon an Interpreter of it. They agree in being effects of the Sign upon an individual mind, I think, or upon a number of actual individual minds by independent action upon each. My Final Interpretant is, I believe, exactly the same as your Significance; namely, the effect the sign *would* produce upon my mind upon which circumstances should permit it to work out its full effect. My Immediate Interpretant is, I think, very nearly, if not quite, the same as your 'Sense'; for I understand the former to be the total unanalyzed effect that the Sign is calculated to produce, or naturally might be expected to produce; and I have been accustomed to identify this with the effect the sign first produces or may produce upon a mind, without any reflection upon it. I am not aware that you have ever attempted to define your term 'Sense'; but I gather from reading over what you say that it is the first effect that a sign would have upon a mind well-qualified to comprehend it. Since you say it is Sensal and has no Volitional element, I suppose it is of the nature of an 'impression.' It is thus, as far as I can see, exactly my Immediate Interpretant. You have selected words from vernacular speech to express your varieties, while I have avoided these and manufactured terms suitable, as I think, to serve the uses of Science. I might describe my Immediate Interpretation, as so much of the effect of a Sign as would enable a person to say whether or not the Sign was applicable to anything concerning which that person had sufficient acquaintance.

My Interpretant with its three kinds is supposed by me to be something essentially attaching to anything that acts as a Sign. Now natural Signs and symptoms have no utterer; and consequently have no Meaning, if Meaning be defined as the intention of the utterer.

I do not allow myself to speak of the ‘purposes of the Almighty,’ since whatever He might desire is done. Intention seems to me, though I may be mistaken, an interval of time between the desire and the laying of the train by which the desire is to be brought about. But it seems to me that Desire can only belong to a finite creature.

Your ideas of Sense, Meaning, and Significance seem to me to have been obtained through a prodigious sensitiveness of Perception that I cannot rival, while my three grades of Interpretant were worked out by reasoning from the definition of a Sign what sort of thing *ought* to be noticeable and *then* searching for its appearance. My Immediate Interpretant is implied in the fact that each Sign must have its peculiar Interpretability before it gets any Interpreter. My Dynamical Interpretant is that which is experienced in each act of Interpretation and is different in each from that of any other; and the Final Interpretant is the one Interpretative result to which every Interpreter is destined to come if the Sign is sufficiently considered. The Immediate Interpretant is an abstraction, consisting in a Possibility. The Dynamical Interpretant is a single actual event. The Final Interpretant is that toward which the actual tends. (Peirce to Welby, 14 March 1909, in Hardwick 1977: 108–111)

3.7. Meaning and denotation: The correspondence with Bertrand Russell

Welby discussed Bertrand Russell and his mathematics in the following terms in a letter to George Frederick Stout, editor of the journal *Mind* (for her correspondence with Stout, see Ch. 1, above). I have reported this letter from *Other Dimensions*, not having traced it in the Welby Archives at York University. Stout played a central role in Russell’s intellectual formation:

... But I feel more strongly every day that my greatest need at this point of my work is to get into touch with what might be called the pioneer wing or scouting detachment of the mathematical army. I have long had a suspicion (which I hardly dared to whisper!) that the neglect to make the idea of ‘meaning’ and of ‘sense’ in that sense – itself a subject of study and analysis – was especially dangerous in the mathematical and still more the logical direction. It is evident that Mr. Russell is, on independent grounds, coming to the same conclusion. I have been studying his *Foundations of Geometry*, where I see this trend, as well as in the *Principles of Mathematics*. Just lately I have also made a study from my point of view of Mr. G. E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica*. This seems to verify in some degree another suspicion of mine, namely, that the curious extent to which logicians complain of each other’s logic, or at least conclusions, may be due to the difficulty which the expert logical mind has in getting away from his method in such wise as to see all its implications in perspective. ... (Welby to Stout, 1903–1905, Cust 1931: 125)

This letter is followed by another to Nina Cust, Welby’s daughter and editor of *Other Dimensions*, in which, again, Welby signals the contribution made by Russell and his *Principles* to highlighting the importance of logical rigour in reasoning, and the connection to the logic of mathematics:

Bertrand Russell’s *Principles* has simply fascinated me. He is working on my line in a way impossible to me – that of intricate and mechanically perfect trains of reasoning. And he realizes one of my ‘wildest dreams,’ that pure mathematics and formal or symbolic logic should be identified. Further, he translates and he applies. I am making several indexes of

the work for my own use. One is general; another of all the arguments (or passages) relating to my own subject; another of all the indictments which he makes of current usage – a formidable list! It is doubly interesting, at a moment when our physical theories of matter, etc. seem about to undergo profound modification, that there should also be a call for the complete revision of our most exact forms of thought. (Welby to N. Cust, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 125–126)

In a letter to Francis Galton from the same period, Welby wrote that she considered Russell's *Principles* 'emphatically a work which for mere convenience sake (and for educative purposes) I call Significs':

... The special value to me of Mr. Russell's *Principles* lies in its being the first example I have seen (or heard of) of an attempt to render the latest results of mathematical study in ordinary language. The injustice which ordinary language does to thought, the fallacies and contradictions which practically make of too much philosophy and ethics mere 'studies in confusion,' is thus most usefully brought out. In fact it is emphatically a work which for mere convenience sake (and for educative purposes) I call Significs. For the first thing it does is to marry logic and mathematics. And their yet unnamed (indeed unborn) offspring ought to carry the office of 'sign' to its highest development and make the clear understanding of that office a study which is the natural condition of all others. We should then I believe discover the existence of an intimate link between the spontaneous – the untaught – thinking of a child and that of the mathematical genius. ... Thus a) would be the idea; b) the child-thinker; c) the fully adult thinker (child and adult in metaphorical as well as in literal sense) who comes round to the same point, bringing with him all the treasures of complexity and elaboration, and the fruits of extended experience. And he, as represented by Mr. Russell, makes Order paramount, puts it before quantity and number and then asks 'What is Order?' and finds that nothing has yet been written on this. Now that corresponds precisely with that infantile mode of perception which I call my thought. And yet until now I have never seen it set forth, nor that question asked (any more than the question 'What is meaning,' except in Pilate's fashion). ... (Welby to Galton, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 127)

Welby's correspondence on Russell's *Principles*, also includes the following excerpt from a letter to J. Cook Wilson (1849–1915):

... My interest in Mr. Russell's book is largely evoked by his protests against the conventionally accepted routine of thought, and by his endeavour to rout out and expose what rightly or wrongly he considers to be fallacies, confusions or inconsistencies commonly overlooked. That in doing this, he, like other mathematicians acknowledged to be eminent, also falls into even egregious confusions himself is certainly possible. It may however be almost a public service to fall victim to linguistic fallacies, if thus their exposure is promoted and the imminence of our danger on every side, as things are, more clearly realized! Though, apart from that, it would of course be an ominous symptom that such a thing should be possible to the representatives of the most exact form of human thought. But, as I understand it, Mr. Russell's whole book is intended to promote recognition of the fact that neglect of elementary metaphysical and logical analysis makes even eminent mathematicians the victims of linguistic fallacy. ... (Welby to J. Cook Wilson, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 140)

Welby's correspondence with Russell opens with a letter from Welby dated 1 February 1904, written after reading his monograph, *The Principles of Mathematics*, and con-

cludes with a letter from Russell dated 6 April 1910.²⁹ Contrary to expectations raised by the title, Welby believed this book by Russell superseded problems of a specialized order related to mathematics, and covered issues connected with her own project for signifiacs, to the point of seeming a real and proper contribution to the accomplishment of her project. (In a letter to Peirce dated 20 November 1904, Welby wrote: ‘What *is* Order? [asked by Russell] is to me a twin question to What *is* Meaning?’, in Hardwick 1977: 39).

Welby described her enthusiasm for Russell’s work on mathematics in another letter, this time to Vailati, on discovering that he too was a mathematician (until then she had only known him as a philosopher). Again she underlined the connection with signifiacs and the importance of translating across different sign systems and languages (what today is identified as intralingual translation), beyond the verbal, including from the language of mathematics to that of philosophy, for the development of logical inference:

Although I was aware of your eminence as a philosopher, I am ashamed to say that I did not know that you were also one of the greatest of Continental mathematicians. I have only discovered this through endeavouring to study, with enthusiastic interest, Mr. Bertrand Russell’s *Principles of Mathematics*.

This is the first time that I have been able to follow, even in the humblest manner any mathematical writing. I have never had any power either to form or to understand, intricate trains of symbolic reasoning or abstruse calculations. I could not even learn to count properly! Is it not then a remarkable thing, that this very difficult book should be to me a revelation of great promise for the future, and that I should find in it a valuable form of that very study which I would call Signifiacs?

For many years I have felt that our great need was the ‘translation’ of mathematical principles into philosophy. Thus, it seemed to me ought the synthesis of philosophy and science to be ultimately effected. But the two types of mind were apparently unable to understand each other. In my own primitive way, I have always seen some of the points which I now for the first time find in a logical form.

However I must not say more of this now. I am making several indexes of the work for my own use. One is general; another of all the arguments (or passages) relating to my own subject, another of all the indictments which the writer makes of current vagaries. These form a formidable list! It is doubly interesting, at a moment when our physical theories of matter, as seen about to undergo profound modification, that there should also be a call for the complete revision of our most common forms of thought. (Welby to Vailati, 14 November 1903, WCYA, now in Section 4.8, this volume)

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29. H. Walter Schmitz (1985b: clviii–clxiii) identifies four different phases in the development of the Welby-Russell correspondence: the first opens with a letter from Welby dated 1 February 1904 and concludes with a letter from the same of 12 November 1904. This phase is centred on the problem of expression, terminological precision, meaning and denotation. The second phase begins with a letter from Russell of 14 November 1904 and ends with a letter from Welby dated 1 June 1905. This phase coincides with the formation of an epistolary circle with the participation of pre-eminent scholars of the time. The third phase includes a small group of four letters, starting out with a letter from Welby dated 15 November 1905 and ending with a letter from Russell of 15 December that same year. This phase is focused on the problem of meaning from the perspective of what we know as ‘referential semantics,’ related to the problem of truth value. The fourth phase begins with a letter from Russell dated 24 June 1907 and concludes with a letter from the same dated, 6 April 1910, and testifies to Welby’s interest in number theory as well as in women’s issues.

A connection between Welby's research and Russell's had already been identified by Peirce in his review of 1903 for the *Nation*. In a letter to Russell dated 1 February 1904, Welby expressed her belief that her work and his were contributions to a common project for a better understanding of the question of meaning:

as I have tried to say in my articles in *Mind* and my book *What is Meaning?*, I see the subject of 'meaning' as one which sorely needs an analysis like yours and one which it has never yet received. Until this is seriously undertaken by those more competent than I am, your own work and that of the group of thinkers whom you quote, will never have the full effect which it ought to have, on the world of philosophy and on the world of education and rational action. For like Symbolic Logic, the usefulness in practice of the method which I venture to call Significs 'can only be judged by those who have experienced the marked increase of power derived from acquiring it' (p. 10) (Welby to Russell, 1 February 1904, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, this volume).

In her letters to Russell, Welby expresses her concern for the 'ethics of terminology,' to use an expression introduced by Peirce. She discussed the need for terminological precision and distinctions in order to improve the linguistic instruments at our disposal, which was part of her overall quest for progress and improvement in the quality of life. Linguistic issues were considered relevant to all spheres of human behaviour and discourse, from sectorial and specialized spheres such as philosophy, psychology, education, or mathematics, to the different spheres of discourse in everyday life and common-sense thought. Welby underlined the need for 'true economy and simplicity of expression,' to ultimately benefit valid reasoning and ultimate assumptions. Clear expression was necessary to improve the inferential capacity which again, to echo Peirce, may be described as the capacity 'to find out, from the consideration of what we already know, something else which we do not know' (*CP* 5.365). This was connected to another major focus in Welby's research, that is, her appeal to teach clear reasoning and expression from infancy (see below, Ch. 4). As she repeated throughout her various writings as much as in her correspondence, mastery over our expressive instruments, in particular the linguistic, was a necessary condition for critical awareness and healthy development generally.

Again in her letters to Russell, she continued emphasizing the importance of translation understood as a method of inquiry, what she called her 'translative method' (see below, Ch. 5), which she used and also theorized throughout her writings. A given sign system may be better understood and further developed in the light of another, that is, when it is translated and interpreted in terms of another system of signs, another language, or 'dialect.' Both the life of reflection as well as everyday life in their multiplicity, are enhanced in meaning potential and practical consequence through translative processes. Therefore, as hinted above in relation to her correspondence with Vailati, Welby's theory of translative practice from a signficant perspective is not limited to so-called 'interlingual translation.' Rather, it invests all types of signs and sign systems, what with Roman Jakobson has been identified as 'intersemiotic translation,' and all spheres of discourse within a given natural language, 'intra-lingual translation' (see also Petrilli 1999–2000, 2000a, 2001f, 2003f). From a methodological point of view, Welby's approach recalls the work of such thinkers as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), author of *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), and Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1921–1985), author of *Language as Work and Trade* (1968), to evoke just two figures named in the present

volume who systematically use the translative method to develop and exemplify their own philosophical-linguistic-semiotic theory (see, also, Chs. 4 and 5, below).

Most original is Welby's proposal to reflect upon the male vision of the existent from perspectives that may be considered as mostly feminine, that is, from the perspective of practical forms of thinking as they find expression in the arts of 'knitting, crochet, netting, knotting, tatting, rug-work, shuttle-weaving, spinning, cord-work, pulled thread-work, lace-work, embroidery, etc.' Welby contributed to founding the Royal School of Art Needlework in 1872, and also inaugurated the Decorative Needlework Society (see above, Section 1.1). She invested the skills required for the arts in question with new significance, maintaining that they provided new interpretants for the type of work involved in expressive and reasoning processes at large.

Russell responded to Welby's letter of 1 February 1904 with a letter dated 3 February 1904. He agreed to the importance of the problem of meaning and logical expression and introduced the problem of denotation, commenting that '[s]ince I wrote my book, I have come to think the questions connected with Meaning even more important than I then thought them: the logical nature of description seems to me now about the most fundamental and about the most difficult of all philosophical questions'. In her response of 5 February 1904, Welby commented on Russell's ambiguous use of terms like 'sense,' and drew attention to the need to distinguish between the signifying implications of expressions like 'sense' and 'meaning,' 'to mean' and 'to signify,' etc. She repeated that critical reflection on the language of mathematics was also necessary, finding confirmation in the writings of the English mathematician William K. Clifford (see above, Ch. 2).

Welby repeatedly exhorted Russell, as in her subsequent letter of 24 March 1904, to consider the problem of expression from a mathematical perspective, with a special focus on the relation between sign and sense, sign and signification, sign and meaning, sign and significance. One might ask "why Russell?" A reason was that Welby believed he revealed a special capacity for translation from the language of mathematics to other 'human dialects,' as described above. Also, nobody better than Russell could work on the problem of expression from the point of view of mathematics showing its bearing on life:

[...] yours is the first attempt I have seen at translating mathematical truth into the other human dialects and because, through my own approach to all subjects from the start-point of the study of significance itself, I am able so to speak to see through your words and to recognize vividly their bearing on life. I am therefore going to make a bold appeal to you to write yourself, from the mathematical point of view, on the question of Expression: on the relations of Sign and sense, of Sign and signification, of Sign and meaning, of Sign and significance; bringing out the distinctions which are so disastrously ignored, and giving us a new view of the unity within which they exist. (Welby to Russell, 24 March 1904, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, this volume)

It seems that this letter of 24 March 1904 never reached its destination, and consequently was re-elaborated and updated by Welby in a subsequent letter of 9 November 1904. In the second edition, most important is her observation that significs deals with 'questions of "meaning" in the value sense, per se' as distinct from questions of logic and philology: 'I should be very glad of an opportunity of submitting to you some ideas of mine on what is now called 'significs' – simply because that is the only word which seems to make the distinction between questions of logic and philology and questions

of ‘meaning’ in the value sense, per se’ (Welby to Russell, 9 November 1904, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, this volume).

We know that Welby was in the habit of discussing her research in her correspondence and conversation with people from different fields and walks of life, and at pressing rhythms – her energy resources seemed inexhaustible as she continued working on her ideas and tirelessly eliciting people for feedback. Enacting a logic which, echoing Mikhail Bakhtin, may be described as truly ‘dialogic,’ whereby different voices come together that are not necessarily in accord with each other, but even clash and disagree (see Bakhtin 1981; Ponzio 2003), Welby presented signifiacs as a method for creating interconnections and encouraging dialogue among voices that were discordant. In a letter dated 9 November she associated Russell’s research to Wilson, Peirce, and Harald Höffding (1843–1931), whilst in a letter to Mr. Hobhouse written on that same day (enclosed with the former in the York Archive files), Russell expressed his total disaccord with Höffding and his paper on ‘Ethics and Sociology’:

I do not think I should do any good by coming to Höffding’s paper: *Ethics and Sociology* are subjects in which I have merely an ‘intelligent interest’ with very little knowledge. Also I perceive from the abstract of the paper that I disagree wholly and absolutely with its point of view; and large meetings of that kind are not suitable for arguing on fundamentals, so I should find it very hard to say anything. People who expect to discover what *is* good by inquiring what cannibals have *thought* good always surprise me. I sometimes feel inclined to apply the historical method to the multiplication table. I should get a statistical inquiry among school-children, before their pristine wisdom had been biased by teachers. I should put down their answers as to what 6×9 amount to, I should work out the average of their answers to six places of decimals, and then decide that, at the present stage of human development, this average is the value of 6×9 . This process, it seems to me, would be as rational as the endeavour to base Ethics on Sociology. (Russell to Hobhouse, 9 November 1904, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, this volume)

After this initial phase in their correspondence dedicated to questions of expression, terminological precision and meaning, Welby and Russell oriented their attention more specifically towards the problem of denotation – the subject of Russell’s paper of 1905 ‘On Denoting’ – with developments concerning theory of knowledge and symbol. On H. Walter Schmitz’s account, a possible explanation for the divergences and critical standpoint with respect to Russell’s approach is that signifiacs, as conceived by Welby, takes its place in the tradition of the *cognitio symbolica*, in the company of Leibniz and Frege (see Schmitz 1985b: Section 4.6; and 1995). Associating the term ‘meaning’ with signifying intention, Welby maintained that the sentence ‘The king of France is bald’ is not meaningless, as Russell believed, but, if anything senseless. Even the single word is endowed with meaning, and in Welby’s view this did not necessarily imply that it had a referent that really exists according to the criterion of existence implied by the expression in question (on the question of the referent, cf. Morris 1938; Petrilli 2000c, 2004h). Ferdinand C. Schiller also entered the debate in support of Welby’s position, and the issue was taken up again in the *Meaning of ‘Meaning’* Symposium of 1920 (see Ch. 1, above).

As from her subsequent letter dated 14 November 1904, which inaugurated what has been described as the second phase in their correspondence, Welby put Russell into direct contact with other scholars (we know that it was her habit to establish links among

her correspondents to favour the circulation of ideas), creating a sort of *epistolary circle* through her mediation. Among the numerous personalities involved in this network figure the already mentioned Stout (see Welby's letter to Russell of June 1 1905) and Vailati, whose writings she had translated into English. She advised Russell to read Vailati's paper on deduction and induction (see letter of 5 March 1905). Apart from any theoretical considerations, these exchanges present a valuable source of information regarding Russell's opinion on the work of important contemporary thinkers, with details concerning their life, habits, and personality.

A small group of letters, four in all, written between 14 November 1905 and 15 December 1905 (the third phase in Welby's correspondence with Russell) focuses on the problem of meaning from the perspective of 'referential semantics,' and relation to the problem of truth value. Welby made a distinction between the expressions 'acquaintance,' 'knowledge about,' 'awareness,' which Russell refused maintaining that 'knowledge about' something was equivalent to 'acquaintance' with something (Russell to Welby, 25 November 1905, WCYA, now in Section 3.8, this volume). All the same, Welby was undeterred in her conviction that 'subtle' distinctions made a difference, and consequently were to be stated. She was concerned with meaning in use in all its nuances, and paid attention to so-called 'common language' or 'common speech'. In Welby's terminology, such expressions were intended to keep account of the historical-social specificity of meaning, therefore of the stratification of expressive and interpretive practices employed by human beings from the origins. Nor did Welby limit her reference to the so-called 'ordinary' or 'everyday' language of a given historical-natural language like English. The mistake of exchanging the part for the whole (the *pars pro toto* fallacy), in this case of exchanging a given natural language for the universal or general capacity for language characteristic of the human species is a limit that was to characterize English analytical philosophy (duly criticized by Rossi-Landi as early as in his monograph of 1961).

The fourth phase in the Welby-Russell correspondence begins with Russell's letter of 11 November 1904 and ends with his last of 6 April 1910. These letters testify to Welby's interest in number theory. She approached this question from both a historical-cultural perspective, as she explored the problem of the origin of arithmetic, and the psychological, associating number theory to her studies on cognitive processes. Her interest for the 'woman question' also emerges in relation to Russell's wife, Dora, who was committed to political and social issues.

Welby drew attention to the importance of contributions from logic, the mathematical sciences and the physical sciences for a better understanding of problems at the centre of debate in philosophy of language and communication sciences generally. Her own approach to the study of language and meaning as represented by signification is no doubt connected with the linguistic turn in philosophy in the twentieth century (see Ch. 8, this volume). But distinct from mainstream trends such as logical empiricism or analytical philosophy, Welby's own orientation in the logical analysis of language was dominated by a broadly cultural, humanistic and ethical commitment, in the final analysis by her concern for the health of life in all its expressions. This special bend to Welby's approach to problems of language and meaning clearly emerges from her letter below, among others, to Julia Wedgwood:

The pre-vision which unifies our torn-apart pitiful half-world has been very strong in me lately. And the added pressure of the approaching answers has come, as I say, from the very quarters which are usually found sterile – physical science and mathematics: mathematics at last being translated through philosophy into life . . . claiming order as its central note; putting number and quantity into secondary places. . . . It is like a dream. . . . Yet the present immense step forward in physics is of course little compared with what is coming.

At last I see something of what Boole himself must have foreseen: but there seems no sign that even he anticipated so complete a transformation of mathematics as that now coming into view. (Welby to Julia Wedgwood, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 128–129)

In a letter to Reverend Edmund Maclure (Organising Secretary from the S.P.C.K., see Cust 1931: 129, note 1) from the same period, placed immediately after the preceding to evidence thematic connection, Welby returns to the question of the importance of taking logic and mathematics into account for a theory of meaning, and to the need of translating the language of mathematics into that of philosophy for the sake of clear and correct thinking:

. . . It is, broadly speaking, the views of the rising school of pure mathematics, with the principles of which I find that I am in sympathy. These were of course foreshadowed by De Morgan and Boole as well as by continental thinkers. For it is mainly the questions in which Mr. Russell is at one with thinkers like Georg Cantor, Weirstrass, Frege, Peano, Vailati, etc., etc., that I find so inspiring. The American school also, led on the logical side by C. S. Peirce, is moving in the same direction – a direction which involves the exposure of our absurdly vague, confused and actually false ideas about ‘meaning,’ and will I hope lead to a general translation, similar to that attempted by Mr. Russell and others, of the dialect of mathematics into that of philosophy. I was indeed sorry to hear you virtually confessing to petrification in claiming to be embedded to an ancient geological formation! But the question always is not merely what did a man (no matter who) once say, but what would he say now! And no systematic thinker can close the questions of thought. Perhaps the nearest approach in one sense to completeness of outlook was Leibnitz. And we are only now beginning to find him out and to discover that perhaps his best work has lain unknown and unused.

Well, when, instead of merely clinging to language as a log carried helplessly hither and thither among swirling currents, we fashion it as a boat and provide it with oars, even a sail, and above all with a rudder and a steersman, things beyond our present imaginings will surely be ours. And those who live in the Logos, the ‘Word,’ must be the last to deny this (Welby to Edmund Maclure, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 129)

Welby’s correspondence with Russell (previously only available in the Welby Collection at the York Archives) is now appended to the present chapter.

The texts

Correspondence from the archives

3.8. A selection from her unpublished correspondence in alphabetical order (1897–1911)

*Between Victoria Welby and Michel Bréal (1897–1908)**

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

20 July 1897

Will you excuse my venturing to address you without introduction? I feel sure that you will when I explain that my object is to thank you warmly for your article on ‘La Sémantique’ in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, & for calling it a new science & pointing out its special importance & wide bearing. The reasons of my gratitude is that for some years I have been writing to urge the very same things which you so ably & admirably insist upon, though, alas, without the smallest pretensions to scholarship. My consolation is that you make ‘le peuple’ the originator & controller of true linguistic advance. For that very reason I have ventured to urge that every child should be made familiar with the elements of the ‘Science of Meaning’ as the key to all his other studies: & I have proved in the case of my own grandson at 8 years old, that this study may be made strongly attractive as well as operative.

May I therefore ask for permission to send you my Article in *Mind* of Jan. & April 1896, & my little book just published called *Grains of Sense*? Any criticism or suggestion which you would be good enough to make would, I need hardly say, have the greatest possible value in my eyes. My great object is to draw the attention of students everywhere to this neglected by most valuable subject, & to the greatness of the hopes which it inspires [...] With renewed excuses for thus troubling you [...] If you are good enough to reply my address is ‘Hon. Lady Welby.’

Michel Bréal to Victoria Welby

28 juillet 1897

[...] Je vous demande pardon de n’avoir pas encore répondu à votre aimable lettre du 20, de ce mois. Mais je suis en voyage, et c’est seulement depuis deux jours que je suis établi dans ce petit port du Bretagne.

Je suis très heureux d’apprendre que vous vous êtes intéressée à ma Sémantique, et encore plus content de savoir que vous êtes arrivée d’une façon indépendante à des vues à peu près pareilles aux miennes. Cela nous permet de penser, à l’un et à l’autre, que nous avons probablement raison. J’ai toujours été étonné de voir combien on néglige ce côté du langage, qui est certainement le plus intéressant et le plus important. C’est aussi celui qui importe au grand nombre: on ne fait pas de la linguistique pour les seul linguistes.

Je me réjouis de prendre connaissance de vos ‘grains de bons sens’ et de votre article dans le *Mind*. Je les trouverai à Paris [...]

En attendant, chère Madame, veuillez recevoir avec mes remerciements, l’expression de mes sentiments les plus distingués.

* [Letters exchanged between Welby and Michel Bréal cover the years 1897 to 1908, WCYA, Box 2. All have been included in the present selection and are transcribed integrally, save for a final postcard from Bréal to Welby in which he thanks her for the proofs of her Encyclopaedic entry ‘Significs’].

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

5 August 1897

Many thanks for your letter and its kind words. Our little correspondence is an example of one reform I hope for – that each should write in his own language. I can understand and enjoy French idiom but cannot trust myself to write it. In accordance with your permission I have the pleasure to forward the little book and pamphlet. May I beg that if you see cause for censure, you will not be afraid of hurting me by the plainest openness?

Michel Bréal to Victoria Welby

16 octobre 1897

[...] Je suis enfin en possession de votre excellent petit livre *Grains of Sense*, ainsi que la brochure qui contient vos deux articles de la revue *Mind*. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que je les ai lus avec le plus vif intérêt, et que j'ai eu le plaisir de constater que sur le plupart des points nous sommes d'accord.

Il est bien vrai que le langage est un instrument très imparfait. Comment en serait-il autrement? C'est l'œuvre des hommes, de tous les hommes. Les ignorants y travaillent comme les savants, les fous comme les sages. Et ce que les sages se donnent beaucoup de peine pour distinguer, comme vous le faites pour les mots *meaning* et *sense*, les ignorants et les fous sont tout prêts à le mêler et à le confondre de nouveau.

Mais c'est pas une raison pour renoncer; et comme vous en donnez l'exemple, il ne faut pas cesser de faire effort pour donner au langage la précision nécessaire. Une distinction bien faite équivaut à la création de deux mots nouveaux. Nous pouvons prendre exemple sur les géomètres, qui se gardent bien d'employer l'un pour l'autre *circle* et *circonférence*, ou sur les chimistes qui distinguent l'*atome* et la *molécule*.

Je suis heureux de penser que la Sémantique compte un partisan comme vous, Milady, et qu'elle s'enrichisse encore de travaux comme ceux que vous m'avez procuré le plaisir de lire. Veuillez agréer, chère Madame, avec mes remerciements [...]

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

18 October 1897

Allow me to return my warm and grateful thanks for your kind and encouraging words. I must not take up more of our time now, but feel sure that if occasion arises I may be permitted to ask for your most valuable counsel on the best way of stimulating the public interest in this question; and meanwhile venture to enclose a little Parable from the *Fortnightly Review* of September [see Welby 1897b], written before I knew of your view.

I will only add how much I wish that your *Essay* could be translated into English. Surely Macmillan or Swan Sonnenschein would take it? [...]

Michel Bréal to Victoria Welby

10 novembre 1897

[...] Je me reproche de n'avoir pas encore répondu à votre dernière lettre, et de vous n'avoir pas remerciée pour le joli et spirituel article qui l'accompagnait. Des articles de ce genre ne peuvent que contribuer à mettre la Sémantique à la mode chez vous les hommes habitués à penser pour eux-mêmes.

Je serai toujours heureux de mettre mon petit savoir à votre disposition si vous me faites l'honneur de le consulter.

Vous pensez qu'une édition Anglaise de la Sémantique aurait quelque succès. J'en ai parlé hier avec mon éditeur, qui est tout disposé à recevoir toutes proposition à ce sujet, surtout si elles viennent d'une maison aussi considérée que la maison Macmillan.

Veillez agréer, chère Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments très respectueux.

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

13 November 1897

Many thanks for your kind words about the little parable. I have sent a copy of your *Essay* to Mr. Andrew Lang, as I found he had not heard of it. I fear that my own poor pen can do very little; but his, as you know, is a power among us, so I hope he will see the value of 'la Sémantique.' As to the translation, I am told that Mr. Charles Whibley is interesting himself in the matter, so he no doubt will be able to get it done, and accepted by an English publisher [...] I wish I could write in French! But I have too much respect for your delicate and sensitive language to write it badly.

Michel Bréal to Victoria Welby

29 juin 1899

[...] Le renouvellement de l'année, en me fournissant l'occasion de vous présenter mes vœux, me permet aussi de vous demander des nouvelles de la traduction que vous avez bien voulu entreprendre.

J'avais été prévenu qu'elle allait paraître bientôt: mais depuis quelque temps je n'en ai plus entendu parler.

Peut-être l'éditeur a-t-il négligé de me faire parvenir un exemplaire? En ce cas, vous auriez pu mal interpréter mon silence si vous pensez que je vous ai lue.

La *Revue de Paris* du 15 novembre contient un article de moi sur 'Les Commencements du Verbe' qui forme une suite naturelle à la Sémantique. Peut-être vous intéressera-t-il?

Je me suis risqué, il y a quelque temps, à promettre un exemplaire de votre traduction à une dame qui s'était offerte pour faire le même travail. Voici son nom:

Mme. Clementine Black,
Abercorn Place, 15,
Londres, N. W.

Je la recommande pour un exemplaire à votre éditeur. Elle paraît partager votre goût pour le philologisme.

Aimant mieux paraître indiscret qu'indifférent, et toujours désireux de lire votre travail, je vous prie d'agréer l'hommage de mes sentiments bien respectueux.

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

1 January 1900

You may be sure that if the translation of your *Essai de Sémantique* had already been published a copy would have been forwarded to you. But it has been done by my daughter Mrs. Cust for Mr. Heinemann, with the assistance of Mr. Charles Whibley. I felt sure that you would have heard from this gentleman of the progress of the work. But I think it probable that the war may have caused some delay. The loss of my husband has alas made mental work of any kind impossible to me for the last year. But I hope to soon resume some efforts.

A friend showed me the other day two articles in the *Revue Philosophique* by M. R. de la Grasserie in which he contended that 'la sémantique' was in no way concerned with the ideas

conveyed by the words. But as the ideas constitute the meaning and bring about its changes, what can he mean?

May I venture to ask whether you have seen the ‘Welby Prize Essay’ in *Mind* by Professor Ferdinand Tönnies of Hamburg? When the third part appears (of course translated) I shall have much pleasure in forwarding a copy of the essay. I will also see that a copy is forwarded to Miss Black, as well as one of your essay. [...] I shall read the article in the *Revue de Paris* of which you speak with great interest.

Michel Bréal to Victoria Welby

9 novembre 1900

[...] J’ai reçu hier le brave volume qui contient la Sémantique traduite en anglais. C’est un grand plaisir pour moi de feuilleter et de lire cette traduction, qui me paraît aussi fidèle qu’élégant. Je vous prie de bien remercier Madame votre fille. La signature Nina Cust me rend ce volume encore plus précieux.

Il n’est pas facile de mener à bien un travail aussi minutieux : mai jusqu’à présent je n’ai pu découvrir la moindre defectuosité. J’ai aussi lu la préface de M. le Prof. Postgate, qui contient beaucoup de faits intéressants et curieux. J’en ai noté plusieurs pour en faire part, à l’occasion, à mes auditeurs. J’en dis autant pour la Conférence qui forme l’*Appendix*.

Rien ne manque donc à ce livre pour le rendre plus digne d’être présenté au public anglais. Il ne reste plus qu’à lui souhaiter bon succès.

Je vous prie aussi de remercier M. Whibley pour l’intérêt qu’il a constamment pris à cette publication.

Veillez agréer chère Madame et partager avec Mrs. Cust mes meilleurs compliments.

P.S. Je suis encore sous le coup de l’émotion que me cause la mort de M. Max Müller. Je me permets de vous envoyer le No du *Debats* où je parle de ce grand savant.

J’espère que l’éditeur aura rempli vos intentions en ce qui concerne l’exemplaire destiné à Madame Clementine Black.

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

10 November 1900

[...] On my daughter’s behalf and on my own, may I thank you warmly for the kind words of your letter. Your approval is the best reward for a labour which she has felt to be an honour. I have conveyed also, through her, your kind appreciation of Mr. Whibley’s help as well as your estimation of the value of Professor Postgate’s ‘Preface’ and ‘Appendix.’ My daughter will see that Miss Black has a copy as desired. Accept my warm thanks also for the part in the *Debats* of my old and much lamented friend Max Müller, I am also keenly feeling the loss of one to whom I owe much.

I had the honour many years ago of suggesting to him just as it was ready for publication the *Envoi* which he had added to the *Sacred Books of the East*. That was the beginning of a long friendship and correspondence. His letters have special charm.

May I venture to tell you that my own humble efforts to suggest a special method of mental training are obtaining me definite recognition. It is now decided that this is to be called SIGNIFICS as the study of Sign, especially of course articulate sign, and its various modes and degrees of value which we call sense, meaning, signification, import, purport, Significance (and others). I venture to enclose a proposed definition for a Psychological Dictionary [Welby 1902b] as it is at last an attempt to describe Significs. You will see that it must include your own great study.

It is hoped that a small International Conference may be held at Oxford in October next year to discuss this subject in its educational aspects: may I hope that if this takes place you might be able to join it? The subject is beginning to arouse interest in Germany also I find [...]

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

25 February 1903

I owe so much to your kind sympathy in 1897 when I ventured to submit some of my work to you, that I feel sure you will allow me to ask your acceptance of the book called *What is Meaning?* which Messrs. Macmillan are now bringing out; and have therefore desired them to forward a copy. If you do me the honour to read it you will see that I have ventured to suggest that a study of the conception which in English we vaguely call sometimes Meaning, sometimes Sense, sometimes Signification and sometimes (when we would strike a deeper note), Significance, may be found to bear good fruit especially in education.

You will understand that the results of my long and difficult inquiry are for obvious reasons not easy to express, especially since I am carrying the question of 'Meaning' beyond that of its changes and growth (which belongs to philology as a specialism) into the analysis of its nature in its relations. I have here two encouraging facts to report: 1) that Dr. Stout in his recent *Manual of Psychology* has for the first time in any such textbook devoted a section to the 'Acquirement of Meaning'; and 2) that I have been allowed to introduce two new words 'Significs' and 'Sensal' in the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* edited by Professor J. M. Baldwin.

I have taken care to submit my main points to experts in various subjects at Oxford and Cambridge, and the welcome extended in both cases to the idea of 'Significs' has encouraged me to hope that in spite of the greatest drawbacks and defect in its presentation, this idea may be found suggestive of future advance in expression.

*Michel Bréal to Welby*³⁰

4 mars 1903

[...] Comme vous m'aviez annoncé l'envoi de votre ouvrage *What is Meaning?* et comme je ne voyais rien venir, je craignais déjà quelque erreur de la poste. Enfin, ce soir, j'ai été mis en possession de ce précieux volume, que je me promets de lire et de méditer comme il le mérite. Vous nous transportez dans un milieu intellectuel bien supérieur à celui de la littérature de tous les jours. Je crains que peu de lecteurs ne soient en état de vous suivre. L'éducation philosophique et la force d'analyse que ce livre suppose chez ses lecteurs est donnée à un petit nombre. J'espère cependant que l'élite du public européen saura lui faire l'accueil qui lui est dû. Je ne doute pas qu'il ne vous place au rang des premiers penseurs de notre temps.

Veillez agréer, chère Madame, avec mes meilleurs remerciements, l'assurance de ma haute considération et de mes sentiments bien dévoués.

Victoria Welby to Michel Bréal

18 October 1905

As I have been away from Harrow, I have been unable until now to thank you for your kind thought in sending me your interesting essay on Homer. I am continually urging the necessity of arousing and accentuating in the young the sense of the importance of linguistic habit in revealing and reacting upon habitual ideas.

30. [An excerpt from this letter is included in Cust 1931: 66].

How often, in how many cases we may use your words ‘La langue elle-même décèle cette origine’! There are innumerable cases, no doubt, like that of ‘niké.’

The passion of glory has a wider field than that of battle – unless indeed we also widen this last term until it includes the strife with and conquest of our selves.

An article has lately been written in an English review suggesting that efforts should be made to infuse into the civil service of our country some of the enthusiastic recognition of courage, of unselfish devotion, of heroism, which military service now enjoys. And indeed there is, I am sure you will agree, sore need that social service should become a career followed with the same fervour and the same public acclamation as military service. I hope it may not be vain to anticipate the rise of such a spirit! [...] I have not ventured to trouble you with any recent work as I have published nothing; but I would gladly if you wished tell you what I have been working at.

29 March 1908

A long illness and two severe operations have delayed my writing to let you know that I was asked to contribute an article on *Significs* to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and to begin it by defining the distinction between that and *Semantics*. I have now sent the article in, and it is accepted (although double the length to which I was limited) as exactly what was required. When I receive the proofs I propose to ask the editor whether I may send one to you. I hope that this publication may further the English interest in your subject as well as in mine. The authorities of the *New English Dictionary* will also give much space to the definition of *Significs* and its dependent terms. No doubt they will do the same for *Semantics*.

During my illness I noticed that you had accepted some high office, but unfortunately the reference has been lost and so I must apologise for not properly addressing this letter which I hope will nevertheless reach you safely.

2 May 1908

At last I have received my proof of the article on ‘Significs’ corrected by the editor; and so I send it on to you as you kindly permit me to do. I need hardly say how much I should value any remarks from you. I am afraid I should not be allowed to add to the length of the Article, which already greatly exceeds the limits fixed [...]

Michel Bréal to Victoria Welby

5 Mai 1908

[...] Je viens de lire avec autant de plaisir que de profit votre savant article ‘Significs’ que vous destinez à la nouvelle édition de l’Encyclopédie Britannique. J’ai été heureux de vous voir insister sur l’avantage qu’il aura à faire pénétrer ces notions dans l’enseignement des Collèges et des Écoles. Nul doute que les études philosophiques y gagneront en solidité!

Je ne puis donc que féliciter et souhaiter bon succès à vos idées. [...]

*Between Victoria Welby and André Lalande (1903–1911)***Victoria Welby to André Lalande*

18 May 1903

[...] As you have been good enough to send me a Proof of your Philosophical Dictionary I write at the suggestion of Dr. Stout to say that I hope you will do me the honour of accepting the copy of my book (*What is Meaning?*) which I have desired Messrs. Macmillan to send.

I regret that being no linguist (though I can always understand what is written in French) I do not feel capable of suggesting the French equivalents of my triad of ‘sense, meaning, and significance,’ and therefore of my now recognised term Significs. But Professor Geddes who thoroughly enters into my ideas would of course do this, or I could ask my friend Sir F. Pollock who as doubtless you know is a first rate French scholar, to do so.

I have frankly accepted the necessity of treating the question of ‘sense’ from the point of view only of English usage, since in any case it seems best to begin thus, and I do not pretend to be able to do more than merely indicate what I believe to be a study which in the future will be seen to concern all humanity.

André Lalande to Victoria Welby

20 mai 1903

... L’amabilité avec laquelle vous avez bien voulu répondre à l’envoi de mes épreuves me fai présumer que vous n’aviez pas reçu celles que je vous avais adressées de même l’an dernier par l’intermédiaire du *Mind*. Elles contenaient le plan général du travail, et la lettre A. Elles ont maintenant paru en deux fascicules de la Société de philosophie, avec les observations d’un certain nombre de philosophes étrangers et français, qui on bien voulu se faire collaborateurs. Je me permets de vous les envoyer avec un article qui j’ai publié il y a quelques années sur le même sujet, et avec les épreuves du 4e fascicule, finissant la lettre C.

Je viens de recevoir *What is Meaning?* que je vais lire avec un grand intérêt, car je n’ai pas oublié votre article du *Mind* sur la question. Si mon enseignement me laissait un peu plus de loisir, un des sujets d’études qui m’attireraient le plus serait certainement la sémantique philosophique, ou, comme vous dites (dans un sens un peu plus large, je crois), *significs*.

Si M. le professeur Geddes ou Sir F. Pollock voulaient bien s’intéresser à notre travail, et nous envoyer une petite communication à ce sujet, comme vous voulez bien me le faire espérer, nous leur en serions très reconnaissants. Je serais heureux de leur communiquer les épreuves si j’avais leurs adresses. [...]

Victoria Welby to André Lalande

25 May 1903

[...] It is I who ought to have apologised for writing to you in English. But in truth I wish it were more generally recognised that in the majority of cases it is best for each correspondent to write in his own language. We almost all understand better than we can write or speak a foreign language.

Many thanks for your enclosures. I am sorry to say that I never received any communication from you before this month. I will make inquiries about it. I will also write to the friends I

* [The exchanges between Welby and André Lalande have all been included in the present selection and are transcribed integrally. They are dated 1903 with the exception of the last letter dated 7 February 1911. The letter texts by Welby are all typewritten copies of the drafts or final versions sent to Lalande, WCYA, Box 9].

mentioned in my last letter and let you know the result. I have made several notes for my own reference in your valuable Vocabulary but none that could be worth insertion. I shall be glad to make it known to friends. I am greatly interested in the Article of which you have kindly sent me a copy. I was also interested in the debate; I am told that M. Couturat has also written on the subject and would sympathise in the object of my little book. I hope that this may be so.

Many thanks for your communications and kind words about my work and all wishes for the prosperity of your valuable work.

Victoria Welby to André Lalande

14 July 1903

I now have the pleasure to enclose a translation in French of the definition of Significs supplied to the Philosophical Dictionary. I leave it to your decision whether the French equivalent of Significs should be substituted for 'Cette theorie.' Would not the term 'Signifique' be permitted? I owe this translation to the kindness of Prof. Geddes who gave it to a Frenchman, of high intelligence and culture, who assists in part of his work.

André Lalande to Victoria Welby

28 Juillet 1903

[...] Je vous remercie vivement de l'article 'Significs' et de la traduction que vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer. Je les ai classées avec les documents du Vocabulaire de la Société de Philosophie, et le mot y figurera sous une forme ou sous une autre. Je doute cependant que le mot puisse être employé en français sous la forme *signifique*, parce que, n'ayant pas, comme en anglais, la finale *ics* pour distinguer les noms de sciences des adjectifs, ce mot ressemblerait trop aux termes en *fique*: *magni-fique*, *frigori-fique*, *substanti-fique*, où cette terminaison a un sens très déterminé = qui sert à produire. *Signifique*, en français, serait donc un adjectif signifiant: – 'qui donne du sens, qui produit un sens (ou un signe).'

Mais nous pourrions en tout cas user de l'expression: *Théorie des significations*.

Je m'excuse, Madame, de vous répondre un peu tardivement; mais j'ai dû faire un petit voyage qui m'a retenu plusieurs jours hors de chez moi.

Veillez agréer, Madame, mes remerciements et mes hommages respectueux.

Victoria Welby to André Lalande

13 August 1903

[...] Many thanks for your letter. May I explain that my hope that 'Signifique' would be allowed in French was based on the analogy of cases like *Statistics* = *Statistique*: *Economics* = *Economique*: *Dynamics* = *Dynamique*: [erasure in the text]. Although you do not use our convenient distinction, you appear, in these and like cases, to use the termination 'ique' as equivalent to our 'ics.' It cannot be denied that the new study requires a new word and 'Significs' means the study of the Significal Method and not only a 'theory of significations (or meaning).' [...]

20 August 1903

In giving instances of French usage which I supposed to justify the term 'Signifique' I forgot to add the two philological cases of 'ics = ique': *Sémantique* (M. Michel Bréal, etc.) = *Semantics*; *Phonétique* = *Phonetics*. Also I forgot to mention that the word 'Sensal' has been also added to the American-English Philosophical Dictionary. It forms a convenient contrast to 'verbal,' which ought to be confined to questions merely of form or sound of words and not of their sense or meaning.

I had the other day a long conversation with Prof. G. Vailati and Dr. M. Calderoni who are enthusiastic as to the value of Significs. Prof. Vailati had preferred Semiotics, but is now entirely in favour of Significs, which seems to afford no difficulty in Italian. The matter however rests of course in your hands. [...]

André Lalande to Victoria Welby

28 août [1903]³¹

Madame,

Je suis tout à fait d'accord avec vous sur la correspondance de la terminaison *ique* en français avec la terminaison *ics* de l'anglais. Mon objection vient de la présence d'un *f* à la fin du radical. Je ne connais pas en français de nom de science qui se termine en *fique* parce que cette terminaison, équivalente au latin *ficus* (de *facĕre*), présente la signification très déterminée: *qui produit, qui fait être*. C'est là ma seule objection contre la forme 'signifique'; objection que peut-être l'usage pourrait surmonter; et si, au moment où nous arriverons à la lettre *S*, le mot est assez naturalisé pour qu'il ait quelque chance de succès, je me ferai un plaisir de l'inscrire sans modifications.

De toutes façons nous le proposerons comme radical international, le suffixe équivalent étant *ig* ou *ig* ce qui ne peut plus créer aucune confusion. On écrira dans ce cas *signifik*. [...]

Victoria Welby to André Lalande

7 February 1911

I have been prevented by ill-health and pressure of work from writing to you for kindly sending me your very interesting *Bulletin*. I take this opportunity of telling you that I now have an article on 'Significs' in the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and a section on 'Significs' in the new Oxford Dictionary as well as one in Prof. Baldwin's *Philosophical Dictionary*. Surely therefore you will be able to insert the definition of the term in your valuable Dictionary? Prof. Bergson and other French correspondents formally recognise the name, and only M. Bergson's overwhelming engagements prevented his writing an Essay on Significs (which he warmly recognises) for a collection of Essays on the subject which Dr. Stout intends to publish.

I am myself on the point of publishing the first of a series of books giving the result of my exclusive researches and work on the subject. I have been reading our correspondence in 1903 and feel confident that you will find the true solution of the difficulty which I quite understand, but hope will be overcome ...

*Between Victoria Welby and Bertrand Russell (1904–1910)**

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

1 February 1904

Certain friends – notably Sir F. Pollock and Dr. Shadworth Hodgson – told me some time ago that it would be well for me to communicate with you as to the somewhat revolutionary ideas which I was trying in clumsy fashion to suggest. But I had always been assured that before all else pure Mathematics was mainly a question, not of Order or of Logic, but of Quantity and Number, and thus was deterred from studying even it's a.b.c. For this reason I assumed that to write would only

31. [The year is not included in the original but is easily deduced from the context of discourse].

* [This correspondence is available on microfilm, other exchanges between Russell and Welby are available in typescript, WCYA, Box 13].

waste your time and lead to nothing, and therefore refrained. For the same reason I supposed it would be useless to study your book *Principles of Mathematics*.

At last, however, the *Spectator* review caused me to send at once for the book. To my amazement, I found it nothing less than absorbing. For you expound with logical elaboration and mathematical precision (besides of course much that I cannot follow) things that I have all my life in primitive immediacy seen clearly and insistently, and have tried in infantile form to say. In fact, when your work has been generally assimilated, the conception which I try in my blundering way to introduce will be much easier to express and to work out. And this must of course apply to others whose 'primitive ideas' are on the line of a true advance, but who are unable to make the 'philosopher' understand them.

I have made general and special abstracts of those contents of your work which concern the study of 'meaning,' my own subject. I enclose a rough note of a few of the points which have for me so overwhelming an interest. I am keenly conscious of the defects of my enclosure. But the study of your book (from the standpoint of my own work) and the reading of your article in the *Independent Review* make me feel that whatever the failure of the Notes, you will appreciate their thesis and their motive. If you do me the honour to look at them you will see why I have been so greatly stirred by your work, – more even than by that of W.K. Clifford and Karl Pearson, though these thinkers also had a profound influence on my own life's work. Nowhere else but in your book have I yet found any definite step taken towards the fulfilment of what seemed a futile hope, – that through the general identification of Mathematics and Logic and both with the principle of Order, the translation of pure Mathematics into the language of Philosophy would become possible, to the great gain of mankind.

I am not however troubling you with this letter in order to express the agreement of an ignoramus with views which I have never before seen set forth as well as with some already recognised. The fact of my having instinctively held them all my life, although unable to vindicate them in the form of exact reasoning of which you are a master, has caused me to see other matters in a light widely different from those conventionally accepted.

First of all, as I have tried to say in my articles in *Mind* and my book *What is Meaning?*, I see the subject of 'meaning' as one which sorely needs an analysis like yours and one which it has never yet received. Until this is seriously undertaken by those more competent than I am, your own work and that of the group of thinkers whom you quote, will never have the full effect which it ought to have, on the world of philosophy and on the world of education and rational action. For like Symbolic Logic, the usefulness in practice of the method which I venture to call Significs 'can only be judged by those who have experienced the marked increase of power derived from acquiring it' (p. 10).

I cannot of course attempt to give in a few words what I see as the important distinction between Sense, Meaning and Significance. Even my book is but the merest suggestion of what I hope will be a fruitful study of the future, especially with reference to education. But I might point out that much mischief in serious writing has resulted in English from the loose use of the term 'meaning' (which is really intent or intention, conscious purpose) in the sense of signification. Now meaning in its true sense (our intention, e.g. in using symbols) involves some action in order to convey idea, desire, sense, and so on. Thus the notion of Meaning seems almost part of that Order, while of course sense, signification, significance are all dependent on the assumption of order. This however is difficult for me to put clearly, and I should much value your comment on the suggestion. For here I am encouraged when I find you saying (p. 67) that so many distinctions, hitherto neglected, are required if we are to be really clear about ultimate assumptions, that 'some straining of language seems unavoidable.' I would rather say, some cultivation, criticism and enrichment of language. Then we might hope at last for a true economy and simplicity of expression. Then perhaps we might hope to know 'what exactly we are saying' and gain valuable answers to questions like, What is Order? Thus for instance we should no longer confound as we now so often do, the difference

between the difference of sense and the difference of kind, or fall into the many confusions which you point out; for instance on the subject of motion and the variable (p. 406).

One point I have never seen noticed. What the male thinker – unless he has been bred a sailor – usually lacks, is the thinking in practical form involved in knitting, crochet, netting, knotting, tating, rug-work, shuttle-weaving, spinning, cord-work, pulled thread-work, lace-work, embroidery, etc. Yet I venture to think that we have here a link of great value for educational and illustrative purposes, between Mathematics (as you treat that subject) and ordinary common-sense thought. Many a problem, otherwise hopelessly abstruse to the ordinary feminine and many masculine minds could be made plain in forms of those often elaborately complex combinations, effected by the simplest of tools. All this of course is also primarily a question of order, not of quantity or number, though these are both involved. ‘Stitches’ are really more or less complex mental constructions translatable into mathematical and logical, and re-translatable into philosophical and practical, forms.

Since writing the above, Mrs. Cobb has told me that you will be here on February 10th, and that I might I have a chance for a few minutes³² conversation. I need hardly say how much I should value this.

Feeling sure you will excuse my writing without waiting for an introduction. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

3 February 1904

Please accept my best thanks for your kind letter, and for the notes on my book which you enclose. Since I wrote my book, I have come to think the questions connected with Meaning even more important than I then thought them: the logical nature of description seems to me now about the most fundamental and about the most difficult of all philosophical questions.

With regard to the ambiguities of usage which you note in my book, the word *sense* in Part IV has the special significance proper to mathematics, which has nothing whatever to do with our problem: in this significance, it means much the same as *direction* – up and down, right and left, etc., are opposite *senses*. This is such a totally different usage from the other that it seemed to me no confusion could result from the double employment of the word. – In the chapter-headings, ‘the meaning of order,’ etc., and also when I say ‘Philosophy of Mathematics: what does it mean?’, the question is as to analysis of a complex idea employed by people who do not know how to analyze it – it is a question of *definition* in the philosophical sense, or of pointing out an indefinable when the form in question happens to be indefinable. In mathematics, the use of symbols makes it a common practice to draw deductions without knowing the definition of our symbols. People agree that $2 + 2 = 4$; here $2 \& 4 \& + \& =$ are all definable, yet very few know the definitions. It is in this sense that I ask what is the *meaning* of $2 + 2 = 4$?

On p. 47, *sense* is used linguistically, as that which should be expounded in a dictionary, or that which should be as far as possible unaltered in translating into another language. This is the sense of a *word*, or the meaning of a word in the sense which I dismiss as irrelevant to logic, on the ground that logic is not concerned with words but with what they stand for. As for *meaning* on p. 4, it begins by being whatever Mr. Bradley intends to signify by *meaning*. This is what I contend to be a confused notion: my position is that (1) all words have a sense, but this is logically irrelevant, tho’ it has influenced Bradley, (2) *some concepts* denote, as ‘the present Prime Minister of England’ denotes the actual man Mr. Arthur Balfour. The concept which denotes is not mental: it is the *object* of an idea, not the idea itself. Thus denoting in this sense has nothing psychological about it.

32. I ought perhaps to include Mr. McTaggart and Mr. W. G. Johnson among those who suggested my communicating with you.

We have to distinguish (1) the relation of a word to the thought which it *expresses*: this is the sense of a word as given in dictionaries and preserved in translation; (2) the relation of a thought (idea) to that of which it is the idea; (3) in certain cases, like that of the Prime Minister, a further relation of the object of the idea (which object, in such cases, I call a *concept*) to another object or collection of objects: it is this third relation that I call *denoting*. The object before the mind when we think ‘the Prime Minister’ is not the same as when we think ‘Mr. Arthur Balfour,’ or when an image of the man himself is before us. Yet the Prime Minister is Mr. Arthur Balfour. This states the problem of denoting.

I agree entirely with what you say about language and making it do its work better. For definitely mathematical purposes, the symbolism which has been developed out of Peano gives an ideal of precision, but it will only express mathematical ideas. A similar work ought to be done for other ideas: but I feel that a technical language, without unphilosophical associations, is almost indispensable, e.g. verbs without tense are necessary to a right philosophy of Time.

Hoping to see you on the 10th. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

5 February 1904

Many thanks for your most interesting letter. I need hardly say how glad I am that you so warmly endorse my appeal. As to the points dealt with in my Notes, it was of course Chapter IV and not Part IV which supplied the suggestions in the second paragraph of my Notes. I quite understand that ‘difference of sense’ in Part IV (e.g. pp. 211, 225, both of which I have marked) was used in the sense (signification) of ‘the difference between an asymmetrical relation and its converse.’ The distinction between the usage and that e.g. in Chapter IV answers not to that between sense and meaning but to that between sense as sensation and sense as that which we socially call ‘common’ and with which we credit our ‘sensible’ friend.

On page 2 of my Notes a contrast is drawn between the two senses in which ‘sense’ is used (see last paragraph of section 379). I confess however that in spite of much care my next paragraphs leave much to be desired. It so often happens that in avoiding a Scylla one falls into a Charybdis of ambiguity or confusion. But you will understand my difficulties.

I mentioned my debt to W. K. Clifford. Strangely enough, when his *Lectures and Essays* were first published, after reading these carefully as well as all of his writings to which I could then gain access, when ‘The Commonsense of the Exact Sciences’ appeared, I asked friends who were helping me to economise my reading (then extending over the whole scientific field) whether I should read that too, and was strongly dissuaded from it! Unhappily I followed this counsel and thus it is only now that for the first time I am gathering from its admirable pages clear ideas, which the ordinary text-books had failed to give me, of the primary mathematical distinctions.

But, there too, or course, no distinction is made between ‘to mean’ and ‘to signify’; and the whole book furnishes valuable illustrations of what we should gain by making it.

I venture to enclose a copy of a short rough abstract I have made to serve as Index to all the critical passages, indictments or pleas for reform, which I could find in your book. They make indeed a formidable list and have given me fresh courage for my own adventurous campaign. I have also of course made a full general rough summary from my own point of view.

I shall look forward to the possibility of our meeting on the 10th [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

18 March 1904

You kindly said you would like to see me some time, and [...] Prof. Patrick Geddes, who has been staying with me while lecturing in London, would very much like to meet you here if it could be managed before he has to leave for the North [...].

I know that one object is to consult you with reference to 'The Evolution of Experience in Mathematics,' thus the one of a number of Sociological Essays called 'The Evolution of Nomenclature' and forming vol. IV of a set now being arranged for.

I also should be very glad to have your views on this, especially after the remarks on 'meaning' in your letter to me [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

21 March 1904

Owing to my being in Cornwall, I am very sorry I cannot accept your kind invitation. It would have been a great pleasure to me if I had been able to do so, & I should have liked meeting Prof. Geddes, of whom I have heard a great deal.

We have left Chelsea, & I am expecting to spend the rest of the year at Tilford [...].

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

24 March 1904

Your note from Cornwall found me studying the Contents and Introduction of your Foundations of Geometry. Once more I can already see how much I have lost by not sooner reading your work.

This gives me courage to tell you how great a disappointment it is to me to find that you will now be out of reach for such a long time.

I had so keenly hoped for an opportunity of having some talk with you and of showing you some of the evidential materials which I have been collecting for so many years. And alas time is more precious in my case than in yours!

I have no fear that you will suppose that I want to waste yours or distract you from your own labours. But you say yourself that you are coming to see more and more clearly that the key to your exacting and absorbing study lies, to a large extent at least, in the direction of 'questions of meaning.' My long study of these has left me less astonished than I otherwise should have been, to find mathematicians themselves confessing that they do not understand you. That is the natural result of the present state of things.

Why am I, in old age, irresistibly attracted by your treatment of what has always been for me an uncongenial and indeed inaccessible subject? Why is it a fascinating revelation to me in spite of inability to follow its technical expositions? Simply because yours is the first attempt I have seen at translating mathematical truth into the other human dialects and because, through my own approach to all subjects from the start-point of the study of significance itself, I am able so to speak to see through your words and to recognize vividly their bearing on life. I am therefore going to make a bold appeal to you to write yourself, from the mathematical point of view, on the question of Expression: on the relations of Sign and sense, of Sign and signification, of Sign and meaning, of Sign and significance; bringing out the distinctions which are so disastrously ignored, and giving us a new view of the unity within which they exist.

No one could do it as you could! And for that I might hope to offer such as it is, the collection of material which for many years I have been accumulating – if you thought it might be of the least use.

I any case is there no hope of your being in this direction for a day or two before long, or would it be impossible for you to come here and see what I have? I could not otherwise give you any idea of it.

My book 'What is Meaning?' does not of course content me at all and I fear will content you still less. But such as it is may I send it? I was glad to introduce your 'Principles' the other day to a Dutch friend who also fell under its spell and has now caused it to be included in the Royal Library at the Hague. But it was rather quaint that *I* should have had anything to do with that. Hoping that it may be still possible for us to meet somehow... In an Essay I am writing for a Sociological Series I hope you won't mind my quoting from your first letter to me as well as from your book? [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

9 November 1904

A letter I wrote addressed to you at the Tintagel Hotel on March 24 last, has recently come back to me from the Post-office! Some of it is now out of date so I do not forward it but will only re-write some part of it. I expressed therein the hope that we might some day meet, and now that I suppose you will be coming to London will not that be presently possible? I should be very glad of an opportunity of submitting to you some ideas of mine on what is now called 'significs' – simply because that is the only word which seems to make the distinction between questions of logic and philology and questions of 'meaning' in the value sense, per se.

Prof. Stout after staying with you in the summer told me he thought that we ought to meet since you also were interested in the question of signification, as you are in the strangely neglected one of Order. To go back however to my undelivered letter. I asked, Why am I, in old age, so strongly attracted by your treatment of what has always been for me, not only an uncongenial but an entirely inaccessible subject? Why is it a fascinating revelation to me in spite of inability to follow its technical expositions, so that I am unable either to agree or disagree with you? Simply because yours is the first attempt I have seen at translating mathematical truth into the other human dialects, and because, through my own approach to all subjects from the start-point of the study of significance itself, I am able, so to speak, to see through your words and to recognize vividly their bearing on life. I am therefore going to make a bold appeal to you to write yourself, from the mathematical point of view, on the question of Expression: on the relations of Sign and Sense, of Sign and Signification, of Sign and Meaning, of Sign and Significance, bringing out the distinctions which are so disastrously ignored and giving us a new view of the unity within which they exist. My book *What is Meaning?* does not of course content me at all and I fear will content you if possible still less! But such as it is may I spend it? I was glad to introduce your *Principles* some months ago to a Dutch friend – poet and psychologist – who also fell for the same reasons as mine under its spell and has since caused it to be included in the Royal Library at the Hague. It is rather quaint that *I* should have anything to do with that! Meanwhile much water has run under my bridge since I wrote as above. I have been since April in correspondence with Prof. Cook Wilson who I find is inclined to be technically an opponent of yours: also with Mr. C. S. Peirce, of whom I fear the same thing must be said. But anyhow there is one thing in which you are all in complete accord, and that is the only point at which I come in; I mean on the urgent necessity of reconsidering and revising if need be our presuppositions and our inherited formulas from new and living points of view.

Prof. Höffding, who has just been staying here and had read your *Foundations* and looked through your *Principles* while here, but has been too loaded with work to do more, was very strongly in sympathy with this. But (of course in a general sense) he also sees that we cannot hope to detect and discard hidden fallacies which have deceived the very elect of the elect: we cannot hope to attain what we were born to seek – a valid answer to the questions which life and the world

put to us, until we are quite clear and coherent in our ideas of what that rich treasure-house, the value of Sign and Symbol, really contains for us.

At present, as in the similar case of 'Order,' all that is taken for granted. We are wasting distinctions of real importance and ignoring subtle contradictions or at least defeating inconsistencies in the imagery used even by the most highly trained and able thinkers. Mathematics is of course free from this danger. But it appears there are others even there, no less pressing. I think I sent you my Index of your indictments? It is an astonishing and suggestive list. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

11 November 1904

... I should much like some day to write on Sign and Meaning and kindred topics; indeed the essential principles upon which the possibility of signs and symbols depends have occupied much of my thought. But for the present I am too much busied with Volume II of my *Principles* to undertake any other work. Many fundamental questions have to be settled in writing this volume (fundamental, I mean, to the foundations of mathematics and the principles of symbolism); and when it is published I shall hope that it will do much to persuade such opponents as M. C. S. Peirce. Of Prof. Cook Wilson I have no hope, as he is apparently opposed to all modern mathematics, and still attempts the impossible task of finding a proof of the axiom of parallels.

I should be most grateful for your book, *What is Meaning?* The point of view is not that from which most people approach philosophy, and one cannot but have a strong fellow-feeling with the few who do adopt it [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

12 November 1904

Thank you for your letter which has much interest for me. I am sending the book, though with a daunting sense of its lack of the necessary orderliness of exposition. ...

I am also enclosing a copy of Mr. Peirce's remarkable letter about Signs.

As to Prof. Cook Wilson I have just sent him another of my very unorthodox ventures to which I cannot expect the answer till term is over. I am bound to say that so far I have been surprised at the degree of toleration and even sympathy for my heresies which his letters have shown. Meanwhile it is a curious and interesting coincidence that he, as well as Mr. Peirce should be writing about what the one calls Oneness, Twoness and Threeness and the other Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness—while neither is yet aware that the other is doing so! ... I am proposing to send to each the letter of the other. I am indeed glad that you propose to take up in a special way the question of Sign and Symbol ...

I shall look forward to seeing you here in January [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

14 November 1904

Very many thanks for your book, which reached me this morning. I am very glad to have it.

The letter from Dr. C. S. Peirce which you enclosed has great interest for me. I agree strongly with his division of ideas into firstnesses, secondnesses and thirdnesses; but I should also admit (and so, I fancy, could he) fourthnesses, & c.

I do not know where Whitehead or I have said that the need of Dr. Peirce's Algebra of dyadic relations seldom occurs. I think myself that a symbolism based on Peano's is practically more convenient, but I hold it quite essential to have a method of expressing relations, and I have always

thought very highly of Dr. Peirce for having introduced such a method. I should be interested to know what are the faults he finds with my book, as his criticism would probably be instructive. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

16 December 1904

I am writing to Dr. (or as he has asked to be called, Mr.) Peirce, and suppose I may tell him what you say (I will unless I hear to the contrary).

Finding I was interested in the almost coercive human tendency to triadism, he himself said in one letter what you say, about 'fourthness.'

I think I ought to let you know that in his last letter Mr. Peirce, after telling me that he is overwhelmed with work and has just been 'working through two consecutive nights and three days' (a man of 65!) adds that he 'will only say that Mr. Russell's idea that there is a fourthness, &c., is natural; but I prove absolutely that all systems of more than three elements are reducible to compounds of triads; and he will see, on reflection, that it is so. The point is that triads evidently cannot be so reduced since the very relation of a whole to two parts is a triadic relation.'

He tells me also that he is resolving to break up his American home and come to Europe as soon as may be, remaining for a time in England in order to see something of 'the men of the new movements' here, as well as my humble self.

So I have sent a cablegram to beg him and Mrs. Peirce, if convenient, to make their headquarters here.

If he should accept I shall hope that you and he may meet here, but in any case a meeting will I hope be easy. It is curious that from a widely different standpoint Mr. Peirce expresses the same feeling as my own about publications. He says 'much of my work never will be published. If I can, before I die, get so much made accessible as others may have a difficulty in discovering, I shall feel that I can be excused from more. My aversion to publishing anything has not been due to want of interest in others but to the thought that after all a philosophy can only be passed from mouth to mouth where there is opportunity to object and cross-question; and that printing is not publishing unless the matter be pretty frivolous.' [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

27 December 1904

Many thanks for your kind letter of December 16th, which I should have answered sooner if I had not been unusually overwhelmed with work & business. It would be the greatest interest and pleasure to me to meet Mr. C. S. Peirce; he is a man for whose work I have a great respect. As regards *fourthness* etc., I have a proof that even *thirdness* is reducible, in the sense that there is a secondness equivalent to it, or rather that only one thirdness is needed, namely the general form 'x has the relation R to y.' For any triadic relation $f(x, y, z)$ may be reducible to the assertion between y and z of a relation which is a function of x. But this only gives *equivalence*; philosophically, the meaning is changed, though not the truth or falsehood. And it seems to me that the same applies to fourthness, etc., i.e. the reduction is formal, and does not represent a philosophical analysis of the ideas involved; tho', for purposes of symbolic logic, it is none the worse on that account.

I do not really agree with Mr. Peirce's views as to publishing: to those of us who do not know him, the little he has published is tantalizing. Still, I admit, the number of readers who will profit by work such as his, without the benefit of his personal explanations, is necessarily small. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

19 January 1905

[...] As you are interested in Mr. Peirce's undeniably original way of looking at 'things' (I often long to enclose all such inherited words in quotation-marks!) I meant to have sent you an enclosed extract from his last letter before this.

But illness caused by that arctic blast has defeated me till now. And I am doubtful as to the wisdom of letting you see what he says about a certain very crude essay on Time which I was tempted to send in its raw state. I do much want to know what you would say to this, but I have found a thinker who sees my point to be anyhow worth raising and who I hope will be able presently to collaborate with me in embodying some important additions to the arguments.

You will however have to remember that I can only approach the subject from a pre-mathematical standpoint and that I can deal only with its material.

Meanwhile the last part of the letter may have some interest for you. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

30 January 1905

[...] The letter from Mr. Peirce, which you sent me, is interesting, but I do not fully grasp his generalization, either as to its meaning or its generals? As stated, it seems unduly vague. But I dare say I have not fully understood it [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

12 February 1905

[...] Ever since you were here I have had a horrid sense of having harangued you past all bearing.

Our talk was in fact my talk! My excuse is that my position is a very unusual one and the range of my interests includes those often – perhaps generally – considered incompatible or irreconcilable. So that in a first interview with anyone who really thinks and is really working at the revision of presuppositions I have even to be autobiographical in order to show where I really am and what I am working out of. After that, goodbye, I hope, to the personal (which in the popular sense is my bugbear)!

You must not of course let me be in any sense a hinderer of your own great work: I trust you to be quite frank on the subject of what you may find an infliction.

But I think I may be able in a primitive sort of way to 'pave the way' to better understanding between thinkers of real power who suppose each other to be hopelessly dissentient in the dissidence of dissent!

If the smallest advance towards mutual understanding *by allowing for one's own natural or acquired orientation* could thus be effected think of the immense accession of power!

I myself have certainly profited most by and learnt most from thinkers with whom I do not naturally agree on the ordinary basis. Starting as it were higher up the stream of human experience I find I can translate my opponent; I see the why of him and in a dialect of thought different from his, find his mind too in mine. But then to me 'nothing human is alien.' Why should it be to any of us?

One thing may I add. I see – you showed it clearly in your article – that you perceive the truth of having to lose the lower or lesser (life or light) in order to gain the higher.

We have to welcome this, hard though it seems. But now there come the first tremblings of a new dawn ... Well, we must go on working loyally according to our lights, trying all things, 'seven times in the fire.'

I enclose two little Notes (out of a great many!) in case they may have some interest for you. But no answer is necessary [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

20 February 1905

[...] I was very much interested indeed by everything you told me of an autobiographical kind, and I quite feel that it is a great help in understanding each other's position that one should not be always and wholly impersonal.

The new dawn, I must confess, is not very visible to me; but I am clear that the first necessity is to realize that the old sun has set.

I read your fragment from Vega with a great deal of pleasure. I wonder whether we shall ever know anything of what goes on in other parts of the Universe. It certainly seems most improbable that no better minds exist than those on this planet.

As to the other paper, I agree most strongly that it is a mistake to dwell on negatives, and a mistake to which philosophers are very prone.

But as to the principle 'that all is sign, read the signal,' I am not certain whether I fully understand it, and if I do, I doubt whether I fully agree. But very likely I should agree if I really understood. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

5 March 1905

Your letter of February 20th interested me much ... I am very glad you like the little skit about Vega because one can't put the absurdity of one's cocksure limitations of life except in this way.

Also that you see what I mean about the negatives posing as positives. In my turn I agree with you that the first need for clearness of mind in seeing life sound and whole is to realize that there has been the analogue of a sunset. Perhaps this experience having been mine long ago when I surrendered to the overwhelming forces of scientific test, makes me long to shorten a similar one for others. For never could I return to a 'day that is dead.' But, if there is life in one, one inevitably goes on ... With regard to what I have perhaps crudely expressed as 'all is sign, read signal' it is but a terse way of putting the obvious truth that every fact and every item of experience is, for us, constituted as we are, an *indication*, or, a stimulant of question, whether we can interpret it or not.

If I could I should like some day to make the attempt to point to such signs of a 'new dawn' which seem equally overlooked in all the positions so far taken. But these things are very difficult to speak of when one has to use the very images, legacies of outworn philosophies, which insist on preserving the ideas one would discard.

I have just received an interesting Article by Prof. Vailati suggested, he says, by my book, in which he complains of this in the case of our ideas of Deduction and Induction. This has been translated; I wonder if you would care to see it thus or in the original?

[...] I enclose one or two more little notes out of my drawers [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

26 March 1905

[...] I think I see what you mean by 'all is sign, read the signal.' The enclosures you sent interested me. I found myself in sympathy with the Kodak, since I believe that all things are discrete and atomic.

But that is a large question [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

28 March 1905

My wife & I can both come on April 7th at about 12, as you very kindly suggest, we have much pleasure in accepting. I hope that is really quite convenient to you; we would leave directly after luncheon. But if it is not as convenient as another day would be, I could certainly come some other time, & I think my wife could [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

29 March 1905

I am venturing to send you two of my somewhat rough Papers in case you care to look at them before we meet again. But pray remember that I always understand silence as well as welcoming criticism.

Then I will expect you both at 12 on the 7th April only you must not run away directly after luncheon as in any case I can well break my general rule now and then and the family won't arrive early!... I must ask you to remember that I am no mere 'optimist' and have sounded the depths of pessimism which I think has a peculiarly valuable witness for us which we could gain in no other way. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

9 April 1905

[...] I can't help telling you how much I felt to gain by our talk. I felt tempted to thank you for taking me seriously. It makes me hope you will always be quite frankly critical like other intellectual friends who have done me the same honour – one too often denied to a woman!

I always wonder at the false antitheses which pass current even in writing of a higher order and which often spring from the identification of the diverse like the literal and the real. I enclose a very rough little note on this.

Is not the 'real' difference between the figurative and the actual (or the 'fact') really that between the direct and the indirect? (referring back once more to the 'visual image'). ...

[...] The true antithesis of the literal, not the real, is the *figurative*. And this has for inevitable ancestry the optical image and the memory image. These both bring us to the 'image' of wood and stone, to the 'doll' of the primitive man the 'figure' of an object and at last to the hieroglyphic image of the earliest writings. Hence imagery; also imagination, which has to be carefully distinguished from fancy.

All these are endeavours at picture and portrait, at a reflective presentation answering to the philosophical one. What *is* the true antithesis of the real? Only I suppose the unreal. But the 'uns' and other negative prefixes beg the question and throw no light on their positives. Certainly not the imaginary but perhaps the fanciful and the fallacious? Or the delusive (not the illusive?). [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

27 April 1905

[...] Certainly I should always be frank, whether in criticism or otherwise; it seems to me that anything else is unpardonable between people who are seriously engaged on the same subject.

I do not think *fallacious* is the opposite of *real*, but rather of *valid*; *fallacious* applies to propositions, especially such as state inferences, whereas *real* applies to things (whatever they may be). I think *ficitious* will do as the opposite of *real*. At the same time I doubt whether there are opposites (other than those in un-) to more than a small proportion of adjectives.

I should like to know how figurative expressions have come to seem so natural. Why, for example, does *suspense* mean what it does? Is it merely because when a body is hanging in the air we expect to see it fall, or when we are caught like Absolom we expect to fall, and thus get into a state of suspense? Plainly the metaphor is the same as in 'ein Urteil fällen.' But what seems to me odd is that the innumerable metaphors of this kind in common speech should all seem so natural, showing that the analogies on which they depend are very easily felt. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

1 June 1905

I am forwarding to Prof. Stout some translations I have had made of Prof. Vailati's Papers (which he kindly sends me). Perhaps you see them in the original, but if not you may be interested to see that he takes up the question of images like 'dependence' and 'support' &c. as you do that of 'suspense.' I am especially interested in his application of the 'significal' criticism to questions of logical terminology.

Most of our common metaphors must be very ancient and really appeal to a 'layer' below our recent and superficial civilization. But I often think that it is unfortunate that they don't go far enough back.

I was glad to hear from Prof. Stout that you are writing on Poincaré in the next *Mind*. I have been fascinated both by his book and his address at St. Louis. I am tempted to send you some day a few notes on them: but I must anyhow wait for July!

Now I am reading Le Dantec's 'Lois Naturelles': how curiously over-emphatic he is. As with Haeckel it gives one the impression of conscious weakness. Why shout?...

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

14 November 1905

I have had a letter to you 'on the stocks' ever since I read your interesting paper in 'Mind' on Denoting. And now you have kindly sent me a copy. Thanks. I have only been able to give it an imperfect study, having been overloaded by necessary reading lately. But there are two of three points about which I should like to ask you.

(1) In the first page, should not the distinction you point out be, that is should we not gain by its being, threefold? Then we should have A. awareness which belongs to sensation and is shared by the simplest forms of life, B. acquaintance as direct experience of, and C. knowledge as you define it.

We might be *aware* of other minds without being acquainted with them and without knowing them 'through denoting.' I venture to suggest this because the idea of awareness (earlier or lower than consciousness?) is associated in my mind with 'Mother-sense' – as it were the starting-sense. We ought all to have this and seem all (except the typical child) to have more or less lost it. Is not this loss the price we pay for having gained 'acquaintance' and 'knowledge about'?

(2) My difficulty in your statement about the theory of denoting on p. 480 would be that Everything and Nothing (and other such words) can be used by themselves. 'What did you give to Smith?' 'Nothing.' 'And what to Jones?' 'Everything.' The answerer here emphatically *intends* (means) to convey a fact. This would apply in the same way to 'a man.' 'What did you see?' 'A man.'

I do not here raise the question whether we should not gain by always using 'meaning' in its immediate or central sense of intention: in which in speaking of the 'present King of France' as bald, we intend to convey what is sheer mistake or sheer nonsense. That is, it is not meaningless (or purposeless) *but senseless*. It seems to me that the absence (in all discussion) of a clear definition of meaning as distinguished from sense, signification and significance is unfortunate, as the vagueness of its use affects many, perhaps most, arguments. But you will perhaps refer

me to p. 483. – ‘denoting’ phrases express a meaning (&c.) i.e. an intention or purpose. The difference seems to be between ‘having’ and ‘expressing’? But the act of expression implies the fact of ‘having’ meaning?

I must say no more now except to thank you for calling attention (p. 481) to the disastrous (and almost universal) confusion between what is *the* this and that and only *a* this and that. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

15 November 1905

I am afraid my letter is badly expressed anyhow: but I find I must have stupidly left out the connection of my (2) with my (1). This is one of dependence. Of course from the level of ‘acquaintance’ still more of ‘knowledge about’ your rejoinder is obvious and I am not concerned to dispute it.

The use I quote seems to me not merely a convenient modern shorthand but also a survival of the earliest stage when not merely a word but even a growl or hiss ‘spoke volumes’ of meaning! Meanwhile your theory of denoting, if indeed I rightly understand it, has a special value for me. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

25 November 1905

[...] I daresay a threefold distinction may be called for, if the object is to give a complete account of our (more or less) cognitive states of mind. But I think the distinction between *awareness* and *acquaintance*, assuming it to exist, is not relevant to my problem. Indeed even the two-fold distinctions of *acquaintance* and *knowledge about* disappears on my theory, since what we call *knowledge about* turns out to be always acquaintance with something else.

If there is such a thing as awareness in contradistinction to acquaintance, I cannot believe there is awareness of *everything* or *nothing* or a *man*. Hence I should be free to make the reply, which I gather you admit on any other level, that such words used alone are mere abbreviations for propositions.

When I speak of *meaning*, in logical discussions, I do not (though perhaps I ought to) intend an *intention*, but something logical; I do not know quite how to explain what it is that I intend, and think perhaps I could excise the word *meaning* with advantage, as I do not intend what you intend when you use the word, and your use seems more correct than mine. There are too few philosophical terms to go round, and so one is tempted to use the same word in different senses in different contexts. But it is a dangerous habit. I believe philosophy would gain by having only special technical words for all its main ideas, instead of making shift to do with terms blunted by the rough usage of daily life. It is as if mathematicians talked of a *ball* instead of a *sphere*, or an *egg* instead of an *ellipsoid*. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

29 November 1905

Many thanks for your interesting letter. I don’t want to lay undue stress on ‘awareness’ as distinguished from ‘acquaintance’ and the latter from ‘knowledge about.’ But I suspect it is a legacy from very early days. We still say e.g. ‘I had an uncomfortable sense of something wrong; and this I think is not always indicative of vagueness or confusion but is a recrudescence of the original *wariness*. However, I admit, the point must not be laboured. Yet, on this line I venture on another suggestion. I not only learn from students of primitive life and language but realise as part of my own deeper experience that while words like ‘nothing’ are now as you say abbreviations from propositions, the case was originally and now is still in some minds, reversed. Once a word was

the only sentence (as before that a sound the only word!) now the sentence – or proposition – is virtually the word. That is why the context becomes, in judging of the value of a word, so important. But the leading word, even of a whole chapter (like one of yours) has still a tremendous and not always recognized influence on the effect of it various contexts.

Although I am keenly sensible of my own failure to present the case for ‘significs’ as an urgent need alike for exact and for poetical or popular thought, I have a great desire to discuss my hopes a little further with you. They are inevitably difficult to express; if they were not, that would indeed prove me wrong!

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

15 December 1905

... With regard to ‘Significs,’ I doubt if I differ in opinion from you, but I think the problem I am studying is not quite the same as yours. I am less concerned with what people do mean than with what things there are that might be meant or would be interesting to be meant. Thus when a single word was the only sentence, I should doubt whether, so far as anything definite was meant, what was meant differed from what we should express by some sentence of many words. I should admit a certain vagueness, which seems to me to be merely ambiguity; but that would be failure to mean any one definite thing, and would not provide a new *thing meant*, as opposite to a new state of mind of the person meaning. But I feel very ignorant in all questions involving the state of mind of a person speaking or thinking. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

24 June 1907

I am especially sorry to have missed seeing you while Prof. Stout was here, as I have been emboldened to mention an idea of mine concerning the primordial form of the Theory of Number to Mr. Greenstreet, expecting to hear it simply derided as absurd, whereas on the contrary he encouraged me to propound it to Mr. Jourdain, Mr. Wagstaffe, &c. I need hardly say that at best I am only dealing with the nascent stage of arithmetic: but I venture to think that the accepted theory begins too late. Prof. Stout also thinks the matter should be followed out from the psychological point of view. I had never had the courage to mention it to *you*, but now am especially anxious to do so. If I am right about the original beginnings of the sense of number it would account for much which at present seems ‘mysterious’ (e.g. the view of Confucius). ... If it were possible for you to come, I could make any time suit from now to July 20th barring 17th. I am much hoping to see Mrs. Russell before very long as I am putting together some papers on the position of women and their true biological inheritance. ... I am looking forward to your criticism (if I may hope for it) on my ‘Time’ article in the July ‘Mind.’ If it were more convenient to come for a night I should of course be delighted: but I dare not talk in the evening. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrand Russell

1 April 1908

I have been intending for some time to write to you but am only just recovering from a long illness with two severe operations. You have been kindly interested in my attempts to suggest what might be called an Introductory Method, and so I want you to know that an Article on Significs which I was asked to write for the new *Encyclopaedia Briatannica* has been accepted as ‘exactly what was wanted’ though it more than doubled the assigned limits. In the new English Dictionary also I am to be given ample scope for Significs and its secondary terms.

I suppose you are going to this Mathematical Congress? Would there be a chance later of seeing you? I notice on all sides the rise of what I should call the significant aspect of Mathematics, which indeed your work has always represented to me. Among other things, I have been much interested by M. de Peslouan's article in the *Revue des Idées* of March 15th. 'Sur le sens des Problèmes...' which is very near my ground. I have (and have always had) an 'instinctive' theory of *Primitive Number* which I should now like to submit to you, as since I have had the courage to mention it to one or two mathematical friends I have found that it arouses interest as tending to account for certain preconceptions and superstitions, and also perhaps for the average child's difficulty in arithmetic, as well as 'magic' squares, &c. I much hope also to see Mrs. Russell and have some talk on the present 'woman question' in some generally overlooked aspects. [...]

Bertrnad Russell to Victoria Welby

3 April 1908

I am very glad to hear that the new E. B. will contain an article by you on significs. I have not seen the French article you mention 'Sur le sens des problèmes...'

Today I start for Rome, & after the Congress I am going on to Sicily. I shall be back in about a month. From what you say about your theory of primitive number, I gather it is a theory belonging to psychology, which is a subject of which I am shamefully ignorant, so I doubt if my opinion would be of any value. [...]

Victoria Welby to Bertrnad Russell

14 May 1908

I suppose you are back by now. I am sorry I took for granted that you would know of M. de Peslouan's article 'Sur le Sens des problèmes metaphysiques en mathematique.' It seemed to me to have elements which might interest you. I am glad there is a chance of your both being in London and getting down here. I am interested to see how much good work Mrs. Russell is doing. ... There is an (to me) interesting Article in the *Revue Scientifique* about Count Witte as Mathematician. One has not thought of him in that light. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

24 June 1909

... I feel that my views on the question you speak of would be utterly worthless, as it is a psychological question & I know only the merest smattering of psychology.

At the same time, I should of course be very much interested in reading anything by you on the origins of Aristotle. I am looking forward to your article on Time in the July *Mind*. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

11 March 1910

We shall be in London ... during the first 3 weeks of April, & it will give us great pleasure to accept your kind invitation to luncheon to meet the Stouts. My wife would be glad to come too, but she will be very busy, & it will probably be difficult for her. We both hope, however, that the Stouts will find time to come & see us in London while they are in the South.

I know Jourdain well & admire his courage more than I can say. [...]

Bertrand Russell to Victoria Welby

6 April 1910

Some time ago you were kind enough to write & ask me to come to Harrow to meet the Stouts. I am now writing to ask if it would suit you if I came to luncheon either on the 11th or the 12th. My wife asked me to say she is sorry she cannot come either of those days, as she will be away speaking: she is generally very much occupied. [...]

Essays and 'essaylets' in chronological order

3.9. An Echo of Larger Life (1885)*

In the world to be ours one day – the world of a larger life – ONE and ANOTHER (we know not who) were hovering and thinking together.

And we will suppose that they spoke; for we have but our earth-words to use. But they had not been on our earth.

Said ONE, 'How strange that all grow better and fuller in truth of being by that gift of discontent with halfness and with part, which makes whole all true ideals! How intensely you and I long for the end of *what seemed no evil once* – all "great and little"; and beyond that again, will not a fresh aspiration be developed? I have heard that somewhere and somewhen "evil" even hid the All-perfect from the hearts of some of His own.'

Said ANOTHER, 'You speak of a fresh aspiration – why, our joy is to know of a thousand! You have learnt not yet how to rejoice in the knowledge of what lies before us. Awhile since I saw a very old Man. I knew how great was his age because of his vigour of life – because he was so far *come* in the glory and splendour of goodness, and was so vast in the power and range of his mind. And I knew him to be Man and to have passed through little Earth, because he was growing further out of isolation and into the LIFE of LIVES: more wholly out of fragment-self and into perfect BEING. I asked and was given the power to speak with him; and thus I learnt strange things.'

Said ONE, 'Tell me what he said.'

Said ANOTHER, 'He told me the story of his life and how he came to know – even as he was known – in Whom he lived and moved and had his being. There was much I could not tell you, but I will try to translate some. He told me chiefly of the straitened earth-life, which passes as you know so rapidly, that those who watch from hence can hardly snatch a glimpse before it is over; and of the solemn note there struck by the Bell of Life, the vibrations of which though to us over in a few seconds were once to him as long and weary years. He knew not then that his hundred years were but one stroke. He said that even on earth looking back it would all seem sometimes as brief and narrow as it really is, but else what is so self-evident to him now (as to us) was hard to grasp, although his *being* was as great as now and the Voice was ever reminding him of it. If we did not know why through the same revealing Voice, how strange it would seem to us that one of so many sections of life divided from each other by recurrent gaps of memory and lapses of foresight (successive layers of mental husk) should have been so momentous and seemed so large and long, and should have required and evolved such rich treasures of faith and strenuous efforts to realise even the glory now so familiar to us! *We* can only imagine it by remembering what an effort of the will is needed to take up our own gift, and to look forward to that further glory in which the only degrees, the sole measurements, are those of essential value, vitality and reality. In that scale-less life "less" or "more" in size or number *are* not. Then this or that shall be more or less wholly and divinely real and perfect, but

* [Originally printed privately and anonymously, see Welby 1885a].

not greater or smaller, nearer or more distant, old or new. We also are not ready for more than inference here. And some of us are prone to remain in a self-made fog like that we wonder at in the Earth life, where “evil” was the one GOD-hiding darkness, men would not take light offered but cried “Why?” and saw only painful contradiction and apparent uselessness, or else paralysed its true work by calling pain the worst evil and sin a mere “mistake,” thus relaxing the healthful tension of the sense of guilt and shame and lowering pure, blessed good to the level of mere ease. Let us beware lest we too lose our hold of a precious clue, disabling thus the mainspring of our strength!

Said ONE, ‘Yes: I see the need. What a lesson learnt from earth!’

Said ANOTHER, ‘He told me that on earth he could hardly persuade his fellows of their own greatness and majesty – even when they confessed GOD as Father! In vain he showed them that their thought could travel in one instant to a distant star and over long ages of time, by a simple act of will and imagination. They persisted in ignoring the significance of this as of more sacred signs of their divine birthright; in letting drop from languid hands the very keys put into them by the Lord of Life wherewith to open truth-doors and find comfort. It was long before they even discovered that “past and future” were as purely relative to them as “upwards and downwards.” When they found that the earth was not flat but a sphere, they could not choose but see that “up and down” – above and below – were reversed to those at the “antipodes,” and therefore had no real existence in space. Yet they were strangely slow in inferring that the same truth in some wise applied to time; that there might well be an “antipodes” in that sphere too, where past and future were reversed. They saw not that the two are one; just as each point of earth-surface is both under and over the globe. He said that a friend even wrote a sort of sketch of things as they are on our scale here; witnessing that their consciousness was really able to grasp that clue, so that their bondage was wilful; he tried (though of course in baby-language ill-spelt and scrawled) to show that the element which on earth took the two forms of suffering and sin, was really in proportion to *whole* good as one point to the universe, as a pebble dropped in space and time; although its issues, as we know, were so far-reaching in their rings and undulations of harmony and light. Of course if evil had been only what they thought it, one trace or fraction of it would have been a fatal flaw in good; but why did they not heed the Voice? They mourned but would not rouse themselves to hear. Evil as *pain* was intolerable (thought too often as sin it seemed pleasant) and yet they confined their own thought (GOD keep us from the folly) in a cage where it could neither stand nor sit nor lie but only crouch cramped and helpless, and then they said “that is GOD’s will for us” pleading that they “could not” stir! We too, though free from this, are apt to make *scale* our mental cage; and to wonder that the LIFE and GLORY of all that IS – to whom a million suns are but as a gold-strewn pathway, should have bent down in utter lowliness into a grain-large globe, to show one flash of His light and to let His own feel one throb of that Heart of Love, in weakness and pain like their own. But you see, to *them* the world was great and sin was strong and suffering long drawn out; and to Him there is no “great and little” as still there are to us.’

Said ONE, ‘I can see why He who is our LIFE went down taking their littleness and sorrow wherein to show them His greatness and joy – their own indeed in Him – and to take away all excuse for letting “evil” perplex them or obscure their sense of GOD. I can see why He, the true Man, the true Self as Life of all, went through the worst of the earth evil, conquering it in the rising and ascending from that “death” which in their eyes was the end and the image of despair; yet more, *Himself* the Risen Being in each one and in all. And knowing Him I can understand His offering Himself – being Love – as their Sacrifice and “food” and taking them thus into His own glorious life, of which they are as germs. But one thing has ever baffled me. How could they *after that* read evil as they did?’ Said ANOTHER, ‘Verily it is strange. For how could they think that the *good* which belonged to evil as yes to no, result to cause, day to night, light to shadow, was anything but a *halfness* – or as the acorn of an oak? Why did they not even see that by their own analogies, perfect Good must needs be a *WHOLE* and not a half alone? If there must be a

bitter cry of Wherefore? in their hearts, why was it not a craving for *whole* good?³³ The only good they meant was but a half of which the other half was evil. The clearer grew their minds, the more manifest it was that *without "evil" good was not*: doubt revealed faith as fear showed them hope; hate-love; falsehood-truth; stain-purity; sorrow and pain gave birth to compassion and sympathy; danger brought forth tender care and shelter. And further (deeper sign still) they could see that their good (of which they made a whole when it was but a part) beyond a certain point swung round into evil; that the same thought, word, or act, according to motive or object, became good or evil; and besides, that patience and apathy, purity and coldness, humility and subserviency, even tenderness and selfish or mawkish sentiment, as well as all pleasure and pain, were strangely near each other. But few lost light or peace or faith in GOD for this; it caused few aching hearts. And that was right. The good which evil brings – as the Redemption due to sin – is verily lovely and precious, a blessed gift of GOD; and only by hating evil and loving the good they knew, could greater good be reached. But still it is a halfness thus, and they were made for WHOLENESS. They should have seen through the good they knew and understood that *perfect good is better than their best, because in itself complete*; whereas all they had there was in part. And then they would have learnt to be as little disquieted by evil as by good: since we know not even yet how perfect good may be!

‘But we are speaking of the earth-section only, remember. For a hundred ages since, the ancient one with whom I spoke has known the full reason of these things and what the word “whole” means. There was something said of another section into which – or so I gathered – the Lord of love went down to *rejoice* for his own, as He went into the earth-section to *suffer* all for them. For there the glory of the choice-power was so dazzling that all else faded away; the real difficulty was to suppose that the will of any creature could for a moment even swerve from GOD and enter bondage: no evil cried for healing or for conquest or compassion: no hunger called for food; *good and joy seemed needless; why were they?* Yet there some used to cry “there is something better still – nobler than untried content; *teach us how to suffer; give us pain;* and then we shall learn Thy joy, shall know the secret of love.” But of this I dare speak no more; for I know not how it was.’

Said ONE, ‘Might we not have sent poor Earth a message? Why should they have grieved for a nothing and craved for a half-thing?’

Said ANOTHER, ‘The message lay hid within their hearts – not as solution of riddle but as a star’s light in the darkness – they could open heart-eyes when they would; the Word was there sounding ever; they could listen and hear all truth. They had only to seek and to find, as at last they learnt indeed.’

Said ONE, ‘Were there not many forms of unveiling, much light for troubled hearts too little used on earth?’

Said ANOTHER, ‘Yes; the whole universe within and without Man was one chorus of witness to the Living Way of Truth. Yet with BEING thus revealed they still spoke of evolved religion or unknowable “Deity”; they fretted over false alternatives or confounded form and essence, that which appears with that which *is*. And some denied what others affirmed under the name of “miracle.” But these were sometimes right; the affirmers were often as wide of the mark as the deniers; for with too many minds the sign of perfect nature, the beam of larger light absorbing a moon-like ray, the pledge of a Divine and boundless cosmos, meant but prodigy and marvel, or worse – an act of *law-less dis-order* – bringing good! Yet that was but for a time. . . ’

Said ONE, ‘Take care; let us move out of the orbit of that teeming little planet; one longs to gather it as a flower when one is childish and forgets!’

33. See Collect for 6th Sunday after Trinity.

3.10. Light (1886)*

When we say, this or that enlightens ignorance or throws light upon what is obscure and perplexing, do we realise what is necessarily and invariably the Manifesting Power? GOD is Light.

If we really believe this, let us strive thoroughly to understand the nature of physical light and whence it comes, what it can do for us and how it acts, and then let us apply its revealing power in analogy and as parable. Let us learn that ‘mystery’ in the sense of what ‘mystifies’ and baffles, what seems a mere inscrutable puzzle to us, is exactly what GOD is revealed as Light in order to make clear; that in Him is no darkness at all on any subject, only in us because we will not go to Him in faith for shining rays to cast upon it, because abiding in contented darkness has made our eyes too weak at first to bear them. ‘Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that is should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear’ (S. Mark iv. 21–24). What then is light? Emphatically that by which we see whatever we perceive, whatever is evident to us, that by which we discover and discern, behold or contemplate. Yet many of us practically deny that we can only see by GOD; and even speak of Him in the terms of shadow, thinking thus to reverence Him.

As GOD is Light, and the very Father of lights (S. James i. 17), and in Him we live and move and have our being, does it not follow that every intelligible question implies an intelligible answer, and that we are intended *not* to rest content until we find it? If we were incapable of receiving an answer, we should be incapable of conceiving the corresponding question. Each seeking ‘why?’ is put into our hearts by the very Light whereby we are at last to learn the answer. Thus indeed He saith unto us with warning voice ‘Take heed what ye hear; with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you; and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath’ (S. Mark iv. 24, 25).

Our measures of what Light can do for us, morally, intellectually, spiritually, are too often poor and contracted; and thus the advancing growth of men’s awakening faculties, the increasing area of scientific, historical and general knowledge, tends to deprive us of what little light we have; we tremble and we dare not look GOD’s own facts in the face; we shiver in a darkness miscalled faith. Yet even what we are not able yet to see, we may sometimes, if we will use GOD’s gifts, infer. ‘Uranus’ first and ‘Neptune’ next were discovered not directly but by inference. Thus may not integral parts of the spiritual ‘system’ of which the Sun of our being is the Centre, be but waiting for discernment on the field of revelation by inference? Whole worlds of truth are surely hidden in the depths of the Living Word, ready for the patient and faithful enquirer, who uses fearlessly because trustfully and honestly the instruments which GOD Himself has given him, and as Light shall enable him to apply. Again, as Light also He is our Father. We too, in virtue of our childship, in the name of the Son, must be whatever light as well as whatever heat is; ‘a burning and a shining lamp’ shall each one be, in whom is stored up the beams of the Sun of all Suns, to flash forth at the kindling touch of the Holy Spirit, to radiate truth and shrivel falsehood everywhere.

3.11. The Evolution of Heliology (1886)*

The world was learning much, and thinking more, and stirring with fresh wonder. And there came to it a Teacher well assured. His sight was swift and keen. But its range was curiously limited by a peculiar form of short-sight. He could discern nothing beyond the atmosphere of earth, and thus had never seen the sun. So he reasoned with a sun-conscious organism, and sought to prove

* [Published privately in the first instance, and subsequently in *The Expositor*, see Welby 1886b].

* [First published anonymously, see Welby 1886c].

to it that the origin of all its forms of expression was earthy. 'Trace them up,' he said, 'and you everywhere find that form, colour, motion, growth, even thought, are only transformed elementary force evolved by the earth. As these develop, as activity increases, as faculties multiply, and as you become conscious of them and at last able to reflect upon and reason about them, you suppose – fatal error! – that they are somehow derived from a source extraneous to the soil from whence they sprang. Thus, also, with sensations of light and heat. They both originate exclusively from the organic germ itself, or from its earth-environment. The notion that light or heat-rays come from and are due to some great "sun" in distant space, independent of earth (though earth is dependent upon and revolves around it), is pure delusion. It would be useful to write a paper on the "evolution of sunrayism," or perhaps of "heliology," and to show how the ideas of a sun as fountain of light and heat and chemical force arose – to trace back, in short, their history and genesis. For it is plain that even were there any foundation for the myth of a sun, it must be beyond our faculties of perception, as beyond our atmosphere; and the idea of our learning its constituents or movements and action, yet more, of our consciously receiving its emanations and influence, must in the nature of things be groundless. It would be easy to show the natural process, in times of scientific ignorance, by which the heat in the earth's centre, shown in volcanic action, geysers, &c., and in deep mine-borings, the light and flames produced by friction, phosphorescence both animal and mineral, and the diffused light of a self-luminous atmosphere, have been erected by the ever-growing superstitions of organic life in its credulous infancy into the revelations of a mighty life-impacting, light-giving sphere, the cause and origin of all activity on earth, and of all the rich and complex phenomena of our existence.'

Here the group was joined by an egg-enclosed Embryo which observed: 'I have just been lecturing in the same sense to my foolish brother-embryos, who persist in sticking to similarly obsolete notions about being "hatched." They, too, apparently inherit a sort of glorified ghost-theory, by which they flatter themselves that they originated not primarily from the speck out of which it can be proved that they grew, but from some mysterious source outside the very egg itself, forming round them what they supposed to be a mere shell, some day to be cracked and "transcended," but which, like the atmosphere you speak of, encloses us in barriers which cannot be passed even in thought. So I explained to them that all theories which foster a craving for post shell-cracked existence are sheer fancy; for the sooner we all understand this, the better. As you and I know, the very idea of such "parentage" is due really to inflated dreams of our dignity and destiny, which have a morbid origin. So strong, indeed, is the tendency to carry high-flown mythological fancies into detail, that some even declare that, once outside the shell, they will acquire powers not merely to run upon the earth, but to "cleave the skies on wing."

The conversation was now taken up by an Orange-pip and a Wheat-grain. 'We quite agree with you,' said they, and the Orange-pip continued: – 'I can contribute some curious facts from the experience of my own tribe. Some of us claim a subtle faculty of conception, an inward power of perception, a receptive organ of reflection, by which the wildest stories and legends are certified and taken as representing sober fact, and revealing verifiable principle. One such imaginative pip asks us to believe that it originally dwelt in a golden globe attached to what it calls the branch of a tree, and surrounded by so-called leaves – whatever such terms may stand for – and further fancies that this globe started from the centre of a corolla of fragrant "leaves," called the petals of a flower. Not content with such a tissue of idle dreams, the pip insists that within the shrine of its own heart lies, ready to be drawn forth by the action of that very extraneity called "sun" the promise and the potency of a plant to spring from it that shall consist of root, stem, and branch, of leaf, and flower, and fruit, and thus of seed again. And it maintains that the very condition of this development is that first it shall moulder away, be broken up and die as seed in earth.'

Here broke in the Wheat-grain: – 'Some of us, I can assure you, go even further in their folly. They not only fancy that they are conscious of a plant-life beyond grain, but one actually teaches the "law of sacrifice" in life through death; affirming that the supreme destiny of the wheat-grain

is incorporation in a higher organism than any plant-form known. It tells us that not only are we to abandon all care for self-preservation as intact seed, to fall cheerfully into fertile soil, and there in pain and darkness waste away in order that at last, through utter dissolution, our hearts may germinate and ascend towards the light, but that corn has another "privilege," a representative "glory." It may, forsooth, be ground, and then be kneaded and exposed to fearful heat; after which it may be received into and assimilated by a more complex organism, to help in forming tissue composed of innumerable cells like our own, but with indefinitely greater powers of combined consciousness and action. A fine prospect and a likely issue, truly!

'Well,' said the Pip thoughtfully, 'my friend, too, spoke of the golden ball being cut when he fell out, and its substance being taken into some organic region unknown to us, to help in building up a finer structure.'

Here the Teacher was observed to be making notes with an air of being somewhat taken aback, and was heard to mutter: – 'This must be seen to. I must correct the mistaken inference that because there are no sun-rays to produce or stimulate these processes, therefore they don't exist; I must write an "Essay on the Science of Biological Ethics," which shall show that all this really takes place, but through forces wholly derived from earth.'

A fragment of ice and a crystal of snow lay close together listening, and near them rested a particle of carbon. Said the Ice to the Snow: – 'Let us take all this to heart. We used to think that if warmth came to us, it was from a sun, and if we melted, though I lost my gem-like glitter, and you your exquisite design, yet that we should find a larger life in flowing through the world in fertilising streams; nay, that beyond all present limits, we should be drawn up by the sun in wreaths of filmy vapour from the earth, returning there in life-bringing showers to aid sun-work. But clearly warmth is earth begotten and death-dealing; we melt, and we are not.' 'Aye,' sadly echoed the carbon; 'and once I thought that, dull and uncomely as I am, I too might one day enter into a glorified state of radiance men call "diamond," and that the many colours and the sparkling light I should give forth would reflect the fabled "sun" they speak of.' Soon, many murmurs took up the burden both of protest and regret. All Nature seemed perversely to have given one hand to heaven and the other one to earth; from all sides came the voice – 'Behold the sun! what witness need we that it is?' But the Teacher smiled. 'It is curious,' he said, 'how the growth of superstition follows the same laws everywhere. It is a weed, hard, as all weeds are, to kill or root up finally. Ideas long cherished, however baseless, tend, both in the individual and in the race (through heredity), to project themselves into a sort of spurious objectivity. You will hear many declaring that they see the sun, and often watch with rapture its glowing, radiant disc behind the many-hued clouds, at what they call sunrise and sunset. And numbers maintain that the alternations of night and day, winter and summer, witness to this ultra atmospheric luminary, instead of merely being special forms of a general law of rhythm, or action and reaction, as observed, e.g., in the phenomena of sound. As well might we attribute to the influence of the tidal ebb and flow, the rise and fall of our own respiration! It is time that the sun-myth were finally discarded. Intelligent and reasonable beings should recognise, even though with pain, the limit of their knowledge and their vision. It is plain common-sense that we cannot know what is beyond the region of the atmosphere, or penetrate the vacant, sunless depths. Let us all be satisfied with earth!'

3.12. Threefold Laws (1886)*

Anything that promises a way out of confusion and perplexity must needs be worth attention. But the very suggestion has an ominous sound. So many ‘ways’ have professed to lead us ‘out’ and when followed have proved mere blind alleys! And when we hear that such a ‘path’ means first of all asking how it came about that men have always laid special stress on a threefold order in experience and what this signifies for us, we are very rightly more than ever on our guard. Such enquiries as a rule either belong to some definite branch of science wherein experts only could handle them to any purpose, or else they are mere waste of time and futile from the first. There is always some nostrum which looks plausible until the analyst’s merciless hand has touched it; and especially there is always a ‘magic number’ to which facts are made to conform by hook or by crook.

Moreover ‘threefold laws’ in philosophy have created at best one school out of many; one which can only differ from and proscribe others, not supply a ‘missing link’ between them or interpret them to their holders. As technical they can only be the concern of a small number of specialists. Such ideas merely mock us in our trouble. What we want is something that helps us to live and to bear life. Yet it is emphatically from this point of view that we are now to ask why the tendency to arrange everything in threes and in a particular order should be so common always and everywhere as it is. Is this pure accident? Does it mean nothing? Might it as well have been twos, or fours, or fives, or a different order?

However this may be, the fact remains that we all intellectually cultivate the ubiquitous Threefold – however little we may suspect it. Certainly its use enormously preponderates over the fourfold or fivefold or sixfold and so on; and except in a restricted sense, over even the twofold. What is the meaning of this, and when did it begin?

We are told that in the Aryan (Indo-Germanic) languages there was a time when one and two, or that which was *divided* from one, were the only numerals known; and it required a fresh effort of thought to attain to and conceive of a new numeral.³³ The suggestion that the name which

* [Galley proofs of a paper dated 1886 variously entitled ‘Threefold Laws,’ ‘Law of the Three Stages,’ ‘The Triad,’ ‘The Tendency to Triads,’ and scheduled to appear with W. Clarke, Grantham. The proof copy was traced in the Welby Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections. Welby sent this paper to Peirce, among others, for his opinion and critical comments, see the relative correspondence in Hardwick 1977. See Welby 1886f].

33. The same state of things still exists. ‘There are still many tongues in which the plural is formed by reduplication, tongues, that is, where duality, the repetition of the idea, is or has been the only conception of plurality yet reached; and others in which the number “three” is denoted by words like *prica*, “many” (in the dialect of the Puris of South America), expressive of vague indefiniteness, and inability to form a clear idea of anything beyond “two.”’ (‘Introduction to the Science of Language,’ A. H. Sayce, Vol. 1: 137–138)

The contrast is a striking one between the educated European, with his easy use of his boundless numeral series, and the Tasmanian, who reckons three, or anything beyond two, as ‘many,’ and makes shifts by his whole hand to reach the limit of ‘man,’ that is to say 5. This contrast is due to arrest of development in the savage, whose mind remains in the childish state which one of our nursery-rhymes illustrates in a curiously perfect way. It runs thus: – ‘One’s none, Two’s some, Three’s a many, Four’s a penny, Five’s a little hundred.’

To notice this state of things among savages and children raises interesting points as to the early history of grammar. W. von Humboldt suggested the analogy between the savage notion of 3 as ‘many’ and the grammatical use of 3 to form a kind of superlative, in forms of which ‘trismegistas,’ ‘ter felix,’ ‘thrice blest,’ are familiar instances. The relation of single, dual, and plural is well shown pictorially in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, where the picture of an object, a horse, for instance, is marked by a single line | if but one is meant, by two lines

this received ([illegible], &c.) meant, 'I pass beyond' is now considered doubtful; but if 'non è vero,' it is at least 'ben trovato.' Suppose we were to find ourselves one day in a world where the arithmetic was wholly confined to the symbol for one. How should we get the inhabitants to assimilate the idea of two and three and so on? They would say One and One, or rather, to take the numerals which represent the original fingers or sticks, 1 and 1 make 1.1 (one-one). Of course the *notion* which we symbolize with 'two' or '2' comes to them easily by the innumerable repetitions in common experience of the splitting of husk, &c., into halves, or the doubling of objects by shadow or reflection, and in the rhythms, like breathing, of which life and nature are full from the first. For even the baby-mind works by doubleness; seeing differences and likeness between this one and that one, seeing its two hands before it, feeling two eyes, two legs and feet, and so on.

The *effort* begins with the idea of 3 or the 3rd. If you add one to the first one-one or double (or half-half), the result is never 3 but only another *one*, or the first of another pair or couple or double, or another half. There would be no third in our sense of link or sum, means or product; no triad at all. Our primitive calculators would always protest that after the doubling, the one-one, we were only beginning again with another one. Stick to sticks! they would cry. Things are single, or else double or half, and *many*. You must choose either one or another one, or both ones or many ones. And then they would declare that we were playing with words, when we tried desperately to give them the fresh ideas with existing language! The only way would be to direct attention to the less obvious and frequent occurrence of the threefold in experience, to the rarer husks which split into three, to triangular objects, to the frozen, the liquid, the vaporous states of water, &c., &c.

And after all, in the very conditions of human life each generation passes beyond itself in the third of the ideal family – father, mother, *child*; and the very space which conditions our thought has three dimensions. Nay, we cannot dispense with triads like beginning, middle, end; past, present, future. So that in these as in many other cases the principle is enthroned at the starting-points of experience, and we may find it worth while to look at the matter from a fresh point of view.

From the first, the metaphor which suggests itself in expressing or defining experience is that of taking a line or course, of following a path; we start on a way along which we journey through the world. We have only to go straight forward and steadily follow it up. But the lessons of life are sharp and searching; and sooner or later, if we really think things out and face the result, we arrive at a time of painful perplexity and doubt. With many of us this grows into an agony of question. We see nothing but the apparent destruction of our most vital certainties. The image even of dissection falls short here.

The general disintegration suggests nothing less than vivisection. Everything seems torn to quivering shreds, as well as falling to pieces and breaking down: the one thing plain is, that our position is untenable and intolerable.

A fresh thought now dawns upon us: the paramount need of knowing how things really are. We come to close quarters and ask, what *is* truth, and what *is* fact?

|| if two are meant, by three lines ||| if three or an indefinite plural number are meant. The scheme of grammatical number in some of the most ancient and important languages of the world is laid down on the same savage principle. Egyptian, Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Greek, Gothic, are examples of languages using singular, dual, and plural number; but the tendency of higher intellectual culture has been to discard the plan as inconvenient and unprofitable, and only to distinguish singular and plural. No doubt the dual held its place by inheritance from any early period of culture and Dr. D. Wilson seems justified in his opinion that it 'preserves to us the memorial of that stage of thought when all beyond two was an idea of indefinite number' ('Primitive Culture,' Dr. E. B. Taylor, Vol. 1: 264–265).

We may abandon our discredited assumptions as fast as their fallacy is detected. But the process of repudiation itself assumes a repudiating critic. What, or who, or where is this?

Despairing once more of an answer, we ostentatiously abjure 'mythology' or 'metaphysics' and take refuge in the obviously or apparently useful. We insist on rigidly confining ourselves to plain and provable fact (forgetting that 'fact' is only probable and never plain), only to find that our plausible utility, as we grasp it, turns to dust and ashes in our hands; while 'actual' which seems to rule us is itself, in a sense, a myth of our own creation.

So after all we find an eradicable enemy smiling at us out of the very heart of our protest and manifesto. It is indeed snugly ensconced in the core of our scientific observation and experiment, in the 'root-concepts' of the tangible and the evident, in the structure of history itself, in the recesses of hard dry logic, in the forms and symbols of mathematics, in the nucleus of all 'matter of fact' and 'common-sense,' even in the very 'physics' which, driving out the wily '*Meto*' with a pitchfork by the door, finds it quietly creeping in again by the window, riding on the very beam of light by which we had sharpened or pointed our weapon! The only alternative is relapse into 'protozoic' conditions, renouncing the dangerous gift of complexity, and watching with relief the gradual atrophy of disused mental organs which had so disastrously transcended the protoplasmic level of function.

But if, instead of either refusing to enter or refusing to pass onwards out of, the region or phase of scientific and critical test, we resolutely face both the stages as means not ends, we find that both are processes and issue in a third which gives us at last an interpretative power, hitherto dormant, but now actual, operative, even prolific of valid outcome. If we come to discern in the history and experience of Man, the way which he leads us into all truth, we find that both, faithfully used and fearlessly passed through, will issue in a life which is an Answer, a solution; first practical, then intellectual.³⁴

Comte's 'Law of Three Stages' here suggests itself.³⁵ But the principle we have been postulating, while translating Comte into a wider experience, tends to open a door where he seems to give us but a blank wall. To arrest the development of mental function at an arbitrary point which is called 'positive,' but as ending in itself becomes actually a negation, seems in this day of ever fresh openings more and more impossible and unscientific.

34. Here the reader may begin to suspect a foregone conclusion, – with its usual accompaniment, facts ingeniously arranged to fit it, or when fatal to it, carefully ignored. It is therefore necessary to say *that the terms way, truth, life, are here taken simply quâ terms*; as plain, even colloquial expressions used in a certain order as conveniently covering a wide range of facts and conceptions. Thus the question of where they notably occur in any document, or what authority they have for us, is for our present purpose irrelevant. Any inference adverse or favourable from this point of view must be postponed. They are taken frankly on their own merits.

35. From the study of development of human intelligence in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of a great fundamental law to which it is necessarily subject, and which has a solid foundation of proof, both in the facts of our organisation and in our historical experience. The law is this: that each of our leading conceptions – each branch of our knowledge – passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive.

'In other words, the human mind, by its nature, employs in its progress three methods of philosophising, the character of which is essentially different, or even radically opposed; via, the theological method, the metaphysical, and the positive. Hence arise three philosophies, or general systems of conception of the aggregate of phenomena, each of which excludes the others. The first is the necessary point of departure of the human understanding; and the third is its fixed and definitive state. The second is merely a state of transition' (Comte's 'Positive Polity,' Vol. 1: 1. Translated by Miss Martineau.)

The gates of knowledge stand wider and wider on all sides, whether or no we are yet able to pass through them. No swathing, stiffening bonds are round us, mummifying thought!

Let us see then whether we can utilise (without being coerced by) Comte's idea of a Law of three stages; and suppose that broadly speaking Man passes through three 'phases of mind' which we may consider as (1) the Moral, the Logical, the Philosophical; or the Way of right conduct, right reasoning, and right generalization; (2) the Mathematical, the Critical, the Scientific; or the Truth, abstract, historical, positive; and (3) the Vital, the Energetic, the Generative; or the Life, sensuous, conscious, creative. In the other words Man mentally develops by a threefold process; that is, *by the tentative, the corrective, and the effective*. This is abundantly reflected and illustrated by the psychical process itself; which as Ziehen for instance tells us ('Physiological Psychology,' p. 29) 'consists of three chief factors, (1) the sensation of perception, (2) the play of motives or association of ideas, and (3) the action.' Again, in the lowest stage of mental development, sensation directly impels to fitting motion: in the highest stage the 'tone of feeling,' a third factor, intervenes and modifies resulting motion (p. 150).

Let us again put our supposition thus; broadly speaking there are *three* stages of mental activity, each stage itself capable of re-division on the same principle, while experience may be interpreted from three standpoints or in the three aspects, all closely bound up with our most practical needs. In postulating such a key to mental and vital problems we must however of course beware of erecting it into a magic formula or a ready-made panacea, and must draw no hard and fast lines to separate what obviously crosses and combines in every direction. We are only making hypothetical distinctions for the sake of getting the very gift which Comte's 'Law' promises; – a way through that question and analysis which sifts truth from error, to the prerogative which we call life, whether in a physical or psychical sense.

We will say then (for we must needs give the idea in many forms) that speaking in a general and evolutionary sense, the first 'need' or organic demand is a means or way. Certainly this idea must precede any other; for how can we even distinguish difference and resemblance without some sense-*means* or mode? We must learn to relate or discriminate in some *way*. Next, if the life-start is not to be abortive; if anything but a speedy collapse is to be possible whether physically or psychically, there must be in some sense *a test*; an effectual sifting out of wrong means, wrong attempts, mistaken efforts and inferences. And lastly there must be *fitting or effective outcome* – in its turn a means of further development. In fact from the point of view now taken, evolution in its widest sense may be called ascent by a means or path in some way, after some manner through the tests of natural selection to 'life' in a sense otherwise impossible or at least unknown to experience. Or – using the words of course in a popular sense – we may say that first there is impression and effort (excitation and response); then elimination of all the less fitting; then productive application of what survives the process. To apply this principle however to the law of mental growth and action which we began by suggesting, – we first receive an 'impression' or accept that of others and forthwith do our best to carry it out in practice. And seeking, finding, following a true 'way' of making the most of life is assuredly our first duty and wisdom. Only we find that we cannot make our special principle or method apply to all men and all things at all times and in all places. It is not invariably accepted or perhaps understood, even by those whose aim, like our own, is the right and the best, in deed and thought and conviction. In short it is less than human. So we begin to feel misgivings: to examine, to compare, to try, to sift; we no longer accept doctrine or theory without enquiry, or take assertion as proof, or feeling as evidence. And then we lose the passionate or at least the habitual sense of certainty: of the necessary reality of what to us has been the very keystone of all that makes deed worth doing, thought worth thinking, creed worth believing, faith worth loyalty. Another passion – or habit – succeeds [illegible] the ceaseless patient search for Truth at all costs for its own sake. However bitter and repellent the outcome or the inference, we feel that all is summed up and absorbed for us in the one question – Is it true?

But when this second stage has been in some form, and more or less consciously, passed through, then – and not till then – we are really prepared for the third. We learn at length what ‘passeth away’; what indeed *came to pass* in a deeper, larger and more literal sense than we have thought of in using the familiar phrase: what things, long loved, are shaken and must go, and what, though tried to the uttermost, yet remain unseathed. The Way of faithfulness loyally followed even in ignorance and it may be in illusion, leads us through thirsty deserts of Truth. But thus in the end – our discipline over, our lesson learnt – we find what had seemed lost more wholly ours than ever. In the third stage we are able at last to apply, in fearless freedom, all which we have gained in our long and bitter pilgrimage.

To go back to the first of our three triads. It must be noted that while Comte gives us the theological, the metaphysical, the scientific, as representing the fictitious, the abstract, the positive, the first sub-triad of the ‘law’ now suggested takes the moral, the logical, the philosophical, as representing conduct, reasoning, and generalization. For otherwise we should find ourselves in the difficulty which lies at the threshold of every enquiry, and is obstructive in proportion to the range and importance of the subject. What are we to mean by ‘theology?’ As in other cases, the term has become inadequate to balance the others used, unless we can rescue it from the cant meanings and technical applications, as well as the obsolete associations, which are increasingly degrading it.³⁶

Once, of course, it expressed the ultimate human prerogative. It meant the knowledge of and conscious dependence upon the highest Object of man’s purest aspirations and the source and consummation of his whole being. And the difficulty is that while it now no longer universally connotes this supreme factor of life, we have no other term to put in its place. What then is to be done? We must fain be content with a precautionary vagueness, at least until attention can be more definitely called to the subtle changes of sense which are the real causes of so much misunderstanding and controversy.

The first triad, then, would include (I) Moralists; or those to whom a right way of conduct (as the result of valid ethics) is the one essential thing; (II) Logicians; or those to whom a right way or method of thinking is of supreme importance; (III) Those who proclaim what in their eyes is the true meaning of life and experience, or who follow a Way of salvation (and holiness) as the one thing needful. And this last would include the mystic, the saint, and even the hero, as well as the ideal philosopher. It is indeed also the place of the poet and the artist; the lover of beauty no less than the lover of goodness. We shall find, I think, that on the whole those who belong to these three first orders will tend to look upon mathematical abstraction and critical or scientific research as secondary matters, compared with the finding and following of a path of virtuous action or a method of right thinking, or a means of spiritual or aesthetic or intellectual redemption. The typical moralist will tell us that ‘good deeds or works’ need neither theory nor authority, and are their own sufficient warrant. The typical logician will claim to unfold the only principle on which our convictions can be rational and trustworthy. And the philosophical or spiritual teacher – whether he deals with the really divine or something less – will urge that the working test of truth is its agreement with certain ultimate assumptions and inferences, or a faith in the Way of salvation which cannot be made into a code of morals or conduct or become the subject or strict logical or physical demonstration.

Here again each division admits of being sub-divided. Under (1) we may have (a) the practical moralist who simply ‘follows’ his conscience and orders his life virtually on empirical grounds. (b) We may have the earnest student of ethics, striving by mental analysis to discern and verify principles which will hold good in all cases, even in those where there seems to be but a choice of evils. And (c) we may have one who, knowing right and wrong in both these aspects, goes on

36. This however lands us in the domain of psychology and philology proper, involves other questions and cannot be discussed here.

to realise goodness, – and further, holiness – not merely as personal or merely as abstract, but as qualities of a vital, energetic, generative, reality. This answers in evolving force to that mysterious impulse which produces the ‘organic,’ and alone gives us working clues to and the synthesis of the else inscrutable rhythms of the universe.

So under (II) we may have (a) the primitive thinker, thinking rightly and logically ‘by instinct,’ as we say of the simple child, though he cannot reflect upon or formulate his thought. And (b) we may have the careful student of scientific psychology; the man who analyses mind, defines and dissects feeling, will, thought and so on, hitherto often finding that he lacks some essential clue; that results and inferences are on the whole conflicting or strangely sterile. Then (c) comes the seer – still too rare – who learns to interpret his healthy balanced insight, finding, so far as he can do this, true application of his gift to the questions echoing round him. Of such a one we may well say that he radiates living power.

Again, under (III) we have (a) the primitive dogmatist content with untested, unsifted, ‘authority,’ accepting his creed with a disguised distrust which he takes for humility, and shrinking with dread from a call to face stern fact. Next (b) we find the man conscious of a royal mission to purify and to illuminate. He sees that faith in God as light, in Christ as truth, involves the fearless testing of all which claims our service and assent. But if he thinks the ‘rational’ is all, he too is sore perplexed at seeming failure. (c) Then at last we find the man who takes us further. He finds that the third stage, whatever we are to call it, can involve nothing less than the meaning and the force of all we see and know and do, because it involves the secret of what we truly *are*.

The same division (and perhaps sub-division) of course applies in some way in the other two cases. The mathematician, the historical critic, the physical scientist, are alike from their several points of view, those to whom demonstrable conclusions (reached by unquestionable methods) are paramount; but the distinction between them is still important. The mathematician follows the way of the purest mental abstraction: the historical critic seeks for truth out of a mass of legendary record: the physical scientist gives us the working result of inductive observation and experiment. No less significant is the distinction between those who represent what I have ventured provisionally to call the vital (or living), the energetic (or impelling) and the generative (or creative). It is however impossible here from want of space to go into this. We must be content for the moment to take a more general view.

We have postulated a first condition of existence and development actual and logical, and a first type of experience which may broadly be summed up under the general idea of a Way or path, as [illegible], mode, manner or method of reaching desired result, as the pursuit of certain ends, practical, moral or intellectual, the following up of given lines of conduct or of research.

We pass on to Truth which in the widest sense includes fact, and even becomes not a mere quality but an end in itself, as opposed to error or illusion, to fancy or fable, to unsound logic and general mendacity and inaccuracy. Here we find men to whom the one thing central, the one thing worth the labour of a life-time to establish irrespective of results or reward, is truth, not only as precision and exactitude, not only as veracity, but as strictly variable *reality*. In the very words of such a one to the present writer, ‘It all comes back to this and this alone; truth at any cost. What if the universe is to collapse under our feet? What if hopes are shattered, ideals proved illusory? If it be so, let us know the truth however ghastly, and not shirk but quietly face it. Neither lament nor pretence can alter it. All else comes second to the search for truth.’ And this is the dominant characteristic of our day; especially of that recent development, the typical scientific mind.

But the man to whom truth, either as indisputable axiom or demonstrable fact, is practically the one thing worth attention, has a tendency on his side to put all ‘ways’ whether of conduct, reasoning, abstract, and synthetic conception of faith, in a secondary place. He feels strictly provable certainties to be so entirely the prime necessity, that he is contented to leave the study of

things ethical, philosophical, aesthetic, or spiritual to others, ever reiterating his warning of the need of unsparing test of their basis. And he is tempted slightly to shrug his mental shoulders at the idea of such work being the exclusive or main interest of anyone. He doubts whether anything can be known (in his almost technical sense of 'knowledge') in these directions. He falls back on the doing of one's best in patient and candid ignorance of any real 'foundation' (still more, real 'inspiration') for schemes of conduct, thought or belief. And he looks with more than suspicion on all demands for 'faith' as implying assent to things which cannot be submitted to scientific test, or even to any form of logical analysis. But then he is liable, on this account, to confound two things which need to be distinguished for the sake of clearness, – truth and accuracy. As we often see in Art, it is possible to sacrifice the first to the second, thereby in fact losing both. In short the follower of truth shows the same spirit as the follower of the Way; and like him is in fact a worshipper – even in some cases a fanatical one – not of a mere abstraction, but of a virtual divinity, as adorable to him and as truly his guide as any moral, theoretical, or spiritual way, sought and followed by those who belong to the first type.

We are thus again led to that third sphere or stage, worth its own sub-divisions, which is expressed under the general term 'life.' When the supremely vital, the vitally energetic, the spiritually generative, – as yet vague and far-away ideals – are recognised as waiting for us not before, but after, we have let patience have her perfect work in *intellectual* training, we shall find that here too we must still preserve distinction. Just as organic life may be approached from the sensuous, from the conscious, from the voluntary standpoints, and studied as vegetative, as automatic, and as creative, so the life which lies beyond that truth through which alone we really reach it, has again three aspects.

In many senses, life has in fact 'three stages' and three characters. To begin with, we have the life of the plant, the life of the animal, the life of Man as the self-conscious thinker and questioner. The sum-total of nature comprises these; we have passed the first, we are still in the second, *how far have we penetrated the third?* At all events the advance now open to the race is increase in complexity of the highest brain-functions, increased brainpower.

But here more stringent than ever are the limitations of language. There can be nothing more abortive than the attempt to be prematurely predictive.

It is perhaps well that, be a new thought true or false, it is so difficult to find words for it which do not carry with them the very assumptions which the new thought supersedes. If true it will work its way in hidden channels until old words have taken on new meanings, or until new ones can be welcomed, since the need of them is felt. If false, much harm is averted by this obstacle to assimilation. Only it must ever be kept in mind that the difficulty is there; and that a really new thought requires an element of vagueness, of reticence, even it may be of obscurity, if it is not to add one more to the great army of the hopelessly misread. A thought as vague, as irregular, as difficult sometimes to distinguish with the naked eye from inorganic slime as protoplasm itself, may yet in its own good time bring a gift of life into a world. It is not always well to insist upon the definite where its absence may be the very sign of life!

But to resume the whole thought in its more general aspect. For the sake of brevity, the postulated sequence has been narrowly restricted in application. But it is obvious that, if valid, it must bear test over a much wider range, indeed in some sense universally. In every form of experience we ought to find the broad principle that the first stage is to grope, to feel our way, gradually to discover and use a means, a medium and a method; that the second is to analyse and verify this, that the third is to translate and apply it in a new and more living sense. And it must also follow that much of human experience, either individual or collective, must be still in the second if not even the first stage. I hope indeed that it may presently be asked whether humanity in its most representative aspect is not now as a whole in the second stage, – the analytical and critical – and whether the pessimism which in some form or another affects us all is not owing to this, is not itself a witness to its own transitional character; one with which it is impossible to

be satisfied, while it cannot rightly be escaped. But optimism is not the cure we want. Whether the optimist reaches forward through mysticism and spiritualism, – the occult and the esoteric, – to a harvest which he has not mentally earned, or whether he desperately reverts to a voluntary ignorance to which he has now no right and which becomes a mere blind fool's paradise; in the end he defeats himself, and is impotent to help us. There are no short cuts to truth, and life is not really reversible, although it may be said that it returns upon itself to start afresh. Let the pessimist but recognise his condition as actually a stage, and one which, faced to the uttermost and itself subjected to penetrating scrutiny will furnish its own solution, and the worst becomes endurable as (in no 'mere metaphor') the pang of coming life. The impulse to question which suggests despair is seen to owe its cruel pressure to the force of the unborn answer soon to issue into light. It is that very answer which is compelling us to seek it. We must earn it, through hard processes of birth.

By this time, however, the reader to whom 'metaphysics' is more than a mystifying and needless jargon, is suspecting a disguised version of Hegel. But although Hegel is one of the most notable of thinkers who have 'thought in threes,' he is also one of the most dangerous of those who have allowed the idea to master and to warp their whole mental world. Let us welcome the warning and submit our present hypothesis to facts, accepting its limitations as they reveal themselves. We will try to illustrate its meaning by a reference to one of the very conditions of mental life itself – the three dimensions of space. How far may this prove a valid analogy?

(1) A moving point generates a line. That is, a way, a path of progression, having but the quality of length.

(2) A moving line generates a surface. That is, breadth. We now discover that our line may be traversed in every direction by other lines; we are liable to be perplexed as to which of these is the true one to take. The simplicity and certainty of our first stage is lost. Others, still unconscious of any 'surface,' tell us that there is but one direction in which it is permissible or indeed possible to advance; that to swerve one step to right or left is irretrievable ruin; the definite simple Way is ours: all surface is delusion. But we now know and see that even to reach a central goal lines must converge from many directions, so that breadth must be accepted.

(3) A moving surface generates a solid. At last we realise a completely new condition of things which yet belongs to and has grown out of the two former. We have been as it were trained by the two first to enter the third.

If we still had any misgivings as to the safety of freely exploring 'surface,' and testing our one line by its many lines in myriad curves and angles, the folly of mistrusting or suspecting the second 'dimension' would now at least be manifest. But the idea of the solid cannot be fully realised until we are within its sphere.

We should always 'find a geometrical notion embodied in the solid which has no representative in the figure of two dimensions.' And this wholly new idea is that of rising above or sinking below the plane. Hitherto as it were all our creed was *flat*; now it reaches *substance*. We thought, while first upon the line and then upon the surface, that we knew what the 'solid' was. But now we see our error.

To put the idea in another way. A point itself is nothing till turning it into a starting-point we leave, – then it issues in a line. Still we see fact only as on one line – our own – and require others to adopt that if they would be right. Then our thought reaches out into ever-widening areas; yet still we know of nothing more than *flatness*. But in truth the surface belongs to a 'solid' world. At last we reach this sphere; and from thence descry, as from our cool hard planet, a myriad worlds of light, – real as itself.

Those of us who are content with the 'point' as such may be said to deny the line; it is only by onward movement that we confess it. Those of us who are content with the line as such may be said to deny surface, it is only by widening 'right' and 'left' that we acknowledge it. And those again who are content with surface as such may be said to deny 'volume' or 'cube'; it is only by taking a fresh direction – by going down into the depth, by rising into the height – that we discern

and enter it. And are we not for the most part still as it were on the plane of two-dimensional thought? We can in no wise surmount any obstacles in our mental path, or see beyond an outline or a limit on the mental surface. We are not content to call all beyond them 'transcendental,' and to treat them as final. A third mental 'dimension' always seems to us transcendental in thought, just as the suggested 'fourth dimension' in space seems to us outside the range of physically possible. Using this analogy as a means of testing thought, reliance upon 'dogma' as upon observance and convention would mean that we belonged to one dimension of thought only. So far as these in any form mastered instead of serving us, it would be because there was, to us, but one single way in which to order our ideas and direct our actions. And when such formula or code was not merely absolute – no alternative existing but sheer ruin – but also fixed, unprogressive, final, it would not even be as much as this. Ours would be but a point of view or a system of order merely – and would carry us no further. Does not this suggest a reason deeper than we have reached for some protests which the dogmatic method evokes? It is alien to the thinking called 'advanced' and worse, to that which is *advancing*. It is equally alien no doubt to the mind which we call mystical. The man of dreams, of feeling, of idealising passion, no less than the man of searching criticism, tends to abjure or at least to neglect formula and ceremony, code and rite. But we have already seen that the fatal flaw in the mystic – and too often in the poet – is, that deserting the first method, that of authority, dogma, outward observance, he shirks the second, that of criticism and analysis, and rushes over to the third, that of realisation, translation, of fertilised application. He finds indeed there thrills of quickening life, and quivering chords and notes of far-off harmonies. He strangely stirs us all as with music when he speaks of it. He sways the mind that shuts out pressing questions and dulls with soothing anodyne the pangs of a choking reason. He even uplifts minds ready to be ruled by strong emotion alone. But his penalty is that he leaves life untranslated; and although he claims clear vision, cannot use it. It is glorious in a sense, but it is barren. He touches us, but he cannot illuminate. The visionary, the speculative, no longer brings us truth, the very words have grown to mean illusion. Knowledge falls apart from the faith's ideals, whether poetic, ethical, or pious. We still may *feel*, and long to be and do; but we do not *see* as men do when they *know*. And truth *must* come as hostile while we dread it. The critical spirit, that precious gift of a God defined as light, becomes a sword to pierce us. We stumble on with nature cloven in two; how can we hope to conquer and achieve? Humanity is Truth as much as Life. Our way leads on through question to the uttermost; so only can we look to live indeed.

But thus again we enter what we have called the second dimension of thought. We are surrounded by apparently disconnected pathways crossing each other in every direction, we lose our bearings 'amid a maze of contradicting finger-posts,' and even yet we cannot descend or ascend except in what seems empty dream or fancy. The agony of this state may be unspeakable. But it is only intolerable if we suppose it final. Let us come to a 'third dimension' and we discover the *meaning* of it; after all it is the unmeaning which appals and paralyses.

The thoughts of lower and higher, of downward and upward, of fall and aspiration gather fresh significance. We acquire a new world to think in, one 'transcendent' to the others only as our homely plain 'solidity' transcends point, and line, and surface. Those of us who have only reached the second stage have indeed in one sense 'lost our way,' – that which has seemed the one line alone existing. But now we may think in plane. That means of course a complex of many lines, but a moving surface is in its turn the analogue of a way. So we have but lost to find it in fuller measure. And again this 'surface' generates a greater complex skill.

But it is impossible yet to treat all this as a question of fact. We have first to ask how far analogies take us. Are they always futile except when merely apt? Certainly they influence our thinking. How far do they even constrain it, whether we will or no? Does it matter, again, what images we choose, and if so is the subject one of solely rhetorical consequence? Should they always be taken at random, snatched up for the moment to be thrown away when used? Or may some prove more really valid than others? Attention needs to be called to queries like these.

Another subject however is yet more urgent, – that of evidence. We have seemed to take for granted that the preponderance of a certain sequence in all that we know and experience is so great as to indicate some reason not yet realised. The warrant for that must be dealt with in a second article, and even so can only be roughly out-lined, so great is the wealth of witness and its cumulative value.

Moreover the threefold law which we have been thus supposing as a possible clue to experience, is of course itself essentially dynamic. We are not only limited nowhere by finality; we are compelled to postulate a never-ending movement. The law itself expresses this; reach life and you reach fresh means of radiation, new paths to new possessions. We not only pass onward along a life-tending way, – but *that* passes onward too. Truth bears us forward and upward; it is means of higher attainment. Life is as much a Way as it is a truth; it gives us the message of growth, and reproduces itself. And consciousness, its outcome depends on change.

Meanwhile we may end by quoting a passage which occurs among additions made by Prof. Jowett in a new edition of his ‘Dialogues of Plato’:

The ‘eternal truths’ of which metaphysicians speak have hardly ever lasted more than a generation. In our own day schools of systems of philosophy which have once been famous have died before the founders of them. We are still, as in Plato’s age, groping about for a new method more comprehensive than any of those which now prevail; and also more permanent. And we seem to see at a distance the promise of such a method, which can hardly be any other than the method of idealised experience, having roots which strike far down into the history of philosophy. It is a method which does not divorce the present from the past, or the part from the whole, or the abstract from the concrete, or theory from fact, or the divine from the human, or one science from another, but labours to connect them. Along such a road we have proceeded a few steps, sufficient, perhaps, to make us reflect on the want of method which prevails in our own day. In another age, all the practice of knowledge, whether relating to God or man or nature, will become the knowledge of ‘the revelation of a single science’ (Symp. 210, 211) and all things, like the stars in heaven, will shed their light upon one another. (Vol. II: 25, 3rd edition)

Yes, we are still groping about among many ways or lines to find our way or line, a path of true advance. But what we want is what shall comprehend them all. And we seem in truth to see, though dimly and at a distance, what we seek. The way which leads through truth to life verily sunders none of the diverse elements of experience. It interprets them, it brings them to bear, it concentrates in vivifying, in quickening them; finally it marries them, it fecundates them, they issue in new Life.

3.13. The ‘Focus’ (1887)*

It is proposed to start with the above title, an occasional not periodical *Magazine of Comparative Suggestion*, consisting not of formal articles, but of short papers, paragraphs, notes on misused or ambiguous terms, brief parables (or illustrative allegories and anecdotes), poems, and parallel quotations, on the most vital questions affecting the well-being of man. The utmost divergence

* [First printed privately and anonymously, see Welby 1887e. As results from letter exchanges between the publisher Alexander Macmillan and Welby and between Welby and her friend Emilia Gurney, during the years 1882 to 1885 (see Cust 1929), Welby had planned to found the journal *Focus* at that time. This project was conceived in response to the need for a critique of language and terminology, dealing with such issues on the basis of the so-called analogical-homological method. In spite of wide consensus this project was never carried through].

of view would find a place in its pages, in the absolute confidence that the lines of really honest and conscientious thought and the earnest search for truth in a teachable spirit, must needs prove in the end to be convergent, and to meet in essential harmony and unity. (For however hopelessly opposed their present tendency may seem to be, and however little their several adherents may as yet be able to discern their mutual relations, or to combine the manifold elements of subjective truth into the perfect reflection of an objective whole, a central principle of unity there surely is, although the paths leading to it be still wide apart. And those lines of conception or interpretation which are really erratic and misleading must needs prove their true character, by failing to stand the test of comparison and analogy). No endeavour would be made to draw together prematurely, as by a forcible wrench, lines which in fact do not yet meet, albeit they be steadily approximating; but it is hoped that something, however little, might be done towards making more manifest than hitherto, the centre of all true convergence and divergence – the origin, essence and goal of life and good – by bringing together ideas now found in opposition, and emphasising their common elements; not by compromise, but by comprehension.

The title 'Focus' has been finally chosen after much hesitation, as coming nearer than any other equally simple, to the idea intended. It is possible that 'Lens,' as expressing that which is the means of bringing parallel lines or rays of light to a common point, would have been more literally accurate; but there would have been none of the richness of suggestive meaning which the word 'focus' supplies. Its definitions and etymology, as given below³⁷ express not merely the needed concentration and radiation of lines of thought which converge towards and diverge from the central 'sun' of truth, but also the quickening and purifying powers of fire; and the thought of a hearth which cherishes all things, with a wide welcome for every shelter-seeking wayfarer, and a special sanctity for the home-dwelling family, expands the term from a scientific technicality to a much-embracing symbol.

Thus we feel that Truth, which possesses the properties of both light and heat, being in fact a consuming fire, manifesting and putting asunder all that is untrue, insubstantial, discordant, may be gathered into one 'focus' where we shall find both light and heat; light to illumine the darkness, heat to decompose and scatter what is base, and to quicken and stimulate energy. To such a 'focus' may we bring our feelings and our thinkings, our interpretations and our prejudices, and even our doubtings or denials; remembering that the word originally denoted a 'hearth' which 'cherishes all things', representing the light of a warm and living love; and knowing that while all else may perish, yet metal purified of its dross, silver assayed, and gold refined by the Refiner in sevenfold completeness shall abide; while tinsel and alloy shall be purged away and vanish.

It should be distinctly understood that the proposed Magazine would *not* be intended merely to add one more to the already over full list, or to compete for readers with those which now take a leading place. On the contrary, it should even serve to some extent to supplement the best existing

37. 'The point from which rays diverge, or to which they converge, may be called their *focus*.' (Isaac Newton's 'Opticks')

'At *focus* a flammis, et quod fovet omnia dictus.' (Ovid, *Fasti*. VI., 301) ('But the fire-hearth is so called from the flames, and because it cherishes all things').

'*Focus*, a point where light-rays meet; also a hearth; hence a centre of fire.' Cf. Gk. $\varphi\tilde{\omega}\zeta$, light; root 'BHA' Aryan, 'to shine.' (Skeat's Etymological Dict.)

'When a pencil of the sun's rays is received in a condensing lens, not merely is light concentrated on its "focus," but heat also; for if a piece of an inflammable substance ... be placed in the focus, it presently begins to burn.' (Ganot's Natural Philosophy, art. 364.)

'The old expression "that fire destroys everything" is incorrect. It destroys nothing – it simply puts certain elements at liberty to unite with others; it decomposes, but at the same time produces. A body in being burned is transformed, but its substance is not destroyed.' (*Idem*, art. 304)

serials, and to act sometimes as pioneer for them in a larger circle of readers than they would naturally command, in consequence of the greater brevity and variety and more popular form of its contents, and its smaller cost. And under certain limitations it might even be possible to call direct attention to the more striking or notable articles in the leading Reviews, Quarterlies, &c., by means of cameo or outline contributed by the writer as a paragraph, with a footnote indicating where the subject would be found more fully treated. The most important features of the principal periodicals might thus even obtain a more general public through the success of the 'Focus,' than they now do.

The 'parallel quotations' would be chosen from old and new sources, and would assuredly bring to light correspondences of thought and identities of principle little suspected by most of us, and full both of significance and of usefulness. Hints and suggestions on terminology and the inevitable and perplexing ambiguity of words might be given; the increasing knowledge of a truer etymology, and the rise of a science of language and of comparative philology, opening a wide field for the practical solution of problems which press like a heavy weight upon our lives and energies, causing us needless confusion and mental distress, and paralysing activity. In many instances it might be pointed out, to the distinct relief of many minds, that what seemed a fatal hindrance, was really but a misused or misunderstood or inadequate expression.

The object of making it an occasional issue is to avoid the risk of 'padding' or manufactured 'copy,' and the deadening effect of periodical writing; since nothing ought to be admitted in the pages of the 'Focus' except on the ground of its illustrative usefulness, and its witness, conscious or unconscious, to the common source of light. The region of controversy would thus, in great measure, be transcended; results being arrived at and conclusions deduced rather by implication than by direct assertion, although the general drift of the collective witness might, from time to time, be summarised, or at least suggested by competent hands.

Papers from the archives

3.14. A Plea for Significs (1904)*

November 1904

Before we can hope for really fruitful ethical discussion – before indeed there can be an 'Ethics' which corresponds to our growing knowledge – we must look to our symbols. Psychology must be expressed by means of phraseology far richer, more delicate, more accurate, truer to experience in its fullest sense and scope, more responsive to fact, wider in range, *more natural and consistent and more scientific in imagery than any at present attained*. For to express the psychology of this age in terms of an outgrown and for us effete cosmical and psychological mythology is suicidal. To adhere to the linguistic framework of an obsolete science and a misread experience, and thus *to atrophy a truer instinct as fast as it rises* and to falsify all our great systems of inferential synthesis alike, is, if we did but know it, a crime against our own humanity.

We must here as elsewhere recover command and use of the original 'touchstones' and criterion: we must *recover* by *uncovering* the lost motherhood of mind. We must realise that true 'intuition'

* [Copies of this typescript were traced in Box 28, file 24 entitled 'Mother-Sense' (WCYA), now appended to Chapter 6, this volume, and in Box 30, file 43 entitled 'Significs,' now appended to Chapter 7. Annotation in handwriting on top of the page: 'M[anuscript] 13, Edited 19 February 1910. Wants editing'].

is a born gift of each one of us and not merely of the exceptional 'genius.' It was for instance to this sound intuition surviving in him and owing nothing to his 'education' except an artificial 'struggle for life,' that prompted and energised Darwin's work as it prompted Isaac Newton's.³⁸

We must realise that this intuition, by the whole trend of civilization, culture intellectual development, has been overlaid, and mostly suppressed. We have allowed it to be expended on trifles or used for mystification, or worse, for imposture. We have compelled it to take degenerate and pathological forms. In its highest form it beguiles us into a mysticism which scorns instead of predicting, interpreting, synthetising the discoveries of science, and deifies or neglects the canons of logic, as it disparages or belittles practical experience.

It is inevitable that in all but a chosen few of men who have fully developed intellectual power on the masculine plane, this true and fruitful intuition should be lost: it is also unavoidable that the whole trend of human progress should *so far* have tended to suppress and paralyse or practically eliminate it in women. The long ages of dulling enslavement succeeded by the ages in which women, either given up to the puerile and frivolous and knowing nothing of their true prerogative, or else vainly striving to imitate and rival the special powers delegated by the original mind-motherhood to the masculine muscle and brain, have forgotten because they have practically lost command of, that insight which is the noblest of gifts. The noblest, – Why? Because it supplies that *sense of significance* without which all knowledge and all co-ordination of knowledge or logical subtlety and development of ideas become vain. [It is that insight, that sense of a significance which is biologically represented by (and may be called a translation of) the development of the consummate logical mastery itself, primarily due to the emergence of separated sex.]³⁹ For the keen *sense* of logical sequence and implication is itself intuitional. The pure Mathematician must be trained, but he is born, not made.

It must never be forgotten that my appeal is to the original mind in us all, and to the true office of the race-motherhood in which all of us must share. Those things which the man's brain, *working without its natural complement*, must needs label unknowable or at least find hopelessly baffling, are 'beyond us' or 'insoluble' or 'idealistic dreaming' precisely because we have temporarily lost an essential part of our hereditary equipment for dealing with them. All history and all pre-historic indications, testify to this. Here we have the reasons for the agnosticism of science, the barrenness of philosophy, the collapse of theology. Here we have a reason for our failure to account for and co-ordinate the 'varieties' whether of religious experience or of philosophical construction.

Here moreover we have the secret of a quite reasonable pessimism produced by the combination of an *indirectly* working knowledge [and thus standard of a 'subconsciousness' or 'sub-liminal' mind]⁴⁰ with the sense of impotence to realise its truth and its glory in this 'weary and mocking' world. The pessimist indeed is our most valuable optimist. For he unconsciously and thus *impartially* witnesses to the reality of the world *with which he so bitterly contrasts* his defective interpretation of the experience of Man. He never asks himself, Why am I discontented, any more than the stars and the pebbles, the animals and the plants? Else he would discover the rich promise of this very misery, the call, – as it were the goading, the urgent impulse – of the Answer-world which prompts his too despairing Question. That question has never yet been and cannot be asked

38. It might perhaps be compared to 'the part played by internal secretion in the general co-ordination of the bodily functions' (Laumonier) till now 'inadequately determined.' Or again we may illustratively use the idea of the intra-atomic activities only lately discovered.

39. [In the typescript the text in square brackets is crossed out, presumably by the editor William Macdonald, with a question mark in handwriting in the margin].

40. [This line is crossed out in the typescript and placed in square brackets, with the comment '?Obscure' in the margin].

aright until the race-Motherhood with its Primordial awareness has been re-discovered and made the most of, and our whole level of Expression and therefore of mastery raised.⁴¹

To return then to our appeal for the discovery of an intuitional criterion of the logical intellect itself: to penetrate to the Mother that bore it *in bearing her son*, the Father: it will I hope be obvious that here is *not* a question of what we usually *call* intuition, – a happy guess, a particular ‘aperçu,’ a gleam of solitary, unrelated light, a vague instinct, (mostly on questions of character and motive) but of something far more august.

The intuition which we need to recover on an ever-ascending plane may even, because of the accretion of casual, sporadic associations of the word, need a fresh symbol.

I have already suggested compounds of Sense itself: *In-sense*, *On-sense*, &c. But that must be left till the ‘sense’ of a salutary language-hunger urges us to seek more nourishing linguistic food for the development of thought on the line of knowledge of reality, in the truest sense of that much abused word.

For what we call ‘Intuition’ has to be, so to speak, married to the logical and the experimental, to the critical and constructive understanding. Until that marriage is effected we can expect no dynasty which can rule our scattered tribes, can read and master the actual and reveal the comely fact that the Unknowable is that only to our one-sided apprehension. We may indeed, to use another figure, say that nothing is unknowable save to an interpretative organism which is reduced to feeding on the barest husks of truth and indeed too often, from starvation, consuming its own tissues.

There has perhaps been no more powerful forward impulse in the world’s history than that given, in spite of us, by the ‘agnosticism’ of modern physical science [that represents a necessary period of abstinence].⁴² It was indeed time that we learnt how fatally defective in their life-centres our theologies and our metaphysics, our mysticisms and our logics, our ethics, and in fact our whole conception of experience (and of civilization) as of humanity itself, really were. GOD forbid that we should ask for a short cut here! The prodigal will not recognise his distance from his father’s house till he has gone through the husks of his swine. And there is here more than the image of a father’s house can give. Rather does it call for the image of a regenerated childhood, not in the babyish sense of the embryonic intelligence which has its life-experience still to learn through a maturing power of judgment, of inference, of critical reason, but in the sense of a tremendous and also orderly energy of exploration and assimilation. Thus in a sense new to most of us we have to set the child in the midst — *as nature, by the prolonged childhood of Man, has already done for us in the direct organic sense and pressed us to translate into the mental and moral sphere*. ‘Untold riches’ is a poor expression for what may *then*, become ours. . .

Let us then clearly realise that the sense of Significance which is ‘intuition’ in a further and truer sense than what the word as yet indicates (since this *ignores* rather than demands and exalts by interpreting, both logic and science) *is not yet ours, except potentially*, and is only seen, dimly and fitfully, as beyond the range of our ordinary standards in the emergence of rare and

41. [Texts in a given file are sometimes repeated in other files with variants of smaller or greater entity. This is the case of the present text, ‘A Plea for Significs,’ traced in the file ‘Mother-Sense,’ Box 28, File 24, and also included in the file entitled ‘Significs,’ Box 30, file 43, where at this point is inserted another text, an untitled manuscript dated November 1904, also traced in the file entitled ‘Primal Sense,’ Box 29, file 36, now included in the present volume. As to the copy of this paper included in the file ‘Mother-Sense (1904–1910),’ page 3 of the typescript ends here and is followed by page 5 where the first two lines are the continuation of a preceding page that has been eliminated. These lines read: ‘or again in rare cases by a special exaltation which intensifies the whole “personality” and transfigures the whole “character.”’ A handwritten annotation gives the following explanation: ‘This is the end of the page on I & Self *cut out*’].

42. [Added in handwriting].

transcendent genius. Never can it be *contrasted* with the intellectual faculties, never can it be detached from the homeliest ‘matter of fact’ or common sense or even, for that ‘matter’ from commonplace! It will follow the most far-reaching speculations as it does the most direct and actual of physical experience. It will illuminate and vivify every element of that experience. We shall see that innumerable factors now overlooked or undervalued are significant and signify to us in ways yet unsuspected: problems like that of pain and evil must take on an altogether new aspect.

Encyclopaedic entry

3.15. Significs (1911)*

SIGNIFICS. The term ‘Significs’ may be defined as the science of meaning or the study of significance, provided sufficient recognition is given to its practical aspect as a method of mind, one which is involved in all forms of mental activity, including that of logic.

In Baldwin’s *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1901–1905) the following definition is given: –

‘1. Significs implies a careful distinction between (a) sense or signification, (b) meaning or intention and (c) significance or ideal worth. It will be seen that the reference of the first is mainly verbal (or rather sensal), of the second volitional, and of the third moral (e.g. we speak of some event “the significance of which cannot be overrated,” and it would be impossible in such a case to substitute the “sense” or the “meaning” of such event, without serious loss). Significs treats of the relation of the sign in the widest sense to each of these.

2. A proposed method of mental training aiming at the concentration of intellectual activities on that which is implicitly assumed to constitute the primary and ultimate value of every form of study, i.e. what is at present indifferently called its meaning or sense, its import or significance. . . . Significs as a science would centralise and coordinate, interpret, inter-relate and concentrate the efforts to bring out meanings in every form and, in so doing to classify the various applications of the signifying property clearly and distinctly.’

Since this dictionary was published, however, the subject has undergone further consideration and some development, which necessitate modification [of the definition] given. It is clear that stress needs to be laid upon the application of the principles and method involved, not merely, though notably, to language, but to all other types of human function. There is need to insist on the rectification of mental attitude and increase of interpretative power which must follow on the adoption of the signifiical viewpoint and method, throughout all stages and forms of mental training and in the demands and contingencies of life.

In so far as it deals with linguistic forms, Significs includes ‘Semantics,’ a branch of study which was formally introduced and expounded in 1897 by Michel Bréal, the distinguished French philologist, in his *Essai de sémantique*. In 1900 this book was translated into English by Mrs. Henry Cust, with a preface by Professor Postgate. M. Bréal gives no more precise definition than the following:

‘Extraire de la linguistique ce qui en ressort
comme aliment pour la réflexion et – je ne
crains pas de l’ajouter – comme règle pour notre

* [Originally published in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXV, 1911: 78–81, see Welby 1911a].

propre langage, puisque chacun de nous collabore
pour sa part à l'évolution de la parole humaine,
voilà ce qui mérite d'être mis en lumière,
voilà ce qui j'ai essayé de faire en ce volume.'

In the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* Semantics is defined as 'the doctrine of historical word-meanings; the systematic discussion of the history and development of changes in the meanings of words.' It may thus be regarded as a reform and extension of the etymological method, which applies to contemporary as well as to traditional or historical derivation. As human interests grow in constantly specialized directions, the vocabulary thus enriched is unthinkingly borrowed and reborrowed on many sides, at first in definite quotation, but soon in unconscious or deliberate adoption. Semantics may thus, for present purposes, be described as the application of Significs within strictly philological limits; but it does not include the study and classification of the 'Meaning' terms themselves, nor the attainment of a clear recognition of their radical importance as rendering well or ill, the expressive value not only of sound and script but also of all fact or occurrence which demands and may arouse profitable attention.

The first duty of the Significian is, therefore, to deprecate the demand for mere linguistic reform, which is indispensable on its own proper ground, but cannot be considered as the satisfaction of a radical need such as that now suggested. To be content with mere reform of articulate expression would be fatal to the prospect of a significantly adequate language; one characterized by a development only to be compared to that of the life and mind of which it is or should be naturally the delicate, flexible, fitting, creative, as also controlling and ordering, Expression.

The classified use of the terms of expression-value suggests three main levels or classes of that value – those of Sense, Meaning, and Significance.

(a) The first of these at the outset would naturally be associated with Sense in its most primitive reference; that is, with the organic response to environment, and with the essentially expressive element in all experience. We ostracize the senseless in speech, and also ask 'in what sense' a word is used or a statement may be justified.

(b) But 'Sense' is not in itself purposive; whereas that is the main character of the word 'Meaning,' which is properly reserved for the specific sense which it is *intended to convey*.

(c) As including sense and meaning but transcending them in range, and covering the far-reaching consequence, implication, ultimate result or outcome of some event or experience, the term 'Significance' is usefully applied.

These are not, of course, the only signifiical terms in common use, though perhaps sense and significance are on the whole the most consistently employed. We have also signification, purport, import, bearing, reference, indication, application, implication, denotation and connotation, the weight, the drift, the tenour, the lie, the trend, the range, the tendency, of given statements. We say that this fact suggests, that one portends, another carries, involves or entails certain consequences, or justifies given inferences. And finally we have the *value* of all forms of expression; that which makes worth while any assertion or proposition, concept, doctrine or theory; the definition of scientific fact, the use of symbolic method, the construction of mathematical formulae, the playing of an actor's part, or even art itself, like literature in all its forms.

The distinctive instead of haphazard use, then, of these and like terms would soon, both as clearing and enriching it, tell for good on our thinking. If we considered that any one of them were senseless, unmeaning, insignificant, we should at once in ordinary usage and in education disavow and disallow it. As it is, accepted idiom may unconsciously either illuminate or contradict experience. We speak, for instance, of *going through* trouble or trial, we never speak of *going through* well-being. That illuminates. But also we speak of the Inner or Internal as *alternative* to the spatial – reducing the spatial to the External. The very note of the value to the philosopher of the 'Inner' as opposed to the 'Outer' experience is that a certain example or analogue of

enclosed space – a specified inside – is thus not measurable. That obscures. Such a usage, in fact, implies that, within enclosing limits, space sometimes ceases to exist. Comment is surely needless.

The most urgent reference and the most promising field for Significs lies in the direction of education. The normal child, with his inborn exploring, significating and comparing tendencies is so far the natural Significian. At once to enrich and simplify language would for him be a fascinating endeavour. Even his crudeness would often be suggestive. It is for his elders to supply the lacking criticism out of the storehouse of racial experience, acquired knowledge and ordered economy of means; and to educate him also by showing the dangers and drawbacks of uncontrolled linguistic, as other, adventure. Now the evidence that this last has virtually been hitherto left undone and even reversed, is found on careful examination to be overwhelming.⁴³ Unhappily what we have so far called education has, anyhow for centuries past, ignored – indeed in most cases even balked – the instinct to scrutinise *and* appraise the value of all that exists or happens within our ken, actual or possible, and fittingly to express this.

Concerning the linguistic bearing of Significs, abundant evidence has been collected, often in quarters where it would least be expected –

1. Of general unconsciousness of confusion, defeat, antiquation and inadequacy in language.
2. A. Of admission of the fact in given cases, but plea of helplessness to set things right. B. Of protest in such cases and suggestions for improvement.
3. Of direct or implied denial that the evil exists or is serious, and of prejudice against any attempt at concerted control and direction of the most developed group of languages.
4. Of the loss and danger of new unworthy or misfitting imagery and of symbolic assertion, observance or rite, once both worthy and fitting.
5. Of the entire lack, in education, of emphasis on the indispensable means of healthy mental development, i.e. the removal of linguistic hindrances and the full exploitation and expansion of available resources in language.
6. Of the central importance of acquiring a clear and orderly use of the terms of what we vaguely call 'Meaning'; and also of the active modes, by gesture, signal or otherwise, of conveying intention, desire, impression and rational or emotional thought.
7. Finally and notably, of the wide-spread and all-pervading havoc at present wrought by the persistent neglect, in modern civilization, of the factor on which depends so much of our practical and intellectual welfare and advance.

As the value of this evidence is emphatically cumulative, the few and brief examples necessarily torn from their context for which alone room could here be found would only be misleading. A selection, however, from the endless confusions and logical absurdities which are not only tolerated but taught without correction or warning to children may be given.

We speak of beginning and end as complementary, and then of 'both ends'; but never of both beginnings. We talk of truth when we mean accuracy: of the literal ('it is written') when we mean the actual ('it is done'). Some of us talk of the mystic and his mysticism, meaning by this, enlightenment, dawn heralding a day; others (more justly) mean by it the mystifying twilight, darkening into night. We talk of the unknowable when what that is or whether it exists is precisely what we cannot know – the idea presupposes what it denies; we affirm or deny immortality, ignoring its correlative innativity; we talk of solid foundations for life, for mind, for thought, when we mean the starting-points, foci. We speak of an eternal sleep when the very *raison d'être* of sleep is to end in awaking – it is not sleep unless it does; we appeal to a root as to an origin, and also figuratively give roots to the locomotive animal. We speak of natural 'law' taking no count of the sub-attentive

43 It would be impossible of course in a short space to prove this contention. But the proof exists, and it is at the service of those who quite reasonably may deny its possible existence.

working in the civilized mind of the associations of the legal system (and the law court) with its decreed and enforced, but also revocable or modifiable enactments. Nature, again is indifferently spoken of as the norm of all order and fitness, the desecration of which is reprobated as the worst form of vice and is even motherly in bountiful provision; but also as a monster of reckless cruelty and tyrannous mockery. Again, we use the word 'passion' for the highest activity of desire or craving, while we keep 'passive' for its very negation.

These instances might be indefinitely multiplied. But it must of course be borne in mind that we are throughout dealing only with the idioms and habits of the English language. Each civilized language must obviously be dealt with on its own merits.

The very fact that the significating and interpretative function is the actual, though as yet little recognized and quite unstudied condition of mental advance and human achievement, accounts for such a function being taken for granted and left to take care of itself. This indeed, in pre-civilized ages (since it was then the very condition of safety and practically of survival), it was well able to do. But the innumerable forms of protection, precaution, artificial aid and special facilities which modern civilization implies and provides and to which it is always adding, have entirely and dangerously changed the situation. It has become imperative to realize the fact that through disuse we have partly lost the greatest as the most universal of human prerogatives. Hence arises the special difficulty of clearly showing at this stage that man has now of set purpose to recover and develop on a higher than the primitive plane the sovereign power of unerring and productive interpretation of a world which even to a living, much more to an intelligent, being, is essentially significant. These conditions apply not only to the linguistic but to all forms of human energy and expression, which before all else must be significant in the most active, as the highest, sense and degree. Man has from the outset been organizing his experience; and he is bound correspondingly to organize the expression of that experience in all phases of his purposive activity, but more especially in that of articulate speech and linguistic symbol. This at once introduces the volitional element; one which has been strangely eliminated from the very function which most of all needs and would repay it.

One point must here, however, be emphasised. In attempting to inaugurate any new departure from habitual thinking, history witnesses that the demand at its initial stage for unmistakably clear exposition must be not only unreasonable but futile. This of course must be typically so in the case of an appeal for the vital regeneration of all modes of Expression and especially of Language, by the practical recognition of an ignored but governing factor working at its very inception and source. In fact, for many centuries at least, the leading civilizations of the world have been content to perpetuate modes of speech once entirely fitting but now often grotesquely inappropriate, while also remaining content with casual changes often for the worse and always liable to inconsistency with context. This inevitably makes for the creation of a false standard both of lucidity and style in linguistic expression.

Still, though we must be prepared to make an effort in assuming what is virtually a new mental attitude, the effort will assuredly be found fully worth making. For there is here from the very first a special compensation. If, to those whose education has followed the customary lines, nowhere is the initial difficulty of moving in a new direction greater than in the one termed Significs, nowhere, correspondingly, is the harvest of advantage more immediate, greater, or of wider range and effort.

It ought surely to be evident that the hope of such a language; of a speech which shall worthily express human need and gain in its every possible development in the most efficient possible way, depends on the awakening and stimulation of a sense which it is our common and foremost interest to cultivate to the utmost on true and healthy lines. This may be described as the immediate and insistent sense of the pregnancy of things, of the actual bearings of experience, of the pressing and cardinal importance, as warning or guide, of that experience considered as indicative; a Sense realized as belonging to a world of what for us must always be the Sign of somewhat to be inferred, acted upon, used as a mine of pertinent and productive symbol, and as

the normal incitant to profitable action. When this germinal or primal sense – as also the practical starting-point, of language has become a reality for us, reforms and acquisitions really needed will naturally follow as the expression of such a recovered command of fitness, of boundless capacity and of perfect coherence in all modes of expression.

One objection, however, which before this will have suggested itself to the critical reader, is that if we are here really dealing with a function which must claim an importance of the very first rank and affect our whole view of life, practical and theoretical, the need could not have failed to long ago to be recognised and acted upon. And indeed it is not easy in a few words to dispose of such an objection and to justify so venturesome an apparent paradox as that with which we are now concerned. But it may be pointed out that the special development of one faculty always entails at least the partial atrophy of another. In a case like this the principle typically applies. For the main human acquirement has been almost entirely one of logical power, subtle analysis and co-ordination of artificial means. In modern civilization the application of these functions to an enormous growth of invention of every kind has contributed not a little to the loss of the swift and direct sense of *point*: the sensitiveness as it were of the compass-needle to the direction in which experience was moving. Attention has been forcibly drawn elsewhere; and moreover, as already pointed out, the natural insight of children, which might have saved the situation, has been methodically silenced by a discipline called educative, but mainly suppressive and distortive.

The biological history of Man has been, indeed, a long series of transmutations of form to subserve higher functions. In language he has so far failed to accomplish this. There has even in some directions been loss of advantage already gained. While his nature has been plastic and adaptive, language, the most centrally important of his acquirements, has remained relatively rigid, or what is just as calamitous, fortuitously elastic. There have been notable examples – the classical languages – of the converse process. In Greek and Latin, Man admirably controlled, enriched, varied, signficated his expressions to serve his mental needs. But we forbear ourselves to follow and better this example. All human energies have come under orderly direction and control except the one on which in a true sense they all depend. This fatal omission, for which defective methods of education are mainly responsible, has disastrously told upon the mental advance of the race. But after all we have here a comparatively modern neglect and helplessness. Kant, for instance, complained bitterly of the defeating tendency of language in his day, as compared with the intelligent freedom of the vocabulary and idiom of the ‘classical’ Greek, who was always creating expression, moulding it to his needs and finding an equally intelligent response to his efforts, in his listeners and readers – in short, in his public.

Students, who are prepared seriously to take up this urgent question of the application of Significs in education and throughout all human spheres of interest, will soon better any instruction that could be given by the few who so far have tentatively striven to call attention to and bring to bear a practically ignored and unused method. But by the nature of the case they must be prepared to find that accepted language, at least in modern European forms, is far more needlessly defeating than they have supposed possible: that they themselves in fact are continually drawn back, or compelled so to write as to draw back their readers, into what is practically a hotbed of confusion, a prison of senseless formalism and therefore of barren controversy.

It can hardly be denied that this state of things is intolerable and demands effectual remedy. The study and systematic and practical adoption of the natural method of Significs can alone lead to and supply this. Significs is in fact the natural response to a general sense of need which daily becomes more undeniably evident. It founds no school of thought and advocates no technical specialism. Its immediate and most pressing application is, as already urged, to elementary, secondary and specialised education. In recent generations the healthy sense of discontent and the natural ideals of interpretation and expression have been discouraged instead of fostered by a training which has not only tolerated but perpetuated the existing chaos. Signs, however, are daily increasing that Significs, as implying the practical recognition of, and emphasising the true line of advance in, a

recovered and enhanced power to interpret experience and adequately to express and apply that power, is destined, in the right hands, to become a socially operative factor of the first importance.

LITERATURE. Lady Welby, 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXV, 1911: 78–81 (January and April 1896), *Grains of Sense* (1897), *What is Meaning?* (1903); Professor F. Tönnies, 'Philosophical Terminology' (Welby Prize Essay), *Mind* (July and October 1899 and January 1900), also article in *Jahrbuch, &c.*, and supplements to *Philosophische Terminologie* (December 1906); Professor G. F. Stout, *Manual of Psychology* (1898); Sir T. Clifford Allbutt's Address on 'Words and Things' to the Students' Physical Society of Guy's Hospital (October 1906); Mr. W. J. Greenstreet's 'Recent Science' articles in the *Westminster Gazette* (November 15, 1906, and January 10, 1907). (V. W.)

Chapter 4

Modelling signifying processes. Imagery, critique of language, education and temporality

Speed on, we say, e're yet your day
Set, and the sky grow stern:
Speed on, stayed souls, for yet ye may
Speed on.

Far heavens beyond us yearn:
Yea, heights of heaven above the sway
Of stars that eyes discern.

Let not mind-wings in death-fold stay,
Make toward a life-known bourne:
For living faith and Truth-worlds say
Speed on!

(V. Welby, 'The Call,' Box 37, file 10,
'Thoughts in Rhythm,' WCYA)*

4.1. Meaning, metaphor, world

Welby dedicated a significant part of her research and writing to the figurative dimension of meaning, therefore to the capacity for establishing associations, comparisons, and parallels between different fields of experience and sign systems, verbal and nonverbal. She focused on the various devices of figurative expression, on the use of imagery, figures of speech, metaphor and simile, thematized in her major publications: *What is Meaning?*,¹ (1903) and *Significs and Language* (1911) as well as in her earlier essays 'Meaning and Metaphor' (1893), and 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation' (1896) (both appended to the present chapter). A series of unpublished studies were also dedicated to these topics (mostly from the final period of her life) and are available in the Welby Collection, York University Archives. A selection has been appended to the present chapter. These include: the file entitled 'Significs – Ambiguity' (Box 30, file 44), presenting papers and notes from 1892 to 1912; another entitled 'Significs – Imagery' (Box 30,

* Handwritten annotation: 'Translation of Swinburne, "The Recall".'

1. *What is Meaning?* proposes a broadly linguistic-philosophical approach to the study of meaning. It is very rich in illustrations of linguistic usage drawn from contemporary writing, from everyday, sectorial and specialized spheres of language, offering analyses of an etymological, philosophical, historical, psychological, pragmatic, linguistic, semantic, and ethical order. As may be claimed for all her writings, this book by Welby is not just a specialized study on verbal language from a strictly semantic perspective, but develops special issues in a broad significant framework with a focus on expression generally, both verbal and nonverbal, according to a perspective that paves the way to the encounter between global semiotics and semioethics (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2003b, 2005).

file 47), with writings from 1899 to 1911; and a paper entitled ‘Mental Biology’ (Box 28, file 22), probably redacted in 1887, proposing a critical analysis of the analogy between body and mind; the file ‘Significs – Education’ (Box 30, file 45), with papers from 1903 to 1911; and finally the file entitled ‘Significs – Time’ (Box 30, file 48), with two short papers dated 1907. Topics related to the problem of figurative meaning include the critique of language, the need for a critical linguistic consciousness and clear use of terminology. These too recur in Welby’s writings. She promoted scientific research on the role of metaphor in thought and discourse, therefore in the development of reasoning, knowledge and communication. Relatively to the educational field, she underlined the need to enhance awareness of the value of metaphor and figurative expression from early childhood.

Welby studied the problem of meaning from different angles – its conditions, transformations, successive and simultaneous variations, meaning in language and behaviour, in verbal and nonverbal sign systems, linguistic and nonlinguistic meaning. The focus of the present chapter is Welby’s analysis of imagery in its different forms and varying degrees of figurativity, and her related quest for a ‘critique of imagery.’ In ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,’ she identified the triad ‘sense,’ ‘meaning,’ and ‘significance.’ In ‘Meaning and Metaphor’ she had already theorized the relation between ‘metaphorical,’ ‘indirect,’ or ‘figurative meaning,’ on the one hand, and ‘literal’ (a term she considered more figurative and more ambiguous than the former), ‘direct,’ or ‘actual meaning,’ on the other.² In real signifying processes these two poles cannot be separated, but can only be identified as such on the basis of an abstraction. The so-called literal is never truly literal, but rather is imbued at all times with figurative meaning to varying degrees. From a ‘significal’ perspective, meaning cannot be classified in terms of a rigid binary distinction between the literal and the figurative. ‘One is tempted to say that there is only one term more figurative as well as more ambiguous than “metaphorical,” and that is “literal”. Most certainly much that is called “literal” is tinged with the figurative in varying degrees, not always easy to distinguish, even with the help of context. The word “literal” itself is indeed a case in point. It has rarely, if ever, any reference to writing’ (1985[1893]: 512, now Section 4.9, below). Welby developed a dynamical, structural and generative theory of meaning, and critiqued approaches that conceptualize meaning in terms of invariability, uniformity, univocality as though words and phrases were numerals, labels, or symbols ‘of unanimous consent’ (Ibid.: 14). She hypothesized a third region or third value of meaning which characterizes linguistic usage at large, from the ordinary spheres of discourse to the more specialized, a ‘third value, neither wholly literal, nor wholly figurative’ (Ibid.), in which the ‘literal’ and ‘figurative’ are present to varying degrees.

With her ‘third value’ hypothesis Welby theorized a contact zone without precise boundaries among signs which interact and respond to each other engendering new ‘interpretive routes’ (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 8–10). She acknowledged that the figurative resources of expressivity, metaphor, similes, analogies, etc. are neither indistinct

2. A similar position was maintained by Ferruccio Rossi-Landi in his book of 1985, *Metodica filosofica e scienza dei segni*, where too in his effort to clarify the concept of ‘linguistic money,’ he distinguishes between the ‘metaphorical’ and the ‘literal’ (cf. Rossi-Landi 1985: 115–120).

abstractions, nor mere rhetorical devices, nor decorative ornamentations. On the contrary, they are structural to the production itself of meaning and knowledge. The ‘third value’ or ‘third region’ of meaning alludes to a signifying dimension where similarly to a painting, the actual and the symbolic, the real and the ideal combine to produce a potentially unlimited range of meaning nuances.

Welby focused on the symbolic character of language, that is, on the relation between symbolic systems and what they symbolize from both a theoretical and didactic perspective. As she says in ‘Meaning and Metaphor’: ‘[...] we might begin by learning better what part symbolism plays in the rituals of expression, and ask ourselves what else is language itself but symbolism, and what it symbolises. We should then examine anew the relations of the “symbolic” to the “real”; of image, figure, metaphor, to what we call literal or actual [...] Imagery runs in and out, so to speak, from the symbolic to the real world and back again’ (Welby 1985 [1893]: 512–513, now Section 4.9, below). In *What is Meaning?* Welby develops the idea of language as a symbolic system, with the explicit specification that its method is mainly ‘pictorial’ (1983 [1903]: 38). And, in fact, this book abounds in examples of (mostly unconscious) recourse to association and comparison through analogy and metaphor in all forms of discourse and expression.

The processes of metaphorisation and symbolisation in the terms analysed by Welby are free from systemic or typological restrictions. These processes develop across the entire sign network in interpretive trajectories without boundaries. She investigated the use of figurative speech in ongoing translative-interpretive processes that converge with the generation of meaning and the acquisition of knowledge. In fact, as anticipated above, the various devices of figurative speech – metaphor, simile, analogy, comparison, etc., – are not merely rhetorical or ornamental, but structural to the production of knowledge and understanding. Metaphorisation and symbolisation develop in potentially infinite sequences of signs that interpret and amplify the preceding sign. And the more deferral among signs and senses in the semiotic network is characterized by dialogism and ‘answering comprehension’ (see Bakhtin 1986), the more the capacity for innovation and creativity is enhanced (cf. Nuessel 2006).

Far from considering language as a static system in which meanings are given once and for all, antecedently to signifying processes, Welby emphasized the dynamic character of language, describing it as an open system continuously enriched with new meanings through ongoing translation and interpretation processes. As these multiply, the capacity for classification, relation, and inference, for explanation and application is empowered. Welby’s conception of translation goes beyond the obvious relation among different languages, interlingual relations, to concern the capacity to establish and identify relations of comparison, association, likeness, analogy, and parallels among different sign systems, whether internally to a single historical-natural language or externally among different languages. The translative method favours the mutual clarification of concepts and terminology, paving the way towards the formulation of new hypotheses and results, to progress in knowledge. Thanks to the translative capacity the sign expands its meaning in another sign somehow responding to the previous sign to which it is interconnected in the great sign network. As Welby averred, the vaster and richer our use of signs, the greater our interpretive, cognitive and inter-translative powers (on the role of translation and analogy in cognitive processes, see below Ch. 5).

In this theoretical framework Welby effected an experimental translation of parts of Dr. Hughlings Jackson's *Croonian Lectures on the Nervous System* (1884), translating from one sphere of experience to another, precisely from a study on the nervous system to the spiritual sphere, and showing how religious discourse must be updated in light of the scientific, if it is to make any claims to validity. She highlights the role of a 'third mode of expression' in the acquisition of knowledge and experience, which combines the literal and the figurative and is connected with analogical inferential procedure. In fact, Welby proceeds by identifying analogical relations between scientific language and the religious, the language of the nervous system and that of ethics and values. This experiment is presented in Chapter XVII of *What is Meaning?*, where she further develops the concept of a 'third region' or 'third value' of meaning introduced in her papers of 1893 and 1896. The content of Chapter XVII is summarized as follows: "Translation" of parts of Dr. Hughlings Jackson's *Croonian Lectures on the Nervous System* (1884) [see Chapter 5, below]. If, as the welcome accorded by experts to this first attempt seems to indicate, we have here a really valid analogy, it seems to suggest a third mode of expression, combining the literal and the figurative as a fine picture combines the actual and the ideal' (Welby 1983 [1903]: Contents, Ch. XVII, xxi). Metaphor, analogy and the various forms of figurative meaning are strictly associated with perception of the world, and are instrumental to the acquisition of knowledge and experience, which is direct, indirect or doubly indirect. Welby also drew up a 'diagram of meaning' picturing the varying degrees of figurativity and indirect meaning in linguistic usage. The description below is from the conclusion to Chapter XVII in *What is Meaning?*:

It is obvious that if, as the approval of the author and of representative experts in the subject thus 'translated' seems to warrant us in assuming, this points to really valid correspondence between the highest mental and the most complex neural activities, we must consider in this context the question of the existence of a class of ideas which cannot be considered either as merely literal or as merely figurative, but as combining both. This, we may say, as of a fine picture, is the combination of the actual and the symbolic, of the real and the idea.

In the case of knowledge acquired by the scientific method, we know that beyond the simple directness of sense-perception we have various forms of indirect knowledge. Perhaps the most obvious of these is found in the case of vision already touched upon. First we 'see' with the naked eye; then we acquire the telescope, and 'through' it indirectly or mediately see more; lastly, we use a sensitive plate in connection with telescope and eye, and our vision becomes doubly indirect. But we are through dealing with the same 'realities.'

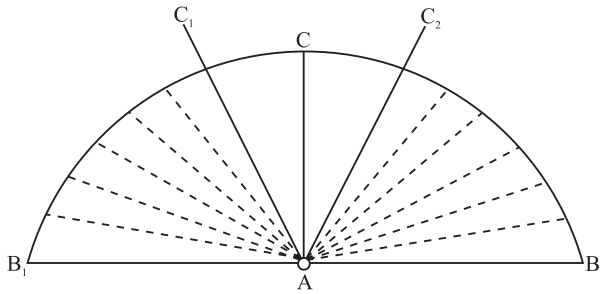
Now, we are accustomed to reason as though in the pursuit of fact or truth there could only be two possible alternatives. We are dealing either with something literal or actual, or with metaphor. The former is fact, the latter is at best merely useful illustration, essentially causal and partial, and therefore never to be treated as evidence.

Suppose, however, that what we take for mere metaphor may in some cases be indirectly perceived fact, which must be expressed, if at all, analogically? Suppose that there is a middle region in which we are dealing neither with the merely literal nor the merely metaphorical, but with direct, indirect, and doubly indirect experience? (Welby 1983 [1903]: 138–139)

Below is Welby's diagram of meaning as reported in a note to the passage cited above:

Let A be the speaker or writer.
 Let B₁ be the simply Actual or Literal, and its direct expression.
 Let B₂ be the simply Figurative or Metaphorical, and its indirect or reflective expression.

Then let C stand for a central point in expression, and let C₁ and C₂ respectively stand for the points where it is supposed to become obvious that a given form or mode of expression is to be classed under the literal or the metaphorical. The central region then becomes one which combines theoretical and metaphorical, actual and figurative. Where should its limits be placed? And what should it be called?



A diagram of meaning

Any word with accepted variations of meaning may be written (with necessary context) at the various points on the arc, so as to test the question, – Is there or is there not a gradation, in every case, from the literal to the metaphorical, and *vice versa*, and can this generally be traced? (1983 [1903]: Appendix, Note XVI, 292)

Both metaphor and concept are constructed on the basis of likeness and association. On the basis of likeness among interpretant signs that are more or less distant from each other, the meaning of the primary subject is enriched with implications associated with the term of comparison in relations of reciprocal, or better, dialogical involvement. The relation of likeness among terms varies depending on whether it is regulated by the logic of identity or the logic of otherness. In semiotic terms and without establishing a relation of net opposition between concept and metaphor, likeness relations present varying degrees in iconicity. (On the relation between iconicity and metaphor according to Peirce, see CP 2.276–2.279). To transit from low to high degrees in iconicity in the likeness relation means to transit from low to high degrees in the capacity for innovation and creativity. This means to transit from likeness based on the logic of identification, homologation or equivalence – regulated by the logic of relative otherness – to likeness in a relation where terms are distant from each other and are associated by the logic of attraction and affinity – that is, of absolute otherness. This is, to invoke Peirce, an ‘agapastic’ relation among irreducible singularities, where the capacity for innovation and creativity are at their highest.

A fundamental assumption subtending the signficant orientation in studies on sign, language and meaning is the contention that ‘while language itself is a symbolic system its method is mainly pictorial’ (Welby 1983 [1903]: 38). In other words, the meaning of verbal signs is established on the basis of convention, so that from this perspective a given historical language may be defined as a symbolic system (e.g. by convention what in English is designated as ‘dog,’ in French is ‘chien,’ and in Italian ‘cane’). At the same time, by claiming that the method of language is ‘mainly pictorial,’ Welby recognized the

iconic dimension of signs (understood in Peirce's sense) in verbal language as in all other social-cultural expressive systems. The iconic relation of likeness (whether analogical or homological) plays a central role in the acquisition of knowledge and experience, what Welby calls the 'automatic processes of translative thinking, in which everything suggests or reminds us of something else' (1983 [1903]: 34). The term 'homology' as distinct from 'analogy' is adapted by Welby from the biological sciences. By contrast to analogy which indicates surface similarities, homology indicates genetical-structural similarities and, as such, is a powerful motor for the development of knowledge and signifying processes (on the homological method, see Rossi-Landi 1983, 1985, 1992). Furthermore, Welby points out that to assume that minds are similar is a fundamental condition for successful communication:

It must be repeated that we cannot, even if we would, dispense with metaphor, and abjure or avoid analogy. We are, indeed, actually compelled to begin with the latter; it has already been pointed out that we cannot attempt to communicate with another 'mind' without first assuming an analogy between that and our own. This being so, it seems but platitude to say that we had better test and verify our analogies, and see that those we use do not make confusion worse confounded by falsifying our mental pictures. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 35)

Welby continued working on the problem of figurative meaning and the classification of metaphor (inviting scholars to continue where she left off) in a series of unpublished papers written between the years 1906 and 1910. In these papers, she distinguished between primary metaphor, secondary metaphor, mixed metaphor, question-begging metaphor, and phrase-metaphor, and listed topics she thought needed to be dealt with. Below, 'Suggested Titles for "Brilliant" Papers . . .', followed by 'Classes of Metaphor,' is a revision and enlargement on the preceding 'Suggested Title for Papers . . .':

Suggested Titles for Papers in Reviews

Survivals in Metaphor. Genesis of Colloquialism. Cradles of Popular Notion. Use and bane of the Common Phrase. The Demon of Ambiguity. Mind-picture Fetishes. Distorting Mind-mirrors. Squinting in Mind. The Irish Bulls of Metaphor. (Sketch for opening).

'We recognize that the Irish Bull, – so precious as a fount of fun – both springs from and tends to produce, confusion of thought, because it is conspicuous and obtrusive. But we don't detect the fainter or more minute sorts of "bull", – the microbes of false metaphor, – to which so much of our modern thought-disease is due as well as our paralysis from needless contention among men who, not understanding why they differ, or what their difference – rightly used in concert – might achieve, simply neutralize each other and add to the general bewilderment.'

Then we have classes of Metaphor: Primary metaphor, representing ultimate ideas or elementary actions. Secondary metaphor (valid from derivative ideas, the premiss being 'given,' the assumption 'granted'). Then the Mixed metaphor (related to the bull)! And perhaps the worst of all, the Question-begging metaphor.

Suggested Titles for 'Brilliant' Papers in Reviews (by 'brilliant' writers)

Survival of Metaphor. Genesis of Colloquialisms. Cradles of Colloquialisms. Cradles of Popular Notion. Use and Bane of Common Phrase. The Secret of Needless Obscurity. 1) The Secret of needless Contradiction. 2) The Demon of Ambiguity. Binocular Thinking. The Fetish-rule of the Mind-picture. Distorting Mediums of Fact (or Knowledge).

Squinting in Mind (This I think will be telling!' [in handwriting]).

The Irish Bulls of Metaphor (Sketch for opening of article [in handwriting]).

'We recognize that the Irish Bull, – so precious as a fount of fun – both springs from and tends to produce, confusion of thought, because it is conspicuous and obtrusive. But we don't detect the fainter or more minute sorts – the microbes of false metaphor, – to which so much of our modern thought-disease is due as well as our paralysis from needless contention among men who don't understanding *why* they differ, or *what* their difference, rightly used *in concert*, might achieve.'

Classes of Metaphor

Mixed Metaphor (jumble of ideas).

Secondary Metaphor (valid for secondary facts, or considerations, – i.e. given the primary or a premiss; granted this or that assumption, and so on).

Instances of probably valid metaphor. . .

Slow, dull, dense, – for stupidity or low order of mental vitality (converse of what the prophet & herald, the sign-reader is; 'signs of the times').

Quick, as living. Again, penetrating, clever, sharp, 'cunning,' 'knowing.' (And difference between deep [good] and base [bad]).

Cold-repellent, and warm-attractive.

Bitter-sour v. sweet. Barren v. fruitful.

Phrase-metaphor; Colloquial and local. 'I had no hand in that; I could not bear the idea.' 'That discovery throws much light on the subject.' 'From your point of view, I see the connection,' etc. ('Personalia: "Projects of Draft Schemes of Books"; Box 28, File 29)

4.2. The 'plain meaning' fallacy, 'plasticity,' and linguistic creativity

The sun has never risen and never set. Yet language binds us to the outworn illusion, ignorance, travesty in expression. [...] there are deep secrets hidden in inherited imagery. (Welby to W. Macdonald, 1904–1907, in *Cust* 1931: 227)

Figurative meaning can be so deeply rooted in human consciousness that it is often mistaken for so-called 'plain meaning.' Nor must figurative meaning be literalized. In 'Meaning and Metaphor,' her essay of 1893 (see below), Welby criticized what she called 'Plain Meaning,' which she describes as a 'linguistic trap' and a major cause of confusion and error. Other causes of confusion include lack of an adequate linguistic consciousness, the bad use of language, and the proliferation of mistaken metaphors and other forms of linguistic imprecision. To critique the plain meaning fallacy means to critique the erroneous idea that meaning is literal or univocal, defined once and for all, as well as the correlated concept of hard dry facts that can be referred to directly. Welby writes, in 'Metaphor and Meaning',

The fact is, that we have been postulating an absolute Plain Meaning to be thought of, as it were, in capital letters. We have been virtually assuming that our hearers and readers

all share the same mental background and atmosphere. We have practically supposed that they all look through the same inferential eyes, that their attention waxes and wanes at the same points, that their associations, their halos of memory and circumstances, their congenital tendencies to symbolise or picture, are all on one pattern. Verily, we need a 'Critique of Plain Meaning'!

Again we *quote* on the same assumption. Unless the language of our author is obviously archaic; unless his allusions unmistakably betray a different life-context, a different social 'milieu,' in short, a different mental world, we claim him or we repudiate him on the same principle. We take his words, we take his phrases, we fill them out with the same content as our own, we make him mean precisely what we ourselves mean. And be it noted that it is always what we mean *now*. That this in any way varies from what we meant at some time when, e.g., our attention was differently focussed, rarely enters our heads. (1985 [1893]: 512–513, now in Section 4.9, this volume)

When language and meaning are in use, when expression is alive, there is no such thing as fixed and plain meaning. On the contrary, meaning is continuously influenced and transformed by different factors – from the subjective and psychological to the broader socio-cultural, interpreted and reinterpreted, translated into different signifying contexts. Welby repeats this standpoint throughout her writings, as in the excerpt below, from Chapter XVIII in *What is Meaning?*, followed by another from the manuscript, entitled 'God saith hear; but he addeth, understand,' probably written between 1906 and 1911, and traced in the file 'Significs – Ambiguity,' included in the Welby Collection, York University Archives:

One of the main results of the backward state of language and the prevalent 'mislocution' is, of course, the unconscious see-saw of senses and meanings which goes on between the usages of the common-sense or practical man in the ordinary intercourse of life, and the usages of the scientific and philosophical teacher. The former freely uses words like Sense, Sensation, Feeling, Matter, Force, Mind, Will, in all sorts of 'senses,' according to the impulses inherited or acquired at school. These 'senses' are usually called out or suggested by experience which varies almost endlessly with age, circumstances, health, etc. The same thing happens with short sentences or conventional phrases embodying such terms.

But both words and phrases (or sentence-sections) creep out into ever wider circles of usage, and infect serious writing and careful argument on every topic. Few suspect that there is any danger in the extraordinary inconsistencies which such words and phrases carry with them in their popular use. They are harmless enough in the ordinary rambling or random talk in which mistakes are generally food for fun only, though even then they are often the source of that result of discussion which is appropriately called 'misunderstanding.'³ But they get into higher and higher society, until at last they are found not only in abstract philosophical controversy, but in scientific lectures and text-books which are heard and read with a sort of veneration by the common-sense public. Thus like boomerangs they return to confirm original confusions (which probably the Lecturer or Manual-writer had himself outgrown), and make them 'worse confounded.' In this way sentences, or parts of them, as well as single words, are always swaying backwards and forwards between the extremes of literal or direct and metaphorical or indirect meaning. We suddenly find ourselves using this or that one as a pure metaphor for the first time, or as suddenly relapsing into its literal or direct use. *As the whole context is in the same case*, and cross-currents of meaning, untraced,

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3. Here Welby refers to Note XVII in the Appendix to *What is Meaning?*, in which she presents a series of extracts from different authors that she believes illustrate her point of view about misunderstanding caused by the bad use of language and metaphor.

unnoticed, ripple out in every direction (as social or other conditions become modified, and new combinations arise) we have practically no trustworthy criterion anywhere. Some newspapers are, of course, largely responsible for the flood of ambiguous writing which is daily poured forth; it is a common-place that they have inflicted 'Journalese' upon us, and helped to deteriorate rather than to raise the language standard. But once they are roused to a sense of what is lost in economy of time and trouble by preventible causes, and might be gained by consensus even of the most elementary and provisional kind, they would be the most eager and the most efficient promoters of that which would so strongly conduce to their interests. For the writer as well as the reader of 'ephemeral' literature is more and more forced to economise time and labour; and under present conditions he has to wade through swamps which could be easily drained and levelled for his use. Thus he would help to persuade parents and schoolmasters that the first need is to centre all education upon the question of 'Meaning and how to convey it.' [...] (1983 [1903]: 140–141)

And as to metaphor, every phrase and word has had historically 100 different shades of meaning and now has psychologically perhaps 1000. You think you are using it in the one plain literal sense and that someone else is using it in an unreal sense. You are under a delusion, hallucination. A fixed common meaning only exists in a code of signals of fixed value; and in words no value can ever be fixed. *E pur si muove*. The idea itself, the phrase in which you express it is but an attitude or a phase in the race or unit's experience. ('Significs-Ambiguity,' Box 30, file 44, WCYA, now in Section 4.15, below)

The English philosopher and translator Benjamin Jowett (1817–1893) is cited by Welby from a collection of his essays and translations of texts by Plato. The following passage by Welby is from 'Meaning and Metaphor':

In his 'Dialogues of Plato' (Vol. 1: 285–286, 293) Professor Jowett warned us twenty years ago of our linguistic dangers, repeating his warning with greater emphasis and in fresh forms in the admirable essays added in the edition just published. He urges that the 'greatest lesson which the philosophical analysis of language teaches us is, that we should be above language, making words our servants and not allowing them to be our masters.' 'Words,' he tells us, 'appear to be isolated but they are really the parts of an organism which is always being reproduced. They are refined by civilisation, harmonised by poetry, emphasised by literature, technically applied in philosophy and art; they are used as symbols on the border-ground of human knowledge; they receive a fresh impress from individual genius, and come with a new force and association to every lively-minded person. They are fixed by the simultaneous utterance of millions and yet are always imperceptibly changing: – not the inventors of language, but writing and speaking, of nations, Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, the German or English Bible, Kant and Hegel, are the makers of them in later ages. They carry with them the faded recollection of their own past history; the use of a word in a striking and familiar passage, gives a complexion to its use everywhere else, and the new use of an old and familiar phrase has also a peculiar power over us.' Then he reminds us of what we too often forget; that 'language is an aspect of man, of nature, and of nations, the transfiguration of the world in thought, the meeting-point of the physical and mental sciences, and also the mirror in which they are reflected, an effect and partly a cause of our common humanity, present at every moment to the individual and yet having a sort of eternal or universal nature.' (Welby 1985 [1893]: 521–522, now below)

Jowett's ideas resound in Welby's own conception of meaning and language and also call to mind the ideas of the Russian philosopher of language, Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895–1975). Though Welby did not work with these authors, they each contribute to developing a dynamic approach to studies on language, meaning and expression, con-

structured upon such concepts as polysemy, plasticity, polylogism, plurality, plurivocality, pluristratification of senses, interconnectedness between sign and meaning, sign and context, sign and sign, between one's own word and the word of the other, where a key role is played by the ongoing work of translation-interpretation.

Welby described language as a living organism which continually grows and develops, acquiring a fresh impress from the individual speaker, meaningful associations and new expressive power each time it is used. The same word may acquire different meaning nuances as the factors conditioning meaning change – context, previous experience, psychological background, intention, etc. Similarly to the word object of interpretation, the interpretive process itself is never neutral. The word that a speaker utters is taken from the mouth of another. Consequently, before being uttered by the speaker, this word has already been pronounced by another, oriented by another, accentuated or intoned by the word of another, permeated with values. Each time this word is interpreted by another word, its signifying potential, what we propose to call its 'signifying materiality' or 'signifying otherness' (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 55, 157, 268, 542; Ponzio 2006b) is renewed and amplified.

The problem of language is largely the problem of the relation between the logic of identity and the logic of alterity, the same and the other, the stranger, the alien. The concept of plain meaning denies the otherness dimensions, the double as described by Fyodor Dostoevsky, the shadow as understood by Emmanuel Levinas (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 393–394). Therefore, it denies the iconic dimension of signifying processes, asserting a monologic and monolithic view of meaning. Literary writing, as Welby knew well, is the place that best evidences how otherness, indeed absolute otherness, operates in language. In fact, the relation with the other is most fully developed in literary communication. The problem of the relation between identity and alterity is closely connected, in turn, with the question of ambiguity, semantic ductility, 'plasticity' (a term favoured by Welby for the signifying ambiguity of words), with contradiction and complementarity.

Welby explicitly theorized the essential ambiguity of meaning, whether actual and direct or symbolic and indirect, depending on the expressive situation *in actu*. Ambiguity is understood in a positive sense distinct from ambiguity understood negatively as generating confusion, obscurity and misunderstanding (cf. Petrilli 2003b). The capacity for ambiguity understood in a positive sense is a necessary condition for adaptation to new communicative contexts, for interpretation and innovation.

'Plasticity' is a term borrowed from the biological sciences. And, in fact, Welby gave an important place to the life sciences in the formulation of her theory of meaning. From this point of view, as well, she prefigured recent twentieth century developments in biosemiotics and global semiotics (cf. Petrilli 1999a; Posner et al. 1997–2004; Sebeok 2001). Welby described 'plasticity' as an essential characteristic of thought and language, a sign of expressive vitality. Linguistic expressions are alive and dynamic, in a similar way to living organisms. Plasticity indicates the capacity for adaptiveness to the expressive environment, to new expressive needs, the capacity for creating connections – ultimately a necessary condition for successful communication in the historical-cultural world as much as in the organic:

What we do want is a really plastic language. The biologist tells us that rigidity in organic activities can never secure accuracy – is indeed fatal to it. The organism can only survive by dealing appropriately with each fresh emergency in more and more complex conditions.⁴ Only the utmost degree of plasticity compatible with persistence of type can give the needed adaptiveness to varying circumstance. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 60)

In *What is Meaning?*, Welby repeated and developed what she had already stated in her early essays, 'Meaning and Metaphor' and 'Sense, Meaning, and Interpretation,' namely that an adequate and systematic inquiry into the problem of meaning requires the work of classifying relations of similarity – metaphor, simile, analogy, etc., and testing their validity. Language and all its resources, actual and effective, must be adequately analysed, and its expressive potential developed to the utmost in terms of 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance,' that is, in terms of the 'sensal,' 'intentional,' and 'significant.' To Welby's analysis of meaning is related her appeal for the 'critique of language' with a special focus on the 'critique of imagery.'

In her analyses of concrete linguistic usage (with reference to the English language), she theorized the role of context in both determining and disambiguating meaning, also prefiguring recent developments in present-day cognitive sciences. According to Welby, context itself can only be interpreted in light of another context. She also established an analogy between linguistic context and the environment:

[...] we must postulate an analogy between Context and Environment: the adaptation of the word, as of the organism, to its surroundings, and conversely its effect upon these. If we enthrone one queen-word instead of another in the midst of a hive or working context-words, these will behave very differently. They will expel or kill or naturalise it (1983 [1903]: 40).

A footnote to this statement warns against the mistake of transforming the relation of analogy between the organism and the word into a relation of identification:

The organism retains its unmistakable character as distinct from others: it is faithful to type. How far does or might the word retain character, whatever the difference of context? That is, how far does B modify A, and conversely? We must beware of pressing the organic analogies' (1983 [1903]: 40, fn.).

Words and expressions can adapt to a broad array of different contexts, spatial and temporal, assuming different meanings or meaning nuances thanks to their great potential for adaptability, semantic ductility, and plasticity.

Metaphor operates without one necessarily being aware of it. Indeed, a distinction can be made between metaphorical interpretive trajectories which are deeply rooted in speaker consciousness (and seem to present plain, simple and fixed meaning) and metaphorical trajectories which are easily recognized as such because of their capacity for innovation and inventiveness. In this case, even interpretants distant from each other are associated in relations that are altogether new and unexpected, typical of inferential

4. [For instance, in discussing the importance for plants of the possession of 'a very plastic organisation, that is, one which will respond readily and *accurately* to the demands of the external conditions of life,' Professor Farmer ('Review of Goebel on Organography,' *Nature*, December 13, 1900) says that 'plasticity is clearly only of use (and therefore will come to a like extent within the purview of natural selection) in so far as it will provide the organism with the power of striking the right note in response to a particular call' (Welby 1983 [1903]: 60)].

procedures of the abductive type (see below). Programmatically, we can choose between the ‘literal’ and the ‘metaphorical.’ However, this in reality is a pseudo-choice with the sole effect of producing artificial, awkward, and even ridiculous exaggerations in one sense or another. As Italian philosopher of language and semiotician Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1921–1985) averred, this line of reasoning either leads to the ‘false asceticism of the literal’ or to the ‘orgy of the metaphorical’ with its mystifying, pseudo-liberating and even terroristic impact on the speaking masses. The allusion here is to the discriminating, even intimidating use of metaphorical language in order to dumbfound consciousness in situations where communicability is only apparent (Rossi-Landi 1985: 117).

Figurative language, iconicity, the use of metaphor, images, ambiguity – all are connected with expressive modalities endowed with the gift for ‘double perception’ according to Giacomo Leopardi, author of *Zibaldone*. Such devices offer the possibility of relating to reality in terms of figuration or depiction and therefore of escaping from the repetition of representation. This means to enter what, with Mikhail Bakhtin, can be identified as the ‘great time,’ in ethical terms the sphere of ‘unlimited answerability,’ through sign processes characterized by their capacity for infinite deferral, regulated by the logic of otherness, and thus by transcendence with respect to the identical. All this characterizes the ‘play of musement’ as described by Charles S. Peirce (cf. Sebeok 1981).

Thanks to the associative capacity of thought processes conceived in distinction from the Cartesian model of the thinking subject, human beings have been described as ‘guessers’ more than as rational thinkers (cf. Bonfantini and Proni 1980; Danesi 1993, 2005; Peirce 1890). Thanks to the associative capacity, with Peirce the claim is that guessing is a characteristic of reasoning, and that reasoning is ever more capable of inventiveness and innovation the more it attempts associations among terms that are distant from each other, that is, that belong to different and distant fields in the macro-web of culture. Metaphor enhances the processes of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and invention in all types of discourse identifying relations that had not been previously observed among interpretants, or creating them *ex novo*. From this perspective, even the concept of truth is connoted in terms of plurality and dialogical complementarity among different viewpoints as part of inferential procedure (see excerpt below from Chapter XVI in *What is Meaning?*).

Through metaphor we discover the unknown on the basis of the known, by approximation (in truth the only modality at our disposal given the sign nature of knowledge); we perceive the invisible on the basis of the visible, touch the impalpable. Welby’s research on associative-metaphorical processes, which she describes as structural to thought and language, involves the question of modelling specific to human beings (Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: Part II). From this point of view, as well, her work prefigures present-day trends in linguistics. Meanings and concepts develop in a signifying network made of associative connections that form languages and cultures. These in turn are part of the larger context, the sign network which converges with the biosphere and with the world of life in its globality (on the relation of meaning to the evolution of life and the whole cosmos, cf. Welby 1983 [1903]: Ch. XI).

The primacy conferred upon metaphor by Welby is the primacy of the capacity for figuration, imagery and imagination (the *iconic dimension* of signifying processes), which distinguishes mankind from nonhuman animals. Once again anticipating current orientations in the sign sciences (cf. Sebeok 1991b: Ch. 5), Welby also encouraged

research on the origin of language despite counter indications from the international intellectual community (in particular the linguists). She believed that the capacity to generate ‘figures’ and ‘to symbolize’ was a characteristic specific to humanity. In fact, speech, that is, the capacity to use verbal signs, is specific to the human species, but the distinctive characteristic with respect to other animal life forms is the capacity to differentiate and figure (or, to ‘figurate’), not simply speech or the capacity to indicate. The capacity to figurate is empowered by speech or better verbal language, written and oral (the *symbolic* dimension in Peirce’s sense). According to Welby speech – or symbolization – is secondary or derivative with respect to ‘figuration’ which is primary and not derived from anything else. The undated manuscript by Welby from the file ‘Significs–Ambiguity’ cited above, opens with the following considerations:

The moment of speech, the signal of the moment of Mind which is the birth of interpretation is also the moment of Figure-genesis. Before the speech-epoch, Imagery is embryonic. Then it is born. And for the moment *that* is the secret. We despise ‘mere’ figure, etc. We are thus despising the difference between man and beast. No beast can Imagine the universe in Word. Still less can he Symbolise. [...] (Box 30, file 44, *Significs-Ambiguity*)

By comparison with other life forms, certainly other animal forms, human beings are endowed with a primary modelling capacity (which is syntactic). A distinctive feature of human modelling is the dimension of iconicity and capacity for depiction. From primary modelling derives the capacity for secondary modelling (speech) and for tertiary modelling (cultural symbolic systems). Metaphor is the motor behind human reasoning which does not merely consist in representing objects (indicational modelling) but in depicting them (modelling proper to language) and modelling systems based on language (that is, ‘secondary’ modelling proper to historical languages), and on cultural systems (that is, ‘tertiary’ modelling proper to cultural systems capable of highly abstract symbolically structured processes) (cf. Sebeok 1991b, 2001; Sebeok and Danesi 2000).

‘Linguistic creativity,’ where reference is to creativity associated with language understood as primary modelling, is the capacity to form new metaphorical associations, to propose new cognitive combinations, and invent new depictions or figurations. It follows that the linguistic capacity thus described is not a prerogative of poets, scientists, and writers, but rather is specific to human beings generally. As Welby claims throughout her writings, human beings are endowed with imagination, ingenuity and memory as characteristics specific to the species. The capacity for association, combination, depiction derives from human primary modelling, what Sebeok also calls language, and forms the preliminary basis of all human symbolic behaviour, and eventually of secondary and tertiary modelling systems (see also Petrilli 2006b).

4.3. Excerpts from *What is Meaning?* (1903)

The following is a small selection of excerpts from *What is Meaning?* and from Welby’s unpublished manuscripts relating to some of the issues so far presented:

In another direction a searching reform is needed. If we were seriously to set to work to distinguish by some recognised sign, the untested from the tested and ‘passed’ simile, we should simply gain in comparison a new world.⁵

We should have –

1. Casual likeness, two ideas or things comparable or similar in one point, in one context, on one occasion, to one audience, etc., only.

2. General likeness of the whole, with unlikeness of constituents; results analogous but differently arrived at or constructed.

3. Likeness in all but one point or feature. This may be (a) important (i.) to the original figurate, (ii.) to the metaphorical use; (b) indifferent.

4. Valid analogy ringing true in character throughout, bearing pressure to the limit of knowledge, and yet remaining analogy and never becoming equivalence, or identity in varying senses.

5. Equivalence: as when we say that so-and-so applies in both cases — (a) wholly; (b) partially. (In these cases it is often difficult to say which is metaphorical and which is literal. There is often borrowing backwards and forwards, and sometimes both are neither metaphorical nor literal and yet equally ‘actual.’)

6. Correspondence in each point and in mass or whole. In this case the ‘figure’ is a reflection as in a mirror. Or it may be question of concomitance, of correlation, of parallel, of object and its shadow, seal and its stamp, etc.

Now, however, it may be said that we have to leave the field of analogy and enter that of homology.⁶ In a criticism of Mr. Spencer’s comparison of society to an organism Mr. Lester Ward urges that ‘the nervous system, instead of being the last to be considered in a comparison of society with an organism, is the first and only proper term of comparison. All the other terms, those upon which Mr. Spencer has laid the principal stress, furnish only “analogies,” as he properly calls them. This, on the contrary, furnishes true *homologies*. Analogies are of little use except in arousing and satisfying curiosity, but homologies are valuable aids to the sociologist. The nervous system, as the reservoir of protoplasm and seat of life, sensibility, will, and ideas, is a fundamental factor.’⁷ And further on he adds that ‘the same principles do not apply to human and animal sociology. . . . The facts of animal association therefore – the remarkable resemblances to man’s ways displayed by insects and the curious imitations of human customs in various departments of the animal world – prove to be only *analogies* and not true homologies, and as such have much less value to the sociologist than they appear at first view to possess.’⁸ Here at least we touch upon one cause of present confusion and one hope for its cure. All manner of comparisons, from the most absurdly inapplicable to the truest and most complete, are lumped together as ‘analogies’; and then we are gravely told that no argument can rest upon analogy. But some comparisons vaguely called

5. [Lord Acton has sounded a true note here: “‘The want of an energetic understanding of the sequence and real significance of events . . . is ruin to a student of history.’” Historians should learn from men of science “how to secure fullness and soundness in induction, how to restrain and to employ with safety hypothesis and analogy” (quoted in *Edinburgh Review*, July 1901: 128). See Note IV, Appendix (1983 [1903]: 19)].

To illustrate her point, Welby in the note alluded to in the Appendix presents a long quotation from an article by Matthew Shirlaw, ‘Naturalism and Musical Aesthetic,’ published in *Monthly Review*, February, 1901.

6. [As in the case pointed out by D. J. Ward (Art. ‘Psychology,’ *Encyc. Brit.*, 10th edit.): ‘Between organic development and mental development there is . . . more than an analogy’ (1983 [1903]: 20)].

7. [*Outlines of Sociology*, 1898: 60–61 (1983 [1903]: 21)].

8. [*Ibid.*: 92–93 (1983 [1903]: 21)].

analogies are really homologies; some again really equations; and from these an argument can of course properly start.

If we had a classification of this kind we should come with fresh light to the question of 'pressing' or working out analogy.⁹ Some comparisons bear this throughout, others partially, others not at all. Then we have what may be called temporary and local analogies. Some may have borne pressure fifty years ago and cannot bear it now; some may bear it here and not there.¹⁰ The crucial point must always be to see that the main thoughts and their inferences do really fit.¹¹ (1983 [1903]: 19–22)

Significs suggests a new starting-point from which to approach the subject of analogy, and implies the emergence of a systematic and scientifically valid critique of imagery.¹² Thus it obviously makes for a new departure in philosophy as well as in psychology.

It cannot be denied that thoughts must at least be handicapped by the imperious associations of language only at best adapted to the current modes of thinking. Anything which tends to prepare the hearer or reader's mind for change in the direction of greater and freer expressiveness, thus also tends to encourage, not the crank and the faddist whose fallacies are thus more easily exposed, but the thinker who is original in the best sense of the word. Thus at once we are brought face

9. [See Note V, Appendix (1983 [1903]: 21)]. This note presents a collection of excerpts quoted by Welby from different authors illustrating her point.

10. [The first step is to make plain the immense difference between the casual and the valid comparison. As an example of the latter we may quote Charles Darwin: 'There is, indeed, much analogy, as far as the states of mind is concerned, between intently scrutinising a distant object, and following out an obscure train of thought, or performing some little and troublesome mechanical work. . . . When a person is lost in thought with his mind absent, or, as it is sometimes said, "when he is in a brown study," he does not frown, but his eyes appear vacant' (*Expression of the Emotions*, 1872: 228)].

After describing the phenomenon of chemical 'Catalysis,' Professor Ostwald (translated in *Nature*, April 3, 1902) says, 'Physiological analogies present themselves irresistibly at this point. We have here a typical *fever* phenomenon.' Further on he remarks, 'That it is not only a chemical interest that makes the work grateful I think I have shown you by examples of its physiological application' (1983 [1903]: 22)].

11. [It is remarkable that while no one in our day seems conscious of the difference between true and false metaphor – contrasting both alike with the literal, and ascribing reality only to the latter – some at least of the classical writers set us an example in this. E.g. in *Demetrius on Style* (edited by W. Rhys Roberts, 1902) we are told that metaphors must be used, only they must not be far-fetched, 'but natural and based on a true analogy.' Some are, some are not, convertible. 'Homer could call the lower slope of Ida its "foot," but he could never have called a man's foot his "slope."' A 'daring' metaphor should be converted into a simile as less risky: even Plato's employment of metaphors is dangerous. 'Some things are, however, expressed with greater clearness and precision by means of metaphors than by means of the precise terms themselves: e.g. "the battle shuddered." No change of phrase could, by the employment of precise terms, give the meaning with greater truth and clearness.' The writer could add then, what ought to be but is not, true now: 'Usage, which is our teacher everywhere, is so particularly in regard to metaphors. Usage, in fact, clothes almost all conceptions in metaphor, and that with such a sure touch that we are hardly conscious of it.' But the editor reminds us that 'metaphors generally have lost much of their freshness through constant use.' Yet some survive in a form which leaves us unaware of the harm they are doing (1983 [1903]: 19–22)].

12. In this note Welby presents various examples of misleading metaphor drawn from different places of discourse (cf. 1983 [1903]: 22–23).

to face with the question of Expression by Figure. This necessarily rests upon the method of analogy, the only method we have for most of our mental work, involved indeed in its primary presuppositions, i.e. the likeness between the reader's mind and our own.¹³ This we have to assume though we cannot prove it, or our writing becomes an absolute waste. No one can even controvert this statement, giving reasons for dissent, without the use of analogy.¹⁴

Starting then from an inevitable analogy, let us remember that just as this initial assumption is tested and established but its working and result in 'making each other understand,' and thus modifying each others' aims and views and action, so must every other analogy, whether in act or word, be rigorously appraised by the same test. No analogy, and therefore no metaphor or figurative form of expression, ought to be allowed to pass current in serious writing unless it has been examined and found to bear this criterion. But few seem to realise that, as Jowett says, 'mere figures of speech have unconsciously influenced the minds of great thinkers.'¹⁵ (1983 [1903]: 23–25)

The mischief lies in the strength of association. We apply an altogether false criterion, because of an unrealised constraint which forces thought into habitual grooves. Now, of course, so far as that is possible, it is best to do without analogy altogether. But, unfortunately, language itself has long ago decided that whether we will or no we shall use it or be content to forgo speech entirely. We cannot cancel the automatic process of translative thinking. Everything suggests or reminds us of something else. What have we just said? Mischief 'lies in' the 'strength' of something: 'constraint,' 'process,' 'translative' – every word calls up more or less consciously some physical experience transferred to the mental sphere. 'Transferred,' 'sphere' – once more we are ensnared; 'ensnared,' again a case in point, and so on.

[...] The wrong idea or mental image conveyed would falsify all inferences. And yet we do not see it in cases where current usage really vitiates our most central conceptions.

It must be repeated that we cannot, even if we would, dispense with metaphor, and abjure or avoid analogy. We are, indeed, actually compelled to begin with the latter; it has already been pointed out that we cannot attempt to communicate with another 'mind' without first assuming an analogy between that and our own. This being so, it seems but platitude to say that we had better test and verify our analogies, and see that those we use do not make confusion worse confounded by falsifying our mental pictures. As Dr. J. Ward warns us, 'instinctive analogies have, like other analogies, to be confirmed, refuted, or modified by further knowledge, i.e. by the very insight into things which these analogies have themselves made possible.'¹⁶ (1983 [1903]: 34–36)

We use defective, misleading because plausible analogies, not only of set purpose but because, whether we will or no, the needs of language compel it. And then we never attempt to study, analyse, and classify them! Either we suppose them to be substitutes for argument or for proof, or

13. [Here as in some other cases it is necessary to guard against being understood to mean that there can be no intelligent communication, no use of Signs, until this primary assumption has been consciously and rationally made. It is assumed in the sense here meant, whenever an animal utters a call or a cry or even adopts an attitude to which others respond or attend (1983 [1903]: 24)].
14. [It must, however, be admitted that what is here meant is not always what we properly mean by analogy, since this only places propositions side by side, and may force either to correspond: it is rather double Application. What is established in one context, in one universe of discourse, applies in some degree or in some sense (it may be a recondite one) to another. Our business is to find out where and how and how far. The specialisms are versions, and what is needed is reciprocal translation (1983 [1903]: 25)].
15. [*Plato*, vol. IV, p. 157 (1983 [1903]: 25)].
16. ['Psychology,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th ed.). (1983 [1903]: 36)].

else we declare that they are all alike casual, arbitrary, or rhetorical, and go our way satisfied with our acumen and assured of our security and our success. Hence our treatment of metaphors. We use theses in such fashion as, it may be, to wreck a policy or measure: we produce the conditions of a great famine or a great war, by the power of some vivid simile which arouses the passions of mankind, – and then? Are we challenged? Are we called upon to justify our action or to undergo its penalty?

No! As soon as it is seen that somehow the ‘figure of speech,’ apparently so harmless, sways us powerfully – even ‘changes the whole situation,’ – we either insist upon its replacement by another which probably, if examined, would turn out worse still; or, ‘mirabile dictu,’ we clamour through the newspapers for the abandonment of all metaphor: we would have the figurative outlawed, or at least excluded from public life! And, be it noted, we almost always make this demand itself thought metaphor: often, indeed, in its least defensible forms.

We strangely ignore the fact that *comparison* is our one way of acquiring or imparting knowledge; that no perception has its full ‘sense,’ much less meaning, until we have started from its likeness to or correspondence with some other perception already ours; as we have seen, we forget that we cannot say one word to our fellow without assuming the analogy between his ‘mind’ and our own. And then we wonder what can be the cause of the swarming confusions which, like locusts, devour the produce of the mental land! Have we not just touched upon one such cause?

We must test metaphor by applying it experimentally in divers directions. Has colour an inside and outside? No; but colour has innumerable gradations in ‘brightness,’ etc.; may be ‘strong’ or ‘weak.’ The idea of inside and outside is here unmeaning, the metaphor does not help. ‘Depth’ in the sense of distance expresses the visual sense of the third dimension, of the eye’s action in ‘running back and forth’ on the lines of sight.

As one out of innumerable examples of the way in which we use metaphor now, we may notice one of the falsest, i.e., the skeleton afterwards to be clothed with flesh (e.g. Lord Rosebery’s speech at Chesterfield in December 1901).¹⁷ Many years ago it was vainly urged by the present writer that grammar as ‘skeleton’ should come last in mind development, the muscular and nervous tissues of language coming first.¹⁸ In the same way, long before the Kindergarten was introduced, it was suggested that geography should first be taught by making a mud-map of the family ‘premises,’ be it only ground-plan and back garden. Then would come the flat paper map with parish, estate, county, and other boundaries representing the ‘skeleton.’

It would be well also to test our imagery by diagram more systematically than we do: it would give some curious results. Though even so, unless we used a solid or hollow globe or a screw, we should still only represent plane-thinking, whereas we have to learn to think in sphere. (1983 [1903]: 42–44)

17. [It is often supposed that we owe this falsity to the imagery of Ezekiel. But it must be remembered that his parable assumes that the ‘very dry’ bones had already formed part of living bodies; so that the process was merely a reversal of development. We, on the contrary, begin with the skeleton, as though we supposed that this was the normal order of development (1983 [1903]: 44)].

18. [It is encouraging to find this as last emphatically laid down by a competent authority. At the Headmasters’ Conference (*Times*, December 23, 1901), Mr. Bell (Marlborough) said there was ‘first a venerable relic of the old classical system of teaching, which still survived in what was called the grammar method, by which a pupil was put through a manual of grammar as a preliminary, the reading-book being regarded mainly as a magazine of illustration of grammatical facts and principles’; and he quoted Mr. Brown of Harrow as saying that ‘every year he was more convinced of the uselessness of formal grammar as a means of teaching’ (1983 [1903]: 44)].

This brings us to the subject of ambiguity in its various senses and forms.¹⁹ Voluntary and beneficial discord may be compared with intentional and beneficial ambiguity. In one sense discord may be described as the condition of true music, of which the essence is significant and ordered harmony. So ambiguity of which writer and reader are equally aware, and which is adaptive and meets new emergency (exigency), is the condition of the highest forms of expression. But there are three causes of involuntary discord, all fatal to any kind of music. (1) Defective ‘tuning’ of the instruments used. (2) Defective ‘ear for music’ on the part of performers. (3) Defective larynx or lungs in singing, or defective hands, fingers, arms, in the use of instruments, organic distortions or morbid growths; preventing perfect command over the sounds evoked.

But while intentional discord is in music good, intentional discord in conduct is always evil. ‘Discord’ is a metaphor of evil. On the other hand, in the intellectual sphere, Fallacy answers to Discord; and there the immoral thinker may deliberately use fallacy which he thinks safe from detection in order by an apparently valid train of reasoning to achieve some harmful result. Involuntary, unconscious Fallacy is always mischievous; it is impossible to use ‘Fallacy as in music we use discord. [...]

To return to the main question; the real difficulty often depends not on the ambiguity of word or even of phrase, but on the ambiguity of context. We take for granted that among competent writers this is rare; and in doing this we assume, not the competence of authors, but what, in fact, is far rarer, the self-evidence of expression in words. Gesture is less ambiguous, but still is ambiguous except to the keen and delicate observer.

Even J. S. Mill seems to forget that context itself in its turn needs context to interpret it, and has no better context than the very words or sentences which it is to elucidate. It is like jumping off one’s own shadow. Context is treated as though it were the atmosphere which surrounds planetary bodies and gives us diffused light. But the atmosphere cannot change places with the earth, the relation is not reciprocal; whereas the relation of context and word is reciprocal.

Of pernicious Ambiguity there are thus three types. (1) We have the defective ‘tuning’ of language. Everywhere we find the slight yet fatal discord resulting from neglect to ensure that perfect relation between every element of Expression which ought to reign in the articulate as in the musical world. Thus we need to train a generation to see the need and imperatively to

19. [It is a commonplace that increase of knowledge, and with it development of conceptual and critical power and of the experience which we call civilized, brings with it an enlarged vocabulary. The English labourer finds about 300 words enough; the man at the other end of the intellectual scale if he be a writer has about 2000. Now we are often told that it does not matter at all how small the received vocabulary is; that context sufficiently determines the various senses of a word; that the acquisition of a word for each meaning would correspond, say, to an alphabet of fifty letters, and would become cumbrous and mechanical like the Chinese. True. But in that case context must become far more delicately and discriminatively indicative than it now is. We must at least be sure what enlarged vocabulary stands for. At present, context often presents us with three or four, perhaps half a dozen, alternatives. True that the reader of high interpretative power – one who has been trained to be significant, and who has had his natural sense of Meaning and Significance made keen and exquisite, will in the future choose almost unerringly the right alternative. Like the expert on the one hand, and the genius, the man of prophetic insight, on the other, what to us now is the faintest or most fleeting sign, escaping our attention or apparently of no account, is to the significantly trained mind an unmistakable and imperative signal, pregnant with consequence.

‘Double meanings lurk in the vacillations of usage. They are a permanent violation of the fundamental demands of logical consequence or discipline in the use of the sign, and are pregnant with great dangers for thought’ (‘Signs and Symbols,’ Schroeder, *Open Court*, November 3, 1892) (1983 [1903]: 73)].

demand its supply. (2) We have the defective mental ear and eye on the part of the 'performer.' This he shares with his hearers and readers, so that neither the one nor the other discovers the true cause of the general inability to bring the greatest of thoughts into definite consciousness, or realises the endless confusion which at present to our shame prevails. (3) We have distorted organs of instruments of expression, preventing the full use of our true articulate and graphic powers. As things are, we even say that this or that truth or reality – this loveliness, that good – cannot be expressed, are beyond expression; whereas truth and beauty and goodness actually *are* expression: that which conceives them is itself Expression. The fact is that as children we have never had our Signific powers systematically trained, and thus our organs of significance are not yet fully developed, and we are often unable to detect the organic deformities which hinder us in expression (1983 [1903]: 73–76)

Colloquialism reveals tendencies as well as attitude and character of average thought, educated or ignorant. For instance, we come to or take leave of our senses. We never do that to our meanings, and we cannot even talk of our significances. 'He is out of his sense' as equivalent to 'out of his mind' (a pregnant commentary on the current philosophical controversies) is a case in point. So, 'I cannot stand it.' (One longs to say, 'move it then' or even 'let it push you onwards!') We 'take our stand' and a 'point of view.' We do not so often 'start on our way.' No; our thought has usually one dimension only, and we take care that our use of even that shall be statical. We boast of 'our own line,' not even of our own 'vector.' And so we fix ourselves proudly on a point from which we see along our 'line' in one direction only. There we 'take our stand' and entrench our 'position.' Presently something of vital importance to us (if we are to escape being 'stranded') requires us either to move on to a fresh point of view or change the whole direction of our line (that is, to learn to radiate from a centre): in fact to take to some other line, secure of returning to the first and to our original point, whenever we like. But that seems to us betrayal or desertion. We conceive our ideal as fixed. We have hitherto taken, so to speak, a straight line and supposed a curve to be a deviation from that, probably due to laxity or weakness. Now we may take a curve and say that a straight line is but a small part of it, only so small that the curve is imperceptible. And everywhere we may take the moving from point to point and not the line thus made, as our image. But in truth we have not yet learnt how to translate the dynamics of science for mental and moral use. (1983 [1903]: 79–80)

If we take any special scheme of thought which claims to be ultimate philosophy, we shall find it represented as 'resting on a basis' or on a foundation. Of course there is a class of ideas which may rightly thus be likened to a boulder or a building. They are fixed or they are helpless: they are beyond all lifeless. But they are resistant and persistent. There is another class of ideas which may be said to be 'rooted to one spot': they are living and they can grow, but they cannot move. There is another type of idea which are, so to speak, free to move – on the earth, in the water, in the air (those again giving distinctions of great value). And again there is another – what word shall we use? for class and type, tribe and kingdom, kind or species, are all metaphors which commit us – another organised group of ideas which is not only living and free to move in three mediums as in three dimensions, but is fully conscious, which has also a reasoning mind. . . . Here we are suddenly pulled up: we were about to say, 'which has and interprets ideas.' But to write of 'the ideas of a group of ideas' is merely meaningless.

It seems self-destructive to use the signs by which we express mental facts, as metaphors for these very facts themselves. If we compare an 'organised group of ideas' to the highest physiological organism we know, we cannot again give this organism 'ideas.' Yet, though we want, so to speak, the conception and the word for 'idea' in a higher form (though certainly not the self-refuting 'absolute'), language in its present stage fails to give us what we want.

Perhaps one reason why the 'deepest' thoughts fail to find any expression which our fellow-man can read is that we have not yet learnt that consciousness, and thought itself, are but a

metaphor quarry for the expression of what stands in the same relation to mind, as 'mind' does to 'matter.'²⁰

This, however, leads straight into a region which one thinker will call that of reality and another that of illusion and dream. These three words, consciousness, mind, thought, like feeling and will and other 'mental' terms, must, as we are now, constitute a natural boundary of expression. And they are used in ways so inconsistent, often even so casual and capricious, that before we try to use their associations figuratively, it will be well to ask ourselves what we really intend to signify by them. The true answer of course is that we only 'know' vaguely and casually what we mean by them. A thinker will urge upon us his particular experience as that of the 'Human Mind.' In doing this he is unconscious that he is the victim of a fallacy which is betrayed by the confusion of sense in our philosophical vocabulary. And generally, in ignoring that confusion he makes it worse by assuming that his own value for 'mind' or 'consciousness' or 'will' or 'feeling' is that of his reader, and that it does not matter even if he uses, e.g., consciousness for mind, or thought for either, since he is aware of no loss in such use.

Take again our use of '*understanding*.' This, in figurative reference, ought always to symbolize the highest level of our powers. But as we commonly use it, it ought to be '*over-standing*': we are dealing, not with a world above our heads, but with firm ground under our feet. We reason about both and their content, but to *understand* is after all our ultimate rational duty, since we belong to a greater than planetary world. Yet if we try in this way to make language bring more clearness into current ideas, we are at present either laughed at or censured, and gravely told that this is mere playing with words or else misusing them. (1983 [1903]: 83–85)

What is truth? 'All this may be very accurate, very exact, very precise; but it is not true.' In what sense? Or 'All this may be very inaccurate, very inexact, very vague, but it is true.' In what sense? In the first case the given statement may rest on a suppressed premiss which is fallacious or erroneous. Or it may be dishonestly put forward as a complete statement, whereas it depends for its truth on some complementary factor which supplies a given character and meaning. In the second case, realities, verities, actual facts may be set forth pictorially, even hyperbolically where the receiving mind needs it, so as to call out response. Or they may be given in action, being lived or acted in outward conduct, thus impressing present spectators, hearers, touchers, with the sensuous conviction of their reality. The test in the first place is mechanical; it is applied in the laboratory, or (mathematically or logically) in formal analysis. In the second it is tested by result; not result of insentient process, but result on a living mind. In the first case we have the insincere and untruthful; result, false impression and inference. In the second we have sincerity and veracity; result, valid impression and inference, albeit possibly vague or general. The first may be accurate, but the second is true – a very different thing. Here also, surely, we have the difference between knowledge about and knowledge of; between mechanically correct information and intimate appreciation. The first is laborious and lifeless; we see only too much of it in the threshing and rethreshing of old straw in the literary world: the second is spontaneous and vitally penetrative, piercing as by an arrow of light to the core of the matter; to what really signifies and avails.²¹ (1983 [1903]: 120–121)

20. [See Note XIV. (A), Appendix. (1983 [1903]: 84)]. This note contains a summary of the unpublished paper 'Mental Biology or Organic Thought,' 1887, now included in this volume, Section 4.14, below.

21. [A good practical description of the dead or as it might be termed desiccated knowledge turned out by the present school system may be found in Prof. Dewar's Presidential Address to the Brit. Assoc at Belfast, 1902. 'It is in the abundance of men of ordinary plodding ability, thoroughly trained and methodically directed, that Germany at present has so commanding an advantage. There are plenty of chemists turned out, even by our Universities, who would be of no use to Bayer and Co. They are chock full of formulae, they can recite theories, and they know text-books by heart; but put them to solves a new problem, freshly arisen in the

It must be once more repeated that, whether we will or no, our thought starts from analogy. Strip all away, and still you cannot speak except by assuming the analogy between your mind and the mind you speak to. In the same way, learn to assume the post-Copernican analogy, and you will find it work better in practice than the pre-Copernican. [...]

But in the case of all analogy, its claim in any given case to be valid has to be established by evidence; it has endless degrees of presumable validity. It has to vindicate its claim to be more than a casual illustration, however brilliant and forcible. We are right in saying that analogy is not argument, and we cannot too carefully examine the ground on which we appeal to this or that one, and form any conclusion from it.²² For the very virtue of analogy lies in its supposed or professed ability to relate modes of experience apparently divergent, even discrepant, but certainly discrete and disparate, and to relate these in such a manner as to increase our productive command over the two apparently incompatible or unrelated lines of thought or work. What, then, is the evidence, to which we just appeal? First, the conditions of the comparison made; and, secondly, its results. The 'leading case' which must govern all our ideas of 'stating one part of experience in the terms of another' is, of course, that which man has from the first been compelled to do; that is, after having named his own muscular activities, and then bestowed these names on the motions which he saw in the world around him, to proceed to speak of his own 'feelings' and thinking processes in terms of these physical activities. At a later stage this process again reversed itself, and we find him expressing the phenomena in nature, and their changes, in terms of his own emotions or sensations.

If we had really been trained to understand not merely the changes, but the nature and work and place, the endless richness and growing variety of the ideas of Sense, Meaning, and Significance; if we had really learnt the inestimable value of organising our present 'chaos' of expression; if we had only in expression arrived at the point which the method of physical science has reached, – it would be difficult to exaggerate the effect on current controversy. (1983 [1903]: 156–157)

4.4. Linguistic consciousness and education

We must at best be contented to work patiently and thoroughly for the future; securing that our own labours shall be strictly preparative and aim more at influencing the future parents and teachers than at suddenly revolutionising the methods of the present ones. (Welby, 'Significs in Education,' 6 February, 25 May, and 30 June 1908, Box 30, file 45, WCYA, now in Section 4.17, below)

laboratory, and you will find that their learning is all dead. It has not become a vital part of their mental equipment, and they are flooded by the first emergence of the unexpected. The men who escape this mental barrenness are men who were somehow or other taught to think long before they went to the University. To my mind, the really appalling thing is not that the Germans have seized this or the other industry, or even that they may have seized upon a dozen industries. It is that the German population has reached a point of general training and specialised equipment which it will take us two generations of hard and intelligently directed educational work to attain' (1983 [1903]: 121)].

22. [Is not metaphorical gesture the earliest application of analogy in figure and always valid? (1983 [1903]: 156)].

Education was a constant imperative and priority for Welby in her work on signification. She promoted the need for a ‘significant education,’ understood firstly in terms of education for the development of critical consciousness in relation to meaning and signifying value. A preliminary from the perspective of a significant education was the capacity to interrogate meaning. As Welby says in *What is Meaning?*:

Signification, as enabling us to deal afresh and in a practical form with the ancient problems, must therefore be considered first as a method of mental training, which, though implied in all true views of education, is not yet practically recognised or systematically applied. In a special sense, it aims at the concentration of intellectual activities on that which we tacitly assume to be the main value of all study, and vaguely call ‘meaning.’ Its instructive and disciplinary value must be secondary to this, as they are both ultimately dependent upon it. (1983 [1903]: 83)

Education is the way to cultural revolution, conceived as a long-term project for social change through the acquisition of a critical conscience. According to Welby, such a process was only possible by developing a critical *linguistic* consciousness, through training in critical and responsible thinking. Welby knew that social change and educational reform went together and insisted on the need of relating the two (see, for example, Chs. XXVIII and XXIX in *What is Meaning?*). In 1885 she printed an essaylet (for private circulation) entitled ‘Questions for Teachers’ (now appended to Chapter 1, this volume), focused on theological and eschatological issues. She continued working on educational issues in relation to all spheres of knowledge and experience throughout the entire course of her life as a researcher. In her early text of 1885, she formulated fifty questions bearing on religious issues with the aim to teach teachers to interrogate the text. The implication is that no text (whether verbal or nonverbal) should be accepted passively, but that, on the contrary, readers and interpreters must establish a relation of active participation with the text, relate dialogically to it, learn to interrogate it, and hence to question value systems, behavioural patterns and systems of belief, including those bearing on questions of theology and eschatology. Welby’s lifelong inquiry into language, logic and meaning was accompanied by her lifelong interest in education understood as education in signifying value, the way to critical thinking and responsibility, relevant to all – from early infancy to adulthood, through all phases and aspects of life.

According to Welby both teaching and learning procedures were largely founded on the capacity to establish connections and comparisons, likenesses and correspondences between different facts, phenomena, experiences and expressions. Indeed, the first analogy on the basis of which all other analogies may be constructed is that between one’s own mind and that of others. Above is cited the passage where Welby states: ‘we forget that we cannot say one word to our fellow without assuming the analogy between his “mind” and our own’ (1983 [1903]: 43).

Analogy and metaphor are used in everyday language, though in most cases involuntarily, unconsciously, implicitly and indirectly. Instead, given their importance for the enhancement of knowledge and meaning, Welby believed that such expedients should be the object of systematic studies in educational theory and practice, of experimentation and verification for communicative effectiveness. Unconscious logico-linguistic mechanisms must be made to surface to conscious life as a step towards dealing with inferential and interpretive inadequacies, and communicative deficiencies at large. From

Welby's perspective, as stated, this implied developing a propensity for the critique of imagery and analogy from early childhood, and acquiring adequate habits of analysis, verification and classification of expressive devices.

Education for meaning implies developing the capacity to identify distinctions and to establish connections among different subjects, ideas, problematics, fields of research, to link together all parts of growing experience, and thus to apply the principle of translation, understood as transsystemic and transdisciplinary translation. Beyond interlingual translation (see Ch. 5), to translate means to illustrate one piece of knowledge or experience in light of another, to gaze at one system of signs in light of another, by which to interpret the unknown and enhance what we vaguely call 'meaning' with new referents. It is important to become a student, from whatever walk of life, that is, a 'significian,' or 'significist,' and learn to ask questions and interrogate signifying value itself. The questioning spirit characteristic of children is more significant than the capacity to supply answers which bear interest above all as the point of departure for new questions. The aim of a signific education is to learn to identify problems and ask questions, more than reach final truths. The dynamic reality of the question itself carries the mind forwards in an endless movement to new and wider horizons. A signific education would focus on developing the power of interpretation and the ability to express facts from different points of view, under different aspects. The student, whether child or adult, would learn to make distinctions and to detect fallacy, error and confusion, whether intentional or unconscious. In cognitive terms the capacity to ask questions is a condition for the acquisition of knowledge and practical competencies in all areas of study and experience, from everyday life to the different spheres of intellectual life. Welby insistently underlined the importance of linguistic education, for the sake of developing the powers of critical thinking as much as for the acquisition of practical competencies.

The value of education was a constant theme in Welby's correspondence, in particular a good linguistic education. It was important to cultivate the interpretive capacity and learn to focus on the problem of the relation between language, logic and meaning, preferably from early childhood. She signaled the importance of studies on the development of the child's mind, and criticized the educational system of her time for not sufficiently recognizing the child's typical capacity to interrogate the reason of things, to ask questions that were logically connected, and for systematically blunting the child's interest in and control over language. As anticipated, educational reform was considered a necessary condition for social reform at large. Teaching methods needed to be revised and updated in light of research on language and meaning, on the relation to values, and application of the principle of translation. The following excerpts from letters to Charles Whibley and to Peirce are dedicated to similar issues:

... As you agreed, all that can be hoped for is that the babies of to-morrow should be given a sense of sense; should learn what meaning means and what sign signifies; be trained to translate and interpret the dialects of life. For this we must arrest the attention and impress the minds of parents, themselves never so trained. So only will man, whose better mind is half-poisoned and half-starved as he wanders unguided in the jungle we call language, make in a new generation the reader you want: to understand deeper things as only sheer force of genius can understand them now. A reader to whom things can be said to give fuller life that now only make for the brute – for that which renders life narrow and gross,

which kills the hope of literature, as it kills the hope of art, by loosening the vital grip of thought control. (Welby to Whibley, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 77)

In the present state of language, inconclusive argument is facilitated and fostered. I am far from denying that the endless discussion and abortive controversy thus raised is profitable to the race within limits and in one direction, that of exercise and of analysis. I would only venture to suggest that there ought to be an available alternative, that of consistent and consentient usage, in which all were trained from early childhood; and that each generation should be encouraged to make their means of expression clearer, more delicate, simpler, more richly adequate. Consistent usage and context, the adoption at all costs of the most illuminating forms of language, and the cultivation in education of a keen sense of fitness and freedom which in inborn (in various degrees) in every child, that is our crying need. In the direction of beauty, grace, dignity, some of us at least have it; we must have it also as the very condition of our awareness of these gifts in the direction of significance immeasurably more penetrative, teeming and commanding than that with which all but men of rare genius have to be content. And even such men are constantly balked by the poor grasp of their fellows on the far reaches and fine meshes of their thinking, and by the failure of an Expression which at present makes them least clear in the clearest heavens of their sight. Our sense both of fitness and of consequence – not merely what *follows* but what *leads*, is more maimed than we know by the present lack betrayed by our helpless toleration of the unrecognized confusion of imposed usage in which the conventions of expression for most of us remain. (Welby to Peirce, 21 January 1909, in Hardwick 1977: 87–88)

To educate for meaning, which for Welby is to educate for sense, meaning and significance, also means to educate for fitness, freedom, beauty, grace and dignity, as she says in her letter to Peirce of 1909, echoing *What is Meaning?* (see below). Moreover, all human beings, whether male or female, are indistinctly endowed with what Welby calls ‘mother-sense’ or ‘primal sense’ (see Ch. 6, below), the *a priori* and condition for the development of critical consciousness, creativity, and responsibility. Welby maintained that mother-sense could be developed through a correct significant education, and denounced educational systems of her time for tending to ‘inducate’ rather than ‘educate.’ The following reflections on her own education are from a letter to W. J. Greenstreet (for many years editor of *The Mathematical Gazette*):

No, you must not think of me as a ‘sibyl,’ which really means ‘fine frenzy’ – energising perhaps, but never analysing or criticising: only casting spells and rousing emotion. I am afraid I disappointed Frederic Myers when he came to Denton twenty years ago: he found me even then keen on mastering facts and sifting evidence.

No, I want you always to think of me as a survival of the all-potent primal sense to which its world lies open – not, as at present, an enigma. I was educated by an almost unique range of experience through the years of childhood and adolescence: I was never inducated. I know I have never lost this, because I have to begin with what in others is already induced in school training, and because my life has lacked systematic discipline. Well, that discipline has had to be self-applied; hence my long labours in training myself for a message which shall be not only emotional or prophetic, but shall also find men as men everywhere: in common life, in practical interest, in labour, business, art, science, religion, philosophy, in the social and the technical, in the commercial and poetical, and above all in the educational. . . . (Welby to W. J. Greenstreet 1907–1910, in Cust 1931: 245–246)

And in her reply to George F. Stout who challenged her concept of ‘mother-sense’ or ‘primal sense,’ Welby not only maintained her position but commented that if primal sense continued to be more vital in woman than in man, this was only because women were more capable of shaking off the effects of ‘high civilisation’ and ‘conventional education’ (Welby to G. F. Stout, 1907–1910, in Cust 1931: 250).

Welby criticized the school system of her day for producing ‘dead’ or ‘deseccated knowledge’ (see *What is Meaning?*, Ch. XVI, Note III). A systematic training in critical and creative reflection on meaning was necessary from early school days, and to this end she aimed ‘to persuade parents and schoolmasters that the first need is to centre all education upon the question of “Meaning and how to convey it”,’ as reported above in relation to Chapter XVIII in *What is Meaning?* In this sense we would all learn to become ‘significians,’ children and the ‘man in the street’ included. Moreover, education and the correct use of language are also considered as a moral responsibility. Indeed, the capacity to interrogate sense, meaning and significance is considered by Welby as an ethical commitment, an act of responsibility for the general improvement of the human condition.

Notes XXII and XXIV in the Appendix to *What is Meaning?*, relative to Chapter XVIII, present a selection of extracts from the writings of different authors expressing views on education. These references are used by Welby to support and enhance her position on such issues as the much auspicated need for educational reform, the importance of adequate teacher training, student training strategies, the importance of motivation and interest in learning processes, of the imagination, the controversy concerning the objects of primary education, the place of classical studies in the educational system, of grammar, and so forth.

In Chapter XXVIII Welby theorizes the connection between a training in significs – education in signifying value, the development of reasoning, the capacity for prediction – and the principle of translation. She returns to the importance of a significant education from childhood and the principle of translation as a means of identifying the ‘common denominator’ linking all subjects, however diverse, in light of which each may illustrate the other (see also Section 5.4, below). Play and imagination (as distinct from fancy) are theorized as constituting an essential component in learning processes and as an integral part of educational methods (see Welby 1983 [1903]: 222).²³ The passage below is from Chapter XXVIII in *What is Meaning?*:

Let us suppose, then, that our parents, and therefore we ourselves, had been brought up to recognise the crucial importance of preserving and utilising all which in language makes for (1) convenience and economy; (2) lucidity, grace, melody, dignity, beauty; (3) power to express what now seems beyond expression both in range and complexity of constituent and distinction. Let us suppose, further, that two generations, as a matter of course, had been taught from their earliest years that it was morally wrong, socially impossible and practically idiotic, to make anything but the very most of all existing means of expression. Let us suppose, also, that we had thus been taught the true place and value of the sense of things (their appeal to us), the meaning of things (their intention, in any), the significance of things (their moment, their importance to us). Let us further suppose that this typically significant triad, on which all action as all knowledge depended, was clearly seen by all as

23. On children and education see Matthew Lipman’s selection of writings by Welby presented under the title ‘Educating for Meaning’ (Lipman 1993: 170–181).

most of all worthy of concentrated attention and interest: what difference would this have made?

We must remember that while the appeal to the matter-of-fact character would have told on the side of economy, of simplicity, and of efficiency – the attraction being, in fact, the doing most at least cost, doing it most thoroughly with most useful results – the appeal to the imaginative character would have told on the side of truer conception, whether abstract or pictorial, whether ethical or artistic, whether making for truth, goodness or beauty. The prosaic type would have seen the point best on the economical, the ‘least trouble most result’ side, as a question of success or failure, praise or reproof, reward or punishment. The imaginative or emotional type would have seen the iniquity and folly or crippling or mutilating the most precious of its gifts, of starving instead of fostering a really vital energy. All alike would by this time have contributed abundantly to our store. For the whole mental atmosphere and attitude of a generation thus trained from the very beginning of life would be altered. Its centre of gravity would be changed. Its world would also at once be expanded; the area of the common interest enlarged and concentrated, and value of life revealed and enhanced.

Such a generation would find in its hand the key to problems which now, in fact, for lack of thought expressive enough to be fully predictive or prophetic, cannot adequately be interpreted. It would find in a pregnant simplicity, now lost in a futile elaboration, the secrets which master death and give a new empire to the life reached through truth. [...]

Let us consider how the teacher of the future, himself thus trained, can accomplish this transfiguration of study. At present the child’s natural interest in and control over language is by direct and indirect means systematically blunted, especially by the premature teaching of formal grammar; while his typical instinct, that of asking for the reason of things, of putting the question Why, is not sufficiently recognised as the keynote of true education as of true mental growth. [...]

The result of pressing home all forms of knowledge in an appeal to sense, meaning, and significance, is an enormous development of the child’s power of appreciating and using distinction, and of avoiding confusion and fallacy. The child is also helped by the use of a principle of Translation by which the ‘common denominator’ of all the subjects learnt, however diverse, may be discovered, so that within varying limits each may illustrate the other. The appeal to the child’s expression-power will always make for that pictorial road to the abstract which is natural to the young mind. [...]

The instinct which prompts the typical child to ask Why at every turn would thus for the first time be fully worked upon. We should at last touch his natural tendency to seek a ‘because’ for everything – to link together all parts of his growing experience. As all fun and chaff, no less than all wit and humour, depend on turns either of sense or meaning or significance; as the ludicrous depends on the incongruous, and our sense of the incongruous depends on the strength of our mastery of the congruous, this method of education would lend itself, as no other could attempt to do, to the child’s craving to be interested, excited, even amused in learning. Then we should see in ‘brain-work’ an unbroken continuity from the marvellous, untiring, intelligent ‘nerve-work’ which gradually perfects the organic activities. And this natural brain-work entirely takes the sting out of monotony, even out of drudgery. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 212–218)

Interesting considerations on education are also made in Chapter XXIX in *What is Meaning?*, in the context of Welby’s reflections on analogy and translation understood as ‘inter-expression.’ That is, transferral, transvaluation, translation of meaning among different spheres of human experience as a way of testing the validity of meaning, of

signifying value at large, and eventually enhancing it (as anticipated in Chapter 2 above, and developed in Chapter 5, below). Welby was in constant search for appropriate pedagogical expedients, and to this end continuously consulted, cited and attended lessons. She elaborated models and plans for lessons and delivered lessons herself on an experimental basis, as in the case of the lessons she gave to her eight year old grandson. In note XXV to Chapter XXIX, she presents six lesson plans from a series of twelve devised for children, with the following introductory remarks:

The following extracts are from a series of twelve familiar lessons on “Sign and Sense” given by a grandmother to a boy eight years old, and reported verbatim. They gave much delight, not because of any aptitude on the part of the teacher, but obviously from the natural affinity of the subject and the fascination of its problems to the young mind. The lessons, however, had to be discontinued from the time the boy went to school. It is to be hoped that the time is not far off when such lessons in worthier form will become the recognized introduction to the school course (Welby 1983 [1903]: 306, Note XXV).

The file ‘Significs-Ambiguity’ (now appended below, Section 4.15), containing papers written between 1892 and 1912, presents notes by Welby for a series of lessons on ‘the duty of saying what we mean, meaning what we say, and understanding what we hear or read.’ In these papers attention is drawn to the problem of the relation between language, meaning, and understanding. In her constant search for adequate terminology, Welby also introduced the term ‘metalemma’ to designate linguistic metaphors.

Her reflections on the problem of ambiguity, figurative language, imagery are closely interconnected to her reflections on education and the need to teach people to reflect on such issues; just as her theory of meaning and her theory of education are, in turn, closely interconnected with her theory of translation. The study of significance was considered as a vital element in education, given that it is the nexus of all experience and expression. Educating for significance implies educating to apply the principle of translation from one sphere of experience and expression to another. From the point of view of education and educational methods, Welby underlined the importance of a training in the principles and workings of imagery – popular, poetical, philosophical, and scientific, and of theorizing and elaborating teaching strategies oriented by such awareness. A critique of imagery was considered as a method against confusion and fallacious inferential processes (cf. Welby 1983 [1903]: Ch. XXIX).

The following excerpt is from another letter to Whibley, confirming Welby’s open, dynamic and progressive views on education elaborated in the light of considerations of both a linguistic and more generally cultural order:

The present controversy on Greek education touches me nearly. The Greek triumph is of course a parable to be interpreted, translated, applied. It is a warrant of possible future triumph which shall even better its instruction. It is a concrete example of man’s expressive ideal. Bring back a Greek thinker and writer and he will indignantly remind you that the point is not what he did, to be slavishly gaped at and learnt by rote through the millenniums, but what he would do now, if he were ‘European,’ in the sense of summing up the best that the European races can show in the matter of culture in the highest sense of that word. The fact that we had so long insisted on the study of his language and literary work would to him naturally imply the fact that we had taken up, carried on and developed his unique

mastery of expression and command of clearness, aptness, force and delicate grace of thought.

This, as our modern science practically recognizes, is in subtle harmony with the modern penetration of the secrets of the ‘material’ world, which translate if they do not unconsciously absorb and vivify what we call the ‘mental.’ I remember a Greek scholar saying once to me that in the flowering of Greece the creation of harmony in art went together with fitness and beauty in language, which was born of the pure springs of a loyal thought; both being fully symbolical and nobly significant. The power is latent in all humanity: we are all potentially born with it. Let us be inspired by the Greek example and better even its great instruction. This must in fact be possible or we should not have gained what is ours in it even now.

On the other hand, our significant predicament must never be lost sight of. If I am right, I can never convey my ‘meaning’ – what I intend you to infer – except obliquely, inferentially. If I could, I should have less need to write as I do! Indeed, I should disprove of my own contention and undermine my case. The only as yet available illustrations of my thesis are the rare cases in which we have in fact abandoned phrases or terms no longer applicable; or acquired, for new experiences, virtually fresh ones which in their turn must not be allowed to coerce us with outgrown association.

All this would sound hopeless but for the marvellous plasticity of language which, in a really trained form, would instinctively balance all enrichment and expansion by increased simplicity and directness. We sometimes already aim at this, for instance (often to our cost!) in a telegram. Shorthand, again, economises time and exertion; but it affects only the mechanical plane. What we need is nearer the sphere of the epigram and the proverb – as it were, short wit – the latter usually a prominently suggestive saying which has in a slang form ‘caught on.’ The origin and true value of useful slang as a pregnant though dangerous element in expression is of course a question in Significs. . . . (Welby to Whibley, 1908–1910, in Cust 1931: 273–274)

Charles K. Ogden delivered a paper in February 1911 to the Heretic Society at the University of Cambridge, titled ‘The Progress of Significs’ (Ogden 1911, see Ch. 7, below). In this address he maintained that the most urgent reference and the most promising field for Significs ‘lies in the direction of education,’ citing Welby in her 1911 article for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (now appended to Ch. 3, above). Ogden’s address was only published in 1994, and in it a section is effectively dedicated to the question of education as one of the most important aspects of significs.

Appended to the present chapter is a series of unpublished papers by Welby, written between 1903 and 1911, from the file ‘Significs – Education’ (Box 30, File 45), stored in the Welby Collection, York University Archives, that testify to the importance of her ongoing research in this area.

4.5. Critique of language, reasoning, and definition. Back to Welby and Vailati

Said the Cule to the Molé	Here's your harness if the former,
O I say now this is jolly!	You can put it on at once;
Said the Molé to the Cule –	It'll keep you so much warmer
It's high time you went to school.	Than the trappings of a dunce!

Said the Cule to the Molé	Said the Cule to the Molé
I'm afraid of learning folly.	Why it's <i>you</i> that's full of folly;
Said the Molé to the Cule	Said the Molé to the Cule
That we all do as a rule!	I <i>must</i> say that's pretty cool!

Said the Cule to the Molé	(V. Welby, 'The Molecule,'
Let's go driving on a trolley	Box 37, file 10, WCYA)
Said the Molé to the Cule,	
Drawn by donkey or by mule?	

Welby makes the following comment in a letter dated 15 July 1898 to Giovanni Vailati:

One often wishes for the day (which will surely arrive in time) when there will be one intellectual language for the whole world, just as once there was Latin as a common language. This would not interfere with the precious distinctions embodied in the various languages, which reveal psychological secrets of the highest value and ought to be utilized in education. (Welby to Vailati, 15 July 1898)

Vailati wrote to Welby from Italy for the first time in 1898 after having read her book of 1897 *Grains of Sense* (see excerpts appended to Chapter 1, this volume), in which he found confirmation of his own approach to the question of meaning. He too was an original thinker who kept away from dogmatism and intellectual fashions of the day. He developed his ideas on signs, meaning and inferential processes in relation to pragmatism as conceived by Peirce, on the one hand, when in Italy William James' interpretation was dominant, and to Welby's signification, on the other, at a time when her ideas were not yet generally recognized by the international intellectual community. As much as their attention was focussed differently, both Vailati and Welby worked on the problem of meaning and interpretation, the power of expression, understanding and inference, insisting on the need for critical-linguistic analyses of texts pertaining to different universes of discourse.

In terminology that was rich with organistic images, Welby underlined the need to diagnose the maladies of language, the various forms of linguistic pathology. Together with her diagnostic commitment she also theorized the need for linguistic therapy through the 'critique of language' and development of a 'critical linguistic consciousness.' The causes of the maladies of language include antiquated linguistic usage and the proliferation of outdated metaphors and analogies, which are often at the source of various forms of confusion, false problems, fallacies, and misunderstandings. These were the direct result of inferences based on erroneous analogies, false premisses, unfounded assumptions, mostly handed down unconsciously by tradition. This analysis applied to specialized languages as much as to everyday discourse. Considering Welby's concern

to remedy problems of expressivity on a practical level, signifies doubles into theoretical analysis, on the one hand, and theurapeutics, on the other – two trends which were subsequently developed after Welby, as in the case of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands (see Ch. 7, below). The critique of language and terminology is a major aspect of Welby's project for significs and was very much in line with progress in her day in the language sciences. For example, her research may be associated with the German philosopher of language Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923), author of *Critique of Language* (1912 [1901–1902]) and of *Philosophical Dictionary* (1923 [1910–1911]).

Vailati was particularly interested in the language of mathematics and the physical sciences, in scientific methods of discovery and mathematical logic, he referred especially to the work of George Boole, Augustus De Morgan and Giuseppe Peano – in Vailati's view Boole's successor. He used Welby's and Peirce's research (Vailati was among the first in Italy to appreciate the importance of Peirce's writings) to develop his own reflections on logic and meaning with particular reference to scientific discourse. Though he did not use the Peircean term 'abduction,' he discussed a 'particular type of deduction' at the basis of the development of modern science. This 'particular type of deduction' based on supposition, conjecture, guessing, and hypothesis, 'a means of anticipating experience,' as he says in his paper of 1898, 'Il metodo deduttivo come strumento di ricerca' (The deductive method as an instrument of research) which differently from deduction properly understood 'leads to unsuspected conclusions' (Vailati 1972: 80, Eng. trans. my own). According to this type of reasoning, initial propositions must be verified so that final propositions, or conclusions, must communicate any certainty reached through experimental verification to initial hypotheses. Vailati observed that according to this particular type of deduction, what he called 'hypothetical deduction,' and what with Peirce we identify as abduction, relations of similarity that are not immediately given are established among things which to immediate experience would not seem to be related. This enables cognition to progress beyond the limits of induction so that as an effect of 'hypothetical deduction,' or 'abduction' thus described, 'we are able to discover intimate analogies among facts that would seem to be different, and that immediate observation is incapable of revealing' (Vailati 2000: 80, Eng. trans. my own).

After Vailati made contact with Welby in 1898, he continued corresponding with her that year discussing issues they were each intent upon developing in their essays: the place of definition in the understanding of language, its cognitive value and eventual contribution to the progress of knowledge; the critique of pedantry and dogmatism; the critique of imagery aimed at evidencing the uses and abuses of figurative language; the need to develop a critical linguistic consciousness; the role of analogy and comparison for progress in knowledge; the use, function and cognitive value of metaphors, analogy, and figurative language in general; false problems and misunderstandings in science and philosophy caused by poor and uncritical linguistic usage; the necessity of educational reforms to the end of remedying the lack of critical consciousness in general, and of a critical linguistic consciousness in particular (cf. Welby 1983 [1903]: Chs. XXVIII and XXIX).

Welby sent Vailati her 1896 essay, 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' which he commented on favourably in a letter to her of 12 July 1898. Vailati repeated on many occasions that his research interests were close to Welby's. He referred to her writings in a public lesson of 1898, published in the subsequent year under the title 'Alcune

osservazioni sulle questioni di parole nella storia della scienza e della cultura' (Some observations on word questions in the history of science and culture), informing Welby that it took up similar issues to her own in 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation': the advantages for progress on the epistemological and operative-pragmatic level of using analogy, the method of comparison and confrontation, of evidencing convergences and divergences among different fields of experience:

Though our considerations up to this point and the facts adduced to illustrate and support them are insufficient to give an idea of the multiple ways in which language can, even without us knowing, contribute to suggesting analogies and therefore to provoking us into imagining hypotheses and constructing experiments, all the same they would appear to be sufficient to help us realize that this is precisely the main cause of the influence that has always exercised and continues exercising upon the progress of a scientific theory, the simple fact that the latter is expressed in one form and not in another.

It is the different degree of suggestiveness which may belong to the varying ways of representing and of formulating a single theory, and the different direction in which each of these may push us to generalizing, deducing, comparing, and experimenting, that causes us, at times, to consider the invention of new ways of formulating and of expressing that which we already know as no less important a contribution to the advancement of the sciences, than the actual acquisition of new knowledge or the discovery of new laws (Vailati 1987: 69).

These exchanges were followed by a period of silence interrupted only in 1903 when Welby sent Vailati a copy of her book *What is Meaning?*. Vailati replied with a letter of 18 March 1903 listing all the points he undersigned without reserve. His letter implicitly describes a common project revolving around the issues so far mentioned, that united the two scholars:

- 1) Your insisting on the need for a critique of imagery, for a testing of analogies and metaphors (especially when 'unconsciously' or 'semiunconsciously' used, as it is always the case in the current and vulgar ones).
- 2) Your warning against the tendency of pedantry and school-learning to discourage the development of linguistic resources, by the inhibition of those spontaneous variations that are the necessary condition of organic growth.
- 3) Your valuation of the practical and speculative importance of raising language from the irrational and instinctive to the rational and volitional plane; in which it is considered as a means or a contrivance for the performance of determined functions (representative, inferential, communicational, etc. and for the attainment of given ends). (Vailati to Welby, 18 March 1908)

In 1903 Vailati went to visit Welby at Harrow, accompanied by his collaborator, Mario Calderoni, and from that moment onwards they wrote to each other uninterruptedly until 1908.

As he explicitly states in its opening lines, Vailati's essay of 1905, 'I tropi della logica' (The tropes of logic), was occasioned by *What is Meaning?*:

Examination of the advantages and disadvantages presented by the use of metaphors, offers a research field that is almost completely unexplored. The recent publication of a volume [*What is Meaning?*] which calls attention to the importance of this type of research, offers me the occasion to make a few observations on the subject. (Vailati 1905a: 21)

This essay examines metaphors derived from the physical world, introducing the concept of attraction and mutual support among terms in associative-metaphorical relations. In particular the focus is on metaphors used to discuss reasoning, that is, the metaphors of what we may call ‘metadiscourse’ focused on logical and linguistic operations. Moreover, Vailati proposes a classification of imagery and analyses the relation between figurative language, the logical order, and worldview. In ‘La ricerca dell’impossibile’ (Searching for the impossible, 1905), he related the principles of ethics to the formulas of geometry, while in ‘La grammatica dell’algebra’ (The grammar of algebra, 1908), he compared the language of algebra and verbal language. Welby recognized her own translative method in Vailati’s approach, which as we know she theorized as a determining factor in the progress of knowledge and experience.

As results from their writings as much as from their correspondence, Welby and Vailati both insisted on the need to improve expression and communication, on the need for clarity. But while maintaining the principle of terminological precision (though Welby clarified that she was not a ‘precisionist’), they both believed that the necessary condition for precision and clarity was semantic ambiguity, plasticity, polysemy – what with Mikhail Bakhtin we may call plurivocality, plurilingualism or heteroglossia, polylogism. Recourse to such expedients as definition and the imposition of univocality could only serve in specific contexts of discourse and to limited ends, as in the case of a code. Vailati joined Welby in her critique of the plain meaning fallacy. Both criticized the description of meaning as obvious, fixed, stable and univocal. Both warned against expressive ambiguity in the negative sense, against linguistic anarchy deriving from the incorrect use of language. Consequently, both underlined the need to put order into linguistic usage and deal with so-called ‘verbal questions.’ They also shared a common concern for appropriate school training with suggestions for reform in the field of education (Vailati himself was a school teacher). Removal of ‘linguistic traps’ impeding the free development and improvement of language was another condition for the development of expressive potential, knowledge, experience and even control by mankind over the environment.

Welby critiqued the indiscriminate use of definition, which she maintained was useful only for specific epistemological functions. She made an important distinction between ‘primary plastic definition’ and ‘rigid definition.’ In any case, neither Vailati nor Welby viewed definition as a remedy against linguistic fallacies and defects. But when definition is useful, the determining influence on meaning of such variables as speaker intention and communicative context must also be evidenced. Indeed, the more the speaker is aware of the ‘plasticity’ of language, the smaller will be the temptation to resort to so-called ‘rigid’ definition. Vailati shared similar views on the question of dictionary style definitions which, if presented as a panacea, would hinder one of the most interesting characteristics of language, that is, its versatility or ‘plasticity,’ its ultimate capacity to adapt to ever new and different contexts, to enhance its own signifying potential. In the opening pages of *What is Meaning?*, and summarizing what she had already said on the subject in her previous papers, Welby claims that

The idea that definition (useful enough in its own sphere) is the true remedy for defects of expression, was shown to be fallacious. Ambiguity, it was urged, is an inherent characteristic of language as of other forms of organic function. Thought may suffer from a too mechanical precision in speech. Meaning is sensitive to psychological ‘climate.’ But the

kind of ambiguity which acts as a useful stimulant to intelligence, and enriches the field of conjecture, is very different from that which in the intellectual sphere begins and ends in confusion, or in the moral sphere begins in disingenuousness and ends in deliberate and successful imposture. [...]

Expression both may and ought to outstrip rigid Definition. Indeed it is probable that what is best worth expressing, best worth being interpreted, and best worth being acted upon, is often least capable of definition in the ordinary sense. (1983 [1903]: 2, 10)

Vailati acknowledged the importance of signifiacs, as Welby reported in a letter to her daughter (Nina Cust) in which she reports Vailati's considerations made during a conversation at Harrow, where we know he visited her personally, in 1903, accompanied by his companion in studies, Mario Calderoni:

I wish that I had time to tell you all about the visit and the enthusiasm of Prof. Vailati and Dr. Calderoni. The contrast between their understanding and acutely critical enthusiasm for Signifiacs and the failure of so many in England to see the unique opening which it offers towards the solution of so many problems made me a little sad. It is the same in Germany, France and America, so far as it is yet known. Only England (except among a few of the deepest thinkers) seems apathetic or entirely to miss the point. After unsparing criticism of the obscurity and confusion of thinkers like Kant and Hegel, Schopenhauer and the modern materialists, pantheists, hedonists, monists, idealists, etc., they said 'But your Signifiacs brings Plato and Aristotle into line with all that is most modern in knowledge and that promises most for the future. Even the work of Locke and J.S. Mill' (of whom they are great admirers) 'has fallen short of what Signifiacs will do in time. It is work like that of Nicholas of Cusa preparing for a Copernicus. It gives us, in exchange for a small, a great – for a poor, a rich – world of light. It must react upon all religion and theology, on practical as well as moral life, setting them free from the distorting pressure which deforms and sterilizes. It is at the heart of things – the first glimmer of the answer and the guidance for which we are looking.' I can only thank God and try to give the failures of self no thought at all. ... (Welby to N. Cust, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 126).

Welby believed that Vailati's research on language and meaning was so close to her own that she did not hesitate to describe it as a part of her project for signifiacs. In a letter dated 28 May 1905 to Vailati, she wrote: 'You may imagine how great a satisfaction to me it is to find the subject, which I call "Signifiacs," so ably taken up as it is by you, as, of course, I should be unable to develop it on the logical side, as you so admirably do' (now in Section 4.8, below).

As regards such themes as the vital role of metaphor in thought and language, the importance of figures of speech in expression, Welby and Vailati again shared similar positions. Rather than consider figurativity as something that must be repressed or literalized, or rather than consider images and analogies as indistinct abstractions or mere rhetorical devices, we know that Welby criticized the 'plain meaning' fallacy together with the idea of 'hard dry fact,' and promoted scientific research on the structural role of metaphor in thought and discourse, recognizing its instrumental value in the development of reasoning, knowledge and communication. Vailati, too, worked on metaphor and its function in discourse. Indeed he referred to the research of both Welby and Peirce (being among the first in Italy to have appreciated the importance of the latter's writings), for his own research on logic and meaning with its special focus on the spheres of ordinary and scientific discourse.

In 'I tropi della logica' Vailati's examination of the metaphors used to discuss reasoning, logical operations, also incorporates discourse (or metadiscourse) making use of metaphors that condition the way we understand linguistic and logical operations themselves. In relation to metaphors, Vailati distinguished between three types of images. These include images that: 1) *support* (as when we speak of conclusions that are 'founded,' 'based,' 'depend on,' 'connect up with'); 2) *contain or include* (conclusions 'contained' in the premises); 3) *come from or go to* (conclusions 'coming from' given principles). Vailati interrogates such images used to describe reasoning and underlines their connection with a hierarchical view of the existent (to base, to be founded on), or with the mere distribution of certainties (included in the premises), and that simply need to be explicated. In his description of the relation among concepts in terms of associative-metaphorical relations, Vailati speaks of attraction and mutual support. The spread of certainty is bidirectional, not unidirectional (cf. Vailati 2000: 80).

A selection from the correspondence between Welby and Vailati is available in the Welby Collection York University Archives, and now in Section 4.8, this volume. I have also included the correspondence between Welby and Mario Calderoni who shared Vailati's research interests and remained in contact with Welby after his premature death.

4.6. Excerpts from *Significs and Language* (1911)

Welby was convinced of the importance of the critique of imagery from a diagnostic and therapeutic perspective, for the health of language and interpretation and consequently for the mental sanity of the speaking subject. From her signifi- cal perspective, the interpretive function is an a priori condition for the relation among human beings and between human beings and the world (see the excerpt from Chapter VI of *What is Meaning?*, pp. 50–52, included in Chapter 3 above, and Welby's ideal dialogue with Jowett in 'Meaning and Metaphor,' appended to this chapter).

Theoretical preferences aside, most interesting is that Welby related different spheres of human expressivity – for example, music, poetry, mathematics and religion – to their common denominator, 'language,' where this term may also be understood in the broad sense described above, that is, as 'modelling.' Furthermore, it is important to underline that Welby identified an essential condition for the health of the subject, in her words, for 'sane human wholeness,' in the health of language and of the different expressive mediums at our disposal, including the verbal. Welby's analysis of the relation between subjectivity and language also anticipate recent trends in the critique of 'linguistic alienation,' that is, the condition of being spoken by words, ultimately of being prevailed upon by the tyranny of language (cf. Rossi-Landi 1970; also Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 232–297). Welby even described 'madness' and 'criminality' as classifications imposed upon the individual arbitrarily by official representatives of power, without hesitating to challenge the validity of this type of categorization. She recognized the crucial importance of the study of meaning, linguistic and nonlinguistic, of the relation between language and thought, and of the symbolic function, for a better understanding of the life of the psyche. From this point of view, as well, she made groundbreaking contributions to what we recognize today as 'psychoanalysis' or 'semanalysis' (Kristeva 1969). Again, we may recall Welby from 'Meaning and Metaphor' when she says:

while the underlying conditions of language must be looked for in the domain of psychophysics, that science had not yet come into existence. Even now it is but feeling its way and putting forth tentative hypotheses, warning us, as it does, so that they are liable to be constantly modified and occasionally revolutionised. And what does it realise, first and foremost? That our difficulties on the very threshold of the inquiry are, as usual, largely those of language. (Welby 1893, now in Section 4.9, below)

The excerpts below are selected from *Significs and Language. The Articulate Form of Our Interpretative and Expressive Resources*, Welby's book of 1911, and are presented here because they all underline the relation between the critique of language and imagery, the development of linguistic consciousness and the health of humanity.

Upon the whole, therefore, it may be truly said that imagery, as we are content to use it, is liable to be insane in two senses: in the sense of *raving*, and in the sense of *waste*. In the first place, it is as though we were shouting at random and talking nonsense; in the second, as though we were throwing food out of the window and money into the sea. The two combined represent sheer and cruel loss and paralysis of thought.

Paralysis of thought. For do what we will, we cannot escape the law which unites, as in our very eye, image and object, reflection and reality, sign and what it signifies, figure and the figurate, and, generally, token or symbol and what they stand for. Those of us who consciously think pictorially are so far more or less able to realise the gravity and extent of this insidious danger. But those of us who do not are in far worse case. They do not even receive automatic warning of the mischief going on. And the difficulties which their thinking presently encounters are of course traced to the wrong source probably charged to Nature or to human ignorance, or to the innate perversity of original principles. But it is needless to defend Nature, which presents problems, as it were, in order that we may learn how simply they may be solved; while as to original principles, we may complain of their innate perversity when we have begun to agree as to what they are. And as to human ignorance, that is scarcely a valid excuse, so long as we do our best to preserve such ignorance, both by the tolerated misfits of imagery in actual use, and by the neglect to provide for a constantly growing adequacy of language: not merely through accretion of new words, but also through the drastic critique of imagery and the resulting acquirement of more fitting idioms, figures, and expressive forms in general.

It is part of the same costly folly to allow, as we do, such daily additions in slang and popular talk as tend to create fresh confusion. And this is the more reprehensible, because both slang and popular talk, if intelligently regarded and appraised, are reservoirs from which valuable new currents might be drawn into the main stream of language – rather perhaps armouries from which its existing powers could be continuously re-equipped and reinforced. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 37–39)

Can we even appraise the value of the Symbol? Can we, say by any effort of imagination, place ourselves at the standpoint of the unfortunate in the limbo of the Asymbolic, hungering and yearning for the Sign that gives significance, albeit with no likeness to itself, yet giving us the world of the indicated and implied; signalling the messages which are there to be interpreted and to be acted upon as rousing, drawing, reassuring, or warning us?

We know something of the thirst of the excluded when, loving the holy, we know ourselves unholy; when, looking up with intellectual reverence to knowledge and the will and power to wield it – to the creative or victorious energy of the leader, the man we call great – we know ourselves ignorant, supine, indifferent in comparison; stupid or silly, superficial, or (as we say of the hardminded) commonplace and unresponsive.

Well, at least it is something to know ourselves all that and worse. For *who* is thus confessing and lamenting? That is a divine discontent. But sharper than all the pangs of such perception, sadder even than such sense of humiliation and banishment, would be the pangs of the prisoner of the asymbolic limbo looking up with infinite longing and yearning at the treasures we so amazingly disregard, or abuse and despise.

All other powers have come under the higher brain of Man; that wonderful enabling instrument of orderly creation which does for mind what so-called Law, conceived of as a marshalling and directive principle in the physical world, may be pictured as doing for motion and matter. But the real power of symbol in its articulate and logical form; the real function of the word in this sense; the power of sense itself, of meaning itself, and of that significance which is pre-eminently the glory of speech: this power is as yet practically in abeyance and almost pitifully ignored. For we are all guilty of or tolerate in this matter a dereliction, an ignorance and a waste which we should not suffer to continue for a day in any other case of vital importance or even of interested curiosity. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 43–44)

Now, in this sphere of imagery, analogy, metaphor, trope, etc. – in short, of linguistic comparison, reflection, parallel, or likeness – we find one of the most notable examples of our inconsistency. Whereas we press convention and formality into a rigid ‘board-school’ or ‘academic’ mould, and risk loss on this side, we are curiously careless, – generally, indeed, unsuspecting, – of the fact that we are liable to be powerfully swayed by the unintentional suggestions of language; as when the common or direct use of a word or phrase infects, so to speak, its analogical or metaphorical use.

Our analogical use of the terms solid ground, basis, foundation, has been already dealt with, but is worth considering more closely. Nothing can be more interesting or educative than the racial history of the stress we lay on these physical facts and the mental use we make of them. Nothing can be more admirable than the service they can and often do render. But it is none the less lamentable that for many generations teachers should, instead of leading in the path of rational linguistic advance, have followed fortuitous degenerative usage, and perpetuated actual ignorance of facts, actual confusion of thought, in the use of analogies of this kind. Before the days of Galileo, as it must be remembered and insisted on, the use of solid ground, basis, and foundation, as figures of universal and primary necessity, or of ultimate security, was entirely justified. The earth itself was assumed to be securely founded; and its being detached from its basis and set whirling in space was the last thing which there was any reason to fear. Solid ground was the need of the very world we lived on: to be ‘supported on nothing’ was crashing ruin.

Well, so it still is for us men. We must have a firm substratum to stand and yet more to build upon. To build? yes: with wood, brick, stone, or concrete, our shelters, defences, huts, towns. All must be as firmly founded as the tree is rooted.

Yet even now we are making aeroplanes, not merely geoplanes; and daily inventing fresh means of speeding through air without touch of earth or water. Therefore, we have less excuse than ever for forgetting the secure and powerful flight of the bird, or the fact that the earth on which we build so heavily rests, or rather floats, more safely on the bosom of space than a soap-bubble on the air. And when the time comes when some of us shall work and practically live in the air in some roomy air-boat anchored in our garden, and only descend to solid earth for food or other need, we may then, perhaps, recognise practically what science has long ago announced to us, that the ultimate ‘foundations’ of all visible power are neither builded nor built upon, but are sources of energy and centres of force, the suns and atoms of the cosmos. And recognising this, we shall perhaps permit the fact to have its proper influence, not only on our views of life, but on our ways of expressing that and ourselves. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 54–56)

Phrases like 'the material world,' 'human life,' 'spiritual experience,' 'heavenly aspiration,' 'insoluble problem,' 'matter of fact,' 'measurable and calculable value,' the 'actual' or 'prosaic' reality are bandied about, sometimes with literary skill, sometimes merely as controversial weapons, sometimes as conventions handed down by those who meant to convey by them conceptions or assumptions which are now either obsolete or greatly changed in bearing. Correspondingly, terms like Nature, matter, force, mass, spirit, mind, and much current image, metaphor, and analogy are used in undetected confusion and a welter of defeating inconsistency. Instead of being informed, directed, enlightened by them – which is the purpose that each of them was originally made to serve – we have either to think away their inherited associations, which is really an addition to the labour of thinking, or else to allow our most momentous conclusions to be vitiated by them. What such vitiation costs us is to be seen in the present enormous waste of exposition and controversy as well as in difficulties and deadlocks actually created by the lack of a real consensus in the quest and achievement of an adequate, consistent, ever intensifying and expanding Expression.

If we realised the situation and acted upon it, the results must at first appear miraculous, like recovery of sight by the lifelong blind; or rather, perhaps, like the exploits of the primitive kindlers of fire and constructors of weapons, tools, boats, wheels, etc., and of grammatical language itself, who were the real leaders of the race.

But for this very reason it is easier at present to take concrete cases, in which the choice is bewilderingly wide, since we are 'all in the same boat.' From one end to the other in our speech and writing we have the too futile complaint that this or that obsolete convention or current custom compels us here, hinders us there, in ways which ought not to be tolerated for a moment. And the complaining author himself inevitably, though in varying degrees, falls into the trap which he is denouncing.

Undoubtedly we are all in the same boat. For the critic who writes from the point of view of Significs, that is, from the really expressive, descriptive and interpretative standpoint, has frequent occasion to remember that he has no other means of protest and exposition than current language, the very one which so urgently calls for them. All that is said or written, therefore, by the significian, is necessarily itself subject to the very criticism which he brings and urges. And, meanwhile, the literary expert or the artist in verbal expression only reveals by his mastery of phrase or his brilliant use of imagery or comparison, and by the ease, dignity, and harmonious flow of his diction, how much more we might hope for if his powers were really set free, and his readers trained to welcome what, as working in a purified and enriched medium, he could give us. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 57–59)

It seems obvious that mathematics should not only become the general benefactor as thus 'applied' to all practical wants, but that it should be equally translatable into other and higher spheres of our common need. But it cannot do this while language (and especially while imagery) remains the neglected discord that it is, even in hands from which one would expect results which throughout rang as true as the music drawn from a perfectly adjusted instrument, and above all from the healthy and most highly organised human larynx. So far from leading to or making for pedantry, this vital command of a perfectly flexible expression in word as in act would reflect the plastic powers of the life-impulse itself in all the richness of its adaptive variation, and would continually surprise us with fresh forms of truth, wonder and beauty, in their turn involving, and in a sense creating, new developments of expressive achievement. At present we see the promise of this gift almost alone on the emotional and imaginative side. The poet does on his own ground surmount the difficulties of language, and by a sort of miracle arouses in us responses which, if we dispassionately analysed his method, we should see to be due to an induced

thrill of sympathetic vibration that must ignore the obstacle and exploit emotionally the utmost power of a yet unworthy medium of expression.

But as things are we agree to discount his message, which indeed fails to reach many at all, or to touch, with any perfect healing, the deepest ills, or answer the pregnant questions of life. It is but too evident, also, that the message of religion as yet tends rather to accentuate inevitable differences than to interpret and gather up these into an organic richness of response. Religion, like poetry, comes, as it were, as an isolated lung or an isolated heart, and language is largely to blame for the persistence of this dividing tendency which so effectually breaks up the normal unity of a sane human wholeness on its highest levels. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 81–82)

4.7. On language, temporality, significance, and the correspondence with Peirce

Du siehst, mein Sohn,
zum Raum wird hier die Zeit
(See, my son,
time here becomes space)
(R. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act I)

The inclusive community – to which all that is toxic is alien and all that makes for light as well as for love and for greatening range and power of knowledge, is beloved and familiar – the living body, the vital communion, is not yet born. (Welby to W. Macdonald, 1907–1910, in Cust 1931: 268–269)

To the problematic of time Welby dedicated an essay of 1907 entitled ‘Time as Derivative,’ published in the journal *Mind. A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, as well as a brief critical note of 1909, ‘Mr. McTaggart on the Unreality of Time,’ published in the same journal. In the latter she criticizes J. E. McTaggart’s conception of time and repropose her own as elaborated in 1907. These are appended to the present chapter, together with another another note, of 1909, ‘Professor Santayana and Immortality,’ published in the *Journal of Philosophy. Psychology and Scientific Methods*, and two short unpublished papers on the topic from the Welby Archives at York University. As also testified by her correspondence, Welby had been reflecting on the issues in question for quite some time before producing her publications. From this point of view, particularly interesting are her exchanges with Peirce:

Some day I will ask you to look at a suggestion of mine regarding the status of *time* which has apparently never yet been made. Dr. Stout and others find the point interesting and important, but I am afraid of not doing it justice. You may know of some student who could take up this apparently ‘dropped thread’ (Welby to Peirce, 22 December 1903, in Hardwick 1977: 15).

The problem of time was at the centre of discussion between Welby and Peirce in a series of letters exchanged between 1904 and 1905, which I shall briefly present in what follows. In addition to the question of time, other important topics covered in

these exchanges include the problem of sign theory, Welby's concept of mother-sense or primal sense, the concept of phenomenology, or what Peirce also calls 'ideoscopy,' the problem of triadism, etc. Peirce so esteemed Welby's research that he proposed she publish his letter to her about signs in a second edition of *What is Meaning?* As he says in the opening,

But I wanted to write to you about signs, which in your opinion and mine are matters of so much concern. More in mine, I think, than in yours. For in mine, the highest grade of reality is only reached by signs; that is by such ideas as those of Truth and Right and the rest.²⁴ It sounds paradoxical; but when I have devolved to you my whole theory of signs, it will seem less so. I think that I will today explain the outlines of my classification of signs.

And after expounding his theory of signs, he concludes his letter as follows:

Now if you think on the whole (as I do) that there is much valuable truth in all this, I should be gratified if you cared to append it to the next edition of your book, after editing it & of course cutting out personalities of a disagreeable kind *especially if accompanied by one or more* (running or other close criticism; for I haven't a doubt there is more or less error involved. (Peirce to Welby, 12 October 1904, Hardwick 1977: 23 and 35)

Welby responded to Peirce in a letter dated 20 November 1904 with her usual modesty:

At present there is no question of a second edition of 'What is Meaning?' and if there were, this Paper is far too important to appear thus! I wish you would offer it to 'Mind.' Meanwhile I am showing it to Prof. Stout for whom I am sure it will have much interest. (Hardwick 1977: 42)

She enclosed a draft of her paper on time in the same letter:

[...] Just lately I have been endeavouring to make improvements in the statement of a view of the origin and nature of 'time' which I have never seen advanced. It is still in tentative form and I fear full of oversights and stupidities.²⁵ But your own argument about time beginning from the question of action without reaction – that of the previous upon the subsequent – has thus a special interest for me, so perhaps I may first say something about that.

You maintain that the action of the previous upon the subsequent is action without reaction. Here I think my invariable reservation 'in some sense' and my invariable question 'In what sense?' come in. For there are other, and pressing aspects of the action of the previous upon the subsequent. You go on: 'The relation between the previous and the subsequent consists in the previous being determinate and fixed for the subsequent, and the subsequent being indeterminate for the previous. But indeterminacy belongs only to ideas; the existent is determinate in every respect; and this is just what the law of causation consists in. Accordingly, the relation of time concerns only ideas.'

I am tempted to say that indeterminacy belongs only, not to ideas but to ignorance.²⁶ Because of the mist I am to-day ignorant of the railway-making movements in the valley

24. [See *Collected Papers*, 5.283–5.309 (Hardwick 1977: 23)].

25. [I hope I am not wrong in sending a copy of the first draft of my 'Time' paper (Lady Welby's note originally appeared after her signature at the end of this letter) (Hardwick 1977: 37)].

26. [This and the following notes are marginal comments made by Peirce at various places in the letter: 'When I said that indeterminacy belongs to "ideas" I meant to ideas collectively, – to the world of ideas, & neither to existence nor to feelings. Ignorance belongs to the world of ideas. By the world of ideas I meant the world of Thirdness' (Hardwick 1977: 38)].

below; they are so far to me indeterminate, although hearing and even smell (worse luck!) may bring me hints and justify conjectures. Because of the curve of the earth the movements of ships beyond a narrow horizon are indeterminate unless we get news through wire or etherwaves!

What we want [are] answers to the completeness of the sense-witness. Where this fails us there is doubt, like the doubt of what the 'future' will bring, doubt as to our own best 'course.' The difficulty is to show, supposing our knowledge of the 'future' – the yet to come²⁷ – were as precise and complete as that of the 'past' – the passed, the left behind, – we should not be shut up in a fatal round of blind 'necessity.' Sooner than this, let all be uncertain, – even our memory!

But we are all clear as to the effect of the past upon the present (the presented) and, to speak of the effect of the future on the present seems for the reason you give, paradoxical. But to me the secret here lies (though most difficult to express) in the difference between Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness as you expound them. (Mr. Russell asks for Fourthness but that in the end only gives Twicetwones; are not the even numbers just multiples?)

'Time' as we conceive or experience it is only a line and that irreversible. When it acquires surface and volume then we get its secondness and thirdness. But as I see it, we are just as 'free' as before: the distinction between life and not-life still applies, there are still the modes of growth – the accretive and the inherent.

I have had much talk with Prof. Höffding about this just now. (He was sorry not to see you in America). He does not so much accuse me of moral fatalism (the usual irrelevancy) as complain that logically any comparison of the future to visual distance in space (the comparison already made in the case of the *passed*) deprives the cosmos of the hope of the *new*, which would shut us into a deadly imprisoning circle. That is the last thing I could tolerate! For I start from and in and with and as Motion. For me, in the 'spiritual' as well as the physical world, there is of course no Rest as the ultimate goal or as the antithesis of Motion. The changeless is less than the dead, it is the non-existent. The secret here again for me lies in the unexplored conception of Order.²⁸ Have you ever written on the idea of order as part of that of 'freedom,' and conversely? What *is* Order? (asked by Mr. Russell) is to me a twin question to What *Is* Meaning? Certainly it applies to the dynamic as to the static, and a disorderly spontaneity, the reign of Chance, would be the worst the most grinding of tyrannies. Your Thirdness comes in here. I often say that I am determined to be free and free to be determined. Why? Because of the unnamed Third yet lying in the womb of Motion, to which both the determinate and the indeterminate have reference. All this however sounds perilously like nonsense, and there is probably confusion somewhere.²⁹ But 'è pur sì muove' is my motto. To me the ideas of the new, the young, the fresh, the possible, are of deeper than any time-import, and are indeterminate only in a special sense.³⁰ Of course I know the Position you take on 'necessity.' But I own that even if I am right and not the victim of some undetected fallacy, *language here fails*.

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27. ['But to suppose our knowledge of the yet to come were to [?] determinate is to suppose its mode of being not the mode of Thirdness. There lurks a subtle contradiction in the hypothesis. It is out of the "nature of things," by which we mean the "nature of ideas" in themselves' (Peirce) (Hardwick 1977: 38)].
 28. ['What you call Order I conceive not to be mere serial arrangement. What you mean is Law looked upon from the point of view of its effects. So understood, it is as you say, precisely parallel to the question What is meaning' (Peirce) (Hardwick 1977: 39)].
 29. ['It may *sound* like nonsense because it is insufficiently defined; but it corresponds to the truth' (Peirce) (Hardwick 1977: 40)].
 30. ['That is what I came near calling Firstness, – Freshness' (Peirce) (Hardwick 1977: 40)].

It insists on keeping us in the toils of Secondness – either this *or* that: your money or your life! Now the either-or is an admirable servant but an impossible master. So is language. We have e.g. to pay a heavy price for having exalted time to a categorical co-equality with Space. The best I can do is to say, I wish instead of the Future we could begin to talk of the Unreached as the Yet distant! We do already talk of the near or distant future; and ‘future’ itself like *all* the time-words is non-temporal. It is just the *Beyond now*; and the now is essentially the here. This gives the transcendent a new legitimacy. What we transcend is a garden-hedge or a horizon; and you may go on transcending till you are back again at your own back-door! But meanwhile the round world has moved on and dragged you, the transcendentalist, with it, on a freshly transcendent expedition.

Now may I say that I think it makes a great difference whether you are speaking out of the racial mother-experience (including the father-experience) or out of one complete and ending in itself. In the latter case, of course the present, like the individual, is all-important. The past is its obsequious servant or its despotic master – you may put it either way – but it is independent of the ‘future,’ which as non-existent in any sense is to it ‘no concern of mine.’

But in the former case the whole weight of reference, the whole trend of interest, the whole demand for knowledge is transferred to the ‘future.’ The mother lives for and in her ‘child’ as possibly innumerable generations ‘potentially’ existent, and, circumstances being favorable, inevitably accruing. Her ‘child’ is only the Race to come: it comes towards her from a distance as real as that in the dim past whence she also, as in her true ‘child,’ has arrived. To the race-motherhood there is and can be no difference in existential reality between the past and the future any more than between a mile just left behind and a mile just entered upon.

Thus I should say (may I say?) the relation of time concerns only our as yet but partially developed ideas. It is a pregnant reflection that we are in a state of discontent precisely from the intolerable misfit between our ideals and our scientific and mathematical view of that reality we call the universe. Thus the very idea that the status of ‘time’ is inferior to that of space as being merely derivative, accords with the fact that ‘here is nothing in the physical universe corresponding to our idea that the previous determines the subsequent in any way in which the subsequent does not determine the previous.’ Reverse the velocities and ‘everything would go on just the same’ except that poor time would have to perform an awkward somersault or stand on its head or ‘take a back seat.’ I fear I think it ‘high time’ (whatever that may be) that it did!

Thus, as you say, according to our present and as I see it radically defective valuation of ‘time,’ it involves a pure idea of Secondness: but the ‘looking to the future as something which will have been past,’ seems, while as you say metaphysically the source of error, also due to an obscure instinct that there *is* somewhere a promise of Thirdness in time as really a partial translation of the space-idea. I wonder what you will say to this? Please say your worst without any softening!

I agree with all my heart of course with the ‘inadequacy of Secondness to cover all that is in our minds’ and with you am amazed at the way in which so many thinkers ‘are trying to construct a system without putting any Thirdness into it.’ But also I agree that Secondness must be exhaustively examined, although – an admirable illustration – ‘no branching of a line can result from putting one line on the end of another.’ And ‘time after time’ (really *in case after case*) I see that the very triadic relations not recognized by dyadism (?) ‘this does itself employ.’ [...] (Welby to Peirce, 20 November 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 37–42)

Welby opens her paper, ‘Time as Derivative,’ criticizing those schools of thought that invest time and space with equal status, and that describe these categories as equally

original and originating, equally important in generating and regulating experience – perceptive and conceptual. She discusses the relation of ‘categorical co-equality’ established between time and space, and to this position opposes her hypothesis of the derived and secondary character of time with respect to space. Claiming that her ideas on time arise from presuppositions deriving from the ‘generative matrix of primitive awareness, or of *sense*, as an organism may be said to “sense” or have a sense of the condition in which it lives,’ she advances the hypothesis that

whereas Space is the primary and inevitable “Room” for change, motion, sequence, succession, measure, number and direction, Time is the product of our experience of Motion and its condition, Space. It is in other words a translated application of these two really original ideas. (Welby 1907, now appended below)

In reality, this view had a precedent in Aristotle who maintained that time is another way of saying motion: ‘time is just this – number of motion in respect of “before” and “after”’ (*Physics*, IV, 219b1) – being a conception that had already pervaded an important part of Western philosophy (and physics). The novelty of Welby’s view is that she reconsidered the time-space relation in the light of at least three different contexts of discourse: progress in the sciences; research in the direction of signification; the exchange of ideas with Peirce who at the time was dealing with the same issues. Welby and Peirce influenced each other as testified by their correspondence, and, indeed, many of Welby’s ideas, including the more original ones, are somehow influenced by her dialogue with Peirce and vice versa.

In her correspondence with Peirce, Welby indicates linguistic usage relative to our experience of time and space in support of her hypothesis. Though agreeing with Welby on the priority of spatial terminology over the temporal which derives from the former, as well as on the necessary and pervasive connection between space and motion, Peirce believed their work on the problem of time proceeded in different directions. He observes that Welby did not specify whether the dependence of time on space is logical, metaphysical, epistemological, psychological, or ethnological-anthropological, though from her account of linguistic usage he infers that it is mainly of the last type. Welby had already anticipated her hypothesis of the derived and inferential character of time in *What is Meaning?*, justifying her statement by the fact that time is the only category whose terms of expression are all borrowed. In the context of her discussion on the capacity for interrogation as a distinctive feature of human intelligence (see Ch. 3, above), Welby asks the question,

Does the animal ask ‘when’? Has it a time-sense as it certainly has a sense of locality, the same in kind as our own? Leaving this as possibly belonging to a borderland in the query world, and certainly needing separate discussion, we come to a significant moment. [...] (Welby 1983 [1903]: 197)

To this passage is appended the note:

Since this was written, ‘time’ as derived and inferential (space and motion being the originating factors) has been made the subject of a Study not included in this volume. The suggestion seems justified by the fact (which does not seem to have been noticed) that ‘time’ is the only category of which the terms are all borrowed. An answer to this question would thus be supplied. (1983 [1903]: 197, n. 1)

Peirce maintained that linguistic usage did not offer proof of the derivative character of time for it did not demonstrate the dependence of time on space 'except in the matter of expression in speech.' But Welby believed that linguistic expression is indicative of the functioning of our mental categories and modelling of experience. As she says in 'Time as Derivative': 'In truth we are not now considering merely a vocabulary or its derivation; we are discussing the *ideas* which suggested and developed the terms that symbolise them, and the empirical source of those ideas' (Welby 1907, now below). Peirce writes, in his letter to Welby of 16 December 1904:

[...] the directions of your work and mine are as different as they well could be. Although you do not explicitly state whether the dependence of Time on Space for which you contend is a logical, metaphysical, epistemological, psychological, or ethnological-anthropological dependence, yet from the account you make of the usages of speech I infer that it is of the last kind mainly. It appears to me that the method of designating temporal relations by their analogies with spatial relations must date from the very beginnings of speech. For language can have had very little development when it was not yet settled how one was to express temporal relations. I therefore imagine the method took rise between two persons who met and endeavored to communicate partly by words and partly by signs. These persons would be together with a common spatial environment, which was visible, and in which special parts could be pointed out by gesture. It would therefore be particularly easy to form a terminology for spatial relations. On the other hand, they would probably have no great variety of common memories, and the few they had could not be indicated by gesture, without their analogies to spatial relations. Hence, if you do not assume a dependence of Time on Space to be otherwise independently proved, it appears to me that circumstances would nevertheless infallibly drive those two persons to the expression of temporal relations through their analogy with spatial relations; and I see nothing in these circumstances to prove any dependence of Time on Space except in the matter of expression in speech. There is much else that is suggestive in the essay, but somehow my mind fails to apprehend it very sharply.

This I have little doubt is my fault. For I must tell you that my philosophical studies have a very narrow range, – except in reading. Bred in an atmosphere of mathematics and of the severest branches of physics, all my studies, excepting some ancillary inquiries, have been directed toward proving points that I thought could be put beyond all intelligent doubt. I have studied philosophy only in so far as it is an exact science, not according to the childish notions of proof of the metaphysicians but according to the logic of science. Hence it has seemed to me that the first thing to be done was to define accurately the relations of time as common-sense assumes them, before entering upon the questions of whether or how far or in what respect these conceptions are valid and still less into any psychological questions about them & still less yet into attempt to make a history of the conceptions. This first humble labor of defining the temporal and spatial relations had never been rightly done. For I can absolutely refute the notions of the mathematicians on the matter. I need not say that at the outset of the inquiry I asked myself by what tests I should know that my definitions when I got them were correct, nor that I provided myself with several independent tests. One of these was as follows. There is one of the main branches of geometry, Topics, which alone occupies itself with properties of Space itself, namely, with the order of connection of its parts. This has been little studied, and no regular method of treating it is known. But if I obtain the proper definitions of temporal relations, little more will be required to furnish me with definitions of the Spatial relations, and if this is rightly done, it must throw a strong light on Topics, while if it is not rightly done it will do nothing for topics. (Peirce to Welby, 16 December 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 47–48)

In a letter to Peirce dated 7 January 1905, Welby confirmed the latter's interpretation of her point of view, that the ethno-anthropological perspective is the closest to her own approach, given that ultimately the race experience is the source of the capacity for abstraction (Hardwick 1977: 51). Peirce in fact had already underlined this aspect of her work in his review of 1903:

Lady Victoria Welby's little volume is not what one would understand by a scientific book. It is not a treatise, and is free from the slightest shade of pedantry or pretension. Different people will estimate its value very differently. It is a feminine book, and a too masculine mind might think parts of it painfully weak. We should recommend the male reader to peruse chapters xxii. to xxv. before he reads the whole consecutively, for they will bear a second reading. The question discussed in these chapters is how primitive men ever came to believe in their absurd superstitions. This has generally been supposed to be the simplest of questions. Lady Victoria does not deign to mention La Fontaine's pretty fable (the sixth of the ninth book; the whole of it is worth rereading if you have forgotten it) of the sculptor and his statue of Jove:

'L'artisan exprima si bien
Le caractère de l'Idole,
Qu'on trouva qu'il ne manquoit rien
A Jupiter que la parole.

'Même l'on dit que l'ouvrier
Eut à peine achevé l'image,
Qu'on le vit frémir le premier,
Et redouter son propre ouvrage.

'Il étoit enfant en ceci:
Les enfants n'ont l'âme occupée
Que du continuel souci
Qu'on ne fâche point leur poupée.

'Le coeur suit aisément l'esprit.
De cette source est descendue
L'erreur Payenne qui se vit
Chez tant de peuples répandue.

'Chacun tourne en réalités
Autant qu'il peut ses propres songes.
L'homme est de glace aux vérités;
Il est de feu pour les mensonges.

La Fontaine's theory is somewhat complex, and allows more to the artistic impulse than modern ethnologists have done. They make mythology rather an attempt at a philosophical explanation of phenomena. But the authoress shows by a painstaking analysis that all such theories – La Fontaine's and the new current ones alike – are fatally irreconcilable with those traits of the primitive mind that have struck Tylor, Spencer, and ethnologists generally, as the deepest graven. In place of them she offers a hypothesis of her own, and the reader is tempted to lose patience with her for regarding it only as provisional, so strongly does it recommend itself, until she presents quite another view which one must admit has its plausibility. (Peirce 1903, now in Hardwick 1977: 157–158)

Welby and Peirce were in accord on the fact that common experience and common speech (see below, Ch. 6) was the right starting point for the formulation of scientific

conceptions of time in appropriate technical terminology. From the perspective of the logic of science, Peirce believed that the first step consisted in the humble work of defining temporal and spatial relations in the light of common sense; only subsequently could one proceed to the evaluation of concepts thus identified in terms of logic, psychology and historical knowledge, etc. (cf. Peirce to Welby, 16 December 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 47). Keeping account of the value she attributed to everyday experience and signifying processes, what she called ‘common language,’ Welby could not but agree with such a perspective. At the same time, she repeated her thesis of the dependence of time on space, which, differently from other categories such as the number system, does not give rise to an independent form of notation in terms of signs. Consequently, it is not incidental that temporal terminology should arise by analogy with original spatial terminology, and maintain its derived character. Says Welby in a letter to Peirce dated 7 January 1905: ‘time is a product of space + motion – is in fact a kind of space and not an independent category at all – whereas space could never from any point of view be called a kind of time, or reckoned as dependent upon it,’ but let us report these words in context:

I have ever since repented having sent you the essay on *Time*, as I have much additional material which if properly embodied ought I think to make it more convincing, and I have now a prospect of collaboration in doing this. As to the point of view from which I approach it, I suppose, as you surmise, the ethno-anthropological comes nearest to it, for, after all, all ‘the more formal or abstract treatments of the subject must begin in, and issue from, the original fountain of race experience.

I am interested by your saying that the ‘first humble labour of defining the temporal and spatial relations had never been rightly done.’ Also that you can ‘absolutely refute the notions of the mathematicians on the matter.’ I would like to add one word about the relative originality and centrality in experience of space and time. What you say about the inevitable reason for an initial spatial terminology is of course and obviously true. But I think that in all other cases we find that though man may have had to begin with a vocabulary borrowed from his original experience, he has soon dropped it, as his mental powers grew, in favor of a specialized one. The case of number itself is surely one in point. You had finger 1, then finger-finger 11. But you soon had to evolve a number-notation. The same is apparently true of all the other categories except time, and, as I venture to suggest, for the best of reasons: that time is a product of space + motion – is in fact a kind of space and not an independent category at all – whereas space could never from any point of view be called a kind of time, or reckoned as dependent upon it. But I am not offering this as an adequate rejoinder to your criticism. You have in fact confirmed my view of the all-coercive nature of space + motion, which gives me hopes that my case may find a more worthy exponent than I can be. (Welby to Peirce, 7 January 1905, in Hardwick 1977: 51)

In ‘Time as Derivative,’ reflecting on her exchanges with Peirce over the years 1904 to 1905 and in support of her own hypothesis, Welby explains the difference in their standpoint on the spatial terminology of time claiming that Peirce referred to a fact of expressive evolution, and she herself to the derivative character of time:

Mr. C. S. Peirce suggests in a private letter that the motion-space terminology of Time is only the inevitable consequence of the fact that the source of *all* imagery must in the nature of the case be ‘space,’ since gesture and attitude reinforced by sounds must precede ordered articulation. But if this is so, how comes it that Time is the only mental category

which has no original terms of its own?³¹ By the same argument we should expect to find that all the categories would, like Time, have to be expressed in terms derived from Space. Of course categories like Number and Quantity have spatial *reference*; but that is all; while we have such categories as, e.g., Quality, or Value, which seem to the plain man to have none. (Welby 1907b: 390, now below)

In a letter dated 20 November 1904, Welby refers to Peirce's preceding letter of 12 October 1904 in which he develops reflections made in early 1867 (see *CP* 1.284 and 1.545–1.567), and applies his 'cenopythagorean categories,' that is, firstness, secondness and thirdness, to the problem of time as well as to his theory of signs (which he divides into ten main classes). As says Peirce:

You know that I particularly approve of inventing new words for new ideas. I do not know that the study I call *Ideoscopy*³² can be called a new idea, but the word *Phenomenology* is used in a different sense. *Ideoscopy* consists in describing and classifying the ideas that belong to ordinary experience or that naturally arise in connection with ordinary life, without regard to their being valid or invalid or to their psychology.³³ In pursuing this study I was long ago (1867) led, after only three or four years' study, to throw all ideas into the three classes of Firstness, of Secondness, and of Thirdness.³⁴ This sort of notion is as distasteful to me as to anybody; and for years, I endeavored to pooh-pooh and refute it: but it long ago conquered me completely. Disagreeable as it is to attribute such meaning to numbers, & to a triad above all, it is as true as it is disagreeable. The ideas of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness are simple enough. Giving to being the broadest possible sense, to include ideas as well as things, and ideas that we fancy we have just as much as ideas as we do have, I should define Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness thus:

Firstness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, positively and without reference to anything else.

Secondness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, with respect to a second but regardless of any third.

Thirdness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other.

I call these three ideas the cenopythagorean categories.³⁵ (Peirce to Welby, 12 October 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 23–24)

Peirce based his most well known sign triad, 'icon,' 'index' and 'symbol' on his 'ideoscopy' and the distinction between 'firstness,' 'secondness,' and 'thirdness.' He established a relation between his categories and temporality, observing that the idea of the present instant in which no thought can take place or any detail be separated is an idea of firstness. Instead, action understood as the action of one thing on another, brute

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31. ['For instance: The terms of Space are spatial. The terms of Motion are motional. The terms of Number are numerical. The terms of Form are formal. But the terms of Time are not temporal (Welby 1907b: 390, now below)].
 32. [Elsewhere called by Peirce 'phenomenology.' Not to be confused with Idioscopy. See *Collected Papers*, 1.183–1.202. For the chronology of names for phenomenology see Herbert Spiegelberg, 'Husserl's and Peirce's Phenomenologies: Coincidence or Interaction,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 17 (1956): 164–185 (Hardwick 1977: 23)].
 33. [See *Collected Papers*, 1.284 (1977: 24)].
 34. [See *Collected Papers*, 1.545–1.567 (1977: 24)].
 35. [For a comprehensive analysis of these categories, see *Collected Papers*, 1.141–1.353 (1977: 24)].

action, belongs to secondness. To this category belongs the precedent that acts upon a consequent, the past event that causes the present event, and experience understood as what the course of life compels one to think. All experience is generally oriented towards a goal, but when experience is considered in terms of firstness this consideration is left aside together with the idea of action-reaction. Instead, action connected with a law, a reason, an intent, a goal is connected with thirdness. The idea of the future, in the form of expectation based on common sense or scientific sense, on some intent or reason, implies thirdness. Referring to the relation between the previous and the subsequent, Peirce maintains that from the point of view of the subsequent the previous is determinate and fixed, instead from the point of view of the previous the subsequent is indeterminate. Furthermore, given that the existent is determinate in every respect, indeterminacy only belongs to ideas. Peirce concludes that the relation of time only concerns the world of ideas, but Welby objects that indeterminacy belongs to ignorance and not to ideas. To this Peirce replies that ignorance belongs to the world of ideas, and the latter is the world of Thirdness.

Welby established a relation between 'time' and 'sense-witness.' Where the latter fails there is only doubt, uncertainty, including doubt about the 'future.' However, we could also suppose that our knowledge of the future is as determinate as that of the past, without implying the prison of blind necessity, indeed uncertainty is better. The effects of the past on the present, the 'presented,' are clear, while to speak of the effects of the future on the present seems paradoxical. In reality, however, this is possible in terms of Peirce's categories, the future can indeed condition the present. Peirce detects a contradiction in Welby's interpretation of the relation between present and future because it excludes the mode of thirdness from the future.

Welby supports her hypothesis of the present-future relation with the following argument: time is commonly conceived and experienced in terms of linearity and irreversibility according to ideas that are only partially developed; and only as the temporal relation grows in surface and volume does it acquire secondness and thirdness. Thus, Welby establishes a relation between her thesis of the secondary status of time, given that it derives from space, and the principle of reversibility formulated by Peirce:

Everything that had happened would happen again in reverse order. These seem to me to be strong arguments to prove that temporal causation (a very different thing from physical dynamic action) is an action upon ideas and not upon existents. But since our idea of the past is precisely the idea of that which is absolutely determinate, fixed, *fait accompli*, and dead, as against the future which is living, plastic, and determinable, it appears to me that the idea of one-sided action, in so far as it concerns the being of the determinate, is a pure idea of Secondness; and I think that great errors of metaphysics are due to looking at the future as something that will have been past. (Peirce to Welby, 12 October 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 27)

Keeping account of Peirce's views, Welby attributes the limit of the present valuation of time to the fact that 'it involves a pure idea of Secondness,' while leaving aside the perspective of thirdness, 'there *is* somewhere a promise of Thirdness in time as really a partial translation of the space-idea' (Welby to Peirce, 20 November 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 41). To recover the spatial dimension of time means to recover the real sense of the transcendent:

Of course I know the Position you take on ‘necessity.’ But I own that even if I am right and not the victim of some undetected fallacy, *language here fails*. It insists on keeping us in the toils of Secondness – either this *or* that: your money or your life! Now the either-or is an admirable servant but an impossible master. So is language. We have e.g. to pay a heavy price for having exalted time to a categorical co-equality with Space. The best I can do is to say, I wish instead of the Future we could begin to talk of the Unreached as the Yet distant! We do already talk of the near or distant future; and ‘future’ itself like *all* the time-words is non-temporal. It is just the *Beyond now*; and the now is essentially the here. This gives the transcendent a new legitimacy. (Welby to Peirce, 20 November 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 40)

In the same letter Welby refers to an objection made by Harald Höffding (1843–1931) regarding the relation she established between the future and visual distance in space (a comparison that also concerns the *passed*). Höffding believed that Welby’s hypothesis deprives the cosmos of the hope of the *new*, and traps people in a circle. Welby also reports her own reply in praise of motion and change. ‘The changeless is less than the dead, it is the non-existent.’ She believed that the secret lies in the unexplored conception of order which she also relates to that of ‘freedom.’ And in this same letter to Peirce she also responds to Bertrand Russell’s question, ‘What *Is* Order?’, which she considers a twin question to her own question, ‘What *Is* Meaning?’:

Certainly it applies to the dynamic as to the static, and a disorderly spontaneity, the reign of Chance, would be the worst the most grinding of tyrannies. Your Thirdness comes in here. I often say that I am determined to be free and free to be determined. Why? Because of the unnamed Third yet lying in the womb of Motion, to which both the determinate and the indeterminate have reference. [...] ‘e pur si muove’ is my motto. To me the ideas of the new, the young, the fresh, the possible, are of deeper than any time-import, and are indeterminate only in a special sense. (Welby to Peirce, 20 November 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 39–40)

The most original aspect of Welby’s conception of time is probably the connection she established between temporality and so-called ‘mother-sense’ (see Ch. 6, below). Welby affirmed a relation between time and ‘racial mother-experience,’ ‘racial motherhood,’ which opens to awareness of time in terms of the relation with the other beyond the conventional subdivision of temporal sequence in terms of past, present and future. Welby distinguished between ‘racial mother-experience’ which includes ‘father-experience,’ on the one hand, and experience that is complete in itself, on the other. ‘Racial mother-experience’ is dynamical and generative, experience that does not close in upon itself, that does not end in itself, but, on the contrary, is open to the future and to the other. Instead, the present, the individual, experience considered as complete and finished in itself, is regulated by the logic of identity:

[...] it makes a great difference whether you are speaking out of the *racial mother-experience* (including the *father-experience*) or out of one complete and ending in itself. In the latter case, of course the present, like the individual, is all-important. The past is its obsequious servant or its despotic master – you may put it either way – but it is independent of the ‘future,’ which as non-existent in any sense is to it ‘no concern of mine.’

But in the former case the whole weight of reference, the whole trend of interest, the whole demand for knowledge is transferred to the ‘future.’ The mother lives for and in her ‘child’ as possibly innumerable generations ‘potentially’ existent, and, circumstances

being favorable, inevitably accruing. Her 'child' is only the Race to come: it comes towards her from a distance as real as that in the dim past whence she also, as in her true 'child,' has arrived. To the race-motherhood there is and can be no difference in existential reality between the past and the future any more than between a mile just left behind and a mile just entered upon. (Welby to Peirce, 20 November 1904, in Hardwick 1977: 40–41)

In relation to the mother, with the child is established a dialogic relation to the alterity of future generations. The child, in the mother, is the generation to come, is projected forward towards the other. Here, Welby maintains that both future action and passed (past) action meet in the present, in the individual, in a growing unending spiral without separations and barriers, which in fact do not exist in reality, if not artificially. According to Welby, the mother is the place of transcendence and continuity of the subject in time, and of time in the subject. The mother lives for and in her child, through the concrete potential of innumerable successive generations, interconnected on the basis of the principle of continuity. In Welby's discourse, the child represents the human race to come and encounters the mother from a distance that is as real as the past it comes from. From the perspective of racial motherhood there is no such thing as difference understood as separation between past and future, any more than between 'a mile just left behind and mile just entered upon,' as she says in the letter reported above.

As described in her correspondence with Peirce, time is a derivative of space and is made of events. But events, action and experience are not determinate and complete in themselves. On the contrary, they are described as open, dynamical, generative in a universe regulated by the logic of otherness and continuity in the dialectic interrelation between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of life. From this point of view, Welby and Peirce anticipate Emmanuel Levinas (particularly *Le temps et l'autre*, 1979, and *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, 1993), and his discussion of time in terms of the otherness relation and of the relation among bodies. This is a far cry from time conceived in terms of unlinearity, irreversibility, monologism and the logic of closed identity, being a conception which instead characterizes the conventional division between past, present and future.

In Welby's view, to identify a relation between 'experience' and 'time' also means to identify a relation between the concepts of experience, the capacity for projection, the beyond, transcendence, infinity (also theorized in *What is Meaning?*, Chapter XXI). The existent considered as defined and finalized once and for all, remains trapped in what with Mikhail Bakhtin is identified as the 'small experience' (cf. Bakhtin 1990). This coincides with the time of identity, of the individual founded in the logic of identity, dominion of the present, of the *hic et nunc*. By contrast, in the case of 'racial mother experience,' which can be associated to what Bakhtin calls the 'great experience' (Bakhtin 1979), such things as reference, interest, and knowledge transcend the limits of the present and open to infinity. This is the time of otherness, time oriented by the relation to the other, the time of ethics, which is founded in the logic of otherness as described by both Bakhtin and Levinas (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 138–166, 377–399). Welby proposes a conception of time, experience and subject in which past, present and future come together and develop in the continuity of a spiral progression without interruptions, generating signifying processes that are free from prejudice, from the logic of identity and separation, projected in the ethical dimension of otherness and responsibility.

In her note of 1909, Welby develops her conception of time as proposed in ‘Time as Derivative’ through her critique of J. E. McTaggart. Again she evidences the derivative character of time as it emerges from the appropriate terminology:

we curiously ignore the obvious origin of the idea of ‘past’ from passed, ‘present’ from presented (here, ‘in this place’) and ‘future’ from ‘yet to come,’ and ‘to arrive.’ Time is not an ‘original category,’ but ‘derivative’ or ‘secondary product’ of ‘motion-space.’ The sensory-percepts of motion and therefore of change in space precede the notion of time or at least include it. Motion and change in space generate time. In 1909, while claiming that time and change in experience through space are irreversible, Welby also observes that this claim is forced given that, under certain aspects, time is also reversible as emerges if we think in terms of ‘reminiscence,’ ‘recollection,’ ‘record’ more than of ‘memory’. (Welby 1909b: 326 and note 1, now appended to the present chapter)

In the same paper she maintains that the articulation of time – a day, an hour, etc. – corresponds to a given sphere of experience. She signals

two kinds of mode of Space; (1) the static and (2) the kinetic. [...] Change implies *room* wherein to change, and thus movement internal or external; movement also of object or of its standing-ground, in given directions. [...] and *time* wherein to change.

A condition for the present state of awareness, or, ‘mind,’ says Welby, is the capacity to remember, to reproduce in the idea the space already crossed by experience. However, this capacity fails (apart from rare exceptions) when a question of predicting, of anticipating the ‘other half’ of our temporal and movement area. Welby describes this incapacity as an ‘arbitrary blindness’: the capacity to predict what is coming, what we are advancing into, that is, ‘forward-reaching vision,’ indirect future vision, presupposes highly organized life as a condition and is strictly connected to the degree of development in ‘significating power,’ therefore in ‘moral sense,’ the ethical dimension of signifying processes. According to Welby, this is a question of developing (in reality, also of recovering) the inferential capacity, as perspected by progress in science. Progress favours recognition and correction of errors, such as the conceptualization of time as an original category instead of as a derivative or secondary product, which in turn subtends other errors, as in all theories of immortality.

In her note of 1909 entitled ‘Professor Santayana and Immortality,’ Welby reflects on what she describes as an erroneous conceptualization of immortality and relative linguistic usage (on immortality, see also her correspondence with Schiller in Chapter 2). She believes that the prefix ‘in-’ or ‘im-’ compromises the possibility of a positive solution to any argumentation whatsoever from the very beginning. These prefixes are used indifferently to signify concentration, negation, subtraction. Welby offers an example (among the many) of how expressive modes can ‘vitiate our inferences, by sub-suggestion of which we are unconscious.’ The prefix ‘im-’ in ‘immortal’ polarizes attention between the terms mortal and not mortal, when instead the real question is whether these are in fact the right terms to consider. Prejudice about immortality is also generated on a linguistic level, as when we fail to distinguish between ‘authentic and originative identity’ and ‘personality or self,’ between to be, I am and to have, I have, where the second term is only considered as a working instrument, and nothing permanent: ‘a working means of a cosmic *identifying* energy’ whose reach goes far beyond definitions of the time

(see Ch. 6, below). Also, Welby identifies a limit in Santayana's critique of the cult of pain in his failure to distinguish between I and self.

As with all other issues, Welby discussed this topic as well in her correspondence with various personalities. The excerpt below is from a letter to Julia Wedgwood, which evokes Welby's reflections from approximately twenty years earlier as articulated in her paper 'Life and Death,' dated 1886 (now appended to Ch. 1, above):

[. . .] Life does not exclude death, it utilizes death as it does birth: it includes death as part of its process. Except we die, we are born not. We cannot divorce the two. But we can interpret them: we can learn and act upon their full significance. We can see that they are included in the idea of life itself. But to act upon their full significance would be impossible without science; and science implies Significs. . . . One deadly harm done by the half-theory of immortality – ignoring the precious services of death as correlative of birth – is not merely the painful but salutary reaction of its denial, but also the resulting conception of life, not as the steady and creative stream of a vital sunlight but as a click-shutter substitute or an evanescent sparking. (Welby to Julia Wedgwood, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 212)

In 'Time as Derivative,' Welby offers a critical reading of conceptions of time formulated by contemporary scholars including, in addition to Peirce, John Royce, James Baldwin, H. N. Gardiner, William James, Karl Pearson. Instead, she identifies a position substantially similar to her own, though working independently from them and from a different perspective, in the theories of French philosophers M. Henri Bergson whom she cites from the Chapter 'Le temps homogène et la durée concrète' in *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, and M. Guyau whom she cites from the volume *Genèse de l'idée de Temps* (edited by Alfred Fouillée). The latter confirm her own conception of time as an idea that arises because of the need to measure it on becoming aware of experience as a sequence of changes, a progression whose velocity varies according to intensity in terms of interest, just as the velocity of motion changes according to degree in pressure, attraction, etc.:

Time of course can no more change its pace than Space its intervals or distances. But what, in passages like this, we call Time, is really our conscious experience; which changes its rate of progression in terms of our interest, just as motion increases or lessens in velocity under given pressure, attraction, etc. (Welby 1907b: 394, now below)

As the measure of experience, time is the metaphorical application of the idea of space. Consequently, the vocabulary of time is entirely derivative, borrowed from the notion of space, while the reverse is not possible. However, such linguistic, indeed, categorical usage is reductive and often inconsistent. In fact, described in terms of unilinear and irreversible progression, time only appears as a partial translation of space, losing sight of pluridimensionality and volume:

Time, on the one hand, enthroned as a primary category, and on the other numbered among the actual facts of life, is in fact but an inference or a translation found expedient in practice, and has no existence in the sense in which Space has existence. (Welby 1907b: 394, now this volume)

Therefore, while it is correct to think of time in terms of space, of room in which to move, to act, to experience, to exist, to think, to reflect, the contrary is not true given that space cannot be defined in terms of time. Welby also reflects on the question of extension. She contrasts a common view of extension based on a restricted conception of

time understood as linear and irreversible development, to a view of extension based on temporal terminology implying experience, its reach or intensity, that is not understood restrictively as unilinear and irreversible, giving rise to reversible, spatial/spacious extension. Therefore, in Welby's description extension is broader than both time and space and includes them both.

Ultimately, insofar as it is a question of intensity (in physical terms, of velocity or concentration), experience is a question of 'value' or 'significance.' Difference in quantity is at last translated into difference in quality. In this case, motion is the simplest form through which to describe reality. That which is expressed as intensity of experience is independent from extension in space or time. Said differently, and returning to the question of the origin, says Welby, time in reality is the translation of 'diversity-in-position' through 'change-of-position'; and it is the effect of a mental condition corresponding to the pre-visual stage of sense perception. In other words, in Welby's view, we cannot perceive the time-scheme in its globality as we do instead the space-scheme, so that the tripartition of time into three 'worlds' – passed, present and future – is no more than the expression of the contingent limit on human perception as much as of the shortcomings of our analytical categories.

Space and motion are all one on the sensible and rational levels, while the term 'material' indicates 'content' and 'resistance.' That which resists, whatever it is, is connected with the dynamical order, and in the last analysis is the source of the static – or at least one of its conditions:

It follows that there is no such thing as an ultimate problem of Time, nor indeed even of Space: the only ultimate problem for us in the connexion is that of Change. For, after all, the successive can only be ultimately distinguished from the simultaneous as two modes of motion (e.g., you strike two 'notes' successively or simultaneously), or as two modes of conceptions. (Welby 1907b: 398, now below)

If this is true, says Welby, to establish a relation of categorical equality between time and space is the result of 'monocular thinking.' In 'binocular thinking' space absorbs time, and thus enriched develops into an enhanced conception of motion associated with the concept of *energeia*. In other words, motion rises from the status of 'sense-percept' to that of 'significance or a consummate symbol of value.' Time experienced as the unidimensional space of mind translated into knowledge, the successive space of experience, is only the limit

which precludes our 'taking in' except in the painter's or sculptor's sense, the whole of any 'scene' together. It is all there simultaneously; but as we can only reach, so we can only see, the parts and not the whole, except indirectly or ideally. (Welby 1907b: 399, now below)

Welby observes that terminology concerning the physical or material world derives from our conscious activities, from mind. In other words, we experience the world, come to know it indirectly through our mental and expressive activities: 'And certainly no one refuses to admit that in this sense we translate the physical into the psychological; we impose our own character upon material phenomena' (Welby 1907b: 398, now below). The language of the physical-material world is borrowed in order to describe our feelings and emotions, but temporal terminology does not enrich one's conception of space; instead, it derives from space and even symbolizes a part of that same conception:

We have two immensities, one physiological, the other 'mental.' The one is Space, the other Eternity. What then is the Future – that Unknown and yet Inevitable on which we lay so much stress, towards which we are compelled to travel, and which can only be 'read' in guess, conjecture, inferential anticipation, or forecast – that of which the prediction can never be verified until it has become the Present? (Welby 1907b: 398, now below)

Welby rejected the division of time into past, present and future as an objective fact and replaced it with the idea of simultaneity. Limits imposed upon vision in relation to space and, therefore, by the conventional subdivision of time are not inscribed in the existent. On the contrary, they are contingent limits of perception and ultimately of categorization. The present is poldimensional and corresponds to what one reaches through bodily vision; the past is the world which has already been explored; while the future is the world that has not yet revealed itself to the gaze.

Welby conceptualized time well before publication of her essay in 1907, and, as we know, one of the places she preferred for the work of theorization was her correspondence, as testified by *Echoes of Larger Life* and *Other Dimensions* as well as by her unpublished correspondence in the archives. The following is a short series of excerpts from her letter exchanges on the question of time, written between 1903 and 1910, with Julia Wedgwood,³⁶ Edmund Maclure,³⁷ Frederick Pollock, George F. Stout,³⁸ W. R. Sorley,³⁹ Victor V. Branford,⁴⁰ collected by Nina Cust in *Other Dimensions*:

... Let me just explain that my suggestion as to 'time' and (as I see it) its origin space-motion is entirely independent of the subjective-objective controversy, at all events in its hitherto current forms. It is our assumptions and presuppositions which, in certain cases, we have, it seems, to revise. Were Kant living now there is perhaps little doubt of his revising them. So probably with Spinoza ... (Welby to E. Maclure, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 129–130)

... When shall we see that experience is spatial and learn Clifford's lesson of the absurdity of limiting space to the bit and the kind we live in just now? We cannot, we are told, have wide time (why not? only because we have absurdly chosen out an impossible one dimension in space and expressed time in its terms – length, etc) but we *can* have a wide experience. All else follows: we cannot stop at two dimensions! At least we might make the most of our triadic experience of space, since it is by means of space-ideas that we depreciate and even repudiate the space-idea in the thought-world. ...

The space of succession which we call 'time' is of course as much space as the space of the simultaneous. And the space of possibility is as much space of actuality: since it is probable that to some other race and planet we are but possibility, while our 'mere possibility' is their actuality. (Welby to E. Maclure, 1903–1905, in Cust 1931: 130)

36. [Author of *The Moral Ideal, The Message of Israel*, etc.] (Cust 1931: 17n).

37. [At this time Organizing Secretary of the S.P.C.K.] (Cust 1931: 129n).

38. [Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of St. Andrew, and at this time Editor of *Mind*. Author of *The Groundwork of Psychology, The Nature of Universals and Propositions, Studies in Philosophy*, etc. (Cust 1931: 32n)].

39. [Professor of Moral Philosophy, Cambridge. Author of *The Moral Life and Moral Worth, Moral Values and the Idea of God, Recent Tendencies in Ethics, A History of English Philosophy*, etc. (Cust 1929: 132n)].

40. [Writer on Sociology, Civics, etc. Part founder of the Sociological Society. Author of *On the Origin of the Word Sociology, Theology Poetry and Civics*, etc. (With P. Geddes) *Our Social Inheritance* (Cust 1931: 70n)].

... Possibly it may be found that while my own ideas have gone astray there still remains something generally overlooked which may usefully modify the current views of time and enrich those of space and motion. As to the ideas of 'aye' and 'ever,' they are both apparently derived from that of a going or a concourse: i.e., motion (a going would naturally require that kind of space which we call time in which to take place). And one wonders whether time is really anything more than a mode of measurement; while the main sense of 'tide' (as Whitsun-tide) might well be a group of interests and activities differentiated from others and then conceived as belonging to a successive order which we measure off as we do space. In this connection 'everywhere' is suggestive. Why do we here include a time-term in a space-term, and mean by the combination only allspace or rather allplace?

Please do not forget that, like Mr. Russell, I postulate a certain defect (or imperfect development) of 'mental sight' in our 'view' of time. At least I may be allowed the use (for what it is worth) of the blind man who has to step or grope his way about and to whom space is successive as time still is to us. (Welby to F. Pollock, 1903–1905, in *Cust* 1931: 130–131)

... I used to say that space and time were only my 'offices,' never my home: now I should only say it of the second or of the first in the narrowest (planetary) sense. As to the point, etc., we say 'Do you see my point? Or my line?' Why do we never say 'Do you see my surface? Or my cube? Why are we here so one-dimensional? Of course I see points, etc., in your – or say in the geographer's – sense (of headland). But geometrically I only see a dot, an edge, a skin (all as sharp as you like) – that is, with my bodily eyes: It is with my mental, conceptual, eyes only that I see the geometer's point, though you do not adopt my view of space and time, you will allow that it is worth advancing? (Welby to G. F. Stout, 1903–1905, in *Cust* 1931: 131)

... I was thinking of telling you what your criticisms had suggested, when, this morning, taking up Bergson's book [*Les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*] ... I found that with consummate ability he was drawing out the very points I was trying to express! Of course in such a case it is not fair by quotation to isolate a paragraph from a continuous argument. Still I cannot resist enclosing you one extract, for this is the very first time that I have come across anyone who saw the matter in the same light that I did. And Bergson is unaware, or at least takes no notice, of the fact of the entirely borrowed vocabulary of time. I shall go on to his treatment of *Les deux Aspects du Moi* with double interest now. ... (Welby to G. F. Stout, 1903–1905, in *Cust* 1931: 131–132)

I have read through your papers on *Time*. ... There seem to me to be a number of excellent points; but – perhaps owing to my hurried reading – the argument is not always quite clear to me.

Your fundamental position is (if my reading is correct) that time is 'the last product' of the space-experience. What is the ground of this assertion that time is a derivative from space? Am I right in saying that the only argument is the philological: that the time-concepts are all expressed in language by spatial metaphors? I have not elsewhere seen so complete a working out of this position. But the question remains: does the fact that the time-concept is expressed in language in terms of space prove that the space-concept is prior in experience? May not the spatial expression be due simply to the greater permanence or fixity of space, not to its priority in experience?

Further, time, you say, is the offspring of motion and space; change presupposes motion. I think two things are required here: (1) a demonstration that change presupposes motion, rather than motion change and (2) an explanation of what is meant by change, succession, etc. (from which you derive time), when what has become the time-element is abstracted

from them. At present it seems to me that a critic might reply to you that you have already assumed time when you assume change or succession.

It is possible that your view might be made clearer by a reference to the technical distinction between the time-presentation or time-percept and the time-concept. (W. R. Sorley to Welby, 1903–1905, Cust 1931: 132–133)

It was a great encouragement to me that you found good points among those suggested. I am also obliged to you for reminding me that genetically the perception of change does precede that of motion; although it is also true that the sense of motion begins in the infant at the moment of birth if not before, whereas that of change hardly becomes definite until sight has become quite distinct. It seems to me indeed that we want a word to express the combined idea.

Of course the hypothesis that time is a derivative from space, and may even be called a kind of space suggested by change or motion, succession or sequence, can only vindicate itself by accounting better and more economically for the admitted facts of the case than any other assumption has so far done. That the direct evidence is psychological – the unconscious revelation of habit in language – cannot of course be denied. But the value of this consists entirely in the involuntary witness thus gained of a practically universal attitude of mind on the subject.

Confining ourselves then to the psychological aspect of time (since the logical and mathematical aspects can only of course be reconsidered in the light of this) we have to be careful not to use of the time-idea itself the ideas which are due to the accepted view of its nature. That is, in discussing the nature and origin of the space-idea we must beware of using spatial ideas; we must use those of muscular notion and change of attitude or position which needs and suggests ‘room’ or ‘place.’ So, we must beware of using time-ideas in order to discuss the nature and origin of the time-idea. To say of time that it came before or first, after or last, must not be understood temporally but spatially: as a question of arrangement on this or the other side of a man; in front or behind him; on his right or left hand. And here we come to two apparently opposed views of time. As a mere derivative it becomes of secondary importance: if I am right we can more easily think ourselves out of time than out of its ‘mother’ space. But as one of the highest (rather than the latest) products of the category-constructing intellect, it even excels space in dignity and importance; since it is that kind of ‘space’ in which thought itself moves and advances (in this or that direction, though time has only one). This is one of the causes of difficulty in making my position clear. Time is one of the causes of difficulty in making my position clear. Time may be described as a special way of dealing with space-ideas, and of applying them to experience. I don’t know whether one might compare the development of time from space to the development of pure mathematics from number through algebra and arithmetic. Anyhow we must distinguish between the product of highly conventionalized and elaborated reasoning and the sense-given idea with which the whole process started. But in all this I am somewhat painfully conscious of disability of two kinds. The one, that of defect of mathematical training, and the other the condition of expression which is only adapted to discuss the received scheme of ideas on these subjects. With regards to what you say of the critic’s probable objection that we have already assumed time when we assume change or succession, we must remember the close relation between succession (and the successive) and success. The latter no one connects with time. And more: when we look at a hill-side covered with successive rows of terraces or houses or trees, etc., we do not mean succession in time but in space, its original home. Again, we may illustrate what is meant by change and succession before time ‘comes in,’ as what the critic of a picture notices when he compares the different parts of what is still a simultaneous whole.

He speaks of the change in size and tint which distance effects – the near hill green, the far one blue; he speaks of the sequence of lines in the picture. And when he points out the painter's success in giving this or that impression, he has not entirely left that order of thought, although again there is no question whatever of time in this either.

Once more, may I repeat that it is, so to speak, but vice of established usage that a time-sense is given to my words of order. My 'last' is last in a 'row' all there at once. Any may I hope that I have succeeded (if not in the 'time-' yet in a true sense) in making my meaning a little clearer? (Welby to W. R. Sorley, 1903–1905, in *Cust* 1931: 133–135)

I have been carefully reading Prof. Adamson's lectures [*The Development of Modern Philosophy*], and am glad to find that he held that all perplexities about time 'resolve themselves into a conflict of view regarding change'; that it is change and not time which like space is primordial. 'What has been said of time applies, in strictness, to the more fundamental conception of change.' Change, as he says, belongs to the 'the very nature of reality.' When he speaks of 'the half-thoughts – permanence and succession – either of which, closely regarded, shows itself to require the other, and to be, therefore, but an incomplete idea,' he touches what to me is a master-key of reality. Again, he evidently leans definitely towards my own conclusion that time and space ought never to be coupled as they are, since it seems that time is dependent upon space but not conversely. Then he points out what to me undermines much of our current conception of experience. For direct experience is only of that 'unchanging moment' which is the 'non-existent.' Past and future belong to the indirect. Thus we assume them to be unreal. But it is our defective images on which logical abstractions are based which lead to these confusions. Experience has surely never yet been adequately defined. (It may be rejoined that it is indefinable. Perhaps I ought to have said, the full connotation of experience has never yet been given.) Until we learn in a much fuller sense than any yet possible, to exchange experiences and points of view, we never can lay down what experience includes; since we cannot avail ourselves of the observations of the specialist in experience. Such a specialist, indeed, unable to compare his particular forms of experience with those of the majority and thus in any real sense to test its value, almost inevitably lapses into morbid exaggeration or becomes the victim of illusion arising from his own actual powers. But if everyone had been trained from the first in interpretative power so as to perceive with analytic insight the sense of differing or exceptional experiences, and thus in some degree at least to master their significance, this necessary element of mutual criticism would soon be supplied. We should then gain an immensely enhanced knowledge of what experience – direct and indirect, immediate and inferential – may imply. . . . (Welby to W. R. Sorley, 1903–1905, in *Cust* 1931: 135–136)

The following excerpt from a letter by Victor V. Branford, written between 1907–1910, focuses on the social and psychological dimension of Welby's conceptualization of time and is yet another example (among the many) of contemporary reactions to her own significant approach to this question:

I have found your paper on *Time* exceedingly suggestive. It raises the question of the social significance of time considered in relation to the dynamic of evolution. It seems to me a fair sociological deduction from your position to look upon time as a mode of the coming into consciousness of the social process. (Branford to Welby, 1907–1910, in *Cust* 1931: 268)

The texts

Correspondence from the archives

4.8. A selection from her unpublished correspondence in alphabetical order (1898–1911)

*Between Victoria Welby and Giovanni Vailati (1898 and 1903–1908)**

Victoria Welby's letter exchanges with Giovanni Vailati took place between 1898 and 1908. As is mostly the case with the correspondence stored in the Welby Collection, many letters are usually unsigned drafts or rough copies, and in many cases they are incomplete. Copies of some letters, mainly Vailati's, are available in the Giovanni Vailati Archives at the University of Milan. The correspondence between Welby and Vailati covers theoretical issues connected with the problem of meaning, inferential processes, logic and the relation to pragmatism, the scientific method of enquiry. Welby and Vailati also exchanged reading lists on various topics and materials of various sorts including papers authored by themselves, information concerning writings by others, etc. Furthermore, they organized translations of each other's works, and promoted various editorial ventures, contributing to the reciprocal amplification of each other's circle of contacts and to the circulation of each other's ideas.

What follows is a selection of the more significant passages from their correspondence available in the Welby Collection, York University Archives. Welby and Vailati exchanged a few letters in 1898 and then again between 1903 and 1908, this time without interrupting contact. Welby's letters to Vailati are mostly unpublished with the exception of a few letters included in the volume *Epistolario 1891–1909* (see Lanaro 1971), a collection of Vailati's correspondence with his various interlocutors; a few letters from this collection are also available in *Other Dimensions* (see Cust 1931).

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

8 June 1898

I have the honour to acknowledge with many thanks the two lectures which you have been good enough to send me. Alas! I have to confess with much regret that I do not read Italian. Hence I am unable to profit by knowledge of your views on the all-important question of the expansion of our powers of expression. As you have done me the honour to read my little *Grains of Sense*, may I ask whether you have seen my articles in *Mind* on 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation?' If not, may I venture to forward them? I need hardly add that I would greatly value any criticism or comment from you, though I fear it must be in English [...]

* [A selection from the correspondence between Victoria Welby and Giovanni Vailati stored in Box 18, Welby Collection, York University Archives].

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

16 June 1898

[...] I will be very glad to receive a copy of your article on 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' being myself engaged in analogous researches, whose results I propose to resume next year in a little essay 'on the function of the word-questions (querelles des mots) in the development of physical sciences and especially of mechanics' ['Alcune osservazioni sulle questioni di parole nella storia della scienza e della cultura'].

I regret having not yet been able to secure a copy of your *Grains of Sense*, which, as Messrs. Dent & Co. have prevented me, is at present out of stock-binding.

As you have seen perhaps from my pamphlets, I am a fervent admirer of the English classical philosophical school, in particular of J. S. Mill, whom I believe to be by far the most exact and profound writer of the century on philosophical subjects. His influence on continental thought seems to me to be underrated by the actual philosophical authorities in England; they seem to me not sufficiently to realize the great advance represented by Mill's writings, *vis-à-vis* of those of the German metaphysicians of the school of Kant (Schopenhauer not excluded), who, in so far as logic is concerned, cannot now pretend to have anything more than an historical interest (and perhaps not much *even of that*).

In my essay *on the use of deduction as a means of investigation* ['Il metodo deduttivo come strumento di ricerca'], I ventured to suggest some little improvements on Mill's views on the function and logical value of syllogism, to which I have been led by my researches on the history of sciences and by direct analysis of the original works of the great physical discoverers of XVIIth century (Galilei, Huygens, Newton). [...]

You will oblige me by any information or bibliographical indication relating to the subjects treated in my writings, viz. history of mathematical and physical sciences, analysis of the scientific methods of discovery and ascertainment, mathematical logic. Of this last I had occasion sometimes ago of occupying myself, under the direction of Prof. Peano of the University of Turin, whose writings are perhaps wholly ignored in England, notwithstanding their real importance as an advancement in the direction initiated by Boole and De Morgan.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

25 June 1898

[...] One often wishes for the day (which will surely arrive in time) when there will be one intellectual language for the whole world, just as once there was Latin as a common language. This would not interfere with the precious distinctions embodied in the various languages, which reveal psychological secrets of the highest value and ought to be utilized in education. [...]

What you say about Mill's influence on Continental thought interests me much, and I will send an extract of your letter to Mr. Stout, editor in chief of *Mind*. [...]

I am afraid I cannot give you any bibliographical information until I return home at the end of July. I have not even my catalogues here, and cannot trust my memory. But as I have a somewhat large collection of books of the class you mention and have also read a further number as member of the London Library, I may perhaps be able to suggest a few not only already familiar to you. [...]

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

12 July 1898

I beg to be excused for my retard in answering to your kind letter, and thanking you for sending me your interesting articles on 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation.' I have read them with much

attention and they have been to me a source of more valuable information and important suggestions than any other writing that I remind to have ever read in *Mind* or other ‘philosophical’ periodicals, on the same subject.

The question as to the ‘meaning’ of the words seems to me to be a particular case of the more general question as to the meaning (or import) of propositions, in so far as, to decide what we mean to assert when we apply a name to a given object, is a question of the same kind as the more general one: to decide what we mean to assert when we enunciate a proposition or verbal formula whatever.

The common view of ‘definition,’ according to which words only can, and must, be *defined*, seems to me to leave out of consideration a most important class of ‘definitions’ – *the definitions of phrases* composed of words that considered by themselves would have no meaning at all. Can we, for example, determine the meaning of prepositions, like *in, of, out, from*, etc. (especially when used in metaphorical sense, as is nearly always the case in metaphysical discussions), without *defining* or determining the meaning of the propositions in which they do enter to connect other words? Can we attribute any meaning to words like *to be, to act, to produce, to represent, to manifest*, etc., except than by attributing some meaning to propositions in which we use them in connection with other words, which, in their turn, have perhaps not any meaning, except in so far as we call *their meaning*, the meaning of the phrases in which they enter? If such phrases are defined and their meaning univocally determined, we can suffer no danger from the ambiguity or even the meaninglessness of the words composing them: while, on the contrary, our definitions of words would serve no useful purpose if by them we were not enabled to rightly interpret the meaning of the propositions in which such words are combined. I do not know the work of Jespersen, *Progress in Language*, except by a very meagre recension in the *Journal des Savants* (1897, I believe), and I am very desirous of reading it. [...]

I believe the exposition and classification of verbal fallacies and, above all, their *caricatures* (*in jeux de mots*), to be one of the most effectual pedagogic contrivances for creating the habit of perceiving the ambiguities of language. It is a remedy somewhat analogous to that resorted to by Lacedaemons, who, in order to keep alive in their sons the horror to intoxication, compelled them to assist the *dégouissants* deeds and sayings of the ebrious Ilots. [...]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

20 February 1903

You did me the honour in 1898 to express your kind interest in the inquiry which for many years I have been prosecuting. I have therefore ventured to desire Messrs. Macmillan to forward to you my book called ‘What is Meaning?’ in which that inquiry is embodied. It will appear on March 3rd. I need hardly say how much I should value any comment you thought it worth while to make. I am quite aware both of the grave defects of this attempt to express unusual views, and also of the necessity of following it up by definite applications of the ‘signific’ method to some of the current problems of thought. Whether at my age my strength will admit of this I know not: but I shall at least try to leave in useful order the materials for such a work. These things are for the younger generation! And I believe that for them a new world of significance is waiting.

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

18 March 1903

I have read it [*What is Meaning?*] with much interest and with almost general agreement, especially so far as it concerns what seem to me the most vital points of your contention. Among these I do reckon:

1) Your insisting on the need for a critique of imagery, for a testing of analogies and metaphors (especially when ‘unconsciously’ or ‘semiunconsciously’ used, as is always the case in the *current* and *vulgar* ones).

2) Your warning against the tendency of pedantry and school-learning to discourage the development of linguistic resources, by the inhibition of those spontaneous variations that are the necessary condition of organic growth.

3) Your valuation of the practical and speculative importance of raising language from the irrational and instinctive to the rational and volitional plane: in which it is considered as a means or a contrivance for the performance of determined functions (representative, inferential, communicational, etc.) and for the attainment of given ends.

I would subordinately object to the word ‘Significs’: it could, as it seems to me, with some advantage, be replaced by ‘Semiotics,’ which has already been appropriated to the very same meaning by no less an authority than that of Locke (*Essay*, IV, 21, *in fine*).

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

28 March 1903

Allow me to thank you for the kind words wherewith you have honoured my book [*What is Meaning?*], and to explain that the word ‘Significs’ was chosen after consultation with English scholars, because (1) it had not been used before and had no *technical associations*, like those of semiotic, semasiology, semantic, etc.; and (2) because in English idiom it appeals not merely to the student and the Scholar but also to what we call ‘the Man in the street.’

All men alike with us ask naturally ‘What does it Signify?’ and put aside, ignore what does not *signify*. They unconsciously give the Sign its true place and value. They say ‘never mind that’ throw it away, it does not signify (it is no *sign* and has therefore no *sense*). I think it is important to take a case where the popular instinct is unconsciously philosophical and utilise this in favour of an advance in thought which must concern us all, though in different ways. I much hope that this explanation may remove your objection [...]. May I add one more word. Neither Locke nor any other thinker, it appears has ever yet analysed on ‘signific’ lines *the conception of ‘Meaning’ itself*.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

14 November 1903

It is very kind of you to send me your two pamphlets, and I wish more than ever that I knew Italian well. As far as I can make out their intention, I am in much sympathy with it. I have a confession to make. Although I was aware of your eminence as a philosopher, I am ashamed to say that I did not know that you were also one of the greatest of Continental mathematicians. I have only discovered this through endeavouring to study, with enthusiastic interest, Mr. Bertrand Russell’s *Principles of Mathematics*.

This is the first time that I have been able to follow, even in the humblest manner any mathematical writing. I have never had any power either to form or to understand, intricate trains of symbolic reasoning or abstruse calculations. I could not even learn to count properly! Is it not then a remarkable thing, that this very difficult book should be to me a revelation of great promise

for the future, and that I should find in it a valuable form of that very study which I would call Significs?

For many years I have felt that our great need was the ‘translation’ of mathematical principles into philosophy. Thus, it seemed to me ought the synthesis of philosophy and science to be ultimately effected. But the two types of mind were apparently unable to understand each other. In my own primitive way, I have always seen some of the points which I now for the first time find in a logical form.

However I must not say more of this now. I am making several indexes of the work for my own use. One is general; another of all the arguments (or passages) relating to my own subject, another of all the indictments which the writer makes of current vagaries. These form a formidable list! It is doubly interesting, at a moment when our physical theories of matter, as seen about to undergo profound modification, that there should also be a call for the complete revision of our most common forms of thought.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

15 November 1903

Since posting my letter to you, I have received, with a kind letter, a review of my book by Dr. C. S. Peirce. I know you think highly of his abilities and therefore will understand my gladness at this. He even speaks of ‘two really important works on Logic,’ the second being B. Russell’s book! It is of course the question itself and not my defective treatment of it, of which he thus speaks. I hope soon to be able to forward a copy of his review (in *Nation* – New York).

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

25 November 1903

I send you the pamphlet of prof. Peano and, therein enclosed, the review by Dr. Peirce [now in the present volume], which I have read with much interest. On one point I would not join in his appreciations, and it is when he speaks of your abstention from any attempt at formal definitions of the three modes of significance. I do not believe that ‘to have gone further’ in the direction he indicates, ‘would have shunted you off upon long and needless discussions.’ The contrary is rather true: the resulting discussions would have been both useful and conducive to increased concision and precision. What Mr. Peirce says of the correspondence between your three stages of meaning and Hegel’s three stages of thought is to me not very clear. [. . .]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

13 July 1904

I had been thinking of writing to you about a correspondence I have had with Prof. Cook Wilson of Oxford about the relations of ‘Significs’ with Logic and Mathematics as well as other things. But I have been so overwhelmed with work that I had to put off writing, and now I have to thank you for sending me two articles of yours, of which one (‘The most recent definition of Mathematics’) as far as my scant knowledge of Italian and the help of friends serve me, I find very interesting. I am at once trying to obtain the number of the *International Monthly* in which Mr. Russell’s Paper appears, for I should like to see the paradox of which you speak. I imagine that it is a satire while also a deep truth. In the first place though the mathematician is the typical exact thinker, Mr. Russell admits that he also falls into linguistic traps. In the second place it is of course quite true that in Logic and therefore in Mathematics it is not necessary to know either whether what we are saying is ‘true’ or of what ‘thing’ we are talking. The first time I saw the saying of Poincaré which

you quote, I was struck with its truth. I confess that I think we constantly confuse two distinct ideas: that of the 'true' and that of the 'accurate' or the 'valid.'

Though I cannot clearly understand your passages on language as affecting mathematical doctrine, I am glad you lay a stress on this aspect of the subject. For Mr. Russell tells me that since writing the book he has seen much more clearly the urgent importance of what we call 'meaning.' If I can get your article properly translated, I shall hope to write again. Prof. Cook does not approve of Dedekind's theory of number. That is a matter on which I cannot judge.

I must not write more and pray excuse defects in the letter for I have just had a fall and am in a good deal of pain . . .

I see that the idea of a common language is making rapid way.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

1 March 1905

The very interesting article in the *Leonardo* and the other on Paradox which you so kindly sent me, found me unfortunately so very unwell that I have had to put off my acknowledgments until now. An old friend of mine has translated the one on Imagery and I have just had the translation typed. I am sending you a copy in case it may be of use. It is very encouraging to me, in a rather uphill battle which I am little fitted to wage, to find this subject taken up by one like yourself. I only hope that I may look upon this as merely the first chapter of a projected work.

There are so many cases in which a more relevant and illustrative image requires to be substituted for a traditional one which actually perverts our ideas on a given subject. However I am grateful that such an excellent beginning has been made.

With the argument of your 'Rôle des paradoxes' I am of course in complete sympathy and especially with the position taken on the last page.

I wonder whether it would be possible for you some day to write some Paper which might help to show us how much sociology suffers from misleading or antiquated imagery? I am much concerned just now with the aims of the Sociological Society recently founded here, and among them with that of 'National Eugenics.' We hope presently to introduce the subject which, as placing 'significance' first among human interests should tend to define and clarify the highest human ideals, I mean of course 'Significs.'

In the meantime I have contributed two short memoranda suggesting that in the tremendous development of the rational faculties and of the power of subtle and elaborate abstraction, we have tended to neglect, not only the development and improvement of expressions, but an original closeness of touch with nature and with each other which ought to be recoverable and utilisable, not in a crude or merely instinctive, but in a highly organised form. It seems to me that women ought to be trained to bring their characteristic powers to bear on this question.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

18 May 1905

I would sooner have thanked you for so kindly sending me your articles in *Leonardo* and elsewhere, but I have waited to get them translated, and this has only just been possible. Even the general idea which was all I could get in the original form showed me their interest; but now this is more definite. The one on the Art of Questioning and that on Antithesis have a special interest for me; but so has your review of Prof. James' work. With this general line I am of course in sympathy; my only fear is that 'pragmatism' may become in the end as narrow as rationalism! and I say this in the very interest of what may be called the vital view of thought.

Perhaps the two ‘Eugenic’ Notes which I venture to enclose will show what I mean . . . , I have a good deal written on this topic. But there are for me difficulties in the way of making more than a private use of my material.

Since writing last, I have had some interviews and correspondence with Mr. Bertrand Russell with whom I find myself much in sympathy on the subject of our need of renovated assumptions, while he also feels strongly on the subject of tolerated linguistic confusions. These however must be discussed independently in each language, except in the few cases common to all.

It has been a great encouragement for me to find that M. Henri Bergson is now bringing forwards with great ability, in his ‘Introduction to Metaphysic,’ a view which I have for many years been trying to suggest in my own crude and faulty way. I have made a translation of it and am now told that I ought to write to him, though I feel shy about this. I wonder if you know him? If you care to see one or two papers of mine I would gladly send them.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

28 May 1905

Prof. Stout, the Editor of ‘Mind’ has just been staying with me. I showed him the papers you had kindly sent me, all except one still in the hands of the translator. He found them of absorbing interest and has desired me to ask you whether you would send him an article for ‘Mind.’ [. . .]

I am having all your papers translated and shall have several copies made; so would you care to have a copy of each or are they being translated elsewhere? I have promised Professor Stout a copy of each.

You may imagine how great a satisfaction to me it is to find the subject, which I call ‘Significs’ so ably taken up as it is by you, as, of course, I should be unable to develop it on the logical side as you so admirably do. With many thanks for so kindly sending me your writings [. . .].

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

2 Juin 1905

[. . .] Je suis bien honoré par la proposition que me fait Prof. Stout, par votre moyen. Veuillez bien lui écrire que je m’occuperai bien volontiers de rédiger un article de sujet logique pour la Revue. [. . .] Je vous remercie aussi pour la traduction de mes articles et je serais bien content d’en recevoir une copie. J’ai lu avec bien d’intérêt vos deux ‘papers’ sur Eugenics [now in this volume] et vous m’obligeriez toujours en m’envoyant les autres dont vous me faites mention dans votre lettre. Je viens de connaître, à Rome, le prof. W. James qui commence à avoir en Italie beaucoup d’admirateurs et de disciples. Je vois aussi quelquefois, ici à Florence, Mr. Benn. [. . .]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

25 June 1905

I have now the pleasure to send you copies of the three translations of your Articles that I have had made for my own use. They are all to me of great interest but especially perhaps that on ‘The Art of Questioning.’ It is a great satisfaction to me to find that views on education which even quite recently were laughed at are now on all sides being more and more recognised. [. . .]

Your review of Professor James’ work has also a special interest for me. With his general line I am of course in sympathy; my only fear is that Pragmatism may become in the end as narrow as rationalism! And I say this in the very interests of what may be called the vital view of thought.

I venture to send two small Notes of mine, but the papers I had intended to send are under a final revision and thus will not yet be ready.

As to the urgent need of renovating our assumptions, I have made a collection of some of the ‘overlooked points,’ the neglect of which tends to dangerous confusion. With many of these, however, I myself can only deal with in English idiom. There must of course be some in other languages which cannot be dealt with in English. Beyond these, we have a use of images, such as support, dependence, etc. (which you criticise), common at least to the Western languages. Besides these again there are current false antitheses – or antitheses true in ‘poetry,’ but false in science and in life – such as that between Life and Death. The true antithesis is, of course, Birth and Death.

The only opposite to life is the mere negative – the non-living: and I have long thought, as the recent experiments by Mr. Burke seem to suggest, that there is not in this case even a pure negative (except of our intellectual creation), and that in the cosmos we only have Life, in many degrees of intensity and definiteness and in various forms, potential, actual, possible. Thus we should only in nature have the relatively non-living. . .

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

28 Juillet 1905

Mes occupations pour la fin de l’année scolaire m’ont empêché de répondre plutôt à votre aimable lettre, et de vous remercier pour la traduction de mes articles et pour l’envoi de vos deux Notes. Je tâche d’y remédier au présent, en vous envoyant deux numéros de revues (*Leonardo* et *Rivista di psicologia pedagogica*) dans lesquels il vous intéressera de lire peut-être les articles de moi et de mon ami, Calderoni, qui vient d’y écrire un petit essai sur le ‘Senso dei nonsensi’ (The sense of nonsense). J’y ai contribué aussi, sous la forme d’une recension (Orestano – L’originalité de Kant), un résumé synoptique de mon appréciation du ‘Kantism’ dans la théorie de la connaissance et dans la morale.

Mr. Stout vient de m’écrire que je pourrai lui envoyer mon article dans le mois de Septembre et que vous avez été aussi aimable de vous charger de lui en procurer la traduction à son temps. Je vous en remercie bien vivement. [. . .]

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

16 Août 1906

Je vous renvoie les épreuves corrigées de mon article pour le ‘Mind’ en vous priant de vouloir bien les faire parvenir à Mr. J. F. Stout. J’ai trouvé la traduction très exacte et admirablement réussie et je vous en témoigne mes remerciements les plus cordiaux.

Le quelques fautes que j’ai notées dans les citations grecques, et dont la correction est indiquée, dont à importer mon manuscrit que j’ai dû rédiger un peu à la hâte. [. . .]

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

28 Août 1906

Je vous remercie beaucoup de l’envoi des épreuves de mon article pour le *Mind* que je trouve presque parfaitement corrigées, à l’exception de quelques petites fautes dans les noms propres (p. e. Theactetus au lieu de Theaetetus). Je les ai reçues avec quelque retard à causes de mon absence de Florence, qui occasionnera aussi quelque retard à recevoir la *translation typed*. Dans tous cas je vous renverrai les épreuve dans deux jours. Mon adresse, pendant ces mois de vacance, c’est chez ma famille, à Crema. Pendant cette année et une partie de l’année prochaine, j’ai été, et serai, occupé comme membre d’une commission nommée par le Gouvernement Italien, à préparer un schéma de réforme de notre enseignement *secondaire* (pour les enfants de 9^{me} à 18^{me} année

qui le préparent aux carrières universitaires). Si vous aviez des idées ou des informations à me communiquer sur ces sujets, vous m'obligeriez beaucoup.

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

6 Septembre 1906

[...] I am much interested in what you tell me and hope to write again soon. It is indeed good when minds like yours are entrusted by Governments with so important an educational Commission. It gives hope for the future, which indeed becomes almost boundless. [...]

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

30 Janvier 1907

Je viens de recevoir, avec quelque retard, à cause de mon absence temporaire de Florence, votre carte et, dans le même temps le numéro de la *University Review* où j'ai lu avec bien d'intérêt votre article sur 'King's English' [now in this volume]. Comme vous pouvez bien penser, j'approuve de tout mon cœur vos remarques critiques, surtout au sujet de l'abus qu'on fait de la 'personification' de la langue, lorsqu'on lui attribue des propriétés telles que de 's'améliorer soi-même,' etc., indépendamment de la volonté et de l'intervention des individus qui la parlent. [...]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

27 February 1907

I have been reading with great interest your article in the *Revue du Mois* and have put together a few comments on that and on the one in the *Monist*. I have had a good deal of correspondence with Mr. Peirce but of course cannot follow his more abstruse constructions, though I can see their value. I am very glad to find you saying that the mathematical logicians are revising their criteria and postulates, which are now resigning their 'divine right' and becoming the *servi servorum* of the communities of propositions. Also I rejoice always at the recognition of the unreality of certain scholastic distinctions which infect our theories of knowledge. When you speak (p. 483) of subjecting others to critical analyses from which they have emerged in a sense transfigured, restored, enriched with new and important significances, you are describing part of the work which I would sum up under the term Significs.

What you say about Peano makes me regret more than ever my lack of mathematical training, since I also long to see our main theories treated not as 'basal,' as dead and barren rock, but 'as organisms which live, eat, struggle, reproduce.' All my life I have felt that the vital analogies apply more widely than we suppose. And they may well be more than mere analogies. We know that within the general term 'Life' there are great varieties of type and form; why should we suppose that even this general term includes no more than the particular forms of life suited to our world and at its present stage?

The further the broadening method of definition of a group of words or phrases instead of an isolated word, is part of the case for Significs. Again I rejoice at the contribution of Mathematical Logic towards the exposure of the fallacy of the traditional logic in assuming that some of our most important words in science and philosophy are indefinable. Of course they are – in isolation; it is, as you say, absurd. [...]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

28 December 1907

The article in the July *Mind* ['Time as Derivative,' now in this volume] (which I sent you some time ago addressed to Florence) is the only thing I have lately *published*, but I venture to send you with this a few typed Notes out of a mass of material from which I hope the first of a series of small volumes may, in the course of 1908, appear. Meantime, as strength returns I must devote some time to the article on Significs which I am asked to contribute to the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It is a great encouragement to me that Significs should thus be formally admitted as a recognised subject and method in this country; and I cannot forget that you have been among the very first of European thinkers to encourage me in my most difficult enterprise, the need of which you had already felt. In Germany on account of the general nature of my work (though only from one point of view) appeared in the current *Jahrbuch*. If any one of the enclosed Papers interest you at all I need not say how much I should value your comment and criticism.

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

2 Février 1908

Je vous remercie beaucoup de l'envoi de vos 'Notes' que j'ai lu avec bien d'intérêt. Le côté qui m'a le plus attiré c'est celui qui regarde l'emploi des différentes images pour la représentation des procédés mentaux. Je viens d'envoyer, précisément sur ce sujet, un deuxième article au *Journal of Philosophy* et qui est aussi, en partie, une reproduction du petit essai que j'ai publié il y a deux années dans le *Leonardo* avec le titre 'I tropi della logica' ('The Imagery of Deduction').

Un autre sujet qui m'intéresse beaucoup à présent c'est la critique de la spéculation philosophique effectuée en la regardant comme une *extension au delà du point 'rémunératif'*, des procédés ordinaires employés par la science ou par le sens commun (procédés de 'définition,' de 'démonstration,' de 'généralisation,' etc.). Dans toute cette direction l'activité du philosophe me semble pouvoir être comparée à celle d'un enfant, qui ayant appris à tourner le vis d'un binocle de théâtre pour obtenir de l'adapter à sa vue, continue à le tourner lors même que le point de la vision distincte a été atteint, en croyant ainsi voir plus clair encore. La critique consiste à déterminer quelles sont les définitions qu'il n'est pas raisonnable de demander, quelles sont les démonstrations tautologiques qu'il n'est pas raisonnable d'exiger, qu'elles sont les généralisations vides et qu'il ne vaut pas la peine de faire, etc.

Je crois vous avoir déjà envoyé mon petit brochure ayant pour titre 'Dal monismo al pragmatismo' (From Monism to Pragmatism): dans le cas contraire veuillez bien m'en informer et je vous l'enverrais aussitôt. [...]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

8 February 1908

I was very glad to get your kind letter, all the more because I have been such hampered by illness since I last wrote and quite unable to do any work. I think our point and illustration of the pressing of an appliance or a method beyond the 'remunerative' limit is quite admirable. Yes, you kindly sent me your pamphlet 'From Monism to Pragmatism.'

I am glad to hear we may expect something more from you in the *Journal of Philosophy*. I do not think I have told you that I have had a careful translation made of your 'Psychology of the Dictionary' which is now at your disposal. Could you not offer it to some review here or in America? I would gladly send it to any editor you name or could consult my friends on the subject if I can thus be of any use. Of course it is concerned with Semantics only, and not with the more

general subject which is now to be known as Significs. I have to make the distinction very clear in my article for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Please accept my apologies for an untidy letter caused by this persistent illness!

Since writing the above, the last number of my *Journal of Philosophy* (which I have taken in from the first and noted throughout) has arrived and I have at once given myself the pleasure of reading your article on the Attack of Distinctions for which I venture to thank you as it is an admirale example of the critical method of Significs (although of course in an indirect sense).

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

15 Février 1908

Je vous remercie beaucoup de votre lettre et je regrette la cause qui en a retardé l'envoi. Merci aussi de l'aimable empressement à faire traduire mon article sur la 'Psychologie d'un Dictionnaire.' Vous pouvez en disposer comme bon vous semble: j'en recevrais bien volontiers une copie. Un ami d'Athènes vient de m'informer qu'on va en faire paraître aussi une traduction en grecque dans un périodique didactique.

À propos de 'Sémantique' et de 'Significs,' un collégien qui prépare un travail sur les 'euphémismes' dans les langues civilisées vient de me demander des exemples de phrases euphémiques anglaises. Est-ce qu'il y a quelque livre ou publication à lui signaler sur ce sujet? Dans ce cas, il vous serait très obligé de toute information que vous voudriez lui transmettre. (C'est le professeur Dino Provenzal, qui habite à Messine, Sicile, et qui enseigne dans le Istituto Tecnico, de cette ville). Il va sans dire que je ne voudrais pas que vous vous donniez de la peine pour cela. [...]

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

12 Juin 1908

[...] Avant la fin de ce mois j'espère pouvoir vous envoyer un autre petit travail de moi sur un point particulier d'analyse du langage. C'est un essai de déterminer quel sens conservent les distinctions techniques des grammairiens (p.e. entre nom et verbe, entre les différentes 'parties du discours,' etc.) dans le cas du langage symbolique de l'algèbre. Je crois vous avoir déjà dit que, sur le sujet des 'distinctions' en philosophie, je compte présenter une communication au Congrès de Heidelberg le prochain Août, en compétant, par des observations sur les 'distinctions illusoirs,' ce que j'ai dit sur les 'distinctions indestructibles' dans mon dernier article dans le *Journal of Philosophy*. Dans un des prochains numéros de ce même *Journal* va aussi paraître la traduction de mon vieil article sur les 'métaphores de la déduction.' De la part de Mr. Calderoni, je me permets de vous faire hommage de sa dernière publication ('Formes et critères de responsabilité') ou sont examinés, au point de vue psychologique, les caractères différentiels entre ce que les juristes appellent la responsabilité civile et la responsabilité pénale. [...]

Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati

15 June 1908

I was very glad to get your kind letter and also to hear from Prof. Sully and now from yourself that you have met in Rome. I shall read with the greatest interest anything which you are good enough to send me: the subject of M. Calderoni's paper has much interest for me. I read your article in the *Journal of Philosophy* and shall look forward to the next. There could be no more interesting subject for the *significian* than that of philosophical distinctions, illusory and substantial (or indestructible). But also there are, so to speak, prolegomena to all accepted and current distinctions,

some of which, like ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ are often used inconsistently. Indeed, there are many prior questions it seems to me, to be asked, before discussion can become fully fruitful.

When I had notice of a special Meeting at Cambridge of the Aristotelian Society to discuss ‘The Nature of Mental Activity,’ and found that three of my own friends Prof. Alexander, Prof. James Ward, and Prof. Stout, were to read papers on the subject (which I have since seen) I ventured to send to two of them the enclosed little Note. Prof. Alexander came here to see me and we had a long discussion on the matter. He confessed that he found it very difficult to express his own idea at all. But of course in these matters each language has its own idiomatic facilities and difficulties.

Thank you for kind inquiries about my health. I am soon (July 7th) going to Scotland for a long rest, and when I come back I hope to begin a more definite work, possibly for publication. I enclose a copy of my article for the next *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on ‘Significs,’ in the case you should do me the honour to read it. (The editor allows me to show it, on a strictly private footing to friends interested in the subject. I find that the tendency to forget, to leave our words and to use wrong ones or to repeat sentences – a sure sign of fatigue – is increasing at present, so I must make it a duty to rest thoroughly for a while. . . I enclose also a copy of M. Michel Bréal’s very generous letter on the article. I was a little afraid he might think my definition presumptuous. . .

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

28 Juin 1908

C’est d’assez loin de Rome que je vous envoie mes remerciements pour l’envoi de votre m.s. Je l’ai lu avec bien d’intérêt et je m’empresserai de vous la renvoyer aussitôt que je reviendrai à Rome, c’est à dire dans la semaine prochaine. La Grèce moderne [Vailati is writing from Athens] est un champs d’observation absolument unique pour tous les faits et les lois qui se rapportent aux transformations sémasiologiques ou significatives des langues civilisées. Je m’occupe à présent, en particulier, de la modification de sens des prépositions grecques anciennes dans la langue parlée d’aujourd’hui. . . .

Giovanni Vailati to Victoria Welby

25 Juillet 1908

Vous voudrez bien excuser mon retard à vous renvoyer la copie de votre article sur ‘Significs’ dans l’Encyclopédie Britannique. [. . .]

Je me permets de vous faire hommage d’une autre publication de moi sur la ‘Grammaire de l’Algèbre’ qui peut-être vous donnera occasion à quelques observations ou critiques. [. . .]

*Between Victoria Welby and Mario Calderoni (1909–1911)**

Victoria Welby to Mario Calderoni

9 September 1909

It was a great shock and real grief to me to gather from the documents you have kindly sent me, the fact that Professor Vailati had died last May. I had never seen or heard one word on the subject and I deeply feel the loss to the world and to Significs, as also the personal one.

I have only just returned from Scotland and found your letter and also the notice in the *Journal of Philosophy*.

I should be very glad to send you [...] in any form most convenient for you to cash; understanding that this sum would pay for two copies of the collected Essays. I only regret that I cannot read Italian.

Professor Stout is now editing a volume of essays on Significs of which Dr. Slaughter is the sub-editor and had hoped that Professor Vailati would consent to be one of the contributors. I believe you will hear from Dr. Slaughter on the subject, but I can say no more, as the book is to be entirely independent of me. It is just this independent witness, of course, which makes its special value to me.

May I say how much I hope you may be coming to England later and if so will give me the great pleasure of seeing you here?

Victoria Welby to Mario Calderoni

3 January 1910

I am afraid that my letter of Sept. 9th written when the very sad news of Prof. Vailati's death in May first reached me, may have miscarried. I therein expressed my intention to contribute [...] towards the publication of his collected Essays. I now enclose a postal order for [...] which I hope is in order. I am very glad to hear from Dr. Slaughter that you will contribute on your own behalf and Prof. Vailati's an Essay for the book which is to appear in the early spring. Is there any chance of your coming over here in the summer? All being well, you would find me here, and it would give me much pleasure to see you.

My work on the subject has made great progress in the last few years and I hope it will soon be in better hands, and developed along sound lines. . . I should have written sooner, but have been suffering much from chill and influenza.

Mario Calderoni to Victoria Welby

20 January 1910

Excuse me for not having yet answered your kind letter and thanked you for the postal order. The printing of Vailati's works is proceeding rapidly and well, and we hope the volume will be completed for the anniversary of our poor friend's death. It has been a tremendous loss for me, as I was almost a son for him, and for all those who are interested in philosophy, for he had a powerful mind and an intense and earnest devotion to knowledge; [illegible] much was still to be expected from him.

* [The correspondence between Welby and Calderoni is available on microfilm in Box 2, WCYA. Other correspondence is available on typescript. The letter texts are mainly copies of the originals or drafts. Welby used her usual shorthand consisting in eliminating vowels and vowel clusters. These have been mostly reintegrated to make the letter texts more legible].

I am extremely glad his name will be associated as the name of one of the contributors to your book on 'Significs.' And it pleases me to know those articles in which we both collaborated will be read by an English public. Both Vailati and I have always been admirers of England and of English thought.

I have found a translator for the two articles in question here; and the translation will be read over by Mr. Algar Thorold (the author of 'Six Masters in Disillusion'), and perhaps by Vernon Lee (Miss Paget) too. So I trust the translation will end by being a good one. Meanwhile, as the first edition of the translation proves to be rather bad, I am reading it over myself and trying, [illegible] my imperfect acquaintance with English, to improve it as much as I can.

I thank you for your kindness in having thought of me.

I hope to be able to come to England this summer and shall be delighted to pay you a visit.

Victoria Welby to Mario Calderoni

14 December 1910

I hear that Prof. Stout has decided to go on with his book of *Essays in Significs* (or whatever he will call the book) so I hope to be able to allude to it in my own book now being put into shape for publication. I shall be very glad to see your admirable contribution published. But now I am venturing to write on a quite different matter, though one to me of the greatest possible interest. A boy in this School, 17 and just leaving, was sent to me by a cousin who told me he thought I could do some needed good, as the boy was a poet and indeed had real genius in more than one direction, and yet having utterly failed to pass here, had fallen into dangerous despondency. Well, Rupert Brooke came. We had many talks. We understood each other; he saw the unique value of Significs. He resumed his studies with a new heart. He has gone up to Balliol for study and there has received the highest commendation and encouragement. He writes that without our talks he would have been helpless, instead of a success. (You see that isn't me, but pure Significs). He is coming to Florence at once to stay some time and absorb, as I advised him, the spirit of Italy. May I ask you very kindly to take an interest in the lad and advise him? He wishes to stay with a private family (his family has ample means). But he is anxious to know you, for he is a born thinker. Excuse this letter written from bed as I am ill.

Mario Calderoni to Victoria Welby

23 December 1910

Thank you for your kind letter. Excuse me for not having answered immediately, my mother having been severely ill during the last ten days. She is better now and I have a few minutes for myself.

I shall be very glad to meet Mr. Brooke and to help him along in Florence. No doubt he will interest me very much and we shall have plenty of opportunity to talk about philosophy in general and Significs in particular. I have enquired about private families wishing for paying guests and have heard of a very respectable one, Ing. Simonetti's, Via dei Banchi, 4. He is a well known engineer belonging to the Railway administration, and is often sent to England for purchases and enquiries. The lady is an excellent housekeeper, the food is good and everything is comfortable and modern. I do not know the special requirements of Mr. Brooke and therefore have limited myself to pure enquiry. He might come here and stop in a hotel or pension for the first couple of days, and then choose for himself. If I knew the hour of his arrival I might meet him at the station.

By this time you very likely have received the volume of poor Vailati's writings. The volume seems to please the public though we could not avoid making it a bit too bulky for easy reading.

I hope you have recovered entirely since you wrote to me. [...]

Mario Calderoni to Victoria Welby [Postcard]

22 March 1911

Thank you for your kind postcard. My mother is much better now, though she had a tremendous blow. R. B. is getting on very nicely here, we all like him very much and are very much interested by his mind and character. Rely on me for whatever you may require.

Mario Calderoni to Victoria Welby

30 June 1911

Thank you very much for your kind letter and for 'Significs and Language.' Excuse me for not having answered before, the examinations in Bologna have kept me away from Florence during the last month. 'Significs and Language' appears to me an extremely important contribution towards the ideal of perfecting the instrument of thought, an ideal which, alas!, seems to be more and more neglected in philosophic circles nowadays, especially under German influence.

The address of the Philosophical library is:

Biblioteca Filosofica

Piazza Donatello 5

Florence

I am expecting news about Rupert's exam, and trust the result to have been excellent. We all hope to see him back in Italy very soon, for he has won our deepest interest and affection. It was no effort at all for us, dear Lady Welby, to be kind to him, as his company is charming and he seems, besides, to 'carry so much future' in him.

My mother is much better now, she just begins to walk, though she must still use crutches. I have been severely suffering from neurasthenia lately, an illness of which I cannot tell whether my tremendous difficulty to write be a cause or an effect. During the last eight months I have not been able to write a single decent page; and that has been a source of great unhappiness for me.

I am afraid I shall not be able to come to England this summer as I have to submit to a cure. I have not heard from Dr. Slaughter for the last ten months and do not know what has happened to the manuscript of 'Pragmatism and Meaning.' [...]

Essays and notes in chronological order

4.9. Meaning and Metaphor (1893)*

Professor Huxley supposes⁴¹ 'that so long as the human mind exists, it will not escape its deep-seated instinct to personify its intellectual conceptions.' He finds that 'the science of the present day is as full of this particular form of intellectual shadow-worship as is the nescience of ignorant ages.' The difference he sees is 'that the philosopher who is worthy of the name knows that his personified hypotheses, such as law, and force, and ether, and the like, are merely useful symbols, while the ignorant and the careless take them for adequate expressions of reality.' He then goes on to warn us against dealing with symbols as though they were 'real existences.'

Few indeed are free from reproach in this matter, so far as reproach is deserved at all in the general unconsciousness of what constitutes the danger. Few see the question to be vital or the

* [Originally published in *The Monist*, see Welby 1893a].

41. *The Nineteenth Century*, April, 1886. (Reprinted in *Essay on Controvertea Questions*).

danger to be urgent; and even those who do are apt to deny that the search for a remedy can be a crusade worth attempting; the very idea seems Utopian or pedantic. On the one hand, teachers as a rule do not take their own analogies and metaphors seriously. Both the literary and scientific, as well as the philosophic and historical instinct tell against their doing so. In their eyes figures have either faded into indifferent abstractions, or they are obviously pictorial and merely rhetorical. But the average reader is apt to take them at the foot of the letter. He is usually unaware both of the extent to which he literalises and of the curious inconsistencies which his literalising involves. So he makes his inferences with a light heart, and wonders, perhaps, at the resulting confusion without suspecting its true cause.

Would that the real state of the case and its practical consequences could be pressed home to all with such force, that whatever be our line of work or thought or expression we should strive in earnest to mend matters. At least, we might begin by learning better what part symbolism plays in the rituals of expression, and ask ourselves what else is language itself but symbolism, and what it symbolises. We should then examine anew the relations of the 'symbolic' to the 'real'; of image, figure, metaphor, to what we call literal or actual. For this concerns us all. Imagery runs in and out, so to speak, from the symbolic to the real world and back again. As matters stand, we never know where we are because we know so little where our phrases or our words are; indeed, perhaps they and we are 'neither here nor there'! Or, if we do know where we are, we cannot be sure that our hearer or reader knows where he is. He, too, is probably 'neither here nor there'! He often praises or agrees with us in the wrong place or the wrong manner. That is worse than being complained of or differed from; it is difficult to repudiate approval. Nor can we take refuge in lucidity and fancy that the clear must be the true. In the long run and in the cases which *signify* most, there is no escape through merely lucid style or method. The 'luminous' speaker or writer, the 'forcible' orator or essayist, the moment he tries to convey to the public mind a thought which is really new, will find himself hampered by his very clearness itself. His ideas are controverted on assumptions not really his; or he himself is misled in subtle ways by what he assumes in others.

Thus, by an instructive paradox, the clearest writer is often the most controversial; and he wonders at our perverseness as, while we admire his power and his 'style,' we wonder at the perverseness in him. We possibly agree with him in ways we do not suspect; he possibly agrees with us in senses he ignores. Such a writer may pride himself on a chary use of metaphor, or on a carefully sharp distinction between 'image' and 'thing' or 'object.' But he is liable to forget the danger dogging him even here. One is tempted to say that there is only one term more figurative as well as more ambiguous than 'metaphorical,' and that is 'literal.' Most certainly much that is called 'literal' is tinged with the figurative in varying degrees, not always easy to distinguish, even with the help of context. The word 'literal' itself is indeed a case in point. It has rarely, if ever, any reference to writing.

The question is, whether this state of things is quite so inevitable as most of us seem to think. Certainly, so long as we are content to live in the fool's paradise of supposing that only the perverse, the prejudiced, the stupid, or the ignorant can possibly mistake our meaning, and that our misreadings of others are simply due to their 'obscurity,' or 'quibbling,' or literary incapacity, we shall ourselves contribute to the hopelessness of the situation. But this is a subject which cannot be dealt with in an incidental way; it is rather a hope for the future, that one of the most practically serviceable of subjects – that of Meaning, its conditions and its changes – shall be seriously taken up. Then, indeed, we may get back to the first of all questions, and that which is most pregnant of helpful answers; that which needs asking more than any other if good work is to be done in this day of universal 'unsettlement': What we do really mean? On all sides dead calms are stirred and ruffled, dead levels upheaved or depressed; nothing (happily) can hope to escape the wave of quickening force. So before long we may well be asking this question in good earnest; and when we do we can but be the better, even if we must needs submit in some cases where we may have prematurely positive, to be content (for the moment) with the answer: We do not really know.

The fact is, that we have been postulating an absolute Plain Meaning to be thought of, as it were, in capital letters. We have been virtually assuming that our hearers and readers all share the same mental background and atmosphere. We have practically supposed that they all look through the same inferential eyes, that their attention waxes and wanes at the same points, that their associations, their halos of memory and circumstance, their congenital tendencies to symbolise or picture, are all on one pattern. Verily, we need a 'Critique of Plain Meaning'!

Again we *quote* on the same assumption. Unless the language of our author is obviously archaic; unless his allusions unmistakably betray a different life-context, a different social 'milieu,' in short, a different mental world, we claim him or we repudiate him on the same principle. We take his words, we take his phrases, we fill them out with the same content as our own, we make him mean precisely what we ourselves mean. And be it noted that it is always what we mean *now*. That this in any way varies from what we meant at some time when, e.g., our attention was differently focussed, rarely enters our heads.

We shall, I suppose, admit that until lately there was one very good reason for this state of things. Only the exceptional mind (if any); only the mind which could not make itself fully understood by its contemporaries, and would risk being reckoned crazy or criminal if it spoke 'plainly,' had any suspicion that this way of looking at things was being gradually invalidated by the general extension of the critical domain. The history of language, its relation to thought; the scope of expression and representation, the function of the figurative and symbolic; the growth of all means of mental communion from the simplest rudiments of gesture or cry to the highest point of intellectual complexity, – all this was either ignored or taken for granted on radically insecure bases.

Again, while the underlying conditions of language must be looked for in the domain of psycho-physics, that science had not yet come into existence. Even now it is but feeling its way and putting forth tentative hypotheses, warning us, as it does, so that they are liable to be constantly modified and occasionally revolutionised. And what does it realise, first and foremost? That our difficulties on the very threshold of the inquiry are, as usual, largely those of language. On all sides we have to use, as best we may, modes of expression that inevitably convey ambiguous meanings even to the thoughtful, even to the trained mind, which cannot but carry with them a background of outgrown or disproved premises, vitiating more or less every conclusion that we draw from them. The very phrases which are our only shorthand for the vast oratory of nature and experience betray us in the using. We have taken them as though they were like numerals invariable in meaning, thus supposing them subject to a permanent uniformity. We have taken them as though they were without a history, merely fortuitous labels or symbols of unanimous consent; the accepted sense, we think, being easily ascertainable, always persistent, and wholly sufficient for practical purposes. In any case we strangely assume that we may safely play upon all the chords of imagery, reserving without difficulty for serious use a body of terms which are direct expressions of 'fact.'

But the suggestion now made is that this is precisely one of the most dangerous of presuppositions. It is not the man who has mystified himself, or who wishes to mystify others; it is not the man who confounds the reality of the logical with that of the actual; it is not the man who takes emotion for proof and notion for fact; it is none of these, but the man who is clear on such points and sees that they must be drawn out into clues and followed up to the uttermost, if we would know where we are – who is beginning to see that the paramount need of the moment is the 'torpedo-shock' of the question, What do we really mean? He knows that the off-hand vagueness and ready-made confusion, which too often from sheer ignorance usurp the name of common-sense, are in the long run its most deadly enemies.

We may look forward then with a new hope to the rise of a systematic inquiry on the subject of a meaning and its changes. This would entail the much-needed work of classifying metaphor, and might even be found to point to the existence of a third value, neither wholly figurative,

as that of a large proportion of ordinary expression. From this and like causes, in this portion of ordinary expression. From this and like causes, in this age of rapid changes due mainly to scientific conquest, we can all readily put to each other questions to which either a 'yes' or a 'no' must be equally misleading. And men of science have specially realised this, since many a time they have been unjustly credited with evasion, or with untenable or immoral views, because they either answered to a 'plain question': 'In one sense, yes: in another, no,' or else gave an answer which could not fail to be misunderstood by a mind which was governed by unconscious survivals. So far as we are in touch with modern culture, we no longer mean what we must have meant in the days before Copernicus, when we say, for instance, 'the sun rises.' When we speak of infection, we no longer mean what we used to mean before microbes had been heard of. When we talk of 'heat,' we no longer mean what we used to mean even fifty years ago. And when a man says that he believes in the sun, the planets, the cosmos, in the heavens and the earth in mind and in matter, in soul and body, in spirit and flesh, he cannot, if he would, mean just what his forefathers meant, or indeed anything at all absolutely and finally. Whether we will or no, the meaning of such terms is changing on our very tongues, and ever swaying between the extremes which we call literal and metaphorical; 'heaven,' e.g., ranging in value from sky to human destiny; 'earth,' from soil to the visible Home of Man. We may appeal, and are right to appeal to 'hard, dry' facts; but we perforce put something out of ourselves even into these. They become 'facts' under the quickening touch of 'mind,' while that emerges from a dim world or prepossession, bequeathing us many a primitive legacy from pre-intelligent sentience, and perhaps from little-suspected sources lying yet further back. For instance, primitive terror in its 'superstitious' forms tended to represent man as inferior to and dependent on powers of some sort; – and this was true to natural order in the fact that his very world was not self-centred and was dependent for its best boons upon a greater than itself. As language advanced, he began quite naturally to express his meaning in 'appropriate metaphors'; to use, e.g., the figures of light and then of sight to describe what we had, as we now say, 'in his mind,' or what sense-messages, as we now say, had 'put into his head.' For 'something told him' that light, as it had been the first pleasure, was also the great means of life.⁴² And he 'saw,' in however grotesque a guise, the unbroken continuity of the organic and the inorganic, and perhaps even more clearly than most of us yet do, that of so-called 'matter' and so-called 'mind.' Perhaps in some cases, therefore, he chose his imagery better than (after long ages of dualism carried to the splitting point) we generally do now.

He knew again that the senses after all, stern masters though they were while life was so hard to live, had very narrow limits; and that the world was in some sense fuller and richer of life than it had seemed to be as known directly through them.⁴³ And then he wondered, – and began to ask.

42. 'Light affects the new-born infant at an early stage, although in this as in other respects individual differences immediately assert themselves. The child seems to take pleasure in an excitation of light and tries (even on the second day after birth) to turn towards it in order to retain it.' (*Outlines of Psychology*, H. Höffding, p. 4)

'Under the influence of light the conversion of inorganic matter into more complex organic takes place, more particularly in the green cells of plants.' (Ibid.: 315)

'It is certainly necessary to look further back than the visual sensations to understand the great influence of light on all creatures that have sensuous perception ... Light is thus one of the most elementary conditions of life.' (Ibid.: 229)

43. It must be borne in mind that I am using psychological terms in a merely general sense. Among many examples of such use I may quote Sachs (*Physiology of Plants*, p. 200) and F. Darwin (*Address to Biological Section*, Brit. Assoc., August 1891) who speaks of the plant as 'perceiving' external change, as 'recognising' the vertical line, 'knowing' where the centre of the earth is, 'translating' stimulus, etc. See also Darwin's *Forms of Flowers*, p. 190.

He was the first Questioner. As Prof. Max Müller says,⁴⁴ ‘the greater the savagery, the dullness, the stupidity with which *Homo sapiens* began, the greater the marvel at what must have been from the first, though undeveloped, in him, and leading of our own age.’ The mere fact of the question is the riddle to be solved. For certainly the beasts had not taught him either to wonder or to ask. And not merely insatiable questioning but something more here rises to challenge our attention and to demand reflection. Man is the first critic because he is the first idealist; the first to be discontented, to protest, to see life as a ‘ravelled end,’ as something which is incomplete and speaks of something more. Surely in any the steps of all steps, the deepest yet the narrowest line to cross is the step from something noticed or found, from something which happens or appears, from something which somehow affects us, excites us, to its significance.

Of course in one sense it is impossible to fix any definite moment as that of the advent of this ‘significance.’ Animals interpret each others’ aspect and gestures, often indeed with a subtle precision which to some extent we have lost. But interpretation in the intellectual sense becomes, from our present point of view, that which makes us really human. Our progress, our ascent, is mainly marked in this. The root-question to ask in gauging levels of humanity is, how much can a given man interpret or translate, of a world that teems with meaning? How much can he truly classify and relate, how much can he rightly infer and conclude, how much can he account for, explain, and fruitfully apply? For after all, results must be our tests. Claims and credentials are nothing, unless they can show this warrant; whereas truth which can use all facts alike is the very means of survival. Man begins by doing, by acting out impulse; then he learns to ‘think’ little by little, observing, questioning, pondering, testing his way onward and upward. And throughout his patient, often painful journey, he is himself perpetually challenged. Nature’s stimulating appeals rain upon him ceaselessly from every side; she orders him to master all her meanings. He responds: – at first again, ‘blindly,’ but ever rising to higher grades of answer. Both deficiency and error are no doubt more or less present in all mental response to actual fact – that is, in all experience. But the essence of sanity from the first lies in corrective power. Everywhere there is either absence of notice, absence of notice, absence of response, or there is experimental activity (broadly speaking) corrected at once; automatically or by the combined effect of the related organic activities. For instance, in health, if in using the hand, one finger accidentally goes astray, the coordinating muscles promptly recall it to a ‘sense of duty.’ We know how the same rule works in speech and writing. Therefore, unless ‘voluntary’ and ‘capricious’ (or ‘willing’ and ‘willful’) are synonyms, the advent of volition ought not to mean the abrogation of this rule.

It is, however, obvious that ‘natural selection’ can only operate where death or sterility is the consequence of failure in adaptation and appropriate reaction, or segregation the consequence of excessive variation. But the point here is, why does not a tendency to correction, thus established, survive automatically in incipient imagination and therefore in language? It seems almost a burlesque of popular notions of ‘free will’ to suppose that the moment the death-penalty is taken off, the new-born intelligence, unique in its adapting power, should go astray persistently without let or hindrance. Many now merely formal or even jocular customs still prevailing⁴⁵ testify, as legacies from a remote time of danger needing to be averted, to the strength of tendencies organised during myriads of generations under the pressure of the struggle for life. Why does not this apply to language?

But sight gives us here perhaps the most suggestive lesson; for therein the ascending series seems especially gradual and unbroken. The eye, unlike the other organs of sense is an outgrowth of the very brain itself; ‘the retina. . . is in reality a part of the brain.’⁴⁶ We may well therefore

44. *Natural Religion*, p. 243.

45. See Dr. Tylor’s *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I: 74–121; *Ibid.*, Vol. II: 297–298, 404–428.

46. Dr. M. Foster’s *Text-Book of Physiology*, Part 4: 1142.

connect its functions specially with the thought of significance; it is the main out-post of our central means of interpretation.

Taking the stages in the evolution of the eye, and using a short summary of these as a convenient means of testing the value of a conspicuous group of metaphors, we find (1) a mere dint; (2) this dint deepening into a pit which (3) gradually narrows. Hitherto we have had only light and darkness; now we have an image, though but dim one. (4) The pit is closed by a transparent membrane; this is protection, not obstacle. (5) The lens is formed by deposit of cuticle. Gain; increased distinctness and increased brightness. The lens can focus a larger pencil of rays from each part of the object to each part of the retina (corresponding point). Finally, iris and eyelid protect the perfected eye more completely, and enable it both to bear more light and to discern more detail.

If mental development were in any way comparable to this physiological development, we should expect to find (1) something which would not naturally be described as a vague or dim 'impression'; gradually deepening, becoming more distinctly localised as the stimulus became more definitely 'impressive.' (2) We should begin to find 'reality' and the 'unreal'; 'fact' and 'fancy'; 'truth' and 'falsehood'; knowledge and ignorance, – contrasted as 'light' and 'darkness.'⁴⁷ And this is what actually happens.⁴⁸

(3) Still our mental 'impression' would not as yet afford us an image; 'imagination' only now comes upon the scene and begins to work (though as yet 'dimly') upon objects which more and more 'incisively' 'impress' us. (4) Our deep 'impression' is closed in one sense from direct contact with the outward; mental vision becomes more delicately differentiated from the emotional 'touch,' however this may be specialized and intensified. But what secludes this is transparent; it is protection, not obstacle. We rightly speak of mental penetration; of 'seeing through' a superficial limit. The mental 'lens' is formed from that 'continuum' on which the original 'impression' was made. The gain now is increased distinctness and brightness. More rays of 'light,' of reality, of fact, of truth, of knowledge, can now be focussed from each part of a given object (or group of objects) of mental attention and interest; to each part of the responsive 'sensitive plate' of the mind. Finally we have, so to speak, increased protective growth. The function of what are called academic culture and scientific method, with their fastidious standards of fitness and accuracy, may perhaps represent something not unlike that of iris and eyelid, enabling the developing mind safely to bear intenser illumination and also to discern more subtle detail.

It must be admitted that so far as it goes this is a significant psychological parable. However slender its right to the position even of a working clue to early stages of mind, it has at least better credentials than many accepted analogies can claim. And throughout its course what most 'impresses' itself upon one's mind is the steady maintenance of invariable reaction to excitation, and of protection from unfavorable stimulus.

'Mind,' as Mr. Shadworth Hodgson tells us,⁴⁹ 'is a fiction of the fancy.' Of course this is open to the retort that so is fancy a fiction of the mind, or fiction a fancy of the mind.

47. I am of course merely directing attention to the relative aptness of metaphors of mental process familiarly in use in our own language. It is obvious that before any inference could be made from them as to the value of unconscious analogies of imagery, we should have to make appeal to comparative philology and embark on a wide inquiry, for which the English-speaking races must wait for Dr. Murray's epoch-making Dictionary.

48. It must be borne in mind that the whole process presupposes the other senses or at least the temperature-sense, the 'muscular sense' and that of touch; that is, we should have 'felt' simple stimuli 'emotionally' before we 'saw' things intellectually. And hearing is not now in question, though in that, too, we should find the same character of development, i.e. the same prominence of the protective and discriminative factors.

49. *Brain*, June, 1891, p. 13.

Psychological is full of these see-saws of paradox, depending on vicissitudes of linguistic usage or context. But mind is indeed a fiction of the fancy when we endow it with a fanciful freedom from all ties with what we call physical reality. For this, however plainly we may recognise its genesis in our own sequences of sense-impression, does practically through them rule us with an undeviating severity which neither fiction nor fancy can temper with. Therefore, if we think it absurd to suppose that there may possibly be an undiscovered vein of authentic and really indicative symbol or metaphor running through the arbitrary meshes of fanciful custom or mythical term, we are in fact implying that all clues from the original interactions of physical energy were entirely lost when what we call 'mind' issued first in language. But at all events we may be sure that links between the 'physical' and the 'physical' are everywhere drawing closer and emerging clearer, however buried as yet in a mass of the fantastic or the arbitrary.

It will probably be objected that we can never hope to find these. No doubt such an attempt must mean the patient work of many lifetimes, and at best we could not hope to lay bare the ultimate point of 'origin.' But yet it seems worth trying. For after all, even the results which may appear so scanty in the tracing back of language, are already rich far beyond what could have been hoped for a few generations back. And if it were once realised that such a line of work might have practical and far-reaching issues; if we really saw that, thus some barren disputes and speculations might cease to bar the way or to waste some precious energies, we should be more than rewarded. In his 'Dialogues of Plato'⁵⁰ Professor Jowett warned us twenty years ago of our linguistic dangers, repeating his warning with greater emphasis and in fresh forms in the admirable essays added in the edition just published. He urges that the 'greatest lesson which the philosophical analysis of language teaches us is, that we should be above language, making words our servants and not allowing them to be our masters.' 'Words,' he tells us, 'appear to be isolated but they are really the parts of an organism which is always being reproduced. They are refined by civilisation, harmonised by poetry, emphasised by literature, technically applied in philosophy and art; they are used as symbols on the border-ground of human knowledge; they receive a fresh impress from individual genius, and come with a new force and association to every lively-minded person. They are fixed by the simultaneous utterance of millions and yet are always imperceptibly changing: – not the inventors of language, but writing and speaking, and particularly great writers, or works which pass into the hearts of nations, Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, the German or English Bible, Kant and Hegel, are the makers of them in later ages. They carry with them the faded recollection of their own past history; the use of a word in a striking and familiar passage, gives a complexion to its use everywhere else, and the new use of an old and familiar phrase has also a peculiar power over us.' Then he reminds us of what we too often forget; that 'language is an aspect of man, of nature, and of nations, the transfiguration of the world in thought, the meeting-point of the physical and mental sciences, and also the mirror in which they are reflected, an effect and partly a cause of our common humanity, present at every moment to the individual and yet having a sort of eternal or universal nature.'⁵¹

50. Vol. I: 285–286, 293.

51. The following, among many pregnant passages between which it is difficult to choose, may be further quoted:

'The famous dispute between Nominalists and Realists would never have been heard of, if, instead of transferring the Platonic ideas in to a crude Latin phraseology, the spirit of Plato had been truly understood and appreciated. Upon the term substance at least two celebrated theological controversies appear to hinge, which would not have existed, or at least not in their present form, if we had "interrogated" the word substance, as Plato has the notions of Unity and Being. Those weeds of philosophy have struck their roots deep into the soil, and are always tending to reappear, sometimes in new-fangled forms; while similar words, such as development, evolution, law, and the like, are constantly put in the place of facts, even by writers who profess to base truth entirely upon fact. In an unmetaphysical age there is

Nowadays, when we feel most scathingly superior, we often announce that we fail to see and have yet to learn something which, bringing us, it may be, a really fresh idea, unpleasantly stirs misgiving. Let us go on with our greeting, meaning it in good earnest. For when we honestly and without reservation consent to learn and succeed in seeing some things now waiting for our study we may find more than we look for, within reach. After all it may be that we have really failed to see and have really yet to learn the part that meaning – whether of language or of conduct – and its change or variations (successive or simultaneous) have had throughout the mental history of man. It may be that while the ordinary modern analogy is a mere rhetorical device, some few images may be found to hail from an altogether deeper and more authentic source. Many, however ancient, are not of course any the more valid for their antiquity. On the contrary it is obvious that such a figure for instance as ‘foundation’ or ‘basis’ to express an ultimate necessity, is a survival from days in which the earth was supposed to require and to possess such fixed and immutable base, while the analogies, e.g. between the human and the inorganic orders are now reversed. We import the idea of mechanism and invariable sequence into the former instead of exporting conscious intention into the latter; we level down where our fore-fathers levelled up. And we have to beware of the subtle atmosphere of fallacy thus introduced.

But on the other hand it is conceivable that some may be found to belong to that as yet mysterious energy on which natural selection plays and of which variation is the outcome or the sign. What we find in language may thus be, as it were, not merely the ‘scarred and weather-worn’ remnant of geogenic strata but sometimes the meteorite, the calcined fragment of earlier worlds of correspondence, ultra-earthly, cosmical. We have no right to do more than ask and seek and knock at the gates of fact in such a matter as this. But until that has been done; until at least we have tried the experiment; have looked for grades of validity in metaphor and analogy in the light of modern science, and still more, have recognized clearly the powerful though hidden effects upon us of organised mental picture brought in surreptitiously with verbal imagery, or by comparison; we cannot know whether such an effort is worth while or no, or what harvest it may yield. For after all, whether we like it or no, we *are* heliocentric; the world and all that

probably more metaphysics in the common sense (i.e. more *a priori* assumption) than in any other, because there is more complete unconsciousness that we are resting on our ideas, while we please ourselves with the conviction that we are resting on facts. We do not consider how much metaphysics are required to place above metaphysics, or how difficult it is to prevent the forms of expression which are ready made for our use from outrunning actual observation and experiment.’ (Vol. IV: 39–40)

‘To have the true use of the words we must compare them with things; in using them we acknowledge that they seldom give a perfect representation of our meaning. In like manner when we interrogate our ideas we find that we are not using them always in the sense which we supposed.’ (Ibid.: 41)

‘Many erroneous conceptions of the mind derived from former philosophies have found their way into language, and we with difficulty disengage ourselves from them. Mere figures of speech have unconsciously influenced the minds of great thinkers. Also there are some distinctions, as, for example, that of the will and of reason, and of the moral and intellectual faculties, which are carried further than is justified by experience. Any separation of things which we cannot see or exactly define, though it may be necessary, is a fertile source of error. The division of the mind into faculties or powers or virtues is too deeply rooted in language to be got rid of, but it gives a false impression. For if we reflect on ourselves we see that all our faculties easily pass into one another, and are bound together in a single mind or consciousness; but this mental unity is apt to be concealed from us by the distinctions of language.’ (Ibid.: 155)

is in it is cosmically generated. As far as science – and experience – are concerned, anything which says ‘I don’t admit that origin; I claim to have produced myself or to have been originated by and on the earth in a final sense,’ must make good its geocentric or self-creating pretensions with overwhelming cogency and rigorous proof. We appeal to the ‘light’ of science, of reason, of experience, against the ‘darkness’ of superstition, myth, and mysticism. And we are thus appealing not to the supersensuous or supernatural but to the ultra-satellitic. Not only beyond the earth and touch but beyond the atmosphere and hearing is the home of the light that lightens our small world, calling forth in us the answer of sight. And the manifold revelations through this sense – in its mental as well as bodily character – press upon us, with greater and greater insistence, the wealth of our relations with the universe.

In any case, *meaning* – in the widest sense of the word – is the only value of whatever ‘fact’ presents itself to us. Without this, to observe and record appearances or occurrences would become a worse than wasteful task. Significance is the one value of all that consciousness brings, or that intelligence deals with; the one value of life itself. But perhaps for this very reason we have taken it too much for granted. It may need a more definite place in psychological inquiries. It may need a more definite place in psychological inquiries. It may have unsuspected bearings.

When we have realised better what manner of gift this is, we may find answers of which we have prematurely despaired; answers coming not from the ‘mystical’ point of the horizon of experience, but rather from the neural. And let us beware here of repeating the pre-scientific error of postulating, for figurative purposes, a flat earth on which whatever lies beyond ‘horizons’ never meets! But, it may be said, why not? Why should it signify? Why, but because Man is the one not merely who thinks, or speaks, or writes, or looks upwards, but the one who *means*, the one who *is* the meaning of much, and makes the meaning of all; the one who will not tolerate the unmeaning anywhere in experience. Nothing remains but that he should interpret rightly; that he should apprehend nature and experience in their true sense. It is the glory of science that she puts this aim in the forefront of her labors. She tells us that nothing can be done without assumption and hypothesis as to the meaning of things. But that significance belongs to the very spring to which we owe her dauntless energy and her accumulating triumphs.

Why should it signify? The very term answers us. To ‘signify’ is the one test of the important. The significant is alone worth notice. We inherit a mode of thinking which we are at last becoming able to criticise in the light of knowledge gained by observation and experiment. But if we persist in using, without warning to hearer or reader, imagery which has no longer either sense or relevance, or which tends to call up a false mental picture or to perpetuate an else decaying error, we shall to that extent forfeit the very gifts which science brings us, and must not complain of the obstinate persistence of ideas which needlessly divide us. At least, let us try to realise more clearly what we are losing in this way. The danger even thus must needs be lessened; detected bogies become powerless for mischief; but we need not leave their ancient home empty, swept, and garnished; stories of verified analogy are waiting to replace them. The figurative must not indeed be pressed, still less literalised. But we may see that it conveys a true rather than a false impression; and harmonises with, instead of contradicting that which we must surely know.⁵²

52. I would gladly forward to any reader interested in a question of such practical bearings, a small collection of *Witnesses to Ambiguity* gathered from representative sources, and a pamphlet which was circulated at the International Congress of Experimental Psychology, held in London, August, 1892, giving examples of the mischievous confusions suggested by the use, even among writers of the first rank, of the metaphor, *Inner and Outer*. Prof. H. Sidgwick, the president, in his opening address, expressed the opinion that the very important work of this kind remained to be done, and added, ‘I have much sympathy with the view urged in a pamphlet that I have received for distribution among members of the Congress, which

It may be said in a true sense that the function of the hero, the saint, the poet, is to bring the world to *life*. But the function of the devoted servant of science, the critical scholar, the true philosopher, is to bring the world to *truth*, in a sense only now becoming possible. Through the last discipline alone, in its most thorough applications, can we hope fully to master the scope of all significance and the laws of all its workings. Then, indeed, we may further hope to read with a fresh eye the Significance of Life.

4.10. Sense, Meaning and Interpretation (1896)*

Part I

The drawbacks and even dangers of linguistic ambiguity and obscurity have always been more or less recognised and deplored, and most of us have exhorted others and have been ourselves exhorted to be clear and definite in statement and exposition, and not to wander from the ‘plain meaning’ or the ‘obvious sense’ of the words which we might have occasion to use. For it is undeniable that obscurity or confusion in language, if it does not betray the same defect in thought, at least tends to create it. The clearest thinking in the world could hardly fail to suffer if e.g. an Englishman could only express it in broken Chinese.

But when we ask what authority is to be appealed to in order to settle such meaning or sense, and how we are to avoid ambiguity and obscurity: when we ask how we always to be ‘clear’ for all hearers or readers alike under all circumstances: when we ask where we may obtain some training not only in the difficult art of conveying our own meaning, but also in that of interpreting the meaning of others: when further we inquire into the genesis of sign, symbol, mark, emblem, &c. and would learn how far their ‘message’ must always be ambiguous or may become more adequately representative and more accurately suggestive, then the only answers as yet obtainable are strangely meagre and inconsistent. And they can hardly be otherwise so long as no serious attention, still less study, is given to the important ideas which we vaguely and almost at random convey by ‘sense,’ ‘meaning,’ and allied terms, or to that process of ‘interpretation’ which might perhaps be held to include attention, discrimination, perception, interest, inference and judgment, but is certainly both distinct from, and as important as, any of these.

The question where the interpreting function begins: where any stimulus may be said to suggest, indicate or signalise somewhat other than itself, is already to some extent a question of Meaning, – of the *sense* in which we use the very word. In one sense, the first thing which the living organism has to do, – beginning even with the plant – is to interpret an excitation and thus to discriminate between the appeals e.g. of food and danger. The lack of this power is avenged by elimination. From this point of view, therefore the problem which every root as well as tentacle and even protozoic surface may be said to solve is that of ‘meaning,’ which thus applies in unbroken gradation and in ever-rising scale of value, from the lowest moment of life to the highest moment of mind.

But ‘meaning,’ one of the most important of our conceptions and indeed that on which the value of all thought necessarily depends, strangely remains for us a virtually unstudied subject. We are content to suppose it vaguely equivalent to ‘significance’ or to ideas expressed by a long list of so-called synonyms, never used with any attempt to utilise the distinctions of idea which they may embody, and which inquiry might show to be of real value in disentangling the intricacies and avoiding the pitfalls of philosophic thought. For example, for the purposes of such inquiry some of the main lines of thought might be tentatively correlated with the meaning-terms which

illustrates forcibly the confusion caused by one established antithesis of terms. Professor Sully and others have expressed themselves strongly in the same sense.’

* [Originally published in two parts, signed V. Welby, in the journal *Mind*, see Welby 1896a].

seem more especially to belong to them; and this would at least help us to understand that we are not to demand of any one what more properly belongs to another.

The following attempt at such a classification is of course only a suggestion of what is here intended (i.e. meant):

Philology and Signification	}	Meaning (or Intent?)
Logic and Import		
Science and Sense		
Philosophy		
Poetry		
Religion		
	}	and Significance

It is evident that the questions here opened are too wide to be adequately dealt with in an Article; but it may be possible briefly to suggest the kind of advantage which might accrue from the direction of attention to this subject.

Signification here represents the value of language itself: it seems naturally concerned with words and phrases, and is generally confined to them, although the numerous exceptions show that the distinction is not clearly recognised.

Import, on the other hand, introduces us to the idea of 'importance' and marks the intellectual character of the logical process. When we speak of the import of propositions, we are thinking of more than bare linguistic value: and we may find that to master such 'import' has a real 'importance' with reference to the subtle dangers of fallacy.

In coupling *sense* with physical science, three main current senses of the word should be borne in mind. There must certainly be some 'sense' both as meaning and as judgment in observation and experiment to give them any value whatever, as our use of 'the senseless' testifies, while the word is perhaps freer from any speculative taint than even 'meaning.' But in another 'sense,' Sense is the inevitable starting-point and ultimate test of scientific generalisation, and this suggests the question whether these divers senses of the word 'sense' are independent: whether the fact of the one word being used to convey what are now quite different ideas is merely accidental, or whether it points to a very close original connection between the ideas is merely accidental, or whether it points to a very close original connection between the ideas, if not to their actual identity. There seems at least a strong presumption in favour of the latter alternative: since the divergence of the senses of 'sense' has been a comparatively recent development and is thus possible to trace. And we have the authority of Dr. Murray,⁵³ as I believe of philologists in general, for this view.

53. I am allowed to quote the following passages from a private letter from Dr. Murray:

'*Sensus* became in common Romanic *senso* (retained in Italian, Portuguese), which again became in French *sens*. From French we took *sens* into English, so spelling it at first; then, to prevent the final *s* being treated as a *z* as the plurals in *pens*, *hens*, *dens*, it was written *sence* (as in fence, hence, defence, offence, &c.), and finally, with the feeling of keeping it as like the Latin as possible, and thus "showing the etymology," *sense* . . . Etymologically, *sensus* is the *u*-stem verbal substantive of *sentire*, to discern by the senses, to feel, see, hear, taste, or smell, – the general word expressing the operation of a sense-organ in acquainting us with external objects. We have no such general word in English, though *find*, and *feel*, have both been and still . . . are extended beyond the faculty of touch, to include smell, and sometimes taste; *perceive* is probably the nearest English word: But *sentire* is also extended to the inner or mental perception, to perceive, be conscious, operate, "*think*." Hence, *sensus* meant primarily the operation of one of the bodily senses, the action or faculty of feeling, smelling, tasting, hearing, seeing, physical perception.

By the (partial) objectivizing of these faculties, it came to mean (2) what we call "a sense," one of the five senses; thus, "quod neque oculis neque auribus neque ullo sensu

If admitted, the fact is a pregnant one, as we may see when the subject can be treated more fully. Here we may perhaps note that the word seems to give us the link between the sensory, the sensible and the significant: there is apparently a real connection between the 'sense' – say of sight – in which we react to stimulus, and the 'sense' in which we speak or act.

Meanwhile the idea of *significance* stands on a different footing from the other meaning-terms. It will hardly be denied that it has or may have an implication both of importance and special interest or value which is completely lacking not only to 'signification,' but also to 'import,' in spite of the verbal connection of this last with 'importance'; and to 'sense' in spite of its wider application. We naturally lay stress on the significance of some fact or event like the French Revolution or the Chino-Japanese war, when we feel that its 'import,' its 'sense,' – even its 'meaning' – are quite inadequate to express its effect on our minds, while it would not occur to any one to speak of its 'signification.' It has 'significance,' it is 'significant,' because it indicates, implies, involves, (or may entail) great changes or momentous issues: because it demands serious attention and, it may be, decisive action: or because it must modify more or less profoundly our mental attitude towards the nations or races affected by it, and towards the problems called social.

This applies still more in the case of the great provinces of thought we call philosophy, poetry and religion, as the ideas belonging to these pre-eminently possess that kind of value best expressed by 'significance.' And if we say that philology or logic or physical science may also claim significance, it is in virtue of these 'knowledges' possessing some at least of the higher value which the word has come to imply: it is in virtue of their special emotional or moral interest either for all intelligent minds or for special groups of these.

Besides the sense-terms already instanced, there are of course many others. We have purport, reference, acceptation, bearing, indication, implication: we speak of expressing, symbolising, standing for, marking out, signalising, designating, suggesting, betokening, portending: words or

percipi potest": what can be perceived neither by the eyes, nor by the ears, nor by any sense.

Then (3) it meant the act of conscious or mental perception, the perception of the mind or man himself, as effected by the instrumentality of a bodily sense (as when I feel a body in the dark, and thereby internally "feel" or "perceive" that some body is present), or of several bodily senses combined.

Then (4) the action of the mind or inner man generally, thought, feeling as to things known, opinion, view taken, &c.

Then (5) especially, the common or ordinary feeling or view of humanity in regard to any matter, or to matters in general, the "common feeling or sense" of mankind as to what is true, proper, wise, or the contrary. In this, an individual man may share more or less largely, and is said to have *more* or *less sense* accordingly: the justifiable assumption being that "the great soul of mankind is just," and that consequently the more a man is a man of sense, *i.e.* possessed of a large share of the common feeling, views, or sense of humanity, the more he is to be valued.

But (6) the feeling, view or thought, that a man or men have in regard to anything, is expressible in words: the words convey the sense of the speaker: we gather his sense from his words, and naturally call it the sense of the words, *i.e.* the sense conveyed by the words (as we call the water conveyed by an aqueduct "aqueduct water," or a letter conveyed by a ship "a ship letter"). Hence the meaning expressed by any sentence is its sense; and by very natural and necessary extension the meaning expressed by any single word is its sense. This was fully developed already by the late Latin grammarians and rhetoricians: thus Quintilian, "*verba duos sensus significantia*" = (ambiguous) words expressing two *senses* or meanings. It is hardly popular or plebeian English yet: the man in the street would speak of the *sense* of a sentence or statement, but usually of the *meaning* of a single word. But he might in reference to a badly written word say he "could make no sense of it."

phrases (and also gestures or actions) are intelligible, descriptive, definite, emblematic: or in that 'intent.' All these and many others come in ordinary usage under the general term 'meaning': it remains to consider the claim of Meaning to cover more ground than Sense, and to stand therefore for all those conceptions which are expressed by the words commonly used as its synonyms. In the first place we must not forget that import (or purport) is really the secondary sense of the word Meaning: and that when we say we 'mean' to do this and that (i.e. we intend to do it) we are using it in its primary sense. It therefore becomes, like the various senses of 'sense,' an interesting subject for inquiry how the idea of intention has here given way to the idea of sense; because there certainly does not seem at first sight to be any close connection between the 'intention' which implies volition and looks to the future, and the 'meaning' which has no direct reference to either. On the other hand, when we say 'it is my intention to do this or that' we may use as an alternative 'it is my purpose to do it': and does not that bring to us to a teleological value? If so, may the link be found in the idea of End? If we organise some expedition and charter means of transport and supplies, our meaning in all this is the furtherance of the object of such expedition: all our actions have reference to this end, which is the point and only 'sense' of our exertions.

We have thus linked Intention, Meaning and End. The fact that Meaning includes Intention and End seems to indicate that it is the most general term we have for the value of a sign, symbol, or mark. And yet it is precisely Meaning which has given rise to the denotative v. connotative controversy and which some logicians would deny to the 'proper name.' Of this it need only at present be remarked that if the latter view is to prevail, the logical use in narrowing the sense of 'meaning' will traverse the popular one, thus tending to create confusion unless we can bring another term into use in its place; while it would seem that all needed purpose would be served by admitting that the proper name, being a sign, is *literally* significant, i.e. has meaning, but is neither descriptive nor definable.

What exactly then is the point to which I am venturing to call the attention of scholars, thinkers, teachers? The very fact of the need and the lack of this attention makes a succinct answer which shall really be an answer, difficult if not even the first place the advantages, direct and indirect, present and future, of a systematic inquiry into the subject, and of its introduction from the first into all mental training.

This is emphatically more than a merely linguistic question, and it has more than even a logical or psychological value. But even if this were doubted, no one would deny that modes of expression tend both to reveal and to modify modes of thought; and this must be especially true in any attempt to make language express more perfectly, and thus enable thought to signify more and to interpret more. From this point of view we ought to properly therefore to begin with our quest from the linguistic stand-point, since a word *quâ* word is a meaning-sign, and thus the so-called question of words is really a question of sense. It is not too much to say, though the fact seems little realised, that it is largely through the very instinct which prompts even the most futile 'verbal' dispute that language has gained that degree of efficiency which it already possesses. But it seems impossible here to enter satisfactorily upon this side of the question, which must thus wait for a more general recognition of the importance of the whole subject.

To take an instance of the increased power of discrimination which we might hope to gain if attention could be effectually roused on this subject, we may point to the many derivative forms of (bodily) sense, all of which are in fact used with consistency and clearness. We have e.g. the sensory, the sensible, the sensuous, the sensual, the sensitive; but all these things have exclusive reference to the *feeling*-sense of sense.⁵⁴ Again, we have a different set of words for each special sense. We

54. It is difficult for the student of meaning-sense not to look with an envious eye at the wealth of idea which the organic-sense derivatives enable us to express with such precision. But for the increased confusion which a double usage would entail, we might gladly avail ourselves of the whole list, for they would immensely facilitate the discussion of questions of meaning-

listen and hear, we glance, behold and stare, gaze and see; we touch and feel etc. Now suppose that our sense-words were all used indifferently, and that we made that context determined quite well enough whether we meant sight or hearing or touch. In both these cases the loss of distinction would be a serious one. Yet in its meaning as significance, Sense is in fact credited with a number of synonyms, which we use simply at pleasure and only with reference to literary considerations instead of as valuable discriminatives, while no derivatives at all comparable with those from sense exist, from any word which stands for meaning. What is the consequence? That our speech is so far less significant than it might be: we fail to recognise what a wealth of significance lies in the idea of meaning itself, or how much depends upon the development of its applications. What after all is the moral basis of speech-life, of articulate communion? Significance and lucidity. These are not merely accomplishments, they are ethically valuable. We owe it to our fellows to assimilate truth and to convey it to them unalloyed by needless rubbish of the sense-less, the meaningless, the confused and the contradictory. It is our distinct duty to study the causes, to provide against the dangers, and to realise the true significance of ambiguity, – a point to which I shall hope to return later. But we find in serious discussion only too much witness to the absence of any cultivated sense either of urgent need of conscientious, even scrupulous consistency in expression or of the importance of preserving the plasticity of language. Such a sense ought to be as delicate and as imperative as that of honour and honesty. We recognise that it is essential to good poetry that epithet and metaphor should be exquisitely chosen, should be delicately apposite, bringing us faithfully the picture or the emotion the poet wished for. But this is even more important when the result is to be not merely the highest delight but the most far-reaching and radical effect on knowledge. It is but seldom that a poet's metaphor or epithet can affect the whole outlook of generations to come, or will introduce permanent intellectual confusion. But when a philosophical or scientific writer uses metaphors or special epithets, they are intended to enforce some supposed truth or to convey fact often of crucial importance. It is therefore hardly far-fetched to appeal to the moral aspect of the question and to speak of developing a linguistic conscience. As it is, school-books abound with instances of the vagueness of our ideas of sense or meaning. We find, e.g. in an elementary text-book of algebra: what is the meaning = what is indicated = what is denoted; and are indiscriminately told to interpret, translate and express, apparently only with the object of avoiding tautology.

One difficulty with which we are thus brought face to face is this: how are we to secure a word for the act or process which has been so much overlooked that we have not yet even acquired a means of expressing it? A given excitation suggests what is not itself and thus becomes a Sign and acquires Sense. What are we to call the act of ascribing, attributing, assigning to, bestowing or imposing upon, the sensation or impression or object, the sense – or meaning, which constitutes its 'sign-hood'? Is the process a 'referential' one? Though signification as the 'signifying act' would bear the sense above proposed for it, it has the serious disadvantage of being already appropriated to another use. In the absence of anything better I would therefore venture here to speak of the act or process of *sensifying*. It is true that 'to sensify' must share the uncertainty of reference which belongs to sense itself. It might mean e.g. the attributing of our 'senses' to a tree or rock, which we suppose to hear, feel, see, etc. like ourselves. But as there is apparently no word which is free from all established associations, we may perhaps be allowed to use 'sensification' for that fundamental tendency to 'assign sense' and 'give meaning' without which Attention, Imitation and even Adaptation itself would either not exist or would be deprived of all their practical value.

sense. At least however we might be allowed to coin a new derivative and speak of 'sensal' where we often now speak of 'verbal' questions, to the loss of a valuable distinction. For the use of 'verbal' ought surely to be confined to the spheres of philology or literary style, whereas 'sensal' would mark the difference between mere 'sense' (as meaning) and 'reality' e.g. when we speak of the 'real' question at issue as distinct from the 'verbal,' we constantly mean, distinct from the 'sensal.'

For the lowest forms of response to excitation or reaction to stimulus only become useful, only become means of physical and mental rise in scale, in so far as they attach some 'meaning' to that which affects them, and thus foster the development of the discriminating function.

It must however be obvious by now that what we are considering is the need not merely of substituting one word for another, not merely of more precise definition or even of more accurate or consistent usage in expression, but of a profound change in mental perspective which must affect every form of thought and may indeed in time add indefinitely to its capacity. If we get this increased power both of signifying and of apprehending or understanding Significance, we might hope for a general agreement as to the possibility of expanding the present limits of valid speculation. Thought might well attain the power to overpass these boundaries with the most indisputably profitable result. There would be less danger of wasting thought and time on plausible but fruitless inquiry.

Indeed one is almost tempted to ask whether the preemptory stress laid by modern science on the futility of attempts to overlap assumed mental barriers, may not be fully justified as in fact owing to an obscure instinctive sense that as yet thought is only reliable within these frontiers, as the lack of philosophical consensus seems to indicate; while on the other hand the tendency of the speculative mind to explore outlying regions, is in its turn due to an obscure impulse which is equally justified as really predictive. At present, it is true, such regions cannot be opened up for full colonization. Before the pioneer can hope to bring back the necessary information for the future colonist, he needs to be specially equipped for his task and to have gone through a training which shall tend to heighten his natural powers of observation and inference. And we must not be misled by the popular notion that only a few of us can or may take up the vocation of a pioneer. As a matter of fact every one of us in the one sense a born explorer: our only choice is what world we will explore, our only doubt whether our exploration will be worth the trouble. From our earliest infancy we obey the law. And the idlest of us wonders: the stupidest of us stares: the most ignorant of us feels curiosity: while the thief actively explores his neighbour's pocket or breaks into the 'world' of his neighbour's house and plate-closet.

But the mental pioneer needs equipment, and it must be adequately provided in his training. The child's natural demand for the meaning of, as well as the reason for everything that he sees or that happens, is the best of all materials to work upon. He at least wants all that the richest vocabulary of meaning can give us. Just as every fresh acquirement of feeling-sense interests and excites him: just as he runs to us with the eager account of what he now finds he can detect by his eye or his ear or his finger: just as the exploring instinct develops in forms even sometimes trying to his elders, so it would be the growth of the meaning-sense were stimulated and cultivated. And the thirst for exploring the inside of our watches might be diverted into the useful channel of exploring their 'meaning,' – or rather the different senses in which they were valuable. Thus he would arrive at the *meaning* of one objection to their dissection, and everywhere would acquire fresh occasions for triumphant appeals to our admiration of his discoveries.

Beginning in the simplest and most graphic form: taking advantage of the child's sense of fun as well as of his endless store of interest and curiosity, it ought to be easy to make 'significs' or 'sensifics' the most attractive of studies. Following the physiological order, it would become the natural introduction to all other studies, while it would accompany them into their highest development; clearing and illuminating everything it touched, giving us a self-acting consensus where as yet that seems most hopeless, and suggesting, if not providing, solutions to some of the most apparently insoluble of problems.

Here then, if I am right, would be the gain. The area of confusion, misunderstanding and dispute would be continually shrinking, and the area of really significant expression and intelligent assent constantly expanding, the limits of consensus enlarging with it. The adaptation of language to growing complexity of experience and to continually developing need would become, like that of the organism, more and more adequate: while correspondence – or at least mutual recognition –

in usage, would become compatible with endless variety in application and implication: a variety all the more possible because we had at last begun to realise in earnest the lesson which in one form begins with life and in another ends only with experience, – the lesson of Interpretation.

In his *Essentials of Logic* – lectures expressly intended for the elementary student – Mr. Bosanquet complains (p. 99) that the commonest mistakes in the work of beginners within his experience as a teacher ‘consist in failure to interpret rightly the sentences given for analysis.’ A much wider bearing, it seems to me, might be given to this remark. It surely applies to the whole field of mental activity. But can we wonder at any kind of failure to interpret, when we realise that the unhappy ‘beginner’ has never, unless incidentally or indirectly, been trained to interpret at all, or even to understand clearly what interpretation – as distinguished e.g. from judgment or inference or bare perception–really is?

Various objections may here suggest themselves. The principal ones may perhaps be summed up as (1) that there is no need for such a study as we are pleading for, since the subject is already dealt with in various connections and is implied in all sound educational methods: and (2) that its introduction would be impossible, and even if not impossible would be undesirable, as tending to foster pedantry and shackle thought.

The answer to the first of these objections is of course largely a matter of evidence, and of inference from admitted facts. The unexpected and startling conclusions to which a careful investigation of the present state of things has led me, require, I am well aware, the most irrefragable witness to sustain them. Before attempting to deal with this evidence even in the too brief form alone possible within our present limits – and thus at least to indicate the answer required – I would lay stress upon two points: first, that the ablest of thinkers, speakers and writers is now at the mercy of students, hearers and readers, who have never been definitely trained to be significant or lucid or interpretative, and who are therefore liable to read their own confusion of mind on the subject of meaning into the clearest exposition: and, secondly, that were inconsistency or ambiguity may seem to occur even in first-rate writing, it goes to prove that the highest and most thoroughly trained ability does not escape the disastrous effects of comparative indifference to question of meaning from which all comparative indifference to questions of meaning from which all alike inevitably suffer, and for which I am venturing to bespeak special attention.

Bearing this in mind, I may perhaps to be allowed to bring forward a few instances taken from logical and psychological sources tending to show how great is the need of such special attention and how little is yet given to it except in an incidental or fragmentary way: although indications of a growing impatience of current confusions and a growing sense of their danger are not wanting.

In the case of the logical use of ‘sense’ or ‘meaning,’ etc. it is no doubt necessary to draw a distinction between the technical terms of logic and those which it borrows from ordinary language. It may be said that when the formal logician employs technical terms like intension, connotation, comprehension, extension, denotation, he is bound to give a careful and precise analysis of the sense in which he uses these terms, whereas meaning, sense etc. not being used as technical terms, need neither be formally differentiated nor made strictly synonymous, since they must always be interpreted by their context. But in the first place, as Dr. Keynes and others impress upon us, logic takes no cognizance of context; and in the second I would myself earnestly deprecate either the sacrifice of valuable distinctions by making these and allied terms ‘strictly synonyms,’ or such a differentiation of their value as would diminish necessary elasticity, or preclude further modification in their use. Words like premiss, conclusion, postulate, equation, proposition: like real, verbal, positive, negative, relative, simple, complex, are borrowed from ordinary discourse, and are as a rule used in Logic with almost punctilious consistency. It is only when we get to the meaning-terms that we are left to gather as best we may their valid use and application, not merely in Formal Logic technically so called, but also in the discussion of those wider generalizations of the nature and conditions of valid thinking which lead on from Logic proper to Epistemology. As yet we are often left to gauge their value and their scope by a context which itself is often

necessarily a severe tax on the student's attention and power of 'interpretation,' just because of the closeness of the reasoning employed and the dryness and abstraction of the subject.

But there are signs that this will not much longer be the case.

In Mr. W. E. Johnson's Notice in *Mind*⁵⁵ of Dr. Keynes's 3rd edition of his *Formal Logic* he cites a number of additions and even special chapters as pointing to 'the growing importance of questions dealing with what is called the import of propositions in view of recent controversies' (p. 240).

Technical distinctions in this, already emphasised, are more minutely applied. A fresh term, Exemplification, is introduced, leading to interesting results and throwing needed light on 'the mutual relations between extension and intension' (p. 242). Mr. Johnson points out that controversies connected with the 'so-called import of propositions' are largely due to 'Confusion between three distinct meanings of the term import. These may be called the *formulation*, the *interpretation* and the *fundamental analysis* of propositions.'

The 'interpretation' here is what concerns us most; and by this is meant 'the assignment of the precise degree and amount of significance to be attached to it.' This is a definitive step gained: but we still want to be clear whether, to the logician, significance = signification; or whether the difference of termination may not indicate a distinction of logical as well as general value. As 'Ordinary language is often ambiguous,' there is 'need of *interpreting*' (italics Mr. Johnson's) 'any propositions to new forms, the logician may unwittingly put more or less of significance into the preposition than it originally bore' (p. 243).

But here and in the following passages 'significance' is used where there is none of that element which 'significance' can alone suggest, and where it would seem that some other word would give adequately and in fact more accurately the 'sense' intended. Might it not conduce to clearness if the use of 'significance' were discontinued in *Formal Logic*? However, the main point is that distinct stress is here laid, for the first time, on questions of interpretation, as well as of formulation and the fundamental analyses; and these especially with reference to Import itself. Developments may thus be hopefully looked for.

In Dr. Keynes's own work (3rd edition) I will venture to take one illustration of the point now under consideration.

In the exercises at the end of Chapter VII (Part II) the student is directed to 'assign precisely the meaning of' an assertion, and to 'examine carefully the meaning to be attached to' a denial (p. 210). But he may surely ask which of the many interpretations of 'meaning' he is to adopt here. To refer only to pp. 160–165, we may choose for 'meaning' any of the various 'senses,' intention, signification, connotation, application, import, purport, implication. Of a certain inference also it is said (p. 164) that 'this would mean' (i.e. involve) the introduction of certain symbols. Ordinary logical doctrine, Dr. Keynes reminds us, 'should not depart more than can be helped from the forms of ordinary speech' (p. 165). But how confused these often are is illustrated by this very sentence; as the 'meaning' obviously is 'more than *cannot* be *hindered*' (or strictly, 'avoided'). 'Make no more noise than you can help' is of course 'make no more noise than you *cannot* avoid making.' Such an instance forcibly illustrates Dr. Keynes's contention that 'it is obviously of importance to the logician to clear up all ambiguities and ellipses of language' (p. 168).

In a Manual for use by students, Mr. Welton tells us that

Generalisation extends the application of the words and so lessens their fixed meaning, and thus allows the same word to have different senses. (p. 13)

A word may thus

55. April 1895.

call up very different ideas in different minds, or in the same mind at different times. Such terms are particularly unsuited to scientific discussion, and when they are used in it they invariably lead to misunderstanding and dispute. (p. 14)

Is 'idea' here a synonym of sense? Are application and sense convertible terms? Are not these words, *thus left undefined*, themselves 'unsuited to scientific discussion' as tending to confusion? He takes the view that 'An individual name may be a mere verbal sign devoid of meaning. . . Proper names . . . can only *suggest*, not imply, and are therefore in themselves *unmeaning*' (pp. 62–63). (Italics my own.)

This distinction, we are assured, is of fundamental importance, and, through overlooking it, Jevons, Bradley and other logicians take the opposite view. But how comes it that logicians of such acumen and eminence 'overlook' a point of such importance? What hinders consensus? And what is the student to gather from all this? For instance, is he to conclude that the suggestive may be the unmeaning?

Dr. Venn⁵⁶ writes with reference to convertible terms, 'Even if we can find two which strictly mean the same thing, that is, which apply to exactly the same object or class, there are sure to be differences amongst the many associations which cluster about them and blend with the true meaning' (p. 43).

Here to *mean* and to *apply* are used as synonymous. But presently we read of 'Two aspects under which a name may be viewed. These are respectively its meaning and its range of application. . . characteristics which it is meant to imply and objects to which it is found to apply. . . . The more meaning we insist upon putting into a name the fewer. . . the objects to which that name will be appropriate; the less the meaning contained, the wider will be the range of application of the name' (p. 174).

Is this 'logical consistency'? How can we hope for it in the case of terms like 'meaning' until the ideas which they stand for have been carefully analysed? At present they seem marked out for loose usage even among the most accurate of writers.

But if, with Prof. Adamson, we are to admit that we cannot yet define even the exact status or province of Logic itself, since it is sometimes treated as an abstract science, sometimes as a subordinate branch of one, sometimes as a nondescript receptacle for formulations of method, it may be unreasonable to expect much from the present point of view until the various meanings of the term Logic are more clearly differentiated and more universally accepted. At present, as he says,

The diversity in mode of treatment is so great that it would be impossible to select by comparison and criticism a certain body of theorems and methods, and assign to them the title of logic. . . In tone, in method, in aim, in fundamental principles, in extent of field, they diverge so widely as to appear, not so many different expositions of the same science, but so many different sciences. In short, looking to the chaotic state of logical text-books at the present time, one would be inclined to say that there does not exist anywhere a recognised, currently received body of speculations to which the title logic can be unambiguously assigned, and that we must therefore resign the hope of attaining by any empirical consideration of the received doctrine a precise determination of the nature and limits of logical theory.⁵⁷

If we can gain a classification of meaning-sense itself, not merely as wide or narrow, direct and indirect, but as applicative, implicative, acceptative, indicative, &c., it must in some degree help towards more clearly determining, discriminating and relating the senses in which we may legitimately apply an all-important term like Logic: and would thus enable the true distinctions

56. *Empirical Logic*.

57. 'Logic' (*Encyc. Brit.*).

within such a concept to be definitely and consistently utilised, while fallacious or misleading uses would tend to expose and condemn themselves.

Part II *

Turning now from Logic to Psychology, the first question which suggests itself is whether Interpretation, – its genesis, its processes, and its developments, – has hitherto received the same attention from psychologists which they so conscientiously bestow on all other mental processes. That it is a mental process no one would deny: and as such by universal agreement it falls within the scope of psychological inquiry. If it proves on examination that such attention has not hitherto been given, we may further ask if there is a good reason for this omission, and whether such reason has been duly explained to the reader.

Let us see then what Psychology has to teach us about Interpretation. Where does it begin in the ascending scale of life? How does it do its work? What are the stages of its advance? How is it related on the one hand to Attention, Perception, Memory, Imitation, Judgment, Inference, Conception, and on the other to the physiological phenomena of response to excitation? Again, to what does the process properly apply? How far is the term metaphorical and therefore only partially applicable? What is it that needs, or bears, or demands interpretation? Is it primarily simple sensation, rising to that highly complex experience, the hearing of articulately ‘significant’ speech? Or is it from the first the ‘meaning’ of this sensation – the ‘meaning’ of the first touch which to the Protozoon was the signal of ‘food’ or ‘danger,’ to the ‘meaning’ of the most abstract of propositions? Or should we rather here say, ‘sense’? Does the living organism from its lowest beginnings in some ‘sense’ ‘interpret’ sense? And does this ‘interpretation’ gradually become more conscious and more complex until the ‘senses’ of temperature, of resistance, or effort, of touch, of sight, of smell and taste, of hearing, resolve themselves into the intellectual ‘sense’ in which all experience, but especially all language, is to be interpreted?

We are told much of the impulse to imitate or mimic, but rarely or never of the equally deep and primordial impulse to ‘sensify’ – to touch with ‘meaning’ – every stimulus, excitation, imitation, impression, sensation, perception, idea, till we reach conception, which may be identical with the ‘result of interpretation,’ and is often identified with ‘meaning.’ If ‘idea’ is here left out it is only because our neglect of the ‘sensifying’ process helps to render it one of the most ambiguous of terms, as in the case both of ‘experience’ and ‘reality.’ Certainly the impulse to ‘sensify,’ which makes the import of every unit of consciousness or experience the measure of its importance, which makes it ‘signify’ just as much as it ‘signifies,’ needs quite as much analysis and is as much a part of true scientific training, as the impulse to discriminate or to compare. The habit of ‘attaching’ meanings is as dangerous as the habit of seeking or assuming analogies, and as useful as that of detecting minute but important differences.

Dealing with the primary intellectual functions Prof. Sully⁵⁸ gives us ‘(a) the initial stage, viz. the presentation of an object to sense, and the fixing the attention on this, and (b) the stage of Intellection proper, the act of perceiving, interpreting or recognising what is presented’ (p. 61). Here we have Interpretation, with Signification, its condition and implication, incidentally coupled with Perception and Recognition. No further notice is taken of or use made of it: it is given no status whatever: we are left without any guidance as to the nature or function of Interpretation as distinct from the Perception which precedes, accompanies, or at least conditions it, and the Recognition which links past with present experience. Here then I would venture to suggest that

* [This second part of the essay was originally published in the same issue of *Mind*, as the first part, but distributed over different sections, respectively on pages 24–37 and 186–202, see Welby 1896a].

58. *The Human Mind*, Vol. I.

significance and interpretation should receive in future more definite ‘recognition,’ and that we need the triad, – Presentation, Attention, Interpretation. Attention, we learn, ‘underlies and helps to determine the whole process of mental elaboration’ (p. 167) and is a fundamental process, appearing as a reflex at the very beginning of mental development; the whole movement of which is determined by the co-operation of this factor. According to the law of attention that we pass at once from the sign to the ‘thing signified,’ we have acquired an invincible habit of passing instantly from the muscular sensations of the eye to the representations which they call up. That is, of *interpreting* sensation. The child learns to interpret as he learns to attend and to infer. Why is this supremely important mental activity – the immediate result of attention – the only one left unanalysed? And what do we suppose to be the genesis of ‘sign’? What is the first moment when a sensation or a thing stands not for itself but for something else, draws attention not to itself but beyond itself? We shall of course be referred to memory. But with loss of memory is the idea of meaning obliterated or the ‘sensifying’ function atrophied? Or may not this remain as an unsatisfied craving, an unanswered ‘What does it all mean’? How far is the doubling tendency to see everywhere thing plus meaning, or sign plus significate, ineradicable because primordial? Where does the ‘calling up’ process begin? When one sensation suggests another ‘remembered’ one? Is that the link between association and signification?

Prof. James⁵⁹ considers that the great difference between man and brute is that the former ‘has a deliberate intention to apply a sign to everything’ (p. 356). ‘How, then, does the general purpose arise? It arises as soon as the notion of a *sign as such*, apart from any particular import, is born; and this notion is born by dissociation from the outstanding portions of a number of concrete cases of signification’ (p. 357).

At least here we have what I would call the sensifying instinct raised to the highest importance and marking the advent of humanity. But what is here meant is the fully conscious, volitional, ‘intentional,’ reflective application of the sign: and in this sense we may welcome the definition of man as the *sign-generator* – rather than merely the *sign-maker*.

Prof. Baldwin⁶⁰ considers that ‘the ultimate basis of psychological interpretation and construction is the mental experience of the individual, in so far as it has universal meaning’ (p. 19). ‘... It is only after the words assume meaning and sense to us,’ like all sensations or sense-impressions, ‘that they become permanent acquisitions’ (p. 202). He teaches that ‘the final constructive product is a true mental unity or picture, which has its own significance for the mind, apart from its elements. This significance is an ideal meaning, which possesses general interest, and appeals to man universally’ (p. 234).

Here we get an incidental definition of significance as ‘ideal meaning,’ which would surely be more instructive if we had begun with a section on, let us say, the nature of the relation between real and ideal ‘meaning,’ and the function of interpretation as applied in each case and with express reference to the idea of ‘sense.’⁶¹ Further ‘the most important thing about interest is its quality as stimulating the will. A thing is interesting to me when, for any reason, it appeals to my attention – when it is worth looking at – when it is so related to me that I am led to investigate it; and the feeling of interest is this need of looking, investigating, finding out about’ (p. 139). ‘In interests, therefore, we have a step in mental growth of enormous significance in psychological theory’ (pp. 148–149).⁶²

In ‘interests’ have we not in fact the key to the nature of ‘sensifying’ process? The ‘feeling of interest’ endows our surroundings with, – bestows upon them, attributes or ascribes to them, –

59. *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II.

60. *Handbook of Psychology*, Vol. I.

61. Prof. Dewey’s article on ‘Knowledge as Idealisation’ (*Mind*, Vol. XII. No. 47) calls attention strikingly and usefully to some of the questions here raised or implied.

62. Baldwin, *Feeling and Will*.

somewhat which may be described as meaning or sense or significance: in other words makes them significant, suggestive, indicative, symbolical, and then prompts the function of interpretation. What is it that affects me? Where does it come from? What is it like? What will come of it? How shall I act upon it? are among the interpretative questions. It may be said that this subject is already discussed in logic and psychology under the heads of Attention, Perception, Memory, Judgment, &c. No doubt: but not from the point of view taken here. Sense *in the meaning sense* has never yet been taken as a centre to work out from: attention, perception, memory, judgment, &c. &c. have never been cross-examined from the direction of their common relation to a 'meaning' which has to be made out, a 'sense' which has to be mastered, a 'significance' which has to be felt, understood and acted upon. Before we ask, what is real? we not only need to ask the 'meaning' of the 'sense of reality' but the 'meaning' of the sense of 'sense'; the sense, intent, import, purport, of the perceptions which make up or bring us experience.

Prof. Ladd's works would supply materials for an independent Essay, and it is difficult to choose only one or two representative passages from his *Psychology*. But it may be noted that hardly any notice is taken of, or stress laid upon, this central factor of intelligence; – the reading of the messages of Sense, and of the *sense* of these messages from the stimuli by which perception is excited. Considering the enormous mass of careful detail which the book contains, surely a larger space might have been devoted to analysing not only the unifying grasp but the sensificatory and translative energy of the 'interpretative consciousness.'

But the inquiry suggested seems to be endless, since the domain of 'meaning' covers all that can be discussed to any purpose, or indeed in any rational sense. I must be content therefore with having roughly indicated some of the many directions in which enhanced clearness of thought might be the reward of a hitherto neglected investigation, and pass on to deal with (2) the objection that the study for which I am pleading would be impossible, and even if not impossible would be undesirable, as tending to foster pedantry and shackle thought. But the very idea of its impossibility seems largely owing to its non-existence. From the moment when we begin to make everything else subordinate to that vital interest for which we have only as yet the vague and unanalysed expression which belongs to vague and unanalysed thought, its importance begins to reveal itself, to stand out and to demand a more worthy appreciation than has yet been vouchsafed to it. In any inquiry we may be forced at some point to recognise that what we have taken for an 'object,' – even in the widest sense – is rather a 'meaning' or a 'sense': and that the halo of reality or objective existence which we have thrown round it is just part of its essential prerogative: is just part, that is, of the quality of 'sense' which is the one character to be always safely ascribed to it.

Why are we tempted to suppose that it would be impossible to study the subject of meaning without re-opening all the traditional controversies of philosophy, merely to plunge us into an ocean of baffling problems of thought without hope of rescue? Surely because a vital point has been missed in our training – in the very theory of training! We have not had the sensifying and interpretative functions developed: their nature has not been explained to us nor their true importance pointed out.⁶³

Again, why do we imagine that such a study could only end in rigid pedantry and the sacrifice even of such power of adaptation as language has already attained? Surely, once more, because of that unfortunate hiatus in our training already so much insisted on: and notably also from our failure to appeal to that organic analogy for language which is admittedly the best we have. When the force of this analogy is once realised it becomes amazing that we should suppose it possible to ignore the need for new phrases and words, and insist on the established vocabulary and forms sufficing us for the expression of new experiences. In other words it betrays a curious atrophy, in this one direction, of the adaptive power which has attained such advanced developments, and

63. It is a curious – and may we say a significant? – fact in this connection that the only instance I have been able to find of any direct attempt to consider exactly what we mean by 'meaning'

has so enormously modified and enlarged the outlook of life in the form of mechanical invention, whether for commercial or for scientific purposes, or merely for the furtherance of comfort and convenience. This tremendous supplementary outgrowth, this unexampled expansion of the range of sense and muscle, ought surely to rebuke the strange hopelessness, apathy and contented bondage to the outgrown and the outworn which keeps the development of adaptive *expression* so far behind that of invention and discovery and thus behind experience: which deprives us of whole quarries of fresh simile whereby to express fresh lines of philosophical thought: and which acts, so far as it goes, as an effectual barrier to the acquirement of a more profound and really scientific Psychology, and a Logic which shall command acceptance without question or reserve.

If it be rejoined that the growing powers of language are in fact recognised, used, stimulated and systematised by every means in our power and especially through every form of training, I would answer that as yet the only work even recognising them which I have been able to find is Dr Jespersen's. His title *Progress in Language* at least strikes the needed and missing note: and whether his special theories are or are not accepted, we owe him gratitude for boldly saying that language is advancing and must rise in scale and value and power, that we have even to learn that grammar must be servant and not master, and that whatever expresses best and signifies most should be systematically adopted, absorbed, and if need be, allowed to transform and amplify the current canons of expression.

After all, language is 'made for man' and not man for language: he ought not to be its slave. If it be objected that linguistic advance cannot be deliberately organised or even cultivated because it refuses to be controlled, and that it is hopeless to attempt to secure universal consent even to the most obviously needed changes, the answer is that we already assiduously cultivate correct articulation, true intonation and pronunciation, accurate spelling, punctuation and grammatical construction, and obtain in each case substantially uniform usage. Why then not direct the attention of the young from the very first to what is yet more important, the need of fresh developments in expression and their right direction and control? Might we not further urge upon those who are our natural leaders and teachers in speech and writing the pressing duty of asserting the power of Man to train within obvious limits his function of linguistic expression as he already trains his touch and his vision, – and indeed his memory and his intellect? J. S. Mill⁶⁴ reminds us that mathematical study induces wariness: it has the great advantage of training the mind to make sure of its steps: 'at least it does not suffer us to let in, at any of the joints in the reasoning, any assumption which we have not previously faced in the shape of all axiom, postulate, or definition' (p. 612).

occurs in a forgotten book of somewhat quaint dialogues called *The Philosophy of Things*. A expresses surprise that B has never once asked him what he means 'by the word *meaning*.'

- A. 'We have been talking almost of nothing else but the meaning of words, and of the uncertainty of the meanings which are annexed to them, and yet you have never once asked me the meaning of this same most important word *meaning* – the very pivot on which the whole of my argument turns – the very hinge on which it bangs!'
- B. 'But by the word *meaning* you intend the *sense* in which a word is to be understood.'
- A. 'Ay – there it is. I ask you to give me gold for my paper, and you only give me another piece of paper. I ask you to give me a thing for my word, and you only give me another word.'
- B. 'What then do you mean by the word *meaning*?'
- A. 'Be patient. You can only learn the meaning of the word *meaning* from the consideration of the nature of ideas, and their connexion with things.' (pp. 78–79)

64. *An Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*.

And this is surely one benefit that we should reap by making significance and interpretation the subject of elementary study. It would form the best introduction to mathematics, and even act in this respect as its substitute in those cases where there was no mathematical aptitude in the student.

At present we have not even attained to an adequate conception of what an ideal language should be: we think of it, if at all, as the impossible thing that Bishop Wilkins proposed – a formalised dialect of culture with its phrases ‘rendered according to the genuine and natural importance of words,’ as if this were anything but what their speakers intended by them! Or we try to invent an artificial ‘Volapük.’ It is surely time that the fetish of a possible Plain Meaning, the same at all times and places and to all, were thoroughly exposed, and students more explicitly warned against anything approaching it, except on the narrowest basis of technical notation. Even Dr Jespersen tells us that an ideal language would ‘always express the same thing by the same, and similar things by similar means; any irregularity and ambiguity would be banished; sound and sense would be in perfect harmony; any number of delicate shades of meaning could be expressed with equal ease: poetry and prose, beauty and truth, thinking and feeling would be equally provided for: the human spirit would have found a garment combining freedom and gracefulness, fitting it closely and yet allowing full play to any movement’ (p. 365).

But the organic analogy forbids the metaphor ‘garment,’ since it sacrifices an essential truth. Thought is not merely ‘clothed’ in language. And the whole passage seems to ignore too much the modifying effect of circumstance and ‘atmosphere’ on ‘meaning,’ and the need for the ideal interpreter, keenly sensitive to delicate differences of sense, to whatever cause these were due: besides which the writer seems to forget that in order to have a really higher grade of significance, we must train a new generation in ‘sensifics.’ Indeed we even require to evolve skilled ‘sensificians’ able to disengage the most subtle over-tones of sense from the complex note of expression. There is a great deal of sound in the meaning-world, but not enough delicacy of discrimination. The sound is not fully articulate to us: we are more or less meaning-deaf. In a wider than technical sense ‘asymbolia’ is more generally present than we suspect. Yet if an ideal language and its ideal interpreter cannot yet at all events be hoped for or practically aimed at, it would be something to realise, as Mr Balfour claims that the philosopher has done, what *not* to do.

It is something to discover the causes of failure, even though we do not attain any positive knowledge of the conditions of success. It is an even more substantial gain to have done something towards disengaging the questions which require to be dealt with, and towards creating and perfecting the terminology without which they can scarcely be adequately stated, much less satisfactorily answered (p. 160).⁶⁵

I would adopt this very language with reference to expression, its defects, its possibilities, its prospects of development. It would be something to discover the causes of our failure to express our whole or exact – what? It would be more to discover whether it was idea, conception, fact, meaning or thing which we oftenest failed to express.

Mr Romanes,⁶⁶ following out an analogy between the evolution of language and that from the single – to the many – celled organism, remarks that ‘as in the one case there is life, in the other there is meaning; but the meaning, like the life, is vague and unevolved: the sentence is an organism without organs, and is generalised only in the sense that it is protoplasmic’ (p. 314).

The comparison of meaning to life suggests two questions: (1) whether our inquiry is after all merely a question of Definition, and (2) whether a conception like Meaning can be defined at all. But the very fact of any doubt as to the possibility of defining terms which stand for unique or ultimate (primary) ideas or any significant or *sense-ful* words at all, at once reduces the appeal

65. *The Foundations of Belief*.

66. *Mental Evolution in Man*.

to definition to a secondary place among possible solutions of our problem. There is perhaps no greater snare, when we begin to realise the chaos in which word-sense lies and to seek a remedy, than the easy and obvious one of definition. Define, define, we cry, and then all will be easy.

But surely we forget that in the first place, this is often precisely the most impossible thing to do; as a fixed meaning, the same for all, unaffected by context of any kind, applies only, if at all, to a small proportion of ordinary words: and secondly, that to define every word which needs it would at once render all important works simply unreadable. They would be so cumbered with definitions or with pleas for, and justifications of, proposed definitions, or with protests against certain received definitions, that the book itself would disappear, while the definitions would provoke challenge on every side, and except in a few cases gain no universal assent, and thus advance us no further. Definition, though essential on its own ground (which again may be variously defined) would tend, if exalted into a panacea, to hinder the evolution of the most precious quality of language, – that power of growth and adaptation by which even now it reflects changes in the psychological atmosphere, and utilises these to purify and enrich the treasures of thought and imagination. But even if this were not so, the main problems not merely of sense but of significance – in short of ‘sensifics,’ – must have been solved before we could arrive at really authoritative definitions. Meanwhile the search for these must always itself have valuable uses. As Prof. H. Sidgwick says, there is often more profit in seeking than in finding definitions.

Prof. Minto⁶⁷ tells us that ‘words have little meaning for us; are mere vehicles of thin preconceptions, raw prejudices’ (p. 88). The remedy, he thinks, is the verification of meaning. We must fix and readjust. Surely that is beginning at the wrong end? We want first to rouse a general ‘sense’ of what the *value* of language, whether in the direct ‘sense’ or as applied to all that ‘speaks’ to us, – Nature, Art, &c. – may become to us if we will: of how much it may convey and suggest to us if we only master its ‘meaning’ methods. The varying character of language of which we so complain, the changing complexities of its suggestiveness and its implicative flexibilities, are not in themselves evils: even its ‘ambiguity’ is in a certain sense a glory which it shares with all the higher organisms: at this moment the very richness of this living suggestiveness is the cause of strenuous biological discussion and even controversy a central principle.

Organic development tends in proportion to its complexity to suggest more than one inference, and in that case to have more than one possible meaning for the observer. And thought cannot be poorer than life, so that its expression must needs be capable of more than one interpretation. Only let us recognise this and act upon it, and we shall cease to crave or strive for the fatal gift of final and mechanical precision of outline, or to protest against the kind of ‘vagueness’ which belongs both to life and to the horizons of the world in which we know it. We shall rather seek to be less ‘vague’ in another sense: to know more clearly how things really are in this matter: to allow more intelligibly for the halos or penumbras and for the atmospheric refractions which surround the symbols of living thought and actively growing mind. Ours is not a dead world without atmosphere in which all outline is clear cut and hard: earth’s outlines melt and vary, shift and disappear, are magnified, contracted, veiled, by a thousand changing conditions. So with the ‘world’ of experience and its expression. We are too apt to over-estimate the value of mere precision in language and even in thought; though for some purposes, as e.g. diplomacy, it may be very great. As Renan himself, that master of lucidity, says:

The clearness and tact exacted by the French, which I am bound to confess compel one to say only part of what one thinks, and are damaging to depth of thought, seemed to me a tyranny. The French only care to express what is clear, whereas it happens that the most important processes, those that relate to transformations of life, are not clear; one only perceives them in a kind of half light.

67. *Logic: Induction and Deduction.*

This is suggestive witness. And when Mr Balfour⁶⁸ urges upon us the power of authority to produce ‘psychological “atmospheres” or “climates” favourable to the life of certain modes of belief, unfavourable, and even fatal, to the life of others’ (p. 206): when he says that their range and the intensity and quality of their influence may vary infinitely, but that ‘their importance to the conduct of life, social and individual, cannot easily be overstated,’ he would do well, surely, to add a warning of their effect, not only upon Belief but upon the Meaning whether of conduct or of experience, or of the verbal expression and definition of either. For these ‘climates’ must powerfully affect and modify the ‘significance’ both of life and expression in act or word; while we are constantly tempted to ignore the fact at least in language, and to suppose that meaning is the same to all, – or ought to be so. It is well to be warned that ‘identity of statement does *not* involve identity of belief’ (p. 263); and that we are *not* entitled to assume ‘that when persons make the same assertions in good faith they mean the same thing.’ There is no precise or definite relation between language and belief; but Formal Logic and conventional usage, he complains, both assume the opposite, a constant relation between Symbol and ‘thing symbolised’ – that is, Symbolate. This is in fact ‘an artificial simplification of the facts’ (p. 265).

If in the sweat of our brow we can secure that inevitable differences of meaning do not vitiate the particular argument in hand, we have done all that logic requires, and all that lies in us to accomplish. Not only would more be impossible, but more would most certainly be undesirable. Incessant variation in the uses to which we put the same expression is absolutely necessary if the complexity of the Universe is, even in the most imperfect fashion, to find a response in thought. If terms were counters, each purporting always to represent the whole of one unalterable aspect of reality, language would become, not the servant of thought, nor even its ally, but its tyrant. The wealth of our ideas would be limited by the poverty of our vocabulary. Science could not flourish nor Literature exist. All play of mind, all variety, all development, would perish; and mankind would spend its energies, not in using words, but in endeavouring to define them. (pp. 266–267)

Truer words were never written. Yet if we say that when we have managed to secure the validity of a particular argument we have done all that can ever lie in us to accomplish, and that more would always be not only impossible but undesirable, surely this depends on what such ‘more’ was. Incessant variation, as we have seen, is indeed as vitally necessary in the world of expression as in the world of life. Here there is no question even of metaphor. But that variation may become infinitely more under control than it has ever been yet. To speak of our struggle with ambiguity under the metaphor ‘in the sweat of our brow’ recalls the husbandry of the savage in contrast with the scientific developments of civilised agriculture. Truly the muscular effort and its result, and even the primitive spade and hoe and so on, survive but little changed. Yet how small a part they now play by comparison with the manual labour and the tools of the earliest days! Still greater of course is the difference in our weapons and in our means of transport. When we have sharpened the arrow or the hatchet and trained a service of human runners or even of swift animals, we have done all that is possible on that plane of development: but most assuredly we have not even begun, except so far as one phase insensibly succeeds another, the next stage in the long ascent of civilisation. By what right do we assume that Language is the one petrified, ossified, non-evolving function of humanity, doomed eternally to remain either clumsy and rude, misleading, confusing, incongruous, inconsistent, or else narrowed and crushed into a mere mechanical notation like that of arithmetic? As well say that we must for ever be condemned in the matter of musical instruments to the alternative of a primitive bagpipe or horn and an elaborate barrel-organ. And if it be (rightly) objected that Language needs an organic rather than a mechanical analogy, let us

68. *The Foundations of Belief*.

remember the difference between the dexter finger of man and its humbler simian ancestors, or even between his eye and its primitive prototype in the mollusc.

'We are no more able to believe what other people believe than to feel what other people feel.' We may put the word 'mean' here for the word believe: and that, even in the case of 'friends attuned, so far as may be, to the same emotional key.' The student of 'sensifics' at least may be grateful for Mr Balfour's plain statement that 'this uniformity of conviction, which so many have striven to obtain for themselves, and to impose upon their fellows, is an unsubstantial phantasm, born of a confusion between language and the thought which language so imperfectly expresses. In this world, at least, we are doomed to differ even in the cases where we most agree' (p. 276).

At all events, if such 'uniformity of conviction' were ever attained it would mean the 'death' of all that makes conviction valuable. There are assuredly 'differences where we most agree' and also 'agreements where we most differ.' Yet there is no doom in the matter except that which we pronounce upon ourselves. If for 'uniformity' we substitute intelligent sympathy and a consensus which has learned to understand its own conditions: if instead of a clumsy make-shift or a rigidly fixed and invariable mechanical action, we start from the idea of a delicately flexible organic adjustment, then our 'doom' turns into our hope and will issue in our rich reward.

We are not tied down to the action of Natural Selection only, for voluntary action tells here also: and the 'characters' that language acquires may certainly be 'transmitted' and to some extent deliberately bequeathed. Only first let us learn more about sense as the paramount value of Language, and thus about the true conditions of its growing significance. If the meaning – here equivalent to content – of such propositions as 'Cæsar is dead,' 'Stealing is wrong,' or 'God exists' 'could be exhausted by one generation, they would be false for the next. It is because they can be charged with a richer and richer content as our knowledge slowly grows to a fuller harmony with the Infinite Reality, that they may be counted among the most precious of our inalienable possessions' (p. 278).

And why should not Language itself be charged with a richer and richer content as we realise more clearly what it may do for us? After giving us a typical example of 'all that is most lucid and most certain' (p. 281), we are warned that its purport 'is clear only till it is examined, is certain only till it is questioned.' It serves us for working purposes, but that is all. Yet even so its credentials are better than any 'Foundations' could be, as they vindicate themselves by results. The working test is pre-eminently that which applies to language.

When we see the beginnings of an appreciable diminution of mutual misunderstanding and controversy, together with a still greater increase of power to express and power to distinguish, to discriminate, to combine, to co-ordinate the wealth of experience: when we begin to acquire methods of interpretation enabling our 'most lucid and most certain' judgments to bear the closest examination and question and to become the clearer for the process, we shall not need to trouble about the 'foundations' of what will thus more than vindicate itself. It will be enough to have diminished the present enormous and grievous waste of expression-power and to have raised language at least to the level of the nervous system to which it belongs, in its power of adaptive response to excitation.

Once let general attention be directed to the practical mischief – the waste and loss, the muddle and misery – caused or fostered by inherited habits of language, and the universal demand for economy of means and a 'way out' of deadlocks will come into play and soon make remedy possible. Indeed in these days of 'enterprising journalism' the danger may soon become one of going too far and too fast. But we are a long way from this yet. Most of us are content to remain on what might be called a non-volitional level of speech, checking rather than fostering the adaptive power which has given us all that makes language worth having – its beauty and fitness as well as its symbolical character. As it is, the growth-force is supinely allowed to spend itself in sporadic and simply wayward outbursts, mere play for the relief of superfluous organic energy and impulse: there is no deliberate or recognised system of directing these to intellectually

useful ends. We practically assume that language must be as far as possible stereotyped, and that the only exceptions or alternatives are the casual innovations dictated to us by the man in the street, who has never been told that 'meaning' is of the smallest consequence, and airily destroys even for scholars valuable distinctions and associations while his supposed teachers look helplessly on, as in the case, e.g. of 'phenomenal.' Though even here, changes apparently erratic and made purely at random may have a distinct psychological value and better reasons than we or their maker quite realise.

And if we sorely need a heightened sensibility to the possibilities and dangers of significance (with all its implications) we equally need it in the case of analogy. This however is a subject so large as well as so important from the point of view of this Paper that even to sketch it would demand a whole essay. The study of analogy, metaphor, simile and illustration from the point of view now suggested, is of vital importance not only for Logic and Psychology but also for Science and Philosophy. So indeed is the whole question of language as raised by 'sensifics'; but this again for want of space cannot now be discussed.

Both scientific men and philosophers complain more loudly every day (as I have a mass of evidence to show) of the extent to which they suffer from the present chaotic state of things. The truth is that just as we are trained to be familiar with 'foreign' languages, so we ought to be trained to be familiar with new dialects in expression, whether these were direct as in terminology, or indirect as in graphic or other aids to representation. And let us not object that this would be an enormous additional tax on memories already overburdened. The truth is that we need far greater skill in swiftly discerning the complexities of sense: in the art of seizing at a glance the point, the gist, the whole trend of whatever is said or written, to put it in a nut-shell if we choose: that we ought to be able to 'place' it, to translate it, to 'enter into' it, to assimilate it – that is, to transform it into living tissue of our own. And we ought besides to be imbued, to be saturated with the 'sense' of the moral obliquity of giving each other darkness when we might be giving light.

If we admit with Dr Ward⁶⁹ that 'philosophy has no nomenclature and no terminology,' that 'every giant and every pigmy states and misstates and restates as much as he wills'; that 'even babes and sucklings rush abroad brandishing the Infinite and the Absolute with infinite ignorance and absolute conceit,' we can hardly deny the moral as well as the intellectual obligation to do our utmost in any way that seems feasible to end such a disastrous anomaly. The labour of fresh inquiry could not fail to be amply repaid. The results of this would be much more than literary. On the one hand it is a question of increased clearness and freedom in treating difficult or obscure subjects, increased power of propounding, and also of adequately criticising, new philosophical ideas: on the other many a fallacy or myth owes its survival in great measure to a dim general suspicion that the real gist of it has not been touched by adverse criticism. Popularise 'sensifics' and the faddists would have a hard time of it; unless indeed their 'fad' only required re-stating, limiting, guarding, in order to contribute some useful item of additional knowledge or some illuminative principle of thought. If more precise definition of the methods by which we might hope for a really new mental start is demanded, it must be answered that to attempt a premature formulation of these would be to court defeat; would in fact be fatal. Such an explanation or such a programme must be the outcome, not the preliminary, of the inquiry hoped for. First let us arouse a really active interest in the subject among those who are intellectually in touch with the rising generation and who are the virtual if sometimes the unrecognised leaders in all questions of thought. Then let us definitely examine the feasibility of an education avowedly starting from and centering round the principle of 'significs' or 'sensifics.'

If we are again tempted to object that this is too abstruse a subject for any but advanced students, we must remember that using the words in the wide sense which here alone applies and is called for, the first mental lesson which nature teaches the infant is precisely this. She surrounds him

69. *Mind*, Vol. XV. No. 58: 226.

with stimuli and excitations: she prompts him to interpret these as best he may, and even to revise his translations under the pressure of pain and discomfort. And she leaves him no peace till he has learnt himself also to be significant, to 'convey meaning' and suggest 'sense' as unmistakeably as possible, first by cries and gestures, then by imitative articulate speech. We have only to take up her curriculum and carry it on, as in fact we do in the case of reading, writing, arithmetic, &c. If only by the impulse and habit of imitation, consensus in language is soon assured to the early stages of the growing intelligence, and consensus is the one means by which we may hope to secure it on the highest intellectual plane. Communication is now so easy among the intellectual leaders of men that there ought to be no difficulty in obtaining it when its enormous advantages are realised. We have already specific studies of acknowledged value under names like Hermeneutics, Orthology, and Exegesis. Moreover, although philologists complain that Sematology 'the science of meanings,' and Semantics (Bréal, *sémantique*), 'the science of change of meanings' have hardly yet been touched, the importance of these and of the psychological side of language generally is rapidly coming into greater prominence. And as foreign scholars themselves admit the special fitness of our language for studies of this kind, may we not hope that before long a start may be made by English writers and teachers in the direction of a more definite and combined effort than has yet been made, to promote the development of the expressive and discriminative powers of language, and to give the study of its main value, 'sense' or 'meaning' a more prominent place in mental training?

Psychology itself has hardly begun to take or to define explicitly its true place in schemes of general training. But it is gradually, however obscurely, making itself felt as a really potent factor in these. And as questions of 'sensifics' emerge from their present chaos, they too must suggest important changes in educative method.

The subject must however be left here, with one personal word added. For while this Article deals with virtually new and untrodden ground, there are only the old modes of language for expressing it, and moreover, the writer was never trained either to 'mean' intellectually well, or to interpret – or sensify – adequately and accurately. The subject manifestly needs analytic and synthetic powers of the highest order; for while 'sense' is 'common' to the whole mental range, it is so in various ways, and thus is peculiarly difficult to deal with. At best, then, this sketch can but serve as the barest introduction to what seems worthy of ampler treatment by more capable hands. May any over emphasis or exaggeration in the foregoing pages be condoned, written as they were in the hope of drawing attention to the importance of an untried investigation, and with no prejudgment of questions and issues as yet only indicated or implied. If such inquiry and consequent discussion follow, the first object of the Article will be attained, whatever the result may be. As to ultimate bearings and final developments; if, as things are, it were possible definitely to map these out, the investigation asked for would by this very achievement, have proved itself to be superfluous.

Summary of Part I

Although the disadvantages and dangers arising from the present failure of language to express more than roughly what is termed Meaning or Sense are generally recognised, no systematic attempt to attack these at their root has as yet been made. Neither the process of interpretation nor the conception of Meaning have so far received adequate treatment. This leads to the loss of distinctions valuable for thought, and to a low average of interpreting power. Attention is here called to (1) the neglect, especially in education, of any careful study of the conditions of meaning and its interpretation; and (2) the advantages which must accrue from such study.

Much is lost by the present dearth of means of expression and of training in their use. There is not even a word to express what happens when a given excitation suggests something other than itself, thus becoming a 'sign' and acquiring 'sense.' The word 'sensify' is proposed for this. Works on science and philosophy and especially on logic and psychology supply ample witness – both

conscious and unconscious – to the need for a special study of meaning, which might be called Sensifics, as no term already in use covers enough ground.

Summary of Part II

Such a study so far from being impossible seems indicated and called for on every side, and might be made not only practical but attractive even to the youngest child. At present language betrays, largely from the absence of such training, a disastrous lack of power to adapt itself to the growing needs of experience. But this power would soon be generally acquired as the result of the training here suggested, and would even to a certain extent follow a general awakening to the importance of the question.

Definition, though useful in its own sphere, must not be regarded as a solution of the difficulty. Ambiguity is an inherent characteristic of language as of other forms of organic function. Thought may suffer from a too mechanical precision in speech. Meaning is sensitive to psychological ‘climate.’ Both philosophers and men of science complain bitterly of the evils arising from an inadequate nomenclature and terminology. We all alike, in fact, suffer and lose by this, and by the endless disputation which it entails. It rests with education to initiate the needed ‘fresh start.’ It is incumbent upon English teachers and thinkers to lead the way, since our language is admitted even by foreigners to have peculiar facilities for inquiries and studies of this kind. Meanwhile it will be something to realise at once more clearly some potent causes of present obscurity and confusion, and the directions in which we may hope for efficient practical remedy.

4.11. Time as Derivative (1907)*

The idea of Time is always found bracketed with that of Space. But not only this. With rare exceptions the two seem to be treated by thinkers of all schools as equally original and originative categories, joint and co-equal generators and rulers of our experience, perceptual and conceptual. This being so, it is supposed to be indifferent which we put first and which second. The most opposite views, even the objective and subjective, have agreed on this point of the equal status of Space and Time; if there has been any difference it has been in the direction of exalting Time (as the ultimate condition both of action and of thought) over Space.

The following suggestions are made wholly from the starting-point of our presuppositions; from the initial, germinal, as it were nuclear ideas which come fresh from the generative matrix of primitive awareness, or of *sense*, as an organism may be said to ‘sense’ or have a sense of the condition in which it lives.

From this homely standpoint then – one which requires perhaps some detachment from the natural attitude of the highly trained mind – I venture to suggest that whereas Space is the primary and inevitable ‘Room’ for change, motion, sequence, succession, measure, number and direction, Time is the product of our experience of Motion and its condition, Space. It is in other words a translated application of these two really original ideas.

For after all what else is Space but Room for all else? In our ordinary view of the matter we speak as if the Room to experience, think, reflect, could be set over against, as independent of, Space: and we call it ‘time.’ But this is a spatial idea. Or we enlarge the idea of Time, make of it a master-thought, and speak of change, sequence, succession, persistence, duration, as contained within it. But to enlarge and to contain are spatial ideas. We speak of feelings, ideas, thoughts, conceptions, as following each other. But to follow is a space-motion idea; and so on. Try as we may we can never get away from the idea of Room in which to move, to exist, to think, to experience.

* [First published in the journal *Mind*, see Welby 1907b].

Yet, while we speak of vast periods of Time, or of the short space of Time at our disposal, and so on (all spatial ideas) – while the very idea that Time has length, a ‘dimension’ of its own, is spatial – we still persist in putting Time and Space, whether as objective or as subjective, side by side, as primary factors or conditions of experience. But you can only couple things or put things side by side, or before and behind, in Space. You can only change them, you can only have the sequent, the con-sequent, or the sub-sequent, in Space. You succeed or persist or endure in Space. The very word ‘in’ betrays your spatial premiss.

It remains to be recognised, however, that since we are compelled, in speaking of Time, to ignore two spatial dimensions, we cannot therefore give the difference between Space and Place in temporal terms. It may be objected that we can do this as on one line, in one irreversible direction. But from the present point of view this is arbitrary and illusory: other directions are implicit in each direction, as other positions are implicit in each position. Man measured Space before he measured Time. You can speak of a space of time but not of a time of space: of a given measured interval of time but not, e.g. of a week of space. You can speak of a position in Time but not of a Time in position: of a course of Time, but not of a Time of course: of a length of Time but not of a Time of length.

The evidence, however, for the spatial and motional derivation of the vocabulary of temporal expression is so voluminous that it cannot be adduced here. Any accredited Etymological Dictionary would give enough examples on almost every page. Nor is it relevant here to urge the obvious danger, in such a question as this, of relying wholly upon etymology. For it must be remembered that the evidence (or suggestion) of single words is one thing, and that of widespread habits of speech leading, in the most diverse languages, to a multitude of varying forms which all involve expressing the idea of Time by a spatial term, is quite another. In truth we are not now considering merely a vocabulary or its derivation; we are discussing the *ideas* which suggested and developed the terms that symbolise them, and the empirical source of those ideas.

And just because an inquiry of this kind refers us back to the most primitive form of our ideas – to the earliest efforts and effects of ‘mind’ – the fact that Time has no vocabulary of its own, but has to borrow all its terminology from Motion and Space, may be found to hold for us a significance hitherto unsuspected: as in truth the fact itself, for that matter, has almost entirely escaped notice.

Illustrations of this borrowing process are easily found; would indeed fill volumes. One or two may here be useful:

Prof. Royce,⁷⁰ who would make the moral law dependent on our present view of Time, tells us that it refers

to intended consequences of action, in so far as they follow one another in a time-sequence, or may be conceived as in such a sequence. Whoever says, ‘I ought to do thus or thus,’ stands in a present moment of time, and looks forward to a future. His present decision is to be followed by a course of action.

The ideas of following, standing, looking forward; of a course, and of definable place, are obviously borrowed from Space and Motion. In the same way ‘before’ is before a man *in a place, on a spot*, in Space, and ‘after’ is what follows or remains *behind* him. As Prof. Baldwin puts it:⁷¹

The ‘before’ and ‘after’ of time rest primarily on the analogous distinctions of position in space, the ‘here’ and ‘there’ successively occupied by a moving body. The continuity of time is derived from the continuity of motion, which, in turn, depends on the continuity of corporeal extension. Magnitude, motion, and time all go together. So pervasive are these conceptions that Aristotle does not hesitate to speak of time as the number of the local

70. *The World and the Individual*, series i., pp. 343–344.

71. Art. on ‘Time,’ *Dict. of Phil. and Psych.*, vol. II: 699.

movement. . . in which the 'now' is, as it were, borne along, like a moving point in space, as the generating unit.

Again, we sometimes see Time figured as a traveller hastening his steps: e.g.,⁷²

. . . we are warned by an astonishingly rapid sequence of events, all to the point, that Time has changed his pace and goes more nimbly as the world grows smaller. How swiftly the forces of competition have gathered about us of late every man may see; and the spectacle should teach us to prepare for certain consequences soon rather than late.

Time of course can no more change its pace than Space its intervals or distances. But what, in passages like this, we call Time, is really our conscious experience; which changes its rate of progression in terms of our interest, just as motion increases or lessens in velocity under given pressure, attraction, etc.

Before going further it may be well to give some out of a multitude of examples of what we seem to lose in clearness and coherence by the prevailing treatment of the problem of Time; as well as few cases in which the view here taken seems to be implicit.⁷³

Prof. H. N. Gardiner⁷⁴ declares that

Newton's conception of time is full of obscurities and contradictions. An absolute time with an independent flow would seem to require another time in which it flowed and by which its rate of flow was measured, and so *in infinitum*. And the flowing of time, if literally taken, is quite unintelligible. Does it flow as a whole, or only in its parts? There is absurdity in either supposition. For if it flow as a whole, then as the whole of time includes both past and future, the latter must be always existent simultaneously. And the same is true if only the parts flow, for these are its parts. But does it flow at all? Why does it not rather 'stand' as the permanent medium for the flowing sequence of events? But this, too, is also impossible, if the purely objective view of time be taken; for the parts of time are successive.

This criticism of the 'flow' of time is a valuable witness to the confusion which results from inconsistency in the use of the spatial terms to express temporal experience, and our failure to recognise the true reason for such relevance as they have. Meanwhile flow (like flux), is a term of motion.

Prof. Gardiner further suggests that⁷⁵

It is doubtful, therefore, whether other ideas of time might not have been developed, or may not, in other orders of intelligent existence. And even with the same order of time considered abstractly, there is perhaps no contradiction in thinking an entire reversal in the order of the content.

The abstract conception of time is full of difficulties and contradictions. Succession and duration are both essential, yet each, for itself considered, negates the other. In its uninterrupted succession time has no standing, but 'flows,' yet all succession is conceived of as being 'in' time as a sort of unity. But in time itself no unity is discoverable.

He considers that in these difficulties and contradictions we have the origin of the idea that Time is purely subjective.

72. *The Pilot*, 28 December, 1901.

73. Quotations have been purposely confined to the more recent attempts to deal with the difficulties inherent in the subject, as these attempts mostly involve some form or degree of criticism of the orthodox or at least traditional views.

74. Art. on 'Time,' *Dict. of Phil. and Psych.*, Vol. II: 702.

75. *Ibid.*: 698–699.

Time may then be condemned as mere ‘appearance’ opposed to ‘reality.’ But the terms are ambiguous, and it is better to consider everything as real which is strictly taken for what it is and not taken for what it is not.

Indeed the whole subject is admitted to be ambiguous. Can we wonder? The writer concludes:⁷⁶

Much of this criticism, however, loses its force when it is pointed out that the form of change, as such, is not time at all. Aristotle already distinguished between motion and time as number of motion. Time is a certain arrangement and measure of motion, a further determination of the content.

Prof. Calkins complains⁷⁷ of the traditional definition of time, on the ground that it confuses what lasts with what succeeds. And she would identify Time not with duration but with succession.

To the question, What is time? The traditional answer is from the outset unsatisfactory, for it enumerates two distinct attributes of time, duration, and succession, without giving an inkling of their relation to each other. . . . Now if we are to choose between succession and duration as expressions of the real nature of time, there cannot well be any doubt of the decision. Things endure, qualities persist, one experience outlasts several others, but the essence of time is its restlessness, and the nature of time is the multiplicity, the succession, of its moments.

But this is really doing violence to our perfectly true instinct of requiring Time as Space in which we may journey through life – moving ever forward. And we might as well endow ‘motion’ itself with a ‘restless nature,’ words which indeed only apply in the organic sphere.

Reviewing Mr. Shadworth Hodgson’s *Philosophy of Reflection*,⁷⁸ Prof. Carveth Read asks what we mean by Time, and having answered that it is ‘hard, nay impossible, to say,’ he continues:

Of that mature sense of time which is at once as clear as an intuition and as massive as an emotion, it is indeed possible to give an analysis and description. But of the time-element, so to speak, of which the sense of time is a clarified accretion, no account can be given: it is an ultimate experience, the most ancient and simple of all that we know. This, however, one may say, namely, that time is not space, but in every way contrasted with space. Yet it is difficult to help suspecting that the curious speculation about statical time entirely arises from a confusion of time with space; a confusion greatly favoured, and made almost unavoidable except to the most resolute clearheadedness, by our common modes of measuring time by means of space and motion; by the entanglement of space and time in their psychical genesis, and by the fact that with time, as with other things, when we try to think of it we try to look at it, and we can see anything only as in space.

This seems at least a little like saying that after all, the most ancient and simple of all conditions that we know is that of Space, first realised as room to move in, and then as room for seeing in. That there are difficulties and confusions in the subject is admitted; but it may at least be suggested that they have their origin in our preconception of Time as a primitive experience ‘in every way contrasted with Space.’ If it had been this we certainly could not have used and would not have chosen the terminology of Space to express Time. Prof. Read is, however, consistent in declaring, further on, that Time strictly speaking has no dimension; and in proposing that we should imagine Time in a new way. This new way seems, as does popular usage, to identify succession and duration, sequence and persistence, with Time. In his recent work⁷⁹ Prof. Read admits that

76. *Ibid.*: 704.

77. ‘Time as Related to Causality and to Space,’ *Mind*, April, 1899: 218.

78. *Mind*, January, 1880: 72–73.

79. *The Metaphysics of Nature*, pp. 178–179.

the vagueness and subjectivity of times perceived or remembered makes them hard to measure and arrange. So to measure them we turn to things external and take the motion of some body as a constant; then construct a calendar and insert it in our own history, and are apt to think we remember the order of events when in fact we read them there.

He then remarks

yet it (time) far transcends any need we have for it. In animals who have little need of memory and foresight, the development of the perception of Time is backward in comparison with Space, Matter and Motion. And this seems also to be true of children; still even in them the sense of Time is so far developed before the rise of self-reflexion, that it is known as that in which we live and not and our invention. And though less clear and distinct than Space, Time is more comprehensive; for Space is only the form of phenomena, but Time of all consciousness; and therefore it is more real than Space, because consciousness is Reality. . . . But the comprehension of Time by man, transcending all utility, belongs to the world's self-knowledge; and, I suppose, the dimness of our comprehension is the still uplifted veil of that knowledge.

May not the dimness of our conception of Time, and the backwardness of the sense of Time in animals and children having a keen sense of Space, be due to the dependence of Time on what to them is the master fact of Space in the sense of Room? Again.⁸⁰

The simplest perception of Time comprises a Duration in which Future, Present, and Past are all present . . . we conceive of a Duration that may be represented by a straight line; though nothing can be less like a line than our actual experience of Time. Then, to this line all the determinations of one dimension of Space become applicable. Any point within it being taken, the opposite directions from this point represent Future and Past, which may be measured by any unit; and then durations may be compared.

Here at least we find a practical admission of the subordinate character of Time as representing one dimension only of a Space which involves three; a time, again, using one only out of a wealth of directions which a straight line, even if irreversible, may take. Surely the expression of the temporal in terms of an irreversible advance in one direction only along a straight line, almost implies our recognising Time as a translation, so to speak, of one chapter – or perhaps of the first volume – of the great Book of Space. And even when the word 'Time' is replaced by 'Duration,' as in the passage above quoted, Duration is still a Space: it is room in which Future, Present and Past can meet. Meanwhile to speak of the Present, as well as Future and Past being *present*, is an extreme instance of the incoherence into which we are constantly betrayed by the attempt to consider Time as an independent category, an intellectual term with an intension and extension entirely its own.

There is a passage in Prof. Karl Pearson's *Grammar of Science*⁸¹ dealing with the relations between Space and Time which, familiar though it is, it will perhaps be well to quote here:

Space and time are so similar in character, that if space be termed the breadth, time may be termed the length of the field of perception. As space is one mode in which the perceptive faculty distinguishes objects, is time is a second mode. As space marks the co-existence of perceptions at an epoch of time – we measure the breadth of our field – so time marks the progression of perceptions at a position in space – we measure the length of our field. The combination of the two modes, or change of position with change of time, is motion, the fundamental manner in which phenomena are in conception presented to us.

It is true that here also we find Space and Time bracketed as of equal importance. But it is done in an original and very suggestive way. And such experiments in expression must tend, while

80. Ibid.: 295–296.

81. Second edit., p. 180.

preserving distinction, to show the existence of a much more intimate connexion between the two ideas than has usually been realised. As a fact, in this passage Space is already virtually if tacitly, enthroned as the ruler of our perceptual scheme. For the space-sense includes the time-sense – as the surface includes the line – while the converse does not hold.

Nevertheless if we say that Space is the breadth and Time the length of the ‘field’ of perception, *where are the depth and the height?* Where is the third dimension or its analogue? It seems to be suggested that ‘change of position with change of time’ – that is, Motion – is the third dimension. But we are thus using a terminology which only in the first case, that of Space, directly and actually applies; breadth is part of the idea of Space, and so is length, while the ‘field’ we are supposed to measure is also inexorably spatial. In the third case, we have a *double figure*; for as there is neither breadth nor length in what we call Motion but only velocity and direction, so there is neither height nor depth, and no volume or thickness.

Mr. C. S. Peirce suggests in a private letter that the motion-space terminology of Time is only the inevitable consequence of the fact that the source of *all* imagery must in the nature of the case be ‘space,’ since gesture and attitude reinforced by sounds must precede ordered articulation. But if this is so, how comes it that Time is the only mental category which has no original terms of its own?⁸² By the same argument we should expect to find that all the categories would, like Time, have to be expressed in terms derived from Space. Of course categories like Number and Quantity have spatial *reference*; but that is all; while we have such categories as, e.g., Quality, or Value, which seem to the plain man to have none.

Prof. W. James observes that⁸³

Most people will think they directly perceive the length of the past fortnight to exceed that of the past week. But there is properly no comparative time *intuition* in these cases at all. It is but dates and events, *representing* time; their abundance *symbolizing* its length. I am sure that this is so even where the times compared are no more than an hour or so in length.

Whereas we do directly perceive the difference between a shorter or longer line in space. The above, as far as it goes, is in line with the view here taken. Further, he says:⁸⁴

It must be admitted after all, however, that the great improvement of the time-perception during sleep and trance is a mystery not as yet cleared up. All my life I have been struck by the accuracy with which I will wake at the same *exact minute* night after night and morning after morning, if only the habit fortuitously begins. The organic registration in me is independent of sleep. After lying in bed a long time awake I suddenly rise without knowing the time, and for days and weeks together will do so at an identical minute by the clock, as if some inward physiological process caused the act by punctually running down. Idiots are said sometimes to possess the time-measuring faculty in a marked degree.

And I should suggest that it is not ‘time’ at all which we in common with idiots and even with some animals, to say nothing of plants, thus automatically gauge. It is succession. It is the condition of arrival at a given point in an experience-space: in the space, *viz.*, which is the condition of that forward movement of mind which we call experience and for which we must have room. Life seems to have an instinctive ‘sense’ of *where* it is, comparable to the ‘sense’ which the magnet has of the north.

In the January number of *Mind*, Mr. Rutgers Marshall speaks of the ‘close relations between the algedonic and the time qualities’ (p. 20) and compares the temporal norm, or presentness,

82. For instance: The terms of Space are spatial. The terms of Motion are motional. The terms of Number are numerical. The terms of Form are formal. But the terms of Time are not temporal.

83. *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1: 623.

84. *Ibid.*: 623 (footnote).

to a central zone of indifference between pleasure and pain. But, accepting for present purposes the conception of the algedonic norm as indifference (having a negative value), can we take such indifference as a fitting analogue to that Now, that presentness, compared to which all that is past, as all that is coming, is shadowy?

Again, Mr. Marshall claims to show that 'timeness is a general quality of all presentations, of a three-phased nature' (p. 26). But surely they rather suggest that this general quality is Spaceness, from which Timeness is a natural derivative.

The first instance in which I have seen the spatial character of Time distinctly brought forward from the philosophical standpoint, is a passage in 'The Metaphysics of Time' by Prof. Walter Smith.⁸⁵

The first thing to be noticed in regard to time is its spatial character. This statement is not a mere paradox. When a succession of events is thought of, the events are ranged in spatial order. We speak of time as long or short; we speak of the distant past and the near future, or of the receding past and the coming years; we 'look before and after.' These expressions are not simply figures of speech; they indicate what forms are present in consciousness when a temporal succession is referred to. Nor does this spatial form of the temporal series mean merely that images originally intuited in space are reproduced with this spatial character. If the images simply arise and dissolve in what seems to be one space, there is little if any perception of time; when the sense of time is present, the images of the past recede into the distance. It is very important to note this feature of the time-concept. It has received too little attention from students of the mind. Kant speaks of time as a line; and psychologists are learning to regard time as a projection at right angles to the plane of the present. But that this spatiality is essential to the time-concept has not been, in general, recognised. To F. A. Lange belongs the credit of having given it due emphasis.

It will be seen that, broadly speaking, this statement implies the position here taken. It will also be noted that Prof. Smith remarks of 'the spatial form of the temporal series' that 'it has received too little attention from students of the mind.'

From these quotations it should at least become plain to the reader that Time may well be the ambiguous and evasive term which philosophers find it; sometimes playing the part of room for an onward progression, and sometimes that of some unnamed entity which flows or lapses, flies or crawls, fails or is lacking; borrowing one dimension and one direction only from the category of Space, borrowing velocity from that of Motion, borrowing indeed even from those of Matter and of Life, but never having anything of its own by which it could be known or called.

Before proceeding further on the line here taken, it seems desirable to cite two French thinkers, M. Henri Bergson and M. Guyau (edit. by M. Fouillée). In neither case was I acquainted with their views on Time till after most of this Paper had been written; but it will be seen that the inclusion of quotations from them is of special importance, as they are in substantial agreement with its contention, — to an extent indeed which might seem to render fresh statement superfluous. It appears, however, still necessary to show that conclusions like theirs may be reached from a different startpoint; and to submit the relevance of further applications of the view here suggested.

As M. Bergson is a thinker whose reasonings on the subject of Time are not only penetrative but comprehensive, it is difficult to choose out of many relevant passages. But two quotations may here be made (from a chapter called 'Le temps homogène et la durée concrète'⁸⁶) in which he goes even further than I do in protesting against our ordinary ideas of the 'place' of Time in experience:

Il y aurait donc lieu de se demander si le temps, conçu sous la forme d'un milieu homogène, ne serait pas un concept bâtarde, dû à l'intrusion de l'idée d'espace dans le domaine de

85. *Philosophical Review*, July, 1902: 372.

86. *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*.

la conscience pure. De toute manière, on ne saurait admettre définitivement deux formes de l'homogène, temps et espace, sans rechercher d'abord si l'une d'elles ne serait pas réductible à l'autre. (pp. 74–75)

The important distinction between *time* and *duration* is one upon which he lays much stress not only throughout this book but elsewhere. But the temptation to extensive quotation and comment must be resisted. It is here enough to note M. Bergson's significant declaration⁸⁷ that

Il y a, au fond de cette distinction radicale entre le deux séries temporelle et spatiale tant d'idées confuses ou mal ébauchées, tant d'hypothèses dénuées de toute valeur spéculative, que nous ne saurions en esquisser tout d'un coup l'analyse. (p. 155)

Even more striking is the witness of M. Guyau's *Genèse de l'idée de Temps*, edited and his arguments reinforced by M. Alfred Fouillée. Here we see the present standpoint emphasised and the corresponding conclusions justified. Perhaps what may be found most startling and suggestive among the many passages which might be cited, is the following summary of the conclusions shared by M. Guyau and Fouillée:

Selon nous, le temps n'est qu'une des formes de l'évolution; au lieu de la produire, il en sort. (Conclusion, p. 119)

For the present purpose it is enough here to point out the explicit terms in which they affirm the history and the status of the Time idea. In regard to the first they remark:

De tout ce qui précède nous concluons que le temps n'est pas une condition, mais un simple effet de la conscience; il ne la constitue pas, il en provient. Ce n'est pas une forme *a priori* que nous imposerions aux phénomènes, c'est un ensemble de rapports que l'expérience établit entre eux. (Conclusion, p. 117)

But they also appeal to the psychology of language:

Toutes les langues primitives expriment par des verbes l'idée d'*action*, mais toutes ne distinguent pas bien les divers temps. Le verbe, en sa forme primitive peut servir également à désigner le passé, le présent ou le futur. La philologie indique donc une évolution de l'idée de temps. (p. 6)

Moreover, they lay stress on the spatial character of Time: 'L'idée du temps, selon nous, se ramène à un effet de perspective' (Preface, p. ii.). Again, 'Le temps passé est un fragment de l'espace transporté en nous; il se figure par l'espace' (p. 39). This view is summarised at the end thus: 'Le temps n'est autre chose pour nous qu'une certaine disposition régulière, une organisation d'images. La mémoire n'est que l'art d'évoquer et d'organiser ces images' (p. 117).

It will be seen that on the whole the present view here receives notable support. I conceive that the idea of Time has arisen because, becoming aware of, or realising, experience in its aspect as a sequence of change, we need to measure it. Borrowing a space idea for the purpose, we measure it as a line, we see it in perspective. The 'measure' of experience thus gained we call Time, but it is only a metaphorical application of a space-idea, and for that reason has (as we have seen) to be content with an entirely borrowed vocabulary. Moreover, as the application of space-ideas and space-terms in this context is vaguely metaphorical (Time not covering the 'whole ground' of Space, and giving us but one irreversible direction) they remain in inconsistent in use. This inconsistency has at least value as testimony to forgotten truth. Time, on the one hand, enthroned as a primary category, and on the other numbered among the actual facts of life, is in fact but an inference or a translation found expedient in practice, and has no existence in the sense in which Space has existence.

87. *Matière et Mémoire*.

In his (Aristotelian) Essay on Primary and Secondary Qualities, Prof. Stout claims that 'we are justified in thinking of matter as extended and movable in space before the existence of sentient being'; and taking as his chief example 'the most fundamental of the primary qualities – Extension' – he continues:

In ordinary language it seems strange to speak of sensations as extended. The reason is that they are not extended in the same sense as corporeal things. Bodies are extended in space. But touch and sight sensations do not in the ordinary sense of the words occupy Space.

Now here he has wisely entrenched himself in the very citadel of his subject, the question of the divers *senses* in which we may speak of Space. But in this context I submit once more that whereas Time may be defined as being *in a sense* Space, or as a form of Space, as *room* to think in, etc., *Space can never be defined as in any sense, or as any form of, Time.*

At this point also there is a remark to be made. We are here dealing only with Space and Time, both used in conjunction as ultimate terms by almost all writers. But it is surely obvious that Extension (or extensity) has a yet wider application than either, and includes both. Thus it is that we have sensible as well as spatial extension; and further, having extensive interests, make extended inquiries. This, though it be a 'mere question of idiom,' is none the less suggestive.

Further, Prof. Stout points out that real extension is something other than visual extension: for this last depends on sight and touch sensations. And here it must not be forgotten that Sight is in the last resort a development of Touch. Language witnesses to this. We visually be-hold. It may even be said that in the biological context we have already discovered that Time is derived from Space. And 'neither tactual nor visual extension occupy any part of the space in which bodies attract each other inversely as the square of the distance.'

Extension, then, makes a rightful claim to cover the facts which we range under the heads both of Space and Time. But no way of expressing the idea of Time is more in use than that which represents Time as a moving somewhat with a universal onward motion, carrying 'life and mind' with it. An onward motion, like a part of Space (or, a space) is an original idea, a direct one, a question of 'real existence.' But applied to Time it is a metaphor *in the sense of a translation*. And therefore we never definitely acknowledge or recognise *volume* in Time thus regarded, though instinctively and unconsciously we come near to doing so. We do say, That week was a 'full' one; my time is quite filled up. We do speak of the 'spacious times of great Elizabeth.' The subject of reference here, however, is not Time at all, but experience. For as life may be full or empty; as one's interests may be wide or narrow, high or low, great or small, so one's experience may have that range or intensity which takes it out of the narrow line of Time and renders it once more truly 'spacious' even to the general consciousness.

If a man had never known the difference in one moment on one spot between a faint and an intense impression, had never felt the concentration of life at some moments, its diffusion at others, he would say that whatever was more intense must be longer in Time or wider in Space. The idea that the time and place occupied by a faint touch and in acute pang was the same, would be unthinkable to him. But our experience of the fact helps us to see that the ultimate question is one of intensity (physically speaking, one of velocity or concentration); and this brings us to that of value or Significance. Difference of quantity ultimately comes out as difference of quality. Motion would then be the simplest form in which we describe the reality which is ultimate to us. What we express as intensity of Experience is independent of extension in Space or in Time.

Or, returning to the question of origin and varying the expression, we may put it thus: Time is really the translation of diversity-*in*-position, through change-*of*-position, into succession; and is the effect of a mental condition corresponding to the pre-visual stage of sense-perception. Just as the blind man cannot see at once the scheme of objects, the 'scape' before him, but must touch one object after the other and tap out his steps one by one with a stick, so we cannot 'see' the

Time-scheme as we can see the Space-scheme together in one act: and thus we erect 'past, present, future' into three 'worlds' which must be dealt with *one in a place* – as we say, at a time – and tap our way through life, touching as it were each 'moment,' each unit of the Time-space.

It is true of course that the blind man belongs to a race which has already developed binocular vision; whereas the truer comparison would be with the animal which has not yet evolved more than a vague sense of light and therefore only feels its way about. Still the general result is the same in both cases. In a true sense the pre-visual type of organism lives in a world of succession and the post-visual in one also of simultaneity.

Change, then, as occurring in Space, with its conditional or concomitant motion, seems to be the central or original experience. This presupposes Space as well as Motion; and may merely involve variety of aspect or content, which does not necessarily involve perceived Motion, or Time. Then comes the recognition of Motion, issuing from perception of change and succession, in Space. 'It has "changed" . . . it must have "moved,"' or, 'I must have moved' is perhaps the first form of such recognition. Later, we apprehend that Change of position or perspective presupposes Motion. Thus through Motion and as the functions of memory and expectation develop, we ultimately translate Change into Time. But Time is still only a mode of measurement; and that which is to be measured, whatever it may be, 'passes,' 'flows,' is long or short; is somewhat which moves always in one direction, refuses to linger or to hurry; never stops, has no breadth or capacity, and yet may be full or empty. It is obvious that such expressions are purely metaphorical. The clock does not really tell you of the passing or the lapse or the flow of Time. It indicates how far you and your fellows and the world have passed, on an assumed journey. When it strikes it indicates similarly, the mile-stone which you have reached. It is an index of Space plus Motion, plus sequence, and at last plus consciousness, but *still essentially of Space*.

In this apparently incidental allusion to the functions of Memory and Anticipation, it may appear as though we were ignoring or dealing but casually with what, from the very point of view here taken, is of cardinal importance. Whatever, it may be said, may happen to that most elusive concept the Present, it is certain that if there be no past for us to recollect and no future to be forecasted, both memory and anticipation are without a function. But it is at this very point that the present inquiry originally started. Taken from thence it will be admitted that the careful study of memory as of anticipation reveals that they are only ideally referred to a Past and a Future in 'time': both are directly a re-minding, an arousing of awareness; awareness of somewhat spatially there, or passed, or coming: 'future' as 'about to be' is allied to the idea of 'out' or 'round about.' And the present being initially somewhat in our presence, what we recall and what we expect are both present to us in this sense. Too little notice seems taken of the double meaning of words like 'present.'⁸⁸

As to the past we are apt to suppose that memory is essentially concerned with a 'past' in which things have a static existence. But the essential fact is expressed in the prefix 're'. Re-petition, to re-call, to re-collect, to re-member, as to re-ply, to re-tort, to re-port, to re-fer, etc., are all to repeat, to 'do it again,' a word of which the primary meaning seems to have been 'direct' or 'straight.' Now when we say that the same qualities or characteristics are found in two or many objects in Space – *are repeated* – there is no 'time' in the idea. Re-petition like duplication and multiplication is thus originally spatial.

Present experience turns into a memory (a sort of image-trial in our wake) but we can never, except in the delusions of insanity or delirium, reverse the process. No memory or remembered fact turns into a present experience. We translate this disability and objectify it in a supposed absolute i.e., conceptual Time as a sort of second Space or higher Room, into which all things are brought that come into being, and in which all things that have been (and gone) are hung up for ever. And when it is stated that 'all spatial relations involve reference to some time at which they

88. This is admirably shown in Mr. McGilvary's Article on Green, *Mind*, Oct., 1901.

hold between some given pair of entities.⁸⁹ I should answer that the 'time' in question depends on the mental 'blindness' which creates the successive; and means our mental arrival at one of the positions to which we have to tap our way, or in music, to beat our way along.

Time has been repeatedly spoken of here as a 'translation' of the idea of Space, and it has to be added that we can translate downwards as well as upwards. Evolution has translated the mechanical into the vital, and translates the amoebic into the vertebrate and mammalian life; that is translating upwards. The conception of Space is capable of translation into, of becoming the symbol of, a 'higher level' of experience. We speak of the wider, of greater and higher in the mental world. We speak of exalted aspirations or motives. But of this further extension, this moral translation, Time is seen to be incapable, except in the character of a product of the Space idea and in a certain sense as a kind of Space.

Change, and its conditions Motion and Space, we have translated into Time; but it is at, least in one sense a downward translation. It is no doubt that just as our nervous system could not work without a circulating blood and an intestinal canal, so we cannot conceive Change without what we now call Time. In fact the only categories we conceive to be independent of Time as of Motion are Matter and Space. But we do see that the nervous system is the highest organic development in our experience; and on an evolutionary basis we do not exalt the circulatory or digestive system into equality with it. There is an evolution of the categories also; but the one usually accepted reverses the facts.

Space itself is really one with Motion. They cannot be put asunder either sensibly or rationally. *We need a word which shall combine the two conceptions.* Then, when the conception of Motion-Space, has found a word, we shall be able to translate this upwards into what we call the mental region: we shall see that all our 'psychological' figures (like our Time ones) are borrowed directly or indirectly from Space and Motion; and the term 'matter' will be reduced to its proper function of indicating content and resistance.⁹⁰ Whatever resists, whatever is contained, is the outcome of that ultimate dynamic order which in the last resort is the source of the static or at least its governing pre-supposition.

It follows that there is no such thing as an ultimate problem of Time, nor indeed even of Space: the only ultimate problem for us in the connexion is that of Change. For, after all, the successive can only be ultimately distinguished from the simultaneous as two modes of motion (e.g., you strike two 'notes' successively or simultaneously), or as two modes of conceptions. If this view is the true one it results that our erection of Time into categorical equality with Space is due to what I would call monocular thinking; and Space would in binocular thought absorb Time, and thus enriched and so to speak ennobled, would develop into an enhanced conception of Motion. For in that case Motion itself acquires more value and content; or may be taken to symbolise the most inclusive concept possible to us, allying itself to that of 'energeia.' In other words, motion rises from being a sense-percept to the status of significance or a consummate symbol of value. Of course we may prefer to say simply that Time is the one dimensional Space of the mind (which again is what we see in the Space-world as motion) translated into knowledge. It is the merely successive Space and Experience. It is true that there is succession in Space also. But this succession, as the artist knows, is nothing but the shortcoming which precludes our 'taking in' except in the painter's or sculptor's sense, the whole of any 'scene' together. It is all there simultaneously; but as we can only reach, so we can only see, the parts and not the whole, except indirectly or ideally. But for this disability we could at will not only dissolve a picture into its successive acts of painting or into its constituent factors (which by means of photography we can now do) but we could even

89. 'Is Position in Time and Space Absolute or Relative?,' B. Russell, *Mind*, July, 1901: 299.

90. It will be remembered that the conception of inertia and rest are undergoing a similar transformation. 'Rest' indeed in its traditional and popular sense is virtually superseded notion.

hear a symphony or an oratorio in music as one transcendent Chord, and receive a poem in one comprehensive Word.

Of course it must not be forgotten that our vocabulary of 'physical' or 'material' terms is itself originally borrowed from that evolved by our own conscious activities: that the language of 'motion' and 'matter' is borrowed from 'mind.' And certainly no one refuses to admit that in this sense we translate the physical into the psychological; we impose our own character upon material phenomena. The difference is that in this case we borrow back the terms thus bestowed upon the physical world and describe our feelings and indirectly even our emotions in terms of the physical. But as we have seen, we do not borrow back the Time-terms derived from Space and enrich our conceptions of Space with them. Why is that impossible? Because, as we have also seen, they symbolise part of those very conceptions, including those of change and motion.

We have two immensities, one physiological, the other 'mental.' The one is Space, the other Eternity. What then is the Future – that Unknown and yet Inevitable on which we lay so much stress, towards which we are compelled to travel, and which can only be 'read' in guess, conjecture, inferential anticipation, or forecast – that of which the prediction can never be verified until it has become the Present? In one sense, as we have seen, it is the analogue of the environment beyond Touch of the blind man, or rather of the organism which has not yet developed the visual sense.

It is strange we should so often forget that everywhere the governing mind-metaphor, the metaphor of mind-activity, is Sight; all its analogies are those, first and foremost, of Vision. And even though this distinctively human function – the pioneer, the explorer of new worlds, the bringer of new messages – be developed in the mental sense only so far as to give a vague awareness of 'light,' and shadowy suggestions of objects which we can only deal with as we say 'speculatively': still it is sight, and depends upon light, 'which lighteth every man. . .' And sight knows nothing of Time: only of Change and Motion.

Or we may, if we like, compare our 'present' to the sweep of our outlook from horizon to horizon, and the great mind's area of vision to the broad land- or sea-scape from a high mountain. But then the present moment must be seen as dimensional. It must give us the cube, the volume, the solid. It must be the true analogue of what from the highest vantage point attainable is the range and content of our bodily vision. The Future, then, to begin with, becomes that which is yet below a given horizon; if you will, the antipodes to the Present whereon we stand. But see what follows. For the Past, that is the world already explored by Man on his great journey through the life-country, has thus sunk below the horizon behind us; the Future is the world waiting for him, ready for the Columbus of the race, *the Copernicus of Time*. When that Time-Explorer appears he will know how to set forth on his voyage of exploration, and will bring us evidence that his discoveries are not conjectural nor fantastic. He will show that the prophet actually sees and gives us here and now, what the ordinary man merely predicts, foretells and guesses at, as far away; and that if we will learn to use his means and use them with his energy, we too may go forth into 'new continents' of Time and colonise the 'future' at our will.

4.12. Mr. McTaggart on the 'Unreality of Time' (1909)*

As Mr. McTaggart apparently intends to return to the subject of the Unreality of Time, it would of course be premature to offer observations on his whole position. But there is a point of view from which his arguments are seen to be distorted from the outset by what we may perhaps call a flaw in the glass through which we habitually observe and consider the whole subject of 'time.'

This was roughly indicated and outlined in my Article on Time as Derivative (*Mind*, vol. xvi, no. 63) [Now Section 4.11, above]; though, as the subject still lacks adequate exposition and discussion, the position assumed could hardly expect to be definitely taken into account. From

* [First published in the journal *Mind*, see Welby 1909b].

this position, however, the orientation of our idea of time is changed, its perspectives are altered, or more strictly, it comes under the category to which perspectives belong.

If the sense-percept of Motion and therefore change in Space was not prior to the idea of time and did not include, as having involved, it, our choice of terminology for its expression and definition would not be what it is. We should have an instinctive sense of incongruity, e.g., in speaking of a 'series of positions running from the past through the near past to the present, and then from the present to the near future and the far future' (n.b., the question as to how a series of positions can 'run' is a distinct one). As it is, we curiously ignore the obvious origin of the idea of 'past' from passed, 'present' from presented (here, 'in this place') and 'future' from 'yet to come,' and to arrive.

When we admit that time involves change, may we not rather suggest that change shares with Motion and its implied Space wherein to move, the parentage of time, as movement through the space of experience in an irreversible direction?⁹¹

We may agree that 'the relations of earlier and later are permanent.' But why? Because they are questions of position. A day, an hour, is a marked off *area* of experience, and an event 'never ceases to have a *place*.' But to say that the timeless never changes can be true only in one sense and on one condition: that change does not suggest or evolve the idea of time, but is derived from and dependent on, time. A fixed lighthouse may begin by being barely seen on our horizon, may be passed and at last barely seen on another. This surely implies two kinds of mode of Space; (1) the static and (2) the kinetic. We may say that Change implies *room* wherein to change, and thus movement internal or external; movement also of object or of its standing-ground, in given directions. To this we add as an after-thought, and *time* wherein to change.

Thus change can only be 'a change of the characteristics imparted to events by their presence in the A series' (of positions). Rather their presence in the A series is one of many results of the events as characteristic. Character is not temporal, neither is Presence: character is qualitative and presence is spatial: while Events *take place*. So long as we ignore these facts which, as in so many cases, reveal themselves through age-long and involuntary tendencies of speech – some healthy and revealing some diseased or antiquated – it is no wonder that even a trained and able dialectician should have to own that 'we cannot explain what is meant by past, present and future.' For they are lent by space for the measurement, the placing, the direction of our successive triad of past, present and future. When we say 'whenever we judge anything to exist in time, we are in error,' we are right, because existence in this sense depends on motion in space only.

It is apparently a condition of present consciousness or 'mind' that it should be able to *remember*, to *reproduce* in 'idea' the space already traversed in experience, and again with rare and doubtful exceptions should be unable to predict, to *foresee* the inevitable 'other half' of our time-area and time-movement.

It looks as though this arbitrary blindness to what is coming, approaching, or what we are advancing into (significantly reversing, it may be noted, the main condition of highly organized life – the forward-reaching vision), has a special reason and office, which, when we have acquired in higher forms a significating power once strenuously operative but now to some extent suppressed, may be safely removed. At present some of the most precious attributes of mind, and among them, that of indirect future vision, by predictive analogy and the sense of consequence, of mental or logical result, seem to be due to the partial paralysis of outlook which the apparent irreversibility of 'time' involves. The very idea of creation or origin seems to depend on a non-reversible (or reverting) 'time.'

When we have proved ourselves worthier of the gift we call moral sense, and of the power of reading the needs of the 'future' through those of the past and present, we may find ourselves

91. The question of reversal seems as yet practically begged. There is at least one sense – that of reminiscence, recollection, record, rather than memory – in which time is already reversible.

safely entrusted by Nature with eyes couched of that ‘cataract’ which as yet hides from us the vista of what is in front of us, while curiously enough we have eyes for that which is behind us.⁹² At present there is no doubt that it would make for the loss of valuable qualities. We should become morbid ‘fatalists.’ Many interests of the highest concern would die down in us. To anticipate as we recollect would be, as we are, ruinous. But let us imagine a lack of *background*, of register, history, memory, and record, as complete as the present lack of *forecast*, and then realise what we are losing by failure to become fit for the vision of the Future. The severe training now called that of science, which has so suddenly come about with effects on the race yet to be realised, may well be the first preparation for this. No strictness of discipline in the seeking of experimentally-purged fact can be too great as the Fore-seer’s preliminary training. Else we should be intoxicated by the resumption of a normal heritage which for good reasons has been in abeyance.

We have, as it is, too many confident prophets who are dogmatically certain of the validity of their message because they have not yet learned to allow for sources of error such as the misplacement of the Time-idea, which is in fact out of context and thus out of relation. All our theories (and refutations) of ‘immortality’ are utterly astray, diverted from their true line of advance by this initial dislocation of judgment. From this point of view, then, I venture to ask whether a flaw in the very first conditions of observation may not be vitiating all our discussions of that *room for experience* which we call time.

As Mr. McTaggart’s article and this comment both raise questions to be hereafter dealt with, nothing more need now be said. At present the difficulties seem entirely owing to the erection of Time, originally a convenient derivation or secondary product of Motion-space, into the rank of an original category.

4.13. Professor Santayana and Immortality (1909)*

G. Lowes Dickinson’s question, ‘Is Immortality Desirable?’ his own answer and Professor Santayana’s reply in this journal (vol. VI, p. 4 & 1), give an unusual opportunity for suggesting a point of view which does not seem to have been so far considered. From this standpoint we may gladly accept Professor Santayana’s protest against a radically false ideal – fostered, if not created, by current linguistic usage – in the desire for immortality.

It seems to me that our prevailing worship of the ‘not’: the not-final (infinite), the not-mortal (immortal), and all the rest, is a symptom of unnoticed perversion in customary expression which tends to foster barren controversy and to defeat beforehand all positive solution. The prefixes ‘in-’ and ‘im-,’ indeed, are indifferently used in the concentrative, and the negating, or subtracting, senses: and we little realize how much perplexity, discordance of ideal, fruitless discussion, even suicidal despair, is formented, if not created, by modes of expression of which this is only one among many examples which vitiate our inferences, by sub-suggestion of which we are unconscious. On the other hand, of course, to favor illusion which may become delirious obsession, too often take on a poetic or devout form which may ‘deceive the very elect,’ and must always tend to the waste of our capacity to discuss the ideal expressed by Professor Santayana as that of ‘continual perfection.’ That ideal implies that we, who in this life use, as well as possess, body and mind, should not allow our working ideal to sink below the constant to the ephemeral, but recognize and confess that the result or good of us, whether that of example or achievement, of direct service or indirect influence, can not be a mere casual incident ‘leaving no wrack’ of effect

92. And then our suggestively ambiguous use of ‘before,’ as at once front and back of our position, will be accounted for, and the paradoxical contrast between physical and mental vision recognised and interpreted.

* [Originally published in *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, see 1909c].

behind, but is presumably an operative though secret witness to the undying reality of that which urges men to do, to dare, even to die for the right, the true, the good – the real.

But there is another danger lurking in the current preconceptions on the subject of ‘immortality.’ We are the unconscious victims of this permitted persistence of outworn or perverted expression, in an undetected confusion between authentic and originitive identity, and personality or self. The present (prevailing) ideal of the permanence of a mere self which at best is a working means and medium of a cosmic *identivating* energy happily beyond our present resources of definition, ‘freezes’ me also ‘to the marrow.’ ‘Individual perpetuity,’ like unchanging bodily or material preservation of what is significantly called a mummy, would belong to the non-living and at most be a travesty of life. Individual potency is but as an eggshell to be broken, though indispensable to the yolk which in its turn is food for an inestimable, because living, ovum. And, moreover, the not-dividual gives us nothing. The negative prefix here again betrays the vacuity of mere denial, however useful in its proper context it may be.

We cannot yet impartially estimate life, but we can at least abstain from using its astonishing offspring mind, and mind’s prerogative, speech, to confuse, deform and degrade, while thinking to enrich, economize or reverence, its unique issue, articulate and logical expression. See how idly content we are with our merely ‘infinite’ ideals, and with our worship of an enthroned and despotic self – one of which, indeed, when it asserts itself in an octopian voracity, we have the grace to be ashamed and to repudiate as engendering selfishness or egotism – terms which are instinctively – and happily – always depreciative and sometimes contemptuous. Note the usage wherein we lightly confound I or we as the expression of indefinable possessive identity, and my or our self, thus confessed as a property or possession, a temporary and modifiable entity which we insist on stereotyping as well as putting in the saddle – the most tyrannous of things – to ride us. Mixed metaphor seems excusable if not appropriate here. Where else do we so fatally confound the plain and elementary distinction between the *is* and the *has*? It may be hoped that we shall not much longer be content with an identity which rests on, or is the source of, a grammatical confusion between what we are and thus cannot merely *have*, or have and thus cannot fully *be*.

We may gladly, therefore, echo the protest against finding our own person again beyond the grave. As we say nowadays, it is not good enough. We praise, indeed, forms of unselfishness and sacrifice which are too often waste of beneficent capital, of a store laid up in us and bringing a hundredfold for all of us and each of us. We are liable to squander under ethical names personal resources which are here ours, ‘lent us’ for intelligent and discriminative, economical as well as devoted and whole-hearted – service. Such an ennobling service we may well assume to be the contribution of the human factor to the cosmic whole, since science discovers no ultimate waste or vagary in the order of nature. There every form of order serves every other, and reveals itself to an ever-growing knowledge as inexorably consistent, while still making room for the spontaneity of life and its ever-increasing control – through loyalty to that order and consistency as the preconception of all worth [illegible] – by an ideally dominating and even creative mind.

I would suggest that this confusion of the *is* and the *has* lies hidden at the root of Professor Santayana’s condemnation of the cult or even toleration of pain, loss, grief, or privation, for their own sake. And ‘my own person’ stands for our own self’s cravings, which we translate into an idolized ‘happiness,’ the wooden idol of *luckiness* set on a sacred throne of well-faring and well-being. The mayhap, what merely happens, thus glorified, is really at best but a wayside episode, never a final goal. And happiness is but the sun of such trivialities, or at most but the noonday interval of rest or play. It lacks the consecrating halo of blessing, even of joy.

It will be seen that I am here protesting against usages which secretly and insidiously depreciate our most vital credit – that expression which should be the articulate offspring of normal and healthy experience, fruit of a conception corresponding in mind to that of a living organism. There is no fact reached in any laboratory faithfully used, which does not in some sense tend to disperse the perverted ignorance shirking full truth in optimism, or shutting down its light in

pessimism. We live in a self-created world of half-ness, and we endow with this the heavenly, the holy, world of wholeness. We are always splitting and sundering that which must never be dismembered. Our instrument of expression is thus become discordant at its very source; and we little as yet realize the tremendous power, the coercive tyranny, which a stale, a deformed, a casual, or an overgrown language may, without our suspicion of its secret betrayals, exert.

There is but one way of realizing this power and of turning it into fertilizing instead of destructive channels. At long last we must recognize that the most precious as the most pregnant function we have is that of reading, testing, translating, applying – significance. Here also the experimental method is, in fact, the introduction to the power which shall significate all experience and all the worlds that crowd at the door clamouring for welcome and interpretation, and thus for the adult privilege of righting the warped ideas and couching the veiled eyes of man's still partly abortive mind.

Thus we shall no longer suppose nature to be 'opaque and overwhelming,' but find her actively forwarding conscious aims and 'perfectly transparent'; worthy, indeed, of the sacred name of mother, and looking to her children to right the wrongs which deflect the pure currents of endeavor, and which at present we actually charge upon her; thus contradicting ourselves in making her an unnatural 'mother.' Then indeed we shall no longer represent, in Professor Santayana's pungent words, the effects of the 'clumsy conjunction of an automaton with a ghost,' but a divine marriage through which a new and holy world is to be born.

All this, I am ready to confess, has a sound of empty and risky rhetoric. And I should be the last to claim that I have given my thesis a worthy expression, even as now possible. But we shall all admit that apart from personal failing, symbols, in outliving their original relevance and implication, act as subtle poisoners instead of servers of our thought, and become the prolific sources of barren dialect or of emotional wandering.

Once more, this fact plainly calls for a determined, vigorous, and reasoned effort to insure that language shall become to us – and still more to our children – at least as loyal a servant and as rich a mine as the splendid instruments, each surpassing the last, by which in physical science we mechanically extend the limits of our sense-response, the borders of our knowledge, and our domination of our destiny. Neglecting this supreme need and treasure, we deserve to find life baffling and cruel, and even the instigator of a cynical or suicidal impulse which is the greatest and in fact the most extravagant of paradoxes.

Duneaves, Harrow, England

Papers from the archives

4.14. Mental Biology or Organic Thought (1887)*

This important paper by Welby was traced in Box 28, file 22, WCYA. It is one of her early studies, probably written in 1887, which remained unpublished. It is proposed here for the first time with the abstract immediately below which instead was included in her book of 1903, *What is Meaning?* Particularly interesting is the critical reading it offers of the analogy between body and mind:

* [Complete title is 'Mental Biology or Organic Thought (Second Edition),' WCYA, Box 28, file 22. This is an unpublished manuscript, probably redacted in 1887. Welby herself informs her readers that Note XIV (A), from the Appendix to *What is Meaning?*, is a summary of this paper].

A paper called 'Mental Biology,' written a good many years ago, but too long for insertion, may perhaps usefully be summarized here. Its object was to call attention to the fact which seems never to have been noticed, that the practically universal (because only workable) analogy between 'body' and 'mind' (whether this is, as usual, static, or as the significant view should make it, dynamic) has one fatal defect. This is that whereas on the side of the physical organism we arrive (in its most developed form) at a 'brain' which is somehow the condition of an activity or state called in its lowest forms sense, mind, consciousness, and in its highest rational thought, on the mental side we postulate nothing as *corresponding to* the brain in its capacity of means or condition of the knowledge of body and brain.

On the contrary, we make the figurative 'mind-body' – 'know' itself! Now, just as the eye cannot see itself, so the mind cannot 'see' itself any more than matter (*qua* matter) can move itself. Therefore, wherever we speak of 'spiritual' phenomena we are inevitably implying an analogue of the material 'brain' with all its implications. Only there is no word for what is not merely 'mind,' as at least the accompaniment of brain-processes, but as much more than the mind which is figured as body, as the actual mind is more (in any sense you like) than the actual body. And, unfortunately, (1) the word 'spiritual' has been widely used in superstitious or unsound senses, while (2), as we have already seen, it refers properly to the life or breath, not to that of vision, speech, thought. There is much yet to be said on this subject; but its further treatment must be reserved for the present.

Where is that which is as much greater than consciousness or thought (as we understand them) as the 'conscious' activities of the brain are greater than the mere reflex action of muscle? To make the conception clear we must acquire a word. Meanwhile it would be something to recognise the need. (Welby 1983 [1903]: Appendix, Note XIV. A (A), p. 84: 287–288)

The broad outlines of biology have already been taken by Herbert Spencer and others to illustrate the development of the social organism. May they not be used likewise to guide us to the history and nature of Thought? If so, we should find it first in 'amoebic' or simple-celled form, then developing more and more divergently as cell-groups became specialized for distinct functions, and then at last re-affirming solidarity, *not* reversion to a more uniform or simpler type, but by the co-ordination of varying and even contrasted functions and structures within a system, of which the connecting link was inter-acting vitality. Applying this system to types of conception we should thus trace organic divergence, (1) in the race, considered as an organic unity; (2) in the individual, so far as he represented a completed process and result; and (3) in the various stages of organic growth to the apex of development as yet reached, whether in the race or in the individual; showing, at each point, the correspondence of each with each.

Taking the first view, we should expect to find strongly divergent types of thought, with individuals representing them and grouped together by a common tendency. In each that tendency would predominate over all others; each variety of character would have its special idea of the supreme need and gift; of the centrally important aim. Those answering to the muscle-cell would emphasise Effort, Action Work; the 'skin-cell' would above all value Common-sense (common sensation rather than specialised senses as of hearing and sight); and would appeal to Feeling and Emotion.

The 'nerve-cell's' ideal would be the impulsive energising thrill which originates, directs, and interprets both (culminating in the wonderful revelations of sight): that of the 'blood-cell' would be the all-pervading stream or life's river, centering in the heart and nourishing all structures and all tissue: while the 'lung-cell' would claim to belong to the inspiring cause at once of its purity, its activity, and its power of nutrition.

So also some would accumulate facts and ideas and others would test them, rejecting and eliminating waste product; some would protect and preserve, while others would secrete and supply. Throughout the whole there would be rapid and even *vibration*, incessant change, development,

re-arrangement, and the alternate storage and liberation of force. The molecules in every living cell of mind would be ceaselessly de-compounded and re-compounded, as the very condition of life. What a comment on some protests against *tides* of thought and belief; on our dread of change, of alternations, of fresh relative positions or proportions between this or that doctrine! The rigid fixity of thought which may confound with steadfast faith, is thus really the sign of lifelessness, as uniformity or belief belongs to the type of life. In a healthy state of things, each group carries out its divergent developments in complete harmony with the rest.

In the physical organism, some cell-groups grow hard, some soft; some are rigid, some elastic, some solid, some fluid, etc. And some shut, others open; some receive or retain, others give or reject. The bone-tendency seems to contradict the nerve tendency, the gland to differ from the sinew. Yet in the physical sphere there are no disputes or mutual accusations of heresy or error; and the whole community combine[sic] in sympathetic effort to repair local mischief or injury, and to expel harmful intruders. In a corresponding mental organism, the affirmative simplicity of early ideas and beliefs is lost; and *to the representatives of a lower type of development*, Unity will seem to have fled with it. But though indeed the first uniformity *is* really gone, the result in natural development is not a mass of conflicting impulses from which the single right one must be chosen by appeal to primitive days, but a harmoniously complex Mind-body of inwardly differing and varying elements.⁹³

By this division of thought-work, in which one set of thinkers guards and works out this truth and another one that, within a greater unity than either, the whole organism can accomplish results impossible for one of uniform type. We must have the most diverse aspects, factors, elements of truth thought out for a common purpose, – the knowledge and advancement of that which answers to healthy conscious *life* in its highest and thus most intelligent form. In this wise the many-celled mental organism, the specialised cell-community of Mind, becomes more and more perfect, master of greater ranges of experience of fact and of faculty. Yet its vital phenomena still depend entirely upon the cellular activity of each one of us. And thought corresponding to the cell and the cell-built organ, can vindicate and verify itself directly.

But the consummating Organismic Thought which comprehends all and penetrates every part of it, works in most of us indirectly and inferentially. To some therefore this last may seem ‘transcendental’ in the sense of unreal or at least unverifiable, because it corresponds to a Completeness which as yet we cannot fully realise; while if we fail to acknowledge and apply such a Unity beyond all difference, we sink back into lower instead of rising into higher levels of being, – the risen life cannot be ours in any sense. The group thought (as formative) rightly takes ‘special’ views of the nature of the Co-ordinating Whole, and of its own responsive duty. And for this very reason it must beware on the one hand of ‘organo-morphism,’ as well as of expecting uniformity among the various groups, and on the other, of breaking up the solidarity of the whole into independent units. Neither cell-thought nor organ-thought *as such* can judge between the oppositions within the supreme unity, or fully understand their reciprocal relations; they can only do it by virtue of the links which, binding them to each other, collect and unify them in a larger integration.

The welfare and the complete development of the mental organism depends, in short, (1) on the differences of cellular activity individually and in groups, and (2) on the sympathetic unity which *binds them together in the very extremity of their contrasts*; interpreting these through the implicit link of a Completeness including and utilising and harmonising them all.

But if our assumptions thus far are at all valid, we shall find that in the cell-type which forms the ‘nervous system’ one cell-group expands into what are called the highest nerve-centres and finally forms the organ which corresponds with brain in the physical structure. This becomes the revealing and directing power, as well as the source of the highest energies of intelligent activity.

93. No attempt is here made to distinguish between the individual and the group mind. At this stage we gain by ignoring it.

And closely connected with this, we find two special sense-organs whereby the mind-organism receives infinitely complex messages from the external world, messages reaching us through the highest of mind-senses – Sight – from immeasurable distances, far beyond mental *touch* or even *hearing*, as also from nucleolus within nucleus, in regions of unimaginable minuteness and intricacy.

Of course it may be objected that if the Thought-history of man thus corresponded with his life-history, and mind *thus* answered to body, the state of things would not be what it is. However imperfect or even rudimentary the general intelligence, it would at least be acting in complete concert and reciprocal service, in its various types and functions. The sense of ultimate unity would grow in exact proportion to the sense of increasing diversity. As thinking men tended more and more to form aggregates of special thought, these ought more and more to reciprocate recognition. If the organs passed through a stage in which, through the fading of the sense of mutual interdependence, they took to mutually-exclusive self-assertion, treating every development but their own as false and morbid, they would end in entire disruption, and the whole subject of the differentiation would be defeated. We should not know what a complex organism was. And this is surely what we see, in the prevailing anarchy of thought. Even so, is the whole parallel then vitiated?

Before we attempt to find or suggest an answer to this question let us take the sequence from another point of view, and trace it differently.

As we go up in the animal scale, we find the first simple structure developing into three main systems, the ‘nutritive system,’ the ‘nerve-system,’ and the ‘blood-system’; severally produced from the three principal layers. Taking the second, we advance through general sensation to the specialised senses. Touch, taste, and smell may roughly be said to require respectively solid, liquid, and gaseous contact. Here we have a three-fold unity of experience corresponding to the three states of ‘matter.’ And we shall find that this becomes naturally the type of the most convincing because most substantial and easily verifiable kind of evidence of what actually exists. We then come to the first perception of distinct objects without direct contact. A ‘sounding body’ does not give off particles of sound but sends us vibrations through a medium, the limits of which are the atmosphere and the energy of the initial wave. Beyond that again, we come to the crowning gift of Sight. And this enables us to discern for ourselves objects at illimitable distances, by means of a medium too subtle to be recognised except as the light-bearer. And thus our area of inference, of course, is proportionately widened.

Can we trace this order in the growth of mind? Of course we must recognise from the first a difficulty arising from the survival in language of terms and phrases no longer true to our knowledge of fact.⁹⁴ Yet those which are confirmed by experience and research may help us more, perhaps, than we think.

Broadly speaking, then, we find that the first definite mental act is unreasoned response to a ‘palpable’ impression corresponding to that of Touch; which we call Belief and hold *tenaciously*.⁹⁵ On this level we hear much of common-sense; of the tangible advantages, the solid bases, results, effects, bearings, of this or that teaching. And in truth the value of ‘tactual’ response remains throughout the development of the higher senses. While however this remains our sole criterion of reality or value, we deprecate as useless or misleading impalpable ideas which fail to evoke the familiar sensations responding to touch or pressure.

If we are neither ‘moved’ nor ‘impressed,’ if we are neither ‘struck’ by some discovery nor ‘wounded’ by imputation, nor ‘drawn onwards’ by some hope, nor ‘driven back’ by some terror, we remain inactive. As ‘sensible people’ our experience is as yet limited to three forms of impression,

94. I cannot here treat the subject from the Semantic point of view, which indeed was not acknowledged when this Paper was written.

95. I should now of course express this differently and emphasise the factors of expression and interpretation.

corresponding to the three forms of matter. We know things, so to speak, in mental sense, as solid and fixed, as liquid and flowing, as vapourous or gaseous and volatile. What answers to touch gives us the first and second; and, as refined and specialised, the third; – in flavour and odour.

So far our experience is, as it were, essentially geocentric. Everything is referred to the earth as the centre of experience and its reality is ultimately tested, as our expressions betray, by its proving *tangible*.

But now we come to a link between environment and organism, differing altogether in character from the contact of material particles, however minute or subtle. Heat had reached us in *waves* (although until the other day that too was supposed to be ‘atomic’ instead of a ‘mode of motion’); and now, sound evokes a special response from a specialised organ, also through vibrations; and finally light reaches us through enormously greater rapidity of thrill, and by means of a supremely complex instrument. This is the beginning of a new revelation of environment. For the first time we are acquiring new organs of response only sensitive to rhythmical beat at a certain rate of rapidity.

Following up the grades of sense, the interplay of excitation and response is significant. Beginning with taste, the feeling seems entirely in *us*: in smell, the impression is divided; in hearing, it seems almost wholly external, and in sight ‘the impression is so completely externalised in consciousness, that only by careful analysis can we be convinced of its essential subjectiveness’ (Leconte: ‘Sight,’ International Series, p. 14). The world picture is reflected within us; that reflection is an image; and both words in this connection are meaningless if they do not imply a reality reflected and imaged; ‘delineated’ on our mental retina.

In Sight two wholly new facts are brought to our knowledge. (1) An actual and spatial ‘infinity’ of evident expansion, revealed by the myriad-studded sky and verified by astronomy; (that is, not a merely negative or abstract notion); and (2) direct relation with bodies beyond, not merely our area of contact, but outside the range of our hearing, and even beyond the very atmosphere of the planet – the belt of known life itself.

There is also a suggested duality in Vision. It gives (1) Light; (2) Objects. And when fresh openings or fresh links with ‘cosmical’ mind-facts (if that be possible) are ours, does not a true instinct tell us that first we shall see more ‘light,’ and then the ‘objects’ which that light is to reveal and illuminate?⁹⁶

Again the eyeball itself is dual; consisting of an *outgrowth* from the brain – a nervous expansion called the retina; and an *ingrowth* from the skin forming the lens-apparatus which defines the light-impression on the retina by means of an image. This image must be (1) bright; (2) distinct in outline; – or if the outline is beyond the field of vision, distinct in elements or detail. *Brightness* only needs light; and the lowest grade of vision gives us that. But *distinctness* requires that each ray be carried to a corresponding point on the image.

In like manner, have we not an outgrowth from the brain called consciousness and an ingrowth called experience, an outgrowth seeking light, the questioning energy within us crying for ‘more light,’ and an ingrowth bringing answers; concentrating, defining, giving distinctness to the objects light may show?

Again, in physical vision we have a ‘central spot’ which is needed for concentration or thoughtful attention to a given point. If all portions of the retina were similarly organised, this would be impossible. ‘We might *see* equally well and over a wider area, but we could not *look* attentively at anything; we could not *observe* thoughtfully ... Other portions of the human retina are even

96. And here, as I should urge now, we get clear of the mischievous myth of the ‘inner and outer.’ [See Welby 1892b, *The Use of ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?* A small collection of extracts bearing upon this question respectfully submitted to the International Congress of Experimental Psychology, August 1892; see also Chapter 6, this volume].

more sensitive to light than the central spot . . . but distinctness of form is perceived only by it.' ('Sight,' p. 268).

Thus a merely *wide* view of things, a tolerant breadth of out-look will fail to show the real nature of anything within it; the concentrating power which masters its every aspect and realises its every element, is yet more needed. What then is the central spot in our mental eye? May not some of us as yet come short of it, seeing but a diffused mental light on a blurred and misty field, and distinguishing but imperfectly objects which thus to us are 'mysteries'? Through a stage of sensitiveness to light only, do we not pass in mind to a dim and vague sense of existing truths, gradually becoming more definite, until a new world is reached, as far beyond the first as that of art and science is beyond mere animal need and function? And others yet further down the scale may in fact be trying to limit the boundary of experience to a blind and deaf *touch*; thus missing all which is not ours through contact, and yet is real as what we feel or grasp, while richer far in beauty and in worth. To put it in another way. Do we not *see* reflected in these physical sequences, a process of discipline through which the human mind and conscience are passing, and of which (if so) we have reached the second stage, and may in sober earnest look forward to the third, without incurring accusations of 'transcendental' audacity? We speak of the knowledge of our ultimate origin and destiny as either unknown to us – beyond our ken – or as known only in 'revelation.' Now an unveiling of any kind is meaningless (except in a secondary sense) unless the act or process has reference to something which may be compared to *sight*; it is fruitless without an answering power of vision. And this applies equally whether we restrict the word revelation to the spiritual sphere, or imply it to describe the discovery or uncovering or 'coming into sight' of any kind of fact. We speak even of our opinion as a 'view'; of our position of mind as a 'point of view'; we talk of an *outlook* or a prospect; and of things which are evident and clear, or dim and dark to us. A curious instance of the supremacy of sight and light in the metaphors of mind, is Prof. Huxley's writing about 'auditory spectra' (Hume, p. 65); he, the most accurate of men. Minimise our assumptions and suspect our analogies as we may, there is always something which we look upon as conclusive in some *light*.

Indeed to quote Dr. Maudsley, 'Viewing matters from the central standpoint of consciousness' (the central spot?) 'it has been impossible to see what and hard to conceive that, anything takes place outside its light.' Let us see then what sight itself can teach us. In dawning sensation, as we have 'seen,' all things are vaguely felt. Thus what is real must needs be also tangible. Then we respond in special spots to special kinds of touch. But at last we get our messages in a fashion wholly new. There is a trembling in our mental atmosphere, and conscience 'hears' a Voice which *calls* us to our duty. What then can this hearing be, and how does it reach us, and how can we verify it, or know that it is 'real'? Is it not a delusion? Nothing has *impressed* us, and yet we are strangely moved. No shape or form belongs to voice; it cries in a wilderness as wind which howls or sighs, and we know not whence it comes. . . . But its effects cannot be doubted and denied. It has disturbed us, changed us somehow. Thus we learn to listen for a Sound; we are ready for a real life-giving Word. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' But how many of us are tempted to stop here. Some of us are eloquent as to the loss of those who fix the boundary of the real at that of intellectual contact, and who tell us that the very idea of a message through some 'impalpable' thrill is a mere illusion, baseless and fantastic. But then we call the sense of hearing 'faith' as once we called an even lower sense. And we were surely right, *when that was all we had*. But all the more ought we to rise in scale. What we have *felt*, what we have *heard*, we must now learn to *see*. To perceive shape, form or colour by means of hearing was indeed hopeless. But hearing is *not* the ultimate faculty, either mentally, morally, or spiritually. And the last to think so or to teach thus should be those who hold it true that GOD indeed is Light. A message comes, more wondrous even than sound. A new thrill comes, and asks us for an answer. Let us see then that we give it, loyally. But still, though there is light, we have not yet reached full *seeing*; no *object* has as yet come forth in light. We tell each other as before, that this must always be. Yet all the thoughts which darkness bred

must go – and this of all is worst. We know at least of something beyond sound; – the hearing of a spoken word is not the final gift. Grotesque, obscure or silly dreams disperse; for what words fail to endow us with, what *rays* can give. And as we keep wide open eyelids to the light, not fearing or distrusting God's best gift, slowly we begin in deed to *see*; we know at last *what* revelation is.

And now we come to vision yet more perfect; to a sense-gift surely rich in meaning and in teaching. 'We have two eyes; and these are not to be considered as mere duplicates, so that if we lose one, we still have another. On the contrary, the two eyes act together as one instrument; and there are many visual phenomena, which result entirely from the use of two eyes as one instrument. These form the subject-matter of Binocular Vision. It must be clearly understood that the distinctive phenomena of binocular vision require the two eyes acting as one. We might have two eyes, or even, like Argus, a hundred eyes; and yet not enjoy the advantages of binocular vision; for each eye might see independently. This would still be monocular vision. The phenomena of binocular vision are far less purely physical than those of monocular vision. They are also far more obscure, illusory and difficult of analysis, because far more subjective, and far more closely allied to psychical phenomena' (Leconte; 'Sight,' p. 90). The same writer tells us that the two eyes seem actually to be brought together and superposed, and corresponding points of the two retinas to coincide. Animals see with two eyes, but these do not act together as one instrument, as a singular binocular eye; they are independent, and see each for itself. And *nothing analogous exists in the other senses*. Binocular vision is the last result of evolution as meeting the wants of the higher developments of mind. To quote further: 'There are, it is true, consensual movements and sympathetic relations in the double organs of other senses – e.g. the consensual movements of the hands. There is even a kind of binocular audition by means of which we judge imperfectly of direction of sound. But these are not only infinitely inferior in degree of perfection to, but they are essentially different in kind from the consensual movement and that sympathetic relation which we find in the eyes, and which slowly, in the process of evolution gave rise to the wonderful property of corresponding parts, and the phenomena of binocular vision' (p. 26). How suggestive therefore it is, that we should say when we want to tell our friend that we understand him, not 'I hear' but 'I see' what you mean. As we learn to use this language more accurately, shall we find that certain processes of *mind* really answer to *refraction*, as others to *reflection*, and that some seeming distortion is in fact due to this? May we find similarly that not merely the photographic camera, but the telescope and microscope, and beyond them both the spectroscope, indicate corresponding functions or 'instruments' of mind, by which fresh worlds of knowledge may be ours? For what if the next stage of mental development should follow that of physical vision and become *biune*? How would this be expressed? Binocular thought would involve a double mental development, as our brain is double and our sight; not merely duplicated, though quite distinct, but *acting perfectly together as one instrument*. May it be that the most *completely human* functions of mind, like those of sight, are only possible to the united action of a two-fold organ of thought, and the more perfect developments of moral and ethical standard to the combined working of a two-fold conscience showing us true good as if in cube, and teaching us what Holiness (as wholeness) may thus mean?⁹⁷

In order fully to realise the *height and depth* which is the special message of binocular vision, the biune mind must correspond point for point, each with the other, as each with the outward world. But such a development would of course be needed, as in teacher, so in taught; and those who first began to use the growing faculty would find it difficult to make their meaning clear to those who had not yet discovered its coming, and might easily be confounded with some whose thought is retrograde and really mere survival. It may be useful here to remind ourselves of the visual process so suggestively alike in nature and in the photographid camera. 'In the work of the eye... we may mentally separate and describe three corresponding images. First, there is the

97. The link between binocular and bisexual evolution is obvious but cannot be dealt with here.

light-image, which is formed in the dead as well as the living eye. Second, the *invisible image*. The light-image, falling on the sensitive living retina, determines in its substance molecular changes which are graduated in intensity and colour, and may therefore be rightly called an image, even though it be invisible, and the nature of the molecular changes be inscrutable. Third, the *external visible image*. The invisible image or the molecular changes which constitute it, is transmitted to the brain, and by the brain or the mind is projected outward into space. . . the sign and the fac-simile in form and colour of the object which produced it. . . ’ (p. 153). Again, as two cameras taking two slightly different pictures of the same object, produce when combined on a stereoscope the clear perception of depth of space, even so the two eyes *act both as a double camera and as a stereoscope*. To sum up the order. Intensity, colour, and direction of light are simple impressions, which cannot be further analysed. Then come successively, outline, form, and surface contents; then solid form, then size and distance. These may be called ‘visual judgments.’ But the higher and more complex of these pass into yet more advanced intellectual judgments. Thus from simple sense-impressions we rise to the supreme achievements of the highest minds.

This then is the question. Is our physical development in advance of our mental development, so that while our intellect has acquired the ‘central spot’ which concentrates our powers of thought or reasoning on a special ‘point of view,’ and deals with a special object, it has not yet fully acquired that ‘binocular’ faculty which would enable us in all subjects or reflection to detect as it were a third ‘dimension’ beyond the usual alternatives of discussion; – which would give us a new perspective; a real depth of insight answering to depths of space and giving us a thought-cube, instead of only points, lines, or plane surface-views? May we not thus be touching the secret of an actual ‘third’ – whether as stage or reason – now reckoned illusory or inaccessible? May some of us, dimly aware of this third element in perception (through which for the first time we see ancient well-worn problems ‘in the solid’), be groping patiently for terms and parables by which to convey what we mean to those who in fact see truth as ‘in flat’ only, *and cannot even imagine the missing ‘thickness’?*

We have seen that our two eyes act both as a double camera and as a stereoscope. But the comparison can be carried no further, for there is this essential difference between the photographic and the living process. In the one case we trace mechanism and physics and chemistry throughout. In the other we also trace exquisite mechanism, but only to a certain point; beyond which we discover something higher. Two factors are joined together, the brain and the mind. Utterly meaningless dots and scratches on the one, become intelligent and intelligible writing on the other.

But here we must pause. The limit of known mental as of physical evolution has been reached. As Dr Maudsley says, No observation of the brain conveys the suspicion of a sensation and when we have correspondingly examined the assumed mental ‘brain’ following up as far as possible the sense-springs within it which bring it ‘knowledge’ and speak of ‘fact’ outside itself, we come again to an abrupt change.

As Mr Herbert Spencer says of consciousness ‘There lies before us a class of facts absolutely without any perceptible or conceivable community of nature with the facts that have occupied us’ (*Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 2, p. 97).

Once more, to quote a passage in Mr G. H. Lewes’s ‘Problems of Life and Mind’ which I had neither seen nor heard of when I first used the term ‘mental organism’: – ‘Let us now pass from Life to Mind. The vital organism we have seen to be evolved from the Bioplasm, and we now see how the psychical organism is evolved from what may analogically be called the psychoplasm. . . The movements of the Bioplasm constitute vitality; of the Psychoplasm, sensibility. The forces of the cosmical medium which are transformed in the physiological medium build up the organic structure, which in the various stages of its evolution react according to its statical conditions, themselves the result of preceding reactions. It is the same with what may be called the Mental Organism. Here also every phenomenon is the product of two factors, external and internal,

impersonal and personal, objective and subjective. . . An organism lives only in relation to its medium. What *growth* is, in the physical sense, that is *experience* in the psychical sense; namely, organic registration of assimilated material.' Yet again: 'By means of data furnished in the narrow world of the senses, we make ourselves at home in other and wider worlds, which can be traversed by the intellect alone' (Prof. Tyndall). And do not the 'data' of the mental senses, as these develop, furnish us with the means of making ourselves 'at home' in – of 'entering into' in the fullest sense – worlds not merely wider, but greater in line-distance and in depth, and more intense in vivid vital action? If so, as the physical body can only become aware of itself through the agency of the physical brain, which it includes, so the mind in its turn cannot know itself except through the medium of the mental brain. (Here surely we have a possible key to the thread bare controversies as to the 'ego' or personal identity). And as the physical brain can receive, verify and utilise impressions entirely beyond the scope of the rest of the organism, so the 'mental brain' can deal with regions and subjects which to the 'mental body' corresponding to the organisms in which brain in the full sense is not yet specialised must be strictly inaccessible and apparently supernatural.

If this suggestion holds, it would follow that as mind interprets (otherwise inscrutable) body by its power of perception, judgment, reflection, inference, so both the nature of the mind and its connection with the body need to be interpreted by that of which in its turn it is an 'embodiment' or instrument or parallel. The secret of the link between thought and thing in us may lie in that further 'dimension' of consciousness which puts us in relation, beyond, so to speak, a *planetary* and even a *solar*, with a spiritually *cosmical* sphere. And the break between scientific and logical process and divinely-spiritual process – whether apparent or real – would answer to that between the unconscious and the conscious.

But mark what follows. If this be so, let us see that we learn a lesson as yet but little taught. We must not seek, in faithless or fearful distrust, to take a short cut over mind to spirit – over truth to life – thinking thus to reach the goal of being, knowing it as real. We must not let 'soul' reign as though it were all. 'Soul' may denote the 'animating force' wherever we may limit its existence; it may connote the life feeling, sense, emotion; or of duty, right, affection. But the central line would pass through mind and thought to spirit, not as thin or shadowy dream or spectral image, but as the highest being in us all; reached only by the way *through* truth to life. *Through Truth*. We only now are learning, in one sense, what that implies. We must not dare to shirk or water down the lesson. The discipline of stern test must be faithfully gone through: the rigour of all verifying processes, the strictest crucibles of science must be faced. Our thought must spread and grow with growing knowledge, for science 'claims as its domain the whole realm of fact, as distinguished from the realms of fiction and of fancy'; and in a sense the claim it makes is true. We must realise the flaw in all our speech, the metaphor which runs through all and falsifies our notions, surviving from a time when science itself was error – when earth was fixed and central and the sky a star-strewn arch, and worlds of fruitful thought were yet unborn, unknown.

At present rival groups of thought call themselves theology or philosophy and are distrusted by the men of facts, the one for its mythical or mystical, the other for its metaphysical character. Another group arrogates the knowledge of the limits of all knowing; or knows of an unknowable unknown. But all alike betray their lack and shortcoming by their common failure to give us the answers to our deepest questions; – answers which, in their turn, if true, must open the way to fresh questionings and seekings. Like science, as Mr Lewes describes it, the highest of all possible sources of knowledge 'is fertile, not because it is a *tank*, but because it is a *spring*.' As yet our differences are only emphasised by the less shallow and more thorough of our teachers. None give us clues to our nature and origin and destiny which *every* intelligence naturally accepts and which is corroborated on every side, and in all experience and history. No 'solution' of the 'problems' of life is self-evidently true to all but the idiot or the lie-lover. No explanation of the anomalies of life carries its own proof to each reasonable mind. Why? Not assuredly because it is the Divine Will; for GOD is light. Rather surely because there is a defective communication between the *consciousness*

of the mental brain and the rest of the mind-organism, involving imperfect connection and interaction of what answers to the 'forces of the cosmical and those of the physiological medium.' The messages we get from the highest nerve-centres of mind (concurrently with what corresponds to consciousness, consummating in intellect and reason) evoke but faint and poor response. Hence the lack of synthesising power; hence the want of vigour and completeness; hence the 'broken lights' we all deplore.

There is nothing thus to link all Mind and Thought in One, as 'flesh and blood' is linked in all mankind. The common life is ours; the nature alike in all; why is not reason one? We cannot make each other understand, or recognise each other's gift of truth. We are estranged in thought from other minds; we long to make them change their thought for ours. We say, if this is true, the other must be false; this thinker goes astray, the other errs. We even cherish ignorance, foster dullness; seeming to claim high place for the inane. We try to numb or atrophy our thought, in fear lest too much life should weaken 'faith'! And then we call our slowness or confusion 'childlikeness.' Or else we try discarding heart-(life)-pulses, and think nerve-web and skeleton enough. And this we fancy is 'advancing thought'! By some a merely reflex action, right in its own place, is called dutiful obedience, and they know not even why it should be rendered. No higher response seems possible to them; they do not seem even to care for it. Whether in 'faith' or 'unfaith' we do not realise our higher responsive power; we take the local centres for supreme. And then we wonder at our sundered state, and cannot think why wise and good men are divided. May it be suggested then once more, that true spirit is to mind what consciousness is to body; and that this holds good, whatever views we (philosophically) take of the mutual action of body and mind, and even of their nature as distinct or parallel, or as two aspect[sic] of one fact? If so, it would seem best to postpone the question 'What is soul'? For what may perhaps be called 'souliness' seems in some degree responsible for prevailing confusions of the Divinely-spiritual with the non-natural, the disorderly, or at least with dangerously ambiguous experiences. In any case let us see now what the nervous and mental processes in their perfect concomitance can teach us; and what inference as to 'spirit' they lead to or suggest. For if there is any truth in the idea that the spiritual is to the mental what the mental is to the bodily, we shall see at once what a real theology for all mankind would do, and what a divinely human and therefore living 'Church' would be. As dealing with the very springs of mental and moral action, theology would spontaneously connect and interpret and utilise every system of thought which, like physical bone, or muscle or gland stood out utterly distinct in its own special character, carrying out faithfully the duty of differing. Such types or systems could not (on the organic supposition) interpret themselves or each other, but would instantly accept the place assigned to them by the confessedly mysterious initial and persistent energy issuing in the final co-ordination of a conscious Whole, in touch with each, and working through one and all.

This would be by general consent the universal arbiter, because the universal messenger and revelation and direction; passing conscious life from each to each, from each to all, from all to each. While theology would thus sum up and translate into life every form of philosophical thought which was the product of sound and healthy reflection, however inter-divergent, the 'Summa' thus arrived at (of the living organism of organs) would put but two things on its Index; falsity and finality. Such a theology would go to science and appeal to Criticism at every step in complete unfaltering sympathy and mutual understanding, to verify life-questions. For the methods of science would simply be its own tools and instruments, like the inferring power of reasoning and the realising power of imagination, and the exalting power of the moral sense. And these would involve the sense of Touch in general, advancing to the supreme sense of Sight. And at that point – of mutual vision – Science and real Faith would surely be at last, indeed, at one.

For the object of both is Truth, the means of both is Light and the secret of both is Life.

The *rightful* Head of the mental organism, the sanctuary and the organ of all our higher knowledge and activities, cannot but win at once the recognition and assent of every living member – of *all* true thought throughout the world. No longer should we see that unnatural,

piteous warfare between two healthy elements of our nature, between 'reason' and 'emotion.' No longer should we be reduced to protest on the one side that the Highest can be known but by the heart, or on the other, that the mind alone (as the intellect) can bring us truth or justify trust. For the message of the brain is received, accepted, understood and carried out by every cell alike.

No claim or credential has to be made good first. Neither threat nor promise is needful to enforce it. To resist or disown *that* 'authority' would be as though our ears were to deny sound or our eyes light. Refusal would be its own condemnation, sentence, penalty; the brand which marked off naturally and spontaneously, the morbid, the lifeless, the effete. Thus there is no dislocation in our thought; nowhere is violence done to the ascending spirals of evolution, as we see them curving upwards in ever wider sweeps. Just as the manifestation of force called 'life' transcends in unique function all other forms of it, just as the mystery called consciousness and volition 'transcends' all brainless automatic movement, so and no otherwise does the Spiritual or *more-natural* transcend, and the Divine or *most-natural* transform and interpret (as it originates) what we call Nature. For in the 'natural' we surely have a secret of degree rather than of quality. We know it first as positive, and from that germ we start. We enter thence the comparative as Nature rises towards perfection. The un-natural signs its own death-warrant. What ever is really that, is also infra-natural, and ought to be to us as the inhuman. For the truly natural is good and but rises to the better. The divinely-natural is best – that is, most healthful, sound and wholesome, as Complete.

If we complain that the highest facts of mind and conscience are thus left vague, and nowhere can be known by 'common-sense,' we must remember that so it is in body. If your hand would do more than touch or grasp, if it would share in the work which seeing or hearing make possible, it can only do so indirectly in the order of nature. It must await a message from the brain, and let the nerve threads tell it what to do. And this finally involves the marvel we call consciousness. Here therefore in experience acts the principle of mediation and the principle of revelation. The nervous system thus represents our link with the mentally super-sensuous, the spiritual as the consciousness of the mental organism; and shows us that this touch is none the less real for being indirect, or for bringing in, through all our living processes, what in itself is inscrutable to each. The mental 'hand' must not insist on that which is perceptible to 'eye' or 'ear' alone, being revealed to 'touch,' but neither must it despair of reaching worlds of truth both internal and external, though wholly beyond its power to feel or grasp or 'handle.' But here a further question suggests itself. How is the physical brain itself evolved and organised? We find we must divide it into three; the 'hind-brain,' 'the mid-brain, and the 'fore-brain.' The first gives reflex or automatic action, which goes on though the others be removed. The second gives adjustment and contains the 'optic lobes.' And the third probably contains the centre of sensation; but much more than that it culminates in the highest centres of all. 'This crowning cerebrum would seem to be the centre of all emotional, rational, and voluntary, and in a word, original action. It is the organ of individuality, the locus of spontaneity, the seat of character. In it lie the springs of human action. In man it constitutes the main mass of the brain' (*Springs of Conduct*, Lloyd Morgan, p. 178).

The most cautious or critical mind must surely here admit a strikingly suggestive sequence. It would almost seem as if in the very structure of the brain itself, the thought of triune wholeness were reflected. And if so (looking at the supposed mind-brain as the apex of the mind-body) we should be prepared to find that the supreme significance of the principle of the triune unity, so far from being a mere arbitrary conception dependent on 'unverifiable assumption' was in fact an instinctive testimony to natural order as yet imperfectly understood. As we are, it would represent the only possible form in which the supreme fact of being could be realised by us. To go over the ground once more. In the first stage of development, whether rational or religious, whether moral or spiritual, mental action is more or less automatic and sub-conscious. The response to applied stimulus is mainly mechanical. Unless roused or stirred up we are passive. Such a type of response some call 'faith'; and even sometimes value it in proportion as it is *blind* or *unquestioning*. The

impulse springs and flows in being *other* than ours; not solar or central to us; perhaps long ago, perhaps now, – but not in us. And thus its source and modes of working are quite hidden from us; though only by our lack and our defect. We do not even try to develop (by exerting) higher faculties, so long as a lower type satisfies us. But in the next stage we begin to ask, to seek, to knock; we are conscious of the dawning of discriminative powers. We begin – if we are true to the onward call – to work towards energizing powers of discernment and direction. We compare and test, accept or reject; beginning to rely on something different *in kind* from the perceptive organs of the first stage, and more worthy, we now feel, of the sacred name of ‘faith.’ And now we *balance* evidence; bringing to bear the developing powers of judgment.

Here we must remember that we are thinking of reflex action, *not* as a part of the activity of the fully-developed human brain and nervous system, but as a type of action existing before the higher parts of brain are formed at all. Mr Mercier explains (‘Nervous System and Mind,’ pp. 161–163) that in man who, as man begins with complete brain, reflex action ‘so far from being rudimentary, is the very antithesis of a rudiment; it is *vestigial*. It exhibits, not the first but the last stage of intelligent action. . . The first rudiment of objective intelligence is at the opposite pole to reflex action. . . Mr Romanes even makes the occurrence of a new adjustment the criterion of the existence of mind in the lower animals. ‘The criterion on mind’ he says ‘which I propose. . . is as follows: Does the organism learn to make new adjustments, or to modify old ones, in accordance with the results of its own individual experience?’ Thus the kind of response we often call ‘faith’ *is in us* mere survival of what was once a higher act. So if we would be faithful to the law of upward growth, we must see that we are not content with this. But living faith means passing through a stage painful to the automatic ‘believer,’ because it brings disturbance, question, misgiving, effort. Yet without this, we have lost the vital element in belief, which at first was the response of heart and will and mind alike, but now has more or less degenerated into the lowest action known.

The order of function has so far answered, first, to that of the ‘medulla oblongata or the hind-brain,’ and second, to that of the ‘mid-brain and the optic lobes,’ etc. But at last we come to the ‘fore-brain and the cerebral hemispheres.’ Now full consciousness in its highest form, self-knowledge and the powers of reflection, become ours. Having already verified for ourselves, so far as sight could help us, the impression to which we now give a voluntary and intelligent response, we pass on into the culminating stage. We begin to enter upon a royal heritage. For at last we are in full possession of *mental brain* which is really the organ of ‘spirit,’ as the physical brain is of consciousness and intellect. And thus we discover the real nature and the natural reality of spiritual fact. We are freed from the false antithesis of a *natural* as contrasted to a *spiritual* world; and we begin at all events the A. B. C. of a new alphabet of faith and fact, of loyalty and reason. Words and phrases which had become discredited by association with proved delusion, or with the unnatural, the morbid or the retrograde, now gain healthy meanings and are self-attesting. Our ideas have been purged of all that could not stand the fire of utmost trial. We see now that we could not really know the Spiritual, until we had acquired the faculty of mental *vision*, the power of balance and of critical judgment. What we had before taken for the spiritual (as the highest) had rather been the psychical; – that common to the lowest as to the highest forms of life. Life now is in our eyes not a ‘problem’ to be solved, but a world of light and movement to be won. We see it as a gift to be expanded and ennobled; to be realised and transformed in growing glory. Truth is no longer an eluding or baffling phantom, but its own witness, proof, and warrant; for Light at last is ours in the fullest sense; shining, beaming, penetrating, illuminating; reflected, absorbed, radiated everywhere; banishing shadows and revealing links unseen as yet between what had seemed hopelessly opposed. And one instant-flashing spark effects changes as complete as that which gives us water from gases.

Our boundaries are thus widening on all sides. Things which have been to us but dim hearsays, or perilously like the falsities of confused or morbid fancy, become living and accessible realities; taking their place with those which no honest and healthy mind can doubt. What on the one hand we have reckoned as ‘mere incident’ because it ‘happened’ long ago, and on the other as ‘mere

myth' because it cannot be demonstrated or proved, or perhaps transcends our present known experience, is understood more truly and more fully, as we grow. And in this crowning stage we learn to unite organically facts which had before seemed disparate and dissociate; perhaps even parted by 'impassable' gulfs.

'Insoluble' problems are seen for the first time by the true and self-free thinker, in the dawning of real daylight. Instead of a world which multiplies enigma and paradox, as our half-knowledge increases and the triumphs of science multiply, we move fearlessly in one of flawless order and growing promise.

Above all, we wake little by little – as we can bear it – to the discovery that every question which rises in a sound or healthful mind carries within it the germ – or at least the promise and the potency – of the true and needful answer. We hear no more of what we 'cannot' know; of what 'for ever' lies beyond our reach. But we see that such answer can only be ours when the highest part of the highest organ of human activity has come to its fullest play. And may we not here begin to touch a clue to the endless disputes as to whether the mind or the self can 'transcend' itself to see itself (as we know the eye cannot do) and thus examine and judge itself? May we not reach along this untrodden path – far onward in the distance though it lie – the fountain of the MUST which issues *logical*, and further of the OUGHT which issues *moral*, command; – whereby to reason and to act, in truth and goodness?

And thus do we not even come to a new aspect of the principle of Incarnation? We discern as possible a Personal Unity beyond the fractional forms in which we have supposed it to be perfect. We recognise, not 'a' this or 'a' that merely, but THE Son of Man, the Outcome of all that rightly claims supremacy on earth. We realise One, outside and beyond whose Being or Energy no atom or thrill of good or truth can be. We may in the fullest sense *enter into* One who is the true Being of every 'cell' of self.

And for that very reason, to all who have passed through 'differentiation' into the supreme 're-integration,' that Being and that Personality is indeed at all times and in all places, to all humanity and to all nature, the Expression and the Revelation of GOD.

4.15. Significs – Ambiguity (1892–1912). A selection*

February 26 1897⁹⁸

*Lessons on the duty of saying what we mean, meaning what we say,
and understanding what we hear or read*

* ['Significs – Ambiguity,' WCYA, Box 30, file 44. There is not a lot in this file: it contains the few unpublished writings which are presented here (mainly from the 1890s, however the years Welby redacted her two important papers 'Meaning and Metaphor,' 1893, and 'Sense, Meaning and Significance,' 1896), in addition to work schemes, lesson plans, drafts of papers, galley proofs, notes, extracts and abstracts from various sources, a letter, a prayer, lists of figurative expressions, phrases and words exemplifying her ideas about language, meaning, and communication, lists of misused terms or phrases, typescript of her paper of 1890 (published in 1891), 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution' (now included in Chapter 2, this volume), 'Sketch of provisional Preface for the new book,' dated January 1912, is included in Chapter 1].

98. [See Chapter 4 this volume, the Section entitled 'Linguistic Consciousness and Education.' This typescript presents notes for a series of lessons on the relation between expression, meaning, and understanding].

- 1) *The purpose of language in general.* The extension of the idea of language illustrated by the scope of the term. The use of the term itself and the use of what it signifies, *direct and indirect*. This a distinction of the highest importance. What a sentence means. What a speaker (or writer) intends (it to mean). How the hearer (or reader) translates the speech or document. What is the direct (or strict) value of the term Translation? What the difference between that and Interpretation? Difference between Sense and Nonsense. Sense is what?

Once more: what is extension, and the use, direct or indirect, of term? Importance of 1) consistency 2) universality in those terms on which in fact depend all others. Thus again in ‘nonsense.’ The value of Humour (‘good nonsense,’ e.g. Foote’s). Its dependence on Sense. A keen ‘sense’ of it always conducive to or concomitant with a keen sense of the niceties of expression.

In another ‘sense’ (note distinction of usage) Nonsense is the irrational. ‘Senseless’ and ‘meaningless’ are not identical. The first may be defined as without reason and the second as without intention, – object, aim, end. Need to be warned of the *double use of the word Meaning*.

- 2) *The duty of speaking 1) with intention 2) with* – what shall we say? Note the clumsy and cumbersome form ‘*intelligibility*.’ Such a word should be reserved for sarcastic use. Note the contrast between this word and e.g. ‘wit.’ Yet we have to use it here. Ejaculation is not speech. Expression of ideas (v. feelings? and sensations?). Careful choice of word and phrase: careful but not laboured. Examples of incoherence (grammatical? logical? sensual?).
- 3) *The duty of the hearer to translate with conscientious care.* Causes of failure in translation partly moral, partly intellectual. Compare with translation from a foreign tongue. Omission to challenge all new words. Omission to make use of every sentence. Illustrations. Hasty inference; as when people argue before they differ. Preconceived ideas, etc.
- 4) *The ambiguity of words.* Failures to catch the sense in which a word is used. Habit of feeling carefully for the sense. Sympathy with the speaker, and imagination. Attention to the context. Patience. All this applies to the [illegible]. This most important: ‘ambiguity of words’ has become a cheap ready-made phrase, and therefore dangerous. All expression is more or less ambiguous: and were it not for this, apathy would descend upon us; inquiry, analysis, criticism, even comparison, would die of inanition. Something is there or is happening: ‘What is it?’, ‘What does it mean?’ These questions would be superfluous if there were from the first none of the doubt which ambiguity generates. Thus failure to catch the sense, etc. applies to all experience. When we go out into the world it is truly said that we find what we bring. There must be ‘sympathy’ for the messages of nature and imagination wherewith to translate them. And there must be attention to the context of a thing or an occurrence. But we must never forget that the ambiguity of experience, what might be called the ambiguity of nature, is always consistent, never dependent on the accidents of ignorance or caprice uncontrolled and undirected. It is – it is the anarchical condition of language – that constitutes the danger and mischief of linguistic ambiguity. And as long as this state of things continues we cannot teach as if it were otherwise; as if in all these matters right order was there and was wilfully or avoidably violated by individuals.
- 5) *The speaker’s choice of words.* Difference between this and the writer’s choice. The good speech reads badly. We can seldom correct ‘misprints’ in speech: and even when we can the wrong word cannot be unheard again. In writing, only the printer need see it, and to him it has no sense, and therefore is innocuous. So-called synonyms and their antonyms. The study of the latter is very useful in testing ideas. Examples and practice.
- 6) *Metaphor.* Dead metaphor is likely to be false, sure to be ineffective. Metaphor is true and effective when the ideas compared are both vividly before the mind. Metaphor may be false in two senses: 1) That here indicated; 2) It may be founded on error. If we use fancy or fiction as metaphor, it ought to be distinguished from fact. The presumption is that the ‘figure’ or

'metalemma' (we need a word for whatever is used figuratively or metaphorically) is always a fact, and therefore consistent with itself and other facts.

[Undated typescript]

Possible Orders in a Co-ordinated Scheme of Work

Start invariable: from Mother-sense directly to Significs as 1) Significative 2) Interpretative. (Here define and emphasise in all its forms the key of the prefix Trans-, Change of place, order, character, value).

Then we come to graduated examples of the working of the Significal Method, Instrument, Engine. And the question of *order* at once arises. This must at first be experimental. Let us then tentatively place certain proposed revisions or re-statements of some main conceptions and tendencies of thought:—

- 1) 'Personal Identity (I and self) *the overlooked third* in matter, mind, and mind's master, leading to the discovery of the —
- 2) Tendency to Triadism and its significance, referred to—
- 3) The forgotten Prologue to the theory of Number, by which we *reckon*, e.g.—
- 4) Time, significantly considered as a variety of Motion in space. We then consider—
- 5) Experience as heliocentric in the immediate cosmos of 'mind,' and—
- 6) Experience as essentially dynamic, and the static as condition of or incidental to this; and we consider—
- 7) The line or direction of Experience in the light of the unrealized supremacy of curve,⁹⁹ and in that of Space (over Time) and Motion (over both).

[Undated typescript]

GOD saith HEAR; but He addeth, UNDERSTAND

The moment of speech, the signal of the moment of Mind which is the birth of interpretation is also the moment of Figure-genesis. Before the speech-epoch, Imagery is embryonic. Then it is born. And for the moment *that* is the secret. We despise 'mere' figure, etc. We are thus despising the difference between man and beast. No beast can Imagine the universe in Word. Still less can he Symbolise. The Archbishop's late judgment is the illustration I want. It is possible to prevent its application over an enormous area. In future all religious cult, observance, rite is thereby more or less recognised as symbolic and metaphorical of something other than itself, yet ultimately inseparable from it; not necessarily a 'thing-by-itself,' but something signified.

Only there is here no absolute standard. Nowhere do we find absolutely fixed meaning. No 'rite' and no 'formula' does or can mean always at all times and to all, the same thing in a *mechanical sense*. Going to Church, etc. symbolises the cult of the Best and Highest. Whatever you believe, there is always some 'more or less,' 'better or worse'; there is always a guessing and a withering line between [illegible] choose.

In the inorganic we have 'geometrical' symmetry and thus predictable precision. The advent of life gives the a-symmetrical phase. The amoeba's pushings-out are irregular. But 1) we find

99. The 'straight line' which has no originally specific name, being a subsumption of this or a subjective deduction from it, and as ultimate, non-existent in Nature. (That is, non-existent as unlimited: restricted in application: included in a larger synthesis as in the case e.g. of the angle).

later on 1) shells ‘made’ for and out of itself by the organism, symmetrical and regular; and 2) various products (bee-cells, sunfish nests, etc.) in geometrical symmetry carried on through all the apparent lapse, etc. This takes higher and higher forms, till it reaches mathematical symbol, algebra, etc. But before this occurs, mental development has passed through an a-symmetrical type of activity, answering to the amoebic processes; and this makes us think that the link with the previous regularity is lost.

The typical valid analogy is the ‘eject.’ And as to metaphor, every phrase and word has had historically 100 different shades of meaning and now has psychologically perhaps 1000. You think you are using it in the one plain literal sense and that someone else is using it in an unreal sense. You are under a delusion, hallucination. A fixed common meaning only exists in a code of signals of fixed value; and in words no value can ever be fixed. *E pur si muove*. The idea itself, the phrase in which you express it is but an attitude or a phase in the race or unit’s experience.

Nature knows the divine will better than we do. So careful of the type? But no; ‘I care for nothing, all shall go.’ And thus alone is all transformed from lower to higher in the way through truth to life.

[Undated typescript]¹⁰⁰

SEMANTICS What is the ‘motive’ or the ‘object’ of the Mimicry of animals (words used in ‘mechanical’ sense)? The preservation of life, whether by attracting prey or escaping danger (enemies). What then is the motive (involuntary or automatic) of human imitation? If not the above, whence and what the pressure which evokes it? We begin with organised likeness of function, rising to likeness of all simple gesture. Throughout this, there is a vein so to speak of differentiation becoming sometimes more sometimes less marked as development proceeds. E.g. brothers and sisters grow more like or more unlike ‘in their little ways.’ Our hearts beat and our eyes wink alike; but we carry our heads differently and move in different curves (more or less gracefully, awkwardly, decisively, etc.). It might be instructive if a registering floor could be constructed on which various people could stand, walk, and run. But the real test would be the impossible one of a register of the curves described by the movements which we call graceful or awkward *in the air*. We know that these are imitated more or less clumsily and more or less intentionally; even the slightest lameness of a prominent person is mimicked. Then we gradually rise into gesture proper, whether silent or accompanied by speech, and gradually superseded by the latter. When this happens, what becomes, 1) of the imitation, and 2) of the pictorial element? Hitherto we have reflected each other like a number of mirrors or echoes more or less perfect. We have played tuning fork and light ray to each other. But this gets less and less easy as 1) the conscious, 2) the voluntary come in. Now both these are rises in scale. Conscious volitional reproduction of gesture and attitude ought to keep the organised tendency to fidelity in common type of function, and add a more and more subtle element of ‘psychical’ sympathy – correspondence in emotion. And conscious volitional representation rising to Figuration and reproduction may be expected to follow the same order.

We are now landed 1) in the region of intellectual sympathy and ‘affinity’ and mutual action and reaction in mental activities; and 2) in the region of the desire to create, to realise, to utilise this by mutual revelation. Our descriptive gesture and our descriptive speech now coming on to the field have found their motive. We wish to make up for animal power lost by annexing the mental force of the whole ‘tribe’; – to make brain do for muscle. We wish even to re-enter on a higher plane, that condition of unailing coordination and cooperation which obtain among the units of our own psychical organization. And it is no longer necessary, when we wish to convey an impression or a group of impressions, to endeavour to reproduce an object or an occurrence –

100. [‘Imitation’ in handwriting above the word ‘Semantics,’ possible galley proofs].

e.g. to go on all fours and growl for 'wolf' or stretch up arms standing for 'tree' – or club a supposed enemy or chew and swallow supposed food. The means for this become more and more perfect, the method more and more economical. The principle of shorthand comes in. Thus it is that we re-enter, through these various imaginative, pictorial stages, the land of parable first; then of Image, Simile, Illustration, Metaphor. For Parable is the Sentence-word of the Figurative. Miss Amelia Edwards' suggestion that the Egyptians began with actual object-writing tallies with this (Quote). And the Imagination in this scientific sense of the word – the calling up and acting out or expressing one fact by means of another; the appeal to link whether of likeness in form or of action; the recognition of continuity in character among the otherwise disparate and [illegible] becomes the most powerful of instruments for conveying Meaning. Here we enter on a new enquiry. What then do we mean by Meaning. What is Interpretation? What is the Significant and the Important?

Now man's life, in relation to this planet, is not pre-natal, not even infantile, but adult, possibly even in some respects senescent. But in relation to the greater world from which this planet emerged and to which it belongs it is yet 'unborn.' And the pre-natal vocabulary refuses to furnish us with the symbolism of the 'born' life.

Thus, as Sir Norman Lockyer told us, Science is not yet born, only conceived: and so likewise of course is religion – for it is true of man himself. And it is fitting that the appeal for a truer education should be made by the astronomer. For he is the only man who holds as proved fact and has learnt by inference from observation and experiment that the sun, moon and stars are not projected by the world to which this 'human' life belongs as lamps for lighting its inhabitants by day and night, but that they belong (and witness) to a greater world with greater potentialities than ours, one tiny speck amid millions!

Of that 'world' our own stellar universe may well be a part. Of that world our knowledge must grow in an expanding curved spiral *on* spiral, again on greater spiral. . . . And our part is to read, to interpret the universe not *of* matter but *which* matters – which Signifies. Does the Universe yet signify to us? Have we yet read its signals and its Signal Value? Does the Idealist know his own business yet which is not to contradict or refute, but to interpret and absorb the Materialist and the Realist? Not to despise the mechanical, mechanism, machinery but to learn its significance. Do the Materialist – and the Realist naïve (raw) or manufactured, know their own business? Not to refute and despise the Idealist but to assimilate and to render him in fresh streams of expressive thought in fresh versions. Does the Free Willer recognise that Freedom is itself determined and that the determined man being free, *gets his way* and more, becomes a way? Does the Determinist see that he has to determine the very Sense of Freedom and realise it thus in larger measure, – a Freedom without caprice, a Liberty which carries Law, one like that of St. Bernard: Love GOD, (the Perfect) and do what you will; a liberty which means spontaneous Order?

Does all this seem 'visionary' or at least irrelevant to Sociology? Well, doubtless the reversal of Copernicus must have seemed so to many contemporaries.

And we have perhaps too much overlooked the fact that the Church is crushing its advocates who had so far a true instinct that the position of our material world in relation to the starry universe was intimately bound up with human ideals, aspirations, conduct. We seem to have lost this instinct entirely, and to suppose that there can be no common ground whatever between our moral interests and the facts which science, in ever greater profusion and ever stricter analysis, brings us. And as to the 'visionary,' unhappily by one of the many disastrous reversals and perversions by which we allow our ideas to be confused and falsified at their very source, we use the words of vision to express only the defects and the illusions of our mental sight. Whereas the highest object of science is to bring the speculative or the visionary to the highest point of usefulness.

[undated typescript]

*The 'Bryant' Index (Sensifics)*¹⁰¹

- A Meaning: various views of its scope and value: Significance, Changes of sense, New words.
- B The power of words. Words as signals and symptoms as well as symbols. Words that serve loyally and words that betray. Words that work for, and words that coerce, thought. Words which divulge and words which conceal. Words which convey and words which bar.
- C Instances of complaint, depreciation, despair of Language. Remediable losses or defects.
- D The Modern Babel: sources and causes of difficulty, obscurity and dispute. Debasement or degradation of words. Their promotion or apotheosis. 'Mere words': verbalism.
- E Ambiguity, inconsistency, confusion and the slipshod in trained writers (serious and humorous). Cases of waste. (Bulls and literals)
- F The waste or neglect of *distinction*. Its confusion with division or separation, severance or sunderance. Its special value.
- G Examples of 1. legal, 2. political ambiguity or definition (serious and humorous)
- H Questions of style.
- J Translation. Difference of value 1. in the word, 2. in order. Borrowed words or order. The expressiveness of literal translation (used in joke). Idiom as barrier or as fresh opening, – as means of enrichment. Extension of the sense and application of Translation.
- K Questions of metaphor, good or bad, valid or invalid. Definitions and metaphors of language itself.
- L Conditions of clearness.
- M Attempts (or proposals) to control, to enrich, Or to *precise* (*preciser*) language. (This word a case in point). Future of Expression. Hopes for Language (serious and humorous).

101. [This typewritten list is marked from A to M where it stops, presumably it is incomplete. The letters are in handwriting and placed alongside each paragraph].

4.16. Significs – Imagery (1899–1911)*

1899¹⁰²

The Betrayals of Metaphor

Take Mr Gladstone's 'IMPREGNABLE ROCK of HOLY SCRIPTURE.'

What does he mean by impregnable? Something which cannot be dislodged or shattered by any known forces? Then there is no such 'rock' known. And no rock can be impregnated with the germs of its own life. In truth, if a Scripture is really holy – as the outcome and record of holiness – it is worthy of the high honour of impregnation with the highest life: it is better than a barren rock, it is a fertile soil or womb normally and wholesomely developing that Life which is not only earthly but heavenly.

What difference would it have made if he said immutable? Or again indestructible, or one more unchangeable? Lastly, what if he said invulnerable, or inviolable?

Further, what does his Rock stand or rest upon? And whatever he may answer, what again is that basis founded upon? Whence its ultimate fixity?

Then, what is the character of his Rock? Does it purify or move us? is it alive? or is it conscious? can rocks raise, guide, nourish, enlighten us?

A friend to whom these words were shown when first written objected that what Mr. Gladstone meant was a fortified and defended rock. Then surely he should have said 'impregnable fortress.' But in either case, his metaphor gives up what it is intended to support or preserve. A fortified rock which cannot be carried but assault may be undermined; and even if really 'impregnable' its garrison may be starved.

As in many cases, the metaphor actually plays into the hands of those against whom it is used. They have only to take the writer at his word, and 'Holy Scripture' becomes a barren rock which at best can only obstruct hostile advance. It can never win over assailants, or itself become the aggressor. Its garrison can only do this by abandoning its shelter, and encountering all the dangers of the open from which it was intended to guard them. It can act as a base and a menace; but nothing more.

But by this time not merely Mr. Gladstone himself, but whoever is reading this is impatiently protesting – 'why, of course it is absurd to analyse or press the figure like this, just because it is mere figure. No one supposes that the Bible is really like a geological rock. As well ask whether it is granite or old sandstone!'

Quite so. *Then what difference would it have made if, to convey the same meaning, Mr. Gladstone had said, the 'intangible atmosphere' or the 'impalpable light' or the 'incorruptible ether,' or best of all the fertilised ovary, of Holy Scripture?*

Do we object that such images are simply strange to most of us and therefore would not serve? The fact may be conceded as far as the ether is concerned, – because it is only now that we are beginning to acquire any real knowledge of the medium including and supporting all which we know as 'solid' (as well as the liquid and gaseous), and conveying all known forms of energy. And moreover it may be reasonably urged that the popular ideas of the intangible and impalpable (and even the invisible) yet more the ethereal, are bound up with those of the unreal or empty, or at least the vague and shadowy, and the easily dispersed and dissipated; while the last alone, like its converse, the impregnable, touches in gain or loss the vitally real.

* ['Significs – Imagery,' WCYA, Box 30, file 47. This file contains unpublished papers written between 1899 and 1911, all of which have been included here].

102. [In handwriting on top of the page].

But (to adopt Mr. Gladstone's point of view) what saith the Scripture itself? GOD is Spirit – (breath, air); GOD is Light. And Life. Have we here nothing which can perform for us the office of a very nucleus of Being?

Both Air and Light are below us as well as above us; a straight line carried far enough 'downwards' from our feet must find them 'beneath' all our 'impregnable rocks.' And whereas these last are only partially indispensable to any order of the animal world, water shares their sustaining power not only in the case of fishes but (under certain conditions) throughout the animal sphere; air shares it in the case of birds and insects, and finally gas (again under certain conditions) can support the rest. But the rock can do nothing more than serve as stepping or standing ground for us, except possibly act as reservoir or channel for a life-stimulating power, – water or gas.

Now air, light, and *one thing more* are far more vitally related to us. What is this last entity? Fire. ('GOD is a consuming fire.' Intense Fire gives out white Light – which again decomposes into colour and casts shadow. And intense Fire scatters the integrated, the coherent, the solid; breaks up the system, the structure, the group.

But what then is 'heat' whereby Fire does this? A quickening of slower vibration which when yet slower is *heard*, and slower still is *felt* as swing, as rhythm or wave, till we come to the vast pulses of tide, and the cycles of the day, the month, the year, the century.

And what then does 'light' thus mean? Again a quickening of the heat waves. *When we wish to express Life, this is a word which we rightly use.* Touched to the quick, and the 'quickening' of our embryonic or languid or dying moral sense, are truly, *validly* expressive terms.

And gravitation. Does it not draw and repel. Pull and push everything in the known universe with inexorably invariable and orderly action? Can anything which we know of escape, though much may in a sense resist it?

Every rock can be 'blasted' somehow even if only in some planetary collision; and we may go and walk or take our stand upon hard sand or soil, or float in a vessel upon water instead, in equal security.

But the air, – can we destroy (though we do our best to pollute) it? Only, perhaps some 'clash of worlds' or what has happened to the moon, might do so. Light – can we crush (or even poison) that? Well, the colliding of all light-giving suns might end it. 'Ether' – can we smash or scatter or taint *that*? And do we know of anything that could?

And 'gravitation,' well, the question needs no answer. Besides, we have been ignoring 'electricity,' the newness of which gives it to many of us a sort of vulgarity which, as all ideas were once modern, and the essence of our religion at least includes new birth, new life, new mental and moral 'light' and 'force,' proves nothing but our own inveterate spiritual meanness, if not our utter lack of spiritual life and reality. For the Real and the Worthy never depend on age! The ancient has always been modern once; the true prophet is the man who rightly interpreting (illegible) and the (illegible) is least afraid of the future and the new – of the deeper unreached layer, or the further unreached horizon or the higher unreached stage of experience.

But what follows from all this?

Suppose we begin by asking ourselves how far in any vitally important issue (such as the historical or experimental or mathematical or logical warrant of what is most precious and of greatest worth in our eyes,) we are using image, figure or metaphor with due attention to the class of association which it will call up in the average mind, and therefore to the impression which it will generally make? Do we suppose that there is nothing of the nature of *grade* or *rank* in the right use of imagery on the most vital of subjects? Do we place the 'statistical' type of metaphor foremost or on a level with, the 'dynamical'? Do we seriously look upon the Organic order of figure or symbol – the body, the members, the head, flesh, blood, life, birth, and so on, and the psychological, sense, mind, truth and will, – as being precisely (in its effect on hearer or reader), on a level with the artificial or mechanical order or even with the geological? Are we prepared

to maintain that to compare, say faith and its object to a groping in the dark or in a thick fog, to a firmly fixed, blind, lifeless *stone* to act as a basis, to 'take our stand upon' or to build an 'impregnable' fortress upon, conveys no less valid ideas to the mind, than to compare them for instance to a progress or advance along a Way leading through all Truth to the highest Life, or to the supreme consummations of human organisation and relation?

Would it have done as well – such expressions being 'mere metaphor' – if we had been told that GOD is Matter or Form, Mass or Structure: that He is dark, cold, dense, inert, unconscious Substance and that the Manifestation of that GOD is no 'Way' at all but a fixed Central Foundation absolutely unchangeable and holding us bound immovably to it; representative not of all, but of one particular kind of truth – the 'supernatural,' and not of all but of one special development of life – the 'spiritual'?

But stay – is the 'spiritual life' itself a literal or a metaphorical expression? And is the Supernature above the Divine Nature? And, 'I am the Light of the World'; 'I am the Bread of Life'; 'I am the Resurrection'; – where are we? Where indeed! Is it not time we asked ourselves a few very plain and simple questions, of which the first is, what here do we really mean, and how far are we really conveying that meaning to each other? In truth we enter on momentous explorations and very awful wars in the cause of man's welfare, with a recklessly 'light heart' as to our means of expression; thus falling into gratuitous and avoidable confusions and ambiguities which are, it may be, main factors of the present collapse (in the 'spiritual' or 'religious' sphere) into a clamorous and mutually accusing anarchy.

4 February 1906 [untitled]

We have sacrificed by misusing the image of the inner and outer. We badly want the true inner and outer, as in space, so in mind. We have the wide sweeps of desire and the exploring pioneers of question, the high reaches of hope and motive, the deep stillness of reflective thought: we have the outlying regions and lofty pasts of speculation, and of survey, and the secret cells of meditation and invention, the innersprings of energies which move, as we say, the world: the true 'world' that is, the course of Man's life and thinking, of his feeling, caring, seeing, being.

But the idea that all this is 'inner' to the 'outer' of motion and space is ludicrous. Inner is obviously as much spatial as outer. Better even reverse the bull if we must use it. But let us leave these intellectual falsities. We are always wanting what in the end we find we can't have because it isn't good enough. We wanted six days of creation or an Olympus or a fetish all powerful, or an Oracle: well. We can't eventually have them. We wanted a solidly founded world and the atoms of Democritus, — well, we can't have them. But it is always the Better that we gain: not that which is better in our ignorant childish eyes, but what is ever to *be* that in our growing eyes. For we must grow even new eyes.

5 November 1904 [untitled]

We often speak of the 'innermost structure' of the mind. Now in what sense has the mind a structure? In the sense of a 'building' (which name, like edifice, emphasises the act, not its result or product) or in the sense of an organism? As we freely apply the building up imagery (and ideas indicated or revealed in imagery) to the organism, whereas the organic growth is essentially different from the inorganic accretion, both senses seem to be involved.

But suppose that a truer comparison were a complex symphony 'played' or 'performed' by an orchestra, or an elaborate scheme of manœuvres executed by a fleet, or an intricate web-spinning design by a weaver, or again the logical development of a highly complex mathematical problem, or last, the scheme of interrelated motions in a solar system or a given group of these? In that case the mind would answer, like the 'soul' to life itself; and life itself would answer to co-ordinated

Motion due to an impelling ‘force.’ Mind would then not be coupled with matter as two terms of an equation but would always be thus coupled with motion. In both cases we should have content and product, things and matter. But we should never confound these with the creative energies and the incalculably complex motions to which they are due. And we should never (as alas we usually do) compare the mind to a completed structure or erection; we should never ask for the foundations of its supposed solid and heavy walls, constructed of stone and brick or wooden ideas or conceptions!

Mind would be comparable to the marvellously co-ordinated movements of the army of builders and of the engines and machines or apparatus which they used, carrying out or performing the synthetic intentions of the architect, signalised and symbolised by but not contained in, his plans. It would be describable in terms of the processes of evolution of a house: and would imply among other things a transition from diffusion to integration and so on.

*May 1906*¹⁰³

Imagery

(I)

To use the dialect of one form or type of experience to convey another less known or obvious (whether always or at the moment): in short to use Imagery of any sort, ought to be recognised as a prerogative and duty sacred in the highest sense. It ought to be morally classed with those of being truthful, honourable, honest, and therefore trustworthy, — worthy of confidence.

One of the very first things impressed on a child ought to be this sacredness of all Figure and thus also of all Symbol. To play fast and loose with imagery, to use it even casually or carelessly, ought to be looked upon as an outrage, as an inexcusable wrong done to the race. Tamper with the highest means of expression — at best necessarily inadequate — and you strike in fact at the heart of man’s best and most precious interests. As long as we do this we have no right to plead ignorance or impotence. The misuse of Imagery is the most fertile source of both; and indeed the real source, it may be, of the idea of the ‘unknowable.’

Some may say — may even blindly boast — that their thinking is not ‘pictorial’: that as they never notice the associations or reconstruct the originals of the figures which language and custom compel them to use, they (and therefore their hearers) escape scot-free from what they sometimes call the ensnaring cult of analogy, and from its consequences. Analogy and metaphor, they will explain, are merely momentary or accidental helps, of value little more, in the best of cases, than rhetorical. Illustration is to them but a fugitive and at most a convenient aid to clearness of exposition. To be careful and scrupulous in such a case, they will protest, is time and trouble wasted: better to proclaim that if image or figure is to be used, comparison to be made, the first that occurs — especially to an eloquent and well-read speaker — will do all that is needed. It is absurdly pedantic or pettifogging, they will insist, to be bothering about ‘merely verbal’ questions. And as to learning anything but technical philology from the history of a phrase or word, or from the meaning or purpose (as the use) of e.g. a prefix: such an idea seems to them — that is, to most of us — almost fantastic, when indeed it is not downright dangerous. Beware of becoming slaves to our words! will be the cry of the most abject albeit unconscious, thralls of idiom. But to whom do they often cry that? To anyone who has realised something of the tremendous stewardship which language implies, and its intimate connection with expression in all senses and forms.

For while everything in our experience, whether we know (or suspect) it or no, is instinct with implication and in some sort with value; while science is daily showing us the unspeakable importance which the smallest detail of detected fact may have for us and our future, we are

103. [Date added in handwriting].

still content, in the supreme matter of expression, with the falsities or distortions of fossils of inherited Image; or with random and inconsistent substitutes. It is time indeed that science herself realised that the cardinal importance of using the right thing in the right way at the right place and moment, needs to be pressed on her notaries in this matter of figurative usage. For it is just the recognition, in her special methods of this paramount need which has brought her such glorious triumphs in so short a time. The extent to which such a warning is required would hardly indeed be believed without a somewhat extended study of the cases in which antiquated or ill-fitting terms are still allowed to mislead, not only the popular mind, but even that of the scientific student. It is even the scientific teacher himself, as can easily be shown, who is foremost in complaining of this. But he can obtain no effective redress, because no practical interest or consensus is yet available. He is practically, like the rest of us, helpless to initiate what, it is safe to say, would be the greatest advance of our time in the general apprehension of the value of the scientific methods and achievements.

31 October 1906

*Significs Imagery. The Implicates of 'Understanding'*¹⁰⁴

Do we even yet suspect, much more understand, the pressing importance because the cardinal significance, of Imagery, and of the Analogy or *reflective identity* which this implies? Do we really, most of us, understand the momentous difference to us, between true and false image; between as it were a shadow cast, a reflection thrown by nature, and the shadow or reflection of one object misfitted, that is, *foisted* by some aberration of vision, on to another; or again between a likeness which implies some central or illusive resemblance?

Do we Under Stand? Rather, will it be reckoned fanciful or far-fetched to write these words separately in this context; to press the actual meaning of under-standing, of standing under Something? No wonder if it is so reckoned; since we have, not so much missed or failed to reach, as *forgotten* the tremendous factor in the development of our mental life that linguistic Image, *figure of speech*, has throughout uncounted ages been perverted in use. There are of course inevitably innumerable cases where we inherit and blindly continue to use imagery implying analogies which belong to an era of ignorance; of misreading of natural facts or order which we have long since outgrown and left behind.

But also there are some cases in which the mother-wisdom, the mother-sense, the instinctive even unconscious response to the call of reality has been true as the answer of the senses to the imperious challenge of our material surroundings. Our forefathers, our remote progenitors, at least knew that it was their vital business not merely to over stand, not merely to stand upon the firm ground of their home-world, but pre-eminently, as erect and upward looking, to Under Stand; to recognise practically and in every conceivable sense, their relations to That which was 'above' them – to their sun-filled, star-set Heaven, sky, universe; no vague or misty, no fantastic or wanton realm of magic or superstition but an orderly realm of stupendous fact to which they, as their world, actually belonged. And this Realm, to us supreme and all-inclusive, is not, be it noted, only atmospheric, or as we say in a much misused figure, 'spiritual'; but beyond that, as we are at least learning to say, 'etherial'; that is, belonging to the necessarily inferred Medium, Mediator, means, condition, of all that we can speak of as actual or natural being.

Only by Under Standing then can we read the cosmical compass: only in the attitude of Under Standing can we at last turn the master-key which has too long locked away not *for* us but *from* us uncounted riches of our own true life and knowledge; the master-key of a cosmical *adolescence*, waiting till we are ready for it, till, at long last, we shall verily see that we are here to stand under

104. [In handwriting on top of page].

our true Home; to – Understand. For thus again shall we learn, both to acquire with the priceless help of science an undreamt of wealth of fitting and valid Imagery; and also to interpret with the sureness of a newly-gained intimacy our planetary and our cosmical experience; the world on which, yet more the world under which, we stand; that world which includes ours and has indeed borne and mothered it; that world which is not merely under or over us, but in which we thrill with a concentrated life and potential growth in complexity and efficiency, like that of the germinal nucleus, the very ‘centrosome’ of our own physical organism.

One sometimes wonders, Are we alive yet? Have we a glimmering of the Sense of which we talk so vaguely and confusingly? Do we so much as suspect what that Sense ought to be and do and preserve us from? Do we ever dream of the almost utopian results which must accrue when the Sense of our Symbols becomes fitting: when we find only Good Sense and Common Sense in our estimate and treatment of the cardinal questions of that expression on which alike depend practical activities and the thinking which alone controls, directs, interprets, applies, and utilises them?

3 January 1907 (Revised May 1909)

Reflection and Image

Children must be taught, that is *shown*, the difference between the imaginative, and the imaginary as fantastic and illusive. The conscious reflection, trustworthy as the ocular, is the true norm. But the organically visual – visionary – is unconscious and involuntary; e.g. the dead bullock’s eye, &c. Therefore the intentional interpretation of the ‘mechanical’ reflection supervenes, and that rises from the imaginative to the reflective, in which we touch the highest intellectual processes.

A mental image, then, is always creative; but also always, when true, reflective and potentially reproductive. We say colloquially ‘He is the very image of his father.’ But you get distorted images on a convex or concave, or any other than plane, surface. You may have the reflection of a reflection refracted or more and more distorted. Or you may have the reflected object partly out of range. In that case something (you *know* not what, though you may *infer* it) is needed to complete the picture.

What then ought to be the distinction between Image and Picture and between both in linguistic metaphor? How far is it dependent on analogy, and what is the relation of this to reflection (visual: mirror-reflection) and again to equation – mathematical or personal? All this needs to be systematically examined on significant lines. As yet it is only done on the scientific side by the analysis of the visual mechanism. Failure, distortion, paralysis of this means destruction, elimination. We need to apply this to the mental world. We are not directly conscious of the visual image on the retina, nor of its (more than) analogue mind; of its mental correlate. Present language of course fails, since it mainly fits now antiquated or exploded theory; and the better anyone wrote the worse that failure would be because the more plausible, the more difficult to detect or suspect, and thus the more insidious.

Here comes in the difference between Sign and Symbol. Is there organic symbol? Or only Organic Sign? Reflection in the latter as we have ‘seen’ is direct Sign. But what from this point of view, is Symbol? *Is it voluntary Sign with likeness discarded?* Is it a tremendous step to be able to dispense with likeness in the remainder? To cause not only the diverse but the utterly unlike, to represent an original? To bring association of the unlike to bear? To do in short what we do every time we write down the stroke ‘I’ to denote the Actor, Willer, Thinker, Speaker: every time indeed we write down any letter or group of letters and make them stand for senses, meanings, ideas, thoughts, in their turn signalling or symbolical, expressive, in some fashion, of reality? We have already done the same thing with sound: sound in fact is the true medium of language; script is but a recording device though of incalculable value. But this is too large a field to enter here. In both cases all this is involuntary symptom or symbol as well as often voluntary sign. There is nothing correspondent, imitative, reflective about it. What then, once more, is the true difference,

the working and thus essential difference between sign and symbol? And between both and the reflection of which the retinal image impartial, incontrovertible, is the type?

6 September 1907

Significs in Imagery

How strangely we remain, in imagery, the victims of a false conception of space and of the heavens! We speak of the 'lower' world as of a place of degradation: it is a shame when we sink: we are accused of baseness: our fall is ruin, at least we can once more be raised and re-instated on a 'higher' level. All our ethical aims are 'high': the moral 'heaven' of reward, or the abode of Deity is 'above' us: we aspire to it, scorning noble earth as beneath our feet, and loathing the 'abysses' of moral infamy. And so on.

And then, all the while, the secret is that we never go far enough down, and therefore – through. Why has no poet ever glorified the unspeakable moment of cosmic vision which comes to the really penetrative explorer of the 'spiritual' or 'Moral' or be it noted, intellectual, world, when the 'lower' crust of the traversed mind-planet, – pierced, through fiery centre, to antipodal surface – is at last broken through, and we stand once more 'under' no strange, new, bewildering unknown Heaven, but the very same that we left – seen by eyes purged at last?

A hell, a hole, a depth of fire? Yes: the centre of the Earth. Below all the levels where soil, mud slime, are found. But if a life cannot resist fire, that life is surely feeble. For the planet whereon it is evolved came forth from fires to which ours are but dull smoulder or bare warmth. In a sense we recognise this: for we commend the victor over the 'fiery trials' of life. We say of such an one: He is tried and trusty; he has come through the furnace unharmed, he has not avoided, shirked it. The story of the Three Children in the Old Testament is indeed a parable of this. The king thought he was compelled to condemn them to a fiery hell of torture and death. The sequel hints at what we have lost: the original sense of the true symbolic value and thus mission and office of fire, which even the fire-worshippers and the sacrificers to Moloch have only misread and misapplied. And so we misread and misapply the lessons of Space, although, with a remnant of cosmic instinct, we do speak of its incalculable depths.

Most true that the moral troglodyte is vile: most true that the life buried in all soil or even soiled at all is ignoble. Most true again that in the earthy darkness, all Heaven and GOD seems myth and nothing real but stone and dust and slime; air fit to breathe that is the truly spiritual tainted and becoming merely the mystic dream of disease or wandering fancy: and light itself no other.

But only, through all, press on, press on, press on! That is, – Understand that Man is the radiating energy here to transfigure by interpreting, by applying, by vitality ennobling the meanest grain of the poorest dust there can be. See how Science is here the pioneer, showing the way to us all. See how, by her inspired and prophetic method, she transfigures and consecrates the despised elements of being: revealing even the heart of corruption and decay – yes, of ordure itself – a chemistry of purity and beauty, a touch of redeeming holiness. We see this, indeed, in the familiar lessons of the pearl; the pearl which we owe to disease, which represents degeneration. But one may read the same lesson in many forms of 'waste product' seen through the windows of science.

Are we then to tolerate corruption? Truth, Light, and Race-love forbid! No: one thought must pass through what answers to the purifying furnace, the uttermost crucible: the mind of *true* Man is its flame, through which nothing vile can persist. We suffer some pain or loss? Never turn back; go on. . . We come to some horror and evil? Never recoil and flee; grapple therewith and conquer; wringing good out of its poisonous fibres, out of its barren ashes. . . For through it all, Good is won, and our Home-world can never be lost.

If we cannot pierce through our planet, at least we can travel round it, and everywhere find the same heaven, the mothering *Beyond* of our world, the uterine Shrine of all worlds, engendering Life on ours and the marvellous child of that Life, – the Mind, conscious and reasoning, of Man.

That, in our yet childish image, is a cell of the cosmic organism, a brain-cell which is there to infer, and respond to the call of Significance . . . Yes, we must learn to *signify*. Man has no right to the senseless. It is verily a cosmic crime to leave Nature and Home unexplored by the guardian of will and reason, that is, to leave them unread, untranslated by Man. For what is he but the Interpreter, born for that very work of reading a mystery-world with the eyes of inspired childhood, eyes as outposts of growing Brain? . . .

28 December 1907 [untitled]

What we really want as substitute for the deceptive ‘internal’ in ordinary and psychological usage is ‘autonomous’ or ‘spontaneous’ or simply ‘awar-ant’ or ‘awar-al.’ And for the ‘external,’ words of course fail: that is the penalty of our folly. One of the sense-terms would be nearest: sense-stirring or some like form. If, having the opportunity of growing food-plants we had grown weeds, some innocuous, some poisonous but all non-nutritive, we should deserve the result.

One distinction available to express the non-conscious and conscious spheres would be that between stimulant and stimulated, between activity, (1) in environment (2) in the environed: *or again*, between activity as radiant and activity as (focussant? vortex-al? vortex-ic? concentrant?) *or again* between sperm-force and ovum-force, sperm-call and ovum-response?

At all costs we must get rid of the false *outside and inside*, a legacy from one of the blindest of historical epochs. A thing isn’t alive or dead, good or bad, intelligent or stupid, senseful or senseless, aware or unaware, organic or mechanical – *spatial or mental* because it is outside or inside an imaginary, *in this case a fanciful* line or box! These things are emphatically *not* spatial or comparable to the spatial; and *position* is as falsely attributed to our ultimate differences as age or even colour would be.

Thing known and knowledge, Thing felt and feeling are not older or younger; and if we think so it is because we are bamboozled by our own perversions of the time idea, and its erection to a false status.

We are still unaware of the *havoc* caused in our ultimate conceptions and convictions, or their collapse in a general agnosticism or pessimism caused by these easily remediable expressive evils. We are typing up a right hand and bandaging a right eye in the misleading images we use, if, as we sometimes boast, we have stripped them of all associations and references. In that case we ought to substitute for Inner and Outer, Internal and External (and their false contexts) just an *a* or *b* or some unused group of letters. For while our artificialised training may to some extent paralyse the natural imaginary, pictorial, symbolic faculties in a few of us, the great majority are still unconscious Appealers to image: and the most ‘abstract’ of thinkers will tell you that you should see as he sees, quite clearly, the nature of the truth of the principles he expounds or the theory he advances or describes.

9 April 1908 [untitled]

Those whose minds are not consistently pictorial do not realise the power for evil which the inherited or acquired imagery of language may exert in giving unconscious and involuntary bias to their own and their readers’ minds. We are apt to forget that originally language was inevitably and wholly representative of sense-response and organic (especially muscular) function, being in this sense entirely analogical and metaphorical. Every argument was necessarily conducted in terms of organic experience.

We no longer, at least in civilised life, directly and intentionally refer to ‘natural’ process, in the sense of process other than mental. Thus the automatic functioning of now unnoticed similes, working silently under our intellectual surface, – as woven into the very texture of linguistic expression, – strongly affects the texture of our thoughts and our reasoning.

The pictorial mind is here safer than the logically abstractive mind. From a serene though illusive independence of the primordial conditions of language as reflecting as well as symbolising, organic experience, the scientific and metaphysical thinkers alike fail to recognise directly the coercion of the appeal which has become involuntary. The enemy in short becomes a more secret and insidious one.

The only escape from this would be a purely formal notation like the mathematical. But we cannot talk in formula except for special purposes. The true solution is to recover awareness of the secret despotism of the inherited mind, which, when we think we have effectually silenced the heresy of mental and linguistic imagery, whispers like Galileo. And yet I reflect and picture! This will rouse us to insist at least that the avowed and obvious threads of analogy of which language is a woven web, shall be the most relevant, the truest to fact that we can hope to find and use.

It is impossible for a generation already adult and fixed in mental attitude, to do more than prepare for this momentous rectification, this release of Languages for an orderly freedom which must double the suggestive significance of natural process and human tendency and conduct.

It is even impossible for one who would call attention to this yet ignored instrument of expression and of definition and solution, to be easily understood within the ordinary span of a lifetime. The very fact that it makes in the long run for pre-eminent lucidity and is both accurately and nobly worthy of our most complex as well as our most simplest undertakings, involves delay until there has been time to inoculate a generation with its life-giving 'serum.' For every hearer or reader at present, unconsciously and involuntarily translates every utterance of such a one into terms of inherited and accepted usage. And this must always be so in every forward pointing attitude.

The pioneers of science have always complained of the difficulty caused by ingrained habits of speech which have been created by views now seen as obsolete or at least defective, and which persist in suggesting the very associations which it is now imperative to outgrow. This creates in fact a paradoxical situation. Pioneers of every type, in an endeavour to increase the significant value of language and to eliminate the causes of needless confusion, obscurity, and ambiguity, *have no language but the very one they would regenerate* in which to define their aims and their methods, and the prospects of practical and beneficial result implied in their study and their appeal. If indeed, in the ordinary sense, they could from the first make themselves unmistakably clear, their contention that language was becoming a treacherous morass would be triumphantly disproved out of their own mouths. This would be pointed out as proof that their whole position was invalid and chimerical, and that language, as we have it, when properly acquired and used, was fully adequate to all demands, and only hostile to the mystery-monger and the crank.

23 July 1908 [untitled]

There are few things more unintelligent, because ineptly wasteful where economy is especially needed, than our use of certain popular metaphors. Before citing examples of this and appealing in *education* for their deprecation it may be best to point out that this is one of the many cases in which present education as it were leaves cracks and gaps through which the precious 'content' of teacher's and pupil's mind is perpetually leaking out, or, to change the simile, the true lines of advance are constantly warped. The result is practically the same as that of mis-pronunciation and mis-spelling: e.g. *bar* for bare, and *bear* for bare.

We rightly correct with care these last tendencies, not merely as a matter of custom but also because the ignorance or neglect of rule or peculiarities of dialect racy in their effect, must not be allowed to complicate the unanimity of intercourse. Having corrected sound and form we proceed to Grammar, and replace caprice or disorder by consistency and order; explaining always that not merely custom but economy and expressiveness are at stake. Finally we add some training in at least elementary Logic.

Some of us indeed think that these precautions are too *rigidly* taken: that expressiveness, apt, fitting, pungent, illuminative, illustrative, suggestive, is often needlessly sacrificed by not adopting instead of denouncing some racy and significant idioms or accents or spelling of unsophisticated dialects, or of the child's spontaneous speech. But then if we *did* in that direction enrich, economise, and invigorate language, we should have to be careful to make it less garrulous, less cumbersome, less wordy, as less pompous, less pedagogic¹⁰⁵, less pedantically formulative. We must see that our contributions neither impoverish nor sacrifice quality; lessen neither dignity, grace, nor delicacy. Even the whimsical must be subservient to the one great need and rule, concentrated, apt, effective and terse expressiveness. Beauty must here follow usage as flawless as we can make it. The instrument must be 'in perfect tune' before the musician can entrance us or even attract us by his playing.

Now in this sphere of imagery, analogy, metaphor, trope, &c. in short of linguistic comparison, reflection, parallel, or likeness we find one of the most notable of our curious inconsistencies. Whereas we press convention, propriety, rule, formality into a rigid 'board-school' or 'academic' mould, and risk loss on this side, we are curiously careless, generally indeed unsuspecting, of the fact, well known to be the psychologist, that we are often powerfully swayed by *unintentional* suggestion: by the influence e.g. of the common or direct use of word or phrase which *infects* so to speak its analogical or metaphorical use.

The history and the influence of racial *experience* lies hidden in the words and phrases which we use illustratively, which we borrow from the needs or gifts or dangers of life, in order to make clear in language some *sense* in which we would be understood, some *meaning* which we would convey, some *significance* which we would imply.

Let us take then as a first example our use in signalling, emphasising, importance, necessary assumption or provision, of the terms Solid Ground, Basis, Foundation. Nothing can be more interesting or educative than the racial history of the stress we lay on these facts and the mental use we make of them. Nothing can be more admirable than the service they can and often do render. But few things can be sadder than the way in which for many generations, teachers instead of *leading* have *followed* degenerative usage, have perpetuated actual blunder, actual confusion in the use of analogies like this one. Before the days of Galileo, it must be remembered, the use of Solid Ground, Basis and Foundation as figures of universal and primary necessity was entirely justified. The earth itself was assumed to be securely founded; and we need never fear its being detached from its *basis* and set whirling in space. *Solid ground* was therefore the need of the very world we lived on; to be 'supported on nothing' was crashing ruin.

Well, so it still is (though even this, as the progressive of artificial 'aviation' is pointedly teaching us, admits of some exception) for us men. We must have a firm substratum to stand and *yet more to build upon*. *To build?* Yes: with wood, brick or stone or concrete, &c.: shelters, defences, huts, towns. All must be as firmly founded as the tree is rooted. Yet we are making *aeroplanes* not merely *geoplanes*. . . And the time may come when some of us shall work and practically live in the air, and only descend solid earth for food, &c.

16 February 1908 [untitled]

When we knead damped flour into a loaf are we building it? Why do we confound the ideas of build and blend, erect and compose, found or base, or rest and start?

Why do we use indifferently (or in habitual perversion) the imagery of space-direction and content, form, outline construct, and all else which the idea of space creates, implies, or presumes? Are we really ourselves *built* up of bricks we call 'cells'? Well, we deserve to be; and we behave, especially as Expressants, as if we were that and no more. And we are proud of the fact that we build up our children's minds of bricks well hardened, squared and cornered, uncompromising,

105. For, note, 'pedagogue' has become a term of reproach like 'pedant.'

moulded and burnt into unchangeable conformity. They may shelter and they may last; but they tend to imprison and to stifle.

Then we make a distinction. We admit, we even insist, that the credit of brick-making from mere clay is our own. And for our most august and reverent building we go to 'Nature' and we quarry her Stone. Carefully we lay blocks of this as we lay our more homely and kiln-dried bricks.

The result in both cases is triumphant. We have effectually squashed, scattered, killed the trembling plasms, the sensitive fibrils, the exploring tendrils, of a subtly creative motherhood and an energising fatherhood. We have sacrificed the supreme childhood of our small corner of an illimitable cosmos. We have defeated not merely its promise and potency, but the fulfilment of promise and realisation of the potential. This cannot be on the lines of the Brickyard and the Quarry!

Well may the man of the Coming Day, the man who takes the glorious name of science rejoice in the very hardness of his task. Add the 'con' and you get con-science: you cover the moral as you already do the intellectual and practical, the provable (still, be it noted, *probable*) and the practical. Well may that man triumph in the coming of the 'Word of the Lord' which has hitherto moved the seers to a rivalry of conflicting or inconsistent vision in which the typical result of a blow is confounded with the typical message of a star. For the coming of the Word is assured: man shall learn at last from the Logos: speech shall be Fact in Expression and thus at last truly creative. Man shall conceive and bear in a sense as yet far beyond us – we who have scarcely begun to see the true office and powers of Language.

Once more we come back to the saying 'Science is not yet born, she is only conceived.' Aye, and Man is not yet born; He also is only conceived.

But the day of his Birth is nearing and that birth shall be – in a palace? No: in a homely shelter shared with the very beasts, shared with despised forms of life. Let us pray that He finds no murderers; yet more that His Message may not be dragged down from the glory of all-seeing unity, ever more richly complex, great with Divinity, into disruptive and mentally blinding dogma.

5 January 1909

*The Human Ideal and Inspired Childhood*¹⁰⁶

To take in and to give out. That describes Inspiration and its correlative Expiration. It is curious that we use *breathe* out and *give* out to express – dying!

In life we expire when we expel carbonic acid, a gas noxious to life. The term is appropriate.

We inspire when we give out *not the vapour but the energy drawn in, as we receive it*, – the energy derived from the atmosphere, air, 'spirit.' The great question thus in the matter of ideal and the idealist is, Are our ideals comparable to oxygen or to carbonic acid? Do we give out the 'breath of heaven,' *or its refuse after it has vivified the blood?* The unconscious mischief done by content with misfitting analogies in language is incalculable. And it is worse in the case of the logical and non-pictorial mind, since the process is there suppressed and cannot be detected. But it is there, deep in the recesses of inherited nature: the image succeeds the sensation and the logical process succeeds the image. The logical discussion is the latest of acquirements and depends on the abstractive power. But there is perhaps nothing more illusive. Except in pure mathematics (and even that may be less entirely detached from the human process than is usually supposed) there is always an element of *reflection* which easily becomes *refraction*; that is, we often treat distortion *as though it were reflection*. The rod which seemed straight in 'air' (the spiritual) is bent *in a change of medium*, in 'water.'¹⁰⁷ That happens to our 'ideas' and our 'thinking.'

106. [This title is crossed out with above it the word 'Imagery' in handwriting].

107. What is the mental form of water?

Reflection itself is of course the Ideal. Plato at least knew that an Ideal was not a creation or even construction, but a reproduction of actual fact seen indirectly, by reflection. The great thing is to see that the reflecting medium *does not distort*.

Now language, as we blindly and supinely tolerate it, is incessantly doing this. If the man who, breathing pure air, physically and mentally, gives out the energy thus received (not, as it too often is, the same air vitiated) that energy will be at once creative and regulative.

We see that very plainly in the marvellous modern advance in invention. The lesson there is sternly obvious. The inventor who behaves as we do in questions of expression, is punished by death or injury, loss or ruin, his own or his agents'. One could wish that the consequences were as conspicuous and unmistakable in our tragical indifference in the matter of language. The lesson, if bitter, would be salutary indeed. And it would only emphasise what is in fact always going on. But for that our spiritual conquests would more than equal our mechanical ones. We should become masters of our natural inheritance, and no longer remain passionately or logically helpless, no longer confounded and confounding.

5 January 1911 [untitled]

The rage for fashionable metaphor. It has been curious to observe the recent rise and obliquity of the metaphor Foundation. It has even to some extent taken the place of the wider Basis.

Now these curious epidemics of most falsified metaphor are well worthy of study. I have rather carefully observed the recent rise and curious domination of this retrograde and often falsifying image of (1) and ultimately immovable and lifeless origin (or startpoint or support) of an inorganic world or an organism.

Some mental constructions – e.g. elaborate designs for machinery or apparatus, elaborate theories mathematical or philosophical are thus compared to an edifice of brick or stone erected upon a 'solid foundation' and thus immovable and lifeless.

The only rival of this ubiquitous tyrant of simile is the Root, in which the 'bull' element is even more conspicuous, since are gravely treating a root *sent down* by the vital nucleus or growthpoint, the starting germ of a plant (1) to gain nourishment and (2) a stable and growing grip of the soil by the pushing forth of many rootlets, as if it were solidly laid by the builder of Flats.

That indeed is only too appropriate a metaphor for the usual results of our fantastic or penurious imagery or rather of the confusion of thought which it betrays – and fosters.

Do we bottle the wine of life and keep it in the dark and chilly cellars? Well, perhaps Life deserves a better figurative epithet than 'wine.' Even 'spirit' seems preferable, though here again we see an example of violent wrenching of a precious comparison. But at least wine and still more spirit is a better standpoint than a cellar or its floor, when we use the image 'foundation' as we now so recklessly do. An analogy of this kind is mischievous out of place in proportion to its service in place. The effect on our thought is that of a subtle poison, like polluted full of mephitic germs.

10 February 1911 [untitled]

The trend of metaphor betrays the trend of thought and association. For example we are obsessed by the building idea. Everything to which we assign any value as a theory or a construction has to be built or erected. Most of us are in this all for the contractor and his ready-made materials and his workmen to put them together. They're mostly shoddy, but that fits too, and what does it matter? One goes down, t'other comes up! all in the day's work; and the great thing is to *make* work – or fuss – not to *do* work as the man did who made a bureau 100 years ago so that all its drawers and doors fit exquisitely through all changes of weather; a little child's finger can pull them in and out though their size is great.

Well, we built our whole life and conduct on ‘secure foundations.’ There was once a poor bird that got built just so. And they improved him and added another bird story – one of attics. But the cellars were very dark. However, that is another ‘story,’ so let’s stop! For that was a bird inspired by the blue air and full of song and wing-beating; how can one bear to tell of his tragedy?

1 September 1911 [untitled]

Note that we are *without* this or that; we have got none, possess none. That seems like the effort of a suppressed instinct to use without and within as (1) the range and scope (2) the special instance of Import and thus Importance for us.

Inside and Outside are impartial ‘sides’ of a containing line. If the one is spatial or material, the other must be; if the one is mental or spiritual the other must be. These things belong to the logic of condition, the denial of which leaves us in a dislocated ruin of confusion. If we have an inner life or experience *we* must be outer to it; if there be an interior realm, it must be as much spatial material as the exterior. The two stand or fall together, as do high and low, wide and narrow; though here we are ‘without’ the inevitable out-line. . . and the Inner must be confined, bounded; whereas we claim it as unbounded. It is the Outer which is that, since that is boundless and the Inner is enclosed.

4.17. Significs – Education (1903–1911)*

*1903 or 1904*¹⁰⁸

We cannot advance: our feet are bound up and our legs fettered.

We cannot perceive: our senses are dulled: – skin toughened and hardened, palate and nostril callous, ears deafened, eyes blinded. Our *sense* is blunted: it no longer penetrates veil or surmounts obstacle: it no longer reacts to the delicate and subtle calls of environment physical, psychological, philosophical-sociological.

We cannot conceive: we even mix up conception and imagination as we do Imagination and Fancy: our conceptual functions are atrophied or disintegrated: our ‘concepts’ are essentially dividual, since they have to be expressed by a half-being in a half-speech which masters and cramps even his ideals of unity. Thus we have not yet attained to the full ‘con.’ *We must first learn to translate:* to find unexpected and undesired correspondences and equations. *Then* we shall learn what is and what is not amenable to synthesis, or rather *in what sense* it is or is not so amenable. And we must begin by trying to inter-translate the most diverse possible dialects of experience. And we must not mix up correspondence $\bigcirc\text{---}\bigcirc$ ¹⁰⁹ with evolutionary identity $\bigcirc\text{---}\bigcirc$ ¹¹⁰

* [‘Significs – Education,’ WCYA, Box 30, file 45. This file contains a series of typescripts on education written between 1903 and 1911, and redacted for publication].

108. [Another typewritten copy of this same text bears the date 1907 (in handwriting) and is entitled ‘Education,’ with ‘Significs’ written in handwriting on the top of the page].

109. [Welby draws a horizontal segment between two beings indicated with two circles, one bigger than the other].

110. [Here Welby draws a vertical segment between a type and a token, respectively represented with a circle containing a dot and an external dot].

We have to co-ordinate and con-catenate the Givens of life as perfectly as in the healthy organism where difference serves unity.¹¹¹

26 August 1905

Comment on a Review of 'The Upton Letters,' by 'T.B.,' entitled 'The Soul of a Schoolmaster';
The Outlook

The writer, we are told, lays bare the pedagogic soul. He was born for better things, he is 'at bottom, a real live man'; but 'all the vices of the class-room are in his style: the addiction to platitude; the irresistible tendency to lecture and lay down the law; the dignity which swell into pomposity; the exaggerated interest in the trivial.' And the conditions of the class-room, as we constantly observe, 'are apt to stunt the mental and moral growth of any man who engages in' school teaching.

These remarks of course apply beyond the limits of the public school system: indeed to all the teachers of the young. All here said, therefore, must be taken generally as applying to present training of boys and girls. We are obliged either to 'narrow the minds of the masters for the sake of the minds of the boys' or else to ensure, out of school hours, that 'the mental growth of the masters' shall not be arrested. At present we find the adult's character has become stereotyped by 'too close and constant association with' – the adolescent!

There is here of course a problem to be faced and solved of a somewhat different character from that which these remarkable words suggest. Psychologists have lately emphasised the characteristic difference between the adolescent and the adult mind. The adult mind has much racial acquisition workably stored up, and besides, has a ripened organic and mental experience and a consequently matured organ. But it has also acquired a number of convenient but questionable preconceptions and prejudices, and a general tendency to dislike change and deprecate reform: it is harnessed to custom and to inherited conventions, especially of method.

The adolescent mind is of course raw and ignorant and has but a short tale of experiences. But it is naturally an explorer, a pioneer, an experimenter. It is a centre of originative racial energy. True that it inherits a salutary belief in the superior wisdom and knowledge, as the superior muscular strength and self-control, of the adult; and not only bows to this authority but tends to imitate it. But thus the young mind itself tends to help the process of damping down the natural enterprise and spontaneity of the adolescent, until we too often see the traces of this energy only in pathological forms; in wild, perhaps injurious, mischief and in bullying and so on. The boy then, takes an automatic revenge. Why? Because only his immaturity has been recognised, and because he has been subjected to a system which by narrowing and dulling *his* mind, reacts upon the teacher and reappears as addiction to platitude, readiness to lay down law, pomposity and triviality. Stunted himself, he stunts the stunter; and this goes on generation after generation until the mind which survives it all or has not been exposed to it, the mind which still shows us something of the explorative and responsive freshness of the natural child-mind (persisting it may be to old age), fills us with puzzled wonder! We cry, this is an exceptional case. But our 'exception' ought to be, though of course in varying degrees, the rule.

Let the masters understand that there would be nothing too good to expect of the boys if only they came from a human nursery to a human school, and they would find their own minds stimulated, not narrowed. Yet of course in various degrees. There would still be the lower and the higher levels of intelligence, like the lower and higher levels of character. And no doubt when all is said, the intercourse of the fully formed seed-pod with the spring shoot must be limited; there

111. [In the copy of this text dated 1907, this last sentence reads as follows: 'But as yet we cannot co-ordinate or con-catenate or... other 'cons'!].

are root and fruit things hidden from the child, as bud-things hidden from the man. But we should no longer suffer from what 'T.B.' complains of. Teacher and taught would complement each other.

11 November 1906

Play and Work

Among the many negligences and ignorances due to our calamitous failure to draw out, educe, develop, organise – in short educate – the human possibilities, and thus to understand the supreme importance of expression and its various grades and modes of value; is our negligence to define truly, and our ignorance of the real nature and relations of, Play and Work. We suppose work to be the business of life: play its afterthought, its relaxation: we give, indeed, the name of Play to one of the vilest parodies of Work, that of the Gambler, just as we give the name of sport to the antithesis of the true sporting instinct, the pleasure of killing for its own sake under certain conditions of 'fair play.' In this last case, the fact that we stipulate for some fairness of 'play,' that we reprobate as 'no sportsman' the man who gives the 'game' no 'chance,' is so far a gain.

But the blot of enjoying the infliction of death upon an animal reared to give us this 'sport' or carefully sought for in its native wilds, is a black one; and so is our degradation into use for idle, random, or even vicious riot and waste, of the word for Nature's most august form of work; for the cosmical Play of the highest and most complex energies.

Now of course it is true that Play *is* thus Work; again, the working of natural 'law' means the play of natural 'forces.' But we do need the distinction between the purposive, disciplined, trained toil of the 'worker,' his strenuous weaving of 'text' the web, or the delving, carrying, hewing and hauling, &c. which we call 'labour,' and the spontaneous and apparently haphazard organic efflorescence of activity which we see in the child's Play and organise later into orderly Games.

6 December 1906

Education and Extension of Term or Sense

In a signficant education – one which puts the sense, the meaning, the significance of all that is learnt into their true place – one of the main things impressed on a child will be the difference between analogy (itself a term of wide range), metaphor, imagery, and the *Extension* of a Term or of a statement.

The first question to decide in any given case is, How much does this term cover? If we are speaking of an object which may be apprehended by the senses, say a rush, does the name include its reflection in still water? Does the term 'man' cover his reflection in a looking-glass? That brings in the question raised by Plato's cave. Did the beholders see images only of real moving objects, or did these include the images they 'cast'?

Here we come to the difficulty of the shadow, as well as of the cast skin of the insect, the cast shell of the crustacean, &c.; and touch the thorny subject of Identity. Extension, then, is in some sense a question of Identity. Where does this end? Take a portrait only partially like; to some people indeed who know the original, not even that. Is a man's name to cover this? Obviously not. Yet the term Lion seems held to cover the heraldic lion – a very bad portrait.

The whole subject needs making much clearer. Especially the difference between Reflection and Image. But also between casual and purposive, wasteful and serviceable Extension. We loosely talk of metaphorical usage when we are thinking of something quite different.

In the context again of Identity *and its reproduction*, there is the case, speaking roughly, of the ancient and modern use of the word Imitation. It is difficult to understand how that title came to be given to modern translations of the 'Imitatio Christi.' The literal form of translation is specially injurious here. Taken together with the sacramental doctrine (in almost any form) the idea conveyed is wholly different from that given by our current use of the term. The imitation of

coins or signatures for instance, belongs to the same order as ‘imitation jewellery.’ The first two convey the ideas of forgery and the third that of sham or pretence. In fact we have too many and skilful imitations, and too few re-conceptions and re-births of the divine humanity. Yet originally the sense was one quite compatible with the ‘life in Christ’; with the reproduction, in forms which meet the world’s changing needs, of the spirit of the divinest of lives.

1907

‘The Place of the Mother Tongue in National Education’
By Professor Henry Cecil Wyld

This Essay is elaborated from one designed for reading at the York Meeting of the British Association. It is substantially an application to the needs of a reformed education, of the teaching of the author’s two works: ‘The Neglect of the Study of English in the Training of Teachers’ and ‘The Historical Study of the Mother Tongue,’ & c.

If the importance of a really adequate instrument of expression for needs of every kind, but above all for mental and moral needs, were generally realised even by linguistic experts themselves, there could be no doubt of the call for an intelligent study of the mother tongue. And this, so far from being a specialism repugnant to the general student, would appeal to his keenest interest. We see this fact even in his invention of school slang, which is really an attempt to symbolise school experiences without the alien notes associated with a teacher, and his conventional books and vocabulary.

Professor Wyld insists that at present the schools, by their whole method of dealing with linguistic questions, foster ‘errors of fact and perfectly obsolete point of view.’ No wonder it afterwards takes about a year to ‘rid them of a vicious and misleading terminology.’ He lays stress on the need ‘to bring home to the youthful mind the great lesson that what is spoken, uttered, heard, is the language itself; that writing is but the imperfect symbol of the reality.’ We have then a suggestive synopsis of the objects of the historical study of English at school. It should awaken an intelligent interest in the familiar facts of English speech; make it clear that living language is continually changing; show that linguistic change proceeds along definitive lines of development; illustrate the influence of Analogy in the formation of language; explain the relation of spoken to written language; cultivate an etymological sense, and discredit the popular view of dialects as ‘vulgar.’

But nowhere in this comprehensive list do we see a clause devoted to the central value and the original object of the system of signs which we call speech or language. Nowhere are we exhorted – though sorely do we need such exhortation – to remember that the paramount because intrinsic value of Expression is what it is intended to convey, or in fact even without our intention, does convey; – that is, its meaning. And nowhere are we warned that we must not predicate this purport, this note of purpose, where there is no evidence of Intent, but speak rather of the Sense or Significance, and (as carrying some momentous implication) of the Significance of Expression.

Professor Wyld urges that it is well for the young that they should wonder how given words are connected, and why their forms differ. Surely it would have been well to go a step further and, instead of being content with merely suggesting that to satisfy a legitimate curiosity on such matters would, when the proper time came, be a pleasing and repaying task, point to the mastery of expressive resource as one of the greatest of human concerns.

21 August 1907

Significs in Education

Our whole system of education is based on original fallacy. No normal or typical child ever needs incentive to study or to enquire, or to persevere ceaselessly in developing all healthy and natural

functions and abilities. Let him find himself in an intelligent environment, – one in which intelligence (not mere news!) is always at a premium – whereby to discover all round him marvels inexhaustible, and then he will assuredly educate himself, and develop to the utmost, by indefatigable self-training, the wealth of inventive and applicative resources latent in this growing brain as heir of all the ages.

As indeed, essentially the human seeker and scrutiniser, scout, pioneer, experimenter and appraiser, the true child needs only to be shown what work has already been done in the direction natural to him, and he will not merely be willing but eager to carry it further or to discover new ways of bringing it to bear. And this truth applies also to language, which is the most forward-pointing of all our acquirements, and in that sense itself the ‘child’ among our penetrative, valuating, interpretative equipments.

What the child mainly needs from us is then:

- 1) regulative economy of effort, and
- 2) access to the enormous stored-up treasure of accumulating record, experience and knowledge.

He needs also – perhaps most of all since this belongs to the latest and highest of human growths – to have developed by the help of his elders the latent seeds in him of reverence, honesty and unselfishness. Those ‘seeds’ as it were require incubation by the ‘elder’ *in loco parentis*.

24 August 1907¹¹² [untitled]

Every Trainer of the Young: every imparter of stored record, of acquired art and craft, and of accumulated knowledge through and in theory and experiment, must himself have first, in the largest sense, a ‘medical’ training; a training in physical and mental hygiene and ‘medicine.’

The art of watching and *interpreting*: of foreseeing what is to be encouraged, or discouraged, or starved out: of inseeing the true nature and difficulties of a pupil or student, and of outseeing his potentialities as his disabilities, personal, family, or racial; and finally of translating those dialects of experience which now are to us foreign languages, ‘unintelligible’ mysteries, into the universal language of humanity worthy of the name – that is the art of education.

And the Medical training must become, as long ago (in the sixties) I was laughed at for seeing clearly – Preventive. Its remedial side ought to be strictly secondary. We must even take seriously to the supposed Chinese reversal: our doctors must draw a certain income (guaranteed by the State?) as long as we are well. ‘Medicine’ will then become Insurance, and the Medical College so to speak will be the Board of Directors of the Public Health Company. That ‘Insurance’ must still have special cases with heavier premiums than the average: and above all it must not insure the preservation of a life toxic to its owner or to the community.

But to do this safely we must learn to appraise properly the Qualities of our Defects. We must learn (it is high time!) from the mother-sense at last re-born and active, the true nature of Disease physical and mental, and of every possible form suffering and weakness; of distortion, deformity, dislocation, over- and under-development. Eugenics must imply all this and a great deal more.

We must learn to distinguish. For some forms of the morbid (as a few already see) may really be the budding in an alien because ‘lower’ world, of a life too great for us – too solar, perhaps too galactic, for our planet. Lombroso and his school from this point of view are so far right, that genius in the sense of hypertrophic function corresponds to mis-adaptation on the side of too much rather than too little. In the French proverb ‘C’est le trop qui nuit.’ We must learn to interpret the human tendency, in large areas of the inhabited world, to venerate the ‘madness’ which we collectively and indefinitely call by the negative world In-sanity. We must understand that our notions of sanity (the most precious of gifts) as of man and our own nature are presumably to

112. [In handwriting on top of the page, the word ‘Education’].

some extent at fault – and so themselves unsound and insane – by the reason of a narrowness of outlook and a coarseness of inlook which our ever more delicate scientific instruments and methods are only as yet promising us the means of estimating and rectifying. In this respect the Laboratory is far ahead of the Study!

Again, we must remember that we still use the word Lunacy; and that, in its actual meaning, is now ludicrously inappropriate. But how if, after all, it have a remote and indirect application? How if the moon represents a degenerate or senile world from which the life has been drained, whereas in the Sun we are to find the nucleus for our planetary life of all that we rightly reckon or can learn to reckon true and good, sane and healthy, inspiring, illuminating, energising, enabling – Divine? And what if that Sun be in its turn but a member of the ineffable community of suns. . . ?

But all this is as yet for us but ‘dream’ in the wanton and wasteful sense. It too easily translates into the ravings of the modern occultist. Let us set to work and earn our ‘mystical vision’ and its ‘ecstasy’ and ‘passion.’ Let us not despise the most prosaic and mechanical of our aids. Let us understand how great an Extension of Sense – aye, of Mother-Sense – instrument and apparatus, machinery and engine, may become when we learn their full significance as projections of human intelligence. Let us become like the little child, avid of experiment, with long patience for what the ignorant vulgar mind calls ignoble curiosity – deeming it no better than a mere grubbing and groping, or sheer orgy of quantitative analysis, reducing our dignity to a handful of worthless dust!

Let us understand that much of our metaphysical soaring, of our ascension into the empyrean of Thought, may after all prove to have been a work of inflation, and may ultimately burst like a balloon and collapse into a rag. Let us above all understand that until we have faithfully and to the ‘bitter end’ pursued that form of critical enquiry into the Whys of our experiences by an untried method which it is proposed to call Significs – the systematic study, classification, and application of the practical and ultimate value of Expression, especially in articulate language – we shall never know, hardly indeed suspect the extent and richness of the heritage into which Man must ever press forward. For thus alone will he enter upon his true domain with its wealth of untapped mines of resource, ever clamouring to serve a new-born race; a race born again and from above in a really human Eugenesis. To Francis Galton we owe this greatest of the watchwords of our day. Let us see that we interpret it, not downwards, but upwards: that we understand that our next stage of advance must be one corresponding to that which developed the human from the animal order.

‘Ye must be born again’ – from above. Like your world, you are solar; and the solar is cosmic. Awake and act. Humanise at last your incredibly sub-human standards, measures, or criterions of Life. Understand that what we call by that name is but a moss-spore in the great living world which is there to thrill from end to end in the Energy of all energies, of the Ether of all ethers in the Light of lights.

21 October 1907 [untitled]

‘We must educate our masters’ said ‘Bob Lowe.’ Yes. But we have forgotten really to educate ourselves and our children first, and instead of that have imposed upon both a substitute which has effectively obviated the danger of seeing things as they are and still more as they might be.

The elaborately stunted and blinded scholars produced by this system have diligently and conscientiously in their turn worked at reducing our naturally shrewd though rough-minded ‘Masters’ to their own level of trained fatuity. And now that these Masters are asserting themselves and sending their teachers to the right-about, we have to pay the bill, – and dree the weird.

One can only hope that enough of the Primal-sense may be left here and there in a ‘labour Leader’ to save the situation in the long run: and meanwhile we have ourselves to thank if our own perversities in nipping off the young shoots of the aspiring racial tree, and clipping the tree itself into grotesquely artificial shapes, have their natural result in a social upheaval and catastrophe.

We have unwittingly, in 'education,' fostered the Unreal and even the Fictitious; and this has engendered Pretence of which again the offspring is Hypocrisy and Humbug.

No wonder that in the very name of 'Society' – in my early days used simply of an exclusive clique to which one was supposed by birth to belong – we should be reverting to an Ism which degrades the idea of a living dynamo or turbine of mutually fostering work-power and reciprocal service, to that of a lifeless State, of a roller whose only motion is that of levelling and crushing till the human world is flat. Thus we have no prospect at present of enhanced vitality – though that is our crying need. We have first to pass through dry and thirsty places of our own creating. Indeed the supremacy of the State – apotheosis of the static – over organic spontaneity – the sanctuary of the dynamic – will even prevent our passing through the phases which might at least give us lessons, however bitter, of experience to be applied to and utilised in a better civilization than ours. The fiat of the State means arrestation; and the mental and moral dynamo is left by the roadside to rust. . . And all because we have sought and secured everything but the one thing. Having lost our racial sense, the parent of all senses, *common or rare*, all other sense has its edge turned or is blunted or paralysed. Let us face the need of fresh beginnings here.

24 November 1907

Norm and Goal

All depends, after all, on what really is the human norm and goal. What if our wildest utopias are but childish, babyish versions of the least we could claim? Why should we have aspirations so heavenly as to sunder all links with sober sense altogether, and become sheer and delusive absurdity? Why is it that, when we are ideally 'in love,' the world turns to one ineffably glorious sunrise illuminating a Garden of Paradise and full of the harmonies of an orchestral universe, of the smile of a very Cosmos of blessing; and why does the vision carry the overwhelming certainty that to a really consummate union, physical or mental, nothing is impossible? Surely the answer must be that Nature, in evolving Life and urging its ceaseless re-creation by the combination of vital energies, gives at its supreme moments the secret of all Purpose.

But you say it is only *We* who translate mechanical or biological sequence into purpose and design? Exactly. We are the translators of the Natural Universe. Only we have hardly begun that work, except when we are ideally and unselfishly 'in love'; which is more even than loving, because it is infinitely more than merely 'sexual' or even than emotional and imaginative. It may be compared to a micronic, an electronic shower of sunlit drops on the very crest of the Life-wave. And even with this revelation of natural *reserves* of beatitude to help us, our mental eyes are as yet so little developed, that we can but barely guess at Nature's Mother-Eugenesis which even now is urging us towards new births of new races whose Real shall surpass, in the very act of realising, a purged human Ideal as we dream it to-day.

Why do we here speak only of Nature and not of GOD? Because – as the heavensent though bitter tide of misgiving and of rejection which means a more than spiritual, an ethereal quiver of *unborn* Light, witnesses – we have degraded the Divine Nature into the super-natural, and because the very name 'god' is currently used to designate the fetish of superstition or the wooden doll of idolatry.

The subtle poisoning of our Better than all Bests being what, alas thus it still is – we have sorely needed and still need the medical, the surgical, the remedial services (for they are verily these), not merely of the sternest warnings and disillusionments with which physical and anthropological science provide us, but also of the Pessimist, the Rationalist, the Materialist, the Agnostic, even the uncompromising Atheist. No wonder the Idealist is received by some of the most honest and truth-seeking of our workers with a pitying if not bitter sigh or smile. No wonder the very words religion, theology, dogma, salvation, call out a wince or even a shudder from some who are the very salt of the earth, the very men of good will to whom the message of all messages is sent!

And no wonder that, having started with such a master-perversion, we misread and do our best to silence, the witness of our own children; setting not them, but our sophisticated and formalising selves, on the throne of the authoritative Teacher. ‘Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling!’ And the greatest of all such occasions is the intrusion of the cut and dried Question and Answer by which we propose and profess to teach the very ones from whom we have now painfully to learn the lesson of all lessons, – how to learn.

That is the training we must give ourselves. As we are, we carefully hand on the very method by which the spontaneous response of Life to its Divine Source is desiccated into carefully repeated formula, fitting, not the everchanging needs of a growing race, but the theories of nature, of the origin of worlds, and the significance of life and mind, which ages ago were the best to which man could intellectually attain. And even if we try to embody some newer conception in our catechisms and our dogmatic assertion, we are only once more, by allowing the evil method to defeat the good purpose, starving or cutting off the most precious things on earth, the very buds of the coming shoots of power, beauty, and sweetness, and honey-secreting blossom.

The failure of what most of us have hitherto called modern education has been perhaps even more disastrous in the religious than in the secular sphere. So once more we come back to the question, What really is the human norm and goal? It is time we asked this in a new spirit, from a new point of view, and in new forms; and pursued the momentous inquiry along fresh and untried paths . . .

I have referred to the note struck in the 18th. Chapter of St. Matthew. It has always been one of the most painful of many surprises dating from my own childhood, to discover how very few of us realise, not merely the distinction but the contrast implied especially here, but also throughout the Old and New Testament, between the *Childish* and the *Childlike*. It has always seemed so pretentiously impertinent to point out so elementary and obvious a difference. But long and wide reading, especially in religious, mystical and theological subjects, besides innumerable letters from, or conversations with representatives of all three or indeed also of secular ethics, and even some observers of children, have compelled the conclusion that the great majority of us would, either in acceptance or in protest, suppose that the child, the little one, set by the prophets and by Christ Himself on the seat of the Master, the Teacher of us all, is merely the Ignorant and the Immature, the immorally and irrationally *childish*, or else, worse still, the child made to learn by rote formal statements of the parents’ or other elders’ inculcated belief, and either rebuked or laughed at for endeavouring, in a stammering or grotesque version of the language of his seniors, to put to them really penetrating and educative questions, many of which we should do well to put, in adult form, to ourselves and each other.

But to say this is of course to allow and even lay stress upon the fact that the child has much to receive and learn from the generation which has brought him into the world, and from all his ancestors human and pre-human. Less than any of us can he do without the accumulated knowledge and lessons of experience stored up by his forerunners through ages historic and pre-historic. For as physiologically and to some extent psychologically he has to ‘begin all over again’ it is all the more important that mentally he should find a great treasure of record gathered and ready to his hand. But our appeal for a deeper faith and a more fearless quest for the really human norm and goal is only reinforced by the recognition of the mission of the little Ones; and should incite us to find the true method in which to profit by their unspoiled and candid vision.

1 June 1908 [untitled]

The vast majority of mankind are not now intelligent in the sense of being mentally interested in, and capable of discussing and acting upon, things other than the commonplace or obvious, the mere surfaces or rather varnishes of life, or the actually organic needs, pains, or pleasures. But from the point of view of Significs this lack of intelligence is to a great extent due to the dulling

or warping during the educational period of inborn intelligence shown in the first years of average childhood. Robust intelligence, strong will and mental power overcome the prevailing educational suppression, starvation, bandaging of the natural powers, just as exceptionally strong muscular power might resist artificial restraint or constraint. But even so it suffers, especially in balance between the creative and critical functions; much which ought to be known remaining unknown to it, and much experience misinterpreted. Hence many 'isms' such as materialism and spiritualism. And in any case the absence of responsiveness and contribution from its fellows (who at present, save the mark! Resist 'for all they are worth' every advancing and ascending tendril of healthy thought) tends to damp down and neutralise or else falsify its own development.

When we begin really to understand children and learn how to foster all that is most original and valuable in their abilities, we may expect revelations, the very idea of which at present would be extravagant and would seem utopian. The concentration of Sense and its vivid and penetrative reaction to all human surroundings, conditions, problems; of Meaning and its ever developing and life-consecrating energies of will, intent, purpose: lastly and above all, of Significance, of the consequence to us, and to our world, of the implication of everything we can call fact and the value of all that can be called sane theory and even hypothesis, will indeed lift us into another and greater region of experience. When that experience becomes an open book and we read therein the secrets of Sense in their widest application, the secrets of Meaning or Intent in their volitional and personal relations, the secrets, finally, of the Significance which is continually suggesting problems as yet to us insoluble, continually pressing upon dull eyes and ears the indirect reason and results and the ultimate references of all that presents itself for attention and evokes wonder or a dim sense of somewhat unknown to us; then answers to questions barely even asked will come with the quiet clearness of the normal sense-life. And finally, when all this stirring of new impulse at the vital centres of what we vaguely call 'mind' has come about, a true age of 'miracles,' of the hitherto impossible, will begin, and will answer to the astonishing advent of the scientific era, *its necessary precursors*, and itself a true 'miracle.'

For all history shows that but for such a stern and searching preparative training, we could not safely have been *trusted* as it were with the deepest secrets of existence. We had to learn the rules of an asceticism of intellect which during an unique race-education in self-criticism and experimental venture and patience, has brought us some at least of the knowledge without which our greatest feats of imagination and thought remain barren even in their wonder and their beauty.

But now science itself is beginning to feel the need and the present lack of more fully interpretative Sense: of a sensitiveness to the faint and fugitive hints of Nature, our own or the world's, of which now we have but rare and sporadic examples in what we call, and venerate as, the highest genius. Even she sometimes gropes where she might find clues and fearlessly advance. When we learn to make full use of power which can only be compared to those which recent discovery of and experiment on Variation and Mutation in the plant-world are giving us, or to those other powers which are enabling us to ignore distance and almost all the obstacles to mechanical achievement once considered insuperable, then much which at present is actually hidden from us will appear, faintly at first stars in twilight, but increasing fast in its true sense as visual activity depending not on constructive idealism, still less on fancy or illusion, but on the fidelity of the retinal report, by which in health we do not create but respond to the stimulation object which is our only immediate criterion of reality.

19 June 1908

Education

What we need is the power and privilege of childhood while acquiring the experience and secondary skill (in manipulation and logic) of the adult.

The ape is human in the foetal stage and then degenerates: we are human till the end of adolescence and then in some degree and direction degenerate. But we artificially cause premature degeneration by our present system, or rather broad principles, of education. A saner and in that sense more natural education would foster what Havelock Ellis calls the ‘ultra-human’: the teacher would understand that here we have more than a pearl of price, – a priceless treasure; never yet really tapped in civilised life. It is not enough to leave this free, to withdraw handicap and lift the pressure and loose the bonds of mechanical convention: it must be stimulated, we must learn how to cultivate it so as to get the utmost from yet unavailable human potencies.

When we do this, the degeneracy of the adult will always be counteracted by the surviving force of the growth or ‘ideal’ period. The paradise and nursery of energy and insight will carry its light and inspiration into the wilderness of the wide world: the children who ought to be our inspirers are always with us, and the child will then also survive in us, as now it does in the exceptional genius – always a fresh-eyed, explorative child.

The exception will become, – of course in many degrees, on many levels – the rule. The race will be uplifted to a truer level: gaining a full adult status with all its enormous power of secondary ‘progress,’ we shall not lose the yet more precious status of infantile and adolescent originality, intimacy of touch with the nature of things, power incisively to read, and (in spite of superficial failure and the lack of elaborated language), to *express*, to interpret, the ‘givens’ of experience.

Some great man said there ought to be a child, time and again, in every study and every laboratory, and his naive questions carefully gathered up and applied. But for this we need ourselves to retain more of his power of direct insight, or we shall be registering the mere froth and effervescence of his abounding energy and enthusiasm, and storing up deserved disappointment. We must learn to distinguish his *childlikeness* from his *childishness*. When we do that we shall be amazed at his hunger to learn, to ask, to inquire, to investigate, to explain and apply. We shall no longer have to drag him unwillingly to school but to check his ardour for it and turn on his tap of Play, which indeed we shall then understand to be itself the finest of schools and the most important of educative activities. Only the tendency to, and enthronement of, monotonous convention – even convenience – must be jealously watched.

6 February, 25 May and 30 June 1908

Significs in Education

There is at work in the civilized world, though as yet we do not practically realise this, a morbid germinative energy which as unchecked, proliferates in a mental cancer.

This spreads ever more widely and cruelly on our delicacy of mental and moral sensitiveness, which thus is ever tending to take diseased forms. In short an undetected toxic factor is everywhere found, affecting all our higher energies and acting especially through language.

Some of us deny the fact, others declare it unavoidable. Some of us insist that even if real, such radical defect could only be remedied by the nostrums of the pedant and the formalist, and at an unthinkable sacrifice, especially in speech, of ease, fluency, elasticity.

Others bluntly deny its reality, and treat anyone who brings such a charge against civilised mankind – or ventures on such a diagnosis – as the captive of a mere fad or dream. Now it is true that if ever there was a charge or a diagnosis which imperatively called for justification, it is such a one as this. For whether we will or no, Language stands, key in hand, at the door of all our knowledge, nay of all our experience, so far as this may be communicated to, shared with our fellows, and may enable us successfully to analyse, interpret and apply it. We cannot afford to tamper with the compass at the outset of the fateful voyage of our mental life, or even without such compass, to neglect the bearings which an accurate reading of the position of sun and stars may give us. Neither can we afford to use rotten sails or a rusty engine.

In truth no image is strong or full enough to cover the case. And moreover it should be obvious that here more than anywhere, no mere denunciation or exhortation can have any right to practical notice until the evil growth has been, if not thoroughly exposed (since this would require the labours of a group of the ablest of our scholars) at least deeply probed by the steady lancet guided by the accumulation during many years of evidence both of the existence and nature of the disease, and of its true remedy. An attempt towards this has been made, but it can only claim a provisional or suggestive value.

The subject presses first of all for recognition and study in the educational world. All reformers in that field, ignoring or unconscious of its elementary lesson and even its existence, have begun too far down. Hence in the long run we are more or less disappointed with the results, though we do not yet realise the true reason for failure. We must at best be contented to work patiently and thoroughly for the future; securing that our own labours shall be strictly preparative and aim more at influencing the future parents and teachers than at suddenly revolutionising the methods of the present ones.

Much can quietly be done in this direction. Attention can be directed to the many examples of present and needless loss or obstacle. All explanation can take on a signficant character. The child's own remarks instead of being treated as mere 'howlers' can be utilised, though not as in some mistaken ways, not fashionable. His interest would be easily roused in language, as he would soon be found trying in his crude way to make it more expressive as indeed at present he does in school slang, and in secret codes.

Let us then trace an ascending trend in the signifying and interpretative quality of the child-mind.

1) The first responsive power in the child (the parent of all other) is Sense. Now this, one of the widest and fullest of terms, ranging from the 'sensitivity' of a tendril now described as 'tropism' (and found again as 'involuntary' and 'unconscious' or 'automatic' impulse in the emotional world) reaches up into the world of 'good sense' and the 'sensible' man; also the 'sensitive' as well as the 'sensuous' man, who are often virtually opposite in tendency, while habitually confounded. This original Sense involves the natural encouragement to interpret experimentally all the report it brings.

The first step and stage in the ascending line beyond this, is at least to be conveniently called the Primal Sense; though in strictness it might better be called the germinal sense, as that which connotes the richest of all 'promise and potency,' rising from the sense-embryo into the sense-organism.

This primary sense selectively develops into a relatively unerring 'instinct,' the higher form of which, as more than an organismal response or hazardous 'guess,' becomes a valid 'intuition.' For on this higher plane there is still an intimate 'tie' with the things of nature and the nature of things: through much failure and error there runs a living thread of success and rightness; of what becomes valid inference, reached, not through elaborate logical discussion (impossible in immediate need) but through, as it were, the thrill which even organically impels swift escape from danger or the instant interpretation of signs which signify the main demand of life and their supply. We often find it said by survivors from explosion, earthquake, &c. '*I found myself* running and jumping &c., in ways and at a speed which had seemed impossible to me.'

This impulse again develops into the quick and penetrating shafts of a sense of *point*, and of insistent implication. It issues, that is, in feats of interpretation. Such a sense, vivid and valid, must be fostered, taught fearlessly to tackle all goings on and happenings and changes. The teacher must be as the brain, the hand, the bow on the strings of an ineffably responsive violin; he must function as the master of the touch which grows into a picture or statue, or sets a complex instrument playing. Only, unlike either, what he thus *cultivates* is at once beyond him, and begins to function independently of him, though dependently on race. The true teacher starts a true development of inherited potencies.

The Educator here must carefully distinguish between two kinds of error, the conventional and the inexperienced. He must discriminate the superposed or superficial, from the ignorant. Civilisation is in this case as great an enemy as superstition bred of terror and craving, or the distortive or merely playful ‘fancy’ which apes the constructive and interpretative ‘imagination.’

From the first the child must be shown the value and the rich connotations, the wide reference of Sense. One condition of this revelation is the adoption, as far as possible, of the natural dialects which at present we despise, laugh at, and stamp out, instead of recognising and cultivating them as representing a necessary *stage* often more closely connected than we dream with the triumphs of expression in the genius.

On his own infantile plane *and with his own simple and illuminating, stimulating, directness*, the child must be clearly shown the ascending value of Sense; of that whereby, on its organic level, he is sensitive and responsive to all around and within his *skin*. We must point out, through simple story or action, that we all insist on the praise common sense and good sense and the sensible. We define and lay stress upon the Sense of a word. Why? Because sense is the first thing: without sense we cannot live or act. The child will not need much exposition here. He will better our instruction. There is no more ruthless critic of what *he* sees as senseless; and unless he has been effectually silenced, we may learn from his most naive protest.

2) Having asked him what Sense is to us all and drawn out a natural answer, we open the doors of Intent and Purpose. The wonder and puzzle of life stimulates a craving for reason, and at this stage evokes a torrent of Whys. To what does this or that experience point? Explain it!¹¹³

Then we go on and ask him what *he* ‘means’; that is what he wishes, wants, us to *understand* by his statements, questions, answers, right or wrong. He already begins like us with ‘I mean (I intend) to do’ this or that. Why? *Because he begins with ‘I want’ this or that.* And this ‘want’ he transfers as we do into speech. He ‘means to *say*’ this or that. It is imperative to connect his impulse to want and demand, arising from a sense of need always to be both respected and criticised, with the *intention* to get and to convey, to explore and to exploit, to experiment and to infer and utilise. Thus we arrive first at the results and then at the Meaning of ACT and WORD, – the intention and purpose of both, as, in the narrower ‘sense,’ of machine or anything ‘made.’

3) Thus then, coming round on a higher sweep of a spiral growth, our sequence, starting afresh, completes itself by entering the supreme region of human interest, that which is best expressed as the Significance, the widespreading, the profound or lofty, or again the concentrated and consummating form, that the interest or value of some action, event, or discovered order or fact, may take.

But all this, in reference to children, sounds formal and solemn if not pompous and grandiloquent, – which indeed in many contexts it is. So that although the word significance is constantly used in this sense in serious writing, it stands for what, in the eager and explorative minds of children, belongs to the most exciting and engrossing moments of life, as to its very nature.

What does it signify? What difference will it make? Has it anything to do with your journey or my birthday or mother’s black gown or father’s being away or the firing of guns? The *whys* become ever more complex, richer in content: like the rings formed by the stone thrown in the pond, like the rainbow cut short by trees or hill, they go over widening or completing curves into an ever-growing vastness of the fascinating world, – the world indistinct and pregnant with insistent and impressive Significance.

113. Unhappily here the recorded protest of a child is representative: ‘I understand quite well if only you would not explain’; an implied and often deserved rebuke.

1 October 1908

Moral Education

If the phrase Character-building is senseless or meaningless it ought to be disused. If it has sense or meaning, it should be consistent.

Consistency implies the fact that lifeless materials, hewn or burnt or moulded or cut into shape are placed in rows, piled upon each other, cemented together and according to the design of an architect, converted into a 'solid structure.'

- (1) One such 'material' answers to Stone. This is laid deep in the ground as an immovable Foundation. It may also be used for walls.
- (2) The next answers to bricks (or stuff to the same effect) of which one row is laid over another. This is erected as a 'dead' wall or it is pierced with rectangular Holes to be later glazed, blinded, curtained, shuttered. The wall is further fitted with wooden Doors. These Walls may sometimes be of rubble or of concrete; in which last case Air is excluded and mephitic gases, the *refuse* of living breath, are imprisoned.
- (3) Partitions of Plaster or its equivalent are placed within the walls.
- (4) Finally a Roof (with chimneys, it may be to let out sooty smoke which darkens the air) is superposed, and this is usually made of weather- and light-proof Tiles.

The Character-building is now complete. All trace of vitality, spontaneity, adaptability, is successfully eliminated. One vital quiver, even, suggests an earthquake and a tottering Erection. But no; we have stability and shelter from rays of Sun, Moon, Star; shelter from the wild fragrance of the growing herbs of nature and from life-giving, health-bringing Wind: shelter also from exposure to the roaring gale and – No, again! Thunder and Flash laugh at our Character-building, and the Current may strike it into ruin or can stun and even kill within our Character-House.

And all the while the *unbuilt* Character looks on. It has been conceived and has silently grown in a secret but teeming Shrine of Life: it gathers strength, it comes forth, – it gains from an uncounted innumerable Ancestry, from an Experience of which we are only beginning to discover the hidden recesses, – and from a vitally Social environment. Most of all it gains from the fecundating touch of truth, of love, of honour; the touch which calls forth an answering quiver and generates to its own surprise (if indeed true Character can realise its self) the Desire to be and do Good. But never copy-book Good! Has there ever been Evil so deadly as that which has named itself Good and is not even relevant to need, or valid in changing conditions? Imposed rules and conventions are defied by Goodness as by a compass-needle. How should it turn but to the Voice of the Calling North of duty, of the Calling North of the simple, the true, the unselfish, the noble, the loving? No catalogue of Regulation would give the Faith of the Pointing Needle of Goodness, nor, what is better (since compass-needles live not, will not, care not) *the Faith of the growing Embryo*.

5 October 1908

Significs

The question of Significs before all else is an educational one. The present adult generation has first thoroughly to realise the urgency of the need of Significs in its manifold references and contexts; then to define what can naturally or may legitimately and practically be hoped for, from the active emergence of a partially atrophied human function on a level no longer of primitive, but of highly elaborated and complex, necessity.

In the infancy of the race this was, as on the merely animal level, a question of survival and dominance. Now it is a question of the solution, both theoretical and practical, of the urgent problems of social polity, of abstract conception and logic, and of what we call common sense; also

of the experiences which we vaguely speak of as emotional, spiritual, moral, religious: distinctions constantly blurred and confounded or else translated into isolating divisions.

For this we first need a general consent among civilised races to envisage the real conditions of Expression, and on grounds of immediate need to make efforts towards the regeneration of that form of Expression which we call articulate, and which is the first condition of human intercourse, advance and achievement. As yet, the extremity of our present loss and lack is only recognised in the form of complaint and protest, which is entirely futile and unheeded. Apparently it is supposed that to complain of language as at present falsifying both thought and action is like complaining of natural order or of human limitations. It has not dawned upon us that the supreme subject of human interest, that of the Significant character of all experience, and correspondingly that of the symbolising instinct and faculty of Man, is itself and pre-eminently worthy of our attention, inquiry an adequate examination and realisation.

On all other subjects we find even sometimes morbidly minute analysis; in all other directions we find energetic and devoted research, and often fruitful discovery. On the side of *Significance* itself; on that of Expressive, Indicative, implicative quality of all Experience and all subject of experience, you find none. On the side indeed of the *significance* of abstract theory, and the Intentional and Purposive activities of the human brain which we call volitional, and admit or deny to be 'free,' you find endless – and barren – speculation. But you never find any preliminary study of the very first condition of intelligent 'mutual understanding,' that which is prior even to logic. We profess to appeal to the *Sense* in which anything is important, but we never ask *in what sense* we are using words like *sense*, how, precisely, we come by the notion of Meaning, and what is the true range, character and value, of Significance. The widest and most indispensable of all forms of attribute and function, that of *signifying* (as the English idiom itself witnesses) is virtually ignored and neglected.

We have here, it is true, a wide range of terms (see Encyc. Art.) and we use them freely. But we leave the whole subject in a nebulous and even chaotic condition, so that before we begin to state our thesis or argue our point, we risk importing gratuitous confusion into it and thus partially paralysing our own energies.

But it is obvious that such a protest as this will inevitably be met by challenge to prove its necessity. Well, it can be proved, I venture to say, up to the hilt. At present only one student and that a very incompetent and ill-trained one lacking indeed some of the main conditions demanded by such an inquiry (knowledge of modern languages, of the classics, of mathematics and of experimental science) as well as the natural gifts demanded, has collected anything like the mass of evidence required.

But even my own poor contribution of the results of twenty years' assiduous work, reveals a state of things of which the immense majority of cultivated men seems strangely unconscious, though many of them are painfully aware of the crippling and even defeating results of what they always suppose is *someone else's* ambiguity of diction or confusion of thought, or else chargeable on irremediable factors of human infirmity.

Thus we are driven back on the conclusion that before all else the question is an educational one. It can be shown that the typical child is a natural significian. He is always wanting to know what his sense-percepts indicate and imply. His question What, How and supremely Why, are incessant, inspite of being met either by impatience or a conventional and *sedative* answer. He has ideas on everything which often seem to his elders grotesque, partly because he has not learned to talk like his elders, and partly because he instinctively sees irrelevance or worse in that adult speech, and tries to be logical or descriptive on his own plane. But his significating and interpretative buds are soon effectually cut off. Only exceptional cases of strong and commanding originality, or of parents of special insight and courage, survive the daunting and suppressive process which we too often call 'early education.' In truth we helplessly confound two things: 1) the imposition of mere convention without regard to its intrinsic worth or fitness, and 2) the

true discipline and training of the naive intelligence, the ‘primal sense’ which is the immediate successor of the automatic wisdom of the suckling.

Granting then that Significs is in fact our first demand in childhood and our first need as adults, how can we most effectually bring the subject into general recognition and induce parents and teachers to study its simplest elements and master at last the general trend of its releasing, restoring and illuminating methods?

2 November 1908

The Significs of Education

What strikes me most in reading modern literature is the general old-mindedness, – at once the cause and the product of our insensate educational reversal of the natural process. Instead of fostering, guiding, supplying with acquired knowledge and method, the child’s inherited originality: instead of telling him that *we* expect hints from *him* in return for the results of experience which he has a right to demand from us, we treat him like a blank sheet, or worse, a worthless palimpsest, effacing his own first-hand message by overlaying it with a secondhand one. Thus to him a ‘lesson,’ instead of a thing to long for a dream about (a day at school being a holiday), his joy in it has been turned to bitterness: to him it is barren drill only; he rushes forth whooping and yelling into the true School which we call Play, and encourage him to think of as the opposite of work – the while that the Play of forces in the universe and the Play of character in man go on without a moment’s intermission, and even in our sleep.

In Nature and its flowering in Mind, all educates and educates, all induces and inductates, all initiates, develops, directs, corrects, inspires, stimulates, orders, – achieves. Even repulsion, even pain and loss, are made to yield honey of experience. I am glad now I went through that terrible time, says some ‘survivor’ or ‘convalescent.’ My life is the richer for it. I see things in a truer perspective, and I can enter into and utilise what else would be a horrible senseless darkness and a desperate defeat. Well, that is the voice of the true Man as essential Interpreter, emerging and assuming for the moment his natural function, and able to see how gain is born of loss and how what seems waste is in truth the overflow of an illimitable energy of which our most precious and noblest moments are as yet but the whisper.

This is no illusive optimism; it is rather even pessimism pressed into service: it is Evil made to serve Good, as the repellent serves the attractive, force. As long as we make a heaven not of real, that is actual, ‘suns’ and their real ‘worlds,’ but of dream suns and worlds, ‘material’ or ‘spiritual’: as long as we suppose ‘mind’ to be a mysterious and impotent intruder, or else make its ‘judgements’ infallible, immutable, all-comprehending, final, – how *can* we educate our children? Why, by the ‘real’ we may mean but the measurable and numerable, nay, even the ‘literal’: ‘It is not only said but it is *inscribed*’; what is *written* is unchangeably true as nothing else can be’ is the underlying thought of the phrase ‘literal truth’ or ‘literal fact.’

Now to measure and to number are splendid powers, and so is that of inscription. But truly, *retinally* to ‘image,’ is what measure and number serve by verifying. The first questions of the child show this: and every time the adult, after complaining of ‘obscurity,’ says that he sees anything clearly, it can only be by what corresponds to the retinal image. But the infantile questions culminate in the fateful *Why?* – the pre-eminent question: that which above all others (as the child well knows, often to our discomfiture) we are here insistently and unceasingly to ask till the answer is found – *and acted upon*. But the child asks the right question, the adult usually the wrong one or the right one in the wrong context. Hence the idea of the insoluble and of agnosis.

In all this let us note the poverty and often inconsistency of the canons of expression, the perverted habits of speech, which we so supinely and mischievously tolerate. The dangers of association, like those of imagery (which we generally use at hap-hazard or on oratorical or

literary grounds only), or again those of bald formality or of overpressed or misread analogy or analysis, are not, as they might be, provided against. The lapses and failures of speech are not remedied, while its corruption is often confounded with its freedom and its boundless capacity for development in a more than merely academic sense. How is education to keep pace with experience unless we may hope for the raising alike of all act and all speech into a higher level of transparency and of significance, of relevance and consequence, of fitness and pregnancy, of order, coherence, consistency? Does not this in the end mean even a higher level of sanity as of intelligence; and the consequent economy and concentration as well as widening range of the powers most precious to us?

Surely there can be but one answer. But first of all we must educate, educe human power from the nursery onwards as that of significating and interpreting the world. First of all we must recognise in the child not only, though conspicuously, the Devotee of Work – of active deed and device, but also the Young Interpreter; we must bid him help us in the greatest of honourable privileges. We must let him take his natural part in the development of this noblest of human prerogatives without which the highest motives and the purest character are balked of their natural outcome and harvest.

How then, in his ignorance and weakness, can the child help? Neither in organising nor in analysing; neither in formal reasoning nor in conceptual construction or mechanical invention. Only in simple direct suggestion, in pointing out what the adult mind tends to miss, in giving that mind truer starting-points and attitudes, and in raising interest to the plane of a passion and a joy from the sense of efficient power which all work must thus bring to the worker. In all this there is little we may not hope for.

In the vital matter of Education, then, are we yet putting the first things first? Are we keeping the last things for the last? Or are we looking for brains in feet and toes in heads?

8 November 1908

The Human Ascent

What are the human stages of ascent from the Actual?

- (1) The symbolically actual.
- (2) The literal – the inscribed.
- (3) The translative, comparative, or analogical.
- (4) The figurative or imaginary (translation of the retinal image).
- (5) The conceptual and thus the creative.
- (6) The abstract, the discursive, the dialectical, the analytical, the critical.
- (7) The full realisation of the Significant, which in the sixth stage is almost entirely lost, entailing controversial deadlock and mystifying or confusing issues which ought to be clear.

Now how do the above, considered as methods, work? What is their service?

- (1) The symbol is a Reminder, by standing for act and fact.
- (2) The 'letter,' the 'written,' is a Record.
- (3) The translation is a transference of act and fact from one 'sphere' to another. Thus (from this point of view) Experience means the illimitably *transferable*, in the sense that every mode of experience can be reproduced (at least up to a given point) in another.
- (4) The figurative involves the transference of the retinal image into mental image – the one being as trustworthy as the other. This, as contrasted with fancy and the fantastic, is Imagination, – really, Reflection, as in still water.
- (5) This ascending development expands – or concentrates – in the great minds of the race, into dominating and illuminative Conception, which rises, though rarely, into creation. It provides principle and theory. It energises and inspires.

(6) The rational intellect, working upon all these in abstraction, reverts to the symbolical stage; and thus, having got rid at once of the 'raw' reality and the pictorial image, enters and conquers anew the world of measure, number and all other logical forms of abstract sequence. This last however – the purely intellectual stage – once reached, becomes not merely imperious but despotic, in the sense that it tends to suppress the earlier stages instead of constantly and unfailingly translating upwards. The penalty is the loss of the immediate and universal sense of Significance. The world becomes full of baffling mystery or endless and more or less circular discussion, strong only on the critical side. The *first* questions are never asked, and thus men constantly arrive at irreconcilable conclusions; and unresolved contradictions result.

Above all, it becomes difficult to show that man's true heritage is the power to interpret and translate validly every possible form of experience, and to show also that all discussion, argument, analysis and generalisation must properly subservise that all-important end. The method of modern physical science is a preparation, a training for this.

It is a translation on a higher plane of the two first stages, the Actual (or Practical) and the Symbolic. You carefully and accurately observe facts: you patiently experiment on them: you symbolise the result.

The rise of the modern scientific method is, then, presumably the necessary preparation for and prelude of, an enormous expansion of the interpretative, translative, and co-ordinative power. This must restore *the original sensitiveness to the Call of the Real* which provisionally I would name Primal Sense (that is, the distinctively human interpretative response to all challenge and stimulus) and incalculably enhance man's power to transfigure his whole environment – which in turn must transfigure him. Just as 'raw' material, just as natural agencies of all kinds, serve the mechanical inventor and enable him to create machinery and instruments of ever more complex potency, so all those forces which at present seem to defy him and to be hopelessly destructive, are to come under the control of the – Interpreter.

But at present the Interpreter (except on the mechanical side) does not interpret; he is half asleep: Translation is in abeyance. The Interpreter and thus embryonic Controller of the environment, of all 'Nature' (rather Nature's Deputy in raising natural order to higher levels) does not yet see that the direct cultivation of the interpretative power which makes the world and experience translatable significant, is now the pressingly needed thing, the central aim of a true Education.

Logic is useless for this, so long as Significs, the study of the Indicative and the Implicative and of the conditions of interpretation, is entirely neglected, with the natural and lamentable consequences which we see in modern language.

We talk vaguely and inconsistently of the sense in which something is true or useful, of the meaning of a statement, of the significance of some event; but we do not even do this in any intelligible order. We ascribe meaning to that which *intends* nothing though it may *signify* much; we ascribe import to what may have no importance; we think such random usage – does not signify, that is, may be neglected. But it signifies the omission or Significance from the list of subjects on which we need to be clear; it signifies our strange blankness of mind on the condition of all real grasp of the nature and range of sane and fertile experience. There is here an entirely ignored sphere of inquiry which, in the interest of children, comes first of all. *Their* insistent inquiries all belong to Significs. Every detail round the young suggests something more, something to be learnt and known. Not only the query in word but the query in act, the explorative query which leads them into difficulty and often danger: all this is the concern, as the representative, of Significs.

So with the adult explorer when he fits out 'expeditions.' Significs co-ordinates all forms of inquiry and discovery; and its first question is the homely one, What does it signify? That is, what is it to and for us? Of what moment is it; what is its origin, what its relations, what its probable outcome?

Now it is obvious that this question is actually, practically asked by the whole animal world. Objects are felt, smelt, seen, heard, and appropriate action follows. In that sense we already have interpretation of Sign; and it is the business of Significs to consider both its identity with and its difference from, the Significance discerned by the human thinker through adolescence to the fully adult standard. The present problem of education is to recover the power to discern and interpret signs now grown too faint and indirect or unfamiliar or conversely too intimately matter of course to be noticed, to arouse the interpretative function and enable it to supply ever fresh material for logical treatment and profitable exploitation.

The question of Significs is thus one of regaining lapsed power on a higher plane; the power, that is, of answering one's own involuntary question, which is essentially human. Man and his world, beyond all else, signify. The significating and the inquiring, the problem posing and the solving, the penetrating and the clearing, the investigating and discovering energies, are all summed up in the energy of right Question, drawing forth the right, and rightly interpreted, Answer.

17 February 1909

The Need for Significs

The fact is that what we call our civilisation is a ghastly failure because we have defeated the race-protecting, race-preserving, race-lifting action of the natural law which tends to the survival of the fittest. That is, instead of translating the ideas of 'survival' and 'fit' upwards, giving the worlds a worthier sense, we have taken to translating them downwards. We cherish and cultivate the meaner whether in life, mind, or speech; we carefully preserve all that is most anti-racial, we make crime an almost irresistible temptation to the acute, pioneering, adventurous brain which we do not know how to make the most of on honest lines: we cruelly and wickedly waste the powers of large bodies of men now called by the helplessly absurd name of the Unemployed, forgetting to call ourselves, as their creators, the Unintelligent.

And worst of all, our whole system of education tends to create an artificial, induced dulness, blindness, supineness.

Thus it is that we have lost the primordial gift of the enlarged brain of Man: we have ceased to perceive the essential significance of nature and the world. Except in cases of rare scientific or other creative genius, or in the direction of mechanical invention, this detecting power is almost entirely aborted. In that direction it still survives mainly because our education on the whole stimulates the mechanical view of things. Even on the literary and historical side, this bent is manifest. Thus the creative brain does find both outlet and welcome there in new combinations that 'pay' industrially or artificially. But all the highest work, scientific or imaginative, is starved.

What is the remedy? How to extract the waiting ore of life and distil its essence now so cruelly wasted? Well, we must first realise the crying need, and see that one generation at last grows up with its original, native sense of Significance carefully preserved and fostered, instead of being as at present damped down and overlaid with second and third hand futility; instead of being consistently discouraged, rebuked or laughed at by those who, themselves, have been semi-paralysed in their own growing days.

Something may be recovered even by the adult; but it must chiefly be the consciousness of the crying and cruel need of the children. It must thus of course also be the demand for the regeneration of articulate expression, the beginnings of a more pregnant speech, since that can be accomplished with our present resources. Only of course the beginnings of really beneficent change must be natural and gradual. Meanwhile, behind all the complacency of the second hand and the ready made, behind the mind of the man who sometimes usurps the honourable name of the Expert and the noble name of the Scholar and the Teacher: behind all the routines of glib rehearsal and barren convention, there still lingers not quite extinguished the spark of a living light, the essential gift and honour of the human race, the power to *read* life, to interpret the

world and more especially what we call its evils and dangers, which are that just because of our artificially induced and tragical blindness.

There is here no question of optimism and pessimism on the recognised lines. Indeed the realisation of the optimistic dream on present lines would justify the most desperate pessimism. We are too dense as yet to know what good really is, as worthy of the race in its cosmic relations. And hitherto we have silenced, killed, or starved – or worse still have formalised and specialised – the teaching of most of those who could have told us, if only ours had been the hearts of inspired children – as they were created and meant to be. We are quite confident that our interests are obvious, and wholly bound up with those of this planet. Any suspicion of a wider range of reference is usually bound up with an antiquated condition of natural knowledge entirely different from ours. Or else it practically becomes a snare precisely in the degree to which it calls forth a reverence only due in reality to the revelation of an Ideal which includes as of old all and only the needs and the yearnings which the Child of the race can at first hand feel. If there is to be a catechism, it is from him and him only that we must humble ourselves to learn it. But the true child hates catechism as he hates ‘lessons.’ He absorbs and imbibes the mental nourishment of his surroundings which to him are also transparently suggestive. . . . And, as representative, he is naturally inspired.

Having forgotten this, we are unconscious of the shame of having to confess what is only too evident, that we adults, here and now, are not inspired. And yet some of us at least believe in a divine incarnation. Believe? There surely lies the secret of our failure to reveal in life to every man of good will throughout the whole world, the Source of inspiring power. For that there must be a very different thing, that is faith; faith to wait, if needs be to deny, to lack all except our loyalty to the Best we can see, know, do, and thus in our small and poor measure, worthily be.

There are, in truth, deeper, higher, more real as healthier forms of a life which is well called ‘spiritual’ as appealing to the analogue of pure air, the very breath and atmosphere of vitality. But these also are mainly distorted or atrophied: witness the discussions by the ‘mystic’ on ‘miracle’ and the ‘supernatural’ and on that curiously pointless notion of ‘immorality’ which so urgently calls for translation and transfiguration. How? Through a yet barely and feebly existent penetration of Sense whose witness is as indisputable to sanity as that of actual touch itself. This comes as we learn to Signify the world and to read worthily and predictively the lessons of experience.

In a regenerate language we should regain the faithful fearlessness of the ancient prophet who at least had worthy speech – who did much no doubt to secure one – an articulate Expression fresh, sensitive, natural, forceful and penetrative as his own spirit, and so to say yearning like its speaker for the higher and purer ideas which answered to the calling heavens above him. To speak of human language as part of the witness of the Logos? We need to realise the oneness as the manifoldness of the Inspiration which is ours quâ human, as Inbreath is ours quâ animal. But first we must cease to manufacture the dogmatist and the dunderhead, the formalist and the dullard.

The child is the most sacred shrine we have; we must profane him no longer: we must keep and treasure his mind, his readiness to welcome each fresh ray of the suns towards which as towards waiting homes we pass; we must let him teach us that discontent which is divine in the highest and truest and simplest sense of that too meanly used word.

March 1911

Significs and Education

We must not confound an abortiveness in educing power due to lack of control, or to a failure due to present conditions, with an abortiveness due to survivals or perversions of speech vitiating expression itself. At present we are always doing this; or if not, too often falling into pedantry, which is worse.

Familiarity blinds us to our own contributions to a really chaotic usage which tends to vitiate the expression even of the clearest and most able minds. And such obstacles may be so successfully masked by received usage that any protest seems a mere wanton quibbling or an ignorant perversity. This is often unjustly credited to speaker or writer. But there is a secret power of association which often makes false usage corruptive. There is indeed in all language, as we now tolerate it, the vice of unrecognised suggestion which expressively adulterates the pure young mind. And in too many cases the senses in which we use phrases and words are still chaotic and inconsistent, so that we cannot give the true answer which both satisfies and inspires, or give it in its most significant form.

In the scientific sense Nature has had worthy service of interpretation. But even there the linguistic barriers and our often anarchic usage point to the urgent needs of Significs throughout all training. For here and everywhere nothing ultimately depends, of course, on sounds and marks, but on the context and sense in which they are used and above all on their implications. And sense is a rich word. It gives life's first answer to all appeal, be it only to the sense of pressure or restriction, or of obstacle or release or openness; the sense of advance and attainment; above all the sense of Significance and of the Why and the gist of things. The mastery of this needs the development of the child's heritage of primal or racial sense.

Before we begin on subjects of interests and modes of training and learning, of development and discipline, there arises this central question of Significs. Do children come to school with their interpretative powers preserved and fostered: have they been encouraged on their explorative and penetrative side: or have they been driven to mischief by the pressure of the adventurous and originating instinct, merely suppressed in the name of order? Have they found welcome in naively giving us – in however crude a form – the primordial keys of experience? We may fully recognise and even enjoy the joke of their quaintness in attempts at rendering their insight in conventional terms which too often don't fit what they feel and see and want to say.

But have we been able to discern the fine thread of their natural penetration? Have we not rather been imposing upon them forms which at best are but conveniences and only half express if they do not actually misrepresent the original germs of meaning, – of intent and purport, hidden springs mostly revealing themselves through attitude, facial expression, tone, gesture?

We English don't gesticulate, and on the whole we may gain thereby a higher level of verbal expression, though we lose much by the atrophy of an original mode of conveying our mental gist, our suspicion, our guess or our wholehearted recognition.

Gesture is at least more spontaneous and less sophisticated than language. But of course it cannot express much that belongs to an essential nature that naturally aspires to the Source of all Nature, – the Divine Nature. The canons and criterions of Expression ought always to be rising; and we should and must, in a sense greater than at present can be fully and fitly expressed, impress upon children what already in crude form or secret dialect, they discern.

Our veneration for the highest rendering of deeply human and essential experience which we rightly call inspired and illuminated (thus inspiring and illuminated, for that is the only test): our recognition of the unique value of certain examples of Expression, ought to open our eyes to our own lack of or at least blindness to, something which is always waiting for full recognition: waiting to be drawn out of the sacred recesses of our marvellous nature. That some thing the little child in babyish stammer begins by trying to say: but his elders as yet can appreciate only the stammer and the absurdity often caused rather by the impediments of an inexpressive or distorted convention of speech.

The Greatest of all took the little child and told us to become like him. But we insist on the little child shedding, renouncing from the first, its gift of instinctive discernment and exposure, and becoming, like his elders, contented with modes of expression which make rather for shadow than for light. Not altogether, of course. Genius triumphs here as everywhere by sheer imperious force – which ought to be needless. The rest of us are here to foster it, to be guardians of the expressive treasure of the race. But even genius is partly balked. The speaker, the writer, the

hearer, the reader, is infected by his thwarting habits of articulate expression. The genius has in truth never yet had a really worthy audience. He has mostly had a hostile, indifferent or servile one – the last perhaps the worst. And yet that audience came into the world to understand and be inspired by, and in various degrees to respond to, him. Some little seed of appreciative welcome lies at the very heart of our common nature.

In the scientific sense, Nature has lately had worthy service of interpretation. But even there the linguistic obstacles and anarchy – mostly quite gratuitous – as so many of its greatest or most untiring exponents insist, point to the urgent need of Significs in all training from first to last. Thus alone can the reward of full mutual understanding be attained.

23 August 1911 [untitled]

The most wonderful of all words is the ‘Why.’ It is ours wherewith to press into and probe, to conquer and govern the very centres of mental life. It is the word of the true child. Everything has been admirably done by Mr. Askwith and the Board of Trade to meet and settle the present ‘strike epidemic.’ Why do all such efforts tend to fail? Because elementary and all ‘education’ suppresses instead of carefully *educing* and cultivating the original human endowment, the instinct to ask and rightly to answer Why. The animal world in action successfully ‘asks’ and ‘answers’ the What, Where, and When, and to some extent the Which and the Who. But it cannot ask the WHY. The Who it answers by parental recognition and as domesticated by recognition of a human master and owner. But the WHY is supremely human. The interpretative instinct cuts backwards into Source and Cause; lays these open; accounts for that ‘mystery’ to which we have no right except as a question there to be answered and a problem there to be solved, – a darkness and confusion calling for a revealing dawn and sunrise. The appeal to mystery is always the appeal to what cannot bear the light; and mysticism is the cultivation of an illusive twilight of mind in which the mean or at least the secondary looms great and the really great is hidden. The mystic substitutes his visions – sometimes noble and entrancing, but never consistent, bringing not the sternness of light but the flickers of lightning – for the true Reading of the world’s history and status and of man’s ineffable and as yet unspeakable heritage in the very heavens in which his world may cry like the ‘Anch’io sono pittor’ – And I can picture the Perfect! Our Why is suppressed except in some small and partial sense, for our ‘because’ is secondary or conventional. The animal world has on the whole survived precisely because though on a level lower than human, it is normally interpretative. Its level is automatic, and our acquired habits are this also. But we are here to deal with the original, and to originate. Unless the universe – including every healthy stimulant to question – urges us to ask and answer every sane question, we may be sure that we are not *educated* but artificially *induced*, ‘inducated’ to learn certain facts and principles and methods, excellent and necessary but wholly secondary. They leave us helpless in the fact, e.g. of a general strike. It will be patched up; some compromise will be arrived at; and the poison will go on working until anarchy breeds some master tyrant who has enough signficant instinct to act as another Napoleon, but not enough to understand his own superficial powers and successes.

4.18. Significs – Time (1907)*

1907¹¹⁴

The Sense-prison

If I am shut up in a prison, at least I know that the open glory of free life outside, that for which I crave and into which I may hope to escape, the home of my dearest treasure, is still untouched. But if in realising my bondage I am also forced to realise that freedom is nothing but a baseless dream, that there is nothing to escape into but ever the same wall, bolt, bar, chain – that the open glory is annihilated or was never but a fancy or a delusion, then life is killed within me in the birth-throe of despair.

We are in the bondage of time-thought and time-word. And we cannot be loosed from that infirmity here and now. But unlike a prison of man's infliction, our prison has within it for the open heart-eyes the Image and Reflection of the Glory for which our bondage is training. And we can know and be conscious and acknowledge that it is a bondage, a life of stringent limit, while pressing in upon us is that openness for which we yearn. Thus when we use the language and apply the similes belonging to captivity we see and realise their piteous inadequacy; when we speak of the timeless in duration words we discern their 'swaddling' bondage, and our outlook and our hope grows ever greater and more unshackled . . .

13 July 1907 [untitled]¹¹⁵

If my view of time turns out, however crudely expressed, to be sound, what follows? Well, Space, as also the Motion of which it is condition, is 'eternal.'

But just because 'space' is but *condition* of somewhat, it is also in its turn, secondary: it 'serves for,' it is means of somewhat. That Somewhat is a dynamic not a static universe of order. The one thing we have to realise is that, except as condition (which translates into a willing slave) fixity and finality are the analogue of death conceived as an ultimate; not as a *going forth* corresponding to a *coming in*, but as an end of all things.

But here again language baulks us. For our end is not our termination but our aim. And that 'end' is ever a fresh beginning. But the dynamic is not motion only, it is motion that changes one order into another, a less into a more, a poorer into a richer: it is illimitable reach always to be overpassed, whether in quantity or quality, whether in amount or in value, whether in extensity or intensity.

But mark that here once more our language is the language of the prison and the tomb: of axiom and of dogma, instead of postulate and provisional assumption.

For even *this* statement (which can never be proved) any statement not formally logic or mathematical can be true for all, always and everywhere, *only in one decreed sense and degree*. That is the penalty of inherited creed, unchangeable, final. It says 'You are alive. To be alive is a danger. It means change. You must meet that danger by swaddling the living form, by preventing movement and growth, even by sealing yourself up in a wall of protection and leaving but one stone out, as a cavity through which you may be fed.'

* ['Significs – Time,' WCYA, Box 31, file 4. This file includes various copies of just two edited short papers dated 1907].

114. [In handwriting on top of the page, with the word 'Time' also in handwriting on top of the title].

115. [In handwriting on top of the page, is written 'Significs,' and under that, 'Time'].

Over and over again in the history of the race this has happened. To change the image, a thousand generations have been treated like a Chinese woman with feet bound up; and we have only hobbled the very feet whereby by nature she was freely to move in *all* directions, and thus always, among these, forwards.

Now how has this been possible? Because we have supposed solid rock to be the ultimate necessity: we have supposed the world and the universe to have ‘foundations’; to be founded *on* this solid rock. That’s why.

So we come round to our start. Motion in Space is the ‘given’; and Time is a specialised form of the result. But this being a secondary product, while in certain senses highly-developed in others, it is as yet crude, rough, inconsistent, as it were barbarous.

As yet Time has only one ‘dimension’ and one irreversible direction. ‘As yet.’ And ‘yet’ has nothing to do with time any more than ‘still’ or ‘all the same,’ though it may mean ‘*at this stage of succession.*’ Now once more mark the automatic witness of idiom, here as usual, suggestive: *success*, to succeed, has an important, probably an original sense, which has nothing to do with time, nothing to do even with sequence *except* in a secondary sense. But to have only one dimension when the category from which ‘dimension’ is a borrowed term, has three: to have only one irreversible direction when the mother-category has – *all there are, including reversals*, is to be conspicuously defective.

Time can only *borrow* and borrow only *part* of, the *equipment of motion in space*. Either give Time no forward movement, no direction, no rate-change, no scale-change, no ‘dimension’ at all, or, *if we are to rank it either with motion or space* or with both as their equal, give it anyhow the privileges of Motion or Space; give it *all* directions, *all* rates, *all* scales; and give it at least the three dimensions of our experience; let us have superficial time and cubic time as well as linear, but irreversible, time!

Let us have deep time, high time. . . And this touches another absurdity. Colloquially we say, It is high time. Now what do we here mean? We mean ‘You have almost lost the *occasion*, the opportunity, the *relevance*, of what you want to say.’

Yes, it *is* ‘high time’ we recognised time’s true status and ceased to be its paralysed victims. Our communications *in time* have to be accelerated as they are now quickening in space. Distances in time have to be bridged as we are bridging them in space. And Quickening is the key-word. Instead of ‘conquering Time marches on’ (Kinglake’s *Eothen*, 1844, p. 173) it will then indeed be ‘conquering Man marches on’ – through Space in time, and in Motion – to the consummation of his potential activities.

Chapter 5

Translation and meaning from a signficil perspective

A sign is only a sign *in actu* by virtue of its receiving an interpretation, that is, by virtue of its determining another sign of the same interpretant. (Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 5.569)

5.1. Translation as the interpretive-cognitive method

As she worked through the late nineteenth century, Victoria Welby elaborated a fascinating theory of translation based on her theory of sign and meaning, which we know she designated as ‘significs.’ Welby’s theory of translation takes account of the vastness and variety of the world of signs, therefore of the unbounded nature of translative-interpretive processes. Moreover, that Welby should have related her translation theory to her theory of sign and meaning also implies a relation to value theory. Ultimately, in the human world, to translate means to interpret, that is, to translate transfiguring and transvaluating significance. In *What is Meaning?*, in fact, Welby presents significs as a ‘philosophy of significance,’ ‘philosophy of translation’ and ‘philosophy of interpretation,’ with expressions that emphasize three distinct but interrelated dimensions of ‘significating’ processes (Welby 1983 [1903]: 161). Beyond translation across different languages in a plurilingual and intercultural world, Welby’s focus was on translation as an interpretive-cognitive method. Furthermore, she was interested in the conditions that make translation possible identifying them in the larger context where translative processes converge with life processes, and perhaps beyond, in the thrust towards an unbounded cosmic dimension as described in Chapter 2 above.

Welby broke new ground as she conducted the sense of ‘translation’ into the territory of reflection on sign and meaning, and theorized translation as an interpretive-cognitive method involving all signifying processes without limits. She already began focusing on the relation between interpreting and signifying practices in her early book of 1881, *Links and Clues*, where she identified four principles of interpretation. These address: 1) the problem of literal meaning; 2) the risk of leveling sense; 3) the importance of context; and 4) the problem of dialectics as a condition for unity. She also recognized the essential role of contradiction and complementarity among the different levels of sense in the configuration of a thought system (Welby 1881: 31–36). In *What is Meaning?*, Welby described translation as ‘inter-translation,’ a method of interpretation and understanding. And given that translative processes are structural to sign processes as they develop across systemic and typological boundaries, and that meaning is generated in the relation among signs, from a signficil perspective, theory of translation and theory of sign and meaning are interconnected (cf. Welby 1983 [1903]: 120).

Welby also identified a close interrelation between theory of translation and figurative language, underlining the importance of analogy in the very constitution of thought and communication processes (see Ch. 4, above). She in fact launched the idea of translation in an extended sense as the application of analogy. Considering Welby with Peirce, the

claim is that all signs and expressions are in themselves the open result of translations before being themselves subject to further translative/interpretive processes (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: Chs. 1 and 2). Significs is a method for the enhancement of meaning and awareness, of significance through translative processes. Translation is therefore no less than a condition for understanding and interpretation of signifying behaviour generally (see Petrilli 2003a,f). As such, one of the goals of significs is to evidence the relation between significance, interpretation, translation, and ultimately between translation and the ethical dimension of signifying processes.

With reference to the typology of translation introduced by Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), in his famous essay of 1959, ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’ (cf. Petrilli 2003a,f: 17–20, which proposes an elaboration on Jakobson’s scheme), for Welby, too, translation is ‘intralingual’ translation or ‘rewording’ (interpretation of verbal signs by means of other verbal signs from the same historical-natural language). It is ‘interlingual’ translation as well, or as Jakobson also says ‘translation properly understood’ (interpretation of verbal signs of a given historical-natural language by means of the verbal signs of another historical-natural language in the shift from one language to another). Furthermore, it is also ‘intersemiotic’ translation, or ‘transmutation’ (interpretation of verbal signs with nonverbal signs, and vice versa, and of nonverbal signs of a given sign system with nonverbal signs of another sign system).

In a letter to Edmund Maclure, written towards the end of the nineteenth century (see Ch. 2, above), Welby had already delineated a research project around ideas she had been developing ‘all or nearly all’ her life, and which were generally in line with the findings of scientific progress of the time. Among the principles or notions forming her project, ‘Translation’ was listed as point two with the following specification: ‘Translation. Every part of experience, while evolving a dialect of its own, ought to be capable of translation into the others, and of being tested by this means’ (Welby to Maclure, 1889–1891, in Cust 1929: 265). Welby’s unpublished papers, stored in the Welby Collection, York University Archives, include a file dedicated to the question of translation, ‘i.e., definition,’ as it appears in the title of the file ‘Significs – Translation (i.e. Definition),’ now appended to this chapter, below. Translation as definition corresponds in part to what Jakobson understands by ‘intralingual’ translation or ‘reformulation,’ and represents only one aspect of Welby’s very broad significant and in today’s terminology ‘biosemiotic’ approach to translation theory and practice (cf. Petrilli 1999a, 2007c). In any case, without ignoring the specificity of communication among different historical-natural languages in the form of ‘interlingual’ translation, Welby was interested in this particular translative practice as part of the larger framework, from a methodological perspective, as instrumental to the acquisition of knowledge. To repeat then, her focus was on translation as a cognitive method: as ‘reformulation’ or ‘definition’ (where this expression is understood in a broad, ‘plastic’ sense). Yet it was also on translation as ‘intersemiotic’ translation or ‘transmutation,’ as much as on the obvious sense of translation as a shift from one language to another.

Welby was commissioned to provide the entry ‘Translation’ for the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes*, 1901–1905, in addition to the entries ‘Sensal’ (co-authored with George Stout) and ‘Significs’ (co-authored with Stout and James M. Baldwin). All three entries are reprinted in Chapter 2, this volume and ‘Translation’ is described as follows: ‘1) In the literal sense, the rendering of one language into another.

2) The statement of one subject in terms of another; the transference of a given line of argument from one sphere to another; the use of one set of facts to describe another set, e.g. an essay in physics or physiology may be experimentally 'translated' into aesthetics or ethics, a statement of biological into a statement of economic fact' (Welby 1902).

As Welby clarified in *What is Meaning?*, she introduced the term 'translation' because it was already in use, but in reality in its current usage it only covered a part of the sense she intended. She observed that other expressions beginning with the prefix 'trans' indicate further aspects of the process she was describing, they include 'transference,' 'transformation,' 'transmutation,' 'transfiguration,' 'making translucent and transparent,' and above all 'transvaluation.' In her own words, as anticipated in a note to Chapter XVI and subsequently developed in Chapter XIX, reported below: 'It must be borne in mind that although the term "translation" has been chosen because it is already used in at least part of the sense here suggested, it does not cover the whole ground required. Many words with the prefix "trans" represent one aspect of the process in question, e.g. transference, transformation, transmutation, transfiguration, and, above all, transvaluation' (Welby 1983 [1903]: 126 n2).

In Chapter XVI Welby thematizes the relation between analogy, meaning, significance and translation. As she already states in the Table of Contents, 'All systems concentrate in Significance as their essential value as well as test. And thus Significs alone gives us the means of inter-translation' (Welby 1983 [1903]: xxi):

To return to the analogy between physical and mental vision: if we test it by result upon thought there is perhaps no truer metaphor in language than that of the mental and especially the intellectual 'eye.' The simplest and most ignorant of us says 'I see,' meaning 'I understand'; and the man of science as well as the philosopher has nothing better to say. For the physical eye forms actually part of the brain, which everybody admits to be the condition of what we call 'thought.' The processes and functions of the brain are thus inevitably taken to symbolise the processes and functions of rational thinking. Whether they do correspond point for point or no, we are impelled by a constraining force, apparently felt by the whole race, to express the one in terms of the other. The mischief is that this is done with a fatal inconsistency. For example, whereas the mental eye is constantly credited even in philosophical writing with the power to 'see itself' directly, the physical eye which is seen in others cannot, except in a mirror, be seen by itself: we can only explore our own eye by means of touch.

But if we seriously appeal in this case to the physical analogy, let us ask what the oculist means when he tells a patient that, so far as physiological conditions are concerned, he sees true, his vision is 'emmetropic,' normal, sound. What by this does he intend us to infer? That the trouble which is complained of arises from disturbance of general health, since he finds the mechanism and tissues of the eye healthy, the focus and accommodation normal, and the two eyes acting together.

Now the corresponding mental trouble may in the same way be due, not to disturbance or failure of normal function in the mental 'eye' itself, but to disturbance of the general mental or intellectual health. But it is well known that in the physical sphere defective eyesight tends injuriously to affect general health in various ways. Unless therefore we consistently decline to use the analogy of vision at all in speaking of intellectual and moral phenomena – which is impossible – we must assume the falsity of the accepted 'view' that the near and the palpable is what we can 'see' with least effort, while the remote, that which transcends our grasp, and indeed all our senses except that of sight, is what costs us the greatest mental exertion. For if we are true to our analogy in the only sense which justifies it at all, it follows,

as we have already seen, that ‘in what may be regarded as the normal eye,’ normal mentally as well as physically speaking, ‘the far limit’ (of accommodation) ‘may be put for practical purposes at an infinite distance.’ We are conscious of a distinct effort in turning from a far to a near object, while the converse act is an easing, a relaxation of effort. But which of us has practically recognised this fact when modes of thought or philosophical principles were in question? These are always spoken of as dealing with things ‘transcendental’; by which the ‘plain man’ means beyond his reach, beyond the limits of what he unconsciously admits to be merely the tangible or the palpable, which is the range of the tentacle and in us of the arm. Thus he is accusing himself of mental blindness: *for to see what is beyond our physical reach is precisely the function of the eye*. But which of us really understands that normal mental vision must needs deal most easily, not the near or the close by, but with the far and the remote: which of us has applied this pregnant idea in interpreting experience? Which of us fully faces the fact that the seer who boasts of the narrow limits of his mental outlook, and decries as dreaming or idle star-gazing the natural activity of the mental eye, is radically false to fact or is really boasting of a distortion of mental vision which must vitiate all his inferences? Which of us has fully realised the fact that we must not, if we use it at all, violate the analogy and falsify the metaphor by thinking of one ‘mental eye’ merely, but under formal conditions must appeal to both eyes in combination? And even so, which of us remembers that the two must not be set one on each side of a head, with a snout – a projecting barrier – between them?¹ In short, which of us realises that we are wholly dependent for our very ideas of mental phenomena on a ludicrous travesty of the facts of organic vision, and that the inevitable issue of this is disastrous psychological confusion reflected in all philosophical theory as well as in the plain man’s common-sense ‘views’?

Professor Karl Pearson insists in consequence of the fetishistic use of the terms matter, mass, motion, force, space, time, cause, atom, body, law, etc. (especially in text-books), physical science has made a false start. But the biologist, the physiologist, the psychologist, have all been dependent on such terms in this untenable and misleading sense, since no others were current. So they have everywhere used them both directly and figuratively. Thus if Professor Pearson maintains his position even in the broadest sense, psychology and ethics have so far made a false start too. Their premisses are liable to vanish with the superannuated connotations of the main terms of physical science. At all events if (as in the case of alchemy and chemistry, astrology and astronomy) the modern scientist is compelled to use the old terms, they must be carefully charged with new meanings, for in too many cases the popular mind is steeped in the logic of magic and yet never suspects it. Perhaps the securest stronghold of myth is the mind which, in the name of common-sense, refuses to question its own certainties. For it is almost invariably unconscious of the extent to which its common-sense has been distorted by the action of our essentially defective system of ideas, revealed as well as reinforced by deformity of figurative expression.

Take again the rods and cones, the receivers of light. The accepted view in analogical use is that if you want to be enlightened you must not ask ‘light’ to come in and reach you (from ‘behind’) at the point of some mental organ turned inwards. That would be fatal ‘introspection,’ we say, and a sad waste of time; we must turn the point of our mental eye-organ outwards if any light is to be thrown thereby upon any subject. And so on throughout our thinking. We are always appealing to facts to furnish us with illustrations. But if we appeal to a mere fancy and treat it as a fact, – if we seriously take the centaur

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1. [‘In some of the lower animals the position of the eyes is so completely lateral that no rays of light proceeding from the same object can fall on any part of the two retinas at the same time, and in these creatures vision is wholly monocular’ (*Text-book of Physiology*, Dr. M. Foster, vol. IV (1891): 1275) (Welby 1903: 124)].

as we take the 'horse' and the 'man,' and use its supposed movements as the analogues of something actual which we want to illustrate, arguing from the one to the other, as though a 'man-horse' were a 'fact' in 'nature,' – then, of course, we re-import into our reasoning the very fallacies which are everywhere else discredited. If we appeal to a centaur at all it must be as a fabulous monstrosity used to illustrate something also monstrous. But we too often use mythical 'facts' belonging to the same order as the centaur, or satyr, or dragon, or phoenix whereby to express the reasonable, the congruous, the orderly, the real; for instance, matter, force, spirit, cause, etc., in their popular or inherited sense. They create fictitious difficulties, and these of course react on the emotional sphere and generate pessimism.

Many attempts have been made to establish special analogies between the facts or laws of the physical world and those of the social, moral, or intellectual world. The misfortune is that all these have been made in the interest of some special view or theory of the world of 'soul' or 'mind,' some special form of idealism or spiritualism, of ethical or social system, or indeed simply of 'belief.' And the consequence has been that the comparisons made would not bear strict examination; there has always been a tendency to ignore or to overpress points which told against or for the desired conclusion. Analogy has been treated too much as though it were an advocate to be secured by a retaining fee, and safe to put a certain case as strongly as possible in a certain way. But, of course, as J.S. Mill truly says,² 'there is no word, however, which is used more loosely, or in a greater variety of senses, than Analogy.' And it ought to be obvious, as he further tells us, that the value of a true analogy is that of a guide-post 'pointing out the direction in which more rigorous investigations should be prosecuted.'

But there is a method both of discovering, testing, and using analogy (or in some cases homology), the value of which does not yet seem to be recognised; and this may be called in an extended sense Translation.³ While emphasising and illustrating what R.L.

2. [*System of Logic*, pp. 363, 368 (1895) (1983 [1903]: 126)].

3. [It must be borne in mind that although the term 'translation' has been chosen because it is already used in at least part of the sense here suggested, it does not cover the whole ground required. Many words with the prefix 'trans' represent one aspect of the process in question, e.g. transference, transformation, transmutation, transfiguration, and, above all, transvaluation.

Reference may here be made to a profoundly significant article by Mr. A. B. Kempe on 'The Subject-Matter of Exact Thought,' in *Nature*, December 18, 1890. The pregnancy and suggestive force of the whole essay make quotation difficult, but the following may serve as example: 'The essential elements of the subject-matter of exact thought are in reality of an extremely simple character; and, though they exhibit infinite variety, that variety is due to simple and easily-defined causes. There is nothing vague or metaphysical about them; but, even when mere figments of the brain, they are precise and definite, with parts and properties which can be analysed and catalogued just as much as if they were the elements of a chemical compound, the wheels of a watch, or the organs of a vital structure. Let me try to show that this is so. I will begin by considering and comparing the essential matter of two 'branches of science,' which will, I think, be regarded by most persons as of quite different characters, and as very properly relegated to separate and distinct treatises. I refer to the geometrical theory of points, and the logical theory of statements. The investigation will, I hope, fully prepare the way for an acceptance of the general definition of the subject-matter of exact thought which will follow.'

This admirably expresses one of the forms which translation may take (1983 [1903]: 126–127)].

Nettleship called the apparently ultimate fact that 'all language and all expression is a form of *translation*,⁴ Significs claims to extend and develop the application of that idea in practical directions. We already find that it is not by endeavouring to kill deep-seated tendencies of human nature but by translating them into a higher form, that we achieve the regeneration of man. Adulation turns into reverence, license into orderly freedom. Even 'gambling,' which thus turns into 'venture' and 'daring an issue,' is undermined by translation, and becomes the boast of the explorer; even the fighting and drinking tendencies may be transfigured as we get to the sound impulses which they distort and degrade. The translation of the first is already seen in war in the form of devoted gallantry. The second is due to the craving for an enhanced sense of life and power and delight which appears thus to be gratified; the morbid and deadly satisfaction could at least, in many cases, be replaced by a healthy one, and in any case points to a true need. The mere attempt to state one subject in the terms of another, to express one set of ideas in those words which seem to belong properly to another, changing only the leading terms, could not fail, if done systematically and critically, both to enlighten us on points of connection or correspondence which have not been suspected,⁵ and also, perhaps, to reveal ignorance in some cases where we have taken knowledge for granted. It would automatically sift the superficial or partial from the deep or complex likeness; and it would lead to the recognition of a wide difference between the casual, the merely illustrative analogy, and that which indicated inter-relations not yet recognised and utilised.⁶

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4. [*Philosophical Lectures and Remains*, Vol. I: 86 (1897). This is very obvious in the case of the infant. 'There is no device or words that can evade or supersede the ultimate recourse to things. Now the significations of words are learned in most cases not so much by definitions and verbal descriptions as *by the observation of the various applications of the words*. Indeed, this is the primitive way in which the meanings of words are found out. The child knows nothing of what, say, the word *horse* means until someone shows it an actual horse, and, maybe pointing to it, says repeatedly, horse, in such a way as to excite the observation of the child to the intended application of the word to the thing' (Francis C. Russell, *Monist*, January 1893, p. 279). Indeed, it begins even earlier. The little one becomes accustomed to the sound of the word 'milk' or 'bottle' in the nurse's mouth when it is looking for or enjoying its meal, and soon translates the one experience into the other (1983 [1903]: 127)].
 5. [A striking case of this in physical science is the 'singing flame.' And it appears that, 'extravagant as the suggestion may have seemed' when Professor Ayrton first made it, an electric arc has actually started playing tunes in one laboratory, and succeeded in evoking a sort of chorus in others, to the astonishment of the physicists working in them. Thus the time is perhaps not far distant when the arc will 'complete as a musical instrument with the violin or grand organ,' and 'we shall be able to realize something of the grandeur of "the morning starts singing together."' ('Musical Arcs,' *Nature*, April 4, 1901). This is indeed a startling case of natural and practical 'translation' (1983 [1903]: 128)].
 6. [A good scientific example of this occurs in an address to working-men by Sir Norman Lockyer. 'The next point is that the astronomical record, studied from the evolution point of view, is in other ways on all-fours with the geological record. We get the same changes of forms, I may say that we get the sudden breaks in forms, disappearances of old accompanied by appearances of new forms, and with this we get, whether we consider the atomic weight point of view or the series point of view, a growth of complexity. The geological story is exactly reproduced' (*Nature*, June 1, 1899). Again, the very title of a leading article in *Nature* (November 21, 1901) involves the principle of translation: 'Zoological Problems studied by a Psychologist, Psychological Problems studied by a Zoologist.'

One example of the various forms in which translation in this new sense becomes a means both of testing knowledge and of widening its range is here given. To give others would increase the bulk of the book too much. In this case ‘translation’ consists of openly borrowing the statement by some master of thought and word, of a given thesis, and applying this with some necessary changes to another. Whether this involves the incongruous or falsifies argument, or whether it fits, it will prove equally useful as a ‘significant’ exercise. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 121–129)

In a letter of 1908–1911 to her daughter Nina Cust, Welby wrote: ‘One side of my work . . . is to bring out the secret of a transfiguring translation. We speak lightly of analogy as casual, and no wonder; for few indeed of our images, metaphors, comparisons are as yet sound and true’ (in Cust 1931: 346–347). From a signficant perspective, translation involves comparison, association and analogy among different fields and dominions of knowledge and experience, among different sign systems, therefore it involves interpretation of one sign in terms of another. Knowledge, meaning and experience are generated and developed through interpretive-translative processes thus described in the encounter among signs from different sign systems, linguistic and nonlinguistic signs, among different historical natural languages, among special languages and linguistic registers within the same historical natural language, etc. Indeed, as hinted above, all sign systems, all languages are already in themselves interpretation-translation processes as we are describing them.

Welby formulated her conception of translation during the initial phases of her studies on language and expression. At the time, she was specifically concerned with the need to update religious beliefs in terms of latest developments in the sciences, to establish a dialogue between faith and reason, by which to translate, update, verify and evaluate religious discourse in terms of scientific discourse. It is important to emphasize that her interpretive-translative method was elaborated in strict connection with what she also called the ‘analogical,’ and in some cases, the ‘homological’ method (see below). From this point of view, Welby did not privilege a given special language as the ‘target-language’ over others. She considered such an approach reductive. All the same, such reductionism was subsequently to characterize the Unity of Science Movement, logical empiricism or neo-positivism, as well as the Vienna Circle which was connected to the latter. In this framework, all languages, unless a question of formal languages, were to be translated into the language of physics, as the very condition of the possibility of producing sense. However, Welby’s perspective was far broader and did not involve any form of reductionism. Welby’s point was that translation from one system to another was instrumental to the development of meaning in all its possible signifying nuances, and thus to the furthering of knowledge, critical consciousness and ultimately of significance. To this end, serious discourse can be translated into comical discourse and vice versa, verbal or nonverbal discourse can be transferred from one universe of discourse to another, for example, from the social sphere to the political, etc. (Chapter XVIII in *What is Meaning?* is rich in illustrations from the daily newspaper, *Westminster Gazette*, and

In an article on ‘The Light-Sensations of Eyeless Animals’ (*Natural Science*, March 1897) we find the following: ‘Distinct vision of the external world would result as soon as there were a sufficient number of the sensory cells to give a connected translation of the image with its various lights and shades into sensation’ (1983 [1903]: 128–129).

from literary discourse, in particular, *Alice in Wonderland*, producing results coloured by tones that are at once critical and parodical).

In XVII of *What is Meaning?*, as part of her work on the question of analogy and relation to translation, Welby presented an experimental translation of a 'Lecture on the Nervous System (1884),' by Dr. Hughlings Jackson (the translation was introduced in Ch. 4, above). This experiment consisted in transposing a lesson on the nervous system into the language of religion, making the discourse of physiology resound in religious discourse and, vice versa, religious discourse resound in the discourse of physiology as a means of verifying the validity of both. As Welby reported in the opening to this chapter, her translation, in spite of any limits, met with the approval of many scholars of the time including 'Sir J. Crichton-Browne, Dr. Mercier, and other alienists and medical authorities,' but also Dr. Hughlings Jackson himself and Professor Croom-Robertson who had challenged her 'to obtain for such an attempt the endorsement of the experts in any subject.' Her translation reads as follows:

'TRANSLATION' OF PARTS OF DR. HUGHLINGS JACKSON'S CROONIAN LECTURE ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM (1884)⁷

Regarding the spiritual system as that part of us related most nearly and fully to a postulated mental sphere, 'solar' to us, *let us consider diseases of its functions as reversals of evolution, that is, as dissolutions – looking upon evolution in the mental and spiritual (as in the physical) region as an ascending development in a particular order.*

Such a development is (1) a passage from the most to the least organised; (2) from the most simple to the most complex; (3) from the most automatic to the most voluntary. The triple conclusion, therefore, from this is, that the highest (mental) centres are the least organised, the most complex, and the most voluntary. They are, in fact, always prophetic. There is no inconsistency whatever in speaking of mental centres being at the same time the most complex and least organised. Dissolution being partial, the condition in every case of it is duplex – negative and positive. To undergo (mental) dissolution is equivalent to being reduced to a lower level of (mental) evolution. Normal thought and conduct are, or signify, survivals of the fittest states of what we may call the topmost 'layer' of the highest (mental) centres. The illusions of the fanatic, or of the morbid mystic and the superstitious devotee, are not caused by (spiritual) disease, but are the outcome of the activity of what is left of him in the highest sense; of all there is of him, his illusions, etc., are his faith and his theology (or his spiritualism) at the time of their prevailing. Thus the various 'isms' claiming at present to be 'spiritual,' and to be revelations of the spiritual or heavenly world, may well be witnesses, not merely of decay, but of something to decay; something belonging to the very crown and glory of our nature, to which they point and from which they spring, but which has lost for the time its royal power of rule and sway and co-ordination, whatever the reason for this may be. And of course the disordered presentation of these activities – now illusory – tends to discredit that whole sphere of mental action which we call religious. Superficial observers are apt to confound the symptoms of spiritual insanity with symptoms which really imply and point to spiritual wholeness.

The highest centres of men's mental and moral activity being least organised 'give out' first and most entirely; the middle centres, being more organised, resist longer; and the lowest centres, being most organised, resist longest. Does not this tend to account for

7. [Verbal quotations from the Lecture are printed in italics; the rest is translative application. It will be seen that in this instance the translation is from what Mr. Rutgers Marshall would call the 'neurergic' to the 'spiritual' sphere (*Mind*, October 1902: 479) (1983 [1903]: 130)].

the special liability to exhaustion and perversity shown by the highest kind of spiritual function, – that which inherently reveals the origin, reason, and object, and also rules and directs the lower forms of natural activity in the history of religious thought and ‘revelation’ generally?

That in us which is in touch with the Divine is the least organised, the most sensitive, the easiest injured and lost; that in us which is in touch with the secondary sources of light and energy is more stable and persists longer, while that which has become merely matter of dogma, second-hand belief or assent – ‘on authority’ – or prescribed conduct and obeyed law under promise and threat, belongs to the third and lowest and most organised type.

The habitual reference to ‘texts’ or to ‘Church authority,’ to dogma and creed, to the letter rather than the spirit of truth, would suggest our belonging to this third level – a very useful one while the higher ones were in abeyance, as in sleep, – but still answering to an animal level of conscious life, and not to be confounded with what alone deserves the name of the real religion of a true Manhood.

It must, however, here be observed that *there are local dissolutions of the highest centres*. We may look upon some kinds of morbid religious experiences – often accompanied with great power to attract and much real beauty – and some unnatural and overstrained developments of spiritual truth enforced as absolute dogma, as representing this most terrible of dissolutions.

Progressive muscular atrophy begins in the most voluntary limb – the arm; and in its most voluntary part – the hand and fingers. So also progressively spiritual atrophy befalling a Church (or community) or an individual, may perhaps be said to begin in prayer, its most voluntary function. (The atrophy of insight, leading to the decay of prophetic, that is, revealing power, is not here considered.) Recourse is had to repetition: in the higher form, of liturgy borrowed or inherited from a time of really voluntary and spontaneous religious articulation, or in the lower form of repeating by rote composed and prescribed ‘offices’ of our own or others’ compilation as ‘private devotions.’ The unlikeness of this to what our Lord shows us to be the essential nature of prayer will be obvious to any one who reminds himself of its analogue – the communion of a child with its father and mother. That the child should ‘perform a service,’ in the sense of repeating daily or weekly some form of words; and should ‘say’ his talk as we speak of ‘saying’ our prayers, reciting in ready-made forms his reverent, loving appeal, or thanks, or confidence, – the very idea refutes itself.⁸

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8. [(Note on Lecture): *‘The becoming more automatic is not dissolution, as I believe some think it to be, but is, on the contrary, evolution becoming more complete. The highest centres are the most complexly evolving, but are also the least completely evolved. In other words, the highest centres are ‘the ravelled end.’ In them evolution is most actively going on, whilst in some lowest centres, e.g., the respiratory, evolution is probably nearly completed.’*

Thus the ‘liturgical’ and other cognate instincts do represent the attainment of an organic aim. But we must ever bear in mind that it is the highest type of spiritual activity which is at once most complexly evolving (thus difficult to reduce to any simple ‘common-sense’ or ‘dogmatic’ definition), and least perfectly evolved, so that their experience and expression must alike be expected to have, so to speak, ‘ravelled ends’; to be fragmentary, obscure, or too purely ‘speculative.’ The very fact that in them the evolution of religious apprehensive and interpretative faculty is actively going on entails this. We have to hope for this (not fear it); and look for it and welcome its advent, if we could vindicate the supremacy of that spiritual dominion which we have so suicidally called ‘supernatural,’ instead of claiming for it in an emphatic sense the term ‘natural,’ as being in a sense ultra-natural (1983 [1903]: 133–134)].

Ultimately the highest 'motor centres' of practical moral conduct and saintly devotion represent – or in other words co-ordinate, – movements of all parts of the (spiritual) organism in the most special and complex combination.

Just as the anatomical bases of consciousness and memory (the highest nervous centres) represent the whole person physical, consciousness represents the whole person psychical. And may this not again form a basis or rather starting-point for that further 'layer' of personality which, e.g., St. Paul calls 'not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me'; that spiritual living Identity which, like the highest centres of the lesser personality, is potentially the whole Organism – whether of individual or Race?

Again, it may be said that, as in the nervous system, *there are three degrees of exhaustion, three increasing depths of dissolution* of the highest functions of our being; that is, of those functions which answer to the cosmical relations of our earth.

(1) *Roughly analogous to ordinary sleep with dreaming.* Here comes in (without fixed or definite delusions, or unreasonable action) a want of correspondence with what is going on round us, and a fitful and chaotic action of the religious imagination, uncontrolled by will and intelligence.

(2) *So-called loss of consciousness* of the links between outward and inward spiritual experience – *analogous to sleep with somnambulism.*

(3) *Coma, significant of the dissolution of all three layers; with which, seemingly, there is a full persistence only of 'vital' operations such as respiration and circulation,⁹ indicating the retention of the activity of a fourth layer* belonging to a form of life low down in the organic scale.

We may, broadly speaking, distinguish on all sides in the religious world these three 'layers' of degenerating religious function; and they surely go far to account for the discredit into which the very name of religion (and indeed both theology and the spiritual life) has fallen with many of those to whom the appeal of the true energy of the 'highest centre' of Man would have met with an instant and unreserved response.

The first degree involves inability to perceive clearly and act freely and fearlessly in touch with all orders of fact and types of thought, even those which seem most diverse; confusion and illusion are consecrated as mystery or miracle, just as ignorant credulity or confident dogmatism are confounded with faith. There is a want of power to originate sequences of thought or movement, or to receive new impressions, or to express these when formed in word or act, and a want of reason and clearness in the so-called 'religious ideas'; on which indeed we may even pride ourselves, calling such blind incoherence 'faith,' and deprecating orderly lucidity as though it were something other than divine or spiritual – something baser and less worthy. We can scarcely, therefore, wonder at others calling this state of mind simply 'dreaming,' and telling us that they have awakened to the 'realities' of common-sense, of ascertained fact and logical statement. In too many of those called 'believers' it gradually deepens into a more or less complete effacement even of the dream-activity, until at last we are actually unconscious of our own unconsciousness, and cannot conceive that there is any attainable state of active correspondence with spiritual reality, or any accessible verifying or interpreting power like in character and force to those which we call 'inspired' and 'prophetic,' but immeasurably enriched and enlarged in scope by the

9. [It will be noticed that no attempt has been made in this 'translation' to apply the distinction already suggested between the 'breath' – i.e. the spirit – world, and the world of special senses culminating in Sight and involving high rational and moral development. It seemed best to leave it as originally written, before the analogical value of the distinction had been fully tested and realised (1983 [1903]: 134–135)].

growth of general knowledge and the growing means of scientific test until now withheld from us.

This state betrays itself by the conviction that while at some other time or place the phenomena of active (fully awake) spiritual life – involving powers of swaying the world of mankind to which we are self-convicting strangers – were indeed all present in full use, all that is utterly gone by; that now there is no possibility of any such experience, in complete correlation with knowledge of every kind.

In this stage there is persistence only of automatic vital operations, – a spiritual breathing and a spiritual circulation, – a holy tone and atmosphere in the life, and a sacramental current through it fertilising it, showing that a real though low form of spiritual life is still present. We want that. But we want more yet.

In the ascent of spiritual life from its germ to its adult development, *the higher types of order keep down the lower*. (As in organic evolution, the higher races keep down the lower, the more complex keep down the simpler.) *Dissolution is not only a 'taking off' of the higher, but is at the very same time a 'letting go' of the lower*. The relaxation of the higher means the release of the lower. *The energies of the lower level of evolution are not goaded into activity, but are let go*.

All elaborate spiritual states in cases of unhealthy religious consciousness of every kind, are the outcome of activities of healthy spiritual functions or arrangements on the lower level of evolution remaining. *The more rapidly control is removed the greater is the activity on that lower level; as in the case of the furious delirium of the epileptic maniac who has undergone sudden dissolution, contrasted with the quiescence of the senile dement whose dissolution has been some thousand times slower.*¹⁰

Dr. Hughlings Jackson asks, *'Of what substance can the organ of mind be composed, unless of processes, representing movements and impressions?... No one ever touched anything (had a vivid tactual image) without moving his fingers, and no one ever saw anything (had a vivid visual image) without moving his eyes.'* And of what 'substance,' we may ask, can the true personality be composed unless of similar processes? Surely it may be said of the religious life that both to do well and to see aright are active processes, and that being is a knowing and a doing by a living One. And language – the message-giving, the revelation of thought, – in a sense the Word also, is a part of personality. It is true of the spiritual as of the physiological order, that *the question of articulation and expression (as of locomotion) is fundamentally one of movements of a very complex and special character*.

Motion is thus the ultimate secret of conscious intelligence and of living faith. *We develop as we must and as we can*. But Dr. Hughlings Jackson tells us that *'there is something more; there is what I will call Internal Evolution – a process which goes on most actively in the highest (nervous) centres. On account of its great preponderance in the highest centres of man, he differs so greatly from the lower animals. I contend that permanent re-arrangements (internal evolutions) are made during so-called dreamless sleep. The doctrine I submit accounts for what, at the first glance, seems the inadequate number of fibres from the lowest centres towards the highest.'*

And in the spiritual life also there is truly something more than the 'external' development. There is an internal evolution which goes on, thank God, even during the most unconscious or dreamless form of spiritual sleep. And that internal evolution is the very secret why the true Man – the Man divine in Christ – differs from, as higher than, the self-

10. [And this ought to warn us of the tendency of that activity which we often call sudden conversion – that is an induced religious convulsion. This is totally different from a true 'sudden conversion' – the arrival of a 'soul' at its flash point – the detonation of long-accumulating fulminates (1983 [1903]: 137)].

man which we call the ‘natural’ man; why the man in conscious relation with the spiritual cosmos is higher than the man merely in conscious relation with his own little religious planet, supposing it to be the centre of the spiritual universe. We may indeed be thankful here for the ‘inadequate number of fibres from the lowest centres towards the highest.’

‘In the case of visual perception there is an unbroken physical circuit, complete reflex action, from sensory periphery through the highest centres back to the muscular periphery. The visual image, a purely mental state, occurs in parallelism with – arises during (not from) the activity of the two highest links of this purely physical chain; so to speak, it “stands outside” these links.’

And of course it may be said that ‘spiritual insight’ stands outside the physical links. But surely these thoughts suggest that thus it may well be not the less, but the more important and central to our experience. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 130–138)

In the Table of Contents for a volume Welby was planning on writing, the name ‘Vailati, etc.’ was written in parenthesis alongside ‘Translation,’ the title of Chapter One, Part Two (see above, Section 1.2). Working in the same direction as Welby, Giovanni Vailati also theorized translation as an interpretive-cognitive method in his various essays. He elaborated a method of comparison and confrontation among different languages and discourse fields, comparing, for example, the language of morals with the language of geometry, verbal language with the language of algebra, etc. (cf. Vailati 1898, 1905a, 1908a). To compare different languages – whether a question of verbal or nonverbal languages, and in the case of verbal languages, of different historical natural languages or different special languages within the same historical natural language – means to gaze at each language through the eyes of another language that acts as interpretant of the former, interpreting and developing it further. This approach corresponds to the interpretive-translative method as it emerges from Welby’s own significant perspective (see letter by Welby to Vailati, 27 February 1907, Box 18, WCYA, now in Ch. 4, this volume).

In *What is Meaning?*, Welby describes intellectual activity, progress in knowledge and experience in terms of the ‘automatic process of translative thinking,’ based on the use of metaphor and analogy where ‘everything suggests or reminds us of something else’ (Welby 1983 [1903]: 34). Mental activities involve automatic translative processes. ‘Translative thinking’ converges with signifying and semiotic processes at large, in which something stands for something else, its meaning, which is generated in fact through the translation of signs into other signs, into different types of signs and different sign systems. Furthermore, translation in all senses takes place in the dialectics between distinction and unity, on the basis of a common element uniting differences, that is, on the basis of the relation of similarity, whether analogical or homological, among elements that may even seem completely unrelated. Continuous translative-interpretive processes thus understood enhance the capacity for perception of unforeseen connections among signs and sign systems, the discovery of knowledge and truths previously unknown, ultimately the capacity for meaning value and significance (see below, Section 5.4.). As Welby stated in *What is Meaning?*, Chapter XIX:

The idea of Translation in all its applications naturally implies the recognition of Distinction, and starts from the conception (or principle) of Equation, which is in the quantitative what Translation (the discovery and application of the common element in the diverse or different) is in the qualitative sphere. Much work, like that done by Mayer and Joule,

remains to be attempted on a different plane. But it is obvious that only within narrow limits can we expect to find mechanical or even logically perfect equivalence. And even if we did we might suspect (in the world of mind) that the one was the derivative or reflection of the other; that we had found the analogue of the mirror. This, of course, cannot be excluded from the domain of translation in its extended (significant) sense; but we must carefully understand its conditions.¹¹

But Translation may be helpful, that is, revelative and illuminative, when there is much less literal correspondence than in this case. It applies wherever there is a presumable unity implied in differences which can be distinguished.¹² What we want is neither an artificial mode of uniting the apparently diverse, discrepant, separate, nor an equally artificial postulate of primary identity which either ignores, minimises, or excludes distinction.¹³

As Translation involves both unity and distinction (the one actually and the other implicitly), language must itself be recognised as the means of discovering contrasts together with the links which constitute them elements of unity, or at least completely exclude the idea of final disparateness. Even the wildest analogy which betrays itself in popular or inherited (and animistic) metaphor is seen as a serious effort to accomplish this rational duty, one in which, as a fact, the whole race at all stages of its psychological ascent shares. For a thing is significant, both in the lower and in the higher sense, in proportion as it is expressible through bare sign or pictorial symbol or representative action. In the higher sense (that of vital or moral or rational importance) it is significant in proportion as it is capable of expressing itself in, or being translated into, more and more phases of thought or branches of science. The more varied and rich our employment of signs (so long as such employment be duly critical, securing that we know well what we are doing, also the indispensable condition of humour), the greater our power of inter-relating, inter-translating,

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11. [A good case of doubtful 'translation' seems to be afforded by Dr. Haacke, who 'seeks to prove that the mechanical conception of nature leaves room for faith in a moral order of nature, by showing that natural bodies and organisms, and human ideals alike follow a great law of tendency to equilibrium.' In his book (reviewed in *Nature*, April 2, 1896) 'Schopenhauer's "will to live" is replaced by the "will to equilibrate," and he shows that 'art, morality, and religion exhibit the tendency to unite various elements into an equilibrium, that is, in simpler language, into an organic system.' The reviewer, however, objects that 'Dr. Haacke apparently takes natural selection to be a force instead of a mere process according to which forces act, dismisses it for this reason, and sets up in its place an unreal striving after equilibrium, which equilibrium is only an effect.'

The kind of distinction which is nearest to actual identity may be illustrated by $12 + 8 = 15 + 5$. Though these are both 20 there is a difference caused by logical perspective; we think the result in either way from either standpoint (1983 [1903]: 149).

12. ['He (Emerson) respects common-sense, and dreads to disturb his vague aspirations by translating them into a definite system. . . . (He) may even be translated into the phraseology of the humble "Lockist"'] ('Emerson,' Leslie Stephen, *National Review*, Feb. 1901: 890).

'The leaders of the Conservative party carry their sublime heads in clouds far above the common affairs of municipal life. They have never translated Imperialism into terms that fit these affairs, or thought out social and economic problems from any independent standpoint' (*Times*, March 4, 1901) (1983 [1903]: 149–150).

13. [An amusing instance of the double sense of translation occurs in the *Westminster Gazette* (Sept. 2, 1902), where the heading 'Chinese "Character" Mistranslated' may perhaps describe some diplomatic dealings with that enigmatic race, while it directly refers to a hitch in the verbal rendering of a treaty (1983 [1903]: 150)].

various phases of thought, and thus of coming closer and closer to the nature of things in the sense of starting-points for the acquisition of fresh knowledge, new truth.

As the distinction between the 'physical' and the 'mental' world is one of the last analysis, an answer to those who would doubt the validity of a translation of the one into the terms of the other is to be found in the word 'sense.' This in Latin and all derivative languages has references of observation as well as of ulterior meaning: there being involved in this word a translation which is perfect, from the perceptual to the conceptual. At first sight like many other terms used in more than one sense, 'sense' itself seems merely ambiguous. But we have seen that there is an ambiguity, which, as the witness to one reality in diverse forms, is of high value.

Further, the physical certainly expresses itself in the psychical, and, in a slightly different sense, the mental in the physical. And this identity of result may be observed any day: mental conditions may be reflected in a man's bodily appearance – often against his will; and the environment expresses itself in our ideas of it. The strictly metaphysical aspect of this question, however, needs fuller consideration than can be given to it in a mere introductory sketch of the subject called Significs.

There is another aspect of Translation already touched upon which might well be utilised in controversy, and has in fact been found of definite service. In an ordinary discussion or argument, the controversialist endeavours simply to overthrow or discredit his adversary's position or contention. Each proceeds against the other as the champion of an opposite thesis. But in the end, it is evident that whichever side prevails, the upshot is nothing more than the displacement of one view by another. Now, instead of this, the object of each controversialist should be to translate the adversary's own position to him. And in proportion as our own position is really the most valid, we shall be able to afford to look as it were through his eyes and to call his attention to what, on his own showing, he is bound to see and has unwittingly overlooked.

But in order to do this effectually it is necessary genuinely to follow his line of thought; and the present contention is that only a previous training in Significs can enable the ordinary mind to surmount the difficulties of this task. Even if we succeed we shall almost certainly find that either we have ourselves dropped out some factor, the loss of which invalidates our own train of reasoning and has exposed us to his attacks; or are unconsciously starting from some premiss no longer tenable; or have stopped short in our advance at some arbitrary point or selected finality which suited the convenience of our thinking or feeling; or else that our opponent has done one or all of these things.¹⁴

Then the premiss on either side can be revised, the missing links provided; and above all, the logical journey continued at whatever cost to our respective predilections. If in any controversy we feel that we can afford to do this, the probability is, as has already been suggested, that we shall supply our opponent with a new perspective from which he can see an unsuspected value in our position or force in our contention. And we shall avoid the hindering appearance of gaining a victory at our adversary's expense. He will say: in that sense I can admit that my position needs revision. In making himself stronger with the help we have had the courage to give him, he will strengthen us also. For instead of the mere substitution of one half-view for another, or, on the other hand, the mere mixture, so to speak, of some oil with some water of thought, we shall better understand the causes of

14. [And be it noted, we as well as our opponent (if we have thoroughly entered into the scientific attitude) shall be nearly certain to discover that this has largely been due to the relatively undeveloped state of articulate expression. Language is too often allowed to remain the accomplice of a 'personal equation' which in any case is sure to be potent and persistent (1983 [1903]: 152)].

our difference, and make that difference (which may even be one of race) a means, through combination, of enriching the common store of truth.

There is, however, yet another aspect of Translation in its transformative character which sends us for examples to the world of physical science. We may say that the biological justification of the principle is found in cases such as that described by Professor A. M. Marshall,¹⁵ in which one species is transformed into another by the modifying action of environment. And of course the fact of transformation by preferential breeding and by domestication is also a case in point. It is deplorable that we should neglect as we do the educational value of such facts. Like the facts of physical training, they all need translation into our systems of mental training and of thought.

We have only to consult thinkers like Professor Ernst Mach (who at least cannot be accused of idealistic metaphysics!) to realise that what he calls ‘that veritable miracle of thought-transference . . . communication by language,’¹⁶ is the very supposition of all thinking, and is essentially translation in the sense now suggested, that is, as including transformation, transmutation, and transfiguration, making translucent and transparent, recognising as the medium of all mediums that Expression which, alas! we have been too content to leave opaque and dense in a sense which might almost be said to confine us within pre-visual limits. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 148–153)

As anticipated above, the identification of elements of unity and distinction, unity and difference, of convergences and divergences among different disciplines, discourses, and sign systems, the identification of common elements and specificities or singularities, all this favours the reciprocal clarification of terminology and concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, and ultimately the quest for significance. Significance encourages a ‘metadisciplinary’ and ‘transdisciplinary’ approach to research, which means to reflect upon one sphere of knowledge and experience with the eyes of another, to translate methods, concepts, and terminology from one sphere to another, relating different sign systems in the larger, detotalized and global system, always open to dialogue with the other. Such a signifying context favours the creation of new links and connections, new correspondences, therefore the discovery of new truths, progress, innovation and scientific discovery, the development of new meaning value. Welby, and Vailati with her, maintained that the simple reformulation of an expression in different linguistic registers and in different communicative contexts, of a subject in terms of another, of an utterance in terms of another from different fields of experience, theoretical and practical, if done systematically and with critical consciousness, could contribute to this type of development. By interconnecting with other signs in unending chains of semiosis according to the dialectics of the relation between unity and difference, the sign is charged ever more with new and wider references and signifying nuances. The more translation processes multiply, the more the cognitive capacity develops and the sign’s expressive power is enhanced in terms of significance. In interpretive-translative processes thus described, the sign is developed, enriched, criticized, set at a distance, placed between inverted commas, parodied or simply imitated, and, in any case, interpreted by another sign, its interpretant. Indeed, the more a sign is complex, rich in signifying potential connecting it to passed

15. [*Lectures*, pp. 30–33 (1894) (1983 [1903]: 153)].

16. [See Note XVIII, Appendix (1983 [1903]: 153)]. In this note Welby reports the whole passage from Mach’s Lecture at Vienna, quoted in *Open Court*, November 8, 1894, which she presents as ‘an unbiased plea for that translation which is but an extension of the process there described’ (cf. 1983 [1903]: 294–295)].

traditions and to future *translations*, the higher the degree of dialogism among signs and interpretants (cf. Ponzio 2006b), the more it is difficult to establish the boundaries of a single sign or sign system, the greater the capacity for innovation and creativity.

The interpretive-translative method is also a method for discovering, creating, and testing likeness relations themselves, which in fact Welby describes as mainly of the proportional, structural and functional type. This perspective evidences the close relation between translation and iconicity, between translation and figurative dimensions of language and the role carried out by the iconic dimension of signs in the generation of thought processes and communication (cf. Petrilli 2008d, e). Analogy, homology, the use of comparison, association, metaphors and similes, indeed figurative language and imagery at large, are all considered by Welby as linguistic-cognitive devices activated through interpretive-translative processes for expressive empowerment in terms of significance. Recognizing the close interrelation between language and thought, she critiqued what she identified as bad linguistic usage, with particular reference to bad use of figurative language, which in light of the interrelation with thought she considered as one of the main sources of prejudice, confusion and mystification (see above, Ch. 4). As she specified in Chapter XVI of *What is Meaning?*, returning to the problem of the relation between analogy, homology and translation understood as an interpretive-cognitive method, what she calls ‘inter-translation’: ‘[...] there is a method both of discovering, testing, and using analogy (or in some cases homology), the value of which does not yet seem to be recognised; and this may be called in an extended sense Translation’ (1983 [1903]: 126).

With reference to the distinction between analogy and homology, let us clarify that Welby not only theorized the ‘analogical method,’ but also the ‘homological method,’ a term she borrowed from the biological sciences. The homological method consists in relating things that are distant from each other, that is, in tracing a common core uniting things that would seem to be completely distinct and unrelated. Following scientific research in the fields of biology, psychology, and language studies, Welby identified a homological relation between organic life and consciousness, between organic life systems and language or verbal sign systems. “‘Now, however, it may be said that we have to leave the field of analogy and enter that of homology’”, specifying in a note citing Dr. J. Ward (Art. ‘Psychology,’ *Ency. Brit.*, 10th edit.), “‘Between organic development and mental development there is... more than an analogy’” (1983 [1903]: 21, and n1).¹⁷ Beyond surface resemblances and associations, the homological method searches for profound genetical, structural, functional and dynamical relationships among the terms of reference in question. Also, Welby warned against the error of exchanging analogy or surface similarity with homology or genetical-structural similarity.

Welby’s own language is rich in figures of speech, in the use of simile and metaphors. She established relations of analogy and homology among different spheres of experience, and on this basis clarified and developed her ideas, often advancing new hypotheses. Among the numerous examples of this type of translation, structural to her discourse, the following passage from her book of 1911, *Significs and Language*, ex-

17. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi dedicated a large part of his research to the homological relation between linguistic and nonlinguistic work, between the utterance and the artifact (cf. Rossi-Landi 1985: 47–49).

plores the concept of beauty and meaning value in verbal language on the basis of the relation of similarity with the language of music (prefiguring developments in contemporary experimental music today):

Language might in one aspect be called articulate music. And we may be grateful to the so-called stylists, although in their efforts after beauty they sometimes sacrifice instead of transfiguring significance, and always tend to defeat themselves by making significance secondary. For at least their work recognizes some analogy between the ordered harmony of music which we call attunement, and the true ideal of language.

And thus we are reminded that as yet language in ordinary use barely rises above the level of noise, and only suggests the perfect natural harmony which ought to be its essential character. The reason for this, however, is not merely that in language we have failed to develop a full control of our 'singing' power, or that we are still content with the rude instruments of ancient days, although this is to a great extent true. We may put it in another way and, as already suggested, may say that in civilised speech we have acquired linguistic instruments of real complexity and implicit power to render subtle forms of harmony, but that it has never occurred to us to tune them together, to attune them. And we may suppose ourselves to have told one who suggested the need of this that the proposal was pedantic, and that to tune an instrument was to restrict its scope, as the ambiguity of tone and conflict of intention which reduces music to noise means a valuable freedom secured. We are liberating music by ostracizing the tuner enriching the language with grunt, squall, yell, squeal, and excruciating discord! (Welby 1985 [1911]: 72–73)

5.2. Translation, communication, significance

Significance increases as interpretive-translative processes develop through the open network of signs. The more interpretive-translative processes multiply, the more the signifying universe expands, and with this our understanding of life. The sign's meaning is engendered in the interpretive-translative procedures of signifying and communicative processes. Thanks to the continuous work of translation, the sign develops its meaning in another sign that transcends and enriches it. Therefore, the more the sign translates into different spheres of thought, branches of science, and fields of practical experience, ready always to transcend its own limits, the more it is 'plastic,' the higher the degree in signifying potential and significance. On this account interpretation-translation is not only a question of signs identifying other signs, but also of what Mikhail Bakhtin describes as 'answering comprehension' or 'responsive understanding' among signs. This is based on the logic of otherness as opposed to the logic of identity, and as such is inseparable from listening and opening to the other, hospitality in relation to the word of the other (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2005).

The problem of translation read in the light of Welby's philosophy of interpretation and significance throws light on the concept 'language' understood as a modelling device, or in Welby's terminology, 'mother-sense' or 'primal sense' (cf. Section. 4.2, above, and Ch. 6, below), and of verbal and nonverbal 'languages' as dynamic phenomena, capable of gazing at the universe dialogically and interpreting it creatively. Language understood as modelling determines the ability at the level of languages (verbal and nonverbal) arising for expression and communication to keep account of and express a plurality of different viewpoints. Language as modelling and languages for communi-

cation are founded in the logic of otherness and are capable of creativity and critique: ‘plasticity,’ ‘ductility,’ ‘flexibility,’ or ‘ambiguity’ (understood in a positive sense) are theorized by Welby as necessary characteristics of the semantic-linguistic sphere for the generation of ongoing signifying processes (see Ch. 4). In fact, such characteristics are essential to maintain the interpretive and communicative adequacy of languages, their capacity for the acquisition of new knowledge, adaptation to new linguistic needs, to different communicative contexts, and for the development of critical consciousness. Interpersonal communication, communicative interaction, is possible thanks to the ‘plasticity’ of signs, to use Welby’s terminology, their capacity for ‘dialogism’ and polylogism, to use Bakhtin’s (1981, 1986a, 1990). Successful communication implies dialogic understanding which is grounded in the logic of otherness regulating the relation among interpretants. But even more radically, from the perspective of significs, or what we may call ‘biosignifics,’ keeping account of the interconnection theorized by Welby between significs and biology (cf. Petrilli 1999a), such characteristics as ‘plasticity,’ ‘ductility,’ and ‘flexibility’ are the condition for continuity and development of life itself over the planet, in which context language as modelling and languages for communication arise. This approach is congruent with ‘biosemiotics,’ ‘biophilosophy,’ and ‘global semiotics’ (cf. Brier 2003; Danesi 2001; Sebeok 2001).

The significal approach to sign and meaning has important implications for our system of beliefs, for our certainties, in the last analysis, for the problem of truth. On Welby’s account, truth is dialogical, that is, can only be identified on the basis of the dialogic relation of otherness. As such, it is always open to interrogation. The capacity for approaching truth grows with the capacity for taking into account multiple viewpoints and voices, which evidences the interrelation between interpretation, translation and significance (cf. Petrilli 1994a: 45–50). In the words of Welby from Chapter XVI in *What is Meaning?*:

All systems also inevitably concentrate in Significance as their essential value as well as test. And thus Significs alone gives us the power of inter-translation. As Giordano Bruno truly says, ‘Certitude is only acquired by a kind of comparison, by conferring (in its true sense) one sensible object or one sense with another.’ This is true in a richer sense even than he intended. What you say is true (1) in one sense; (2) in many senses; (3) in all but one sense, (4) in all senses; (5) in no sense (*i.e.* is nonsense or is false). ‘For the same Truth may be in different subjects... and given us through diverse senses,’ in both senses of that term. (1983 [1903]: 120)

‘Significance’ in Welby’s terminology indicates the maximum expression value of a sign. I have already cited Welby as claiming that, ‘all systems concentrate in Significance in their essential value as well as test. And thus Significs alone gives us the means of inter-translation’ (Welby 1983 [1903]: xxi). From the perspective of significs, the sign not only emerges as a cognitive entity, but also as an axiological entity, as an expression of the relation of signs to values. The more a sign is subject to ‘transference,’ ‘transformation,’ ‘transmutation,’ ‘transfiguration’ and above all ‘transvaluation’ (which, as stated above evidence different aspects of translation), the more the sign translates consciously and dialectically, or better, dialogically, into other signs from different spheres of thought, knowledge, and practical experience, the more it translates into different languages, cultures and value systems, the more its significance, import and ultimate value increases. To be significant means to have value and concerns the ethical dimension of signifying processes.

What must also be underlined, therefore, is that translative-interpretive processes thus understood favour the development of semantic-axiological and metalinguistic consciousness, of critical and what I propose to call ‘semioethical’ consciousness (cf. Deely Petrilli, Ponzio 2005; Petrilli 2004g, j; Petrilli and Ponzio 2003b and 2005). From the significal perspective, the word ‘transvaluation’ best conveys the idea of interconnectedness between translation, meaning, and cognitive-ethical processes, between translative processes and Welby’s meaning triad ‘sense,’ ‘meaning,’ and ‘significance’ (these terms indicate a progressive advancement from the lowest to the highest grades in expression value in concrete situations of communicative interaction). As Welby says in *What is Meaning?*:

There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as the Sense of a word, but only the sense in which it is used – the circumstances, state of mind, reference, ‘universe of discourse’ belonging to it. The Meaning of a word is the intent which it is desired to convey – the intention of the user. The Significance is always manifold, and intensifies its sense as well as its meaning, by expressing its importance, its appeal to us, its moment for us, its emotional force, its ideal value, its moral aspects, its universal or at least social range. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 5–6)

And, in fact, the attribution of sense to the object, of meaning to the sign, of significance to signifying processes in their globality is no less than the result of translation understood in terms of interpretive, cognitive and axiological procedure.

As philosophy of significance, interpretation and translation, significs is also described by Welby as a ‘method of synthesis’ valid both for science and philosophy, ‘a method of observation,’ as she says in *What is Meaning?*, ‘a mode of experiment,’ which includes ‘the inductive and deductive methods’ in one process, that is, what Vailati calls the hypothetical-deductive method and Charles Peirce the ‘abductive’ or ‘retroductive’ method, which enable us to reach the highest levels of meaning:

Significs, then, will bring us the philosophy of Significance; i.e. a raising of our own whole conception of meaning to higher and more efficient level; a bringing cosmos out of the present ‘chaos’ of our ideas as to sense, meaning, and significance, and showing us that we need to use these terms in a certain order of value and range. Its best type of metaphor is the ‘solar,’ its best mine of analogy is the biological; because, as implying an extension of purview given us in spatial form by (post-Copernican) astronomy, it tends to relate the idea of life to the ideas of motion and matter, and moreover to relate the idea of mind to both. Thus Significs involves essentially and typically the philosophy of Interpretation, of Translation, and thereby of a mode of synthesis accepted and worked with by science and philosophy alike; profoundly modifying what we wrongly call the ‘root’ ideas of religion, of ethics, of poetry, of art, and, lastly, of practical life in all forms. But if studied systematically it would be seen from the first to provide a method of observation, a mode of experiment which extends far beyond the laboratory, and includes the inductive and deductive methods in one processes. There would never be any need to struggle that this view of things may supersede others; it could never be a supplanting system, and could never thus be attached to any individual name; it must necessarily be worked out by many co-operating minds. The principle involved forms a natural self-acting Critique of every system in turn, including the common-sense ideal. But also it gives the gist, the vital centre the growth-point of every existent organism of thought. It explains its own thinker to himself; it accounts for his thinking what he does as he does, and thus explains other thinkers to themselves. In fact, for the first time we gain a glimpse into what lies ‘beyond the veil,’ which both our own primitive and confused idea of Meaning and our modes of

applying it have drawn over the world. The criteria thus reached will vindicate themselves alike to the most opposed of our thinkers. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 161–162)

But to return to the relation between meaning (understood in the broad sense of the triad sense, meaning and significance) and the use of language, Welby's considerations also contribute to a better understanding of the relation between language (therefore text and utterance), the speaking subject, and significance. Her significal approach to meaning sheds light on the problem of communication and understanding itself, that is, critical and creative understanding, what with Bakhtin may be identified as *responsive understanding* and, with Peirce, what I propose to call *agapastic understanding*.

If in oral or written communication we understand what is said, this is because comprehension is always achieved through interpretants that are not uniquely verbal. What we say is based on preceding verbal and nonverbal communication and is said as part of an extended network of signs in which any historical-natural language only occupies a very limited space. When we speak to communicate, this 'event' is possible on the basis of communication conditions established previously. Paradoxical as it may seem – but paradoxes serve to evidence how things stand – the claim is that when we speak to communicate communication has already occurred. This is true in the case of the production of both oral and written texts. Whether written or oral, speech does not install communication relations, but, if anything, ratifies, maintains, notifies, declares, or exhibits them, furnishing 'portmanteau words' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) which enable partners to mutually recognize each other, to stay in these relations, and to express the will to maintain and preserve them.

That which occurs is more or less the same as that which occurs in a love declaration: unless it is reduced to a purely conventional or formal act (in which case it is no longer a love relationship), a declaration of love is formulated when the love relationship already exists, so that the declaration is only a portmanteau word and anticipates a complementary portmanteau word as its reply. When a professor delivers a lecture in a university hall, for it to be successful a communication relation must already subsist; the professor may make the most original and exciting statements ever, but the first implicit statement recites 'this is a lecture, accept it for what it is.' When a child begins communicating with its mother through words, preexisting communication with her is already intense, this being one of the necessary conditions for language acquisition.

If the utterance text were to constitute its very own conditions, if it were self-sufficient, independent from context, if it were not to depend on anything else but itself, this would mean that it is based uniquely on initiative taken by the speaking subject and on the linguistic system that subject employs. On the contrary, neither word nor subject has priority in the construction of communication relations. Each time there is a subject, a word, a text, communication has already occurred, and that which the subject utters is relative to that communication.

To speak, to be a speaking subject, to act as a writer, is always to respond, and in fact all texts are responses, including the subject understood as a text. The subject and the text may constitute and decide anything, but not the conditions that make them possible. This already emerges from the fact that every time the subject speaks, every time it produces a text, it is responding. Furthermore, the text cannot constitute or decide anything about its reception, about its being heard or read. That to speak is to respond

and that speaking can do nothing without presupposing that someone is listening, says clearly that initiative does not belong to the subject, to the I, but to the other: an other with whom the subject is already communicating, to whom it must respond and answer to/for. The terms of such response are not only verbal but, on the contrary, take place on the basis of relations and sign systems that cannot be reduced to linguistic-verbal signs alone. And, in any case, the other must grant listening as a primary condition with respect to communication as installed by the text.

Verbal action does not presuppose another verbal action. As stated, the word is a response, but that to which it responds – not at the superficial level of rejoinders in a formal dialogue – is not in turn a word, a text, but rather a communicative situation produced prior to speech, to a given piece of verbal action. The actions accomplished by words and texts at the level of communicative exchange, of the ‘linguistic market,’ presuppose social relations, communicative relations which are not necessarily, in turn, relations among words and texts. In other words, the relations that produce relations among words are not, in turn, relations among words.

An immediate consequence of what I have claimed so far is that verbal action is not only grounded in nonverbal communicative conditions, but presupposes them. Indeed I could even go so far as to claim that it is improper to speak of ‘speech acts.’ In fact, I believe that the expression ‘verbal *action*’ is preferable. A distinction may be established between the terms ‘act’ and ‘action’: the latter concerns the subject, is connected with consciousness, is intentional, is programmed, already decided, and presupposes initiative taken by the subject; on the contrary, the act is what has already occurred before action thus understood. The subject is involved in the act, implied by it, has already been acted, decided, and is subject as in *subject to*. When the speaking subject does something with words, when it produces texts, when it fulfils verbal *actions*, the *act* has already occurred: the ‘communicative action’ of words presupposes a ‘communicative act’ that cannot be reduced to verbal actions as its necessary condition.

But the point I wish to emphasize in the present context is that if communicative action can decide its own *meaning*, it cannot decide its own *significance*. Performative action can do things *because it is action interpreted as being significant* (Petrilli 1998c: 95–105).

To be significant means *to have value*. And value cannot be conferred by the same subject that signifies with its action. If in addition to having meaning the performative action of condemning becomes an event that changes things, this is because it is significant as well, it has value, weight, import. All this presupposes a preceding communicative act which confers such value. Performative verbal action is action which must be interpreted to have meaning; but in order to be performative action as well, that is, capable of having an effect, of modifying something else, such action must have already received an interpretation which is antecedent to the relation it constitutes at the moment of occurrence. Antecedence concerns interpretation which has already invested performative action with significance.

We know that the term ‘significance’ is used by Welby in triadic correlation with other two terms, ‘sense’ and ‘meaning.’ Using this terminology, we could state that the ‘meaning’ of action presupposes ‘sense’ understood as a derivative of ‘to sense’ and not only as ‘orientation,’ ‘direction.’ In order to be performative, verbal action must be ‘sensed,’ ‘felt,’ if perhaps not by whomever accomplishes it, certainly by partners ad-

dressed by the speaker in a given communicative context. Differently from significance, 'sense' is associated with the senses, with feelings, with the sentiments or passions. Instead, 'significance' refers to given values fixed and flourishing in a community, which may be more or less extended and comprehensive ranging, for example, from a minimal social community constituted by a couple, to a city, nation, continent, etc. Therefore, in addition to sense as connected to listening, verbal action presupposes implied meanings, significance.

5.3. Interpreting Welby's translation theory with Peirce, Bakhtin, and Wittengstein

In a letter to Welby dated 14 March 1909, Peirce says: 'When you speak in one of them [essaylets] of Man as *translating* vegetal and Brute strength into intellectual and spiritual vigor, that word *translating* seems to me to contain profound truth wrapped up in it' (in Hardwick 1977: 111). In fact, Welby's considerations, similarly to Vailati's, recall Peirce's interpretive-cognitive model according to which the meaning of a sign is developed by another sign, the interpretant, through interpretive-translative processes. The idea of amplification and enhancement of meaning and knowledge through signs that defer to each other as conveyed by Welby is captured by one of her interpreters, L. P. Jacks, in his introduction to her 1931 book of correspondence, *Other Dimensions*: 'Like the universe, whose offspring it is, thought rests – so we learn – on no "foundations," but revolves in an endlessly "ascending spiral" to higher forms of itself, retaining its conquests and perpetually enlarging them' (in Cust 1931: 11). Welby's interpretive-translative approach evidences the spirit of investigation that pushes mankind to question the nature of meaning and to probe the meaning of the universe itself, an attitude she fully captured with the question 'What does it mean?,' or 'What does it signify?' In that question lies the generating source of intellectual activity, the driving power of all that may be summed up under the name of philosophy. And again, as Jacks attests in interpreting Welby's thought system: 'The universe may be compared to a spoken sentence imperfectly heard, while philosophy is the attempt to articulate it more clearly, thereby revealing what it *means*' (in Cust 1931:12).

Peirce theorized a situation of open-ended, unlimited or infinite semiosis, proposing a sign model based on the relation of dialogic deferral among signs, in the light of which meaning is conceived, in its primary acceptation, as 'the translation of a sign into another system of signs, and which, in the acceptation here applicable, is a second assertion from which all that follows from the first assertion equally follows, and *vice versa*' (CP 4.127). According to the theory of infinite semiosis the meaning of a sign is the interpretant sign in an open-ended chain of *remvois* from one interpretant to the next. And just as for Welby everything suggests or reminds us of something else, in Peirce meaning is given in the transformation of one sign into another 'equivalent' or possibly 'more developed' sign (interpretant), thanks to which we know something more. The interpretant sign further enhances the overall signifying potential of the preceding sign together with the interpreter's overall understanding of the previous sign. In other words, a sign subsists thanks to another sign acting as its interpretant, so that its meaning is its translation into

another sign. The sign flourishes in relations of reciprocal translation and substitution among signs with respect to which the original sign is never given autonomously and antecedently. As Peirce himself had already explained in a letter to Welby of 12 October 1904:

A sign mediates between the *interpretant* sign and its object. Taking sign in its broadest sense, its interpretant is not necessarily a sign. [...] But we may take a sign in so broad a sense that the interpretant of it is not a thought, but an action or experience, or we may even so enlarge the meaning of sign that its interpretant is a mere quality of feeling. [...] It appears to me that the essential function of a sign is to render inefficient relations efficient, – not to set them into action, but to establish a habit or general rule whereby they will act on occasion. According to the physical doctrine, nothing ever happens but the continued rectilinear velocities with the accelerations that accompany different relative positions of the particles. All other relations, of which we know so many, are inefficient. Knowledge in some way renders them efficient; and a sign is something by knowing which we know something more. With the exception of knowledge, in the present instant, of the contents of consciousness in that instant (the existence of which knowledge is open to doubt) all our thought & knowledge is by signs. A sign therefore is an object which is in relation to its object on the one hand and to an interpretant on the other in such a way as to bring the interpretant into a relation to the object corresponding to its own relation to the object. I might say 'similar to its own' for a correspondence consists in a similarity; but perhaps correspondence is narrower. (Hardwick 1977: 31–32)

Developing Welby's position on translation in a Peircean key also involves the possibility of rereading the Peircean conception of translation and infinite semiosis from the perspective of signification. This too is an exercise in translation. These concepts emerge in Peirce as the necessary condition for interrelation between sign theory and theory of knowledge; but it must also be borne in mind that signification supersedes all strictly cognitive boundaries in a dimension where the cognitive and the ethical at last come together. According to this approach, the concept of knowledge is not only developed in cognitive terms, but also in what with Welby may be called 'moralising' and 'humanising' terms. As says Welby in *Signification and Language*:

There are probably many who dimly realize, and would provisionally admit, that our present enormous and ever-growing developments of mechanical power and command are there to be interpreted in terms of psychology. This must presumably affect not only the very minds which are conceiving and applying them to such tremendous and apparently illimitable purpose, but also the thinkers concerned with the mental sphere itself, its content and its range.

We may thus suspect, if not actually infer, that human thought also is on the threshold of corresponding developments of power, – developments to which the 'new birth' of scientific method in the nineteenth century was but the prelude and preparation. If, indeed, we deny this conclusion, or dispute this assumption, we may effectually hold such a development in arrest – or risk forcing it out in unhealthy forms – just as, three hundred years ago, the spirit of scientific discovery was fettered and retarded on the verge of its great career of achievement. The explanation is in part, if only in part, the same now as it was then. For in the pre-Baconian age the study of phenomena, the inquiry into 'the causes of things,' was not more inhibited by theological prepossessions and denunciations than by the dominance of an intellectual nomenclature which ruled reality out of the universe and confidently took its place in all disquisition or discussion upon Man and Nature. The forward step taken was largely the result of a breaking of the barriers created by traditional terminology, a pushing aside of fictitious formulas, and a coming directly into the presence of things in order to

learn whatever they had to say ‘for themselves’ – and for the Whole. All the conditions – especially the supreme condition, an urgent need – are now existent for a second and similar forward step, but upon another plane and to higher purposes. For the fresh advance which now seems imminent, as it is sorely needed, should be no mere continuation of the Baconian search, the accumulation of data for a series of inferences regarding the properties of the material system as usually understood, but rather the interpretation, the translation at last into valid terms of life and thought, of the knowledge already so abundantly gained. While man fails to make this translation – to moralise and humanise his knowledge of the cosmos, and so to unify and relate it to himself – his thinking is in arrears, and mentally he lags behind his enacted experience. That we in this age do lag behind, and that we have thus far failed to achieve a great ad general act of translation, is a loss chiefly due to our unanimous neglect to understand Expression, its nature, conditions, range of form and function, unrealized potencies and full value or worth. And therefore the first message of what is now to be named Significs¹⁸ is that we must amend this really inhuman fault; that we must now study Expression precisely as we have long been studying ‘nature’ and ‘Mind’ in the varying ranges of both these terms. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 1–3)

Growth in knowledge which is paralleled by growth in significance, involves the accumulation of knowledge not only in quantitative terms but also in qualitative and ethical terms. As anticipated, this favours the development of conscious awareness in human beings, and with Welby it is clear that such development favours the human sense of total responsibility towards life and semiosis pervading the entire universe.

This approach recalls Bakhtin’s research which also contributes to a better understanding of the problem of translation. For Bakhtin, as well, semiosis or sign activity is an open process of deferral and transferral of signs into other signs, a ‘dialogic relation’ among signs. As such semiosis cannot take place outside interpretation/translation processes. Both Welby and Bakhtin believe that the speaker develops consciousness and expressive capacity through continuous ‘translation’ processes from one sign to another, considered necessary to the development of linguistic and nonlinguistic consciousness, of experience and knowledge generally. In the conception of both theorists, such processes are ever more innovative and creative the higher the degree of dialogism and otherness in the relation between the translated sign, or the ‘interpreted’ sign, and the sign that translates it, the ‘interpretant,’ the ‘translatant.’ Similarly to Welby, Bakhtin also underlines the importance of gazing at one sign system with the eyes of another sign system (referring also to the relation between verbal and nonverbal signs, as in the case of the transposition of the nonverbal signs of carnival into the verbal signs of carnivalized literature), of gazing at a given language with the eyes of another, of considering a literary genre, or more generally a discourse genre, with reference to another, and so forth (Petrilli 2008e).

With respect to the problem of figurative language, a leitmotif throughout all her research itinerary, Welby motivated her interest by underlining that ‘while language itself is a symbolic system its method is mainly pictorial’ (Welby 1983 [1903]: 38). And again she claims that ‘[...] a thing is significant, both in the lower and in the higher sense in proportion as it is expressible through bare sign or pictorial symbol or representative action’ (Welby 1983 [1903]: 150). By referring to one of the most important

18. [For a definition of this term see the *Oxford Dictionary*, the *American Dictionary of Philosophy*, and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edit. (Welby 1985 [1911]: 3)].

triads introduced by Peirce in his classification of signs – symbolicity, indexicality and iconicity (see *CP* 2.247–2.249; and Peirce's letter to Welby of 12 October 104) – Welby's statement may be translated or reformulated as follows: if verbal language is a conventional system, its method is above all iconic. In other words, Welby, like Peirce, fully recognized the fundamental role carried out by iconicity in the development of both verbal and nonverbal semiosis, in particular the importance of the iconic relation of hypothetical similarity in verbal language (cf. Petrilli 2008d; and Ch. 4, above).

Moreover, Welby's position on this specific problematic may be related to the research of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) as formulated in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Irrespective of whether or not Welby and Wittgenstein were ever in direct contact with each other, they certainly shared common acquaintances, including the philosophers Bertrand Russell, Philip Jourdain, Samuel Alexander, and moved in the same circles related to Cambridge University (cf. Nolan 1990: 96–98). Beyond conceptualizing language in terms of activity and function, recognizing the determinate role of context in the communicative situation, and conceiving theory of meaning in terms of cognitive therapy, both scholars recognized the central importance of analogy and the relation of similarity in communication and in the structure of linguistic signifying processes generally. Wittgenstein distinguished between 'names' and 'propositions,' analysing the relation among 'names' or 'simple signs' used in the proposition, where the object or meaning is of the conventional order (see Wittgenstein 1921b: 202). Welby also spoke of simple signs, of 'bare signs.' In Wittgenstein's view, the rule or code that relates the sign to the object of reference is conventional, that is, arbitrary, and therefore cannot be discovered simply by guessing. (Arbitrariness is a category proposed by Ferdinand Saussure [1857–1913] in *Cours de linguistique générale*, 1916, to characterize the relation between *signifiant* and *signifié* in individual words, or in individual nonverbal signs forming 'conventional,' social codes). Instead, the relation between whole propositions or 'propositional signs' (Welby's 'pictorial symbol' and 'representative action') and what they signify to their interpretants is a relation of similarity, according to Wittgenstein; that is, a relation of the iconic type. Analogously to Wittgenstein's 'proposition,' Welby's 'pictorial symbol' and 'representative action' are complete high level signifying units.

Similarly to Wittgenstein's analysis in the *Tractatus*, Welby's language analysis is not limited to describing phenomena of signification, language and thought, but rather aims to account for their generation. (In addition to convergences, there are also important divergences between their theories as clearly emerges with the *Tractatus*. In this volume, for example, Wittgenstein elaborates an isomorphic conception of the relation between language and reality which Welby criticized and which Wittgenstein himself revised in the subsequent phases of his research as represented by *Philosophical Investigations*).

The work of scholars like Welby and the others so far mentioned, contribute to illustrating the more complex levels of signifying, expressive and communicative processes, without reducing them to the mere status of information transmission and message exchange. Each of these authors calls our attention to the importance for signifying processes of iconism, otherness, and relations among signs beyond systemic restrictions. This orientation also helps evidence the dialectical-dialogic nature of interpretive-translative processes in the relation between the categories of 'unity' and 'distinction,' as Welby argues, between the 'centripetal forces' and 'centrifugal forces' operating in language, as Bakhtin puts it (1975), and, therefore, between the power of centralization and

decentralization, between monologism and polylogism, monolingualism and plurilingualism, respectively oriented by the logic of identity or the logic of otherness. Thanks to such dialectics, knowledge and truth are never given once and for all, but, on the contrary, are open to investigation and subject to modification in the continuous work of adapting to and generating new contexts and communicative practices, beginning from everyday life.

Developing Welby's intuitions in the light of recent studies in language theory and the sign sciences generally, it is clear that semiosis, that is, the situation in which something functions as a sign, is not possible without translation. Indeed semiosis itself *is* a translative-interpretive process. The role of translation is fundamental in the constitution of sign, both verbal and nonverbal, in the generation of meaning.

The interconnection between signs and translation emerges when we posit the category of replaceability, that is, the possibility of being said otherwise (whether verbally or nonverbally), as a necessary condition for signness, that is, when the sign is considered not only as something that replaces something else, but as something that may also in turn be replaced by something else. In other words, processes of replacement and transposition do not involve exclusion of sense, but rather shift in meaning, stratification of sense, and reciprocal signifying enhancement among signs. Consequently, meaning may be defined as a class of verbal and nonverbal sign materials that reciprocally defer to each other. Each term is either an interpretant sign or an interpreted sign of the other, depending on signifying context, in semiotic processes where the interpretant sign replaces the interpreted sign which it somehow develops. Identity of the sign can only be defined in continuous deferral and shift processes: to be this sign here, a sign must always be interpreted and become other thanks to the interpretant sign that translates it and develops its meaning.

5.4. Common meaning, common language, common speech. The problem of translatability

I myself have certainly profited most by and learnt most from thinkers with whom I do not naturally agree on the ordinary basis. Starting as it were higher up the stream of human experience I find I can translate my opponent; I see the why of him and in a dialect of thought different from his, find his mind too in mine. But then to me 'nothing human is alien.' Why should it be to any of us?... (From a letter by Welby to Bertrand Russell, 12 February 1905, now in Section 3.8, this volume)

The following passage from Chapter XVIII in *What is Meaning?* theorizes interlingual translation as part of the larger context, where translation is understood in a broad sense as converging with life processes in biological terms. The concept of 'common character' uniting different languages is also theorized, the 'community of nature' in Welby's language theory, a signifying area she also indicated with the expressions 'common sense,' 'common meaning,' 'common language.' These concepts can be associated with

the research of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1921–1985) on signs and language, in particular his concepts of ‘common speech,’ ‘linguistic work,’ and in a more mature phase of his theory, ‘social reproduction’ (cf. Rossi-Landi 1961, 1968, 1985, 1992a):

Translation considered as mental digestion renders foreign substances’ innocuous if not actually nourishing. Digestion (next to vibration turned into sense-product) is the ruling example of translative change. Even waste product manures the glorious rose, the corn, the vine, etc., and water, through the agency of ‘life,’ becomes sap, grape-juice, wine. For in the larger sense wherein it is here used, translation includes transformation.¹⁹

But we think that to digest what we have read, marked, and learnt does not mean that we ought to expect results from acting thus, analogous to the results of actual digestion. The consequence is that this metaphor actually hinders us in expressing what we mean. We look for what, judged by our own figure, we cannot have. Digested food is profoundly changed by the process. If I say, ‘I will carefully weigh your statement after sifting the evidence you have brought,’ I give you quite a different impression from what you would have received if I had said, ‘I will carefully sow, cultivate, and then eat and assimilate your statement, and let you know the result.’ The latter alone refers to digestion: sifting and weighing belong to quite another order of ideas. At present a really illustrative use of metaphor would often read like burlesque. But this is a great loss.

It is obvious that in the literal sense the translation of one language into another (and the degree in which it is possible) depends on the ultimate common character of the two. In this case that community of nature is settled already. We admit that the languages are human, and that therefore they belong to the same category; the differences are all secondary.

Thus the translation whether good or bad must always be valid, justifiable; we discover that we have one thing in two forms. And this conclusion is only strengthened if we refer to the original meaning of translation, which is spatial – a transference of position. But there is another sense in which translation of this kind may necessarily fail, because it cannot convey the subtle context of association, that Significance which is the highest form of meaning. As Jowett well says, ‘The famous dispute between Nominalists and Realists

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19. [It is worth remembering that not only can you translate the serious into the humorous and *vice versa* (though the later is to seldom done) but you can translate from one sphere of humour into another. E.g. Alice in Wonderland translated by the *Westminster Gazette*, pictures and all; a perfect example of translation from the social into the political sphere.

Again Darwin’s *Expression of the Emotions* has stimulated and indeed started a good deal of research into the origin of emotional signs; but we do not enough notice the importance of the translation of these which is always going on. The history of the licking of a dog, of a kiss, of an arm round the neck or ‘waist,’ of stroking, even of a loving smile gains a new ethical significance when we realise that these and other signs of attachment and even tender or passionate affection have been translated from savage violence and the natural expressions of hatred or contempt; while the trembling, faintness, and tears of sudden joy or thankful relief were originally signs of suffering or terror. The lesson here seems to be that we are utterly wrong in trying merely to eradicate evil tendencies in children or savages; what we have to aim at is always the translation of these into the corresponding good. But until the wide application of the term, especially in training, is realised, we cannot hope to effect this. In one case, however, it has been successfully done for practical purposes. The sheep-dog’s enthusiasm in guiding and guarding the flock which he has been trained to supervise is the translation into its converse of the wild dog’s instinct to hunt, scatter, and destroy them. It is said that the intense energy with which the collie pursues his translated vocation makes him liable, unless precautions are taken, to die prematurely of heart-disease (1983 [1903]: 143–144)].

would never have been heard of, if, instead of transferring the platonic ideas into a crude Latin phraseology, the spirit of Plato had been truly understood and appreciated.²⁰

Translation, again, may be admirable from the linguistic, the grammatical, and idiomatic point of view, and yet detestable from the literary standpoint. Only when it is admirable from the highest point of view does it become a version. And the typical example of this is the authorised translation of the Old Testament.

As well remarked in an article in the *Times* on ‘The Poetry of King Alfred,’²¹ ‘the originality which is felt in Alfred’s work through the guise of translation consists largely in his masterful transformation of his text, like a man whose purpose is well known to himself and is remote from aims merely literary.’ The instance taken is the passage in which ‘the position of the Earth in the celestial system is likened to the yolk in an egg’:

similar to what we see in an egg;
the yolk in the midst, and yet gliding free,
the egg round about. So all the world resteth
still in its place, while streaming around
water-floods play, welkin and stars;
and the shining shell circleth about,
day by day now as it did long ago.

The writer continues: ‘But in this simile of the egg the text has no part; it is a solid addition from his own stores, and it illustrates the purpose of his mind. He is seeking to convey great ideas by easy and familiar means; he is seeking to bring down the lore of the philosopher to the comprehension of his untutored folk. The egg manifests this purpose in a concrete and conspicuous manner, and it is a typical example of his teaching.’ Here we have a case of conscientious analogy.

Just as it is the human prerogative to translate the organic form of appreciating what sign signifies into the intellectual form of intentionally interpreting symbol, and to translate sense-impression into the terms of its excitant, so it is the highest form of that prerogative to translate the intellectual form of interpretation into what for want of a better term may be called verified or disciplined mysticism, that which has passed through the ordeal of science.²² Also ‘mysticism’ is often the raw material, or at least the forerunner, the ‘onseeing’ of science. The dreams of alchemy have thus been transmuted into the achievements of chemistry, its prayer has been answered in an unexpected sense; it has been itself transmuted from base metal into gold; the dreams of astrology have become the realities of astronomy. We have reached no final limit in either, and are warned that the progress of science is never linear, but that the next advance (as in the biological ‘tree’) may involve new direction in departure. And direction is often more important than distance. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 143–147)

Welby identifies a common element in experience in the human world, which she calls ‘common meaning.’ Common meaning is the condition for both singularity and universality in human signifying processes. In other words, it refers to the signifying material that makes the individuality or singularity of a sign possible, its specificity, its otherness and, at once, its universal validity for mankind. Common meaning indicates common signifying material, what we can also call ‘semiotic material’ relevant to the

20. [Plato, Vol. IV: 39 (3rd ed., 1892) (1983 [1903]: 145)].

21. [August 20, 1901 (1983 [1903]: 145)].

22. [There are many signs of the advent of this, notably in recent articles in *Nature* (1983 [1903]: 146)].

great multiplicity of languages, or special languages forming a single historical-natural language, as well as the different historical-natural languages, cultures and sign systems. Common meaning refers to the originating source of signifying processes through to the highest degrees of significance. It is the common core for all intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic communication. In the face of what would seem to be major or minor areas of untranslatability among different languages, ‘common meaning’ indicates that translation is always more or less possible (see Petrilli 1995d: Ch. XII; Petrilli 2003a).

We said that common meaning can be related to the concept of ‘common speech’ elaborated by Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1961). This does not converge with the concept of ‘ordinary language’ elaborated by English analytical philosophy. Indeed, the latter only represents one aspect of what Welby understood by ‘common meaning,’ or Rossi-Landi by ‘common speech.’ Welby formulated her concept of ‘common meaning’ in the early stages of her research as emerges, for example, from a letter to Thomas H. Huxley written between 1882–1885:

If I were trying to talk your language it would risk the absurdity – worse, the confusion — of ‘English as she is spoke’; but may I not ask you in virtue of what underlies all sectional diversity of speech, to look through my language as I look through yours, putting aside merely technical or secondary meanings, and seeking the *common meaning* [my own emphasis] of all human or natural utterance?

[...] I feel that to antedate a coming time, when we may learn the universal scope of the ‘principle of translation’ and share each other’s truth as we speak each other’s tongue, may be to risk the violation of one of the deepest of divine laws. (Welby to Huxley, 1882–1885, in Cust 1929: 102)

‘Common meaning’ indicates a sort of a priori of language in the Kantian sense, a level of reference common to all languages, whether historical-natural languages or special languages, a series of operations constituting the condition itself for expressivity and communication through verbal (and nonverbal) signs. The expression ‘common’ indicates communion in the existent, an a priori primal sense (see below), an a priori community with respect to the very differences it generates thanks to the capacity for otherness structural to it. All language users, whether they are learning, teaching, translating, or simply conversing, activate common signifying processes and common empirical procedures that constitute a common ground among differences and allow for shift from one universe of discourse to another, making communication possible within and among different historical natural languages, within and among different special languages and everyday colloquial languages. Common meaning, as conceived by Welby, refers to all the common signifying operations that are necessary to speech and communication among human beings. It concerns all similarities, all homologies in biological and social structure uniting human communities beyond historical-cultural and geographical differences and their local variations.

In addition to common meaning, Welby also used such expressions as ‘common language’ and ‘common sense.’ With such expressions her intention was neither to underrate the great multiplicity of different languages, or diversity among languages, nor to relocate such plurality to some mythical original language, to a sort of *Ursprache*, to the universal linguistic structures of the *Logos*, or to some biological law governing and unifying all human languages. Welby explicitly criticized all attempts at overcoming diversity among languages and expression through appeal to a universal language

when such diversity was perceived as an obstacle to communication and mutual understanding. Indeed, she believed that variety and plurality among languages, dialects and jargons favoured reciprocal enrichment and further development of our linguistic-cognitive resources. To her mind, appeal to a universal language, whether a question of imposing an already existing natural language or of constructing an artificial language *ex novo* – if such a thing were possible, was only an apparent solution to the question of diversity. In reality, linguistic and expressive diversity at large were to be appreciated and explained, while problems deriving from difference and diversity called for attention and categories capable of accounting for difference and the interconnection with universality. This was a far cry from the idea of imposing a universal language over the plurality of different languages and worldviews. The concepts of ‘common meaning,’ ‘common sense,’ ‘common language,’ and ‘common speech,’ as conceived by Welby (and similarly to Rossi-Landi 1961), provided interesting tools to deal with such issues. These tools were intended to *explain* linguistic usage and not merely describe it, the latter being the limit of Oxonian analytical philosophy.

In fact, these expressions refer to similarity in function carried out by different languages for the satisfaction of analogous needs of expression and communication. Different languages offer different expedients, solutions and resources to satisfy expressive and communicative functions that are essentially similar, while at once expressing the singularity of each language, system and universe of discourse. Rather than impose an artificially constructed universal language which meant obliterating linguistic-psychological-cultural differences, Welby recognized an important resource for signifying, interpretive and communicative processes in these very differences and the practices associated with them (see also 3.3, this volume, above). Thanks to ‘common meaning’ in Welby’s vision of the linguistic and nonlinguistic world, differences (which generate other differences in an open, detotalized and continuously evolving totality) are not the cause of division and silence, but, on the contrary, call for interconnection, inter-translative processes which favour mutual understanding and communication across different languages, cultures, and value systems. As she writes in *What is Meaning?*:

Granted, then, that an advance in our powers of expression, an enrichment of the resources of language, a greater mastery of significance, clearer apprehension of needless obstacles to mutual understanding, more effective consensus in all these directions is desirable: how are we to begin? The difficulty is that hitherto everyone who has been at all alive to the serious consequences of our present lack of mutual understanding has thought of it almost exclusively from the point of view of the inconvenience resulting from diversity in civilised languages. Many proposals of suggestions have been made for the acquisition of an universal language; and even now the adoption of neo-Latin as a common language for philosophical as well as scientific purposes is being urged as meeting a crying need. But I venture to suggest that, except in a limited sense or as a temporary expedient, that would be beginning at the wrong end.

For even if the whole civilised – or intelligent – world could be brought by means of some great international movement to unite in the formation and consent to the use of such a language, – whether an old language adapted or a new one constructed, – it could at best but touch the surface of the question, and might indeed easily tend, by engendering content with unworthy ideals, still further to hamper and discourage that development of linguistic resources for which at present the very variety of tongues and dialects must indirectly make. Many ‘ways of putting it,’ ancient and modern, are at least now at man’s

disposal. With an artificially introduced and sanctioned universal language, imposed upon us at our present stage of linguistic development, much of this precious psychological heritage would wither and be wasted and lost. It may be that the world cannot do without that opulence of distinction in idiom which makes for richness in human life as a whole. This opulence arises from and issues in difference of practice, themselves valuable as providing the means of dealing in various ways with the emergencies of the future. The problem surely is, how to keep this priceless treasure without allowing it either to divide us, or to silence that which, being everywhere the highest thought of the highest man, is most of all worthy of expression. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 211–212)

Welby did not search for monological or monolinguistic solutions to the question of diversity among languages. To signal an example from our own time, Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory prescind from communicative function, that is, from the social and intersubjective dimensions of communicative processes (distinct from his important work on media, ideology and social theory). In fact, to explain the speaker's capacity to produce a potentially infinite number of sentences on the basis of a finite number of elements, Chomsky (1985) postulates the existence of a universal and innate generative grammar whose structures are biologically inscribed in the human mind, and which is activated by experience that is already given and functions as a stimulus. By contrast, from the perspective of Welby's signification and her interpretive, or better, pragmatic-interpretive approach to problems of meaning and communication, experience results from interpretive practice and is modelled in the dynamics of semiosis. In fact, by interpretive practice is also understood inferential processes of the hypothetical order, where inductive and deductive methods are included in one process (Welby), hypothetical-deductive inference (Vailati), or abductive or retroductive inference (Peirce). Through such interpretive processes the subject completes, organizes and associates data that is always more or less fragmentary, partial, and incomplete. Experience is all these interpretive operations together. As such it is innovative and qualitatively superior with respect to data input, that is, the historical and social material in which linguistic and nonlinguistic interpretive work of preceding generations is sedimented. And once the abductive dimension of experience is evidenced, including the dialectical relation with competence, language acquisition and linguistic competence no longer need to be explained in terms of an innate universal grammar. On the contrary, the claim is that language acquisition is possible on the basis of abductive inferential processes.

Welby denounced the acritical use of language, whether a question of ordinary language or of special languages, including the language of metadiscourse. As she states in Chapter XVIII, for example, of *What is Meaning?*:

One of the main results of the backward state of language and the prevalent 'mislocation' is, of course, the unconscious see-saw of senses and meanings which goes on between the usages of the common-sense or practical man in the ordinary intercourse of life, and the usages of the scientific and philosophical teacher. The former freely uses words like Sense, Sensation, Feeling, Matter, Force, Mind, Will, in all sorts of 'senses,' according to the impulses inherited or acquired at school. These 'senses' are usually called out or suggested by experience which varies almost endlessly with age, circumstances, health, etc. The same thing happens with short sentences or conventional phrases embodying such terms. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 140)

Welby reflected on the use of the term ‘plain’ and critiqued the myth of ‘plain meaning,’ being an important element in the construction of her own conception of language and of the world: ‘For one thing meaning is not, and that is “plain” in the sense of being the same at all times, in all places, and to all’ (Welby 1983 [1903]: 143). As we have seen, she underlined the semantic plasticity of the term ‘common.’ And with such expressions as ‘common meaning,’ ‘common sense,’ ‘common language,’ and ‘common speech’ she aimed to identify the conditions of language-thought, therefore the conditions that make linguistic use possible. Rather than a description of real processes, of the world as it is, these concepts are part of a theoretical construct, a model and method with an interpretive function, a hypothesis applicable to different languages. From this perspective, Welby’s work is rich in intuitions that foreground the research of such scholars as Rossi-Landi and his own concept of ‘common speech,’ or his critique of the concept of ‘use’ as elaborated by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*. According to Rossi-Landi, Wittgenstein analyses the language unit as though it were already given, failing to keep account of the real processes of social production from which these units ensue (cf. Rossi-Landi 1968). In his various monographs Rossi-Landi developed the concept of ‘common speech’ in terms of work, that is, ‘linguistic work,’ and subsequently in terms of ‘social reproduction’ (cf. Rossi-Landi 1961, 1985, 1992a). In fact, with his notion of ‘linguistic work’ he too intended to explain and not simply describe linguistic use.

The idea of common signifying material concerns the system of techniques forming the necessary conditions for expression and communication, and which in their repeatability and constancy are common to all human beings. As such, this material does not have national and cultural boundaries, but, on the contrary, is transnational and transcultural. Indeed, as Welby says, to impose a universal language would mean to start from the wrong end. ‘Common meaning’ or ‘common sense’ is not the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic and ideologic unification and centralization, of the ‘centripetal forces’ of language, as Bakhtin would say, nor is it connected to the abstract Saussurean notion of *langue*. As maintains Rossi-Landi (1961: 169) in his critique of the dichotomy established between the Saussurean system of language and individual speaking, between *langue* and *parole*, between that which is permanent in language and innovation, between *inventum* and *inventio*, the notion of common speech, understood as referring to the constant and reproducible elements of language (language-in-general, human linguistic work) cannot be reduced to one only of the two poles forming these dichotomies, but involves them both.

Rossi-Landi’s notion of ‘common speech’ serves as an interpretant of Welby’s own common sense or common meaning hypothesis, which it clarifies and develops. Another interpretant according to a line of thought that develops Rossi-Landi’s research and which seems to lead where Welby was headed is the concept of ‘semiotic materiality’ (Petrilli 1986b, 2008c; Ponzio 1990a). Above all, it contributes to a better understanding of the dialectics between ‘communion,’ ‘commonality,’ ‘community’ and ‘difference.’ In this context of discourse expressions like ‘community’ indicate an open community, regulated by the logic of otherness, a non conventional community, far more extensive and involving or participative, than a community based on the logic of identity could ever be. A community that unites different elements on the basis of irreducible otherness, therefore without levelling or homologating such elements according to the logic of

identity – whether a question of class, profession, nation, history, memory, ethnicity, religion, politics, race, gender, species.

Given that different languages belong to the ‘same category’ and express needs that are common to humanity as much as they are differentiated, Welby, like Rossi-Landi, believes that translation is always possible. However, whilst a translation may be ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ it must always be ‘valid’ and ‘tenable.’ In this case translation into the target language offers a different way of saying the same thing, developing initial meaning into a new interpretant. The original meaning of the term ‘translation’ itself understood as ‘transferral of position,’ is a spatial concept, says Welby, and evidences the multiplication of viewpoints with respect to the single sign in translation.

Welby distinguishes between ‘translation’ and ‘version’: a ‘translation’ may be admirable from a linguistic, grammatical and idiomatic point of view, but detestable from a literary point of view. Only when rendition is good on a literary level as well, in aesthetic terms, can we speak of a ‘version.’ However, the translator is destined to fail in his work if he does not succeed in rendering the significance of the original text in the target text; the system of values expressed in the original, which is strictly connected with the cultural context in which it is conceived, must find expression in the translated version of that same text. But, obviously, not even a translation that is ‘good,’ and not just ‘valid’ involves a relation of perfect correspondence, of identity among interpretants from different languages. Welby posits the categories of difference and otherness and the dialectics between them as a necessary condition for the happy realization of any translative process whatsoever. As she observes in Chapter XIX of *What is Meaning?*, even when terms are as close as they can be to ‘actual identity,’ the relation between them always involves a margin of difference. To exemplify, Welby indicates the logical procedure of equation ($12 + 8 = 15 + 5$) (see note 11 to the present chapter).

To maintain the thesis of translatability does not imply maintaining that in the last analysis all languages are equal to each other, that underlying structures are identical to each other, or that vocables overlap to perfection. The thesis of translatability among different languages keeps account of the ‘ultimate common character,’ the ‘community of nature’ that unites them because they belong to the same category, that is, human languages. However, as anticipated above, this does not imply the principle of linguistic universalism. The latter reconducts the great plurality of different languages to a single language, the *Ursprache*, to universal linguistic structures, to innate mental structures, in the last analysis to a monological view of reality (cf. Rossi-Landi 1985: 246–250, 261–269). Instead, languages always maintain a margin of reciprocal otherness with respect to each other, not only in the obvious case of different natural languages, but also in situations of plurilingualism internal to the same language. Opening to difference, distancing, variation in viewpoint, linguistic register, discourse field, are all necessary conditions for translation and expressivity across languages. As close as they may be from a cultural perspective, all languages have their own specificity and are reciprocally other. And even when languages are distant it is always possible to translate from one to the other. Indeed, the relation of otherness and difference among languages is the very condition for translation (cf. Ponzio 1981; Petrilli 1994b: 103–107; Petrilli 1995c: Section 3.2).

With specific reference to poetic language, while maintaining that poetry by definition cannot be translated, Jakobson argues that even in the case of poetry translation *is* possible if translation is conceptualized as transposition. Creative transposition is possible:

internally to a given language (or from one poetic form to another), or among different languages. Intersemiotic transposition is possible from one sign system to another: for example, from verbal language to music, dance, cinema, or painting. Understood with Welby as ‘transferral of position,’ translation is always possible, even if not necessarily in terms of a ‘version,’ thanks to the role played in sign systems by the logic of otherness and dialogism.

When there is a question of translatability among historical-natural languages, to ask whether or not historical-natural languages communicate with each other is irrelevant. As close as two languages may be on the level of historical formation they do not necessarily communicate with each other. That two languages share common aspects either because they are familiar with each other or because they share a common past in terms of formation and transformation processes does not eliminate differences among them. Nor will there necessarily be overlap between the two distinct universes of discourse that these languages represent.

The right question to ask does not concern communication but *expressibility*. The problem of translatability is the following: can what is expressed in one language also be expressed in another? The reply should not be of the inductive order, that is, reached by verifying all cases, among all languages, thereby accumulating results case by case. Nor should it be of the deductive order, that is, made to derive from some theoretical premise or axiom, given that we are working in the sphere of the human sciences and not in some formal discipline. Instead, our reply should be of the abductive or hypothetical-deductive order. In other words, it should be reached on the basis of an inference, a reply that allows for verification of the case in question on the basis of a given hypothesis.

In this sense, to translate (this impossible communication among historical-natural languages) is always possible. This conviction is based on the metalinguistic character of language, verbal and nonverbal. Interlingual translation occurs in territory that is common to all historical-natural languages, the verbal. It involves intraverbal translation as much as intralingual translation. Therefore, interlingual translatability occurs on common ground and involves common practices familiar to a speaker exercised in a single language, that is, the practice of transverbal expression.

Verbal sign systems are endowed with a distinctive feature which differentiates them from nonverbal special languages, that is, the *metalinguistic* capacity. Verbal sign systems can speak about themselves, objectivate themselves, make themselves the object of discourse. Availability of multiple special languages within a single historical-natural language augments the possibility of metalinguistic usage. All the same, the degree of distancing and critical awareness between metalanguage and object language permitted by plurilingualism internal to a single historical-natural language is inferior by comparison to the distancing achieved when translating across different historical-natural languages. Therefore, if we consider the problem of translatability in terms of expressibility, it is clear that the relation with another historical-natural language favours expressibility and that translation is not only possible, but even augments the speaker’s metalinguistic capacity.

On the other hand, to the extent that interlingual translation is intraverbal translation, it is achieved on the basis of what, as anticipated, Rossi-Landi in 1961 (now 1998) called ‘common speech.’ This expression was introduced by Rossi-Landi to conceptualize a system of relatively constant human techniques, a system that is broadly international

and not limited to national-cultural boundaries (Rossi-Landi 1998: 165). The 'common speech' hypothesis clarifies that the relation of resemblance between the original-text and the translation-text, which translation must keep account of, is neither a relation of isomorphism nor of superficial analogy, but of homology. In other words, despite differences the relation of resemblance bonding historical-natural languages is of the genetical-structural order and is determined by the fact that two texts from two different historical-natural languages share a sort of filigree, what Rossi-Landi calls 'common speech,' and Welby the 'common character,' the 'community of nature' uniting different languages, that is, 'common meaning,' 'common language.'

Thanks to the metalinguistic capacity of the verbal, it is always possible to reformulate what has been said, whether in the same special language or in the same historical-natural language and, even better, in a different special language and in a different historical-natural language. Translatability is inherent in the verbal, is a characteristic common to all historical-natural languages, and is possible thanks to 'common meaning.' This position opposes those conceptions that describe historical-natural languages as closed and self-sufficient systems, just as it opposes extremes in the description of differences among historical-natural languages established in terms of 'linguistic relativity.'

The question of translatability must be connected to the problem of the meaning of a sign and to the fact that this cannot be circumscribed to a single type of sign or sign system. From this point of view translatability may be explained in terms of a semiotic order. In fact, with Welby and Peirce we know that translation is implicit in the concept of sign itself. A sign is not possible without an interpretant, that is, without another sign that somehow explicates its meaning. In other words, meaning subsists in the relation of reciprocal translation among signs.

Theoretically there are no limits on the interpretants of a sign. In other words, the meaning of a sign cannot be circumscribed by limits of a typological or systemic order. Each time there is meaning, no type of sign or sign system can be excluded to furnish the sign with ulterior interpretants. Meaning and translation are semiotic phenomena whether interpretation-translation processes occur in the verbal sign system, among the sectorial languages of a single historical-natural language, among different historical-natural languages, among verbal and nonverbal sign systems, or among nonverbal sign systems.

To understand the meaning of a verbal sign in our own historical-natural language or in a different historical-natural language means to activate interpretive processes involving interpretants that are not necessarily of the verbal order alone.

Therefore, to translate from one historical-natural language to another means to apply artificial limits, as it were, on the process: interpretants for that which is said in a given historical-natural language are searched for exclusively among the verbal interpretants of the translating language. In the case of interlingual translation the point of arrival must necessarily be verbal. Interpretants are chosen from the language into which we are translating. However, limitation to verbal signs only concerns the goal of the interpretive trajectories involved in interlingual translation, while the course of such trajectories is not at all limited to direct transition from one historical-natural language to another for nonverbal signs and value systems are also inevitably involved.

Translation difficulties should not be attributed to resistance of some sort by the text in translation. Translatability is the very condition of the life of signs. If difficulties arise

in interlingual translation, this is because the interpretant is restricted to the sphere of the verbal, and even more specifically to the sphere of a single historical-natural language (the target language).

Translation difficulties do not arise so much from the fact that what is said in one historical-natural language must be transferred into another. The real difficulty lies in the need to reach an adequate understanding of the communicative act that renders the text in question possible, that renders it significant as a response, given that it is not self-sufficient and independent, but rather presupposes more communicative relations than it actually installs. Before reaching the target language and finding an adequate interpretant, or translantant, the work of interpretation involved in translating a text implies a multiplicity of interpretants which not only do not belong to the target language, but do not even belong to the source language. Beyond these, the interpretants in question need to be traced in a great verbal and nonverbal sign network, and not always is it possible to foresee which trajectories should be followed, which portions of the network should be explored.

As emerges from Welby's signficant approach to the problem of translation, interlingual translation only concerns the point of departure and arrival, while all the intermediary interpretive work is of a semiotic order. The text can only be 'transferred' from one historical-natural language into another on the basis of intersemiotic translation. Beyond having two historical-natural languages communicate with each other, translatability depends on the explicitation of interpretants that connect the text in translation to communicative context.

5.5. The semiotic centrality of translation. Translative processes and evolutionary development

Chapters XXII to XXVI in *What is Meaning?* are centred on problems relevant to the evolutionary development of mankind. Among other things, in these and other writings Welby deals with the linguistic causes of superstition among primitive peoples (cf. Welby 1890a, 1890b, now in Ch. 2, this volume), describing the evolution of mankind from a biosemiotic perspective (cf. Posner, Robering, Sebeok 1997–2004; Sebeok 2001), or more specifically with Welby, a biosignific perspective (though the terms 'biosemiotics' and 'biosignifics' are in a sense redundant given that semiotics, understood as global semiotics, and significs are constructed on the interconnection between the life sciences and the sign sciences). Welby examined special issues in the larger context of her rereading of evolutionary processes from a signficant perspective. She described the development of mankind in terms of the evolution of interpretive-translative processes of thought, experience and behaviour into ever more complex and articulate intellectual spheres, to the point where 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance' at last coexist. To translate is neither simply to 'decodify' nor to 'recodify.' No doubt such operations are part of translative processes, but they do not exhaust them.

In the first place to translate is to interpret. If we agree with Peirce that signs do not exist without an interpretant and that the meaning of a sign can only be expressed by another sign acting as its interpretant, translation is constitutive of the sign, indeed sign activity or *semiosis* is a translative process. Meaning is indissolubly interconnected

with translation, in fact is engendered in translative processes, as evidenced by the description of meaning in terms of 'interpretive route' (see Petrilli and Ponzio 2005; Ponzio 1990a). Moreover, evolutionary processes in the human world are described in terms of translative processes of a qualitative order across levels of meaning, according to an ascending degree in practical import, expressivity, and inferential capacity. In fact, development in knowledge and expressivity is not merely the result of accumulating data in quantitative terms, but rather of re-elaborating and transforming such data through the continuous action of translative processes in the same sign system and among different sign systems, verbal and nonverbal.

However, translation as we are now describing it does not only concern the human world, *anthroposemiosis*, but rather emerges as a *constitutive modality* of semiosis, or, more exactly, biosemiosis. Translative processes pervade the entire living world, that is, the great biosphere. Indeed, as theorized by Welby, translation is no less than vital for life and its evolution in all its aspects. From this perspective, Welby's translation theory is a biotranslation theory.

The passage below is cited from Chapter XXV in *What is Meaning?* and together with Chapters XXII to XXVI, focuses on evolutionary issues relating to mankind, 'anthroposemiosis' in the larger context of 'biosemiosis.' In these chapters Welby reflects on the linguistic causes of superstition among primitive peoples from a significant perspective, therefore in light of her tripartition of meaning and its evolution across the levels of 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance.' Different aspects of this meaning triad are identifiable on both the diachronic axis of evolutionary development as well as on the synchronic, in relations of interdependence among human beings forming specific socio-cultural systems:

It may then be suggested that while the sense-scheme of the primitive mind was for obvious reasons more exclusively dominant than it afterwards became, and may be supposed to have reacted to more subtle appeals from the various realms of nature (as to the spinal was added the specifically cerebral type of response), the meaning-scheme, now so highly developed, was still embryonic; while the element of Significance, as we now at least tacitly recognise it, was not yet assimilated. In other words, the primitive form of intelligence may be supposed to have been sensitive to certain modes of energy, modes which it was incited to translate somehow into cult of some kind and then into formal doctrine; just as it was impelled to translate the sense of hunger into the taking of food, and, in a higher stage, to translate the whole experience into articulate statement. Only, in this last class of cases, the translation, as life directly depended upon it, had to be the right one; in the case of the more indirect forms of stimulus, the translation was purely tentative, and was thus liable to be grotesquely wrong. Even where its principle survives, on the one hand in the highest scientific, and on the other in the highest religious, poetical, or philosophical thought of our own days, its earliest applications were repulsive as well as fantastic.

This, however, would be, from a significant point of view, just what we should expect to find. Man's sense-world includes much which requires the discipline of a meaning-sense to interpret rationally; and this sense, this sensitiveness to the meaning, intent, purport, purpose, 'end' of experience, direct and indirect, culminates in the sense – now become the recognition of Significance; of the import, the importance, the ultimate value, the supreme moment of all experience and all knowledge. (Welby 1983 [1903]: 193–194)

5.6. Translation, interpretation, significance (unpublished papers, 1905–1911)

The Welby Collection at the York University Archives includes a file entitled ‘Significs and Translation (i.e. Definition)’ (WCYA, Box 31, file 49), storing a series of short unpublished papers dated from 1905 to 1911, redacted for publication. All papers in this file, which we shall now briefly present, are appended to the present chapter. The title of this file may prove misleading. It should not be understood as conceiving translation merely in terms of definition, or reformulation as understood by Jakobson, but as reflection on and formulation of an approach to translation theory and practice understood in the broadest sense possible, in a signifi- cal and what today is recognised as a biosemiotic framework, and certainly inclusive of Jakobson’s concepts of ‘intra- lingual,’ ‘interlingual,’ and ‘intersemiotic’ translation.

In a paper of 13 March 1905 entitled ‘Significs and Translation,’ Welby focuses on the problem of evolution in terms of translation (on a scale progressing from the general to the specific: evolution of the universe, humanity, mind, human intelligence, expression, etc.). In fact we know that Welby did not limit the problem of translation to the problem of shift from one language to another (interlingual translation), but far more broadly she theorized translation in terms of translative processes across different universes of discourse as well as across different types of sign systems, verbal and nonverbal. From a signifi- cal perspective, translation-interpretation involves processes of differentiation and specialization in sense and signifying function. Such processes are perfected with the appearance of mind which involves development of the analytical and critical capacities and the capacity for differentiation and construction. At the same time these processes do not involve the introduction of barriers and separations, which, according to Welby, are human inventions introduced for the sake of analysis, but do not exist in nature. In her view, a condition for development is the recovery of the ‘inter-translative’ capacity among different discourses, senses and sign systems, which occurs in the constant and necessary dialectics between the tendency towards concentration, on the one hand, and continuity, on the other, between distinction and unity. To the same type of dialectics is also subject the development of significance, engendered through ‘inter-translative’ processes among different senses, functions and values.

In ‘Translation “Upwards”,’ a paper of 25 November 1907, Welby returns to theoriz- ing the processes of evolutionary development from organic activity to mental activity in terms of translation. In ‘A Badly Needed Translation,’ 11 June 1908, she continues theorizing the idea of uninterrupted translative processes across the different realms of life. Evolutionary development is possible on the basis of translative processes from organic life to the life of the intellect. Welby underlines the need to recover the relation of dependency of mind upon biological life, as the condition for continuity of translative processes through to the highest levels of significance (see also her untitled paper, dated 11 November 1911, included in the same file).

The paper entitled ‘The Snares of Translation’ is organized in the form of a dialogue among various voices (an expedient often used by Welby in her writings), and focuses on the problem of interlingual translation. Meaning is never absolutely simple, literal, neu- tral or univocal, but rather is figurative and intonated. Therefore the meaning of words in translation from one language to another is not preestablished, and cannot be taken

for granted. Moreover, words frequently derive from other languages, that is, as a result of loans and shifts from other languages, dialects, and universes of discourse. The implication is that the metaphorical and figurative dimension is structural to meaning, that terms are ‘multiplex’ and act in linguistic practice, in the spheres of ordinary language as much as in specialized languages. With specific reference to translation processes across languages, and in light of the nature of meaning, which shifts, is enhanced, or loses force at the moment of use, a classification of correspondences among terms from different languages could never be exhaustive nor definitive, and therefore is useless. Welby examines juridical discourse and the difficulties involved in translating terms from the English language that are not original to it into French, e.g., *verdict*, *jury*, *sentence*, *conveyance*.

In ‘What is Translation?’ Welby establishes an analogy between the traveller who transfers him/herself across space in a physical sense and the transferral of meaning from one language to another. In this light, translation is described as the ‘power of making an identical statement or description in different terms,’ which enhances our ‘powers of dealing with the world by acquiring the power of common understanding.’ This does not mean to augur a utopian world where a ‘common language’ is spoken with the introduction of a single international language over others. The idea of developing artificial languages was at the centre of debate during the second half of the nineteenth century and became a trend of the times. A primary concern was to overcome barriers and separations presented by languages to the ultimate end of avoiding conflict and even war. In Chapter 3 above we mentioned H. G. Wells’s vision of a Utopian tongue in relation to Welby’s view of language. ‘Esperanto,’ the best known artificial language in her day, was introduced by Ludwig L. Zamenhof (1859–1917) in 1887. ‘La Langue Bleue’ or ‘Bollak’ was introduced between 1899–1902 by Leon Bollack (1859–?). ‘New Latin’ may be ‘Latine sine flexione,’ also known as ‘Interlingua,’ was introduced in 1903, by the Italian mathematician Giuseppe Peano (1858–1932) who proposed a simplified version of Latin as a common language. ‘Volapuk’ was invented in 1897 circa, by Johan Martin Schleyer (1831–1912) (see Wells 2005 [1905]: 271, n. 11). In 1929 Charles K. Ogden introduced ‘Basic English,’ an international auxiliary language with an 850-word vocabulary for people with no knowledge of English (cf. Petrilli 1995a).

Welby spoke of a ‘common humanity,’ but this did not mean to postulate or impose a ‘common language,’ such as Esperanto, or, in the past, Latin, over others. In a passage from her book of 1911, *Significs and Language*, cited in Chapter 3 above, Welby says she wants Esperanto, but naming it as an expressive resource alongside others, including ancient Greek, literary language, and Zulu clicks (cf. Welby 1911 [1985]: 83). In any case, while acknowledging the inevitable need for international languages, e.g. the telegraph code, she drew attention to the importance, from a signifi- cal perspective, of expressive wealth as determined by the great multiplicity of different historical-natural languages as of all special languages, therefore, by linguistic variation. Such wealth is lost creating a situation of ‘monologism’ and ‘monolingualism,’ when variation and diversity are eliminated. In Welby’s view, loss of languages coincides with loss in significance.

In the ‘Final Note’ to her book of 1897, *Grains of Sense* (now included in section 1.9, above), Welby took her stand in the debate of the time on the problem of war and peace. By contrast with those who placed their hopes for peace and mutual understanding in a common language, she shifted her attention to the conditions that make communication and mutual understanding possible. Beyond the concept of common language, this led her to

problematize the action of values, sense and significance in all languages, the capacity for mutual listening and hospitality towards the other present in all languages. Beyond physical proximity, Welby postulates ‘mental communication’ as a necessary condition for the construction of an international community, that is, the capacity to share and communicate values. Reflecting on problems of communication, Welby identified in mutual indifference among peoples, cultures and languages a determining condition for the internationalization of hatred, war and destruction, sacrifice of the other; and in mutual listening, hospitality towards the word of the other, the premise for cooperation among civilizations, triumph of justice and international order over anarchy and extermination.

In Welby’s day to speak of a ‘common language’ such as Esperanto meant, for some people, to indicate a possible solution to the type of misunderstanding that leads to war; by contrast, for others it meant to favour tension among peoples, because they would at last be in a position to understand each other. Also, at the time, some people also saw a deterrent to war in economic interdependency among countries, and in such phenomena as traveling abroad, which were thought to favour transnational friendship. On her part, Welby evidenced the importance of sharing values and of developing critical consciousness and creative responsibility towards the other. Such values indicated the way to a world dedicated to mutual understanding and participation with the other, ultimately to peaceful living based on the principle of mutual cooperation among peoples and nations, beyond the barriers of identity for a ‘new era in human thought and action’ (cf. Welby 1897: 136–142, now Section 1.9, this volume).

The difficulties of translation may also be attributed to the singularity or uniqueness, the otherness or specificity, of each language, of each culture with respect to every other. However, such difficulties can be overcome on the basis of the concepts of ‘common humanity’ and ‘human universals’ (as signaled in relation to Rossi-Landi’s concept of ‘common speech’). Translation is interpretation without which translation is not possible. For Welby’s original reply to the question ‘What is Translation?’, see her paper appended below with the same title.

In ‘Translate – and Master,’ 23 May 1907, Welby criticizes the tendency to resignation in the name of Divine Will, often no more than a cover and alibi for one’s own ignorance and obtuseness. Similarly, she criticizes the tendency to accept intolerable contradictions. Poets are considered responsible for exasperating such attitudes when they describe nature as torturer and devourer of her own children, thereby creating mystifications around the concept of pain and suffering. Everything must be translated and mastered, including the experience of pain in a way that is constructive and beneficial for all. Welby’s approach to translation highlights the interconnection with interpretation, knowledge, responsibility, with life in all its aspects.

In ‘To What End?’, dated 8 June 1907, she describes the sense of humanity’s existence in translation towards ever more developed spheres of thought, to ever higher levels in praxis and expression. Human beings are the ongoing result of translative processes from vegetable and animal life through to the emotional and intellectual. Welby even theorizes relations between human beings and machines in terms of translation. Through translative processes sense is developed beyond the level of sensorial perception to high levels of meaning and signifying processes through to the sense of value, including the ethical, though, in Welby’s view, the potential of sense in terms of significance had not yet been fully recognized. From an evolutionary perspective, through translative

processes, human beings, the masters of nature, transcended the lower levels of sense as represented by vegetable and animal life. Paradoxically, however, though equipped with the capacity for projection and development, for transcendence with respect to the ordinary limits of experience, maximum levels of expressive, cognitive, or axiological potential have not yet been reached.

In an untitled paper of 30 May 1908, Welby discusses the ‘analogical relation,’ that is, the art of establishing correspondences among spheres of experience, even distant from each other, in terms of translation. The importance of the prefix ‘trans’ in the word ‘translation’ for an understanding of the nature of translation is the subject of an untitled paper of 14 August 1908. Welby emphasized the nature of translation as a cognitive procedure, through which are established relations of analogy and comparative transferral among ideas, problems and things from different spheres of experience, thereby enhancing the interpretive, expressive and communicative power of language. She supported her views on the basis of progress in science.

To theorize language from the perspective of signifiacs, means to theorize language in relation to action and values. Welby’s approach to signifiacs prefigures ‘speech act theory’ and the conceptualization of language in terms of ‘communicative games,’ as formulated by English analytical philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, but according to a perspective that was far broader than the latter. Welby did not seek to merely describe the linguistic phenomenon but to explain it, as we have observed above in relation to Rossi-Landi’s approach (see also Ch. 8, this volume). She was interested in the conditions that make language possible, that generate the linguistic phenomenon. As says Welby, ‘language is only the supreme form of Expressive Action,’ and like other expressive forms, for example music, is related to the action of life itself.

‘Expression’ and ‘communication’ call for ‘articulate Translation of the dialects of experience,’ creating a verbal and nonverbal expressive apparatus that is ever more metaphorical and figurative. The method of association and combination through which experience is articulated and developed in all its diversity and complexity, renders meaning ever more polyphonic and polylogic, to say it with Bakhtin, and never ‘plain and obvious,’ as says Welby (see Ch. 4, above). At the same time, she also theorized the ‘principle of simplification,’ which she applied to both the conceptual and practical levels, and which can be related to Peirce’s ‘principle of economy.’ The concluding passage to this paper is a good description of the interconnection between translation, interpretation, and significance from a signifiacal perspective.

Welby’s considerations on the language of mathematics, in a paper of 23 September 1908, entitled ‘Mathematics,’ begin with a description of mathematics as ensuing from translative processes into the ‘highest region of the rational brain,’ while maintaining relations of dependency upon the biological or physiological order. On the basis of interconnectedness and continuity thus described, Welby claims that the language of mathematics is not separate from other languages, including ordinary language. Indeed, to remain efficient the language of mathematics must not isolate itself in its own specialism. Life in all its manifestations develops in a continuum without interruptions through to intellectual life in the human sphere, and where barriers are introduced among different spheres of experience, thought and languages, bridges must be reconstructed and interconnections recovered in relations of reciprocal, I would add, ‘dialogical’ enhancement. The mathematician who closes him/herself off from the ‘commonwealth

of interests' and confines himself to his own 'technically perfect method' loses sense in terms of humanity as well as of mathematics. The more the mathematical processes of abstraction, theorems, and technical symbols are perfected, the more mathematical language must be integrated by 'ordinary language.' Ordinary language as a connecting tissue is necessary to speak about mathematical discoveries and communicate them to others, as well as to interpolate mathematical discourse in the interpretation of relations between one problem and another, between one standpoint and another. Speaking of the work of the mathematician, Welby observes that 'His very abstractions, as they rise in complexity, delicacy and creative coherence, lose something that other thought activities can contribute; and among these the figurative or analogical, the image – as retinal infidelity, or the comparison – as condition of choice.' The language of mathematics inevitably makes use of ordinary language which must maintain its 'plastic vitality' in order to serve its different purposes, as in the case of the language of Augustus De Morgan and Bertrand Russell. Welby claims that through the significant method

the thinker will pass easily from the one medium to the other, and thus contribute to the construction of bridges between mathematical and other forms of thought which will pass easily from the one medium to the other, and thus contribute to the construction of bridges between mathematical and other forms of thought which shall enormously enrich the human inheritance.

An example of this type of translation is the application of mathematics to mechanics. With the method of significs, says Welby, 'applied mathematics' responds to the specialism of the mathematician while at once involving competencies of the non specialist: 'For here, as everywhere, Significs means the intensification of that Sense of Significance which is at once the simplest and the most complex of our responses to the Arousers of Interest, the Calls to which we are embodied potential Answers. What does all this imply? That the "Pure Mathematician" is a greater man than he knows, but is only doing half his work, – the segregative isolative half.'

These papers by Welby echo and develop ideas that she had already expressed in various places of her writing, including her correspondence. For example, her critique of specialisms and separations and her quest to uncover interconnections uniting different fields of thought and languages, thereby recovering relations of reciprocal involvement (a position that prefigures today's quest for inter- and transdisciplinarity), is formulated in her exchanges with Victor V. Branford, during the years 1902–1904:

For the moment I am most interested in your idea of 'translating' the ideas of one group of studies into the nomenclature of another. This of course is one of the oldest problems of philosophy, but your way of approaching it is new. And there never, it seems to me, was so much need as today for special efforts to be made for bringing together on a common understanding groups of specialists who are in danger of becoming literally unintelligible to one another, not only in the details of their specialisms (as is doubtless inevitable), but also in the underlying principles. (Victor V. Branford to Welby, 1902–1904, in *Cust* 1931: 70)

In 'Question of the Limits of Possible Translation,' 20 December 1908, Welby warns against bad translations and mistranslations, which imply misconceptions and misinterpretations. Yet again, she insists on the importance of a 'significant critique of language' and mastery over our expressive resources for an adequate development of 'articulate expression,' therefore of 'articulate communication,' as a condition for progress and full

development of human creativity in all its expressive potential. ‘Articulate communication’ is closely connected with ‘expressive action,’ including the nonverbal. Moreover, keeping account of progress in science, ‘articulate communication is every day extending its range and its importance,’ making mastery over our expressive resources ever more urgent. Without aiming at ‘pedantic or priggish precision,’ Welby points to the importance for our ‘masters of style’ of uniting ‘aptness’ or ‘consistency’ in the use of illustrative or suggestive terms to the search for ‘beauty’ and ‘expressive dignity.’ Sense, meaning and significance must not be sacrificed, not even in the case of literary writing, to the sounds and rhythms of language. The correct use of language is considered as a criterion and limit to possible translation in the case of literary writing as well.

By ‘translation’, then, Welby broadly understands ‘interpretation,’ or better, as she says in an untitled paper of 14 December 1910, ‘interpretations through translation.’ Translations through the various realms of experience empower the interpretive and signifying capacity in the quest for significance. In Welby’s view, this capacity is not yet fully developed due to negation of so-called ‘mother-sense,’ ‘primal sense,’ or what in this paper she also calls ‘native’ sense – the original source of ‘fecundating significance.’ The method of signification consists in ‘reading one form of experience – inductive and deductive and by the light of another,’ thereby stimulating the central signifying function, the essential condition for mankind’s centrifugal and transcending creativity.

With reference to the problem of subjectivity, this perspective involves a shift from polarization in the usurper self, closed in upon its own identity, to the open I engendered in the relation with the other. If the end of any experience is to enhance ‘fecundating significance,’ therefore to reach awareness of its value and signifying power, then the central question continues to be ‘what does it signify?’ The concept of ‘fecundating significance’ is taken up again in the last untitled paper, dated 11 November 1911, which closes this particular collection dedicated to ‘Signification and Translation.’ In this paper, Welby continues her critique of oppositions of the type inner world/outer world, inside/outside, upper/lower, to the advantage of a vision of the existent where distinctive units are not considered as separate and isolated, but as terms of a relation which respond to each other as interconnected parts of the same universal continuum.

The texts

Papers from the archives

5.7. Significs – Translation (i.e. Definition) (1905–1911)*

13 March 1905²³

Significs and Translation

As in the evolutionary ascent our senses become more sharply differentiated, two things happen. 1) The universe tends to ‘fall to pieces’ (and it *is* a fall) and 2) the difficulty of concentration by mutual reinforcement and translation becomes greater. It is as though a commander were defeated because on occasion he could not turn his infantry into cavalry or either into artillery (or vice versa) and thus was actually encumbered instead of aided by the distinctions in function of his forces. Now in the original sense-state wherein *in a sense* the living ‘cell’ felt-touched-smelt-heard-saw and besides that responded to the real in nameless ways, this intertranslation was, on a very low level, possible. Hence survival; hence the preservation of the amazing ‘can be’ or may be, which science calls the potential, the very power to differentiate, to elaborate, to develop ever-brainwards. Life insists upon Mind, and that as ever-growing and ever greater in analytical, discriminative, constructive powers. But there is a price to pay. How bridge the ‘gulfs’ or surmount the barriers thus created? In nature, as we are incessantly reminded by science, there are none, and no rigid lines of demarcation. They are put there by imperious ‘mind’ for its own convenience. It has to work in sections, just as number has to be made up of units.

What nonsense we talk about not having advanced in intellect since the days of the Greek triumphs! In the first place, the date of that outflowering is in the history of man but yesterday. In the second, we have been recoiling since, in order to spring further. We have been sharpening our tools and reshaping our instruments and reconstructing our machinery. That is the significance of the ‘mechanical’ age. The literal machinery like the means of literal locomotion is a projection of mental tendency. And we have been re-learning to *detect*: training ourselves to discover and observe the smallest trace or hint of ‘actual fact’; and (yet more important), to criticise relentlessly our own observation. Now we have a fresh lesson to learn, that of a significance itself: no longer as vague and simple (for the very idea is still in the embryonic stage) but as full of pregnant distinction, like for instance that between Image, Sign, and Symbol or that between Sense, Signification, and Meaning. But to do this we must learn to translate inter-sensally and inter-functionally. As we learn to translate sight into hearing, and feeling into both, so we must learn to translate emotion into intellect and both into will and conversely. Thus shall we learn how to translate mathematics and physics into poetry, religion, ethics; thus shall we learn how to translate philosophy into science, and all this again both backwards and forwards.

And consequently and finally, we must acquire terms which shall include such diversities, and signalise the change of orientation which has come and is coming about. Thus we shall begin to see that there is no question of giving up reason for will and desire, or of giving up emotion and imagination for the critical and dialectical intellect: no question of realism v. idealism, or of physics v. metaphysics.

* [‘Significs – Translation (i.e. Definition),’ WCYA, Box 31, file 49. Unpublished papers written between 1905 and 1911. All papers in this file have been included].

23. [Of four copies of this paper only one bears the annotation ‘Significs and Translation’ in handwriting on top of the first page].

Even the morbid may in that day have its significance; and even in some forms when better understood, be found to supplement and enrich the witness of the normal. What we call brain disturbance or disease or defect or abnormal development involving loss of balance and loss of hold on the precious consensus of average commonplace common-sense, may in some cases be the preliminary disturbance and the first indications – culminating it may well be in an agony of birth-pang – of some great generative advance in human reaction to those illimitable excitations of the real universe of which directly we perceive so little, but of which science is perpetually and insistently preaching to us.

There is a tremendous Schooling in front of us! Are we ready to allow a really ‘transcendent’ training to educate us, to educe powers as yet latent, and not even expressible in an antiquated terminology, which by reaction on our ideas is compelling us to remain in one of the very stages which otherwise we should be outgrowing.

9 December 1906

What is Translation?

When we cross the channel, we find that we no longer ask for *bread*, but for *pain* (which in its spelling arouses an unfortunate association!); no longer for *meat* but for *viande*; no longer for *vegetables* but for *legumes*.

If however we had always assumed that there could be but one right form of speech, that all others were but gibberish: or again, if outgrowing this we assumed a final difference, an insurmountable barrier between various languages, – so that it was impossible to say in one what it was a matter of course to say, even admirably, in another – we should, as travellers in the actual bodily sense be almost exactly in the position which, as thinkers and workers, is actually ours.

Now of course in a given family of languages there are plenty of words (as of idioms) which vary but slightly, so that we can at once detect their common sense. But outside the language family or class, we have no such help.

What then are we to do? We must contrive to render the one language into the other: we must discover, anyhow for practical purposes, how to state any given fact, ask for any given object, describe any given need, process, appearance, in terms perhaps totally different from those which are ‘native’ to us. And we call this Translation.

What then *is* Translation – this wonderful power of making an identical statement or description in different terms, thus securing benefits of the first order of importance and enlarging our powers of dealing with the world by acquiring the power of common understanding? We naturally, of course, think of it as a secondary matter, even a mere question of convenience of intercourse. We naturally assume that there is yet a better way; and to save trouble would give a Utopian world a common language. Well, of course up to a certain point this is an obvious need and boon, as we see e.g. in the case of the international telegraph code; and it is absurd that we should ever have submitted to be without what is so easily provided; a provision which we once saw in Latin and now see in Esperanto.

But even this only applies to a certain family or group of languages. There seems no possibility of a world-wide Latin or Esperanto, providing for all needs; unless indeed there is an unobserved eliminating process going on which will eventually kill all but one family of speech. In any case, this would mean one of the greatest losses possible to Man. We are waking up to this fact in the discovery of the rapid loss of local dialect and accent, and of native languages like Gaelic and Erse, &c. It means a loss of enriching Variation: it means reduction to dead uniformity. We are even attempting an artificial preservation of some of the vanishing languages and dialects. But do we realise the true and ultimate nature of the loss as one of *a mine of significance*? Do we remind ourselves insistently enough of the need we feel of *quoting*: of saying something in another language or in a different occupational dialect, which cannot be so well said in our own? This

is an intimate psychological need. We excuse ourselves for much quoting from other – mainly classical – languages (a temptation from which most of us, from ignorance, are free) because we cannot translate. Now the words best worth quoting are the most human, and therefore of most universal interest. Why therefore cannot we translate them? Because of the deep psychological, arising from physiological, differences which have generated variations in modes of expression, and which make for a needed wealth of distinction.

Yet there is a way of overcoming such difficulties. Beneath all other differences there is a common humanity – a truism little in practice recognised. The question. ‘If you tickle us, do we not laugh?’ applies all over the world. There is an enormous stock of universally human riches not yet drawn upon. They are overlain with a thick crust of convention. We have hardly begun to translate, because we have hardly begun to interpret.

Once more, then, What is Translation? The first thing to understand clearly and emphatically is that the important point lies here – as so often – in the prefix; the ‘Trans-’. Whether we translate, transfer, transmit, transform, transmute, transfuse, and so on, we are always concerned, as common life and the dictionary tells us, with an *across, athwart, over, beyond, on the other side of, through*.

Among the abundant linguistic forms which automatically reveal the central place of change-bringing movement in our experience, transformation comes nearest to translation. The latter, indeed, is originally, like its congeners, a question of space and of removal. The thing moved remains the same. But transformation changes form as transfiguration changes figure; and these, while preserving identity, is what we need.

This then is our demand: a practical and scientific translation which implies a true transformation and often transfiguration, and yet carries over all the value of the translated dialect of mind. But this, we see, is more than translation; which indeed is a mere transference of meaning, of what it is intended to convey, from one set of symbolic sounds or their written equivalents, to another.

We ought to speak of *transforming* French into English, and still more of transforming a ‘dead’ language into a ‘living’ one. And the process may be (1) Literal, (2) Liberal (or general), (3) Significal. The last is our pressing need.

We must translate not merely speech but its *raison d’être*, its sense, its meaning, its significance.

23 May 1907

Translate – and Master

How often we dignify our own ignorance and dulness with the name of the Divine Will and are, alas resigned to it! How often we permit contradictions in conception which ought not to be tolerated for a moment: The poets, instead of helping us here, hinder us. They take up for instance the ludicrous inconsistency of calling Nature the Mother – which ‘she’ is – and making her the typical Waster, Torturer, Devourer of her children, evolving ‘heart-strings’ only to wring them, nerves only to intensify suffering, mind only to add a fiendish sting by reflection, memory, anticipation: by its before and after, its bitter recollections, bitter forebodings – bitter resentment and rebellion.

Sufferings? Nature says, *Suffer me* – to teach and lead you by Endurance and by rising through the very burden – bearing of motherhood which you would outgrow: the bearing of new life. Conceive and bear!

But more. Nature says, If I did not intensify suffering you would be even more contented than you are with the thick stifling darkness of ignorance which denounces the loyal learner and calls his passion that of a prying curiosity. . .

The office of Pain is to cry, Learn, learn! Of the children, of a natural order, of all clear and holy, pure and innocent, keen, penetrative, victorious thought. You are *not* to bear, *not* to suffer in its present *untranslated* sense. The ascetics and the martyrs have at least discovered this paradox, though they have done it wastefully: they have discovered that pain may be strangled by a fierce

frontal attack or captured and enslaved by an ambushade. And then they have found it silently smiling upon them and turning into a mountain path-way, while the broad road of flat ease and pleasure was always suggesting the nausea of satiety and the dying down of the precious conquered Good; ours through strenuousness which rises through the zone of ‘pleasure and pain’ to a greater stimulus than either, to that which shows both to us very far away, in the dim gone by and done with . . .

Translate – and master.

O wretched race that we are, ever turning from the Gate of Life and falling short of the Why of things, because our reaching out is so half-hearted and so faithless, and we know not what we say! Well, it is a great thing that we can so reproach ourselves, as some of our race have seen. For the pride of race must awake: we belong to the stars and sun: shame on our pretty gropings, our unworthy ideals – and reals. The idealist is a byword, and he gives back scorn to the realist. In truth man appeals to Halfness and to Halfness he shall go. But wholeness, like Nature his Mother, is waiting – to make him Whole.

[Undated typescript]

The Snares of Translation

(A) I suppose ‘verdict’ in this French sentence, ‘qui formule le *décret* ou promulgue le *verdict*’ is one of many words borrowed back from English usage.

(B) O, but verdict is as much French as English. It is the decision of the Judge.

(A) But in England it is given by Jury, not Judge: and the Jury is not French.

(C) But ‘verdict’ is simply ‘true saying,’ and verdict is Latin, which has come to use through Norman French.

(B) Yes: there is no question of technical meaning or borrowing; verdict is a word in general use.

(A) But only in general use metaphorically and among cultivated people.

(B) Not at all: I dispute that; there is no question of metaphor in the matter.

(A) Unless you are speaking from knowledge obtained by enquiry, you may find *that* a risky question to beg. Jury also is in use on the same borrowed and metaphorical footing. You speak, (a shade more jokingly than of ‘verdict,’ of the ‘jury’ of friends you have assembled to decide on a new wall-paper. ‘Sentence’ again, like ‘conveyance’ is on a much broader ground. But one has to hazard even this much. No assertion is safe on this subject, for its almost entirely unexplored, and Dr. Murray’s is practically the only Dictionary which has attempted to *actualise* some and *deliteralise* other current expressions. No one supposes of course that we could ever have an exhaustive, still less a lasting classification; in the very act of making it, we should find Language shifting, yielding, growing, withering, under our feet.

Yet we should at least learn to fear reckless rushing in, and at all events to tread gently where we have hitherto been quite sure that ‘of course we knew and everybody knows’ where the limits and what the work and effects of metaphor and the figurative really are. We should be a little less disastrously prompt with our ‘of course’s’ and our repudiation of any possible confusion in the use of the very ‘multiplex’ terms which form our colloquial and literary currency. And this is already the case with all our deepest scholars and most penetrating thinkers in the younger generation.

8 June 1907

To What End?

What are we here for? To what end is Man born?

To translate upwards, in faithful obedience to the law that brought man into being-helpless, bare, defenceless, *yet* victorious – the Survival of the Fittest *in an ever-rising sense of phrase*. ‘When I am weak then I am strong.’ What else *as a man* can I be?

Man is the Master Paradox; let him see that he realises this. There are wanton paradoxes; and by all these the Human Being 'himself' is the greatest he knows, little as he yet know even true himself, much less its possessor. He is here as having *translated* Vegetative and brutal strength into emotional and intellectual strength. He is stripped of the lower to be robed in the higher: he has surmounted the lesser sense-world and entered the larger, the moral, sense-world. Like the mother-animal which foreshadows, predicts him, he gives up the meaner to enter the noble life: he learns what worth really is and thus what is and what may be for him both attainable and worthy.

But first we must realise as we have not yet done – clearly, vividly, delicately, practically, unmistakably – the wealth of *sense* in which a phrase or a word is true and connotes the real. Sometimes, often indeed, this wealth of Sense makes for a dangerous poverty. Our hearer has too much choice, when he and the speaker both think he has none. In many cases we must have if not a new symbol, some distinguishing sign on the old symbol, to show in which of many senses we are using it.

But first let us realise not only the various 'senses' in which the word or phrase may be used, but also the absence of any hard and fast line of demarcation between those senses. We must be educated to realise here the borderlands instead of dangerously ignoring them. And this perhaps notably in the moral world, which is the world of motives and moment, the realm of the Sovereign Dynamic.

It is our motives and not merely our words or our actions that ultimately signify. Symptoms have to be interpreted, 'disease' has to be traced into the hidden evils that produce them. How obvious, how commonplace it sounds! And yet we are a long way from that in the moral judgements which we teach our children – who instinctively know better – to form.

Now actions, like words are indeed for practical purpose the immediate criterion. But when a man approaches us with a knife we have to decide swiftly whether he *means*, that is *intends*, to kill us or release or heal us. His action is ambiguous, because it may have many or at least alternative senses. So with an animal, let us say our dog, which appears to attack but is playing with or even trying to save us.

Motive is the one moral thing, and in the end the strongest of all things; and the meaning of this ascends from the mechanical to man or again descends in a wonderful sweep of translative achievement, from man to machinery. Furthermore in man it is not only volitional but moral: and the Best becomes the strongest to survive: the cosmical Will is done. When we are weak in one, the lesser and lower sense, then are we strong in another, the greater and higher sense.

25 November 1907

Translation 'Upwards'

In us organic activities have been, – as our 'brains' grew – more and more 'translated' into mental ones. Those great organic muscles, our physiological hearts, continue to pump: but our emotional 'hearts' have learnt in organic translation to beat with enthusiasm and to thrill with sympathy. Our fathers indeed aptly spoke of our 'bowels' of compassion.

Our 'feet' have learnt to walk in true ways, or again they may make false steps and we stumble, stagger, or fall on the paths of moral life. Our fate may be in our own 'hands,' or the hands of others, and we handle, practically or theoretically, the problems of life.

But it is needless to labour this statement of natural process in translation of the organic into the mental. Let us only – translatively – open our 'eyes' and 'ears' to the true significance and application of this automatic *racial* translation of the organic into the mental world – and *then* let us see that we do it loyally and in order, not casually and chaotically or in no longer relevant forms, as, alas, in linguistic 'translation' – in imagery – we are now doing.

30 May 1908

*Translation*²⁴

If the real art of poetic (or prosaic) translation from one idiom or speech into another is still to seek, much more to seek is, not merely the art but the fully developed function of analogical translation, the expression of corresponding character in widely differing forms and regions of experience. The mastery of this, one of the greatest of the human gifts, is comparable indeed only to reason itself, which is often dependent on its secret and unrecognised working for good and evil. We instinctively or deliberately assume some correspondence or at least likeness between two facts or events or sequences. We even use the terms of the one to express or convey ‘figuratively’ or ‘metaphorically’ the idea of the other.

Passing from the known to the unknown, the condition of all knowledge and all advance, we make *comparison*, whether we will or no, the very key of mental life; the spring of all invention and all application of discovery. But this carries two dangers. We may suppose a rigid, mechanical, technical correspondence where there is something much higher because more plastic and productive, – a Significant one. Or again we may suppose all analogy, all metaphor, all images, to be merely the accident or ornament of popular exposition, solely of passing and pictorial utility or rhetorical adornment. Meanwhile it is impressive; it arrests attention, it appeals to population notions and habits, or again being decorative it makes for persuasive attraction: all this is at once its advantage and its drawback, its service and its danger.

Realising this, one would suppose that every civilised child would be brought up to look upon a comparison, an apparent likeness, similarity, correspondence, as one of the most important things in the world, far more important than spelling or grammar; as important as emphasis. We should all be pointing out that a true analogy was that of using one thing to define or describe another, in order to throw light upon it and gain help or warning from it; that it is a question of opening a shutter or bringing a lamp; it illuminates and illustrates; it clears up, it shows us the way. This very image of ‘light’ is a case in point. But in fact we are brought up or left with the idea that analogy or image was a casual factor in speech; better, if not left alone, at least treated as merely incidental and if pressed or carried out, dangerous.

11 June 1908

A Badly Needed Translation

Life as vegetal has the power of transfiguring the mineral and gaseous world into the living. As animal, it has *lost* his power, and become parasitic on plant or animal life. ‘Mind’ in its turn has lost the power of direct assimilation from nature, and as language witness is compelled, in order to function, to live upon animal experience. That is, mind can do nothing unless it ‘feeds’ upon organic experience, besides being found in some connection or correlation with what we call a ‘brain.’ What is That, in its turn, which is in the same relation to mind – that is, which represents the next step in ascent, dependent on the last? At present we have but obscure hints and suggestions of this.

Sometimes we call it spirit. Probably we are more right than we know. Life depends in a special sense upon the air, *breath*: mind depends upon Life: is not the next higher stage dependent on Mind? And is not the refinement of atmosphere to be translated upwards stage after stage, until the enormous temperatures and all the incalculable energies which mind indirectly detects through instruments which it invents and through its power to ‘reason’ upon the messages of these, are found to be the natural environment of the next higher step of the creative ascent? Suppose that in every stage power in a lower form is lost as a condition of higher acquirement?

24. [Title annotated in handwriting].

The loss of the living in being unable to assimilate the inorganic is compensated by the general gain of the animal over the plant; so with the mind thus gained. The 'spirit,' which ought to be evident and transparent to all, since it is the Air which the mind breathes, the pure atmosphere which pervades and vitalises it, has taken the form of gases which act morbidly, though with indirect (anaesthetic) benefit. Hence myth, superstition, mysticism, and all which obscurely stirs us, evoking schemes of doctrine and speculation, ecstasies and terrors of the 'supernatural,' heavens and hells.

We construct elaborate narratives and arguments, all clashing one with the other: we have gods Many or One: we dimly see here the Triadic order which unconsciously for the most part governs our thought; and speak, in the most 'advanced' of religions, of the Trinity, – always tending for reasons but little understood, to begin and end with a Triad. All this belongs to the Order, in its lowest form, of intoxication, in its higher form of exaltation like that produced by nitrous oxide or in the form of ecstasy produced by asceticism, by long fasting and by silent and solitary contemplation. Great things, to us 'miraculous' things, are thus brought about. But we do not understand them or even our own Holiness, Wholeness. We are but barely on the threshold of the life in which they become natural and normal as the highest link between us all, belonging to the categories of that experience which science can deal with. To the Christ they are entirely natural; and to live in the Christhood which man is here to rise into and share, is the illumination of this as yet obscure ascent of Life and its 'blossom' and 'fruit.'

14 August 1908 [untitled]

From all directions in which one's mind and thought may radiate, the importance of the idea prompting the verbal prefix 'trans-' becomes more manifest, more clearly accentuated. Change of position and thus of view: realisation of unity in multiplicity: change of kind, of aspect, and of worth, as well as of number: distinction, that is, of *quality* involved not merely in difference of (relative) *quantity* but by *position* as well as by *measure* and *number*: these and more are indicated by the prefix 'trans-'.²⁵

But here the chemist must help us instead of looking scornfully amused at our muddles of meaning, and practically saying, 'the less said the better' (which as yet is too painfully true in *unnoticed* directions). *He* is really the best preacher of the 'Trans-'. And all his 'transes-' themselves need to be strictly and severely applied to the so-called 'chemistry' of mind. They *turn* over, into, out of. They begin with spatial transit and transfer.

Are we then to acquire new and infinitely cumbrous Dictionary of symbol and notation, as the chemist is obliged to do? Are we to imitate his enforced elaboration of technical formula, his enormous complexity of accumulative and distinctive symbol? No. For we have an unused or at least seldom used short-brain and short-thought and short-sense, compared to which even the chemist's is 'circumlocutory.' The long way round, the labyrinthine path, the laborious collection of item, the minute analysis (still, even so, comparatively coarse, as abounding problems yet unsolved bear witness), only make more conspicuous the painful scarcity of the interpretation which has given Man his still infantile degree of domination of those conditions given him by Nature to master and to utilise by penetrative and practical simplification.²⁵

Truth forbid that we should undervalue that power of mind which rivals its own products, the instruments ending in 'scope.' But not only are there many more 'scopes' to be mechanically constructed – as also many more tests to be applied and combinations to be effected – but it becomes more and more imperative that power to read one problem by the help of another; to make one solution give birth to another, to apply elsewhere and otherwise some unexpected and fruitful result, should be enhanced by the normal development of that articulate system of sound

25. Here we need a word like *gist*, an admirable one.

and mark which so powerfully though unconsciously sways all our thinking and our doing. For language is only the supreme form of Expressive Action. And the play of this must in all its forms be at the very least as discriminative and as exquisitely true as the ‘play’ of the typical musician and even the ‘play’ of evolving vitality itself, or the ‘play’ of all natural forces.

Now the possible Play of Speech spoken or written *or otherwise conveyed*, though far from being as yet attained or even in the right sense aimed at, surpasses all other. Thereby mind and thought, to borrow a phrase from the primitive chemist, precipitates a deposit of incalculable value.

Nature here, as usual, puts us to shame. The cloud, for instance, does full justice to Water, Air, Light and the ‘laws of gravitation.’ And it may do justice also to another call, the call of sense of beauty in us and of the unsounded *significance* of that ‘nature’ which we so vaguely and inconsistently realise and express that we look upon it as in turn a cruel monster to be defeated, a healthy and virtuous norm, a purely mechanical system or order, and as the Divine Nature, – an unconscious rebuke to the ‘super-natural’; for what can be super-divine?

Every flower and blade of grass, as each rock or pebble, does full justice to its theme and to its setting. So, in health, does our pulse, our contracting muscle, our nerve-thrill. Only in the Expression and Communication of this and all else of which we are conscious or call fact and truth; only in the articulate Translation of the dialects of experience, are we content needlessly and shamefully to fail. No fear but that at best there will be failure enough! But in Expressive Communication we have largely a gratuitous failure and the most disastrous one we can make. For life itself, like Nature and Mind, may be called – that is may be considered as – Expression: and we must grow to understand more worthily that of which it speaks to us and would faithfully reveal. In a deep sense indeed, we do in fact understand or rather under-move; we move and stand under a heaven of reality mirrored in the humblest drop or disk of polished metal in our hand or at our feet. Why do we *aspire*? How do we come to use the term aspiration? Because we are bound, as human, to be erect and to look upwards: and because we belong like our world to a sun; to a Solar centre. We may well speak of a sun of righteousness and of the light of the world. But we move in a double revolution, – the loyal and the trusty *order* of our orbit. In this connection, then, let us note, as an example, the inexcusable folly of using the idea of revolution, the very condition of our planetary Home’s appointed Way, of its benefit from its Sun, to designate ‘revolt,’ tending to destructive anarchy, mutiny or desertion. Here we see an instance of the work of mis-translation against which no protest is effectually raised; of a false type of analogy and comparative transference of an idea from one sphere of interest to another. We cannot of course do without this: there is a mass of examples to show that the man who protests that we can and must avoid the pitfalls of imagery and metaphor by abstaining from their use, is often the most flagrant offender. And he who does not only commit what he denounces; he does it in subtly falsifying ways, constantly overlooked or ignored.

Significs will effectually test the relative of any and all forms of *transference* or *transposition*, of any process indeed which can be symbolised by the prefix ‘trans’-. Even in this case – one of uncounted thousands – we should gain by the simplifying, illuminating, results of applying consistently the method of Significs. This tries all things by the test of Sense. In what or which sense, on what ground, with what object, from what startpoint, with what reference are you working, thinking, speaking? What do you intend to convey, to induce, to effect, to suggest, to imply by your act, your attitude, your procedure or abstention or refusal; by speaking or declining to speak? And what is the essential significance of any of these activities and all others worthy of the name? To what do they point, at what do they hint, what may they reveal?

23 September 1908

Mathematics

Mathematics may perhaps be defined from one point of view as the translation into the highest region of the rational brain, of the weaving instinct, or of the orderly and transcendently complex ramifications of the nervous system, including the yet mysterious cortex itself. It is really more significant and also more closely connected with the unnoticed because automatic physiological functions, than even the mathematician suspects. He is tempted to withdraw himself wholly from the commonwealth of interests, and to protest that he must lock the door upon all else than his own technically perfect method. But the result is not only that he humanly, but that he mathematically loses. His very abstractions, as they rise in complexity, delicacy and creative coherence, lose something that other thought activities can contribute; and among these the figurative or analogical, the image – as retinal infidelity, or the comparison – as condition of choice. Just because he is typically the servant of precision, accuracy, faultless symmetry, he ought of all men to help in a practical protest against the tolerated chaos which invades every sentence he writes in other than purely technical symbol. The ‘ordinary language’ in which he introduces or expounds his discoveries, or which he interpolates in the interpretation of, or comment upon, the relations between his main or secondary positions or problems, is not a plastic vitality but a fouled stream.

This factor is very conspicuous in Augustus de Morgan and again in Russell. When Significs is adequately brought to bear on all modes of thinking, a new era will here begin. Instead of risking the suggestion of new difficulties by the comment in ordinary language on some unusually experimental venture in the region of the ‘theorem,’ the thinker will pass easily from the one medium to the other, and thus contribute to the construction of bridges between mathematical and other forms of thought which will pass easily from the one medium to the other, and thus contribute to the construction of bridges between mathematical and other forms of thought which shall enormously enrich the human inheritance. And they must react beneficially on his own specialism by suggesting new schematic constructions and new modes of dealing with and interconnecting these. We have an earnest of this in the extraordinary development in mechanical invention, of applied mathematics. Attempts at application in other directions have been so far lamentable failures. But when we accept and adopt the method of Significs, ‘applied mathematics’ will ‘apply’ much more widely; and this widening, while endangering no jot of his command on his own territory, gives the Mathematician the Freedom of the City of Man, and turns his fellows into his helpers instead of his mystified and often obstructive hinderers, or his complacent ignorers.

For here, as everywhere, Significs means the intensification of that Sense of Significance which is at once the simplest and the most complex of our responses to the Arousers of Interest, the Calls to which we are embodied potential Answers. What does all this imply? That the ‘Pure Mathematician’ is a greater man than he knows, but is only doing half his work, – the segregative isolative half.

20 December 1908

Question of the Limits of Possible Translation

Is it desirable to allow such terms as truth, honesty, virtue, holiness, love, good, to connote, by gradual vitiation through laxity moral or intellectual or both, forms of vice, adulteration or falsification? Is it not better when quite feasible – in fact when the natural and easy plan – to preserve a given line of association in expression, so that the man of the new generation may never find e.g. dirty or mean becoming the serious epithets for what he is normally to approve and admire; and such terms as noble and pure for what he is to despise, ridicule, even detest?

There are prevalent and tolerated mis-translations of this kind and scarce less monstrous, against which we cannot too strenuously protest. Better none than those. Indeed the present state

of things, once perceived, is so intolerable and leads to such desperate tragedy of misconception and abortion of mental life, that there are times when one would almost welcome a general dumbness and agraphia so that we were reduced to gesture and attitude and to the resources of geometrical and numerical diagram and symbol.

There at least we seem still to be sanely consistent; we don't call a triangle a square, or muddle up 2 with a 4, a 3 with a 5, although these last are tempting alike! The question here arises, how far expressive action has correspondingly deteriorated? As this is still largely natural and not conventional, we may think it invulnerable. But we pay a heavy price for refinements of civilisation which on the whole tend upwards and give us priceless brain-born privileges. And here also the question arises: How to keep on a rising line in *character* as well as in *ability*, without risking the loss of attunement with the order, the law, the tone, the pitch, the harmony, the accord and concord, the true scales and spectrums, of the universe: how in short to avoid the analogue of squint, blunder, chaos, – failure.

The intellectual and moral ascent ought to really be ascent: but there is no subtle corruption than that which can be conveyed through a language allowed to rot, or to harbour parasites malignant only as out of really significant relation. If the corrupting process were a question of vulgarism or ignorance; if the priceless quality of significance did not, among those from whom we must naturally look for the typical examples of ideal and conscience in this matter, suffer so strangely from the prevalent supineness and neglect, the protest of Significs would not be needed. But at present the evil is allowed to grow without check or even notice till many of the highest and purest forms of expression are killed out or degraded by unworthy contexts.

We are prompt to denounce vice in action and even ignore and even encourage. Indeed many a criminal may have begun by taking language 'at its word' – at its face value – and seeing no 'harm' in deeds which reflect the words used in quite respectable circles! Many instances of such perversion are given elsewhere, and terms like 'property' and 'marriage' to say nothing of 'murder' and 'falsehood' are used in morally indefensible ways, though legal exigencies may up to a certain point excuse and even justify them in merely formal procedure.

Our 'masters of style' are indeed concerned with certain conventional canons of beauty and dignity, some of course in essential harmony with what is here submitted. But that harmony is mostly negated or neutralised by needless sacrifice of aptness or consistency in illustrative or suggestive terms. Especially in verse – blank or rhymed – is this the case. We impose barriers on Sense or Meaning for the sake of sound and its rhythms as conveying or inducing emotion, translating this into written form. But it is possible for the sake of the luxury of emotion or even for that of mere pleasure, to taint the very sources of the highest human developments.

Our idealistic terms are not always so true to Nature and the real as in the case of the Heavenly, the 'heaved,' the Uplifted mind or thought, that which instinctively acknowledges its kinship – with its planet's and its sun's – to the starry motherhood of the cosmos into which, as 'sky,' with infant eyes we look...

Abundant evidence of the crying need of a Significal Critique of language as we are content to teach it to each fresh generation, can be supplied. Meanwhile attention may be drawn to what appears at least broadly to be the fact; that our modern Western civilisation is the first and only instance on record of a helplessly falsified expression for accordingly adequate and creative activities.

It is as though we are content to hobble in the shoes which fitted our infancy or to use arms and hands artificially distorted and partly paralysed.

Never did the advanced sections of the race more urgently need a normally organic language: never had we the conditions or more complete command over our expressive resources: articulate communication is every day extending its range and its importance, while modern science brings to the front the crying need of flawless accuracy and consistency, though as in the delicate 'tuning' of an instrument this ought to be the very opposite of a pedantic or priggish precision. So also

does the enormous and ever-growing advance in invention of which the incipient 'conquest of the air' is a conspicuous instance.

No flaw, even the smallest, can be tolerated there. And yet invention can never be as speech is, at the very heart of all that is worthy to be called human life. Physical communication it but a mockery while mental communion remains in its present state. In invention we tolerate no flaws of any kind, since we realise the disaster which they must bring. But how often is mental and social disaster the consequence of unrealised or neglected flaws at the very heart of Expression!

14 December 1910 [untitled]

We must train ourselves to give examples (of course as yet crude and tentative only) of the Translations (interpretations through translation) which lie waiting for us throughout experience, when we have learnt to *signify*, and to apply that process normally. As yet we do not fully signify. We have not reached the true norm of significance. Hence our groping in jungles of mind, and collecting well-sifted bundles of bone and skin, and muscle and nerve &c. &c. out of which to construct marvellous dolls that speak and jibber. Hence our solemn reminders to each other that this or that achievement, however 'ideal' and practically desirable, is impossible for man and therefore an utopian dream. That is true: for unless we are all brought up to signify and interpret as we are born and here to do, we have to blow off useless 'steam' in visionary and mystical dreams and beliefs. A wretched man even *drinks* to get the caricature by poison of a natural glory. For as it is, we are all gratuitously sub-natural. So we wander in a cultivated labyrinth in which we diligently labour to find clues: and when we have found these we use up the rest of our 'time' (our span and thread) in endless spinning of theory and equally endless tearing of the web in controversy that inevitably and unconsciously nullifies instead of enriching.

We think we mentally walk: but the left foot *refutes* the right, which returns the compliment. And so, oddly enough, we are 'no forrader,' though we can talk eloquently about the 'advance' to which our muscular fatigue, though possibly caused by a treadmill, is witness, and enlarge on the folly of supposing that there is a 'royal road' to the solution of problems all the while there to be solved *as we solve the problem of breathing*.

There is indeed a 'royal road,' penetrating all our jungles like that made by a flash of lightning or a wireless message. But as we are, only the rare genius ever strikes it all. He has no time to show us what it indicates and whither it leads; or else he finds us putting him on pedestals or shrines, literalising his lessons, missing his points and issuing 'editions de luxe' of him; we have sometimes even tried to sterilise by our glosses his spring of fecundating significance. Why? Because our Native and Primal Sense has been trained out, snubbed out of us. So he may well be glad to go!

Here then is a ludicrously inept Example of what must become a sound and fruitful method of reading one form of experience – inductive and deductive and by the light of another. We will take, at hazard, a page out of *Nature* of Feb. 4th. 1909, p. 401, and make an elementary experiment as the children do, in application.

There is a source of *mental* radiation which may well be called 'Radium,' since it represents the greatest discovered intensity of radio-active forces, one which energises and exploits the mental world. Mind as radio-active (which is a 'planetary' offshoot of a 'solar,' a central energy) emits light itself and is 'phosphorescent.' It changes the colour of precious stones of thought and 'chemically' turns the oxygen of experience into ozone. The 'Water' of life is converted into steam or 'spirit' (the 'peroxide of hydrogen'), and is again formed by recombining its constituents. This and similar transformations are effected by 'a' and 'b' rays of thought.

But the human Radium gives off an emanation (a gas or spirit) which produces heat (the first necessity of mental life). While the 'life' of this emanation (which we have yet to identify) is very short, that of human Radium may be typified at present as about 1750 years long as against less

than 4 days. This indicates the proportion of significant to ordinary ‘thought’ in value and power. It probably indicates a transformation of elements which in pre-radiatic days would not only have seemed but have been fantastic. We speak of mental ‘depression’ which makes one’s despondent fears as heavy as lead. And *as we are*, this is an effect of human radium. That which supremely radiates irresistible power also supplies weight. And we need weighty thought and decision; as against dull or inert stupidity.

Meantime, while there is a weedy crop of fascinating theories tending to choke the precious sprout of a nourishing and developing human growth, all that we can do as yet is to stimulate the central signifying function which is the essential condition of man’s recognition and attained command of the full use of his radio-active mind. At present he radiates but feebly or casually, and if at all, mainly from an usurpative ‘Self’; but the latent force is there. We damp it down in childhood, substituting the partial paralysis of the present adult standard and average. We have to cherish every glint and germ of our Radio-active Humanity.

11 November 1911 [untitled]

Is the world of Life a Wife? And that of Motion and Impulse a Husband? May the growth-stimulating and nutritive element of the Cosmos be regarded as (in an overwhelming sense) a fecundated womb? Is what we (often unfortunately) call the external world really an agent of impregnation of the so-called internal world?

Is thus that sphere which we often misleadingly call the Inner really the Receptive and the Outer really Stimulative? Are each helpless without the other? Must the two blend perfectly in order to produce whollier types of life? Is there thus no question of superior or inferior in this, but only of a supreme marriage of human gift and power?

Alas, we only return the divine gift of spirit – pure air of love and reason – by breathing out refuse, that is what we must refuse to retain on the penalty of poisoning vitality. And so with all food – even the sacramental. The image of the Highest must be consistent with a divinely incept Nature on the highest organic level. Food spiritual as well as organic must imply what in our defective state is rightly regarded with horror – expect as beneficent *manure*. As manure the horror becomes secondary; for the detritus which poisons the air fecundates the soil which again loses its association of mere dirt or mud and its transfigured into the very nurse of pure and beautiful flower-life.

What a paradox is here!

The highest organic form known to us – the most complex of existing organisms – the healthy human – *execrates* what to it is merely the symbol of intolerable disgrace and which in fact, as this age of sweetening at all costs vigorously proclaims is a poisoning agency unless we can deodorate it, rendering ‘sewage’ innocuous by chemical methods where we cannot actually make it subserve pure growth and the activities of nutritive plant-life.

These things cannot be worthily said or acted upon until we have brought up a generation to penetrate the many husks which hide the precious kernels of a fecund significance; till, indeed we have really learnt the answer to the question at present generally put in contempt or at least lightly – What does it signify?

Well, to begin with, all questions must be lightly put not in the sense of absence of weight but in that of conquest of darkness.

Chapter 6

Mother-sense and subjectivity

'The first woman was not born,
but formed out of the sun and the echo.'
(Maori legend, New Zealand)

6.1. Significs, mother-sense, and logic

Welby elaborated the original concept of 'mother-sense' in a series of unpublished manuscripts (essaylets, notes, letters) written at the beginning of the twentieth century, between 1904 and 1910, and grouped together in a file entitled 'Mother-sense' (WCYA Box 28, Subject File 24, appended below). The expression 'mother-sense'¹ was subsequently replaced by 'primal sense' and its variant 'primary sense,' imposed by her publishers, which she accepted for the sake of publication, but she preferred the expression 'mother-sense.' Other files collecting materials relating to the same topic are available in the Welby Collection: one is entitled 'Primal Sense' (Box 29, File 36, this too appended below), the other 'Primitive Mind' (WCYA, Box 29, File 37).² The concept of 'mother-sense,' 'primal sense,' or 'primary sense,' had already been formulated by Welby in approximately 1890 and plays an important role in the overall architecture of her thought system, whether implicitly or explicitly. Mother-sense is thematized by Welby as the generating matrix of the human capacity for signifying processes, for experience, language and knowledge acquisition, for the development of consciousness and subjectivity, ultimately of worldview. However, it was only from 1904 onwards that she worked on the concept of 'mother-sense' systematically, encouraged among other things by the public debate on eugenics (a new science founded by the English psychologist Sir Francis Galton [1822–1911]), to which she herself contributed with two papers delivered at the Sociological Society, respectively in May 1904 and February 1905 (cf. Welby 1905 and 1906c, now appended below), being the only women who took part in the discussion.

In an essay of 1907 entitled 'Mother-sense and Significs' and subsequently 'Primal Sense and Significs' (WCYA, Box 29, file 36; now in Welby 1985: ccxxxviii–ccxliii), 'mother-sense' (synonyms include 'primal sense,' 'primary sense,' also 'original sense,' 'racial sense,' 'native sense') is described as the originating source of sense and meaning, of the capacity for interpretation and invention, for problem solving and discernment among the multiple meanings of signs, behaviour, and experience. The so-called 'ra-

1. The expression 'mother-sense' is written indifferently by Welby with or without a hyphen. I have made the decision to retain it throughout this volume. Related expressions include 'primal sense,' 'primary sense,' 'racial sense,' 'motherhood,' 'original sense,' 'native sense.'
2. File 37 in Box 29, 'Primitive Mind,' is not included in this volume. The materials it is described as containing are already published. In fact, Part II, 'Meaning and Metaphor,' corresponds to Welby's paper of 1893. However, I have not traced all papers such as, for example, 'Did Man Go Out of His Senses?,' or Part I, 'Truth and False Starts.'

tionalising intellect,' the faculty for critique and rational construction, is a subsequent development of mother-sense – its condition of possibility, from which the intellect must derive. Through her writings, Welby insists on the power of critique and theorizes the 'critique of language' and 'critical consciousness' as a necessity for the well-being of humankind. But Welby underlines that this critical capacity associated with the rational intellect is directly connected with mother-sense, indeed arises from mother-sense, and to subsist and develop must recover this connection. Mother-sense is a creative force that precedes mechanisms of control as enacted through the institutions of language and logic, through the order of discourse.

In an insightful article entitled 'Regaining Victoria Welby,' 2004, Luke Simons thematizes the central role played by mother-sense in Welby's signifiacs, and signals the interrelation established by her between 'intuitive knowledge' and 'rational knowledge'. By comparison to other expressions, in particular, 'primal sense,' the one privileged by Welby, 'mother-sense,' the 'primordial method of mind,' is the more accurate and far more pervading concept. Indeed, as Simons so rightly points out, citing Welby, it is in service to 'mother-sense,' this grounding concept, at the root of signifiacs, that Welby develops the science of Signifiacs in the first place. In Welby's words: 'Signifiacs cannot adequately be defined as the science of meaning or as the study of significance; since before it can become either, it has to be recognized and cultivated as the recovery, orderly development, and strenuously practical application (before all else in education) of the *primordial method of mind*, one which is necessarily the precursor and condition of all forms of mental activity, including even that of logic itself' (Welby 1908, Box 29, WCYA, cited by Simons 2004: 1).

In the paper reported below, dated 15 April 1907, and presented by H. Walter Schmitz under the title 'Primal sense and signifiacs' (he explains that the original expression 'mother-sense' had been crossed out and replaced with 'primal sense'), Welby explicitly analyzes the connection between Mother-sense and signifiacs in the following terms:

The connection between Mother-sense and Signifiacs may be put thus: Primal Sense is what takes up and supplies to us the material of immediate awareness, conscious and interpretive. It is the successor in evolution, or constitutes a further stage in value, of the animal's instinct. It is thus at once primordial and universal, at all stages of human development; though varying greatly in the part which it plays in the thought-life of human beings at such stages. And as Primal Sense is the Mother of senses, it is still occasionally found in women. Hence the peculiar authority accorded in all times to 'wise women' – from the Mrs. Eddy of our day back to the Witch of Endor of Saul's – in whom this primal and synthetic faculty has reasserted its ancient sway and been recognised as a special 'possession.' The tremendous emotional appeal which the message of the Christian Scientist has for so many minds is due to that 'gospel' being the re-announcement, the re-affirmation, of a comprehensive faculty, of a homogeneous psycho-physical power of response and adjustment, which has been largely lost in use, but which we organically 'know' to have been once common to the race, and to have made historically for survival and effectiveness.

Nevertheless, all such movements as Christian Scientism fail, in the long run, to take the highest minds with them. They fail, in spite of being in touch with so mighty a source of enrichment, because they ignore the greatest of all special gifts, the rationalising Intellect: which has not only to criticise, but also to reason out and construct from, the *données* of Mother-sense – its warnings, its *insights* and *far-sights*, its revelations, its swift reading of worth, its penetrative recognition of reality.

It is just here, then, that the place and work of Significs is to be found, as the necessary link – rather, the medium of interpretive communication – between the constant ‘givings’ of Mother-sense and the constant ‘constructions’ (in all senses) of the intellect.

For in order effectively to criticise, or to construct, it is obviously requisite that the criticising and constructing faculty should be perfectly served by language: that the working hand, so to say, should not be defeated by its own tools, or rather indeed that the working brain should not be defeated by its own delegate. The reasoning intellect should have imposed upon it no expression which induces distortion, in the slightest degree, of those representative forms of thought, those direct perceptions of reality, which are always freshly emerging in the receptive and responsive mind, and most powerfully in the mind of the young. And more. It should always be resolutely searching, even at the cost of shocks, sometimes rude, to its historical or aesthetic sensitiveness, for the symbol or the simile which most significantly, centrally, undeniably, gives the fact or truth which we mean – which we intend to convey.

‘Representative forms of thought,’ we have said: and ‘distortion.’ Let us take from these suggestive terms the service they can render us. Surely we all recognize that a picture of anything, if it is to speak truth, must never be out of drawing: nor a statue if it is to seem natural ever out of proportion; nor a musical scheme, if it is to be music, pass out of harmony. The painting which has been worked into a daub, the sculpture that is an essentially ‘formless’ (because disproportionate) mass, or the music that is degraded into mere noise naturally repels the man of aesthetic sensibility. Similarly the man of logical mind is sensitive to the *jar* of the ‘false quantity’ in reasoning. It is one of the ways, for him, of being out of tune, out of drawing, out of proportion.

All this is generally perceived. What is not yet so generally perceived is that each of these falsities, deformities, and dissonances, has its analogue or its equivalent in the false, the distortive, the corruptive, the variously misfitting forms of our common speech. Still less is it generally perceived that the persistence of such faults in language means, in effect, the supplying of the mind with a daily and hourly service of insidious mis-reports concerning that cosmic Reality with which it is the chief interest of humanity to get into ever more intimate touch and more adequate understanding. It has yet to be generally recognised that every misfitting form of speech is at the very least an arrestation of thought, even when it does not impart a positive misdirection making for perversion of truth and life. [...]

We talk of the inner and the underlying where there is no question of either: we talk of the he and she where there is nothing corresponding to sex: we talk of beginning and end as complementary and then of ‘both ends’; but never of both beginnings. We talk of truth when we mean accuracy or fact: we talk of the literal (‘it is written’) when we mean the actual (‘it is done’). We talk of natural ‘law’; reducing its sphere to that of the ‘law-court’ with its imposed decisions, forgetting that a law is a rule deliberately decreed and enforced or ‘passed’ by consent and liable to abrogation: we talk of mind and consciousness as the analogue of a bag or box, or of a piece of stuff in various ‘states’: we talk of the unknowable when what that is or whether it exists is precisely what we cannot know – the idea presupposes what it denies: we talk of immortality, ignoring its correlative innatality: we use special terms, e.g. the inner and outer, to define (or express) the non-spatial: we talk of solid foundations for life, for mind, for thought, and for the very world on which these are evolved: of the fundamentals when we mean the germs, starting-points, foci: of the solid reasons when we mean the rays of true light or heat. [...]

Can we realise this state of things (and the foregoing list is but a sample of it in one civilised language) and not agree that whatever else it denotes or suggests, there is no Mother-sense – no sense in the reasonable sense at all – in our helpless toleration of such a chaos and of much else like it, and in our teaching children thus to outrage their

natural sense of fitness, risking thereby the killing down of their precious sense of symbolic relevance and fidelity?

It is of course an important as well as obvious truth (implied everywhere in this plea) that we must never aim at having – fortunately could never hope to have – permanent standard of mechanical exactitude in language, since the experience which man is impelled to express, describe, and discuss, is continually changing and growing. But it will be found that children, unless their minds are being warped by a distortive training, will recognise the truth of this at once. From the first, they strike, in their quaint ways of speech, the keynote of freedom and growth and of pregnant expressiveness. Were their power of linguistic suggestion, now allowed to run to seed, trained and developed, or their often original and significant saying collected, not merely to make fun of but to learn from, our gain would be inestimable: and the next generation, it is safe to say, would make an onward step in the interpretation of experience practically unique in the history of man.

For while they would tend to recover the lapsed heritage of the Mother-sense; while their natural aptitudes in expression would for the first time in the modern era have free play and worthy attention, they would have all the accumulated knowledge of the race, all the traditions of its intellectual ascent, to work with and upon. [. . .]

The Primal Sense is concerned with the real, and may be traced as much in the humblest and simplest as in the proudest and most ambitious of man's activities. It is concerned with the ideal, not only because it is itself ideally immediate, practical, fruitful, but because it grows with the growth of the human appraisal of worth, and is ever ahead of, as ever introductory to, man's ascending appeals for at least relative perfection.

The true ideal of human speech is that of a delicately sensitive, detective, responsive, creative organ, self-adjustive to all healthy developments and enrichments – as to all dangers – however recondite or subtle, *just as our senses are*; but also automatically rectified as the senses need to be, by the unflinching and rigorous action of the intellectual test. (WCYA, Box 29, file 36; also Welby 1985b: ccxxxviii–ccxlii)

Welby theorized the connection between mother-sense and language. She underlined the need to maintain this instrument of thought and expression in perfect condition and to develop a linguistic conscience through an adequate education, from early childhood (see Ch. 4, above). According to Welby, logic, rational and intellectual life, the life of conscious reason, is subtended by the broader and generative dimension of sense, the 'original level,' the 'primal level,' 'mother-sense,' 'primitive sense,' 'racial sense,' the 'matrix,' with which it must maintain a relation of dialectic interdependency and reciprocal enrichment. True logic must always be associated with mother-sense. Indeed, one of the major tasks of signification is to recover the relation between them of 'dialogic interrelation,' of 'responsive understanding,' as Bakhtin would say, of 'agapic or sympathetic comprehension,' as in Peirce, and again of 'interpretive communication,' to use Welby's terms. It is, therefore, of reciprocal empowering between the constant '*données*,' or 'givings' of mother-sense, on the one hand, and rational life, the continual constructions of the intellect, on the other. As she says in the text cited above: 'It is just here, then, that the place and work of Signification is to be found, as the necessary link – rather, the medium of interpretive communication – between the constant "givings" of Mother-sense and the constant "constructions" (in all senses) of the intellect.' Signification, then, must recover the relation of communication-interpretation which interconnects mother-sense, primary, primordial sense to the intellect, rational life. Such recovery is necessary for the full development of critical sense and, therefore, for experience at the highest de-

degrees of meaning, value, and significance, given that mother-sense is the material of 'immediate, unconscious and interpretive intuition'; from an evolutionary point of view it constitutes the 'subsequent phase, on the level of value, to animal instinct.' Therefore mother-sense is together 'primordial and universal' and as such is present to varying degrees at all stages in the development of humankind. Both mother-sense and father-sense are profoundly connected to the sign materiality of human experience.

In an undated paper (though probably written about 1900) Peirce speaks of 'primisense' as the first level of a triad which also includes 'altersense' and 'medisense' (CP 7. 551). Together these three levels form a system with which to explore the complexity of consciousness. Most significantly Peirce associates this triad to his phaneroscopic categories of 'firstness,' 'secondness' and 'thirdness' (CP 2.79–2.94). Therefore a correlation may also be established with the triad 'qualisign,' 'sinsign' and 'legisign' (CP 2.227–2.272), and with what he calls 'qualisense,' 'molition,' and 'habit' (CP 8.302–8.305). The analogy with the triadic dimension of Welby's own thinking and her various triads of meaning, consciousness, and experience is worth exploring (see Appendix 4, below). From the point of view of the present chapter, particularly interesting is the relation between Welby's primal, primary or primitive sense and Peirce's primisense. As Peirce writes in an undated and untitled manuscript, included in his *Collected Papers* under the title, 'Forms of Consciousness' (CP 7.539–7.552):

There are no other forms of consciousness except the three that have been mentioned, Feeling, Altersense, and Medisense. They form a sort of system. Feeling is the momentarily present contents of consciousness taken in its pristine simplicity, and might be called *primisense*. *Altersense* is the consciousness of a directly present other or second, withstanding us. *Medisense* is the consciousness of a thirdness, or medium between primisense and altersense, leading from the former to the latter. It is the consciousness of a process of bringing to mind. Feeling, or *primisense*, is consciousness of a firstness; altersense is consciousness of otherness or secondness; medisense is the consciousness of means or thirdness. Of *primisense* there is but one fundamental mode. *Altersense* has two modes, Sensation and Will. *Medisense* has three modes, *Abstraction*, *Suggestion*, *Association*. (CP 7. 551)

To return to Welby and her text cited above on mother-sense or primal sense and the connection with significs, to recover the relation with primal sense, the matrix of sense, also means to recover common sense in all its signifying valency, from the instinctive-biological to the ethical, to recover the relation with sense in terms of bodily perception through to sense understood as significance. Associating Welby to Emmanuel Levinas, mother-sense is the capacity for significance before and after signification (cf. Levinas 1961, 1977; Petrilli 1998b; Petrilli, Ponzio, A., Ponzio, J. 2005). It concerns the real insofar as it is part of all human practices and the ideal insofar as it is the condition by virtue of which humanity may aspire to continuity and perfection in the generation of actual and possible words, of signifying processes at large. In Peirce's account, human beings are incarnated subjects made of intercorporeity, sociality, history, psychic activity. Subjectivity implies thought, language and consciousness as well as the complex and variegated sphere of the unconscious, or 'semi-conscious,' an 'obscure part' of the psyche which Peirce considers as the principal part of mind. The semiosis processes forming the unconscious are not illuminated by reason, that is, they are not controlled by reason or fully-conscious inferences. And not only does the unconscious represent the main part of the mind's activity in terms of quantity, but in fact it is also richer in signifying

potential than thought processes controlled by reason, or fully-conscious inferences, ‘almost infinitely more delicate in its sensibilities,’ says Peirce (*CP* 6.569, cf. also *CP* 7.555). Therefore, beyond sharing a similar conception of mind and its sign nature, Peirce, like Welby, theorizes the important role carried out in the life of the mind by the ‘obscure part’ of consciousness with respect to conscious reason, by behaviour governed by intuition, sense and what he also calls ‘mother-wit,’ an expression easily correlated to Welby’s ‘mother-sense.’ As Peirce writes,

Such reasoning is sometimes elaborate, self-critical; but at its best it is simply sleepy. The doctrine of Descartes [*Meditation II. Principles, Part I, 9*], that mind consists solely of that which directly asserts itself in unitary consciousness, modern scientific psychologists altogether reject. Swarming facts positively leave no doubt that vivid consciousness, subject to attention and control, embraces at any one moment a mere scrap of our psychical activity. Without attempting accuracy of statement demanding long explanations, and irrelevant to present purposes, three propositions may be laid down. (1) The obscure part of the mind is the principal part. (2) It acts with far more unerring accuracy than the rest. (3) It is almost infinitely more delicate in its sensibilities. Man’s fully-conscious inferences have not quantitative delicacy, except where they repose on arithmetic and measurement, which are mechanical processes; and they are almost as likely as not to be down right blunders. But consciousness or semi-conscious irreflective judgments of mother-wit, like instinctive inferences of brutes, answer questions of ‘how much’ with curious accuracy; and are seldom totally mistaken. (*CP* 6.569)

By rediscovering and reaffirming the connection between mother-sense and rational behaviour we can recover the sense of symbolic pertinence present in the child, whose natural inclination for investigation and questioning, according to Welby, serves as a model for human behaviour. Critical work is inevitably mediated by verbal language, spoken and written. Consequently, another central theme in signification, as anticipated, is the need to keep language and the logical capacity in perfect order. We know that this conviction led Welby to her ‘critique of language’ and more specifically her ‘critique of imagery’ (see above, Ch. 4), which she also applied to her studies on the psyche and subjectivity (see below). Welby theorized a close interrelation between language and consciousness, describing both as derivatives of mother-sense. She underlined the need to develop a ‘critical linguistic consciousness’ through critical linguistic practices free of prejudice, stereotypes and dogma, favouring the exquisitely human propensity for what she calls, once more, ‘interpretive communication,’ or with Bakhtin, ‘responsive understanding,’ which is dialogical and critical interpretation regulated by the logic of otherness (cf. Bakhtin 1981, 1990; Ponzio 2006b). By ‘otherness’ here is understood the existence of something on its own account, autonomously, therefore independently of the I’s initiative, of volition, consciousness, wilful recognition. Otherness is a synonym for materiality understood as objectivity and converges with the iconic dimension of sign processes as described by Peirce, with his firstness. Instead, the expression ‘altersense’ also introduced by Peirce, reported above, indicates otherness in the sense of secondness and indexicality.

At this point the term ‘dialogism’ (or ‘dialogicality’) as used in this volume also needs to be explained by contrast with the term ‘dialogue.’ ‘Dialogism’ refers to the condition of involvement with the other, that is, passive involvement. This is not involvement by choice, the result of initiative taken by a subject that has decided to get involved.

Dialogism is not only present in formal dialogue. Indeed, formal dialogue may only be endowed with a minor degree of dialogism; whereas discourse that is not dialogic in formal terms – that does not take the form of a dialogue – may be endowed with a high degree of dialogism. Dialogism is present in both exterior and interior discourse. Furthermore, dialogism is not a prerogative of discourse. Any sign situation or semiosis is a relational process and as such presents different degrees of dialogism. The relationship between sign and interpretant is dialogic and is so to varying degrees. Instead, the term ‘dialogue’ indicates a situation that may be dominated by the logic of identity or by the logic of alterity. Where the logic of identity dominates, dialogue tends to reconfirm standpoints, interests, and values, and therefore is dialogue only in a formal sense. Where the logic of alterity or otherness dominates, dialogue is characterized by the readiness to interrogate perspectives, interests, and values. In this case nothing is preconstituted, prefixed and guaranteed. This is substantial dialogue. In other words, form is not a determining factor for dialogue to obtain: we may have dialogic form without substantial dialogism and vice versa (for all these aspects see Ponzio 1990b, 2006b).

Coherently with her significant method, Welby conducted her analysis of commonalities, specificities and differences in sign and signifying practices in the context of the dialectic and dialogic relation with the totality. This is to say that Welby viewed the human world in terms of dialogic and detotalized signifying material, as anticipated in Chapter 5 above (cf. Petrilli 1992f), emerging from relations of responsive understanding in the relation between unity and distinction, where differences are interconnected on the basis of universal mother-sense and respond to each other at all levels of life, from the broadly organic to the most complex levels of the social. Furthermore, difference must not be exasperated in terms of separation, but rather appreciated in terms of distinctions in an ongoing continuum, interrelatedly with the detotalized sign network. In fact, a recurrent theme in significs is the methodological necessity to understand the dialectical interrelation between distinction – which is never separation or division, and unity.

In a letter to Welby dated 7 May 1904, Peirce observed that

Reason blunders so very frequently that in practical matters we must rely on instinct & subconscious operations of the mind, as much as possible, in order to succeed. Thus, in my logic there is a great gulf between the methods proper to practical and to theoretical question, in which latter I will not allow instinct, ‘natural’ reason, etc. to have any voice at all.³ (Hardwick 1977: 19–20)

To this Welby emblematically responded, in a letter dated 29 June 1904, with the following considerations:

I venture to enclose a brief and closely compressed Paper which I was asked to contribute to the discussion on Mr Galton’s momentous Lecture on Eugenics [Sir Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences*, Macmillan & Co., 1892. This work is reviewed in *The Nation*, 56 (6 April 1893), 260] (well reviewed I am glad to see in the ‘Nation’). You will there see my interpretation of your statement that ‘reason blunders so very frequently that in practical matters we must rely on instinct and subconscious operations of the mind as much as possible, in order to succeed.’ But in *my* logic (if you will allow me any!) I see no great gulf, but only a useful distinction between methods

3. [See *Collected Papers*, 1.616–1.677 (Hardwick 1977: 20)].

proper to practical and theoretical questions. So then ‘Never confound, and never divide’ is in these matters my motto. And I had gathered, I hope not quite mistakenly, that you also saw the disastrous result of digging gulfs to *separate* when it was really a question of *distinction*, – as sharp and clear as you like. (Hardwick 1977: 21)

In the same letter to Welby of 7 May 1904, Peirce characterized his correspondent as ‘a rationalistic radical’ and himself as a ‘conservative on rationalistic & experiential grounds.’ In her letter of 29 June 1904, she responded that in a narrow or conventional sense she was neither radical nor conservative, but in a deeper and more ultimate sense she was both. And when a question of leaning rather to one than to the other, ‘the racial motherhood in me as in every woman ensures its being the conservative. Only the question remains, Conservative of what? Of the antiquated, the obsolete, the effete? Of the once fitting, now misfitting? Of the once congruous, now incongruous? Of the once workable, now unworkable? Of that which once promoted growth and development and now stunts, backens, withers it?’ (Hardwick 1977: 21).⁴

The relation between ‘mother-sense,’ ‘primal sense,’ ‘racial sense,’ or ‘racial motherhood’ and ‘logic’ is thematized constantly throughout the correspondence between Welby and Peirce. Opening to the ethical sphere before and beyond the strictly cognitive, with Peirce scientific rigour in reasoning is connected to ‘mother-wit’ and to agapastic logical procedure, with Welby to ‘mother-sense.’ In fact, to recover the relation between logic, sense and values means to conceive the possibility of extending logic beyond its strictly cognitive boundaries in the direction of ethics and aesthetics, or what we propose to call ‘semioethics’ (cf. Petrilli 2004g, 2007a; Petrilli and Ponzio 2003b, 2005; also Section 8.4, below).

In a letter to Peirce dated 21 January 1909, Welby undersigns his observation that logic is the ‘ethics of the intellect’:

Of course I am fully aware that Semeiotic may be considered the scientific and philosophic form of that study which I hope may become generally known as Significs. Though I don’t think you need despair of the acceptance of your own more abstract, logically abstruse, philosophically profound conception of Semeiotic. Of course I assent to your definition of a logical inference, and agree that logic is in fact an application of morality in the largest and highest sense of the word. That is entirely consonant with the witness of Primal Sense. Alas, there is no word (except religion) more dangerously taken in vain than morality. (Hardwick 1977: 91)

Primal sense is the generating source of sense and of the capacity for criticism. It is oriented by the logic of otherness and corresponds to the capacity for knowing in a broad and creative sense through perception, intuition, sentiment, and cognitive leaps. Evoking Peirce, it is the idea intuited before it is possessed or before it possesses us. As

4. Peirce’s reply in a letter to Welby of 12 October 1904 is the following: ‘[...] I wanted to express my surprise at finding you rather repelled the designation of a “rationalist,” and said that as a woman you were naturally conservative. Of course, the lady of the house is usually the minister of foreign affairs (barring those of money and law) and as an accomplished diplomat is careful and conservative. But when a woman takes up an idea my experience is that she does so with a singleness of heart that distinguishes her. Some of my very best friends have been very radical women. I do not know that I don’t think your recommending a serious consideration of changing the base of numeration is a bit radical’ (in Hardwick 1977: 23).

the capacity for knowledge, 'mother-sense,' 'primal sense,' 'racial sense,' 'sense of the human,' is an inheritance common to humanity which characterizes the human race in its totality, without boundaries in terms of sexual gender.

From a socio-historical perspective women may emerge as the main guardian and disseminator of mother-sense because of the practices they are called to carry out on a daily basis revolving around care for the other, for example, children and the future generations they represent. Such practices are grounded in the logic of the gift, of 'giving,' as Welby also says, therefore self-giving, listening, and responding to the other. In any case, as much as mother-sense may manifest itself as particularly alive in women, in reality it is a heritage common to both men and women. On the other hand, if the sphere of intellectual knowledge and logical inference is mainly entrusted to the jurisdiction of the male, this too is due to socio-cultural factors, and certainly not to some natural propensity exclusive to the male. The expressions 'mother-sense,' 'racial motherhood,' etc. indicate the primitive or primary instance of the human race, therefore the original source of history, tradition, wisdom, intuition, an archaic heritage available indistinctly to the whole of humanity. From this point of view as well, mother-sense can be associated to the concept of language as a primary modelling device that distinguishes human beings from other life forms. 'Racial motherhood,' of which rudimentary forms may be traced in what Welby calls 'in-sense' and 'fore-sense,' is mostly paralyzed by the artificial conditions of society in which the mother is overwhelmed by the power and violence of her son. But as the main repository of mother-sense, Welby called attention to the responsibility of women in recovering archaic wisdom, and underlined their role in the development of meaning, language and construction of the symbolic order.

With a view to contemporary women theorists an interesting connection can be made, for example, between Welby's mother-sense logic and Genevieve Vaughan's theory of the Gift Economy (cf. Vaughan 1997, 2006).⁵ As Vaughan says in her book *For-giving* (1997), gift-giving exists 'in many places' but is made invisible by patriarchal capitalism. In reality, gift-giving is effectively the basis of communication, or better the generating nucleus of communication, and even invests 'communication-production' (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005) in the post-capitalist phase. Traces of gift-giving are in fact visible on a large-scale in the capitalist system: for example, in economies of indigenous cultures, in such phenomena as free housework, or the remittances sent by immigrants to their families in their home countries. Even linguistic work, or 'immaterial work' (see Petrilli 2003–2004a) is inseparable from the logic of gift-giving and, in effect, is itself gift-giving, linguistic gift-giving. Also, in today's globalized world, linguistic work or immaterial work is now recognized as a necessary 'resource,' a basic 'investment' (that is, an 'immaterial investment'), indispensable to the good functioning of the global communication-production system. Gift logic is not an imperfect expression of exchange logic, but rather is based on the logic of otherness and excess, of care for the other, be-

5. Reference to Genevieve Vaughan's Gift Economy in relation to Victoria Welby's 'mother-sense' is the result of our ongoing dialogue over recent years, for which I warmly thank her. This exchange of ideas has produced a rich series of joint initiatives in the editorial, didactic, and research spheres, in addition to the pleasure of attending conferences together and sharing ideas on topics of common interest.

fore and beyond the idea of equal exchange, which instead is based on exploitation and generates social and linguistic alienation (cf. Rossi-Landi 1970, 1975, 1992a).

From Vaughan's perspective the process of language learning is based on gift-giving logic, such that her theory of language as gift-giving recalls Welby and her concept of mother-sense. Vaughan describes language as verbal gifts, therefore as a means of conveying the gifts of sense, that is, of sense as perception and experience. This is not only sense from the perspective of mothering, but from the perspective of being mothered. In Vaughan's thought system, the long term, detailed and intense mother-work that is necessary for the health of young children habituates them to *being* nurtured. This means to establish and project the giving-and-receiving process as an interpretive 'frame.' Consequently, the creative reception of perceptions can be understood as a nurturing of human needs (to perceive) by the environment. According to Vaughan, language offers virtual verbal nurturing or gift giving/receiving both interpersonally and at the level of syntax. From this point of view, it could be called verbal mother-sense. Unilateral, transitive, turn-taking giving-and-receiving has a logic of its own in contrast to the self reflecting logic of identity and exchange of equivalents typical of the capitalist, equal exchange market (cf. Vaughan 1980, 1981, 2004a).

In her writings Vaughan maintains that the critique of the ideas of progress and social evolution, which have arisen in the framework of capitalist logic and globalization, confirms that logic of gift-giving (or primal sense) is not more 'primitive' than an identity logic that would be more 'evolved.' On the contrary, the critique of capitalism and of the idea of progress and social evolution in that context allow us to see the logic of substitution, exchange and identity as a doubling back of the unilateral gift upon itself, creating innumerable problems both at the practical and at the theoretical levels. In sign and language theory, division of the sphere of intellectual knowledge and logical inference from gift-giving and 'mother-sense' is thus a distortion, says Vaughan (perhaps due to the separation of the domestic sphere from the market which came to completion in the 19th century!), and actually a step 'backwards,' which is consonant with and functional to the exploitation of the gifts of humans and Mother Nature by the patriarchal capitalistic market system. A reevaluation of matriarchies, no longer viewed as 'women's rule' or as mirror images of patriarchies, but as peaceful gender egalitarian societies, provides a conception of gift economies organized according to maternal values. This kind of social organization is more 'advanced' because more conducive to life on Earth than the power and profit centred abstract mechanisms of patriarchal capitalism (cf. Vaughan 2004b, 2007).

In the architecture of Welby's thought system, the intellect separated from mother-sense tends to be dominated by the logic of identity. Understood in terms of rational knowledge and logical inference, the intellect involves the processes of asserting, generalizing and reasoning about data as they present themselves to our attention for observation and experimentation. But when separated from mother-sense, the intellect is easily overruled by the logic of identity understood in a restrictive sense, allowing for the tyranny of data, which we intend to possess, but which on the contrary possess us. Instead, the intellect derives from mother-sense and must remain connected to it, in order to flourish in terms of sense, meaning and significance, and of opening to the other.

In argumentative terms, inferential processes dominated by the logic of identity, and in semiotic terms by symbolicity and indexicality are mainly of the inductive and

deductive types. Instead, when regulated by the logic of otherness, in semiotic terms by iconicity, logical procedure is of the abductive or hypothetical-deductive type. In this case the intellect overtly maintains its connections with mother-sense which converges with the creative and generative forces of signifying processes, with the capacity to relate things which are distant from each other, and at once attracted to each other. Insofar as it is regulated by the logic of otherness and by the iconic dimension of signs, abduction is characterized by the propensity for creativity, dialogism, freedom and desire (see Petrilli 2004e). Peirce associated desire with meaning: insofar as it belongs to both the semiotic and the axiological orders, meaning is associated with value, and meaning as value with desire. Therefore, according to Welby, true logic is connected to mother-sense or primal sense and is regulated by otherness. This position which may also be associated with Peirce when he claims that the great principle of logic is ‘self-surrender’ – which does not mean to say that self must lay low for the sake of ultimate triumph, and even though it may turn out so, this must not be the governing purpose (*CP* 5.402, note 2). Echoing such thinkers as Bakhtin and Levinas, self must be open to the other, responsive to the other and must assume a position of listening and hospitality as a condition for development in terms of sense and significance, for reciprocal empowerment, and full development of logico-inferenced potential.

In Welby’s letter exchanges with Mary Everest Boole, the latter significantly considered a precursor of psychoanalysis, an important focus was on the laws ruling over thought processes theorized in terms of the intimate connection between logic and love, passion and power (cf. Cust 1929: 86–92). Welby’s correspondence with Boole on subjectivity, thought and reasoning is noteworthy (see above, Ch. 2). Welby also corresponded with many other people about such issues as they were very much at the centre of public debate at the time, including (again) Peirce and Ferdinand C. S. Schiller (Welby’s correspondence with Schiller is appended below).

6.2. Mother-sense, modelling, and the properly human

I am really an *aboriginal* pragmatist, for, many years ago – long before the name came into use – I was seeing more and more clearly that ‘intellectualism’ was now feeding upon husks and turning upon itself, engendering nothing but fresh and abortive controversy; and also that words like ‘make’ (on the use of which much argument about truth turns) were terrible traps for the unwary. That has led to my plea for the recovery of what I am calling (for want of a better term) the Primal sense, the inborn and generative alertness to danger and profit in mind which answers to that wariness which has enabled the race to survive the formidable dangers of early life: that ‘fittest’ in unerring response which has been ‘selected.’ (From a letter by Welby to William James, 10 May 1908)

The file entitled ‘Mother-sense’ (WCYA, Box 28, file 24) contains papers written between 1904 and 1910 in which Welby distinguishes between ‘sense’ or ‘mother-sense,’

on the one hand, and ‘intellect’ or ‘father reason,’ on the other. ‘Sense,’ that is, the broad capacity for knowledge through feeling and perceiving, also described as ‘racial knowledge,’ refers to a special capacity which characterizes the human race and is mostly handed down through the generations by women. Instead, ‘intellect,’ that is, knowledge by asserting, reasoning, generalizing from data that has been observed and experimented, is the type of knowledge that by tradition is mostly entrusted to men. With this distinction it was Welby’s intention to indicate the general difference between two main modalities – which in fact cut across sexual difference – in the generation/interpretation of sense. These two different modalities may be isolated hypothetically, by theoretical abstraction, but in real signifying processes, in praxis, that is, in sense producing practices (where ‘sense’ is understood broadly to include ‘meaning’ and ‘significance’) they are strictly interrelated. Mother-sense may be understood in the dual sense of the Latin verb *sapĕre* which means both ‘to know’ and ‘to taste of’ (in Latin *scio* and *sapio*): what the intellect must exert itself to reach, sense already tastes of in the dual sense of this verb (*sapĕre*). In order that cognitive and expressive potential, the capacity for research and progress in all spheres of knowledge and experience develop fully, they must be grounded in mother-sense. Indeed ‘mother-sense’ and ‘father-sense’ must be recovered in their original condition of dialectic and dialogic interrelation, phylogenetically and ontogenetically.

In accord with the logic of continuity and relation, Welby’s discourse did not establish a separation in terms of sexual gender between man and woman, male and female. She explored the differences between what she called the ‘feminine principle’ and the ‘masculine principle,’ and therefore between men and women, reflecting on the special contribution that should come from women for the maximum development of humanity. Connecting up with contemporary debate on evolutionary theory, she subscribed to the view that woman represented the potential for reproduction, the principle of continuity, and as such symbolized the human race. Overturning the biblical narrative, man was a subsequent derivation from woman, differentiated from woman, and represented the principle of variation. However, ‘motherhood’ must not be confused with the female nor with the feminine understood in terms of sexual gender, nor does it necessarily imply physiological and pre-mental maternity, though these may be among its important expressions. On the contrary, ‘motherhood’ is a condition investing both sexes, an a priori with respect to sexual identity (indeed with respect to any form of separation based on the logic of identity). Thus understood, motherhood involves both the masculine and the feminine, indeed includes the masculine in a way in which fatherhood does not include the feminine. As stated above, even though mother-sense may find its maximum expression in woman, it is not exclusive to her. In all human beings the feminine and the masculine principle, mother-sense, the sense of the human, and intellect (which derives from sense) should coexist and complement each other. Mother-sense is the primal source of signifying processes, an a priori with respect to the feminine and masculine principles, with respect to which the intellectual capacity is a secondary derivation.

Mother-sense conditions and models our perception of experience, our capacity for meaning and knowledge, our conception of time (cf. Welby 1907b: 395, now this volume; on the relation between ‘racial mother experience’ and time, see also Ch. 4, above), our capacity for commitment to the improvement of what we might call a concrete abstraction, that is, future generations. In fact, similarly to Peirce, ideator of the concept

of creative love (agapasm) when he maintains that the evolutionary results generated by the logic of love derive from love oriented towards something concrete, Welby too, though independently from Peirce, oriented the logic of mother-sense towards one's concrete neighbour. That is, one's neighbour in terms of affinity or similarity, even though the latter may be distant in space and time, and she criticized the threat of 'vague and void abstractions,' as might be represented, for example, by the bad use of the concept of 'future' itself. In terms of inference, practices oriented by creative love are abductive practices. Abduction is regulated by the logic of otherness, structured by the relation with the other, the other in close 'proximity' (as understood by Levinas), the other considered as a 'concrete abstraction' (to recall Marx), and therefore in its concrete sign materiality. In relation to subjectivity, the expression 'sign materiality' alludes to inclusion in a physical body as a condition for significance, to subsist as sign material. Nor does this imply reducing the relation between the body as physical-organic material and the body as sign material to a relation of identification (on the concept of sign or semiotic materiality, see above, Chapter 5; also Petrilli 1986b, 2008c; Ponzio 1990a).

But the history of the human race is also the history of continuous deviations by humanity in the socio-cultural and signifying network, in our analytical and constructive faculties; it is the history of the loss of intuition, of the sense for discernment and critique, the sense of human, even of vital origin and significance. Such loss leads humanity to be satisfied with the existent as it is, when instead what is needed is a condition of eternal 'dissatisfaction' to the end of increasing the expressive capacity and improving the human race. As Welby writes: 'We are all, men and women, apt to be satisfied now [...] with things as they are. But that is just what we all came into the world to be *dissatisfied* with' (see Welby 1906c, appended below). Welby underlined the need for radically critical social consciousness, capable of transcending the limits of convention, stereotypes and prejudice, which could only ever be reached by recovering the relation to mother-sense. She urged the need to recover the critical instance of the intellectual capacity, therefore, the gift for unprejudiced thinking, interrogation, generation of meaning, inferential processes of the highest creative and critical orders, the capacity for prevision and discovery, for translative processes in the broadest sense possible, across space and time, and across the great variety of different systems of signs and values.

Welby believed that the human being, whether male or female, would never reach fulfilment as a human being without the mother-sense. In her reflections on the 'motherhood of man,' she specified that the woman in the mother is passive and 'anabolic,' while the female in her is 'katabolic,' an active source of nourishment. As the mother, woman englobes man structurally; and in man the 'woman component' is always potentially present. In Welby's terminology man is the whole term; it signifies the human and must not be reduced to the half-being, to something sterile. From this perspective, as observed above, the masculine and feminine principles are not divided and separate elements, and must be recovered in their original instance of dialectical interconnection.

We have repeated that Welby communicated and developed her ideas through her correspondence welcoming criticism and discussion. Her use of the terms 'anabolic' and 'katabolic' attracted critical attention. For example, the Dutch psychiatrist and poet Frederik Willem van Eeden (1860–1932) commented in a letter to Welby, dated 23 February 1906, as follows: 'Words like "anabolic" and "katabolic" may be useful; their

use implies too much unnecessary and even harmful reading, often inaccessible to the simple minded – who yet want enlightenment as well.’ Welby took the opportunity to clarify and promptly replied with a letter dated 27 February 1906 (for her correspondence with van Eeden, see Ch. 7, below):

As to words like anabolic and katabolic [...] they ought to be in common use. Alas, many of our simple words belong not to the primitive and instinctive but to the ‘middle’ age: full of acquired conventions and thus not truly simple. Thus science has to supply words for some great simple truths of Nature which sound strange. Take a word like ‘aura’ and another like ‘ion.’ There are many and some day we shall see that they are priceless for the poet too. But I grant you that my encyclopaedic reading ruins my style. Only you see I am daring in spite of getting desperate over my absurd failures. Yes I am daring because I aspire to give sense messages to the leaders. They will see my difficulty. Their appeals will be worthier. Meanwhile I have only too many letters from those who think too well of my stumbling and stammering work. (Welby to Frederik van Eeden, WCYA, Box 4)

Mother-sense is at once analytical and synthetical, determining the capacity for knowledge increase in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Development in qualitative terms involves the capacity for changing orientation and perspective, for accomplishing cognitive leaps. Calculation gives useful results, says Welby, but without the sense and judgement of quality it can give no more than a description of fact. Moreover, we have seen that mother-sense includes father-reason (even if latently), while the contrary is not necessarily true, though father-sense for full development must remain connected to mother-sense. Together, they are capable of a spiral progression, that is, of generating signifying processes that are open, continuous, unending, and not circular, closed in upon themselves, or repetitive in an uncreative sense.

Moreover, sense is defined by Welby as knowledge that is ‘instinctively religious.’ In the context of her discourse, ‘religious’ is understood in the etymological sense of *religare*, to unite, to relate, to link, and in the altogether original sense of the feeling consciousness of the ‘solar relationship.’ This expression indicates a universal sense of *dependency*, particularly developed in women, upon something greater than the human (therefore the woman must not submit to her own creation, man); a universal tendency towards a world that is more vast, more elevated, a world made of other origins and other relationships beneath and beyond the merely planetary, a world at the highest degrees of otherness and creativity. From this point of view mother-sense converges with the capacity for transcendence. In other words, it converges with the capacity to transcend the limits of sense itself, as such constituting the true sense and value of the properly human. Transcendence in Welby is connected with the materiality of life, with the world as sign and nonsign material, and certainly not with metaphysics in its reductionist interpretation. As Welby further specified, the concept of mother-sense does not imply ‘anthropomorphism,’ but far more broadly ‘organomorphism,’ on the one hand, and ‘cosmomorphism,’ on the other.

As observed, the implications of the concept of mother-sense and its potential for the acquisition of knowledge clearly emerge in light of another concept, that of ‘language’ or ‘primary modelling device’ (see Sebeok 1986b, 1991b, 2001). According to Sebeok ‘language’ understood as a primary modelling device is exclusive to human beings and distinguishes them from other life forms.

On the basis of research in biosemiotics, we now know that a modelling capacity is probably operative in all life forms. Through semiosis all life forms are endowed with the capacity to produce and comprehend the species-specific models of their worlds (cf. Sebeok and Danesi 2000: 5). As discussed in Chapter 4, primary modelling is the innate capacity of organisms for simulative modelling in species-specific ways. The primary modelling system of the species *Homo* is called *language*, which should not be reduced to or confused with just verbal language. In fact, we must distinguish between language understood as ‘verbal language,’ that is, as indicating a communication system, and ‘language’ understood as a species-specific modelling device. Secondary and tertiary modelling systems presuppose language understood as a primary modelling device; these, too, indicate uniquely human capacities. In Sebeok’s terminology, the secondary modelling system is verbal language or, *speech*, while tertiary modelling systems indicate all human cultural systems, symbol-based modelling processes grounded in language and speech. Sebeok’s triad is fundamental for the distinction between modelling and communication, and demonstrates the foundational character of modelling with respect to communication.

Similarly to language understood as the human species-specific primary modelling device, mother-sense is the condition for the acquisition of knowledge and experience through the different sign systems forming human behaviour, verbal and nonverbal. As a modelling procedure, mother-sense is original, primary or primitive signifying material, the condition for meaningful and responsible behaviour, for inferential processes at the highest degrees of abductive logic, innovation, critique and creativity. Interpreted in terms of modelling procedure, mother-sense implies the capacity for inventiveness, innovation, creativity and giving. Oriented by the logic of otherness, mother-sense converges with the capacity to generate infinitely new worldviews, sign systems and signifying practices in the dialectic and dialogic interrelation with the logic of identity, where identity is never absolute. The great variety of worldviews and signifying systems pervading the existent are systems that have been articulated, signified, constituted, configured on the basis of mother-sense, and as such are secondary or derived systems. In the human world cultural, expressive and symbolic systems are the projection and interpretation of the original and originating capacity for sense and at the same time its reduction. Original, primal, mother-sense converges with the capacity to engender signifying processes at the highest degrees of otherness, creativity and responsibility, thereby constituting the condition for the beyond, the otherwise of signifying processes themselves. From this point of view, Welby’s signification with its special focus on the conjunction between life, language and sense in all senses, prefigures present-day trends in the sign sciences, which now at last come together with the life sciences and ethics.

According to recent findings in biosemiotic research in dialogue with the most advanced expressions of research in the life sciences and the sign sciences, modelling determines worldview. However, differently from other life forms, the special modelling device with which human beings are endowed, called ‘language,’ is characterized by ‘syntactics.’ Thanks to syntactics the human being is able to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct an infinite number of worlds and worldviews on the basis of a finite number of elements. This capacity distinguishes human beings from other animals where the relation between modelling and what the biologists call *Umwelt* is univocal, unidirectional (cf. J. von Uexküll 1909, 1992; and Hoffmeyer 1996). Non human animals are

born into a world which they are not programmed to modify, if not according to an original *bauplan* as established by the genetic patrimony of the species they belong to. By contrast, thanks to syntactics human beings are endowed with a capacity for creativity and metasemiosis. Consequently, the human being may be defined as a *metasemiosic* or *semiotic animal* (cf. Petrilli 1998c: 8, 181–182; Deely, Petrilli, Ponzio 2005). This entails a capacity for the suspension of action and deliberation, therefore, for critical thinking and conscious awareness. The immediate implication is that by contrast with other animals, the human being is invested biosemiosically and phylogenetically with a unique capacity for responsibility, for making choices and taking standpoints, for creative intervention upon the course of semiosis throughout the whole biosphere, caring for semiosis in its joyous and dialogical multiplicity, as also emerges with Welby's concept of mother-sense. In this sense the 'semiotic animal' is also a 'semioethic animal' or, thinking of Welby, a 'significant animal' (cf. Petrilli 2004j; and Petrilli and Ponzio 2001, 2002a,b, 2005: 535–564).

In a letter to Welby dated 2 October 1907, Ferdinand C. S. Schiller proposed that she use the expression 'common sense' instead of 'mother-sense' to avoid giving the impression that she intended to exclude the male sex from this concept. Considering that 'mother-sense' refers to wisdom inherent in all human beings, he believed that this expression was easily replaced by 'common sense':

But why should you not identify your Mother-sense with Common-sense and call it (mainly) that? It is what at bottom you mean – the wisdom of the 'tout le monde' which is wiser than the sages, which pervades Society and its history and is rarely formulated and never adequately expressed in set logical terms. It is truly 'common' in that it can be fathered upon no one and in that it is at the basis of our 'common' life in society; it is also 'mother,' in that the logical acumen grows out of it. I am willing to believe that women in general, when one gets beneath the surface of their frivolities and follies have retained a closer contact with this force and that e.g. the 'maternal instinct' will (despite all appearances to the contrary) triumph over 'race-suicide' temptations, if only women are given a free hand in the regulation of things. So you would have ample reason for calling this 'common-sense' a 'Mother-sense,' but the more you emphasized the former phrase the more intelligible you would become to the mere male! ('F. C. S. Schiller on "Mother-Sense"; WCYA Box 14; also in Welby 1985a: ccxlv–ccxlvii; now included in the correspondence between Welby and Schiller appended below)

Schiller's proposal betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of Welby's position. This is evident when in an earlier passage from the letter above he claims that to analyze intuition does not mean to deny logic, but rather to reform it, for in fact he was not stating anything different from her own view. In the words of Schiller from the letter above:

So it is with 'logic' v. 'intuition,' and if you wish to speak on behalf of the latter, the right policy is not to disavow logic but to reform it, to show that intuitions underlie it and that it is never in real life so dull and dry as in the text-books. Real thinking does not advance by a formal array of indisputable syllogisms; it sets out to prove a pet hypothesis it has set its heart upon, it dares and suffers (even defeat!) and thereby achieves: the more 'purely' rational the calculation, the more paralysed and impotent.

In any case, as much as the concepts of 'mother-sense' and 'common sense' converge (to the point that Schiller's statement seemed a truism to her), their meaning implications were not entirely congruent, and Welby preferred to avoid the term 'common' because

of its negative and oversimplifying implications. As stated above, to mother-sense she attributed the human capacity for critique itself, for the suspension of action and deliberation. As she claimed in her reply to Schiller, dated no more specifically than October 1907 (for the complete letter, see the Welby-Schiller correspondence appended below):

Well, the mother-sense never 'sets its heart' on any 'pet hypothesis': if it had done this in the original days of its reign, you and I would never have been here. The race would have been snuffed out. No: it takes one hypothesis after the other, treating the one it 'cares' for with a more uncompromising scrutiny and severity than the others. The very life of its owner and her children once hung upon this instinct of suspicion and of test. It is sheer mother-sense – instinct of intellectual danger, – which in you, as in Dewey, Peirce and James, calls out the pragmatic reaction! It is the direct descendant of the keen awareness of the signs of primitive danger to the babes of the pair or the tribe, left in relatively weak hands. But let the pragmatist beware of exchanging one fallacy or one over-worked method for another, perhaps its opposite. [...]

That the Mother-sense is 'common' seems to me a truism. Of course it is common. Only, the word common is used in several senses. In one it means despicable and is coupled with 'unclean.' On another side, Loeb's [1859–1924, German experimental biologist and physiologist] tropisms are common! And my Originating, Birth-giving, Reproductive, Interpretative – my Mother-sense, is common to the whole range of life and extends beyond it and beneath it. [...] (Welby to Schiller, undated letter [edited by Nina Cust as 20 October 1907], in Welby 1985: ccxlix; now appended below)

Welby obviously did not deny logic, the symbolic order, whose value she recognized with her studies on the methods of reasoning. However, she also signalled the need for a constructive critique of logic itself in order to improve the conscious and creative use of cognitive instruments and interpretive models. (From this point of view, see also her letters of 10 and 11 May 1908 to William James, now in Ch. 1 this volume). Welby agreed with Schiller that the term 'mother' in the expression 'mother-sense' risked evoking the idea of the mother in a biological sense, being a reduction and oversimplification with respect to what she effectively intended. Instead, 'mother-sense' as she understood it refers to 'originating, birth-giving, reproductive, and interpretative' sense. This is original, primordial, pre-sexual and pre-mental with respect to any divisions and separations established on the basis of the logic of identity, including that between the sexes. As she stated in a text dated 30 June 1908 (of which the complete version is included in the file 'Mother-sense,' Box 28, file 24, appended below):

My own transition (as a matter of precaution) from 'mother' to 'primal' (with, as variant, 'primary') Sense, is an illustration of the difficulties created by our neglect of Significs. For it ought to be understood at once, *that in such a context as mine* I cannot possibly mean by Mother-sense, mainly, still less only, the shrewd or practical insight of the typical 'mother' in the actual or organic sense.

Naturally I mean a primordial, inceptive, inborn, need-fertilised, danger-prompted, interest-stimulated, Sense. *'Mother' is indeed or ought to be, the wide and general, 'Father' the specialised, term.* The pre-sexual organism was the maternal, and included the paternal element. We already recognise this in our philosophical and scientific use of the term Matrix. We never, in this connection, use the term Patrix; and we are quite right. The 'mother' is enabled by stimulus to conceive, develop, nourish new life. (WCYA Box 29, file 36; also in Welby 1985a: ccxliii; now appended below)

In this text as much as in other papers in the archives, Welby clearly states that she used the expression 'primal' sense and its variant 'primary' sense, out of necessity, to satisfy the public ear and on advice from the publishers, in order to avoid misunderstanding, as much as she preferred the original expression 'mother-sense.' With this expression, in fact, she was not promoting gendered discourse, she was not maintaining that what is designated as mother-sense was exclusive to women. In any case, similarly to her meaning triad, Welby explored the different possible signifying implications of her concept of mother-sense, which she proposed to her readers, but ultimately she avoided freezing it into fixed and definitive definitions, or rigid systematizations.

6.3. Mother-sense beyond feminism and the debate on eugenics

I am much concerned just now with the aims of the Sociological Society recently founded here, and among them with that of 'National Eugenics.' We hope presently to introduce the subject which, as placing 'significance' first among human interests should tend to define and clarify the highest human ideals, I mean of course 'Significs.'

In the meantime I have contributed two short memoranda suggesting that in the tremendous development of the rational faculties and of the power of subtle and elaborate abstraction, we have tended to neglect, not only the development and improvement of expressions, but an original closeness of touch with nature and with each other which ought to be recoverable and utilisable, not in a crude or merely instinctive, but in a highly organised form. It seems to me that women ought to be trained to bring their characteristic powers to bear on this question. (From a letter by Welby to Giovanni Vailati, 1 March 1905)

'Racial sense,' 'primal sense,' 'primitive sense,' 'racial motherhood,' 'race motherhood,' 'mother-sense,' 'original sense,' 'native sense,' are all expressions that indicate a necessary condition for the evolution of the human race on both the ontogenetic and phylogenetic level. On 16 May 1904, a paper by Welby was delivered (by her assistant, Miss Carter) at the Sociological Society on Francis Galton's eugenics which, she emphasized citing Galton, not only dealt with 'all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race,' but also with 'those that develop them to the utmost advantage' (cf. Welby 1905, now included below). In light of her 'mother-sense,' described as sense beneath and beyond the separation among sexes, Welby reflected on the special responsibility of women to humanity and to life generally.

Eugenics was at the centre of public debate during the second half of the nineteenth century and provoked different reactions. A central idea addressed the necessity to prevent 'undesirable traits' from being passed from one generation to the next, and tended to be readily accepted. In fact, Galton's theory also caused unease because of the implications involved by this type of prevention and the eventual consequences

on a practical level. For example, among the voices conveying concern, was that of Herbert G. Wells who, in his book of 1905, *A Modern Utopia*, signaled the totalitarian threat in Galton's discourse. Wells imagined a modern version of Utopia and described his own vision of human society as follows:

[. . .] a modern Utopia must differ from the Utopias of any preceding age in being world-wide; it is not, therefore, to be the development of any special race or type of culture, as Plato's developed an Athenian-Spartan blend, or More, Tudor England. The modern Utopia is to be, before all things, synthetic. Politically and socially, as linguistically, we must suppose it a synthesis; politically it will be a synthesis of once widely different forms of government; socially and morally, a synthesis of a great variety of domestic traditions and ethical habits. Into the modern Utopia there must have entered the mental tendencies and origins that give our own world the polygamy of the Zulus and of Utah, the polyandry of Tibet, the latitudes of experiment permitted in the United States, and the divorceless wedlock of Comte. The tendency of all synthetic processes in matters of law and custom is to reduce and simplify the compulsory canon, to admit alternatives and freedoms; what were laws before become traditions of feeling and style, and in no matter will this be more apparent than in questions affecting the relations of the sexes. (Wells 2005 [1905]: 144–145)

In line with Welby, Ogden too developed the concept of eugenics in a positive sense. He introduced it into the context of his reflections on language and meaning in his paper 'The Progress of Significs,' 1911 (now in Ogden 1994), precisely in the section dedicated to 'Ambiguity: Irritants, Metaphors, Lubricants, Mendicants, Unfortunates, Interpretants.' Here, Ogden discussed the so-called 'doctrine of unfortunates,' an expression he introduced to indicate bad linguistic usage and the problem of linguistic ambiguity understood in a negative sense, that is, as generating confusion and sterile controversy. As a remedy, he proposed the 'eugenics of language,' what Welby called 'critique of language,' for the development of an adequate linguistic consciousness. Ogden had spent several days in Welby's library directly accessing all the materials she had collected and put at his disposal, and on this basis he was able to write his own well documented paper (see Ch. 7, below). In the words of Ogden:

There remains the question of words we ought not to make use of – the 'Unfortunates.' We may call this aspect of the case the 'Eugenics of Language.' A recent study of Anthropology (Edwin Sidney Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, 1909–1910) tells us that ignorance of the physiological fact of paternity was the almost invariable cause of stories of miraculous birth. This barbarous stage, which has its analogy for Language in Genesis, has elsewhere passed away.

Genesis must make way for Eugenics, and foreshadowing the conscious process for Language, Mr. Alfred Sidgwick (*Distinction and the Criticism of Belief*, 1892) has drawn attention under the title of 'spoil words' to terms which have become ambiguous beyond remedy. But having adumbrated the problem he leaves it unsolved. It is often said, as by Mill in his *Logic*, that their meaning must be restricted. But this I should urge is a great mistake. We really do but add one more to the existing confusions. Take the case of Professor Riehl. Having demonstrated to his satisfaction that Philosophy can legitimately include nothing outside Epistemology, he is constrained by some ingrained naughtiness to retain it. Needless to say, this procedure is calculated to cause as much confusion as Karl Pearson's usage of the term Metaphysics in *The Grammar of Science*, for he cannot refrain from employing the word now in its Historical Sense (when it includes the Metaphysics to

which he objects), and now in the restricted sense. It may sometimes indeed be expedient to indulge such naughtiness as a tactical move, as where Reinach's definition of Religion is employed in virtue of its educational effects.

It is not of course denied that context only can decide the degree of ambiguity attaching to any word. But for purposes of discussion especially, the Doctrine of Unfortunates is of the highest importance. Stress has not hitherto been laid on the principles involved; and therefore owing to the great practical value of the suggestion, I am inclined to emphasize it the more. These Unfortunates must be ruthlessly rejected on detection until such time as they can return with reputations untarnished. The words to which I refer are such, for the most part, as are discussed under the head of Appearance by Mr. Bradley – words too like 'Cause' (which Mach rejects), 'God' (an absurd word), 'Nature,' 'Metaphysics' (Karl Pearson, *op. cit.*), the gratuitous absurdity 'Rationalism,' and many another. According to [Walter Bowers] Pillsbury in his book *Attention* (1908), almost the whole discussion of the question of free-will hitherto has been simply a 'discussion about words.' 'God' and 'Nature' at any rate must go in the cleansing process, with many another comfortable word. In them we lose a worthy pair who helped advance sound parish views. It may seem sad thus to part with each vague abstraction. We marked, as Matthew Arnold puts it,

Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air
But when they came from bathing, thou wast
gone ('Scholar-Gypsy,' *Works*, p. 276)

But the poor things *must* go! Language *must* have a bath even against his will.

What would be lost by substituting for each the less ambiguous word which ought to stand ready for us, if the others meant anything to the user? The extra time taken would be amply repaid by that saved from fruitless controversy. (Ogden 1911, in Ogden 1994: 29–32)

Victor V. Branford, author of a series of books on sociology, and co-founder of the Sociological Society, commented on Welby's eugenic papers as follows:

I have been reading again your contribution to the discussion, and I like it more than ever. It seems to me packed with inspiration. If Galton does not like it, I shall think very much less of his insight than before. . . .

I had a call this afternoon from W. Macdonald,⁶ the critic whom his friends think the man of soundest and subtlest judgment of thought and style now Walter Pater and Matthew Arnold are gone. He is the man you may remember I quoted to you as admiring the grand simplicity of the child-like way in which Galton 'insulted the alienists and medical men.' Well, Macdonald began talking about the Galton meeting again, and said a great many interesting things – this among them – that 'Lady Welby's paper was the best thing at the meeting – she moved with such ease and freedom on a high plane amid complex ideas.' It is with the greater pleasure I report this very spontaneous appreciation by one whose judgment is almost unerring – for your communication received scant justice from some whom I thought would have seen its importance (V. V. Branford⁷ to Welby, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 188–189)

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6. [William Macdonald who later became one of V. W.'s chief helpers, taking part especially in the compilation of her last book *Significs and Language*. Cf. App. Note 2. (Cust 1931: 189, note)]. Note 2 contains an excerpt from an article by Macdonald published in *The Sociological Review*, April 1912.
 7. [Writer on Sociology, Civics, etc. Part founder of the Sociological Society. Author of *On the Origin of the Word Sociology, Theology, Poetry and Civics*, etc. (with P. Geddes) *Our Social Inheritance* (Cust 1931: 70)].

Welby and Galton corresponded between 1890 and 1898, and again between 1900 and 1911. This correspondence, too, is available in the Welby Collection, York University Archives. The following are extracts from a series of three letters by Welby to Galton, selected by Nina Cust and included in the volume *Other Dimensions*:

I cannot say how much our talk interested me. Once more I felt what a difference in clearness there was between your mind and Shadworth Hodgson's. Though a powerful and suggestive thinker, he is much more in bondage to inherited dogmas of language (which we treat as though it were some despotic *curia*!) than you are. Our talk made me long indeed for the day when metaphysics will so naturally go to science for guidance and verification that science will as a matter of course go to a purged metaphysics for help in realising the full significance of her labour and discoveries. With regard to what you said about vital identity needing one unique 'house' to enter: if I am the analogue of a melody I can enter a hundred different kinds of instruments and be 'played' by a million different performers and yet lose no identity worth preserving: the recognisable identity persists: and that is 'me'... (Welby to Galton,⁸ 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 75)

I suffered (as usual) horribly after my brief visit to London. But it was well worth while. You gave me – as you always do – just what I wanted. I was glad indeed that you agreed as to the usefulness of the cultivation in women (beginning such training in infancy) of that 'racial sense' which is my translation of 'subconsciousness' and would I think work for the results you aim at in Eugenics. It would make for the experimental discovery of how far leading ideas in the higher races, now called vaguely ethical, theological, religious, mythological, are really attempts to reproduce in impressive or awe-inspiring symbols the facts of evolving life or even the constitution of nature itself. If so, such attempts would of course often take grotesque forms and fail of their object, which is in essentials that of Eugenics. But their 'sub-conscious' impelling 'force' would, when recognised and rightly directed, be helping, through the generation of constantly rising – ascending – ideas, to do your work or raising the level of the race.

We were speaking of the meaning of 'expression.' Well, what can it be but the pressing out of us – by the mental pressure of that race which you are trying to redeem and to raise – that which is our human 'message.' Only here and everywhere the greatest danger is from mystery – mysticism. In ages of persecution this has often been protected science. Now it is protected fantasy and mythology. The mystic's *métier* is to mystify; and until we have concentrated attention from childhood on the supreme importance of the true value of sign we shall be liable to 'mystification' in unsuspected directions. . . . When that is done, however, the intolerable waste of resource now going on, with the consequent abasement of the prophet into the dogmatist, of the poet into the dreamer in paradox, of the teacher into the pedant, of faith into credulity, of order into mechanical sequence, will be ended. We have certainly as yet no words for the hope which thus dawns upon us. The super-natural and the magical pale before its divine nature, and darkness, as inscrutable mystery, flees before the inexorable eye of the signfician. . . . (Welby to Galton, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 196–197)

I was glad to find that Mr. Hobhouse agreed that the Psychological Research people begin at the wrong end. . . . The really startling thing is the 'personal' isolation of the human unit. One would suspect that the swing of nature's individualising energy is spending itself and that we are beginning to feel the effects of a reversal of tendency. If so, sociology is one of the many symptoms that in the future there will be more combined consciousness, more

8. [Founder of the School of Eugenics. Author of *Hereditary Genius*, *Natural Inheritance*, *Finger Prints*, *Essays in Eugenics*, etc. (Cust 1931: 75)].

personal grouping; so that we may possibly see the rise of ‘group genius,’ of a syndicate of the ablest men, all many-minded, able to pool their ability in a really common mind.

To that end Eugenics would contribute. For of course each member of such an ‘organism’ of ability, in becoming a parent, may foster either reversion to the single-mind type or advance like that of organic complexity in the biological ascent. Our present single-mind would be recognised as a single-celled form in that hierarchy. Such an idea would account e.g. for the tendency to form ‘sects’ and for the dominance over minds of a ‘Church.’ (Welby to Galton, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 207–208)

Through her correspondence, private discussions, unpublished writings and two short papers (now appended below), Welby contributed to the public debate of her day on eugenics. However, her perspective was completely different from Galton’s as is immediately obvious from the first letter of the series of three cited above from *Other Dimensions*, when she writes: ‘With regard to what you said about vital identity needing one unique “house” to enter: if I am the analogue of a melody I can enter a hundred different kinds of instruments and be “played” by a million different performers and yet lose no identity worth preserving.’ Welby was completely free in her practice and in her theory from the bonds of identity understood as eliminating the other, or sacrificing the other in any way, endorsing a view of humanity oriented by the logic of giving and hospitality towards the other in his absolute difference. Welby was interested in recovering the connection with mother-sense, and improving the conditions from which arise all forms of human expression and behaviour, verbal and nonverbal, all values. She promoted the development of a eugenic conscience which, from her significant perspective, meant a critical conscience, the necessary condition for improvement in human behaviour in all its aspects for the benefit of the community in its totality, the ‘open community’, as Charles Morris (1948) would say. With respect to the community, the single individual is considered at once in his/her uniqueness and as an instrument – also in the sense of a musical instrument variously resounding with the touch of different performers – at the service of the community itself:

It is to be hoped then that one result of the creation of a eugenic conscience will be a restoration of the human balance, bringing about an immensely increased power of revising familiar assumptions and thus of rightly interpreting experience and the natural world. This must make for the solution of pressing problems which at present cannot even be worthily stated. For there is no more significant sign of the present dead-lock resulting from the anomaly just indicated, than the general neglect of the question of effective expression, and therefore of its central value to us; that is, what we are content vaguely to call its meaning. (Welby 1906c, now appended)

Welby’s project for significs and Galton’s project for eugenics in reality developed in completely different directions, as Welby herself signalled with her critique of the Galtonian ideal of restriction and suppression. Both projects may be considered as interpretations of Darwinian evolutionary theory, but their general orientation, methods, and finalities are profoundly different. In fact, eugenics is oriented by the ideology of restriction, division, separation and even suppression of differences that do not respond to given pre-established ideals. As such, it is in total contrast with the ideals guiding significs, which instead favoured dialogic multiplicity and reciprocal empowerment. The horrific consequences in history that derive from the conscious or less conscious application of eugenics to human societies – from the treatment of African-Americans

in the United States to Nazi Germany during the first half of the twentieth century, through to ethnic cleansing programs in relatively recent times in Kurdistan, Rwanda and the Balkans are under the eyes of all. On the contrary, with signification, Welby wished to encourage a sense of global responsibility and social justice. Her view of humanity prefigures a tradition of thought that today theorizes the inevitability of diversity and variation, the need to install a dialogic relation among differences, therefore among singularities and specificities that are not indifferent to each other, a relation of reciprocal involvement and understanding of mutual support (cf. Bakhtin 1919, 1990, 1993; Levinas 1972, 1987a, 1987b; Ponzio 1995g, 2007).

Mother-sense, the racial mother-experience, conditions the human perception of time, and determines the capacity for otherness and transcendence. The image of the mother and her relation to her child is a metaphor of continuity. According to this logic the past must never be forgotten nor denied, but interpreted and reinterpreted with ever greater competence in light of newly acquired knowledge and experience. In ethical terms, mother-sense features the concept of responsibility in broad terms as responsibility towards the other, that is, responsibility without limits towards the other. Welby indeed theorized a relation between mother-sense and human responsibility that extends beyond the limits of closed identity – whether this refers to race, nation, religion, sex, gender, language, culture, class, and different value systems – to involve all individuals in their singularity. And, in fact, she critiqued ethnocentric and anthropocentric approaches, characteristic of the cultural trends of the time.

Welby acknowledged the pragmatist with a form of humanism deriving from his ‘maternal humanity,’ his mother-sense, while at once criticizing feminist movements of her day. She conceived a project for the emancipation and development of humanity in its wholeness, beginning with improvement of the expressive instruments at one’s disposal through an adequate education. In this light, feminist movements that focused exclusively on the rights of women, on the ‘cult of effeminacy,’ seemed reductive to her. She warned militant feminists against the danger of ‘monkeyish imitation’ of the male behaviour they were contesting, while the ‘ruling female,’ in turn, would soon be imitated by man, thereby favouring the reign of power and violence over good and beauty. Welby appreciated feminist movements with their commitment to values and practices that she endorsed, but at the same time she insisted on the broader vision for the development of a new humanism and improvement of interpersonal relations beyond division among the sexes and subjectivities. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the importance of feminist movements, Welby was eager to promote the principles of interrelatedness and mutual understanding among unique human beings in the interplay between totality and difference against the tendency to build barriers or exasperate separations.

The ‘woman question’ arises in the context of a discussion on eugenics in a letter exchange between 1904–1907 with the philosopher, G. Lowes Dickinson (‘Goldie’). To his comment that ‘Your Eugenics Paper touches very interesting matter, but is too brief to be very clear. I should like to talk to you on that, and other subjects. . . ’ (G. Lowes Dickinson to Welby, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 187), Welby replied with the following statement:

... Yes; of course the Paper is very much compressed. ... You know I consider myself mainly a provider of forgotten or neglected starting-points. ... If there is any value in what I say, it is just because it is the human voice welling out of the original human – and behind that, animal and plant – nature. It is just the biotic word. ... Am I cryptic? If so it is only because we have so woefully lost the germinal forms of consciousness. With regard to the true service – ethical and intellectual – of the woman, it is really appalling to think of the harm those so-called ‘advanced’ women (or most of them) are doing. ‘The day of the mere man is over’; ‘men need not fear that they will be placed under the yoke,’ and so on. Thus the whole subject becomes a threadbare and vulgar joke, and it seems more than ever obvious that women are of no intellectual account. They don’t even see the absurdity of their claims.

Meanwhile it is of no use ignoring the facts of biology as in certain directions all but a very few persistently do. For this attitude falsifies all our conceptions of history, our interpretations of record and, with that, of legend. We must get out of this static see-saw of unconscious fallacy in which we can never ‘get forrarder’ in understanding man and interpreting experience. We have got to begin at the very beginnings, while recognising that the idea of beginning is itself a secondary one. Now this is not a highly elaborate and abstract process. It is not an exploration of the Absolute or the Unknowable. It is a new sense of the simple and the elementary, and of the significance of these.

P. S. – I just add that it seems to me that the sort of men who back women in assuming a false position are yet more objectionable than the women, as well as more reactionary. (Welby to Dickinson, 1904–1907, in Cust 1931: 187–188)

More than just asserting identity, Welby proposed a broad and inclusive view of humanity in its plurality and diversity. It was important not to reproduce the very paradigms feminists were challenging, that exasperated divisions and separations between men and women. More than claiming the rights of any particular sexual gender, for Welby it was a question of recovering the feminine component in all human beings, therefore the relation of mutual empowerment between mother-sense, primal sense and the intellect, between sense and sign, or to evoke Julia Kristeva (1974, 1980), between the ‘symbolic’ (that is, official signs, the order of discourse) and the ‘semiotic’ (the a priori at the origin of the order of discourse, preceding the constitution of the subject, being, identity – the semiotic which, in Kristeva’s interpretation, is also connected to the maternal).

Significs is a project for the development of the expressive potential of humanity in all its aspects – biological, intellectual and ethical. Welby was also dedicated to social and political issues, in particular to the struggle for reform in various sectors of public life, from education to the various forms of exploitation and degradation of humanity. Relative to the problem of labour and the labour-force, she denounced the slave trade, child-labour, unhealthy labour conditions, unemployment and poverty. As she declared in a note in *What is Meaning?* (1983 [1903]: 42, n. 1), the mental attitude presupposing that any attempt at resistance and reform was futile, denounces its own futility. And in the context of her concern for human relations generally, Welby also turned her attention to the treatment reserved to women. In a letter to Schiller dated 2 October 1907, she denounced the abuse of male intellectual dominion over women, the process of masculinization, the fact that the human universe, in both its ontogenetic and phylogenetic expressions, is mostly overwhelmed by masculine discourse that represses the feminine. Welby observed that the whole social order was laid down, prescribed for women ‘on masculine lines only,’ causing loss of her original potential for critical knowledge, her ‘natural and complementary powers of interpretation and problem-solution, of sugges-

tion and correction' (Welby 1985a: ccl). In this connection, as well, she was committed to promoting reform in the social, legal, political and educational spheres.

The Welby Collection at the York University Archives includes the files 'Mother-sense' (1904–1910), 'Primal Sense' (1904–1910), and 'Significs – Eugenics' (1904–1907), a selection from which has been appended to the present chapter. Other unpublished papers on the topics in question are available in the archives and deserve more attention than can be afforded here.

6.4. Sign and subjectivity: Inner sign/outer sign

There is only one thing I can say with entire confidence. Those who seriously enter into the matter will find that the study to be called Significs is profoundly significant as to our very constitution, regarded as combining 'body and mind' in the supreme human union and developing through the primal sense and the creative and discursive intellect. (From a letter by Welby to Ella Stout, 12 April 1910)

Sign models, theories of meaning and conceptions of subjectivity are closely interrelated. In the framework of so-called 'decodification' or 'equal exchange semiotics,' the subject is conceived in terms of identity, at low degrees of otherness and dialogism (cf. Petrilli 2009b; Ponzio 1990, 1993a). Here the subject coincides perfectly with its own consciousness, controls its own signifying processes, and submits what it communicates to its own will as emitter and codifier. On the contrary, description of signifying processes in terms of open-ended infinite semiosis, interpretive processes structured by dialogic responsiveness, deferral from an interpreted sign to an interpretant sign, has determined a radically different view of the concepts of identity and subject. In the framework of interpretive semiotics, the logic of otherness dominates over signifying processes and the subject is no longer described as a set entity, defined prior to interpretation itself.

In the framework of semiotics of interpretation, otherness emerges at the very heart of identity, as a constitutive part of it. Identity is configured in the dialectic and dialogic dynamics of the relation between interpreted sign and interpretant sign in the thought processes of a single subject and in the relation among different subjects. According to this approach, identity, subjectivity, consciousness develop in open-ended semiotic processes, where the relation among signs is oriented by the logic of responsive understanding, dialogism and otherness. Both Peirce and Bakhtin thematize the self as constructed dialogically in interpretive/translative processes connecting the thought sign with interpreting signs or interpretants, in open semiotic chains. In such dynamics the self is always other, never definitively present to itself; and in such dynamics, it effectively subsists as self. Therefore, the I/other relation is not only articulated in the obvious sense of the relation among different subjects, but also emerges in the relation among the multiple selves forming 'individual' subjectivity (cf. Petrilli 1998e: 106–132, 141–163). All thought-signs are translated and interpreted by a subsequent thought-sign, in an open chain of deferrals among multiple selves forming the thought

processes of the same person. Knowledge and representation evolve in interpretive relations among different mental states in different instances. The subject is not separate and distinct from the interpretive processes that form it, it does not pre-exist with respect to sign-interpretant relations that precede it or follow it or take place inside it. The subject does not contain interpretive processes, it does not pre-exist with respect to interpretive processes, nor does it control them from the outside: the subject *is* the chain of sign-interpretant relations in which it recognizes itself as subject. Indeed, following this line of reasoning, experience of the other self, the self of another person is not a more complex problem than recognizing given sign-interpretant relations as ‘mine,’ those with which I become aware of myself. Consequently, writes Peirce, just as we say that a body is in motion, and not that motion is in a body, we ought to say that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us (see *CP* 5.289, n. 1).

Similar to Peirce, Welby, too, develops a generative and dynamic conception of human consciousness and subjectivity. She too describes mental processes of the human psyche in terms of ‘sign interpretation,’ maintaining that psychological-mental life develops through interpretive processes, indeed converges with them. The interest stimulated by a sign in an interpreter leads to the search for interpretants in which to recognize and enhance that sign’s significance for us. Welby underlined the fact that thought processes were studied in psychology under such categories as ‘Attention,’ ‘Perception,’ ‘Memory,’ but that these categories were not analyzed from the perspective of what they have in common, that is, meaning, nor in terms of the interpretive-translative processes forming the various levels of consciousness, as instead she proposed with her significant method.

In Welby’s view thought processes and language were not separate entities, thought was not simply covered in language, but rather thought and language presented two aspects of the same process, interpretation. Mental life is made of signs, verbal and nonverbal, of language. Consequently, studies in psychology must be grounded in the sign sciences, in the theory of meaning, language, in logic and in signification. Welby’s approach prefigures the research of scholars who came after her such as Bakhtin and his close collaborator Valentin N. Voloshinov, both of whom maintained that psychology was to be grounded in verbal-ideological theory (cf. Voloshinov 1927, 1929). For both Bakhtin and Welby the reality of the human psyche is linguistic-cultural-ethical reality, and more broadly sign reality, and as such calls for a sign-interpretive approach. From this perspective, the problem of the relation between individual psyche and cultural-ideological expression is also the problem of specifying and distinguishing between the concepts of ‘individual’ and ‘social,’ ‘private’ and ‘public,’ ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ in the global context of signifying processes.

The individual as a person and not simply as a biological entity is a social product. The content of the human individual psyche is as social as the language that expresses it and the language that engenders it. Bakhtin (-Voloshinov) (whose research reveals many affinities with the psycholinguistic approach developed by Vygotskij) identifies the specificity of the human psyche in the union between the biological organism and the system of socio-economic and cultural conditions which enable this organism to subsist and develop as a human being: the individual organism and external experience come together in the sign. On this basis a distinction can be made between the inner and outer dimension of sign and subjectivity. Beyond the biological-biographical dimension, beyond participation in social reality which necessarily implies the mediation of signs, the

specificity of the human individual as a sign is determined by its otherness. The inner sign and the outer sign are interconnected and interact dialogically in the objective process of historical-social relations. Individual consciousness is fundamentally social consciousness. The relation between thought and external reality is a relation mediated by social signs – this is true for the individual as much as for the collectivity. The inner psyche cannot be analyzed as a thing, as a separate and independent entity, but can only be understood and interpreted as a sign, or better as an expression of the relation among signs.

Consciousness (that is, conscious and unconscious) is made of verbal and nonverbal signs, of social-ideological material belonging to specific historical-economic and cultural systems. Individual awareness is essentially social awareness organized in the context of social relations. Whether a question of the single individual or of the collectivity, being expressions of the same semiotic continuum, the relation between language, thought and external reality is always mediated by signs. This point is clearly expressed by Voloshinov when he claims that the real, substantive roots of any given single individual cannot be traced within the boundaries of the single, individual organism, separately from other organisms, even when that utterance concerns the most private and intimate self:

Any motivation of one's behaviour, any instance of self-awareness (for self-awareness is always verbal, always a matter of finding some specifically suitable verbal complex) is an act of gauging oneself against some social norm, social evaluation – is, so to speak, the socialization of oneself and one's behaviour. In becoming aware of myself, I attempt to look at myself, as it were, through the eyes of another person, another representative of my social group, my class. Thus, self-consciousness, in the final analysis, always leads us to class consciousness, the reflection and specification of which it is in all its fundamental and essential respects. Here we have the objective roots of even the most personal and intimate reactions. (Voloshinov 1927, Eng. trans.: 86–87)

In reality there is no difference in principle between the 'unconscious,' 'conscious,' and 'social ideology' given that each of these terms is made of the same semiotic material: linguistic-ideological and historical-social material. The contents of the individual psyche, of the conscious and unconscious, the contents of culture, social ideology and official, institutionalized ideology are all part of the same generative process. They spring from a common source. The structures of the unconscious, the structures of oneiric work of the individual conscious and of more complex ideological forms are fundamentally the same. The different levels of conscious and unconscious as well as the different levels of ideology are the different levels of sign work, linguistic work and interpretive work (cf. Petrilli 2003–2004a, b). The unconscious described as unofficial conscious distinct from an official conscious is connected to official conscious on the basis of historically specified, dialectic relations (cf. Ponzio 1978: 78; Voloshinov 1927).

Welby's interest in the human psyche arose in relation to her studies on language, interpretation and meaning, in particular on the use and abuse of figurative language, therefore of metaphors and analogies. She developed a theory of subjectivity which can be associated to Peirce's approach and which, as has been argued, also prefigures Bakhtin's work in this area, even if their terminology differs. In her pamphlet of 1892, *The Use of the 'Inner' and 'Outer' in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, Welby insists on the importance of using language correctly to develop a correct theory

of the psyche. In particular, she insists on correct metaphorical usage, presenting a selection of excerpts accompanied by her critical comments on each, from the texts of various authors on problems relating to psychology. These excerpts are proposed as testimonies to the negative effects on theory and understanding in psychology of the incorrect use of figurative language. To exemplify her standpoint, she focused on a single metaphor and its several meaning nuances, used over the centuries to express the contrast between the psychical and the physical, the subjective and the objective, thought and thing, the conscious and the non-conscious. The metaphor in question is variously expressed through a series of oppositions, such as the following: 'internal and external,' 'inner and outer,' 'within and without,' 'inside and outside,' 'inward and outward,' 'interior and exterior,' 'self and non-self.' Welby observed that dichotomies such as these encourage the fallacy that mental life and material life are distinct from each other, that mental life is separate from the body. But let us report Welby's own words directly from the 'Introduction' to her pamphlet of 1892:

It has been suggested that the difficulties widely felt by the general reader in following psychological argument, especially at a time of rapid change and development like the present, might be somewhat lightened if the attention of Psychologists could be called to certain metaphorical usages as the source of needless perplexity and in some cases of wrong inference, especially among students unused to thinking in the abstract, and among outsiders interested in problems which beyond all others in science, touch us personally at every point.

Of these, only one example is dealt with in this little Pamphlet, as to attempt more would expand it into a book; besides which the author is keenly sensible of unfitness to do more than barely suggest with the unavoidable crudeness of the 'outsider' one branch of an enquiry which in competent hands would yield a rich harvest.

The metaphors of Internal and External, Inner and Outer, Within and Without, Inside and Outside, Inward and Outward, have been used at least for many centuries and very widely, to express the contrast between the psychical and the physical, the subjective and objective, thought and thing, the conscious and the non-conscious. If the history of this usage from the earliest days were carefully traced, it might surely throw light on some difficult points in psychological enquiries. Meanwhile it is respectfully suggested from the outsider's and general reader's (as well as the student's) point of view, that its present use in psychology often leads to confusion rather than to clearness, and that it could generally be dispensed with without inconvenience if not with positive advantage, since it is constantly added to words which already express the idea which it is supposed to convey.

A large number of cases in which this seems to hold good have been collected from the most various writers, and mainly from those distinguished in psychological research. A few of these are here presented, not of course as examples of defect in the writers concerned, but as instances of the danger inseparable from the use of this curiously inconsistent and anomalous metaphor. Some instances of implied or explicit protest against it are also given.

What makes its peculiarly confusing character is this: – In every other case in which spatial imagery is taken whereby to express mental fact, both terms which belong to each other (in the sense that the one implies the other as contrast or complement), are equally used. It is recognised that you cannot, so to speak, take any half-word to express a complete idea, while keeping its other half to express another of entirely different order. Take for instance the figure 'high and low.' Motive, aims, standards, &c., are figuratively equally the one or the other. So we have broad and narrow views, acute and obtuse perceptions, heavy and light hearts, and so on. We should see the point at once if we called the psychical

upward and the physical *downward*, or backward and forward respectively. Long and familiar usage makes us callous to the gratuitous absurdity of the inferences involved in the Outside and Inside metaphor. We might as well (and in some cases had better) call mind short and matter long; thought high and thing low; self narrow and not-self broad; consciousness obtuse and nature acute; the psychical thin and the physical thick, the soul light and the body heavy! (or in each case, the converse). In every such instance, each on occasion is both – or neither.

Again, the danger of this metaphor is twofold. First it places one part of ‘experience’ *inside* and the rest *outside* an entity unnamed, suggesting ideas like the walls of a house, the sides and lid of a box, the husk of a nut, the skin of an animal, or, in more abstract form, ideas of surface, outline, boundary, dividing point. But this is a view of humanity or personality which consistently taken would surely involve curious results. And as in using the antithesis of inner and outer we have omitted to provide for a ‘median layer,’ we are reduced to the level of pure abstraction. ‘Mind’ and ‘matter,’ ‘thought’ and ‘thing,’ embrace all that is, all reality, all that has meaning, importance or consequence. But to ‘us,’ mind and thought are Internal, we are bidden (or forbidden as the case may be) to ‘look within’ for them; matter and thing are External; we are to look without, or outwards, for them. As a fact (the only warrant for a *figure*), this last is all we can do – eyes don’t turn on a swivel!

Or do we take refuge in Self as the inner and Not-self as the outer? Then, what is Self the inside *of*, or inner *to*, or within? And what is Not-self outside of, outer to, – without? Are not both self and not-self thus without⁹ something else, – that is, Meaning? We appeal to Sense; but is there thus any sense in either? Lastly, should we tolerate such metaphors as a wall, a hull, a bag, a skin, for *that* to which there is an external and an internal world? If not, why not? And when we ignore all this, as the impatient reader would naturally have us do, as futile literalism, and plead that spatial relations must be carefully left out of account, what is left? Why, nothing at all! The expression is emptied of all significance and becomes merely a misleading excrescence which might surely be got rid of, and with it much common confusion, by a consensus among leading writers on Psychology no longer to use this figure except in the rare cases where no substitute is at present possible, and yet some word must be used.

Secondly, it actually reverses the evolutionary order, so far as that furnishes an analogue. And if language has wandered into such reversal, is it really neither possible nor worth while, even to realise and to warn unwary readers of the fact? Are we forced thus to cherish survivals of obsolete notion still powerful to sway the ordinary mind? As there seems now a general agreement that the presumption is everywhere against the entire independence of ‘mind and body,’ ought we not to use any obvious biological analogy rather than reverse it in linguistic usage?

In the case of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ there is surely just such an analogy in the ‘gastrula’ stage of embryonic development. To quote, as one of the best and most recent summaries of the subject, Prof. Romanes’ ‘Darwin and after Darwin,’ p. 141–142, – ‘The point to remember is, that in all cases a gastrula is an open sac composed of two layers of cells – the outer layer being called the ectoderm, and the inner the endoderm. They have also been called the animal layer and the vegetable layer, because it is the outer layer (ectoderm) that gives rise to all the organs of sensation and movement, viz., the skin, the nervous system, and the muscular system; while it is the inner layer (endoderm) that gives rise to all the organs of nutrition and reproduction. . . The outermost layer afterwards gives rise

9. [For ‘without’ has the additional drawback of an ambiguity not shared by ‘within:’ a proud privilege! (Welby 1892b: 5)].

to the epidermis with its various appendages, and also to the central nervous system with its organs of special sense. . . the innermost layer develops into the epithelium lining of the intestine, with its various appendages of liver, lungs, intestinal glands, &c.'

Leaving the analogy of the 'medium layer' as belonging to a further stage, especially as 'the exact mode of its derivation is still somewhat obscure,' the higher or 'animal' layer is the outer, the ectoderm, and the lower or 'vegetative' layer is the inner, the endoderm. The skin (and therefore the special senses, the original 'means of knowledge,') the nervous and muscular systems (means of thought and action, concept, word and deed; condition of 'conduct,') belong thus biologically to the outer world; while the digestive and reproductive systems belong to the inner world. The 'outer' is thus responsible for the brain and with it intellect and 'moral sense;' while the 'inner' is responsible for what is below the 'rational' level.

In short we may broadly say that if used at all, the 'inner' would be used in true analogy, of that side of life and nature which man shares with the whole animal kingdom (and in a more general sense the whole plant kingdom), the side of nutrition and reproduction; while the 'outer' would be reserved for that which in its higher or more complex forms is especially and preponderantly developed by man – reason and intellect. Thought is thus linked to the external and the outward: feeling to the internal and the inward. And curiously enough, though he makes no more allusion than anyone else to this biological analogy, Prof. Höffding affirms that 'mental, like bodily, vision is from the beginning directed outwards. The eye apprehends external objects, their colours and forms, and only by artificial, roundabout ways, sees itself and what is within itself. And even in respect of external objects, the eye is always naturally set for the vanishing point, the greatest distance of sight. While we are conscious of a certain effort when the eye has to accommodate itself to near objects, it is with a feeling of relief and ease that we direct the glance from nearer to more distant objects. In like manner external objects occupy our attention long before we think of the sensuous perception and conception through which alone external objects exist for us. . . The inner world of mind is denoted by symbols borrowed from the outer world of space.' ('Outlines of Psychology,' p. 2.)

But why not say 'tangible and visible objects;' and why add 'inner' to 'world of mind' or 'outer' to 'world of space?' Surely we might as well speak of the 'narrow' or 'low' world of mind and the 'wide' or 'high' world of space? As the terms are confessedly borrowed for mind from space must we not borrow 'outer' as well as 'inner' for expressing the mental, if the term is to have any relevance, point, or use, at all?

After all what do we rightly want to do in describing the mental or psychical world as Inner and the material or physical as Outer? Do we not want to emphasise distinction while preserving continuity or even identity; to give intension in the one case and extension in the other? Cannot these be equally secured by more abstract terms, like subjective and objective?

When we order Experience to fit such assumptions as that which some uses of 'inside' and 'outside,' 'within' and 'without' betray or create, it refuses to endorse false analogy and punishes us, it may be, by becoming inscrutable. Every question wrongly put, we are often admonished, is unanswerable. We must learn to put more reasonable questions. May it be that the general and 'time-honoured' use of this 'figure of speech' (with others not here touched upon) tends to falsify if ever so slightly the main issues of Psychology, and with them, those of philosophy, ethics, and indeed of science itself, to say nothing of the ideas of the 'practical' man who accepts them without criticism and acts upon them with disappointing if not disastrous results?

The following examples have words like 'external' and 'internal,' &c., in italics, in order easily to catch the eye. The first twenty quotations are from various witnesses to the difficulties liable to arise from the use of this often needless metaphor. A numbered

key with the references to Authors, volumes, pages &c., is printed, and can be separately obtained. It was thought better that the cases should be first taken simply on their own merits. (Welby 1892b: 3–7)

According to Welby mind and matter, self and not-self are different expressions of the same signifying/interpretive continuum. As she says in the excerpt above, ‘mind’ and ‘matter,’ ‘thought’ and ‘thing,’ embrace all that is, all reality, all that has meaning, importance or consequence. She returned to the problem of the relation between inner and outer, inside and outside, internal and external on several occasions in her writings, re-elaborating it under different aspects, as again in a paper of 1905 entitled ‘Genius’ (Box 30, file 43, ‘Significs,’ now appended to Ch. 7, this volume) where she analyzes the relation between mind and space: ‘Again, as long as we think of mind as inside and matter as outside, while making them antithetical, we shall be rightly punished for a flagrant self-contradiction. Matter is spatial, we say, and thought is not. But Inner and Outer are *both* spatial. It is as though we took ordinal and cardinal to express Number and its converse! But the Indicative cases are endless. Anyhow, let us realise the anarchy of thought we are so carefully creating.’ Welby recognized the principle of continuity between the life of the mind and objective, material life, while at the same time acknowledging the specificity of each, their different configurations and functions.

This concept is also stated clearly by Peirce when he maintains that

[...] every man inhabits two worlds. These are directly distinguishable by their different appearances. But the greatest difference between them, by far, is that one of these two worlds, the Inner World, exerts a comparatively slight compulsion upon us, though we can by direct efforts so slight as to be hardly noticeable, change it greatly, creating and destroying existent objects in it; while the other world, the Outer World, is full of irresistible compulsions for us, and we cannot modify it in the least, except by one peculiar kind of effort, muscular effort, and but very slightly even in that way. (CP 5.475)

As conscious and unconscious sign material, the inside, the self flourishes in the continuity of the interrelation with the other, the outside. As an interpretant it responds to something that is other, and in turn becomes an interpreted for other interpretants that respond to it in the chain of deferrals among interpretants. In this process, like all signs the self too acquires meaning value and becomes significant for the interpreter. Again, the term ‘inner’ can be used for biological being and ‘outer’ for social form, while interaction between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ thus understood can be described in terms of ‘social communication.’ As Welby writes in her introduction to *The Use of the ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, reported above:

After all what do we rightly want to do in describing the mental or psychical world as Inner and the material or physical as Outer? Do we not want to emphasise distinction while preserving continuity or even identity; to give intension in the one case and extension in the other? Cannot these be equally secured by more abstract terms, like subjective and objective? (Welby 1892b: 6).

According to Welby the human psyche does not form in isolation within the boundaries of the biological organism. Therefore the content of the psyche (self) does not develop inside the individual organism but outside (not-self), or better, in the relation with the outside. (On the relation between inner and outer see too the paper ‘Mental Biology,’ now in Section 4.14, above.) Similarly to Bakhtin(-Voloshinov), Welby aimed

to construct an objective psychology, a social psychology, describing inner experience, subjective consciousness, in terms of the relation with objective, outer experience. Nor does this mean to accept behaviourism in its mechanistic forms (for a thorough critique, see Bakhtin-Voloshinov). On the contrary, reference is to behaviourism as proposed by Charles Morris (1946, 1964), or by his master George H. Mead. Morris's 'behaviourism' can be associated with what Peirce understood with 'pragmati(ci)sm' and Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1985) with his theory of 'social practice,' though in the present context I can only signal this connection. (But see my Introduction to the monographic issue of the journal *Semiotica* entitled *Social Practice, Semiotics and the Sciences of Man: The Correspondence between Morris and Rossi-Landi*, Petrilli 1992a).

During Welby's day, psychology was at the centre of debate and emerging as a science in its own right. Her correspondence testifies to this, as we have seen in Chapter Two above from her exchanges with Mary Everest Boole. Unpublished writings by Welby in this area are available in two different files at the York University Archives: 'Psychology,' file 38, and 'Psychology and Significance,' file 39 (Box 29, WCYA). In addition to these files specifically dedicated to the subject, Welby deals with psychology and its relation to other disciplines, e.g. logic, in several writings distributed throughout the archives. An example is the paper entitled 'Coming to Grips. Significs and Psychology,' dated 6 March 1910, included in the file 'Significs' (now appended to Chapter 7, this volume). Here Welby underlines the importance of applying significs to psychology 'since here every problem it suggests and offers to solve, is one which depends on our power to interpret our own "selves" and minds.' Psychology is concerned with productive interpretation, verification and application of all forms of mental activity. As such it should become 'the *rational brain* of science,' says Welby, 'that which interprets, criticises, applies and develops its method.' Interpretation is described as 'the greatest of all our psychological functions,' the ultimate object of psychology. As such she attributes psychology with the function of co-ordinating all other sciences and spheres of human activity and expressivity and ultimately of enhancing our capacity for significance. It ensues that especially the educator must have a grounding in psychology, indeed ought 'to be psychologist before he is teacher.' Welby concludes this paper with the following considerations:

The psychologist surely should, at least on his own ground, set an example here, and warn the man of affairs, the man who puts the term 'practical' beyond all others, that the practical is 'practically' thinned and eviscerated by our neglect of its prime condition – the full human sense – on the highest as on the lowest level, of the import, the purport, the implication, the significance and thus the ultimate nature and value, of all actuality and worth. And he should thus especially inspire the 'practical' arbiters of our present destiny, the educational authorities, representing the Teachers in School and University, the 'Masters' – an ambitious term – of each succeeding generation. (Box 30, file 43, now appended to Ch. 7, below)

Significs is closely related to both psychology and education. Indeed, given its primary concern for interpretation, significs may be considered as a foundational, or better, transversal, science with respect to all others. As to the problem of subjectivity, Welby was intent upon evidencing the structural role of interpretation in the formation of the human psyche, that is, in conscious and unconscious life. Her theory of subjectivity is grounded in her theory of sign and meaning. Consequently, the capacity characteristic of signifying/interpretive processes to transcend boundaries and limits, which are the limits of the logic of closed identity, and of the order of discourse founded upon such

logic, is theorized in relation to the development of subjectivity. This approach implies to transcend the already given and to interrogate behaviour regulated by convention, rules and roles in light of the logic of otherness constitutive to sign and subject. In fact, the centrifugal forces of otherness orient the signifying and interpretive processes that form language, psyche, and cultural systems, determining the capacity to transcend their limits as determined by codes and conventions in set universes of discourse. The meaning of a live word, whether written or oral, is given by signifying value in terms of sense and significance beyond meaning as established by codes. In addition to identifying coded meaning, understanding implies interpretation of sense and significance which, in turn, involve social programs of behaviour. In other words, interpretation also involves understanding the sense according to which signs and behaviour are oriented. Meaning understood broadly as inclusive of sense and significance is always connected with the other with respect to that which is foreseen by codes and official social programs of behaviour. The term 'significance' clearly indicates this shift in sense.

Semiotics as traditionally practiced during the twentieth century, recognized as 'communication semiotics' (following Saussure, Buysens, Prieto) and 'signification semiotics' (Barthes 1964b), has tended to neglect important aspects of signifying and interpretive processes that, instead, have been developed by more recent trends. For example, in the final phase of his research, Barthes (1982) introduced the concept of 'third sense,' with which he alluded to a third dimension of sense also called '*signifiance*,' by contrast with '*signification*.' With her own theory of meaning, Victoria Welby had in fact already prefigured important aspects of twentieth century developments in studies on sign, language and subjectivity. The signifiical method rejects the binary view of meaning, which postulates two poles, 'literal' and 'figurative' meaning, and identifies a 'third region of meaning.' We know that Welby hypothesized a meaning triad, 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance,' and established correspondences with other signifying triads in relation to psychic processes, consciousness, and experience (see Appendix 4, 'Table of Triads'). Similarly to Mikhail M. Bakhtin, she critiqued linguistic and philosophical orientations based on the logic of identity, that tended towards the solution to problems of language and meaning in terms of monologism, monoglossia, univocality. Instead, she thematized ambiguity, ambivalence, plasticity, transcendence with respect to convention and official consciousness, the plurality of different languages as positive and creative dimensions of signifying processes. Like Bakhtin after her, she critiqued descriptive approaches to semantics, analyses focusing on language as a pre-established abstract system. In this type of critical framework, Bakhtin proposed his 'metalinguistics,' and Welby her 'significs.' (A current development of this approach is 'semioethics,' see Chapters 3, 4 and 5, above).

All this tells us that the history of the sign sciences is not unilinear (but this is true of any science). What appears to be *the* line of development, *the* tradition of thought, is only one among various possible developments, having dominated only because the others were neglected for one reason or another. The present volume is dedicated to Welby and signifies a line of research that still today is not well known despite its having prefigured some of the most promising contemporary approaches to sign and language studies now available. Of course, many are the significant authors in history whose work was obscured during their life-time, not least of all Bakhtin and Peirce. Charles Morris is mainly known for his two books, *Foundations of the Theory of Sign*, 1938, and *Signs, Language and Behavior*, 1946. Yet he authored a series of other important books that

have been almost completely neglected, such as *Varieties of Human Value*, 1956, and *Signification and Significance*, 1964, in which he too explicitly works on the relation between signs and values.

Beyond direct relations established by Welby in real life with important personalities of her time, ideal relations can also be established with scholars she had never met, as in the case of Bakhtin. Comparing thought systems helps understand each in the light of the other as much as they may be distant in chronotopical terms. The meaning implications of each system can be enhanced and developed by translating from one to the other, thereby developing a global perspective on problems still at the heart of debate on sign, language, and subjectivity. Moreover, to compare Welby's theoretical horizon with Bakhtin's for example, is an exercise in applying the signifi- cal method, which means to translate signs from one field of discourse to another across boundaries and divisions, as a means of verifying and amplifying knowledge.

6.5. The self and its masks. Welby's unpublished manuscripts (1903–1910)

Eugenics in fact ultimately means or ought to mean the fact that the generation of selves must subserve the interests of pure and permanent because 'impregnable' Idents. Surely we shall not much longer be content with an Identity which rests on or causes a grammatical confusion between what we are and thus cannot *have*, or have and thus cannot *be*. (Welby from an untitled paper dated 23 September 1909, WCYA, now this volume)

The Welby Collection includes the file 'I and Self' (Box 27, file 13) dedicated to the problem of subjectivity with texts written between 1903 to 1910, from which a selection has been appended to the present chapter. This file includes an undated typescript of approximately 15 pages entitled 'The I and the Self' and a series of 'essaylets' (from one to three pages) on the following subjects (not all texts bear a title): 'The "Sub-Conscious";', 'I and Self,' 'Conscious (brain-born) Identity,' 'Man and Superman,' 'Religion as Moral Eugenics,' 'What is Selfishness? Inverted Personality,' 'Who are we and what have we?,' 'Is Selfishness Man's Ideal?.' Welby was always updated on latest findings in all spheres of research as testified by her notes and reflections on works by numerous authors,¹⁰ also available in the archives. In her studies on subjectivity, she deliberately concentrated on English linguistic usage with the intention of proceeding to comparison with other languages in a subsequent phase of her research. File 13 also includes samples

10. These include F. C. S. Schiller, A. E. Taylor, F. Tilly, F. H. Bradley, F. W. H. Myers, J. Royce, G. W. F. Hegel, H. Sidgwick, R. B. Arnold, O. Lodge, J. Dewey, C. Read, E. Carpenter, C. A. Strong, H. R. Marshall, B. Russell, G. Santayana, H. M. Stanley, H. Sturt, G. F. Stout, J. G. Fichte. Welby read widely with a special interest in such areas as philosophy, theory of mind, theory of knowledge, mathematics, metaphysics, theory of religion, anthropology, psychology, sociology and life sciences.

from her literary writing: a parable in the form of 'A Dialogue,' a short story entitled 'Somebody, Nobody, Anybody, Ownbody,' and an untitled poem dated January 1911. All are dedicated to the problem of the relation between I and self.

Welby focussed on the meaning implications of such expressions as 'conscious identity,' 'conscious being,' 'human identity'. Among other things, coming to awareness implies to become aware of one's own otherness beyond the otherness of others. In her analysis of the problem of subjectivity, Welby made an important distinction between 'I' and 'self' describing the complex and articulated relation between these terms. As it emerges from the dialogic relation among its parts, identity of the subject is modelled in this relation as multiplex, plurifaceted and plurivocal identity. What Welby called 'I,' or introducing a neologism, 'Ident' (from which derives the adjective 'identic') develops in the relation with 'self' or, better, with the multiple *selves* forming the different faces of the 'Ident.' Consequently, in Welby's analysis otherness clearly emerges as a necessary condition for the constitution of subjectivity. Indeed, a margin of distancing, of otherness is necessary for there to be a relation between the terms 'I' and 'self.' In Welby's view, ethics itself is founded in the relation of otherness and non-correspondence between I and self (23 November 1907).

Otherness is not only involved in the relation between oneself and the other from self, but also in the relation between I and self and among the many selves constituting subjectivity. Welby observes that English idiom presents a distinction, that is generally neglected, between 'what I am' and 'what I have' or 'what I own, possess.' The common expressions 'I am not my self,' 'He is not himself' (more correctly 'his self'), are wrongly used to indicate a state of disorientation of self, the fact that 'my self does not correctly express or represent me.' In Welby's words: 'But of course *we* are not ultimately our selves or anything that can properly be called *ours*. We ought to say, 'My self, in that act, far from *being*, betrayed Me: hence I repudiate and am ashamed of that traitor who misrepresents Me' (23 September 1909). In reality, says Welby, the expression 'I am not my self' states a fact, that I and self do not converge, I and self are not in a relation of perfect correspondence or identification. I am not nor ever can be self. In her description of the distancing between the various parts that constitute subjectivity, Welby evoked the ancient use of the word 'person' to refer to the masks of the actor. The I or Ident may be associated with 'mother-sense,' the matrix, while the self, or *person*, or mask may be considered as one of its possible expressions or realizations or, as Welby says, 'representations.'

The I or Ident is at once the generative center of multiple *selves* and a multiplicity inhabiting each one of our selves. The I or Ident on the level of ontogenesis corresponds to mother-sense in terms of phylogenesis, the originating, generative source of all forms of responsivity and mental power, whether analytical or constructive, calling the human being not only to react but to create. Self is an expression of the I, the speaker, the means through which the Ident works, through which it operates. I and self do not converge. To be implies to become a nucleus of originating – though not original – power, to become aware of one's signifying potential and of one's worth both phylogenetically and ontogenetically. Personal pronouns of the series I/we/you/they concern 'our sense of universal order, our sense of mentally creative potency, our sense of worth as well as of reality, before all and above all our sense of sign and its signification, its natural significance and its intentional significance – its Meaning' ('The I and the Self,' undated manuscript). Identity derives from the relation of dialogical otherness among the

multiple selves constitutive of the *Ident*, between one's *self*, or rather one's *selves*, and one's *Ident*. In line with scientific progress of the time, Welby theorized a dynamic and generative view of the subject, affirming that we are in our various selves, but do not identify with any one of them, adding that 'the greatest misfortune that can happen to a man is to be identified (except reflexively, that is as whole and part) with his self [...] As *We* are never *It* we are never *Self*. We only *have* what is both' ('The I and the Self,' undated manuscript). Subjectivity is the ongoing, generative and dynamic outcome of the dialectic and dialogic relation of distancing and differentiation of the *self* with respect to the *I*. As she says in the same paper: 'selves are the product of *Identic*, Somatic activity, its structure the product of its *Function*.' The role or function of 'I' or 'we' is determined structurally in the relation of distancing and deferral with respect to self. 'I' with its multiple selves belongs to 'movement' and 'function'; 'self' belongs to matter and 'structure' (see also the paper dated 26 November 1906, 'I and Self'). Again, as we noted earlier in this chapter, this echoes Peirce's suggestion that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us (*CP* 5.289, n. 1). The relation between I and self as theorized by Welby, between the sign that the I is and its interpretants, is not a relation of static equality, reduction of differences, but rather of non correspondence, deferral, difference and reciprocal otherness. Subjectivity is created in the dialogic interrelation among its parts which defer to each other and beyond in the relation to the outside world. The role or function of I/we is determined structurally in the relation of distancing and deferral with respect to self. The I, with its multiple selves, belongs to the order of 'motion' and 'function' and therefore cannot be self-regarding; the self belongs to 'matter' and 'structure' and, therefore, says Welby, it is just there (see 'I and Self,' November 26, 1906). For both Peirce and Welby identity is becoming, acting, doing, giving.

Generative, dynamic identity, *Ident*, is such also by virtue of its triadic character according to the model father-mother-child, impulse-development-outcome, question-answer-act, which describes 'the process as the condition of true culmination, of attainment of an ascending ideal of which Nature is the parable as she is the exemplar.' Conscious identity represents the highest point of development in evolutionary processes insofar as it rises to the interpretation of all things, in ultimate analysis, of significance in the universe (21 January 1910, untitled typescript).

The relation between I and self, between the sign and its interpretants, is not of equality, convergence, reduction of differences. Rather the relation between I and self, sign and interpretant is a relation of deferral, reciprocal otherness, a relation of dialogism. As with Peirce, for Welby, too, otherness is not external to the sign, it is not mechanically opposed to identity, subjectivity, the interpreting thought, but rather it is constitutive of the sign, internal to it. Otherness is present in the very process through which subjective identity is constituted, it is the internal condition, the very modality of existence of subjectivity. For this reason the relation to other I's is not different from the relation with internal otherness, continuously experimented by the I, with the multiple others, the multiple selves in dialogue with each other through which the I develops dialectically and dialogically as I.

Welby underlines the acritical use of the term 'personality' among scholars of the subject: this expression is wrongly conflated with the concept of identity, blurring the distinction between what I 'am' and what I 'have'; just as spatial and numerical analogies are used acritically (the sub- and the supra-liminal, multiple personality, etc.), mixed with primitive, animistic and spiritualistic images interpreted literally, emptied of all

justification and significance. The English language foresees a terminological distinction between 'person' (which, among other things, is free from pejorative associations connected with self), to which are correlated such terms as 'personal' and 'personality,' and 'self' which, instead, does not have a correlate in 'selfal' or 'selfality.' Moreover, to express the status of self and imitating the term 'embodied,' Welby also proposed the term *inselfed*. 'Person' and 'personality' are on the side of 'self' and therefore are not synonyms of 'I' or 'identity.' On establishing a distinction between the I and the self, Welby clarifies that 'the self is included in "I", *but not conversely*. [...] The race like the individual *has* a Self because it *is* an I' ('The I and the Self,' undated manuscript). As much as a distinction is made between I and self on a terminological plane, this is not always clearly theorized by the specialists. In fact, Welby observes that the distinction between 'I' and 'self,' and thus between 'to be' and 'to have,' between 'what I am' and 'what I have,' between 'owner' and 'owned,' 'observer' and 'observed' is either theorized inconsistently or lacking altogether. The self is a representation of the I, part of the I. The self is what we have and therefore cannot be. Instead, the I is what we are and consequently alludes to what we cannot possess. My 'I' belongs to others just as 'mine' belongs to (but does not converge with) 'me.'

The potential for responsivity towards the other, for dialogic interrelation, creativity and critique is restricted when the logic of identity, therefore monologism, convention, the order of discourse, ontological being prevail. On the contrary, as observed elsewhere, the properly human lies in the capacity for maximum opening and orientation towards the other. The places of discourse cited by Welby as examples of this capacity realized to the utmost degree, include the discourse of love and passion, altruistic love, creativity of the genius in scientific discovery, literary discourse.¹¹ All such places harbour the unknown, the elusive unfolding in the interplay between veiling and unveiling sign processes. The other discussed by Welby is both the other *of me* constitutive of my own identity and the other external *from me* which also concerns and involves me, in a relation where the other is for me and the I is for the other. Subjectivity develops in the tension between the centrifugal and centripetal forces of expressive processes, between the forces of centralization and decentralization, accretion and dispersion:

[...] the language of passion, counted, by science or the man in the street, as 'mere poetry' or merely fanciful, is in truth exact. It is a case of this or the other Self; and we are more interested in the other, *still ours*, because the radiating force is the central one: we only accrete that we may disperse by radiation: we only store up that we may dispense, as the very brain process shows. Thus it can only be insisted that the energy we call 'I' is 'unknowable,' *because it is the knower*. All we know in the ordinary sense is what in some sense is ours. Our swarm, flock, herd, family, tribe, clan, body, self, with its soul and spirit, its ghost and wraith, its ancestry and progeny, its history (its past) and its destiny. All belongings—all ours! Never *us*! We are here *Insselfed* just as we are *Embodied*. As *Embodied* our chief moral duties are hygienic. As *Insselfed* they are social and (in, for Us, an elementary sense) emotional, ethical, intellectual. ('The I and the Self,' undated typescript)

In Welby's description, the I or Ident is centrifugal energy, while the self is centripetal. The I tends to the negation of self, it is understood in terms of becoming, acting, giving,

11. Let us remember that Welby also liked to elaborate her theoretical reflections in literary genres, or in Bakhtinian terminology 'secondary genres'—poetry, stories, dialogues, parables, aphorisms, etc.

rather than of receiving, preserving, being selfish. The ideal connection between Welby and Bakhtin is immediate when the latter theorizes the sign, language, the subject in terms of sign material and of the relation between ‘centripetal forces’ and ‘centrifugal forces,’ the processes of ‘centralization’ and ‘decentralization,’ ‘unification’ and ‘disunification.’ In such dynamics is determined the (partial) recognizability of sign and subject and at once their evasiveness, plurivocality, uniqueness, as they emerge in the space of the ephemeral, in a balance that is always uncertain, unstable among forces continuously struggling with each other (see Bakhtin 1975).

Welby’s theory of subjectivity is founded in theory of sign and meaning. And from this perspective as well, she shares a similar position not only to Bakhtin but also to Peirce, both exponents of so-called ‘semiotics of interpretation,’ and may also be identified as the ‘semiotics of significance.’ In fact, an important aspect of Peirce’s sign theory is the contribution that may come from it for a redefinition of the subject despite the lack of a systematic corpus of writings addressing the issue. In Peirce’s account, the human being, the self, mind and language are made of verbal and nonverbal sign activity. Consequently, subjectivity is generated in open-ended semiotic processes unfolding in the dynamics of the relation between utterance and interpretation. As Peirce argues, ‘men and words reciprocally educate each other; each increase of a man’s information involves and is involved by, a corresponding increase of a word’s information’ (CP 5.313). And even more explicitly:

there is no element whatever of man’s consciousness which has not something corresponding to it in the word; [...]. It is that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an *external* sign, proves that man is an external sign. That it is to say, the man and the external sign are identical, in the same sense in which the words *homo* and *man* are identical. Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought. (CP 5.314)

Insofar as it is a sign, that is, a sign in becoming, the subject emerges as a dialogic and relational entity, that is, an open subject, an ongoing process in the intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogic interrelationship with other signs. The dialogic conception of thought and subjectivity is already traceable in Peirce’s early writings and was developed throughout the course of his research. Insofar as we are dealing with signs, the subject’s boundaries are not defined once and for all and can only be traced in the dialogic encounter with other signs, with other subjects. Therefore, in Peirce’s account, and similar to Welby, the subject (which is made of sign material, verbal and nonverbal) may also be considered as an open and dynamic set of relations among parts in dialogue:

Two things here are all-important to assure oneself of and to remember. The first is that a person is not absolutely an individual. His thoughts are what he is ‘saying to himself,’ that is, is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time. When one reasons, it is that critical self that one is trying to persuade; and all thought whatsoever is a sign, and is mostly of the nature of language. The second thing to remember is that the man’s circle of society (however widely or narrowly this phrase may be understood), is a sort of loosely compacted person, in some respect of higher rank than the person of an individual organism. (CP 5.421)

Evoking the language of theatre, Peirce speaks of a ‘loosely compacted person,’ Welby speaks of a ‘company of selves.’ In her effort to convey the idea of the multiple parts that

constitute subjectivity, Welby recalled the ancient Greek meaning of the term 'person' used to indicate the actor's mask. Given that the term 'person' is on the same line as self, it does not indicate what 'is,' 'original being' which, if anything, includes the personal. 'Person' indicates the mask that enables us to play our part on the stage of the world. What counts is the character we impersonate, the part an actor *plays* or *acts* (in a play of parts), in a triadic relation involving 1) the mask, 2) the actor, and 3) the character acted:

Now the 'Actor's mask' (practically what we now call his make-up) gives us a valuable lesson. The actor has many such masks ready to be assumed, as he plays various parts on the stage of the world. And the idea involves a notable triad: you have (1) the mask, (2) the actor, (3) the character acted. This last again as a rule is 'created': does not actually exist in the world as a definite human Unit. In truth one has a company of selves. Some may be shelled off and left behind: some may be starved: some may be disciplined and trained: one may be our efficient ambassador or viceroy. But no one of our Selves can be wholly Us. We do not yet know who We are and still less who We might, in Identical Recognition, become. The Ident is still a secret. ('I and Self,' 1 December 1906)

According to Welby, acritical use of the term 'personality' denounces the dangerous tendency to exalt *self*, establishing a relation of substitution, usurpation, identification between self and I, instead of a relation of reciprocal otherness, distancing and differentiation of self with respect to I. In reality, self does not converge with I but is one of its representations, an opening, a means, an instrument, a modality, and never an end in itself (see also 7 July 1907).

In accordance with a dynamic and generative conception of life as illustrated by scientific research of her day and with specific reference to human subjectivity, Welby maintained that the Ident is energy, a prime mover which manifests itself in the *self*, which energizes the self, indeed our multiple and ephemeral selves. In a fashion similar to the body, the *self*, for which Welby also proposes the term *ephemeron*, is mortal, ephemeral. Instead, the I tends towards immortality beyond the mortality of the body and of the self. The I converges with the activity of giving, beyond the logic of equal exchange, beyond possession ('I and self,' 9 January 1910). Also, as understood by Welby, the Ident refers to that part of subjectivity which resists and is other with respect to self in the continuous flux of signifying processes whose rhythm is beaten out in the succession, superimposition, multiplication, and cohabitation of our multiple *selves*. Formed in this way, identity is not a unit, a numerical individual, the addition of its parts, but something more – an excess endowed with logical value, says Welby, which foresees the logic of creativity and innovation:

The 'I' *effectively IS*; since it belongs to the creative element of the universe, the energy of conception which includes the begetter and is both reproducer and evolvant (or evolutant?). Thus the I is one with the active and with the 'actor' who can and does impersonate and play an inexhaustible variety of persons and parts, while remaining inviolably identical and illimitably representative. ('I and self,' 23 November 1907)

Insofar as it is a relation among different terms, between to be and to have, between what one is and what one has, identity in Welby's view cannot be described in terms of reflexive identity, if not partially. True human identity is not reflexive, given that I does not coincide with any of one's selves. If anything, analogous to evolutionary processes in general, human identity develops by ascending degrees in complexity. In

an untitled typescript of 17 February 1907, Welby repeats her critique of the concept of reflexive identity, as of various interpretations of the relation between the ‘seer’ and the ‘seen,’ between ‘subject’ and ‘object,’ and of derivative theories concerning the concept of introspection: ‘we are always talking of an impossible Introspection; we are always discussing our “views” of our “inner” life.’ And again in a text of 3 July 1908: ‘On all that in any sense is *mine* I can return, and thus study and discuss it. But never can I reflect upon that which reflects. Never can I discuss that which alone discusses, having conceived. *Self*-examination, yes. But I-examination has no sense. It is even verbally non-sense.’ Reflexive identity reflects upon all that which belongs to the I, on every part of the body and self, except for the implication of I, that which Welby calls ‘itsame’ (which can never be insofar as we have, but can never be *Isame*) (3 October 1908).

Welby theorizes the need for a critique of language and for the development of a critical linguistic conscience (see Ch. 4, above). Unconscious linguistic usage can lead to ambiguity in the negative sense of confusion, as when the term self is used with contradictory meanings, that is, either to praise self or to deprecate self in moral and intellectual terms, as in the expressions ‘self-occupied,’ ‘self-complacent,’ ‘self-assertive.’ In fact, the latter qualify the *egotist*, indicating the condition of being *selfish*, of being univocally oriented towards *self*, the *self-absorbed individual*. Like Peirce who, in a paper of 1893 entitled ‘Evolutionary Love’, maintains that ‘self-love is no love’ (CP 6.288), the ultimate ‘sin,’ Welby (in ‘Who ARE We and What HAVE We?’, 9 April 1910) warns of, ‘giving our selves leave to demand and secure gratification, pleasure, ease, for their own sake: to be greedy of welfare at some human expense,’ of allowing self to transform *selfness* into *selfishness*. Though the action of the centripetal forces of *self* may be necessary to ‘self-preservation *here*,’ to ‘survival *now*,’ the condition of being oriented univocally towards self as an end in itself generally defeats evolutionary development to the extent that it generates ‘self-regarding selfishness.’ And having said this, Welby also claims that

Egotism, however, properly speaking is impossible: I cannot love or centre upon I, for I am essentially That which radiates: that which IS the knowing, living, activity: it is only selfism that we mean; not egoism. The Me may be considered for some purposes as a sort of bridge between the two; and makes up that confused and inconsistent whole which we call personality and bodily presence. (‘The I and the Self,’ undated typescript entitled)

Hedonist ethics, the cult of *self*, gratification of *self*, concentration *on* self, love of *self* (which on Welby’s account described dominant ideology of the time) only represents a phase in the development of human consciousness and mental purview and is to be accepted for what it is: a phase and by no means an end. Hedonism implies a reduction of the vastness of the cosmos to the status of a mere annex of the planetary egoist. In this situation ‘conscious mind’ tends to converge with self according to a monologic and monolithic conception of identity, with a reduction of differences in the relation between I and self where self tends to prevaricate over I. By contrast, the ‘supreme function of the Ident’s *self*,’ says Welby, is to put itself at the service of the Ident and to collaborate in generating, knowing, serving, mastering and transfiguring our actual and possible worlds; the mission of our selves being ‘to master the worlds for Identity in difference [. . .]. The Ident is one in all, but also All in each. The Ident’s name is first multiplex –

We, Us, then complex, I, Me. That Ident has, possesses, works through – a self, or even many selves' ('I and Self,' 19 January 1910).

In a paper of 13 March 1910 entitled 'What is Selfishness? Inverted Personality,' Welby places such values as thought, love, faith, truth, honour on the side of the I, and what she considers as distortions and mockeries, such values as violence, cunning, self-exaltation on the side of the self when it tends to usurp the I. The self that aims to replace the I is selfish; yet, a relation of otherness must be maintained between the I and the self in which the self must not overwhelm the I, but on the contrary respond to it on the basis of listening, as in the relation between the actor and the character interpreted by the actor. We must play our part in the drama of life but never strive to be the self we have and die a death not ours: 'The true death is a birth as the true birth is a death.'

Welby theorizes the I's capacity to objectify the self, the observer's capacity to objectify the observed, and maintains that the I, the Ident cannot be at once observer and observed. The I can objectify the self, keep it at a distance, closely scrutinize it, and the I in turn can be scrutinized and objectified in the interplay of different points of view and perspectives, while at once evading any possibility of total objectification:

No man ever observed the Man, the I to whom his Self belongs, but only his Self. Why? Because 'he, I, you, they, we, us,' that is, *Man*, is the Observer. He Observes his self because he can 'hold this at arm's length'; he can make it the object of his thought, his scrutiny, his analysis, his judgment. But he can never fully be at once observer and observed, because this is one of the processes which involve a distinction inconsistent with complete identity. There is such a distinction between I and my – anything. There is such a distinction between whole and part. But there is none between I and I. That is, Identity itself in its purest form *as well as everything you try to say about it*, becomes an 'identical proposition.' ('The I and the Self,' undated typescript)

The answer to the questions 'Who are we?,' 'What are our selves?' involves continuous deferral among the multiple selves constituting subjectivity in the dialectical interrelation between distinction and unity. Welby indicates the bad use of terminology as one of the main causes for confusion about such issues: '*We have no Identical vocabulary, only a Selfward one*' (26 November 1906). To understand what we are, requires a point of view that is other, external, the capacity for interrogation, and, therefore, in expressive terms, use of such linguistic expedients as paradox, contradiction, irony, comicality, word play. As Welby says, in the attempt to transcend the limits of language, false expression and linguistic traps, the serious expression 'I who am' should be replaced by the comical question 'Who am I?' ('The I and the Self,' undated typescript; see also 'Conscious Being, Conscious Identity,' June 1907). We all remain a 'citadel of secrecy' with respect to each other, in relations where intercourse is tentative and experimental; and the I by virtue of its constitutive otherness, in which is determined its uniqueness, evades possession (3 July 1908). As she had already claimed in 1906: 'We do not yet know who We are and still less who We might, in Identical Recognition, become. The Ident is still a secret' ('I and Self,' 1 December 1906).

In 'The "Sub-Conscious"' (25 January 1906) Welby criticizes use of the prefix 'sub' placed in front of 'conscious' to the extent that it communicates the idea of something lying underneath, something inferior, or marginal, a fringe as in the word 'suburban.' Use of the prefix 'sub' suggests that the conscious is made of a surface with an inferior stratum beneath it. This also emerges with the word 'subject,' but even more so with 'sub-

consciousness.’ In fact, this term underlines the fact that consciousness is limited to that which is obvious, direct, while the great experience, that is, experience pregnant with significance, experience and knowledge branching from mother-sense, is left aside or relegated to the mad, the fanatic, the cheat, the deceiver, etc. Welby proposes a different spatial figure: tridimensional consciousness:

But suppose we try another type of inevitable figure, another form of the consistent spatial appeal? Suppose we assume that consciousness, like our space, has three dimensions? Then what we call that will in one context be the line and in the fuller sense the surface. But the awareness which is our full heritage, – that which creates the Ideal, prompts both speculation and criticism, suggests research, inference, practical application, will be recognised as the cube: that alone will have the volume which consciousness must involve. (‘The “Sub-Conscious”,’ 25 January 1906)

It is as though we are not yet ready to recognize the full volume of conscious heritage, the cubic character of consciousness. As Welby argues in the same text, it is necessary to ‘thicken our layer and to bring more of the area of response into volitional effect and logical control.’ Apparent incursions by mysterious forces into the life of human consciousness imply the action of some sort of atavistic knowledge which we neither understand nor control. Welby hypothesizes that it is a question of ‘instinctive knowledge,’ that is, racial knowledge which, however, is misinterpreted and therefore misused. Conscious being may be placed on the side of identity, says Welby, understood in a positive sense as plurality, community of selves, otherness. Otherness is the logic thanks to which identity understood as a community of selves is generated. The Ident as the resulting unit is dialectical and open with respect to the sum total of its parts, its multiple selves, in relation to which indeed it represents an overflow, an excess value. The I as a unit is dialectical, open and generative:

In order to Be – and really to Be is to be Given – what is impotent for fertile being IS not; there *must* be overflow, there must be in some sense gift. True that in the arithmetical sense the bare unit may be added to and may multiply. But that is just because it has no content and no identity, as it has no fertility. Full Identity is generative, is a Giver of its very self. (11 December 1906, untitled typescript)

From the perspective of generative identity, divisible but not divided I, distinct but not isolated, use of the term ‘individual’ does not convey the idea of the combination between ‘I am’ and ‘I have’ and therefore is not adequate. ‘Individual’ is reductive with respect to ‘conscious being’ considered in its complexity, as results from use of the negative prefix in: ‘It is the negative, the mere protest (as here the prefix *In-* betrays) against what we might be but must not be. Out of the Not nothing comes’ (11 December 1906, untitled typescript; see also ‘I and Self,’ 1 December 1906). The concept of ‘individuality’ – Welby proposes the term ‘dividuality,’ – to which she juxtaposes ‘personality,’ refers to a negligible quantity and is denied the possibility of a qualitative leap. Nor is the concept of ‘social’ considered acceptable by Welby, grounded as it is in the concept of ‘individual’ thus understood, as its complement or mere multiple. As an isolated unit the individual is incapable of generative creativity:

But if not typically in-dividual, what are we? *Identical*; and that in a sense compared to which all other identity is poor. We have here the Ident who is capable of indefinite enrichment; in whom indeed enrichment is summed up. There are many grades of Identity.

That attained so far by humanity is the highest that man knows, except That which he infers; That which he knows that he Signifies or at least Symbolises. He must never forget but carefully cultivate his power of working inference, his sense of the implications of experience. (11 December 1906, untitled typescript)

In Welby's description, and again like Peirce, the human being is a community of parts that are distinct but not separate. Far from excluding each other, these parts, or selves, are interconnected by relations of reciprocal dependence. In other words, they are founded in the logic of otherness and of unindifference among differences, thereby excluding the possibility of undifferentiated confusion among the parts, of levelling the other onto the self. As says Welby in a paper dated 3 October 1908, to confound is to sacrifice distinction. To the extent that it represents an excess with respect to the sum of its parts, the I or Ident, says Welby, is not the 'individual' but the 'unique' (where this expression has nothing in common with the monadic separatism of Max Stirner's conception of the unique):

[...] for we may represent the Unique. That is the word which might well supersede the intolerably untrue 'individual.' It is in fact just our dividuality which constitutes the richness of our gifts. We can, but must not be, divided; we must include the divisible in the greatest of Wholes, the organic Whole, which as risen to the level of the human, may crown each one of us as unique. ('I and Self,' June 1907)

The I is grounded in the logic of otherness which means to say that to be an I is always to be other. The I tends towards transcendence with respect to the centripetal forces polarized in the self and which are, of course, necessary to the self for it to subsist as self, as *ephemeron*. Subjectivity emerges in the open space of the dialectical and dialogical relation with the other, in which the traces of identity are delineated in the open interrelation among the multiple parts of the I, without ever identifying with any one of them, and with respect to which the I is transcendent, an excess. As the knower, the I or Ident in the last analysis is the unknowable; as the possessor, the I is the elusive; as the utterer, the I is the unutterable. The I is orientation towards the other, towards the self as other – continuous transcending of the limits of the real as it is, of the *hic et nunc*. The I can never be possessed or captured once and for all. While the *self* represents that which to an extent can be identified, measured, calculated, the Ident can only be approached by approximation, tentatively and hypothetically, through the means at our disposal, that is, our inferential *selves*.

Welby describes the self as a way and not as an end, and as a way the self is 'individual' in the sense described above, that is, non divided, a way without interruptions to life and knowledge.

The ether, as science is revealing, is the unfailing way, the medium, whereon and whereby the light itself reaches us. Now 'Self,' again, is properly a Way, a Medium through which we energise and act, though alas, with our unconscious selfishness, we turn it into an End and identify Man with that. Yet, even as it is, we do not praise a man when we call him selfish. One who knows his self not as end but as means alone understands the highest form of identity. For the true Man is first and last the way through truth to life in a mentally Copernican sense, and through consciousness and tested observation, to knowledge. In such a way there must be no flaw, no slit, no gap or chasm. In this sense Man as a way is individual, that is, not divided or broken. (Welby 1910a, 'Jesus or Christ?' *The Hibbert Journal* 8(2): 430–433)

Mother-sense converges with the logic of giving and implies the gift for truth, knowledge and interpretation. As she says in an early paper of 1887, 'The Secret of Life': 'The power of the Gift [. . .] was vitalising all truth, interpreting all problems, unifying all nature.' Oriented by the logic of the gift, mother-sense is the originating source of self and of the human capacity to perceive life in all its expressions, to experience nature, the world at large, the universe in its dialogic relations of interconnection and vital interdependency among signs and senses. Gift-giving is structural to experience, knowledge and expression, and engenders the propensity for critique and transformation.

Translating Welby and her gift-giving logic into the language of recent trends in language and sign sciences, we can make the claim that mother-sense, individual identity, the capacity for inference, in particular creative abductive inference, as theorized by Peirce, the capacity for expression, verbal and nonverbal, are all oriented by the logic of otherness and excess. Gift logic, the logic of otherness, absolute otherness as Levinas would say, dialogic intercorporeity as Bakhtin would also term it, form an a priori with respect to the world as it is, to signifying processes, before and beyond equal exchange logic dominating today in a globalized world. Equal exchange logic is based on the logic of closed identity, as described by Morris, and is oriented by short-sighted self-interest. As such it presupposes exploitation in terms of social and economic systems and from the point of view of interpersonal relations generates the condition of social and linguistic alienation. Instead, Welby's mother-sense recovers the connection with the body, one's own body as much as with the body of the other from self, and in such reconnection predicates the well-being of humanity with eyes raised towards the expanding dimensions of significance. Human action, as Welby says, must recover the intimate connection with human nature and beyond in dimensions no less than cosmic. Thanks to mother-sense, human beings are characterized by a capacity for critique and creativity and as such are not condemned to passive acceptance of the world as it is, but rather are called to conscious awareness and global responsibility.

A Will and a Way were making hay,
All in the summer weather;
Will came down and broke his crown,
Way stuck the bits together.

Up Will got, and made a plot,
To ruin poor Way's haycock;
For Wayward Will has plenty of skill,
To play mean tricks which may shock!

Way found him out and began to doubt
If Will was worth her mending;
Says she, my dear, I greatly fear,
That mischief you're intending.

Now Will was crossed if Way was lost,
He couldn't get on without her;
This well he saw, and so he swore,
That never again he'd flout her.

But Way now paid him back; she said
You're not *free*, Will, to take me;
Then follow instead, my dear, he said;
See if you can shake or break me!

She shook him a little, but he was brittle;
She knew she would have to mend him;
So they made it up in a loving cup –
And she's always there to befriend him.

Thus when there's a Will it's certain still
That a Way can be found behind him;
If he lost his Way, we should have to say,
That nobody then need mind him!

(V. Welby, 'Man has his will, but – Woman has her way,' Box 37, file 10, WCYA)

The texts

Correspondence from the archives

6.6. A selection from her unpublished correspondence (1900–1911)

*Between Victoria Welby and Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller (1900–1911)**

*Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller*¹²

27 May 1900

[...] you must remember that as it is of the essence of my contention that our present expression-limits are far narrower than we suppose (or ought to tolerate) we cannot hope that a really new thought shall be easy to make clear. I am anxious to see the test you rightly demand applied. We shall know the tree by its fruits. I was challenged to make the subject of Significs (or Sign & Sense) intelligible and attractive to young children. Now I am the worst of teachers because I am discursive and absent-minded: yet I was able to make 12 'concrete' lessons on the subject very acceptable to two grandchildren of 10 and 9 years old. I have the report of these taken in shorthand without the children's knowledge, to show you, with their own 'illustrations.' But in fact I applied the method of significs before I discovered that it *was* a new one, that the subject was so to speak a dropped thread in our mental weavings and knittings. But I should rather say that the true meaning (i.e. intention) of a conception was 'revealed through' but did not 'lie in' its qualifications; and that the more diverse these were the richer it became, but also the more difficult to express. In your criticism of Lotze (*Philosophical Review*, May 1896) you speak of the needed belief that the world has a meaning, that the riddle of life has an answer. In Lotze's hands as I think you rightly point out, this 'meaning' is really 'unmeaning.' But I should also say that there is no riddle of life, only a question, itself due to the insistence of the answer. But for the stimulus of the answer we should not re-act in the question: it is an ebb & flow: we do not (happily) speak of flow and ebb.

* [The present collection is from the correspondence between Victoria Welby and Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller, WCYA, Box 14. The letters included are mainly Welby's given that this monograph is dedicated to her, with the aim of evidencing different aspects of her thinking. Apart from a few exceptions, there are no typewritten copies of Schiller's letters which are all in handwriting except for those reported otherwise. Schiller's letters which are sometimes very long, also deserve publication for their theoretical interest. As for all Welby's correspondence, in this case too a complete edition is to be hoped for, and the same can be said, for example, of the correspondence with Cook Wilson, George Stout, or Max Müller. Welby's exchanges with Schiller open with a note from Welby dated 25 May 1900, and close with a letter from Schiller dated 30 June 1911, and include various enclosures. My own interventions are placed between square brackets. Letter openings and endings have been consistently eliminated to save space. Some of the letters are from *Other Dimensions*, edited by Nina Cust, 1931. On Welby's correspondence with Schiller, see above, Section 2.4].

12. [Introduced by Nina Cust as follows in *Other Dimensions*: 'Fellow and Senior Tutor, Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Author of *Riddles of the Sphinx*, *Humanism*, *Problems of Belief*, *Eugenics and Politics*, *Formal Logic*, *Logic for Use*, etc.' (Cust 1931: 409)].

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

22 June 1900

I hear nothing from Mr. Choate and so I suppose he is away and that you had better yourself name a day and time for coming down that suits your own plans. If you don't mind I shall prefer seeing you alone as I can thus better 'orientate' myself.

I have been reading your Psychical Research Paper and re-reading your 'Metaphysics of the Time-Process' and your Review of the 'Will to Believe' with great interest, always of course from my point of view. Also I am looking again at Prof. James's 'Will to Believe.'

I have studied and noted almost every line he has written, but have always felt him a somewhat dangerously fascinating writer and I don't find him ultimately convincing. Yet his hearty and trenchant affirmations are at least full of life and courage: and anything that represents the 'open door policy' – say the open eye philosophy! – and tends to widen ranges, must of course appeal to me.

But sometimes he makes for shutting up: as when he puts us on a 'forced option' in saying 'Either accept his truth or go without it.' For there must always be, in these cases, a third alternative. Every logical dilemma must be expressed: and in all cases of expression we have the question *In what sense?* Thus I may answer 'I accept the truth but not in *your* sense: in *that* I go without it.' And when he uses the example of a man who refused to accept a place in Nansen's expedition, he surely confounds assent with action? You can't physically be in two places at once: but you can in a true sense, surely be in two 'minds' at once – *that* belongs to our multicellular constitution and our composite if not multiple personality. Then does he not needlessly confuse us when e.g. he speaks of 'trenchant' distinctions which seem to 'mutilate' facts. But to 'cut' or 'tear apart' is just what distinction does not do: it enables you to see the complex richness of a whole, doesn't it? 'Never confound and never divide' is a favourite motto of mine.

But it seems to me that we suffer not only from myopia but also from diplopia in 'mental' vision. I am afraid that the conspicuous absence of all that is noble or lovable in the supposed 'communications' from another world and the curious fixity of type (extending I am told even to 'guided' hand-writing) in such messages, foster many doubts as to whether our research into 'psychics' has yet got its true start. But the pioneers are in any case to be honoured: what we want is to secure not the interest of the man in the street but that of the most competent judges of evidence.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

6 July 1900

[...] I had mislaid my 'critical' notes, and thus when I offered to show you instances of what I meant in the easily avoidable confusions and even bulls to be found in capable writers of all schools I could not produce them and had to fall back on the one example of the 'sun' in Hobhouse. And, indeed, finding that you are among the very few who are conscious of the extent of the evil, I soon felt that this side of my work might safely be neglected between us. But I wish we had had time to go through parts of the book for there is much in it which I warmly welcomed [...]

One thing I am sure I did not make clear and that is the double value which I see in the definition of personality as the way through Truth to Life. For it is also to me the definition of that primary need which takes the form of devotion in some minds to science, in others to philosophy, in others to conduct, in others again to art. Everywhere we must seek and find a true way to life, a living way to truth; and both beauty and goodness shall be added unto us. Then perhaps we may begin to realise what you already perceive; that regeneration of Desire must precede the better gift. But let us see that we don't confound the Abstract and the Ideal. As 'to abstract' is to take or think away everything, give me the converse. What is the highest conceivable point of adding, of putting in? How much can you think into a subject? Will adduction do? But what is the converse of the 'Abs' itself?

I don't suppose I much commended my way of putting things to you yesterday. But I hope I did show that the question is not a personal one in the sense of an individual one. I hope you are beginning at least to suspect that here is an unworked field, a rich 'claim' waiting to be exploited, an unused tool or weapon, a Method sound in theory and practical in application, and that study of Sign and Sense and their relations to Thought from a new point of view and with a definite hope of enhanced wealth of expression reacting upon Thought is worth considering. I am sure if you can yourself and can induce others, to take up the matter seriously and realise what enormous issues are involved in the formation of a literary and especially a figurative conscience; if you or anyone can help to create a demand, the very existence of which will ensure inestimable additions to the resources of Expression, you will have an ample reward, and that in a lower as well as in a higher sense. For once the man in the street hoping to see that his business must gain by greater command over precision where precision is needed and greater elasticity where it isn't, he will welcome any effort to secure the consensus at present exclusively devoted to spelling and putting your h's right.

True that there will be drawbacks: that we shall not thus reach a faultless utopia. But for the first time the 'man of light and leading' will have a real chance of telling us what they do 'mean'; and of being welcomed and understood; and we shall find that even the board-school may begin to grow an embryonic sense of the value of a worthier and more adequate conception of language and its work. They might, by the way, even encourage the labourer's child to go on saying 'theirselves' and 'hissself' which are right, instead of the wrong and hideous themselves and himself.

I should like some day to say a few words about the last page of your *Mind* article on Time. For that is one of the cases ('free-will' is another) in which I think we need to acquire *binocular thinking*. And though I am not sure I should say all you do about the 'will' I do strongly believe that it is the 'conditioning factor' of a mental evolution which is to give us insight-outlook as yet only potential (like the achievements of hyper-aesthesia) as well as means of expressing it. [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

10 July 1900

[...] With regard to the brief and clear description of the aim of Significs which you ask for, I doubt if the one you suggest would be a wide enough net to hold it. I want one which shall draw in fish of all kinds. And the only definition worth having grows out of and does not precede practical use. I fear therefore that at present too great insistence on brevity would defeat its own object. So what do you say to the summary which I enclose?

Certainly as we are, one of the things best worth saying can be said (in the full sense of saying). It seems to me that the next great advance in philosophy will be 'polyphonal'; we shall have chords of thought (represented by word and sentence-chords and orchestral symphonics of conception. So also we shall have the philosophical recognition of what I venture to call three grades of consciousness; 'planetary,' 'solar,' 'cosmical.' The highest form of vitality (assuming the possibility of grades of worth therein) is presumably cosmical. Planetary experience is our way to this through solar experience, which as yet we only have explicitly in the physiological and astronomical forms. Then there is the analogy of the binocular v. monocular types of modal seeing. [...]

Ferdinand C. S. Schiller to Victoria Welby

5 August 1900

I am sorry that my last analysis of men's attitude towards the imperfection of language should have struck you as pessimistic, for, I assure you, I meant it as highly optimistic and as showing that we collectively always have what we want and that as soon as we really make up our minds

we want something we can get it – so that all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds! That you should have read this as pessimism only shows how easily extremes meet. Put in the case of pessimism and optimism this has been observed before. However whether it be optimism or pessimism the account I gave is I fear true of the mass of men, though of course individuals are victims and have to suffer the penalties of social solidarity. (The social aspect of Truth is a much neglected study!) My conviction in the matter, which has been steadily growing with the growth of my experience, has been forced upon me by the facts of people's attitude especially towards religious and 'psychical' matters, and is quite free from bitterness. Moreover I expect to prove the truth of my contention decisively in one point, by the projected census of sentiments as to a future life, one of the results of which will be to show that though nearly all *have* cared, at any actual time very few *do* care. Hence the few can't find out and soon social sentiment crushes out their curiosity. Of course the *will not to know* masks itself in intellectual forms (just as the *will to know*) and so fosters that dominant intellectualism which we are only now beginning to see through. Consider e.g. how often 'Faith' stands at bottom for laziness, apathy, fear of exposing the unsoundness of views one desires to keep. The *locus classicus* for me is the lovely Oriental letter quoted by James (*Psychology* Vol. 2, about p. 650) from Layard. How often do we not hear essentially the same plea pass muster, because it is not expressed in quite such a strong form!

It is very right and clever of you to point out to me that on the basis of my own argument I must not faint in the quest. But I think it follows that if my contention be sound, we have to adopt somewhat different methods than if the intellectualist assumption were correct. Instead of plying men with reasons why they rationally should change their views, we should have to ply them with reasons why they should *want* to change them. Once they see (grasp) those and withdraw the volitional support of their errors, these will collapse at once.

I was much pleased to read to-day in *Nature*, n. 1605, August 2nd p. 316 'English photographers are specially noticeable for their *deliberate ignorance* of the creative work of the past. . . ' That scores a point to me!

Again your friend's judgment on 'Riddles' is I think another. For he has gone wrong because he has failed to discriminate between the theory of an actual world process in 'time' and a logical or dialectical 'process' in thought. And he has done this, apparently, because Hegel so skilfully and intricately confused the two that there are probably not more than half a dozen people in England and the United States who have a right to an opinion as to what Hegel's actual doctrine is as to the relation of history to the Dialectical process (And these I may add, are about equally divided!). And Hegel confused the two because otherwise his system would not stand. Thus your friend though guiltless himself, is the victim of a sophist, and we are all in a like case more or less. For is not Society as Plato said the Greatest Sophist of all.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

27 March 1901

[. . .] I am hampered (among other reasons) by the cruel lack of the training and knowledge which you represent and also because in defending a thesis I am always conscious that whereas I am right in a sense – and that perhaps an important and overlooked or ignored sense, an opponent or critic whatever his view is also right in a sense – of some kind. Our business is always to find out in what sense (in an enhanced or enriched sense of that term) he is right, and then go on to examine the meaning, – the intention and critical value of the two positions and thus to reach that significance which is the life of which the quest for truth is the condition and 'antechamber' (badly expressed but you will understand). Apply this to my idea of time. For anyhow time is the only case of the kind which has no vocabulary; and whether my inferences are right or wrong that is a profoundly significant fact.

With regard to the use of ‘planetary, solar and cosmic’ to indicate a real distinction of value in our consciousness and experience, I must of course appeal to the principle that a difference of degree does at a certain point become, rather connote or imply (supply the word), difference of kind. Thus the popular appeal to a larger outlook, higher aims, wider interests, &c., is not a mere demand for inflation or bigness; and the great man *is* great in the solar sense. When we are trying to think or do the best we can, we instantly talk solar system and would talk cosmos (Aristotle did!) if we could.

But as yet we have only the space terms to use (and a poor lot of those!) And remember again that the infinitesimal, except to the mathematician, has no vocabulary but this for an obvious reason.

I am ‘intensely’ conscious of the Significance of the microscopic; but you see I can’t write about it. I only see that our power to deal with the minute must increase with our power to deal with the vast, and that both thus carry more value – are far from being mere questions of size or number. Meantime it is significant that we suppose (as believers in the ‘spiritual’) the Breath-world to be the ultimate: and *that* we share even with the plants. The Light-world is beyond it and contains it: and there lie the metaphors of knowledge. How I wish I may be able before I die to indicate even a tithe of the riches which lie ready for the explorer who begins with ‘Significs.’

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

3 June 1901

The intentional production of illusion has never yet been systematically used in education or employed by a philosophical writer to put his readers on their guard against errors which are not merely logical. It is a pity that the highest developments of the power to produce at will and therefore to detest and expose fallacious inferences, have hitherto been called more ‘conjuring’ and devoted only to money-making by amusing trickery, if not to less defensible objects.

If the power the conjurer wields, – one largely the result of special training – were only translated into an altogether higher form, we might look forward to striking results in education. We should obtain studies in ambiguity of thought as well as of word of the highest value, and students would learn the extent to which the plausible dominates us, and the case with which even the ablest writers miss points by fixing their reader’s attention on issues which may in reality be less centrally important than others which seem trivial and escape attention.

Prof. Jastrow’s study of the *Psychology of Detection* (p. 106–107) (‘Fact and Fable in Psychology,’ Prof. Joseph Jastrow) comes opportunely to illustrate this suggestion, and his appeal to physiology is illuminative. Not merely in ‘recognising a book, a picture, a face’ or in judgments on the occurrences of a ‘seance’ but in the deepest thought and study, men may in a true sense fully see and understand what they call the ‘world’ but yet in fact suffer from ‘psychic blindness’ and find it unmeaning – whence pessimism results.

For man blames the world for this; to him it is an inexplicable and therefore distressing ‘riddle’; but what he needs is the stimulus of this very distress (carried indeed to the point of the intolerable) in order to develop in him an enhanced power of ‘interpreting, assimilating, reading the meaning’ of what as things are seems to him senseless or drives him to arbitrary and precarious solutions.

We have never yet deliberately trained this faculty: is it not time to begin? The conjurer can if he will make you see the true meaning of his apparently hopeless puzzles: the same power applied to the great problem of life would make us see significance where now we must despair of it.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

12 November 1903

You are always so wickedly suggestive of ideas that I could not inflict upon you a tenth part of those your book prompts! You see everything you write is vitally fresh and energetically human – rare qualities in a philosopher!

But there are one or two points I should like to say a word about. And first, as you know, I think it a real misfortune that thinkers like you – in the van, on the crest – should have handicapped yourselves with such a misleading and effete idea as immortality. True of course that, as I plead in my book, its very antiquity gives it authority. But surely in every case the first question is: Have we yet translated it into the dialect of our present stage of experience in its most advanced form? [...]

One of the priceless services for which I am grateful to Mr. Russell is his warning against absurdities like 'Man is mortal.' Anyhow that disposes of the immortality either of Man or of the Individual or of the Race. This is one of the points which it seems to me would come naturally from you. Mortality and its converse only applies in any direct sense to a particular organism, highly divisible, dividual. In the planetary sense you may cut me up into a million scraps and I shall smile at you from each – and then take them all out for a walk! And even as a vague and casual metaphor, our use of immortality entirely leaves out the indispensable correlative natality.

I was studying again the passage in which St. Paul tries to express the unborn-undying 'I' which we mix up with 'self.' But what he preaches is really a survival, like that of Prof. Loeb's sea-urchins, or rather a return into this life on this earth. The seed we plant was produced by a plant and developed into another plant of the same kind in the same way – both equally here, equally tangible, dissectable. But, you will say, he speaks of the 'spiritual' body. Exactly. And that is obviously the combination of the mental and moral, intellectual and emotional, rational and volitional elements of our nature here and now. That combination does metaphorically survive in this world, if it be great enough.

Now there are two things I want you to consider. In the first place, as you know better than I do, the word spirit was for classical and scholastic writers the direct word for Breath, just as (mental) light is still for us the word for physical radiancy. Unfortunately the word 'spirit' is for us in English borrowed; and so we find it easy to make it mean a vision in the shape of a human figure. It seems to me however that this is a sheer unconscious corruption. The true meaning of spirit is the spirit e.g. of justice, of injustice, of enterprise, of routine, etc.; in short it is simply an impellent, an impulsive energy; the motor, for good or evil, of human life. The Holy Spirit thus becomes the Moving and Governing Force as well as the pure and life-giving Atmosphere, which is the secret of the highest form of personality. And the intensity of the saint's sense of this leads him to speak of it as literally personal. The 'animating spirit' of a man's life IS the man; and when this is the Better than all Best it becomes the source, as Divine, of all the worthiness of Man.

Naturally then the sin against this is the sin against the forgiveness-power, the love-power; it is the shutting out of all that is greatest for us and in us, thus unforgivable.

Of course, as we have not yet acquired the language for a 'time' of cube or volume, I cannot in accepted terms protest against the use in this context of the 'future' except as an expression of defect, as a blind man would say that a wall was twenty paces long or a box the size that two hands could hold or one finger cover, instead of in visual terms. That is the kind of thing we are content with, when speaking of a Life which 'has been' and 'is now' and 'shall be' in a sense beyond our present puny ideas and embryonic definitions. When one sees in a book like B. Russell's in what absurd confusions, begged questions and fallacies most of us live, one's 'solar' spark is roused to indignation and flares up!

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller [undated]

*'Axioms as Postulates': A Letter to the Author*¹³ (p. 1–7)

Our whole personality is concerned as a decisive factor in metaphysics (p. 50). Therefore the first thing to do is to ascertain what this 'whole personality' really is and what it includes and implies. The discovery of ignorance would here be significant as well as salutary. In the first place, whose personality is it? It cannot be the property of a 'thing' that belongs to an inferior grade. Happily we cannot even idiomatically ask 'What's personality' it is! If you say my personality, you are super-personal just as the organism is super-visceral or super-epidermal or super-skeletal. The organism includes but cannot be defined as being one of its constituents. So the question remains. *Who* as well as *What* are we, and what do we possess and own? For the possessed and owned, even if it be a part of US, can never be the whole of what We are.

Now it may on this supposition be admitted that the 'self is a complex psychological product, which may be derived and analysed away in a dozen different ways' (p. 52). But my own answer would be that the 'self' is not Me but mine – my self. And you have still to discover, recognise, and greet the Owner who analyses his self in this and other ways; and then cross question him. For the analysis is effected by an 'I.' Who ever heard anyone say Self enjoyed self's self very much, self assure you? And when we are coveting our neighbour's 'possessions' we are not coveting him! It is true that the Self can say 'my' I or Ego. But only as the servant or the horse may say, My master or my owner – *the man who acknowledges me*.¹⁴

Now if Self be Me, Who is my Owner? Anyhow 'Who,' is quite distinct from 'What,' I am. In a garden you don't say, Who is this flower? In a kennel, Who is this dog?

I am glad you see that 'the sciences have a habit of evading the verbal confession of the changes which the growth of knowledge has wrought in their conceptions' (p. 55). But then we all share this tendency. See the continued use of that mischievous traditional fiction, the tabula rasa, which one constantly sees seriously 'laid down' by people who ought to know better. And I am still more glad that you see the significance of the 'creation' metaphors as originally meaning 'to hew or shape.' For this is the true method by which we may discover the real sense of much which has become unthinkable by mistranslation. Again, I rejoice at your saying that, 'the intellectual cosmos also neither has nor needs fixed foundations' (p. 57) and also the 'conception of Natural Selection was suggested by human selection' (p. 58). But I own that to me the statement that 'the cosmic method and its nature are the same as ours' requires careful qualification. Rather ours are but infantile attempts to reproduce on a minute scale and in but elementary forms the methods and nature of the supreme intelligence. And as for the notion of the experiment, instead of saying that 'it serves to bring out the radically,' I wish you would say the 'germinally.' 'Our activity always meets with resistance,' so that we often fail in experiment. Now I suppose that the resistance (as in the needed friction if we are to advance or propel) is of the essence of the result. But alas, our paradises are vicious circles or identical propositions or whollified halves or Homes of Satiated yet Insatiate Desire.

What we call the objective world is of course in the last resort simply a persisting factor in 'experience' (p. 59). Which makes it stranger that we should not all alike recognise the fact that the 'objective' world is essentially the Sign, Symptom, Indication, Suggestion, of That whence We and our experience of it, plus our postulation of it (and plus all else 'possible'), have arisen and emerged.

13. [Reference is to Schiller's essay published in the collective volume *Personal Idealism*, edited by H. Sturt, see Schiller 1902].

14. It is curious here that the property idea is secondary and the confessions (recognition) idea primary.

When you ‘look forward’ (a spatial idea) ‘and declare that the objective world most truly is whatever it develops into’ (p. 60) you give a refreshing witness to the true (that is secondary) ‘place’ of ‘time.’ The future like the past is thus included in the real present. And in fixing the ‘place’ of time among the categories, we admit that Time being a kind of space, has a place. But space hasn’t any minutes or hours, weeks or months or years, unless we derive all these terms back (as in fact we can) into spatial definitions, and call them indeed ‘spaces’ of time. On this page I have a rude question to ask! If ‘matter’ may be regarded as the raw material of the cosmos how can ‘matter’ be compared to the ‘material,’ or what is the ‘material’ which makes matter – and matters! To my thinking the ‘objective world’ must continue to ‘resist and constrain’ *against* our will until it is *directed* to do so at our order and under our control.¹⁵ It will then be the ever-ready and obedient ‘fulcrum,’ touchstone, crucible, jumping off ground, &c: and the water through which we have learnt to swim at will. But no resistance, no swimming; and we get no ‘forrarder.’ Whereas the ‘forrard’ is essential. We haven’t begun on the true Forward (Lift up your hearts) yet.

When, by the Way through truth, we have reached that, we shall know the secret of Life which is restful work and all-ward (not merely onward) Activity, not motion *less* but motion *ful*, not change *less* but change *ful* in a transfigured sense.

Until then the world cannot afford to be plastic in the sense of being mouldable by our wishes (p. 61). For considering what so far our wishes must needs be – even the best and highest of our *direct* desires, how utterly their efforts would fail! It is at least a safeguard that ‘selfish’ is a sufficient word of censure. ‘We must assume that we can obtain what we want.’ But this takes for granted (1) that we really knew yet, and (2) that knowing we are ‘wanting’ as yet the true and ultimate ‘good’ for which we have no word, since all our ‘planetary’ good is but the complement of ‘evil’ and dependent on that for existence. It is one-armed and one-legged ‘good.’ ‘We must ask often and importunately, and be slow to take a refusal. It is only by asking that we discover whether or not an answer is attainable, and if they cannot alter the “facts”, our demands can at least make them appear in so different a light, that they are no longer practically the same’ (p. 62). This can only be true in so far that our demands are consciously and purposely being lifted, raised in scale. We must *lift up* our desirous hearts, our wills: our wishes must aspire and must Rise and Ascend. At present we grovel; even the saint does: witness the reproduction of his ecstasies by the agency of nitrous oxide and other artificial aids. Throughout this argument the Race-Mother’s knowledge is absent and is needed. There is nothing more pathetic than the true child’s forecast of what it will have in adult life if it gets its own way. For it hasn’t yet grown the adult mental consciousness. Thus its worst tragedy would be the ‘plasticity’ of the future and of fact. The facts may turn out not to be what they seem ‘and can be transfigured if we try’ (p. 63). So with our wishes, our desires, our ideals of ‘satisfaction’ as the highest good of a finality, of parasitic content rendering energy superfluous and activity mere ‘restlessness’ and in the end folly – contradicting indeed in spite of you, your own idea of ‘Energeia.’ For we are at best still blind puppies full of uncriticised puppy-desires; worse, artificially imposed ones inherited with an inherited language. Do allow for that, and warn us of it.

Just as (p. 64) axiomatic first principles demanding recognition and reverence as necessary truth involve a fundamental duplicity, so with the apriorium of wish and desire – and will!

It must in fact never be forgotten that it is precisely in the properly intellectual sphere that the whole human advance has been achieved. We are apt unconsciously to carry on the ancient idea (in primitive days still partly true) that emotion is an affair of the ‘heart’ and even of the viscera, as contrasted with affairs of the brain.

But now we know that it is always the cerebral system which receives emotional stimulus and in its turn communicates this to the rest of the organism. And emotion itself is less automatic or

15. The idea of ‘order’ as itself command, is here significant.

self-contained than it was at the animal level, as human it has a larger element of intelligence, it is in fact more intellectual than in the sub-human. Intellect in short is ‘the distinguishing characteristic’ (p. 127) *not merely of the philosopher but of Man as distinguished from the sub-human*. It is due to the very thing which constitutes human supremacy – the development of the cerebral cortex, and with it of the wits and the ‘cunning’ which have made man conqueror of ‘brute’ – more muscular force, and the controller in ever greater degree, of the ‘mechanical world.’ Thus Intellect must not be depreciated, though it is true that neither must it be segregated nor isolated from the other mental functions. The highest ‘centres’ have been evolved in order that the emotions and will may be fully analysed, translated, criticised, disciplined, interpreted, applied. Intellect itself must be vitalised and fertilised: the whole being of man must energise through it; it must become the Expressive organization and criticism of experience in every form. Is not this really your own demand?

I confess to being disappointed with A. Sidgwick’s review in *Mind*. I wonder at his saying that ‘all meaning consists in application’! Meaning being really intention is virtually itself Purpose and certainly not application which is what it implies. Signification, sense, and meaning as purpose (I meant to do this, intended to do it, did it on purpose) all imply application, just as they imply Sign, and ‘Mind’ to respond to the appeal of Sign. But it is obvious that they are not Sign or Mind. No more can they be ‘application.’

I am inclined to sympathise to a certain extent with the last paragraph of Mr. Jevens in the *Hibbert Journal*.

I have got much more than this on your Humanism. But don’t forget that these are the grumbles of a friend. I am heart and soul with one who vindicates the unity of man in all his powers.

Only, ‘desire’ for ‘self’ must be translated into *aspiration*; into a life which expresses and don’t ‘say’ prayer. And intellect is supreme in a true sense though like mind itself, it needs life to ‘mind’ in! The true man can always give a reason for the ‘faith’ that is in him: his emotions are essentially rational in the sense of *purposive significance*: they are not the wayward mothers and children of the Irrational, which for us is the senseless (however much we may ‘intend’ our pranks) and the insignificant – although it may indeed wreck for us a world of precious Order [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

15 April 1904

[...] The truth is that we shall soon I hope see that the ‘meta’ is everywhere, both needed and accessible (by signficant method of course) ad especially in the sphere of ‘Desire.’ And it is not (so much) more ‘dimensions’ of Desire that we want to postulate (and act upon) as an upward translation of Desire. What do I mean then by an upward translation? Don’t you see that ordinary translation is lateral, that is, broadly speaking from position on a level of kind to another – from one language to another? But I want a vertical translation – one from a ‘lower’ to a ‘higher’; and that is what Darwin has given us. We are the upmost Translation of a Tadpole and even of a Worm. Now not only our desires but our very notion of desire (betrayed by demand for satisfaction) are grovelling and wriggly. Translate. At present our poor ill-used ideals are worm-eaten and tadpole-devoured.

I own I find it difficult to forgive the ‘metaphysicians’ for having brought so much discredit on the ‘meta.’ ‘Transcendental’ is horribly rhetorical; but ‘becoming the beyond’ and meanwhile signalling it in mental flash lights is the note of biology in a wider sense than we commonly recognise ...

But I wonder whether you do really see anything in my alas too crudely expressed ideas! Some day you must be quite frank with me on that point.

Meanwhile I find that after all I did see your ‘Axioms as Postulates’ in proof and remember making sundry remarks thereon. But now I have written it all over in pencil [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

1 December 1904

I have been reading your Address on the Immortality Questionnaire with a somewhat rueful interest. Don't you see that as I have often complained I am compelled to formulate my reasons for not being in your sense a psychological researcher, in the very terms which I find suicidal? That is the main reason why I am intelligible to so many and thus miss the criticism I want.

Now your mind is young and alive. Won't you make a serious effort to 'grasp' what I hold out to you? On your own showing, you can if you choose! And that does not imply any conversion to views of mine on the subject. They must take their chance.

My work – whether well or ill done – lies so much at the heart of things, at the very source of life, I speak so entirely from the standpoint of a recoverable 'race-mother-hood' of thought, that I have to repeat my too simple 'message' in all forms possible to me and then remain, as I have said, with the desperate consciousness that this babble which we are content to call, not archaic but living language, betrays me at every step. The mammal here has no language but that of the primitive vertebrate and this again none but the molluscan. To put it differently, the shell has become the prison and the race has now to make a giant effort to break forth. Let us, the growing chicks, begin, for life's sake, to tap at this outgrown and empty shell! I am trying, but my beak is sadly weak and my brother chicks hear not my feeble chirp of appeal, else would a great light and a flood of air – of true 'spirit' – be theirs. And we are not only chicks come to a hatching time and addling miserably in a discontented egg, wondering indeed whether there be a 'future' egg-life, a final one in which we may some day sate ourselves on an 'absolute' or a 'positive' or a 'pragmatical' yolk, or again shrugging featherless shoulders in hopeless indifference. We inherit and share the mother-nature: from us also must come life-growth. . . You are dimly conscious of this and it impels you to preach Humanism which has some at least of the constituents of yolk and even it may be a vital speck therein.

What then do I want to say just now, though I can't properly say it, about your research on Immortality? Why do I confess to thinking it futile like so much of similar work though not on any of the grounds you mention? Well, I can only again resort to image and this can at present only be a 'hint' (indeed my whole work is of course a hint only). It seems to me that we are devoting enormous Labour, patience, enthusiasm & courage to brave ridicule, to the discovery of the centaur, the phoenix, the hippogriff and the unicorn. We are wondering at the 'faith' (meaning credulity) of this man, the scepticism of that one, the indifference of the other, [illegible] our enterprise.

We are omitting, in short, in our quest for 'knowledge' on the subject of immortality, to be clear on what we are looking for and asking about.

For surely (1) the only mortality we know of takes us out of this world, removes us from this present scene, ends what we know as this present life. Therefore the negation of this, its 'im' is simply the indefinite continuance of the present life, under present conditions, on this planet. And (2) the only mortality we know depends wholly on our 'natality.' We die because and in so far as, we are conceived and born.

Therefore the first enquiry ought to be, What are our views as to whether there was a 'past' life (beyond that of this world at the other end). Do we desire one or believe in one or are we indifferent and why? Do we think it matter for 'faith' or for knowledge? As Norman Pearson has well put it, if the universe did without us comfortably before we arrived here, it can presumably do the same after we depart.

But (3) what makes us then conceive our source and destiny under the arbitrary figure of a straight course upon a line in one direction? What makes us figure the 'future' thus? Is it not our conception of Time as original in the same sense as Space, our conception of 'personal' identity, and the compulsion of conventional language representing this? There is of course much more than this to say. But meanwhile, to me, putting carts before horses (soon to be dead metaphor!) is

soundly practical compared to our usual procedure on the great questions. If anyone would only move the ‘previous question’ in these cases! Not to shelve the new idea or to stifle debate but to discuss real issues in a really fruitful and human way!

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

[From *Other Dimensions*, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 86–87]

... It is curious how language (and the space-coercion on our minds through our senses) compels us to be philosophical quantificians, making size and amount our idols and quite ignoring the claims of quality to ‘transcend’ them. ... We laugh at the Americans with their biggest show on earth; yet they are the children who innocently betray our own absurdities, giving us older, more cautious, ones away. We behave just the same over our great men and so on. And we are right so long as greatness is the symbol of goodness and its truth, of truth and its goodness, with – for only alternative – ‘pettiness.’ But we must never forget that to any one who can value living beauty (whether of actual form and colour, or of personal character or act) size, scale, becomes quite secondary. It is also secondary to identity. If we have lost one we care for, the promise of another ten times as large is a mere insult. But it is of course true that quality is surpassed in value by identity. We insist on the ‘sameness’ as the supreme value. ... Well, we have to raise higher our notions of identity, and see it as victorious over that change which we have allowed to master instead of serving us faithfully. [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

[From *Other Dimensions*, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 87]

The apotheosis of bulk has of course its own ‘great’ value, ‘amply’ realised. Quality as the mere ‘what is’ requires the idea of quantity; and quality *plus* quantity emerges in quality in a higher sense. But our ideas of immortality are fatally tainted with the merely quantitative. The instant you begin to talk of the infinity and eternal life as endless duration, etc., you betray that this is your standard. ... To use the idea of the infinite to describe the crowning value of being or its perfection is like describing sunlight as the colourless or soundless; or land as waterless; or the sea as landless; or motion as sizeless; or electric ether-waves as wireless! The ‘ins,’ like the ‘uns’ and the ‘nons’ and the ‘a,’ are the symbols of logical nonentity and, applied in the organic and mental world, the symbols of paralysis and nescience. They are simply the ‘cannots’ of life. And if we could measure infinity we should still only gain the unqualified quantitative. ...

Language at present betrays philosophy into the worship of quantity rather than quality: *e.g.* Spinoza seems awed by the mere magnitude, the immeasurable, innumerable attributes, of Divinity. But the only thing ultimately, especially, GODlike is worth, value, truth, reality. ... If we demand the large and neglect the small we are as one who should despise a diamond and buy a desert. ... A little wit is better than much stupidity! ...

Ferdinand C. S. Schiller to Victoria Welby

[From *Other Dimensions*, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 90]

... You seem, perhaps, to incline too much to regard the process which makes language into a fit instrument of expression as being one in which the mass of men can take an active part. This is like Bacon’s notion that if only his mechanical method of investigation were adopted, discoveries would ensue as a matter of course. Whereas discoveries always wait until the genius comes who ‘sees the meaning’ of what had long been known as matter of fact. So it is also in language: when a man feels that he has new truth to express and desires to do so, he does so, and then – and only

then – are the rest able to think his thoughts after him and to be lifted an to a higher plane of expression. What e.g. would English be without Shakespeare?

Do not be alarmed lest my pluralism should lead to mechanical schools and dogmas ready cooked and swallowed by the faithful in pills. It does not lend itself to that sort of thing, for to compose the world out of ultimate personalities implies that each of these may have, and must have, its own *Weltanschauung*. Besides, who has not observed that unity of opinion merely conceals absence of thought? . . .

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

[From *Other Dimensions*, 1902–1904, in Cust 1931: 90–91]

But this is the most terrible form of pessimism! Evidently, like the old Scotch puritan, you may be sure of your own volitional salvation but you are no sae sure even of mine; and as for the rest of mankind, what is the use of discussion?

. . . Well, I can afford to accept your view and on the very strength of it to claim you as a pioneer in a noble enterprise, so far as it enables you to overcome any laziness in the matter either in yourself or in others. But a serious effort to do this (not of course by merely railing at everybody else, which I am sure you would consider a cheap as well as a futile method) would soon I think show you how narrow are the limits within which it applies: how often it is just the most conscientious and painstaking who are the most grievously defeated either in understanding or in being understood. And this, not, as you may naturally be tempted to say, because of innate stupidity, but because the idea of training our powers of being significant or of penetrating significance has never occurred to our teachers.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

3 June 1905

Yes, it is an annoying universe, bent on causing our plans to gang aogley. Fancy willing to believe in it! Perhaps that is what provokes it into being so perverse. Meanwhile I have at least gained the opportunity for a touch with your admirable friend and leader, who unwell and hurried as he was made time to write and explain.

That ‘touched’ me and made me regret the more that he should be suffering in that unbearable way. I had especially wanted to see him just now, because the birth of Eugenics had put pressure on me to take more definitely in hand the advocacy of that ‘mother-sense’ which I believe is obscurely inspiring all you pragmatists. Certainly Prof. James is largely endowed with it and ought easily to see the force of what, in my very defective hands does not get the hearing due to it. Well one must still hope that he will get well (like Mr Galton whom I saw yesterday) by wise care, and get over that narrow pond once more.

Now I have another topic for some words with you. (Why does the phrase ‘I had some words with him’ still more ‘high’ words, always mean dispute, almost quarrel? Is it due to a deep significant instinct?). I have had another long letter from Mr. C. S. Peirce in which it is clear that his mind misgives him as to the effect of certain words of his upon you and would like me, I gather, to do a little peacemaking. Now I don’t think he would mind my showing you anyhow parts of the letter – reading you bits – but he is very youthfully impulsive in his mode of writing and I don’t think I am justified in sending you copy. Still I think it would make a difference to you if you know of some passages in his letter, so I am in a difficulty. Now I wonder if you could manage to come here at the beginning of Long? We should have a good deal to talk over. If you can’t I think I must send you the letter. I can’t imagine anyone reading it even after being attacked – without being drawn to the writer. There is such a refreshing humanness and warmth about it all, and he has evidently

a real regard for you, and what is more an even keener appreciation of the value of your thought. For instance in one passage he says 'I hope Schiller will let it rest. I shall do so. I do not doubt he is a very lovable man as James is; and of the two perhaps Schiller is stronger in philosophy.'

There is much more in the same direction so I hope I am not indiscreet!

I condole with you in having seen so little of Prof. Stout. I greatly enjoyed our talks here, mostly in the garden. How I should have enjoyed some with Prof. James!

I have been reading – since Waismann, Haeckel and Co – Poincaré and Le Dantec just lately. I notice that the French rebellion against our tolerated confusions in language and our habit of behaving as if there were none of the smallest consequence except to pedants is boiling up, so perhaps after all the first eruption will take place at Paris. Half the arguments against 'Humanism' rest upon ignored linguistic misfit.

But then I can't stop there. Half the arguments pro or con anything are in the same plight. And to think that we have been making Latin and Greek compulsory all these years and never discovering that the great object of such training should have been to make this impossible!

Well this letter must end; I have endless work waiting. And did I tell you that Prof. Cook Wilson's last letter was 19 pages long? It is more than good of him to take all that trouble with my 'mother-sense' postulates, which are certainly not axiomatic!

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

9 July 1905

[...] I have purposely steered off from the pragmatic controversies, since I look on them with the benevolent eye of the 'race-motherhood,' only intent on making peace when I see the chance. [...]

But I have been reading with great zest your 'Empiricism and the Absolute' and Mr. Hoernlé's article. As you know I wage implacable warfare upon 'a closed system,' 'a fixed quantity,' 'immutable substance' or 'absolute whole' and on the primacy of the 'stationary.' Mr. Hoernlé gives a good example of the traps of language when he shows that when we speak of the Absolute as beyond relations 'we must deny in the same breath what we affirm.' And he comes very near my protest against 'inner states' and 'outer objects.' But it is curious that he should speak of 'a process, a change, in a word, Time,' when the logical process is out of time and with it certain forms of change.

[...] I want to get further into Humanism with you. In one or two cases as we talked, you touched on questions which I felt I could not deal with just now as I should like to do with one who goes so far into the heart of things as you do. E.g. the question of the need for each individual life for recapitulating the intellectual as the organic stages, although in a sometimes 'telescoped' form. [...]

But there is a mother-tongue and you are learning it. There is no human variation of thought which is not a dialect of that and cannot be translated back more or less wholly into it. And I see Humanism (minus the 'ism'!) as an attempt by the son to recover a lost treasure of his inheritance from the 'race-motherhood.'

Ten minutes after you left I got a delightful letter from Henri Bergson which I would have liked you to see. I find that he read and approved of my articles in *Mind* so I am making hold to send him *What is Meaning?* He says he fears that there is no surviving copy of his *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, but he is trying to get one for me and asks me for Notes upon it, which I may venture upon in the autumn. Meanwhile he is busy writing a big book. [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

15 July 1905

[...] My protest is only called for by the apparent justification of a 'wicked' attitude in the title of Prof. James' book. Great as he is I doubt if he fully realises the reactionary tendency of this day towards substituting wilfulness for willingness, by insisting on believing what we prefer (now and here) and degrading 'truth' to dependence and desire, instead of being its critic and guide. I often wish that we spelt it trowth and thus realised its identity with knowledge. For knowledge has no mercy on the preferences which may be and often are, just what we have to outgrow.

As to 'belief' it is curious how strong its tendency is to reject inconvenient knowledge. It is like indignation of the Axiom at the presumption of the Postulate! (That wouldn't make a bad parable). Here again the ancestry of the word belief is suggestive: I wonder you don't appeal to it now that it is generally admitted that the history of linguistic usage really has a psychological value, though of course only a postulative (?) one.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

15 March 1907

Do you know this is the third version of my letter to you? Don't you feel conceited. Or are you too much 'the measure of things' for that?

Well, I naturally prefer Schilla to Charybdia: Humanism like Pragmatism represent, up to a certain point, my own attitude, which is that which I would call Primal or Mother-sense. But this gives me the heliocentric relation which is implicit in *my* Humanism. [...]

When I see you I shall have much to say about the needed reaction which to me you, like the Pragmatists, represent; the temporary dethronement of pure 'intellectualism' in favour of the revival of lapsed Original Awareness, which is beginning to stir us into fresh activities. But don't forget Hans Andersen's Cat who used to say, me, my kittens – and the world. Shall we write a little history about one of the kittens which grew up and said, 'My grandest of all grandfathers said the only wise thing ever uttered'; so now I will start – not Felinism but – Tom-ism for the (Tom)-cat is the measure of the universe... (*You* will say, pity this letter didn't follow the others into the waste-paper basket!).

The mischief of course is that we are always trying to supersede and proscribe somebody else. But Schilla must not do this, since both he and Charybdia belong to one great channel, and their combined whirls should indirectly expedite the ship by forming a swift central current. [...]

Well, once more, I am naturally on your side till you begin to denounce by implication the post-Copernican attitude. Thus I would strongly deprecate 'Man the measure,' unless you make it plain that you are using 'Man' in a cosmical sense; though even that I fear would not avert the fatal Kittenism that cares for nothing but being 'satisfied.' And for me the less we are satisfied the better! I think it would be a bad fairy that brought us *that* toy. ...

[...] I am now studying Sir Oliver Lodge's *Catechism* and find much to admire in his comments. But how I wish he had made it plain that it was a catechism *not* for children (for whom catechisms on such a subject are poison) but for Teachers! It is the children who on these subjects should catechise their elders. Anyhow we should have a chance thus of recovering primal sense and seeing much of our folly to which we are blind ourselves and succeed too well in blinding our children. [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

17 March 1907

It just shows how badly I write that you should suppose I hold or credit *you* with solipsism; though ‘Man’ as a race and as Human is dangerously abstract for the Humanist. And how *can* you think I care about bigness? I thought you knew me better: but then language is given to conceal one’s thoughts – at present. We must alter all that! My friend, to a mother her smallest baby is ‘bigger’ than the solar system. . . . Spatial terms are all we have in the end to express value with; and the starry heavens come to life if the gazer is alive enough. Dancing aimlessly? Why nature is the very embodiment of Aim; and hers at this moment is to make you write on Humanism and me on Primal sense and its method of Significs. *Reduced* to glowing gas – or for that matter to mud? or promoted? A ghastly night-mare? A vision of transfiguration which must quicken one’s life. It is only our ignorance that thinks everything base except the greedy self of us! The values ‘manage’ to grow here, perhaps in a baby’s eye, just because there are no voids and no hurrying in the cosmos – nothing mean unless we take the trouble to supply it. The Original is the Human and ignores sex except in one respect – the actual *inclusion* of Quickening Humanity. The primal-sense in us all, as a common pre-sexual heritage, must be *brought to bear* on all things, philosophy included. You see we women are never original now because first it was stamped out of us by milleniums of degradation and planed out of us or rather atrophied by the kind of training we got. Now if I can ‘mother’ Significs you may find them even inconveniently original – after the age of 50.

This is a very untidy letter and shouts for revision, but I think you will see its drift . . . I was glad to see that you adopt my solution of the freedom *v.* determination controversy: determined to be free and free to be determined!

Ferdinand C. S. Schiller to Victoria Welby¹⁶

[undated]

I protest against your identification of humanism with solipsism. It is just on pragmatic grounds that I accept the commonsense belief in an external ‘world.’ . . .

I do not ‘want the earth’ nor any of the worlds dispensed in your ‘World-Office.’ They all seem to me to be on the same level, and to differ only in magnitude and not in kind. They are all material, physical worlds which must be tainted with imperfection, just like ours, and not worth making into ideals.

Hence I cannot admit that your Copernican ‘planetary,’ ‘solar’ and ‘cosmic’ metaphors really illustrate what they are intended to illustrate. They are all on the same plane and differ only in bigness. There is no advance in them to a higher plane. But, as I am not an American, mere bigness only bores me and Kant’s ‘starry heavens’ are almost as unimpressive as his (empty, unmeaning) ‘moral law.’ Nor do I know of a severer indictment of the rationality of existence than the thought of all these millions of hurrying suns dancing aimlessly across voids of space until a mutual crash reduces them all again to glowing gas and scorches into nothingness all the values that have somehow managed to grow up on some little speck of a planet! It is all a ghastly nightmare.

P.S. – I think you are quite right about the masculinity of our ‘humanism.’ But how is this to be avoided so long as the whole man makes the philosophy and women have not the courage (or originality?) to be feminine, and aspire only to ape the man?

16. [This letter would seem to be a response to Welby’s preceding letters of 15 and 17 March 1907].

*Ferdinand C. S. Schiller to Victoria Welby*¹⁷

2 October 1907

After reading your papers and listening to what you had to say I venture to think that I can make a few suggestions towards rendering your next book more palatable and readily digestible, by mitigating the stumbling-blocks which have hitherto upset your readers. The three chief of these are (1) the meaning of Mother-sense (2) its connexion with Significs and (3) the question of what can practically be done to remedy the defects of language; and my suggestions follow in order.

(1) You mean I think by Mother-sense the intuitive guidance of action which is not conscious or only very imperfectly conscious of the reasons for doing what turns out to be reasonable. That something of the sort exists throughout the world, that it underlies the specialised 'instinct' of animals, that discursive reason is not a complete substitute for it, and indeed never quite dispenses with it, that women have it and are guided by it to a greater extent than men, all this I am ready to grant you. But I think also that you should raise and try to answer the question 'Why then is that the world in general has rejected this guidance, and preferred that of "masculine" logic, thin, arid, and miserably one-sided and inadequate as that has often been?' The answer is in general the same as to the questions – why do we still cure by drugs and not by hypnotic suggestion, and predict by scientific calculation and not by divination? The methods that promised less have yielded more. They are less romantic but more trustworthy on the average and in the long run. So it is with 'logic' v. 'intuition,' and if you wish to speak on behalf of the latter, the right policy is not to disavow logic but to reform it, to show that intuitions underlie it and that it is never in real life so dull and dry as in the text-books. Real thinking does not advance by a formal array of indisputable syllogisms; it sets out to prove a pet hypothesis it has set its heart upon, it dares and suffers (even defeat!) and thereby achieves: the more 'purely' rational the calculation, the more paralysed and impotent. As witness Percival Lowell and his Martians!

Then again the word 'Mother-sense' is a serious handicap. It at once suggests to all *men* that it is no affair of theirs. And the majority of women are more ashamed of spiritual than of physical motherhood! Why that should be is one of the greatest psychological mysteries which no *man* will ever be able to explain. If women can not or will not give expression to their side of the question, they condemn us to lasting ignorance and themselves to a secondary position.

But why should you not identify your Mother-sense with Common-sense and call it (mainly) that? It is what at bottom you mean – the wisdom of the 'tout le monde' which is wiser than the sages, which pervades Society and its history and is rarely formulated and never adequately expressed in set logical terms. It is truly 'common' in that it can be fathered upon no one, and in that it is at the basis of our 'common' life in society; it is also 'mother,' in that the logical acumen grows out of it. I am also willing to believe that women in general, when one gets beneath the surface of their frivolities and follies have retained a closer contact with this force and that e.g. the 'maternal instinct' will (despite all appearance to the contrary) triumph over 'race-suicide' temptations, if only women are given a free hand in the regulation of things. So you would have ample reason for calling this 'common-sense' a 'Mother-sense,' but the more you emphasised the former phrase the more intelligible you would become to the mere male!

(2) This is a more difficult matter to advise upon, because I don't feel I have grasped it clearly myself. However it is true I think that the 'Common-sense' often means more than it can express, and means right where it seems to express nonsense, and that therefore if it were held in greater honour by our commanding intellects, its babblings would escape much contempt and ridicule to the advantage of both sides. But the development of Significs is surely a matter of the discursive intellect. And you sometimes seem to over-rate the assistance that can be got from the babes and

17. [This letter by Schiller and Welby's response in five points, listed A to E, are both reported by H. Walter Schmitz in his reedition of *Significs and Language*, see Schmitz 1985a: ccxlv–cclii].

sucklings. Not all children are geniuses either – they are commonplace little souls, which it is primarily necessary to train in social conventions they will learn to love, and which after all do represent the wisdom as well as the folly of the ages. I quite admit that the renewal of generations has great advantages as well as drawbacks and that if we were immortal like the Struldbrugs, the hideousness of our spiritual fossilization which baffles all imagination and stop all progress. (But query why was progress necessary?) . . . I also admit that the world needs initiative and initiators (in both senses) and some dynamic person who will keep prodding it the whole time. But the way to satisfy this need is not I think to kneel for revelations before every cradle, but to impress on the world the necessity of progressive thinking and to transvalue the positions of the spiritual progressive and conservative, to do in fact what H. G. Wells tries to do in his ‘Utopia.’ And apropos of this I think you sometimes have a misleading way (which I don’t suppose you really mean) of representing all knowledge and wisdom as being already there and needing merely to be brought to light. But this when logically thought out surely involves a denial of novelty and so the reduction of progress to an illusion – which is precisely what the metaphysicians and intellectualised logicians have nearly always maintained! Against them we have to assert the reality and sacredness of the New! The ‘true’ instinct, the perfect expression are not primeval lights which have grown dim from our failure to clean the glass through which they shone: they have to be *made*, by re-making the old material and moulding it into fresh shapes.

(3) This leads me on the question of what can be done and here perhaps I am less sanguine than you in one way and more hopeful in another. I don’t think that Language is such an imperfect instrument and that we are so dominated by its tricks. On the whole I think it reflects pretty accurately the mental condition of its users. If it is confused and fragmentary and perverse, it is because the minds of its users are this. You don’t sufficiently allow for the fact that intellectual confusion and dishonesty are common vices and with some consuming passions. If you provided such minds with a perfect instrument they would at once proceed to ruin it. But secondly I don’t think that in actual use language is so imperfect. In their context words get and convey meanings which they do not seem to bear per se. Misleading metaphors are seen through, hints are taken, ambiguities and illogicalities are overlooked (in the *good* as well as in the bad sense). In short we somehow *do* manage to express ourselves and to be understood. And your real master of language always manages to find words wherewithal to express himself.

The bars to understanding are (1) the non-recognition of the infinite flexibility of words, (2) the reluctance to embark upon *new* thoughts, (3) the affection we all have for our old ones and the prejudices they generate. Now your Significs only seems to deal with the first factor in the trouble, and besides you do not suggest anything positive or specific that can be done to remedy the evil. I rather doubt that anything very specific can be done. You can teach people, no doubt, the nature and range of the instrument they use, the evils of its abuse, the immense psychological difficulties of really conveying meaning from one mind to another. But all this our ordinary education, literacy and logical, does or should do. Beyond that what?

This letter, however, must stop. I don’t know whether you will find anything of value in these suggestions, and in any case do not hurry to answer it . . .

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

October 1907

‘Why then is it that the world in general has rejected this guidance (of Mother-sense) and preferred that of “masculine” logic, thin, arid, and miserably one-sided and inadequate as that has often been?’

(A) *That is the question which you Pragmatists have to answer.* Mine is simple. There is always loss or at least abeyance in gain: and the gain of Logic ‘thin and dry’ but inexorable, has been and is incalculable, even by its own methods!

Disavow logic! You forget that I at least am in my humble way loyal to laws of life which offer secondary characters of Manhood to the woman past middle life. You forget that I can show you lapses of logical sequence in its representatives apparently hitherto overlooked by writer and reader alike, which when pointed out, cannot be and are not denied.¹⁸

Well, the mother-sense never ‘sets its heart’ on any ‘pet hypothesis’: if it has done this in the original days of its reign, you and I would never have been here. The race would have been snuffed out. No: it takes one hypothesis after the other, treating the one it ‘cares’ for with a more uncompromising scrutiny and severity than the others. The very life of its owner and her children once hung upon this instinct of suspicion and of test. It is sheer mother-sense – instinct of intellectual danger – which in you, as in Dewey, Peirce and James, calls out the pragmatic reaction! It is the direct descendant of the keen awareness of the signs of primitive danger to the babes of the pair or the tribe, left in relatively weak hands. But let the pragmatists beware of exchanging one fallacy or one overworked method for another, perhaps its opposite.

(B) Yes, *all* half-words (and some spuriously used whole ones) are handicaps. They settle your involuntary dualism from the first. As to the ‘majority of the women,’ the dominant Man with his imperious intellect¹⁹ has for uncounted ages stamped down their original gift: all their activities beyond the nurse (and, alas, there also, now) are masculinised: language, originally the woman’s as custodian of the camp, creator of its industries and first trainer of the next generation, is now wholly ‘male’: the whole social order is laid down, prescribed for the woman on masculine lines only. Who ever, for instance, thought of consulting her about changes in marriage law? Well, it would after all have been useless: you have crushed out all but her illogical prejudices and her emotional insistentcies, which urge her to set heart on pet hypotheses or to cling to doctrinal mummies as though they were living. These are really the last refuge of a balked prerogative of mind.

Frivolities and follies! What else is left to one for whom ‘strong-minded’ has become an epithet of dislike and contempt? And when the suppressed energies of the race do, in spite of all, ‘spurt up’ in us women, what can their fruit be, as things are, but abortive and defective?

The present mode of ‘College’ or ‘technical’ training can at best but make the woman a second- or third-rate Man: she further loses thereby what little she has of the racial gifts – her natural and complementary powers of interpretation and problem-solution, of suggestion and correction. Again, look at her inventive complexities, e.g. of weaving. Woman was of course the original weaver. Look at her logic and mathematics of the knitting-pin, the hook, the shuttle, the needle. Look at old lace and embroidery. I myself have ‘invented’ elaborate figures produced by a mere hook, and ‘stiches’ by a mere needle. No man has ever, apparently seen the significance of woman’s ingenuities here and applied them to his inventions, or in his training of students. Practically only the sailor and the fisherman understand even knot- and net-work.

That the Mother-sense is ‘common’ seems to me a truism. Of course it is common. Only, the word common is used in several senses. In one it means despicable and is coupled with ‘unclean.’ On another side, Loeb’s tropism are common! And my Originating, Birth-giving, Reproductive, Interpretative – my Mother-sense, is common to the whole range of life and extends *beyond* it and *beneath* it.

(C) This section is more difficult to answer. Of course ‘all children’ are not ‘exceptional’ ones, ‘geniuses.’ How about logic here? For ‘genius’ is not yet, as it ought to be, the human norm.

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18. I have not yet shown you the evidence for this statement. To be convincing, it requires to be tabulated as well as indexed – and it grows every day – since a case here and there taken at haphazard might be explained away.
 19. How imperious you men are not yet conscious: you have the stupidity of your masterful intelligence which ‘never knows when it is beaten’ or when it talks non-sense instead of mother-sense.

However even the average child, as his brain, unharnessed to *our* conventions, first develops, is far from commonplace. The truth is that he is an uncomfortable and inconvenient judge of *our* *criteria*s of common-sense, of our copy-book wisdoms, moralities and religions: he is an intolerably candid critic: he says, Why, your Emperors have got nothing on! And the remote conscience of his elders, not quite crushed into silence, whispers, No more they have! So we promptly silence *that*, and put the child not in the midst but in the corner, or send him up to bed. (For of course, as you see I have to admit, the child is always a boy).

Ah yes, in childhood we have all been sent to bed: a hideous cruelty to the very Type of vitality and wide-awakeness. Thus we embitter or else dull and blunt than little Spring of Energy who is bound to make experiments and mistakes, and even now and then to revert to savagery, that he may teach us needed lessons. He is 'naughty' and must be civilised and moralised; discipline is necessary; granted. But let us see that we reverence and cherish in him his priceless gift of freshness and enthusiasm, of exploration and experiment, and of onward seeing eyes. And let us see that our logic and our ethic are good enough for him and that we are not driving him into sullen or rebellious protest with our inanities of maxim and fossilities of creed! Nothing has ever made me wince like the eyes of a 'naughty child.' Was it my fault that he had sinned? Had he transgressed bad laws, or good laws wrongly applied? Had he ever been shown the true *What*, the true *How*, the true *Why* he had done wrong?

When you ask in this context, 'Why was progress necessary?' (as I have heard you asking, Why has every baby to 'begin' in mind all over again?). I retort, Why do you ask the question? We quickly tumble into the abyss of infinite regress. . . Still there *is* a whole chain of answerable Whys, of which we only yet know the nearest or latest links.

With regard to kneeling before cradles I agree with you that, though symbolically the 'wise men' may wisely kneel where there isn't even the luxury of a cradle, that is not the action or attitude now needed. Neither, I think, is that of stamping – 'impressing' the world: but rather – since it seems to have become at once anaemic and neurotic – giving it shocks that impel it to sweep energetically round it's true sun, not round a mock one due to its own vapourings!

(D) You speak of my misleading way of assuming things 'already there.' May I say I think *you* are misled (1) by unconscious reference to the spatial 'there' (as it were in a given spot or area) and (2) by an unsound reference to Time as a primary category. If you are to 'make' truth in any sense, then the 'already' is as much or as little relevant as the 'notyet' which would be a useful alternative word for the use of Pragmatists. Neither the one nor the other is a denial of novelty any more than of the birth of successive generations; in our assumptions that it is so we are betraying our slavery to our own spatial, and still worse temporal, imagery.

As to your 'true' instinct and perfect expression as *made*, is not the word 'mould' dangerously near 'manufacture' which you repudiated?

(E) Of course your (3) is a simple 'rebutter.' May I suggest that it ignores 30 years' diligent collection of evidence which, before you can pronounce on the matter should at least be looked into? I think I have earned the right to ask that before any one decides that it is only persons 'already' confused (and why ignore your own protest here? confusion is *made* – like hay) whose language is faulty or 'out of key,' they should seriously look into my stores?²⁰ You must excuse this little splash over, but I have been too remiss in speaking plainly on this matter.

20. Of course these need to be properly tabulated and schematised: at present their full weight and significance cannot be realised on account of their unwieldy volume and their widely scattered condition. I am thinking of advertising for a man or asking the London Library or British Museum, or Mr. Murray to recommend me an expert! Seriously it is becoming imperative and I hope to get it done this winter.

And here I will give *you* a challenge. Give me the names, say, of three ‘masters of language’ writing in English some time in the last 20 years and specify examples of their writing, and I will show you what Significs, even in my sadly inadequate hands, has to say on the matter.

The question of what ought to be and can be done is one which is very clear in my mind, but which I should only suggest in the hope of stimulating others to ‘better my instruction.’

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

October 1907

[...] But I have so much to say in answer to your challenge (which I feel as an honour as well as a boon) that it is perhaps as well that there has been time to reconsider the various points.

First then may I say that you misconceive the entire position of what I am fain, in the language scarcity, to define in words like ‘mother-sense’ and ‘significs’ – both types and methods of reaction and response. And to misconceive (since the outcome may be active for harm) is worse than to miscarry. Yet there is nothing more pragmatic, as there is nothing more significal, than to conceive a healthy life, an organism, a thought babe normal in the highest attainable sense. Why, your fight for Pragmatism and your claim to call it Humanism in a true sense is a more one-sided version of mine – which indeed includes it. It is the offspring of the Racial Matrix. You have ‘crystallised’ thence.

In the end it will be fatal to your cult unless you come to recognise this. Open yourself to it: don’t repeat the Intellectualist mistake on your own new ground.

The intellectualists is now reduced to baking without flour or to making up a scanty supply (from shortage of grain at this moment) by adding dust or rebaking a ground-down loaf with all the gluten gone from it. But you are in danger of doing the same thing *at the other end*: of wanting to thrush the grain of ‘truth’ out of the thresher himself. Will you excuse my carrying the war into your country and give you a hint?

You are in danger of pressing too far your paradox: your reaction from the passive fallacy – from the conception of humanity as a simple Stare at the Ready-made, the Wound-up for all time, the immobile, fixed, unchangeable framework – and your discovery that ‘truth’ also (rather reality) is dynamic, moves and makes through and by us Movers and Makers, Leaders and Impellers, Directors. The very greatness and the consummate validity of the idea constitutes its danger. After all we are planetary, as possibly the Martians with the educative experience of age are vainly trying to remind and warn us.

We have no possible right in the question of truth to arrogate to ourselves the utterly unpragmatic, unjustified character of planet-ejecting suns.

If we have expelled the moon, if we have a satellite, it is a mighty poor affair, and there is no life in it. We don’t seem able even to project baby meteors and thus contribute to the population of the universe! So we are in one sense if not a property, a product. Cosmically and actually we are secondhand, it may be manyhand. But does that prevent our belonging to and doing the work of the Supreme, of ALL THERE IS of the Truest and Best? No: and our ancestry, our lineage, the essence of our ‘true’ nature as born of the divine, *is speaking in the claim you make*. For the Highest Sake don’t be unworthy of your own sun-claim. You are right. We originate, just as one minute drop of a powerful liquid can create a revolution with crash and uproar and volcano-boiling. But that drop would not deny its ocean or pretend to be its author except in a secondary sense: though an ocean may of course in a true sense ‘consist’ of drops, and cells ‘make us up.’ Yes, we who ‘make’ truth (using the word in the sense farthest from manufacture) are ‘made up’ of cells which in their turn are constituted by electrons? Well, for the moment that *will serve our turn*. Electrons for ever! And ‘for ever’ means – our turn. The universe only ‘stands’ to a reason which won’t stand any of our Stickfasts . . . Whirl fast enough and you get the ‘solid’ steadiness which you call an ‘object.’

But our whirling is as yet but that of a baby’s rattle. How do I know this? By virtue of my cosmic parentage. Children, living cells of nucleatic energy, delegates of the Vital Vortex wherein

Good is absorbed and creatively gives back 100fold, be ye worthy of your Embassy, and of the right of your divine Lineage . . .

Your doctrine implies untiring effort and work. Achievements, victory, accomplishment creation – Yes. We are more creative than we know and also more shamefully wasteful of the powers which radium is at last rather suggesting than revealing. We are only on the threshold of that and many secrets. When in the nursery we draw a star, it is always with a focus dot and circle of forth-rushing rays. Even a squib teaches us that lesson. It is our shameful fault that we invent explosives to destroy human values. Think if we invented bombs of creation instead of destruction, the explosion of which scattered irresistible life and good and truth around, rending to fragments the cancerous growths, as the stony hindrances, the cruel prisons of deadliness and corruption? And if we ourselves were quickened; if our slow and feeble beats of life were stirred to a steady vibration incalculable in intensity, like that now supposed of the ether, an explosion might well energise a lifetime . . . When shall we learn to alter experimentally our rates of life, to live 20 times as slow or as quick as we do now? What pragmatic victories would then be possible!

You are right of course about ‘mother’ being for most of us a half word. But it is absurd to starve because as yet – let us suppose – we must either have bre- or -ad! Join them! Where are the whole and wholesome words – rather word-bearing ideas so greatly needed? Do you wish me to call it Human sense or the Progenitive sense or what? Manhood and Womanhood, like boy and girl, are as secondary as the sound and shape of a numeral representing unit or its aggregation and total. [. . .]

Commonsense? Yes much of my suggestion is truly that and so elementary that none of you catechised, skeletonised, un-sensed victims of ‘education’ can make yourselves simply discerning; penetrating enough to know it [. . .]

You little know the Significal responsibility you have assumed in your Pragmatism and yet more Humanism. Your letter shows that while it is precisely this whisper of what I have provisionally to call Primal Sense which has impelled the movement represented by Pragmatism, none of you yet fully understand your own impulse. Only the Living Activity issuing from the marriage of a now divided super-sexual Ident can do the work you want.

For Good’s sake (I always want to add the second vowel to that coarse Teutonic word) let us create and use Himher, Heshe or else some better new terms on that line.

There, you see! I go further than you, as indeed I go further than anyone I know. Still, though we are just feeling the inspiration of Speed, there is value, there is use in slowness. I shall be ready perhaps with some of my answers in 10,000 years. I am the last person to advocate the premature birth of thought, which would thus be abortive, just as I am the last to tolerate the fruit of a monstrous conception. Meanwhile do let us crawl a little more to the purpose and save our breath for something a little less barren than the controversy whereby the pragmatist belies his own protest! [. . .]

Don’t allow us to make your thought into one of many ISMS. At the moment Humanism is the finest definition of the most central startpoint we have. But beware of Lunatism and the crater-pulpit!

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

20 October 1907

[. . .] like many others (doubtless mainly my fault) you still misconceive the entire position which I am fain, in the scarcity of recognised language, to define in words like ‘Mother-sense’ and ‘Significs.’ And to misconceive since the outcome may be active for harm is worse than to miscarry. Since seeing you I have had a long conversation with a critical friend (an Oxford man, a philosopher and logician but not a one-sided intellectual!) whose name I don’t want to use but whose word I

know would have some weight with you; and he practically endorsed the contents which I have tried to outline (or rather indicate) in the enclosed paper. [...]

I have just dipped into the *Journal of Philosophy* of October 10th and there find (p. 574) a definition of Pragmatism which quite fits with my 'mother-sense' and anyhow entirely avoids the linguistic trap of 'made,' 'manufactured,' 'moulded,' on which I venture to suggest, most of the controversy of the subject really turns. By the way did I tell you that I found in the Quarterly for July an interesting indictment of academic language as a corrupt sort of slang, while dialect is your only true English! I sympathise a little there. [...] You will be amused to hear that Mr. B. Shaw says I shall certainly make a 'record' recovery in order to see him! We are in full correspondence.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

[undated]

You ask me very usefully Why then, &c., but of course I might ask you why the world has so long been contented with Intellectualism instead of Pragmatism? However, that would be barren and would agree with you that I must make my answer unmistakeable. It is that of science. All great advance has entailed some atrophy: it has been necessary to reject for some ages the superseded guidance. It is only in the last 2000 years about (a mere episode) in mans history, passed and to come) that the Inceptive Awareness (will that do? as alternative definition) has withered to let the human energy overflow in intellect.

Your protest and mine like the present revival of interest in questions of the Religious and Spiritual are both the signal that the discursive intellect from reigning has begun to usurp; and in the widening Spiral of our onward course must once more recruit its material and its forces from its spring and source.

The reason against the use of Commonsense is mainly its twin brotherhood to the Common-place [...]

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

21 November 1910

I must thank you very much for the kind thought of sending me your book. I shall re-read it with special interest just now when my own new one is at last on the stocks with the help of a very able editor. I read with great interest your review in 'Mind of Father Walker.' I am glad you emphasise the mischief that may be done by 'the highly protective obscurity of language.' Your summing up also (pp. 569–570) and your quotation from the book at the end of your article, are much on my line.

I have been working harder than ever but feel less equal to it especially in the sudden access of severe winter. However I have every incentive to go on while I can, and I shall at least leave a wealth of material to show that my subject is really at the centre of human interest and effort. Even in politics the present inane waste of human energy that benefits no one but newspaper 'bosses' is a forcible witness to the crying need of Significs. It is piteous to see in every Paper the chorus of mutual abuse. For all the while, most of the performers, except those to whom self-interest sums all things, up, see that only in a pooling of effort – in public questions – can a really worthy result be hoped for. Well, Significs – that is one generation brought up to put first the sense and true bearing of all questions, one not partisan but human – is, in worthy hands, our main hope. Instead of rivals theories will become contributors; or opposite only as right and left hands.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

7 April 1911

The more I see of controversy on Pragmatism the more it seems to me to depend, anyhow partly, on the subtle influence of terms and phrases and conversely, of their context. Anyhow, whether I am right or wrong, we may hope to make each other (if not ourselves!) more significantly expressive through the recognition of Significs as the study of the very first of all human needs and that on which all others must depend. Now no one can be more conscious than I am of inadequacy in making such a suggestion: but as no one also moves I have to do my poor best to call serious attention to the matter. That is why I enclose a type-written copy of my introduction to a book which I hope will be out this or early next month. It has been submitted to somewhat drastic criticism [...] If strength allows (and I am 74 this month!) this book must be followed by one or two more volumes showing some of the practical applications of the study. Matters are really beginning to move on now after a rather discouraging stagnation.

You see I am under no illusion as to effecting any radical change among the adults until the adolescents have been (from days of infancy!) reared to carry on and develop the original human penetrative awareness which in fact enabled our 'first parents' to survive in spite of their comparatively defenceless condition. On a much higher plane there is a great deal of that sort of survival needed now. But I mustn't preach any more just now especially as I have been a good deal knocked over by the late trying changes of temperature. I had an interesting little 'conference' the other day as the Headmaster of Eton and Harrow came here to discuss the subject, and Mr. Ogden (my Cambridge representative) was here to meet them.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

5 May 1911

You would have heard from me before this, but that I have been very seedy and especially full of work in the last stage of my book. I have read your Aristotelian Paper with much interest, and agree that you have there provided against a common confusion. You say you cannot remember that I ever tackle intentional ambiguity.

I have not made a separate study of it and could not just now remember where I have touched upon it: but of course it is very important, especially as a good deal of civilized intercourse would be impossible without it. This I think is generally recognised. I am afraid that in the bad sense it is the swindler's and the election agent's stock in trade: but in the good sense it may widen an issue and allow for human tendencies and temperament. I entirely agree that facts cannot be cleared of values. I'm not so sure about your (4) which I quote: 'No absolute line can be drawn between "fact" and "fancy" because (a) fancies often anticipate and grow into facts and (b) "facts" believed as such are often only "fancies."' I am afraid that I think a clear line needs to be drawn between a statement of fact and a fanciful statement.

I notice that Dr Skeat in his last ed. lays all the stress upon truth as moral or ethical.

I hope before long to send you a copy of 'Significs and Language.' It will have to be followed up by a volume of practical (or pragmatistical?) applications; but I am rather dreading the effort. However the material for a series of volumes is all there and will I hope find utilisers.

Victoria Welby to Ferdinand C. S. Schiller

29 June 1911

I had hoped before this to ask you to accept a copy of my book, but I have been far from well, and unable to cope with manifold duties. However I know you will understand this. Though of course open to much criticism I think I may claim that my work makes for the *uncontroversial* side of

your pragmatic views. It seems more and more strange to me that the only subject universally neglected should be that which is the first and last condition of discussion itself, if we are to look for enriching and fruitful combination in the mental world. One may hope that before long it will become a commonplace that the nature and functions of Significance in all its forms – its pitfalls and its promises – and man's control of its economy and its enrichment 'beyond the dreams of avarice,' should take a central place in all education and training. I can only 'turn over the first sods' in such a subject, and if I can regain some lost strength must leave behind me a third book to which the two first have been Introductions. But this is an undertaking for which at present I feel far from fit. In any case I should leave abundant illustrative material for it. [...]

Papers from the archives

6.7. I and Self (1903–1911). A selection*

3 October 1903

Dear Prof. Stout

I have taken advantage of a quiet time at Denton to restudy carefully your little Note on Self. I find it especially helpful. I enclose a rough typed copy of it with the original in case we have misread anything. So far, though it helps to clear, and exposes weak points, it does not seem to undermine my suggestion that in the most interesting of reflexive relations we have something more complex than any other one. The transference of meaning surely does not enable Self to cover the whole ground. *If it did the ethical use of unselfishness would be impossible or at least inexcusable.* The negation of the primary human prerogative could not have ethical value.

I clearly see of course that if we eliminate the 'properties' or 'qualities' of anything, nothing remains. But in the 'I-sayer' we have a unique case: ownership *expressed*. In all other cases the use of 'My' is to indicate what is not, in every sense or wholly, 'Me.' (The case is of course even worse in other languages, e.g. French; where we have 'mon moi').

It seems to me that while on one side it would be instructive to restore the older usage 'hissself' (as herself) and theirselves, it would also be instructive to write, as in French, *same for self*. We should see more clearly the difference. For sometimes we do mean Itsame or Isame, Mesame, and sometimes we mean a somewhat which 'I' can deny or destroy just as 'I' can destroy my eye or my body. The personal relation seems to me conveniently expressed by *I and Self*; and the distinction justifies the ethical usage. But surely it is impossible for Me to act upon Mesame; we have here transcended the 'reflexive relation' and got back to that which creates or makes use of it.

I put down a few more notes on this line suggested by your statement and now enclose them.

[Undated]²¹

A Dialogue

'I wish you would not scold me so terribly' complained the Self to its owner the I. 'You always seem to think that I can get out of my inherited character and be quite another person with quite different ways. Why can't you take me as you find me and make the best of me? At worst I am a

* ['I and Self,' WCYA, Box 27, file 13. This file presents unpublished papers written between 1903 and 1911 and in the main part edited for publication, mixed with notes, studies, poetry, abstracts and extracts from various sources – correspondence, articles, volumes, etc. All edited papers from this file have been included in this section].

21. [Handwritten annotation on top of page reads: 'Parable,' and 'I and self theme'].

good cure for vanity. If I could embody the ideal which is good enough for You, you would be so proud of me that instead of radiating all the life and light and love which you get from your sun-fountain, you would give out self-complacency, self-satisfaction! And then you, the Ray-Centre, would turn inwards and be so conscious of me that your energies would die down into turning round and round me. And I should have to master You and turn you into a mere appendage of me. If that's what you want I don't object! I should get my own way instead of your getting the Way in which indeed you are. And we should go together to the Self-world which ends at its own centre and lives for that; creating for its own pleasure, admiring its own excellence, exacting praise and worship from all, for its own delecta? into the world which the poets and saints sing of and live for? I thought you were to use me, such as I am, for some true work, bringing truth to Man in homely ways and in ways which science teaches? Above all I thought you were to draw my speech onwards and upwards till through his many selves, Man could think out and act upon, because he could express, what now for lack of such expression he cannot think out, cannot even imagine or more than vaguely conceive?

'Well, I must say' answered the I, 'this is a grand lecture to get from one's Self of all people! You who are merely born and merely die on this speck of a planet! You who are always defeating me by sucking in all that I am here to give out, so that I can hardly squeeze it out of you again! You who boast and swagger in my name and invent new religions for your own cult and enjoyment and talk fine about development, and so on! Why, you jay in peacock's feathers, you ass in lion's skin, you have even stolen my name to preach to me with! How dare you say "I" when you know that I am your I, here only to live through and use you...'

But the Self interrupted him: 'Why do you say "You" to me then? You see you can't help yourself. I shall pose as "I" as much as I choose.'

'How can I help it' returned the I, 'while my fellows are content with such an absurdly aim-defeating language, a sort of little frock which fitted them when they were babies and is now quite outgrown. It's true that both you and I lose badly in this way and perhaps waste our time in quarrelling while we can't even say a word to each other without reversing what we have just said, calling "us" just what "we" are not! Suppose you help me instead to suggest how absurd it is to talk of reproaching, even denying and renouncing *my* Self, &c. and then to contradict that by making Self the whole of the I!'

'Well, let's try to clear this horrid confusion up' said the Self. 'And I'm quite willing you should be Master. You see I can't help making everything – even virtue and holiness – centre on what is "me-same". The storing instinct, the Self-centering energy is of course my very reason for being. I must gather and gather, store and store that you, – one with the true "I am", the true "Way", – the truly radiant life-star, may dispense, may give forth, may live and glory in that very giving . . . Well, You know that your self has not even yet the worthy words to say what no more "Self" can dare to claim. So let us work together in the brief flash of my atomic existence. You have all reality to radiate in. . . I have but my own centre of attraction and interest. I can only absorb that you may radiate. But be you faithful to your order and be sure that you will rule and well use – Self.'

[Untitled and undated typescript]²²

Here is a little story. In the days before man took to circling solemnly round and round his 'Soul' or his 'Self' that is, concentrating an absorbed gaze and all his care upon his precious Inside, two people met and began to practice the last new accomplishment, which was conversation. Now these people were simple and direct and knew that they were just Bodies. Is anybody here? Says

22. [Handwritten annotation on top of page: 'Parable,' and 'I and self' theme].

No. 1. Well, I'm Somebody I suppose, answers No. 2. But Somebody is no better than Nobody, returns No. 1. Only Nobodies say that! retorts No. 2.

But presently they got tired of squabbling and No.1. remarked, It seems rather stupid to talk of Ourbodies don't you think? Well, said No.2, I sometimes amuse Mybody by telling other people to bestir Them'bodies instead of Theirbodies. But my brother laughed till he cried at the idea of being Himbody, and my wife who had amused Herbody by bringing us new names for good things to eat, said, I'm all right both ways anyhow. You see, said No.1, we really are Bodies; what else should we be? So let's settle to say always Mebody, Youbody, Himbody, Thembody just as we say Anybody, Somebody and Nobody. Yes, and my brother may laugh if he likes! Says No.2. It's ridiculous to think there's any difference at all between what we are and what we have.

It will be seen that there was one advantage in a Body's identity, being thus embodied. Gin a Body meet a Body coming thro' the Rye, – what are the results? But the face of that Body can never except in a mirror inspect Itsbody, and not only that but Nobody can do anything with Anybody except by bodily means.

Now we have transferred the ideas which belong to Body to a mythical entity called sometimes Person, sometimes Soul, sometimes Spirit, sometimes Self, and as we are never sure of the difference between these and stick to calling them all 'ours' the result is a glorious confusion of identical propositions and also contradictions. Then we gravely explain that personality is a mystery or perhaps an appendix or a series of states, which invent them – whats? Baffled, we fall back upon Minds. That's what we are! Well, then we must never change them or we shall get worse muddled than ever!

25 January 1906

The 'Sub-Conscious'

This is a case where we may ask whether we are not adding to the endless confusion resulting from misuse of inherited image, by gratuitously starting new ones.

The prefix sub- carries the idea of under, inferior, lower, below, or of offshoot, fring[e] as in 'suburban.' This tells in the case of 'subject,' but far more in the case of 'sub-consciousness.' It emphasises the notion that consciousness is confined to the obvious and direct, and that experience of the most momentous kind, presumably racial and the bearer of knowledge far greater in scale and finer in grain than what we usually call that, may safely be ignored and left to be exploited by the fanatical and the fraudulent, the credulous and the [...]²³

Now may it not be suggested that the power of the prefix – so great in many directions – is here disastrous? The appeal is really to consciousness as a surface layer, while another layer not called by that name, something 'inferior,' lies 'below.'

But suppose we try another type of inevitable figure, another form of the consistent spatial appeal? Suppose we assume that consciousness, like our space, has three dimensions? Then what we call that will in one context be the line and in the fuller sense the surface. But the awareness which is our full heritage, – that which creates the Ideal, prompts both speculation and criticism, suggests research, inference, practical application, will be recognised as the cube: that alone will have the volume which consciousness must involve. It is as though we were so immature as to be not yet ready for the full volume of our conscious heritage: we can only be trusted with its bare surface. The figure however fails us, and we are driven to the conclusion that we *are* cubically conscious, and that our business is to thicken our layer and to bring more of the area of response into volitional effect and logical control. At present we are haunted, stimulated, exalted, paralysed, shocked, puzzled, frightened, amused by apparent incursions from a mysterious penumbra of life

23. [The text abruptly stops here in the middle of the line without further signs, not even suspension marks].

which we can neither understand nor control. This seems to involve instinctive knowledge but also a subtle trickiness. It can never be relied upon. But why? Because we either refer it to a discredited animism or to a literalised myth, or else to mere disorder or weakness of brain. But we speak of planes of being or experience and never think that there is presumably for us in a mental sense not only a plane of the equator but also a plane of the ecliptic. . .

15 July 1906 or 07

Finished 12 November 1911 [untitled typescript]

The way of mental salvation as present lies partly through paradox. What is our greatest gift and prerogative? The mortality of our *selves*. As nothing but a self was born, so nothing but a self can die. And that blessing is secured to us – is not left to our blind and wayward choice. Body and Soul – self itself – thank GOD, is mortal. Even as it is we have an obscure instinct of our true welfare. Not merely do we feel that in some sense life is only gained through loss and is reached through death, but the stories of Wandering Jew, Flying Dutchman etc., witness to the deep sense that death and birth are merely poles which we separate but which coming together flash out in a nameless light of reality and invulnerable existence. All our petty self-seeking melts and fades away . . . For the first time we emerge into the answer-world which has prompted our question and stimulated our discontent; the perfect world which justifies our pessimism, the spiritual world which implies our materialism, the ideal world which falsifies our realism. Identity remains real; the Ident which is reflexive only on its stream, not on the source of that stream. It is true of course that the term ‘self’ was originally equivalent to ‘same’ and to ‘ego.’ But now a self is what You *have*, and are apt selfishly to pamper and work for. And what you have you cannot in the full sense be. That is true even of our children, though they be flesh and blood of our flesh and blood, bone of our bone, nerve of our nerve. They are ours, not us.

So long as we do not understand; so long as our aspirations are so incredibly mean that we don’t even see what a curse the granting of our desires that our self should ‘survive’ would be, it is a necessary discipline that the ‘hope of immortality’ should itself die. Our legends of resurrection and ghostly re-embodiments of a wandering ‘self’ would then be seen in their true light; witnesses on the one side to our inveterate mistranslation of the cardinal truths of our nature; and on the other of these truths themselves. There is here an inevitable babyhood. Its immaturity is not our fault; an undeveloped brain cannot think as the adult with brain matured. But there is also an avoidable, a wilful, a perverse babyhood; a childishness from which we are able and are bound to free ourselves. We already see this when we exhort each other to bring will to bear, to resolve that we will live worthily and serve nobly . . . It is to that capacity for high resolve that the appeal lies. Our selves in the end are *ours*, not *us*; they were born, they die. If we will, they will obey us; if we will, if *we* loyally deny and train them, they will grow not only into faithful servants, but also into magnificent instruments (put into our hands for a few momentous²⁴ moments of what we call ‘time’) with which to do great deeds, great in the highest and most enduring sense, albeit micronic in scale. And our very subjection, through language, to the ideas of quantity, or relative amount, causes us to name the treasure of word’s worth in terms of size, and call them ‘great.’ That very subjection also warns us that we could not conceive it or speak of it except by virtue of transcending it – exactly as we cannot protest against a Beyond or try to draw ultimate outlines, fixed boundaries for thought, without in that very act transcending them.

One who thus speaks is of course credited with all the antiquities; with an antiquated philology (and its fanciful etymology), theology, agnosticism; with a dead and gone ‘mysticism’ or ‘materialism.’ Such a one being alive, is at present defined in terms of the mummy and fossil. Well,

24. Note that momentous is not ‘temporal,’ which is secondary, but energetic and pregnant with consequence, decisive of ‘fate.’

that is the fate, I suppose of all onward-sweeping life. And it is itself a narrow thought that we may neglect anywhere what we call the Past – *really the passed by*. Its life and reality are already absorbed into the Present, and are in fact passing each moment into the Future.

This is an unconscious translation of Motion in Space, as the very vocabulary of time betrays. And East and West which to us seem fixed are not ultimate; they are but relative, changing at every step. What word have we for that sense of opposite direction?

It is indeed the ultimate and fruitful sense of what we see as simple opposites, that Significs will give us. Paradox then represents at once our weakness and our strength. At present it is often a refuge, even a desperate expedient. But it points to a more inclusive, a richer, more manfully evolved and constructive – a more expressive speech; as already we have an ever-growing mechanical evolution of which the marvels become richer every day.

Our mechanical victories set the example to reveal the potentialities of their mental analogues and complements, and first of all those of linguistic expression, on which we depend at once for the communication of our highest conceptions and ideals, and for their necessary criticism and test.

26 November 1906

I and Self

The 'I' has many 'selves' (hence perplexing inconsistency, as long as we confound I and my self). The 'I,' belonging to motion and function cannot be self-regarding except in the sense in which you may regard a hair of your head or still more intimately a drop of your blood. The self belonging to 'matter' and structure is, – well – is just there. It beckons and buttonholes you. It anxiously begs you to look, *not* at what it brings but at IT, the precious IT. It usurps the royal I's throne: but here words fail. *We have no Identical vocabulary, only a Selfward one.* And this makes for the fatal suck of the Self. It is a whirlpool down the contracting funnel of which we see the noblest ship as the meanest straw helplessly drawn to perdition. But 'I' am a fountain or at least a drop in one: one in intimate spraying touch with every droplet in our water-laden atmosphere: claiming brotherhood with every drop jewelling the veils of autumn cobwebs, every wisp of free-floating cloud, every veil of fertilising shower, every glory of water's spectral privilege, the glories of rainbow, sunrise, sunset, and of the illuminated splendours of the tropical ocean.

Lost in the ocean? Lost in the fountain? Say rather, at last found there in and all which it implies.

1 December 1906

I and Self

We confound individuality with personality. The Greeks who bequeathed us the metaphor of Person, the actor's mask, knew better. The 'individual' is merely a unit and often but an item: it is absurdly inadequate to express a conscious being (one saying I am and I have) as the Im-measurable or the In-calculable would be. That we should be content with such terms for the most precious of conceptions 'speaks volumes.'

Now the 'Actor's mask' (practically what we now call his make-up) gives us a valuable lesson. The actor has many such masks ready to be assumed, as he plays various parts on the stage of the world. And the idea involves a notable triad: you have (1) the mask, (2) the actor, (3) the character acted. This last again as a rule is 'created': does not actually exist in the world as a definite human Unit. In truth one has a company of selves. Some may be shelled off and left behind: some may be starved: some may be disciplined and trained: one may be our efficient ambassador or viceroy.

But no one of our Selves can be wholly Us. We do not yet know who We are and still less who We might, in Identical Recognition, become. The Ident is still a secret. This is the cry of the Cell.

The 'cell' itself is another unfortunate idea, as science is always helplessly complaining. Its associations falsify its physiological use. Still we must use it till the great Day comes when all these things shall be automatically judged, and we shall gain with the truer idea the truer image that fits, instead of the misfit which misleads and makes much of mind abortive.

11 December 1906 [untitled typescript]

When we are conscious of bearing the seed of a fuller life than we can yet live, it is pitiful to be made by a language now steeped in seething falsity – the product of vital decay – to talk virtual nonsense. From the point of view of conscious being, carrying within it the great gift and character of Identity, the name In-dividual is worse than inadequate for definition. It is essentially barren. In order to Be – and really to Be is to be Given – what is impotent for fertile being IS not; there *must* be overflow, there must be in some sense gift. True that in the arithmetical sense the bare unit may added to and may multiply. But that is just because it has no content and no identity, as it has no fertility. Full Identity is generative, is a Giver of its very self. The multiple may have a character and powers of its own, just because it is on the way to become a combination. The whole difference may be compared to that between physical mixture and chemical combination: the unit is merely condition of these: it is contentless and thus emptiest of all empties, except a unit-less world.

Only on the ground and in the one form, – that of fertility, of the creation of fresh selves out of very substance, we are and must remain, Divisible but not Divided; dissected, analysed, but not isolated or belittled, not scattered or broken up. The unity of the organism – the richest Whole we know – is this, and has been this from the very outset of its conception.

The master-signal to us therefore is, Never divide, and never confound; but to the first part must be added – Except to generate more life. For here lies the secret of our disastrous use of Individual for the You and the Me of the human order. It is the negative, the mere protest (as here the prefix *In-*betrays) against what we might be but must not be. Out of the Not nothing comes. We are Dividuals both in a good sense and a bad sense: if we are individual in any sense we are merely items, indeed merely points to start a line from: neither length, breadth, nor depth is ours. Negligible quantities indeed, mere postulates of quantity, to which quality is impossible.

But if not typically in-dividual, what are we? *Identical*; and that in a sense compared to which all other identity is poor. We have here the Ident who is capable of indefinite enrichment; in whom indeed enrichment is summed up. There are many grades of Identity. That attained so far by humanity is the highest that man knows, except That which he infers; That which he knows that he Signifies or at least Symbolises. He must never forget but carefully cultivate his power of working inference, his sense of the implications of experience. For at least he has no excuse for reversing the discovered order of things and postulating the earth as a mother-world round which the sun and his brethren of light circulate. Thus, that he should be content to express his nature as ultimately 'individual' and to conceive 'social' as the complement (or multiple merely) of this, is strange indeed. As well call himself a point at once or even a dot!

Let us beware, then, of dividing the True Human Being into mutually independent constituent atoms while denying the divisibility of these, thronged worlds that they are. And again, let us beware of confounding the infinitely rich complexity of distinction which need not imply separation. One would think that Life was too brief, our glimpse of it too fleeting and too obviously poor, to waste the precious opportunity either in Dividing for mutual exclusion, or in Confounding which makes both for poverty and for chaos. Dividing to Combine and Re-combine is of course another matter, since the very object of that division is combination. But to confound is to *Sacrifice* Dis-

inction; and that carries its own doom. The greatest form of Division we know, as we have already seen, is of the essence of Life as we know it and of its initial glory, love. Life is to bud off – more life. Its very cells are to proliferate to that end. On the other hand division easily associate[s] itself with defeat: Divided we fall: but united we stand; yes, and act.

So we must not cut up; and we must not be fragments or even mere sandgrains. Just because we are dividual – just because it is possible to break up into lower forms of life, as indeed after death, we do, we must see that, like the Nation, the Empire, the Community, the Race, we are not Divided but United. We must see that we do not confuse and therefore confound the bare nonentity which cannot be divided (even to give Life), with the potential multi-millionaire which is the highest form of life; that which can rightly claim *in the fullest sense*, Identity.

17 February 1907²⁵

Conscious (Brain-born) Identity

The idea of Reflexive Identity, itself the product of one form of cerebro-mental activity and essentially a reflected image (as of trees in rippling, ruffled water) becomes, like many others by which we strive to convey or express the relation of the Seer to the Seen, the ‘subject’ to the ‘object,’ actually dangerous, unless we can take it into and test it by the criteria of the Mother-sense. Here it is seen to refer to the possibilities of the highest worm-form, the serpent. The eyes in the highly developed snake can examine every part of its own organism *except its own head and its own eyes*.²⁶

But unhappily we always assume that the examination of our own head and its brain-contents, used like the body by us all as the obvious analogue of our mind or ‘soul,’ is impossible. And we cannot even, as the snake can, examine by our own direct eyesight, our own back. We need for this an independent reflecting (or doubly reflecting) instrument. Now if we are prepared to include in our imagery of the mental world the ever-widening world of instrumental extension of sense: if we are prepared to go for this to the world of science and borrow its ever-growing wealth of scope and graph, of Instrument as of Engine, well and good. We shall still be only on the way to the more perfect instrument, but *on the way* at last we shall be. And great indeed will be the gain to Psychology and therewith to ‘philosophy’ and ‘metaphysics.’

Meanwhile we suffer tragically from the idea that it is possible for Identity to examine, analyse, and describe the Ident-Examiner with its own resources merely. We are tactically comparing the Mental Man with a Mental Snake or a tape-worm: we are denying our own royal privilege of a fully developed eye with its inexorable corresponding limitation of being unable to turn inwards, (as rolling round on an axle): we are always talking of an impossible Introspection; we are always discussing our ‘views’ of our ‘inner’ life – of our mental brain or spine. The consequences are many and are all defeating. And on these rests our conception of our Personation – in its highest form our Impersonation – of the Cosmic Ident.

25. [Handwritten annotation on top of page: ‘I and Self’].

26. Here however we must remember another typical organism contrasted with the snake and with ours, a lowly and ancient one; that which has not yet differentiated the light-sensitive organ and whose very skin can ‘see.’ Possibly that creature might distinguish the light reflected by its own organism from that reflected by all else, and thus in a primitive sense *reflect* upon its being and character. Meanwhile such an organism, while lacking our precious retina and all which that involves, has the advantage over us of seeing light, of being enlightened, at every part of its surface. This is the mental ideal, when combined with the highest development of local vision.

[Undated typescript]²⁷

I and Self

The whole gist of my suggestion as to the secret of Conscious Identity, of That which says 'I' am and 'I' have, may be translated first into an astronomical dialect. When a Self 'usurps the throne' of the Possessive and Directive Ident, it is a satellite usurping that of the planet round which it describes an orbit; or again it is a planet pretending to Sunship, it is one of many offshoots pretending to be a Generative centre. But it thus translates into a biological dialect, and answers to the Leaf or the Petal claiming to be the Stem, to the eyelid or the nostril, the skin or the hair, claiming to be the 'heart' in the most representative sense of that term.

And further it translates, first into a psychological dialect, answering to the usurpation by the evolved linguistic dialect of the evolving centre of articulate Expression. From this evolving centre all languages proceed. Next we come to logical, philosophical, mathematical dialects, claiming to be independent but really issuing from that central and original fount of all conscious response and mental power, analytical or constructive, which may be called broadly the Mother-sense, the central Awareness of a world which calls to Man not merely to react but, through faithful reaction, to create.

These 'translations' are of course rough and faulty; indeed what is here meant by translation is still at best in an early infancy. But they may broadly indicate the value, in questions of the vital identity in what we call personality or – the falsest of words – individuality, of the sharp distinction between what we *have* and what we *are*.

You may *have* many selves as indeed you may have many hairs or teeth – or only one; but you *have* them; that at least our English idiom recognises. *You* have to choose the best and see that you make the most of it, as you can only work through Self. Always *through* and *by* and never *for*.

But what you *are* is another matter; and that to us is the most inaccessible of mysteries unless we can enter the greater Life from which there is an out-look not merely upon something of Ours but upon its Owner. Language however here, as usual, balks us. The secondary having successfully posed as the primary, language has been its accomplice so that the needed recognition can hardly yet be put into anything but paradoxical form.

The signifi- cant see-saw is invariable: an error, a misinterpretation of experience, starts, creates, a given form of expression. This crystallises into a fixed habit and effectually rules our thinking. That which we can only express in given forms falls under an *unconscious* slavery to those forms.

It is therefore from the despotism of such forms that we need emancipation. From being admirable servants they have become insupportable masters. And we are thus so far demolished that such insurgence as we do effect, being sporadic and casual or serving only to attract attention, to emphasise the unusual, or to save trouble, is mostly in the end injurious. It is by a 'stroke of luck' that now and then we thus 'hit upon' an acquisition in vocabulary or idiom, or on the other hand shake ourselves free from the incubi of wantonly distortive or blurring forms of speech.

This vital need must no longer be left at the mercy of a stroke of luck or a random hit, or popular caprice.

Above all we must more worthily, more significantly ask the questions, Who are we? What is Man and his personal value, or his specialised atomic concentrative identity? What here is the true difference and relation between the enduring race and its brief, its swiftly passing single lives? Are we to be compared to seeds, or further to 'cells' – again, like 'individuality,' a word which betrays us by calling up a false idea – or the temporary concentrations of energy which we see as a tornado, as the eruption of a volcano, or as the appearance of an insect plague?

Or are we as units in the greatest of sums, items in the greatest of totalities, rays of the greatest of suns, beats of the greatest of hearts?

27. [June 1907, in handwriting on top of page, presumably date of editing].

No: for we may represent the Unique. That is the word which might well supersede the intolerably untrue 'individual.' It is in fact just our dividuality which constitutes the richness or our gifts. We can, but must not be, divided; we must include the divisible in the greatest of Wholes, the organic Whole, which as risen to the level of the human, may crown each one of us as unique. But as our bring grows we may come to see that through this very exaltation we can afford to divide ourselves as Life has divided itself, for a royal purpose and a divine ascension, that is, in order to re-concentrate in ever nobler Unities.

July 1907

Man and Superman

'And I, my friend, am as much a part of Nature as my own finger is a part of me. If my finger is the organ by which I grasp the sword and the mandoline, my brain is the Organ by which Nature strives to understand itself.' ('Man and Superman,' Bernard Shaw, p. 133)

Brain, Nature's Self-understanding *Organ*. She in life-generation first translates fibrillar plasm into the mind-generating brains of a Plato, a Newton, a Darwin, and then the sense-thrill of the Planet and the Animal into the strong Wave of the Conscious Will and its Director the Reason. Hitherto Nature has only succeeded in producing a child who would fain be a matricide, but takes refuge in the coward's weapon of treachery and defamation. When she prompts our truest and noblest actions (which we call defeating *her* criminal cruelty!) we either invent a hostile source of *her* inspiration – which is the very breath of our Life – or we tell her she is a fool and that we know better than the very Inspirer of our Discontent and the Urgent Pleader with our recreant Apathy and our decadent worship of the Pleasure-Idol whose final work is in truth the sating and the sickening.

When our mother-nature *gives* us Selves and bids us make the most of them, (just as we train our sense and our hands to serve *us* and the world of our fellows), we quit Her Throne of the *I* and descend to the slum of Self-worship. Instead of *I am, therefore I think* (p. 119), our Foreward becomes, *I mean to enjoy My Self, and thus to become only that Self*: the Willing Hand has now become the Usurper of the crown of the brain-filled head. The Octopian Suckers of Self have conquered the Radiant *I*, the fecund mother of love and truth and service to whom Life is the Joy of a Fountain, or the Joy of the Singer, the Painter, the Thinker, the Worker, who are pouring Selves out for Man, not nursing them into a cancer.

7 August 1907

I and Self

Poor 'I' is obliged to speak only in terms of a self, which we speak of as *ours*. The English idiom in this last case gives us the truth, but we take no advantage of it and quietly violate our own elementary grammatical rules. No 'educator' ever gives a child or youth²⁸ a hint of this in the most important of all contexts, that of human identity. There – where all hangs upon it – we coolly confound the *Is* with the *Has*.

Some foreign idioms, it is true, do not give us this priceless distinction.²⁹ But as our idiom does give it, let us at least see what we ought to gain by it. First we gain consistency. True identity in its fullest as most elementary sense *is not reflexive*. It may bend round and touch some *part* of its organism, framework, surface, some constituent of its nature; but *it* cannot touch *It* in the inclusive sense; the Whole, Only, Essential Ident. Man, the *Sayer* of I am, I will, I act, do, make, the Sayer of I think, I know, as I live, I love, can only touch or recognise what is, it may be,

28. Note the loss of Mother-sense. *Youth* the most inclusive word we can have is narrowed down to the masculine!

29. N.B. to ask a Comparative Philologist what the general tendency is *now* known to be.

an integral part of his unity, the most intimate of properties, the true delegate and viceroy, the truest representative specimen, the ‘personal’ embodiment of Him. Man’s dominating Self, like his healthy and flawless Body, may worthily represent him, and HE may be able always to act worthily *through* that Self. But in that case he can never deny, renounce, reproach or ignore it, just as He can never complain of, accuse, condemn HIM. He can only condemn somewhat of *his*. It is mere tautology. The Highest of Identities saying I am, I will, I act, do, make, un-make, I restrain, direct, control, destroy, and throughout I think, I know, is *always* Owner: it IS owner and ruler and it Has – self. It is Conscious Being and it *has*, – an[d] embodies self with an ancestry, the head of a hierarchy of selves belonging to a given race on a given planet on a given solar system, of a given form and degree of vitality and of mind.

I have to choose among my selves and make the very most of that poor and unworthy Means. The true ‘I’ again, in His-Her turn, is a Way – one it may be of unthinkable millions and *yet* Unique – passing through truth to Life . . . Language fails miserably, since we have so far failed in our day to develop the Mother-tongue or to use the Son’s critical intellect to rectify and enrich and elaborate it; to make it adequate, ably, profoundly, penetratingly, unerringly, universally, *predictively*, significant. Thus the clearer our sense of reality, the more cruelly our outworn, antiquated and inadequate language betrays us. The remedy is easy: world-wide conference, and common action, and education of the adult by adolescence, that the adult mind may recover and *train* the growth power of the child.

30 September 1907 (4th edition)³⁰

Religion as Moral Eugenics

The religious Entity is the Race: its Concrete is Man. It has more than an object, since that is a semi-existent dependent on a subject, its *complementary equal*: it has real significance. It reverses the abstract and the absolute: [the prefix ab- is privative: at best it only denotes what takes away, ignores, reduces to skeletal formula; lets go, lets out, relieves, releases. Thus, if we allow the great NO to dominate under the plea of no ‘content’ or ‘concrete,’ no ‘limit,’ no ‘boundary,’ or no ‘barrier,’ that is, under the glamour of the abstract or the absolute, we are deservedly left in the Great Inane].³¹

It is Man’s, in forms which range from the embryonic or even the grotesque to the noble and the sublime, in order that he may conceive and bring forth the great affirmation and posit of the universe, his true heritage and his wherefore. It does not empty, it fills: it sets free the chrysalis, – the cocooned ‘soul’ – into a world of what answers to unimaginable and yet instrumentally recordable thrill; a winged freedom pulsating with orderly, insistent, and fruitful Reality. ‘Sets free,’ yes. It is blasphemy to connect the idea of bondage in thought, with a freedom which before all things is determined and ruled – the freedom of faith which is loyalty to conscious and willing acceptance of *order* in life and truth, and which treads the Way to a divine goal. Thus religion – a word miserably abused and made, instead of the consummately natural link between all men, of all races, at all times and in all places, a *breakage* of such link – gives us a the really Human Being of which we are integral representatives.

Once more: we need the *inclusive* converse of the abstract and the absolute, we want the concrete and the concentrate. No fear but that these last can always at need be abstracted and absolved, with a natural absolution! Each ‘individual’ must be the epitome, as each must be a fertilised life-cell, of humanity. We can never of course be individual – only a Mathematical point or an Arithmetical unit can be that. But we must implacably resist possible *division* in the fission sense while pressing possible *distinction* to its furthest point; and we must learn ceaselessly to

30. [Handwritten annotation at top of page: ‘also I and Self’].

31. [Alongside the text in square brackets is the handwritten annotation ‘omit’].

rise, just as in eugenic response to cosmic order the Race has to be born again and from above. Each human ident must be a summary as well as a germ of humanity: of Man, the master and ruler of his self or 'selves,' his 'personalities' or his 'multiple personality,' and of those 'parts' that he is here, as Actor in the highest sense, *to play*; those Characters that he is here to 'personify,' and among which he is to gain power to choose the noblest he can know, in order to *impersonate* that to act that out; transmitting its crown and its powers to his descendents, physical or mental. For boundless are the potentialities of the being we are blindly content to call merely an 'individual.'

True that dividuality means either Motherhood or deathward maiming, – that is, Man's supreme privilege *or* his greatest danger. Now as things are, only one of two separated 'sexes' knows directly what it is to be physically dividual *in a life-generating division*; to the other it is only deathward maiming: hence, doubtless, *in our present over-masculinised language*, the universal and contented use, in European civilisation, of the term 'individual' for each separate human being.

But more. Both sexes are not only physically divided but essentially *distingual*; and the richer the distinction, the fuller and nobler the life. *That* is one of those lessons of 'personality' which we have mainly yet to learn; and it is implicitly included in the conception of Eugenics. Let us then work steadfastly and patiently for its gradual recognition and its practical fruition. Let us understand that with eyes necessarily blindfolded to all but the uncounted treasures within their own special domain and purview, the 'men of science' in this age are working for ends at once more glorious and more intimately the concern of every one of us, than either we or they can yet safely realise, or even, in a tradition-saturated language, adequately express.

'Religion' needs a better word: the great word 'Moral' must connote the guide, not the slave, of convention and law: and the difference between Man as conscious identity, the Sayer of I AM, I will, with what that Ident not *is* but *has*, must be insisted on. As it is, 'we' contradict 'our selves' at every step, and then complain of the result! We must learn to control, to direct, to utilise, while transcending, the self which is centrally and vitally *ours*, on this planet and in its presumably embryonic life.

21 October 1907³²

The 'Self' is Singular or Plural. It is ultimately numerical. You may have one or more 'selves.' But the 'I' – the Human Ident, is neither. It is only quantitative in the inheritative sense. For the quantitative issues in the qualitative which in a sense is its product. The Quantitative is a matrix whence (as we see in chemistry) issues the *unlike*.

And nothing can seem more unlike Quantity than its own product Quality: as yet we have failed to find the common term which, like so many in this speechless and garrulous age, is urging its services upon us.

Thus the contrast is obvious: but in spite of the lesson of sex, the fertility of 'opposites' is not recognised in language or realised in thought.

23 November 1907

I and Self

The 'I' *effectively IS*; since it belongs to the creative element of the universe, the energy of conception which includes the begetter and is both re-producer and evolant (or evolutant?). Thus the I is one with the active and with the 'actor' who can and does *impersonate and play* an inexhaustible variety of persons and parts, while remaining inviolably identical and illimitably representative.

32. [In handwriting on side of page: 'I & Self'].

We ARE in acting. But We act through and by – what?

Now as usual we have here light and shadow; and the shadow, the darkness wherein we are blind and stumble and blunder, is pretence, is mendacity. The lower lives rightly simulate in order to escape. And we all feel that to save life we may, we even ought to mislead a criminal or a homicidal maniac, since *morality is human service*, and that necessarily begins with the survival both of the served and the servant. But *that* simulation (or dis-simulation: a curious linguistic paradox?) is no pretence; and its deception is as innocent as that of a ‘mock sun.’

So in personality – a playing of one part, or, as ‘multiple,’ of many parts. The genius is the ideal complex of many such parts, distinction but never for a moment divided – still less ‘at odds’ or dislocated. Now therefore, having dealt with the supreme owner and endower; with one who is in doing and above all in giving – which is essential being and conversely — we want a word for the *part played*, and for the *personation* as distinct from the personator. In the English idiom – now prevailing in an ever-increasing proportion of the ‘civilised’ and certainly dominant world of men – we *have* one. We can, not only speak of *the Self*, like *the soul* and *the person*, as ours, but we can speak of self in the plural of ‘selves’; which we cannot normally do of the soul or even of the person. And more, we can even renounce and disown self as we cannot even do in the case of the person, much less in that of the soul or the so-called spirit.³³

Yes, we have a mighty privilege, one which is at the very nerve-centre of Ethics, and as yet almost wholly unrecognised. We may arraign, judge, condemn our-selves. But *we* are amenable to a higher judge. Our reflective identity can reflect upon and even discuss all that can in any sense be said to *belong* to it. If we take the image of the serpent, it can look at or touch with its long tongue any part of its body *except its own brain*, or rather the implicate of that brain *‘Itsame.’*³⁴

I have said that even with the reflective sinuosity of the serpent, we could not reflect upon that which is the agent or at least the condition, of reflective power – the brain. But of course in those coming forms of experience (now in its infancy, or, in the genius, on the threshold of adolescence) which in a derived sense may be called ‘future’³⁵ we may acquire an ‘x-ray’ power of seeing through our skull in an inverted mirror, or of turning our eyes *inwards*³⁶ or of letting them move round our heads – as the flat-fish have so conveniently succeeded in doing in a long generative adaptation – and thus seeing brain-aspects from different view points. Anyhow then we might have *some* warrant – though *we* must still elude the scrutiny of *us* – for drawing conclusions as to the nature and prospects of what, with an often burglariou appropriation, we are pleased to call our minds! In this perhaps we are not ineffectively, but quite unconsciously satirised, by the advertisement of *The Origin and Nature of Man*, complete in 1 vol. For 5/-, postage 4d! Truly a miraculous author that and an obvious Superman . . . but a naïve letter of cat out of bag, and a prodigal giver away – of himself and his like. Are any of us quite guiltless of this?

[Undated and untitled typescript]

What is the organic form of Reflexive Relation? The head may bend over and, as the centre or spring of consciousness, may ‘reflect’ upon and ‘look at,’ the chest, the abdomen, the knee, the foot.

But conscious reflexive identity is neither reciprocal nor reversible. The brain cannot ‘see’ the bodily back; and the knee or foot cannot ‘see’ the face. And except as an acrobatic feat or in ‘tetanus’ no higher animal can ‘reflect’ both ways. The head as main centre of sensation and as seer

33. I say ‘so-called’ because of our astonishing confusion of usage and reference in this truly pregnant but to most of us barren and tricky word.

34. Which can never be rightly called ours, for we *have* not but *are Itsame*.

35. Are Future and Futile related?

36. As we so crazily suppose we can now do, calling the absurdity, ‘Introspection’ and writing quite solemnly about it!

supremely represents the organism. But parts of that organism are beyond its direct perception by *reflexion* and it can neither see at all, nor normally bend backwards. Thus human personality, as a reflexive identity is radically imperfect. A true reflexive identity would bend over in any direction; and any part would equally 'see' or 'touch' any other.

Now we are bound to make a physiological analogy fit as far as it goes. But in this case the 'reflexive relation' refuses to fit just as it is most wanted. If it is expressed by 'self' then we must suppress the possessive pronoun. It will be said that in English we are on the way to this in 'itself,' 'himself,' 'themselves'; and that 'meself,' 'usself,' will follow. But I suggest that the current English idiom though we philosophically ignore it and are inconsistent in its colloquial use, does in fact express a distinction of cardinal value. For instance it may be disputable but is not mere nonsense to say that You or I have many selves. But if we are dealing with a reflexive relation such as we find in the physical world, it is absolute nonsense. If on the contrary 'I am' precisely that which may *have* one or many selves, as an actor has many parts, plays many characters, and as a 'self' may have good or bad points, then we may detect an ascending grade of identity just as we find ascending grades of complexity throughout the evolutionary process. Self, like body, then becomes (though as we have seen, but partially, imperfectly) a complex 'reflexive relation,' in its turn surpassed by the 'I.'

Our religious ideas may be taken from the lower or higher form of reflexive identity. We may suppose a world-self having its own satisfaction and welfare as chief concern. Or we may conceive a world-I as the Essential Radiator, Giver, Generator, Quickener, &c. As a fact we unconsciously do both. We see GOD as a Self and make Him act as such: make Him pursue 'pleasure' (in creation, &c.) as end, and crave for service and perpetual adulation from all 'creatures' under promise of reward or threat of punishment. Or we see GOD as 'I am' and we find Him Essential Being, Directive Action, the Source of both and of consciousness, reason, knowledge, virtue, holiness. 'He' it is that begets and conceives, that leads and supports, that reveals, that vitalises, that opens, that transfigures, that consecrates. 'He' it is that 'inspires' the what and how and why. The organism has the creative energy which we call life: it is 'living.' So the Self has the creative energy which we call the I and is but its mental embodiment. But the I which is Self-owner and Self-director gives this higher divine image.

Even if such a thing were thinkable I have no right to sacrifice 'I.' It is not mine to give. But in truth 'suicide' in the sense of identity-murder is impossible. It is only my living organism which 'I' can 'kill.' The right or wrong of that as always is a question of motive. I belong to Another just as 'mine' belongs to me.³⁷ Meanwhile a question here presses – though that cannot be answered until the suggested distinction has been worked out. Death thus, like birth, affects the I. The dread ethical question which awaits us is 'What have you done with and made of, your Self?' This question is inherent in the constitution of things. We must needs 'hear' it in a thunder of divinely natural appeal. But the whole point of the question is that the Self is ours, not us.

[Undated and untitled typescript]

Self is first of all the form of expression appropriate to a reflexive relation. E.g. 'The wave dashes (itself) against the rock.' An entity which however often we think of it, is identical with itself. 'The world after a series of changes will reach the self-same phase as [omissis].' At every point of the discussion the self-same confusion emerges.

This use has primarily no especial reference to conscious beings as ends. *All entities are capable of reflexive relations* – except perhaps the absolute. But of all beings known to us those

37. The question whether freedom (not of will, that is of course meaningless, but) of choice belongs to mine as well as to Me, cannot be treated here. We can only see that a distinction does everywhere emerge.

which have the most interesting reflexive relations are human minds. Hence we call them by a transference of meaning ‘selves’ in a special sense. Such are self-approval, self-knowledge, self-centred, self-seeking, self-sacrifice, suicide. All these are relations of a complex unity = (I) in one aspect, the same complex unity = (I) in another aspect.

To ask if an animal is a self may mean, Has it these especially interesting reflexive relations, e.g. can it consciously sacrifice itself, or commit suicide. In this sense the question is debateable. But if the word self is taken in its general meaning, animal is certainly a self, and so for the matter of that, is an inanimate *thing*.

[Undated and untitled typewritten note]

‘My self, our selves,’ these expressions embody a useful recognition as expressing special intimacy of relation; though even so *we* may be ashamed of our selves as of an act or desire which *We* – though not our selves – repudiate. It is *We* who have conscience and thus reproach our selves which have none. So that ‘selfish’ is always a condemnatory epithet. The word *Myself* is a compound like *My life*, *My race* or *My country*, or again like *My soul* or *My being*. All these sound grotesque because they are not in use; and *My being* is inadmissible as that should be *Me being*; the *Me* behind whom I cannot get, since *I am* that.

13 February 1908³⁸

One of our idiomatic absurdities is the *rebuke*, You forget yourself. If only one could! The man rebuked has really forgotten all else: the self has so to speak blurted itself out in an unguarded moment. But the man who has learnt to forget self is the only true Follower of One who had no need to forget it since it was remembered only as servant and sufferer, because Giver and Sacrificer; and could say, not as a great and moving speech, but as a recognition of the true human status, Weep not for Me.

3 July 1908 (Mr. G.)

I and Self

When we speak of halving ourselves or our minds so that part of us is defining, analysing, judging, explaining the other; Mind discussing the ‘nature’ of mental activity; We are assuming what Prof. Stout calls Reflexive Identity.

Now let us, as science would always have us do, appeal or at least refer, not to a fanciful or forced or casual analogy, but to that actual experience whence we draw all such expressions as ‘reflection’ halving our selves or our minds, the one facing or examining the other – and so on.

The crowning case for the present purpose is the retinal image (true that it is in the first place upside down and has to be reversed: a profoundly suggestive fact). Now the retina will give us the image of, enable us to *see* some part of our own bodily form or outline. Unluckily it is not on a swivel, nor can its ‘vision’ penetrate the organic tissues so as to enable us to scrutinise our insides! But more, *the one image it cannot give is – its own*. It cannot halve itself or reflect *upon* itself. True we have two co-operating retinas, *but they cannot see each other* or accomplish the equivalent of mind discussing mind.

Our ‘minds’ can examine someone else’s retina, alive or dead, or the mirror reflection of our own. Can our minds examine, analyse, define each other? Must we not confess that each of us, instead, is a citadel of secrecy, often involuntary, from our fellows? Who really understands us? Who do we really understand? No one. Up to a certain point, yes. But no further. . . our nearest

38. [Annotated in handwriting at top of the page: ‘I and Self’].

still grope, still mistake, still have to sympathise with, trust us, act with us. But they cannot really know us or we them. Intercourse remains tentative and experimental.

There is a deep reason for this, but our language is too poor worthily and accurately to express it. When we try to do it, we wander into vague words like soul, spirit, personality, character – Self. But the question who are WE, who own these supposed treasures even in the sense that a mother owns the unborn babe who will become an independent life, is never asked. Who am I who discuss these matters and can never be called *mine* except in meaningless contradiction – Who am I?

Our visual organ is duplicated, so is that of hearing. We have two arms, two legs.

How can we be so wildly mystical as to suppose that the animating conscious ‘I’ can return upon itself, as the body’s face can return upon and see or touch *parts* of itself though not the whole or the inside? Yet truly *I* can return upon *my* self. We have here a true idiom and one infinitely suggestive. On all that in any sense is *mine* I can return, and thus study and discuss it. But never can I reflect upon that which reflects. Never can I discuss that which alone discusses, having conceived. *Self*-examination, yes. But *I*-examination has no sense. It is even verbally non-sense.

In the history of life so far as we have traced it the bisexual has preceded the unisexual. Now we are beginning to discover that germinally the bisexual still persists, the elements of the other are in each. And is it not presumably so in the history of mind? *In that sense* it may be that ‘for the sake of’ greater results parthogenetic mind has been succeeded by separation of mind-sexes. In that case, the theory of mind discussing mind becomes once more tenable. Mind in one of us can certainly fertilise or ‘inspire,’ and conversely can certainly conceive and bring forth the result of such vital contribution and impulse. All true intercourse is in some sense a reflection of that duality which is the condition of an ascension, an elaboration of vital types and forms. Or shall we say that intercourse between minds is always provisional and always aims at the production of a new Unity, itself to seek its complement?

3 October 1908 [untitled typescript]

The first duty of Man is to make the most of, but carefully to control, that admirable servant but arch-usurper, Self. Else it is liable to become, like the Minister of slavish origin to whom all power is entrusted while the Ruler carouses and sleeps, the most greedy of tyrants. It degenerates in a supreme scale of generation. It becomes Octopian; and its great limbs wind round, its suckers fasten upon its Master who – more than Ruler – is Owner. And He is paralysed by His. The IS is killed by the HAS. Where self commands, where its suckers fasten, the true life ebbs, the Ident dies. What then is the MAN, the Ident who is the true Sayer of I? He is the Self-giver as the Self-director. He works through the secondary, the Possessed identity. The Man, the true Sayer of I and Mine is the Radiator; radium for the first time expresses him. His self is the Absorber, is absorbent. And if there is to be radiation there must in some sense be absorption or at least cumulative concentration. Well is that Absorbent named Person and the personal. Through Self Man personates or more nobly, impersonates. He ‘acts,’ plays his part in the world and its living drama.

Time was when the actor wore a mask; now he makes his own mask by his command of Expression. But does he command Expression? Is there nothing we cannot adequately worthily express? Does our articulate expression correspond to, is it as efficient as gesture, attitude, action? Has Man, again, learnt the algebra of all Expression?

We say of man, in some great crisis, His act, his look his attitude *spoke volumes*.

Does our very articulate sound, does every word we write *tell*? Does the flexible order of ‘language,’ the complex web of laryngeal and lingual Speech serve us, as an Organ more abundantly and delicately perfect than either our singing voice or our violin-playing may be at the highest point of development? Do they serve on their own ground even as the all but living and

sensitive scientific instrument recording and magnifying vibrations of unimaginable delicacy and world-wide distance, do?

23 September 1909 [untitled manuscript]

There is in fact a sense and a main one in which mortality may well be the most precious of our privileges. Even now we speak of dying to a lower and of new birth to a higher trend of life. The new birth here connotes a new individual but not necessarily a new Identity. Even now we say, though with but little heed, here as elsewhere, of the implications of our speech, that in some act that we regret we were not our selves. But of course *we* are not ultimately our selves or anything that can properly be called *ours*. We ought to say, 'My self, in that act, far from *being*, betrayed Me: hence I repudiate and am ashamed of that traitor who misrepresents Me.' And I also feel that a self may bring dishonour upon an Ident who *in some sense* is ancestrally responsible for it and indeed ought always to govern it. Thank GOD that 'self' is ephemeral. No really great entity in his 'heart of hearts,' his sacred place, the altar of his being, desired eternity for an agent which required stern control, whose insatiable cravings for monopoly, and whose invulnerable complacency and vanity compelled him, the Owner, the Ident, to live with amour on and in the sleepness vigilance which we call that of conscience. Such a one should surely turn with relief to the fact that in any case he did not choose his ancestry; and that as his personal self, like his body, was born, so it dies. The two ideas are in fact inseparable; and to use the one and cancel the other is merely like postulating heat without cold, the large without the small.

How far any Ident – any Owner of a self of which He, in the nucleus of his being, sees at least the secondary character – can or could choose his descendants, is virtually the issue, tentatively raised, of Eugenics. It means the effort to secure in the future, passing, fleeting, selves that shall well and ever better serve and represent in each case that Identical which is more than im-mortal – the mere complement of the in-natal – but at least both. It means the emergence of clearer and more consistent views of Human Identity and the increasing control, direction and development by the Ident of its present representative. Of course the question of expression here arises. It may be objected that 'self' is the ultimate term. In that case we must never speak of it as *ours*, and we must acquire another term for the possessed personation. Eugenics in fact ultimately means or ought to mean the fact that the generation of selves must subserve the interests of pure and permanent because 'impregnable' Idents. Surely we shall not much longer be content with an Identity which rests on or causes a grammatical confusion between what we are and thus cannot *have*, or have and thus cannot *be*.

19 January 1910

I and Self

What is the supreme function of the Ident's *self*, that priceless means, loyal minister, trusty ambassador, or ambitious traitor and despicable usurper, who may be tempted by the supine aloofness of his mandatory, – the Power he represents and serves in learning, serving, transfiguring worlds – to assert his own supremacy? To master the worlds for Identity in difference, that is the mission of Our selves. The Ident is one in all, but also ALL in each. The Ident's name is first multiplex – We, Us, then complex, I, Me. That Ident has, possesses, works through – a self, or even many selves. Now that Self is the best and noblest of servants, unless his master is ignobly unfaithful, allowing his status and authority to be usurped. Instead of radiating, 'I' thus becomes a sucking whirlpool: instead of concentrating treasure to give forth, 'I' becomes a hoarder of treasure to keep in, making all worlds poorer and – pauperising the hoarding self or else choking it with its own gratified desires.

Poor Self! What have we done for it? Our fault that it usurps instead of serving Us in that transfiguration of all worlds which is our mission. For note that unless we are Self-ish – unless we are thus supinely betrayed by our usurping emissary and governor acting in Our name – We share a being which and Who never can be selfish: to Whom a greedy grip is impossible, and as we say unthinkable: a Being of lavish blessing and perfect control; one of all-spending love and inflexible justice . . .

Lift the stone and there I am . . . Such a being can afford to say these things; and it becomes true that the Son of *Man* (not merely of a *Self*) hath not where to lay His head. But that Son is homeless because in Him is Home itself . . . In the death and decay of body and self We come to our own at last – an Own beyond all owning, because an Own of gift. The No and the Not are gone; the emptying denial has done its passing work. When Units break down we have not a mere *un*-limited: when the finite barriers break we have not a mere *in*-finite: when a soul has been absolved we have not a mere *ab*-solute: when the mortal has died its death, we have not a bare *im*-mortality. Much good would a Heaven of Not-Sos bring us, a dreary waste of denial and vacancy!

No: the conceptions of limit, of the finite, of the solute, of the mortal, are themselves exalted and enriched: we know at least that poor as our 'positive' yet may be in our budding outlook, yet there, in the Great Yea and not in the blank Negative, the poor Nay, lies our destiny.

True that this is as yet unspeakable – partly at least by our own most grievous fault, our easy and unheading betrayals of the priceless gift of Expression.

We need as yet Denial and its gulf of gasping emptiness. But we have hints of its true nature in the No-good and the No-knowledge and the Not-divine. The curse of the Void is Inanity . . .

The Ident, – the sacred I that Is, – appraises rightly the function of denial. We dissipate, we abstract, we empty even meaning. But We do not stop there: we do not demand the Negative as ideal or cosmic reward. No: we concentrate and enrich, through purifying, our aspiration. The true Content rushes in, the moment the falsity leaks out. Let us then pour it out, and in shall come the treasures of the positive: Good measure, pressed down, running over – yea, ever and for all a Running over of the Real we know as yet only in the Here and Now, as embryo, the bearer of a greatness we must earn.

21 January 1910

At a low level, the act of generation ends the individual life. But at a higher point in vital ascension it may well enrich Identity by eliminating the petty selfish element which is really a plausible parasite. We do not care for the selfish man! But if Self is ME instead of something of mine why not be selfish and commended for it? I must be Me not Mine only; else *I* shirk my work, which is to initiate. To be is to become an originating though not original nucleus of power through reverent loyalty to the Source of all consciousness and creative Identity. It is to be at home with the Child of humanity, its growth-point. Such an Ident it would seem must be threefold. Father-mother-child: Impulse-development-outcome: Question-answer-act, is everywhere the process as the condition of true culmination, of attainment of an ascending ideal of which Nature is the parable as she is the exemplar.

Life thus rises from the ideals of the ocean floor and the swamp (which mentally most of us have not outgrown) to the ever-growing types and ever-soaring ideals of a sun-generated, divinely inspired 'conscious identity' destined by nature to be Master, through mind rising to the interpretation of all things, of all the significance of the universe. The physicist and the astronomer are working at the first stage of this. Our discipline must be slow and inexorable. We must shirk no lesson and be discouraged by no failure. We must be as ready for death as for birth, since both are conditions of Life. As we are vital so we are mortal; and to some of us it seems incredible that this should not be plain to everyone. The very fact that we may and must know and own it, shows

that only something of Us can be born or die – which are twin processes in a somewhat greater sense than our poor language can yet put into its halting words.

At best ours is but a schoolroom lingo: let us aim at cosmical expression, too great to despise the small but too great also to tolerate the mean or the corrupt.

13 March 1910

What is Selfishness? Inverted Personality

Radium in its tremendous joy of self-dispersion is calling as yet in vain to us – Behold your secret at the heart of Nature . . . In the very mineral world you find it, and in the culminating energy of seed-dispersion, the forth-rush of the life-gift which leaves the mother-plant to wither and sink back into the nursing soil in the organic sleep that we call death, the other half of birth, completing one pulse of experience. That preaches to us. All Nature quivers with appeal to us . . . ‘You are at last faithfully, patiently, untiringly, often even at risk of suffering and death, learning My secret which is yours, for the same source and the same goal are ours in the Divine . . .’

But never forget that thought, like love and faith, like truth and honour, must ennoble all it touches. The mean, the poor, the narrow, the impotent are *not* yours, they are mere distortions of YOU. The grab of violence, the cunning of plot to gain credit, the craving for self-exaltation and satisfaction at the expense of one pang at your fello’s heart; – they are the mockeries of YOU.

Your Self, enthroned in Your place, cannot but be selfish; and the selfish soon breeds lust and kills out the very heart of your living sun of being . . . Your Person must no more command You, or its cravings dominate YOU than the true actor’s character commands him. You are to play your part in the drama of all life; to play it loyally; to give your self and your ungrudging energies to it, for You are at the fountain of all being issuing from it . . .

True that these words fail; first because of the weakness and fault of the speaker, but beyond that because we have not yet learnt or in another sense have lost the secret of Expression, which ought to have at least the whole range of Action and penetrate its hidden nucleus. For it is expression of the Word of the Divine through the little words of man, illumined by the pure light of the Sun and all the stars, seen through and by man’s tiny eyes and brain. But mere scale matters nothing. Let us understand life better and we shall act a living part, but never *be* the selves we *have* and die that death not truly Ours, – *which thus we should deserve*. The true death is a birth as the true birth is a death. Let us learn these things as children at a yearning mother’s knee . . .

9 April 1910

Who ARE We and What HAVE We?

Ultimate ‘sin’ consists in OUR giving our selves leave to demand and secure gratification, pleasure, ease, for their own sake: to be greedy of welfare at some human expense. (A pity that ‘Ego’ is dragged into this shame, as our use of egotist betrays). Id-entity, Idio-sympathy, Idio-symbiosis (?) is perhaps nearest for US. But an indulged Self is an octopus of suction for satisfaction. My ‘self’ is narrowly inherited, as my body and its consciousness are, from certain converging lines, few of which are precisely known. But *I am* (remember the Hebrew definition of Deity: I AM that I AM), the OWNER, the BEING per excellence, howbeit but poor or dim. Think of helpless confusion of *being* our highest property, our estate, our freehold, our horse our dog, or again our post or business, and on the other hand our foot or skin or hair or tongue! We ARE not even our children (or our parents) although we may hand down part of what we ARE.

I own all these, I confess them mine – in varying degrees of intimacy. I have had no power, it seems, to choose a dominating ancestry and thus gifts that *I*, (not my puerile ‘self’) long for and

would select. All the I AMS, the Idents, *have* ideals or norms among others, which may be bad or good according to the ethical code attained, or any other human standard.

But emphatically in the ultimate sense what is mine is not ME. The grammatical inconsistency betrays a radical defect of ideal, if not a radical misconception of actual human status. This is (at present) the baffling secret of ethical judgment. A great sinner is to be arraigned for allowing his self to develop selfness into selfishness (the good side of which is the attractive, the acquiring power). But sometimes (perhaps usually) the Ident is weak and his self *brutally* (that is revertingly) strong. The beast-stage still counts in us. We should reprove another Ident for lack of self-control just as we arraign a man for keeping a dangerous animal loose, however valuable it may be under control.

It is nothing less than a tragedy that we should speak of 'himself.' If that is to mean 'himsame' we must insist on another name for what is not Us but Ours. Curiously we always speak of *her*, not she, self, and of *our*, not we-selves. The verbal question at once raised here about Self being Same, – Self-same – only illustrates our unworthy expressive helplessness and lack.

Our tools, our machinery, our instruments are becoming almost startlingly potent and manlike. The psychologist needs perhaps to realise more vividly how near some of them already are to our own 'automatic' control, with which we seem to have begun to endow them. Not perhaps so much the Machine, but the Engine and the Instrument represent the automatic or secondary brain, the value of which we cannot appraise until in illness or old age it fails us! And then we leave the Engine of engines, the Instrument of instruments, Articulate Expression, in a helpless chaos, always getting fouled or falling short ... We are almost deliriously pressing and supplying, precisising and perfecting all modes of communication except the supreme one, the Articulate.

19 June 1910

Is Selfishness Man's Ideal?

If yourself is the true fountain-head and the owner of You – of perhaps a company of You – then you can't be selfish enough. Only you must obtain a new word-Selflike. The selfish man who goes about 'on his own,' securing every bit of fun he can filch from other selves; whose capacious maw is always voraciously open for every poor widor's crumb that he can devour, – can gulp down that robber throat of his, – He is our master and exemplar. Let us all go and be gobbled up too, by the Selfish Man! What to him matter our restless nights when he is noisy, our worn-out apathy when he has worked us to the bone? To us apparently SELF is the very Man; look at the word 'himself.' You can't say 'sheself,' which just shows a woman is of no account. She can't even be selfish without being a sham or an anachronism. She hasn't really a dominating Self anywhere about her. She just wears her self out with work for you, like a saucepan or an old donkey, only she loves it and they don't.

O, a good Grasper, a gobbling Self is a fine thing! It knows a thing or two and grips and swallows comfortably; while that foolish monstrosity is forgetting number One and lavishing its very heart-throbs in that most idiotic of industries, the weaving of other lives in a web of greatness and joy in which One must have One's share (you couldn't even do a sum without it); only Others must see to that.

But this is becoming a labyrinth of words. Somebody says, That's rot, you know. Well, Self for ever! Good old self coming out first and the rest nowhere. Somebody must come along to show how to secure the best seats in heaven and how to rig the market and make a good pile to spend there. And he's a Self too, you say. Well, well, we'll tip him a bit and he'll lock out the crowd and make things hum. 'The distinction between a piece of property and its owner is indeed vital ...' This is a pure commonplace. And there you have the distinction between what you are and what you have; between the secret Initiator or Owner and the Result or Property, the Belongings. I have selves and good and bad and minds, also a person, a figure; then hopes, powers, faults – what you

will – (I expect that all ‘mine’ is plural) but I just AM. The ancient Hebrews knew all this well. The Archetype was ‘I AM THAT I AM.’ What I Have is another matter altogether.

January 1911

He stood as One beside his self,
Who looked into the sea,
Seeing the various selves he had,
And wondering which was He.

And then he knew no self was He,
Which his – or her – self owned,
For Self was always His or Hers
And must not be enthroned.

Now had he known his self was *his*,
And that He *owned* (not *was*) it,
He would have kept it out of harm
By taking care to boss it.

So had he known the tricks of Self,
He never would have stumbled,
And even when his friends complained,
He never would have grumbled.

When I am self-ish I am snubbed,
And richly I deserve it,
For self is *mine*, it’s never Me,
And never must I serve it.

The ‘I am’ is the Ident thus
What ‘I have’ it is never:
Our selves are often in a fuss
Of no account whatever.

WE are the owners of *our* selves
And never must obey one:
None know Us but the Secret Source
Of all *We* have, and have done.

V.W.

[Undated typescript]³⁹

The I and the Self

The question of the true nature of that ‘conscious identity’ for which we retain the ancient image ‘personality’ is so much, though indirectly, affected by the present rapid changes in our views of the constitution of the universe, that it may be permitted to inquire whether our English linguistic usage suggests a practical if partial clue to its solution.

In such an inquiry we begin by excluding all other usages. This of course, is a mere matter of temporary convenience. To base any suggestion as to the real meaning of what is vaguely called personality, on the idioms or grammatical usage of a single modern language, would of course be absurd. Yet such idiom or usage may well be used in illustration of a point which seems strangely neglected, – the difference, that is, between what I ‘am’ and what I ‘have.’ And if we find that our own form, now inconsistently used, might enable us to express a generally neglected distinction in what is to us the most important of all unities – that which conceives and predicates both unity and distinction within it as beyond it – the next step must necessarily be to compare it with other languages in which we may well find yet more suggestive forms.

Now, while the comparative history of the ‘personal’ terms has been carefully studied, no one seems to have asked whether, in some variety of linguistic usage and its appeal to ‘natural’ or ‘material’ experience, we may find some hint of a factor which has been overlooked. And to

39. [This full length essay was ready for publication, perhaps in the journal *Mind*, signaled in handwriting on the front page. The 15 page typescript bears no date except for an indication on page 11, 18 March 1906, which, however, is crossed out. On page 14 we find the annotation: ‘Possible wind-up’].

raise this question seems the more desirable now that we have a notable and elaborate work on 'Human Personality? Adopting, virtually without any attempt at analysis, spatial and numerical analogies (the sub- and the supra-liminal, multiple personality, &c.) mixed with what are really survivals of primitive, animistic, and 'spiritual' literalisms, often without their justification and their significance.

The English idiom, then, seems to be one which indicates an aspect of the question of personality generally ignored. It is constantly said of someone greatly disturbed or in some way off his balance, He is not himself. Or again in a similar case the excuse is offered, I was not myself.⁴⁰ But we cannot wholly *be* anything which in any sense is *ours*. 'Himself,' 'themselves' are a modern corruption. The villager still speaks in the old way and consistently, of *his* self and *their* selves, as we all still say, her self.

It seems to follow from this usage that what we call personality involves the difference between what anyone Has and what it Is; and thus between what is owned and the owner. Therefore it ought to be quite a commonplace convenience to say, *I* am deeply concerned in this matter, but it has nothing to do with my Self. Or again, My self has made a mistake, so I have to pay my representative or delegate's penalty.

Here however we touch a fresh difficulty. We have begun with the 'person' and are now dealing with the 'Self.' Properly we ought to have gone on to talk of I and my *person*; of the interests, not of my Self but of my person. Thus also we should have a wider range of grammatical form; we should e.g. speak of our impersonation as that which makes a performance in this world possible.

We do speak of the personal and of multiple personality, but we can't speak of the selfal and selfality. And it may be urged with reason that self for us has been not intrinsically but accidentally tainted with the poison of the anti-social, from which it ought to be purged; and that as a fact the philosophical thinker who speaks of a Supreme Self as Divine, as worthy of devotion and adoration, as the Source of all Truth and Goodness, is thus purging it and restoring it to its rightful status.

But unhappily, as we are, the influence of unconscious suggestion is more dangerous than we realise. And we cannot (as we sometimes virtually assume that we can) keep the senses of the words we use in water-tight compartments, so that the Self should one moment be morally and intellectually contemptible and the next exalted to the human throne.

For the moment however all we can here do is note that for us, the self is included in 'I' *but not conversely*. We see indeed Selves in which the I has atrophied and the parasite or rather the invader taken its place; emerged from its empty skin. The race like the individual *has* a Self because it *is* an I. For another thing, it is by a perfectly true instinct that we have taken the Self (that is the self-absorbed individual) as the type of evil character. To be self-occupied, self-complacent, self-assertive, is to be what we rightly scorn as the egotist. To be selfish is indeed to be base; to be morally despicable. But this same Self is also exalted into the symbol of 'Personal Identity', although we have the alternative of the ruling term 'I,' and might usefully adopt the word *Ident*. No man ever observed the Man, the I to whom his Self belongs, but only his Self. Why? Because 'he, I, you, they, we, us,' that is, *Man*, is the Observer. He Observes his self because he can 'hold this at arm's length'; he can make it the object of his thought, his scrutiny, his analysis, his judgment. But he can never fully be at once observer and observed, because this is one of the processes which

40. Mr. F. H. Bradley ('On Mental Conflict & Computation,' *Mind*, July 1902) takes such phrases as "I was not myself when I could act in such a manner", "I was not myself when I could so think of you", "I do not feel myself at all to-day" (p. 292), to illustrate his distinction between the essential Self (which I would call the Ident) and the accidental self. And when he goes on to say that 'my self is dispersed by being identified with conflicting suggestions and scattered in their disorderly struggle' (p. 295, footnote) he is surely thinking of it on the present lines.

involve a distinction inconsistent with complete identity.⁴¹ There is such a distinction between I and my – anything. There is such a distinction between whole and part. But there is none between I and I. That is, Identity itself in its purest form *as well as everything you try to say about it*, becomes an ‘*identical proposition*.’⁴²

Thus I distinguish between the I and Self. ‘I am not myself’ is really the statement of plain normal healthy fact. But usually by this we mean to say ‘my self is not rightly expressing or representing Me: I suffer accordingly, but must make the best and most of my limitations here and now, inherited or other.’

You can’t ‘consist’ of your own anything. If it is really something of yours, it is either outside you like a shell or a parent, or inside you like a vein or an idea, or a part of you like your leg or your skin. Our usual ways of putting it, when we come to look a little out of the habitual groove into which we so easily fall, is not even grammar, to say nothing of common-sense. *I who Am*, remain intact though I be stripped of all. But who then am I that can thus survive, and can thus discern the defects in my own eye and the limits of my own mind *and the futility of my own usurping Self?*

Why am I dogged by a persistent and imperious claimant, which I alternately cherish, indeed it may be worship and live for, and contemptuously repudiate, deny and renounce? Who am I?

What is the relation on the one hand between that insistent Self and Me; and on the other between it and what I call my body? What is the distinction between the self and what we call the Soul or the Spirit? And what, in our ultimate identity, is the relation of all these to Us?

But first there are other questions to ask. Why have I a Self – or many, it may be conflicting or unknown selves – at all? Why is self-consciousness a term at once of appreciation and depreciation: the symbol of man’s greatest privilege and of his worst meanness and weakness? Surely because I am I, the owner of Self: because Self is at best an Expression of the I, the speaker: because selves are that through which Idents must work: which must be moulded to man’s ideal: which must be owned, acknowledged, made the most of, all in their variety and in spite of all their defect.

To the complaint of lack of time it has been answered, But you have all the time there is. So when one is most sadly conscious of the limitations and perversities of an inherited self it may be said, But you have all the self there is. You have the Race to fall back upon: you have the tremendous powers of Man always growing and as yet in their childhood, at your service. At least make the children clearly understand what they already instinctively feel, as the fairy tale with its scorn of ‘cannots,’ witnesses. The fairy tale is but the fanciful form of what science is more than hinting at.

We may contrast, so to speak, the Amness of Man with the Isness of the world. Man recognised the difference when he made the Divine name ‘I am that I am,’ – never, that I Have. But expect in inspired and predictive moments, our ideas of the Identity which we miscall personal are pre-scientific and inconsistent. They are still in the static and ready-made stage. And worse, they hopelessly confuse the Has and the Is. One has to repeat that what in any sense we *have*

41. It would be impossible in the present context to cite cases in point on the mathematical or logical side: but it may be noted that Mr. B. Russell (*Princ. of Mathematics*, Vol. 1, p. 210–211) maintains that relations between a term and itself are impossible; for even if ‘the relation asserted is identity, there must be *two* identical terms, which are therefore not quite identical.’ This, he says, raises a fundamental difficulty.

42. One must here remember that distinction in the above sense does not involve numerical difference, as separation and division do. And it needs to be clearly understood that the idea of possession itself, in simpler days confined to its first or obvious sense, what the organism contains or includes, is with us extended to the ‘possession’ of a master by a slave, or an ocean by a drop. Thus what belongs to me, what is mine, may be a world, or a deity, even a universe. Surely this is one of the cases in which there ought to be some verbal distinction? Else we risk carrying out the idea of inclusion where it cannot possibly apply.

cannot be what we *are*. But how, it may be asked, can it be said that human identity is mis-called ‘personality’; that man has, but can never be, a Person? Because a ‘person’ really and rightly represents the original actor’s mask. It is a deep truth that ‘All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players.’ Personality is just the ‘make-up’ which enables us to ‘play our part like men’ – the part assigned to us in the great drama of existence. But though we assume a figure and a character, that which we impersonate, the Character we play, is the important thing.

And yet more important it is to realise that *we* play it. The word ‘person’ has anyhow this great advantage, that if used in its original sense it is free from the depreciative ethical associations of Self, and cannot possibly be used to define original Being, though this last of course includes the personal.

That personality in this original sense of the word should be generated on this small planet; that the *person* should ‘be born’ and ‘die’ again in what is in fact a mere moment, – is common sense. A person is so to speak a character assumed. But that We – you and I and all of us – with our sense of kin to Nature, our sense of universal order, our sense of mentally creative potency, our sense of worth as well as of reality, before all and above all our sense of sign and its signification, its natural significance and its intentional significance – its Meaning; that We should be merely ephemera ‘playing our little parts’ on a mere particle of a satellite, – on a grain of dust flung forth by one million ‘suns’ – that we should be but this!

Well, if we were, we couldn’t think this: we couldn’t be conscious of the very humble status of our ‘selves.’ And the splendid conception of a Common Sense in a Common Place would not be as ‘common’ to us as it is. For it is We who depreciate our selves – rightly in one sense, wrongly in another – it is We who are conscious of the ‘sin’ of moral and the ‘error’ of intellectual perversion or mistake: it is We who are conscious of the shame or the misfortune – as voluntary or involuntary – of ignorance or of stupidity. It is we again who feel the coercive pressure of those ‘ideals’ of true good which are the very inciters of the discontent which, in morbid and self-contradictory form, issues in pessimism. Our ‘selves’ as we continually confess, need mastery, control, direction. When we give them this and when we learn how to make the most of their elementary powers, then they will yield a great return. It may well be that only in some Self, or in Self in some sense, can we realise our true mission and message.

But ‘I’ am an Energy, a Prime Mover a working Force which harmonises and controls my manifesting and microscopic self, that through which ‘I’ can energise here and now in planetary scale and guise.

Science is everywhere insisting on the dynamic view of origins, and this furnishes an independent argument for that of the ultimate nature of conscious being here proposed.

The harmony of this way of looking at things, with those Eastern ideals of our being which to us are paradoxical, even contradictory, is surely manifest. To some extent it explains and justifies, to the Western mind, the apparent extravagance of Eastern negation and abnegation.

The question which is central alike to Eastern and Western ideals of conscious being, is that of identity.

Identity is essentially invulnerable. Identity *is* that which persists through all conceivable change. Evanescent, change-destroyed identity is none. But we confound Identity in the highest sense with that which is lost through the minutest change. And we even confound it with that of units. But the unit is a merely numerical individual. The ‘identical’ is more, and has a logical value: it is recognisable in a different and higher sense. Man is an Ident – we need the word – and so in their turn (though *as* his) are his bud-individuals. But full identity is presumably not yet reached: in that as in many other senses our very helplessness, our sense of the paradox of things, our vain protests against the cruelty of what we call Nature, our very discontent with our world, are all witnesses that we are growing in a sense so intensely and purely natural that we have naively called it *supernatural*.

But here we must briefly consider the question of what the psychologist calls reflexive identity.

What is the organic form of reflexive relation? The head may bend over and, as the centre of spring of consciousness, may figuratively 'reflect' as it physically reflects upon most parts of the body. But parts of the organism are beyond its range. Yet a completely reflexive identity would bend over in any direction and any part would reflect upon any other.

Now we are bound to make a physiological analogy fit as far as it goes. But in this case the 'reflexive relation' refuses to fit just as it is most wanted. Thus human personality, as a reflexive identity, is radically imperfect. If it is expressed by 'self' then we must suppress the possessive pronoun. It will be said that in English we are on the way to this in 'itself,' 'himself,' 'themselves'; and that 'meself,' 'ussel,' will follow. But I suggest that the current English idiom, though we philosophically ignore it and are inconsistent in its colloquial use, does in fact express a distinction of cardinal value. For instance, it may be disputable but is not mere nonsense to say that You or I have many selves. But if we are dealing with a reflexive relation such as we find in the physical world, it is utter nonsense. If on the contrary 'I am' precisely that which may *have* one or many selves (as an actor has one or many parts, plays one or many characters), and as a 'self' may have good or bad points, then we may detect an ascending grade of identity, just as we find ascending grades of complexity throughout the evolutionary process.

The necessity of self-preservation *here*, of survival *now*, makes 'self' centripetal: hence 'selfishness.' Egotism, however, properly speaking is impossible: I cannot love or centre upon I, for I am essentially That which radiates: that which IS the knowing, living, activity: it is only selfishism that we mean; not egoism. The Me may be considered for some purposes as a sort of bridge between the two; and makes up that confused and inconsistent whole which we call personality and bodily presence. Sometimes it says with the I that it is more blessed to give than to receive: but sometimes it craves like the self and circles continually like the self round its own paltry centre. Yet even if you could double back on your 'very self' it would still be, not you but yours. Say that the body, by means of its senses, can perceive, examine, most if not all of its self indirectly if not directly. But even thus, in this conception we are eliminating the observer, which once more cannot be included in the observed.

In the moral sphere, the Self may be compared to a digestive apparatus only reaching out in order to engulf and assimilate: in order to aggrandise. Naturally all it returns to the 'personal' universe is waste product, or any supposed aliment which, instead of feeding its self-complacency, turns out to be so inconveniently critical that it has to be expelled. Now the whole energy of the I, unless it has fallen to the degraded level of living for its own self – as a man light live for his dinner or a woman for her clothes – is normally directed to the denial of self, not in the sense of thwarting or starving its healthy development and thus usefulness, but in that of making the tendency to be, to act, to give, the main one, instead of merely to get, to keep, to be what we rightly despise as 'selfish.' The 'I' normally lives from and for its Source: and strives to make its Self worthy of this. When there is this harmony, an underlying identity is well expressed in Us and Me. For an 'I' at war with its self is but partly manifest and suffers accordingly: wasting its openings here and now.

That the modern tendency to a refined and deliberately advocated self-absorption has its good side; that an hedonic ethics may well be the symptom and herald of a great increase of the total of human consciousness and mental purview, seems undeniable. But if self-cult and self-gratification is to do this for us, it must be strictly understood as a stage and a means, and not, as so often at present, supposed or taken to be an end. In any case there is perhaps nothing more striking in this age (which presents everywhere the contrast of apathy and strenuousness) than its curiously complete self-concentration. No matter what the type or the views of the speaker, we everywhere find experience dealt with in terms of Self. The unthinkable vast cosmos as revealed or inferred by physical science, becomes once more, as in primitive days, a mere annexe to the all-important scene of the career of the planetary egoist. That ephemeron, innumerable born and dying in a flash of 'time,' calmly tells you either that his is all the conscious 'mind' or 'personality' there is,

and, with a curious inconsistency, that both are a mere expedient postscript (soon to be dispensed with) of organic exigencies, or else that analogies and symbols derived from primitive appeals to his own muscular activities and the space in which they find play, are still adequate to express a personal cosmic force whose chief concern is Man as we know him here and now.

But into that question we cannot here go.

It is time now to make some attempt to illustrate what we lose by our present modes of expressing the human conscious being and to justify not only such a protest as we are here making, but also the suggestion of a possible way out.

In endeavouring however to choose illustrations or examples of the confusion caused by our failure to be consistent in our use of the 'personal' terms, the difficulty naturally is that one might quote from almost all literature. But if we bare this in mind, it may be possible to give a few fairly representative cases in point, taking them from a wide range of modern writers in our own language.

We may begin then with Hobbes, who makes what to some of us may seem a startling statement:

(All sovereign assemblies) 'if they have but one voice, though they be many men, yet are they but one person.' ('Behemoth,' trans. by F. Tönnies, *Dialogue IV*, p. 156)

Most of us would probably demur to this usage, which nevertheless is quite in harmony with the present contention.

Adam Smith's witness is interesting:

When I endeavour to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to pass sentence upon it, and either to approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all such cases I divide myself, as it were, into two persons; and that I, the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of which is really no 'I' but a self of 'Mind.' He continues, 'The first is the spectator, whose sentiments with regard to my own conduct I endeavour to enter into, by placing myself in his situation and by considering how it would appear to me, when seen from that particular point of view. The second is the agent, the person whom I properly call myself, and of whose conduct, under the character of a spectator, I was endeavouring to form some opinion. The first is the judge; the second the person judged of. But that the judge should, in every respect, be the same with the person judged of, is as impossible as that the cause should, in every respect, be the same with the effect.' ('The Theory of Moral Sentiments,' edit. 1861, pp. 164–165)

Here we get a division of the final Identity which seems virtually to destroy it. Surely it would be clearer to say, either that *I* become the examiner and judge of my self (as I might of my friend or my child) or that I recognised a plurality of 'selves' all mine, and appointed the one I considered the worthier and fitter, to examine and judge the other. For in the last sentence it is explicitly admitted that the judge cannot possibly 'be the same with the person judged of': as impossible indeed as that 'the cause should, in every respect, be the same with the effect.'

The following quotation tells its own tale.

The 'ceaseless circle into which we fall in trying to define *ego* is hinted at in various common expressions. A child even will often remark, "I did not do it, my hand did it"; "you did not touch *me*, you touched my *foot*," &c. That is, even the most cursory observation asserts that object in itself is not subject, that the *me* is not mine.' ('Evolutionary Psychology of Feeling,' H. M. Stanley, p. 257)

So again in this example:

In every state of consciousness we have what Kant calls the 'I think,' that is, the state is *owned*, it is the state of some one, it is called *mine*. We can distinguish in every state a self as knower and a self as known, the 'I' and the 'me,' as James puts it. The self as knower

and the self as known are a unity; we never have the one without the other. But the self as known, the so-called empirical 'me,' changes constantly, but it is always owned. The self as knower, however, is a common function or process, as constant and essential in the mental realm as space and resistance in matter. ('Soul Substance,' Prof. Frank Thilly, *Phil. Review*, Jan. 1902, p. 20)

That which we speak of as 'mine' whatever it be, is here admitted to be *owned*. But here comes in the ambiguity of 'owning.' This indeed is double: since to own is not only to possess but also to acknowledge or admit.

Mr. F. H. Bradley has so much one would wish to quote that selection is difficult. But he remarks that 'a man commonly thinks that he knows what he means by his self' (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 75). It is a pity indeed we don't accept 'hissself' and 'theirselves' from the peasant instead of using the absurd himself and themselves. Again, Mr. Bradley urges that the 'distinctions of self and of not-self in one whole, are *not* presented as the reality even of my self. They are given as found within it, but not as exhausting it.' (Ibid. p. 111). And so with 'my self' too. What is 'mine' is found within 'me' and does not exhaust its owner.

Mr. Myers thinks that 'the highest genius in the world would thus be the completest *self-possession*, – the occupation and dominance of the whole organism by those profoundest elements of self which act from the fullest knowledge, and in the wisest way!' (*Human Personality*, Vol. 2, p. 193). Yes, but in the sense that *we* are 'higher,' 'greater' – nobler than our Selves when we are true to our I-hood. For we are the Radiators: the selves merely the Storer.

He deprecates both the view that Self is a co-ordination and that the Ego is a unity. 'For my part,' he says, 'I feel forced to fall back upon the old-world conception of a *soul* which exercises an imperfect and fluctuating control over the organism' (Ibid.: 74). But surely here the word which pre-eminently connotes or implies Ownership and direction is better than one like soul which is preceded by a 'my.'

Prof. Royce has so much to say on the subject of Self that selection again becomes, as in Mr. Bradley's case, hard. But we may observe that he says

Now as we know Man, he first of all appears to us as a being whose inner life is that of an individual Self. The Self of each man apparently has had an origin in time, and a development such as makes it dependent, for its contents and its character, upon natural conditions. . . Any deeper criticism of our hypothesis about nature must therefore depend upon a mere exact account of what we mean by the human self. (p. 246)

But here we have the man the being as owning an 'individual self' with an 'innerlife' Are we then extraneous and impartial critics belonging to the Net-Man? Anyone would think that these were the words of a being far superior to Man!

One may be grateful to Prof. Royce for his reminder that

The inconsistencies of common sense in regard to the Self are, upon their practical side, well summed up in the familiar advice which we are accustomed to give the young. 'Forget yourself,' we say, 'all true success depends upon freedom from yourself.' One sees, it is hard for the poor Self to please common sense. And the reason is that common sense does not in the least know, when it appeals to the Self, whom it is addressing, nor, when it talks of the Self, what object it is meaning. (p. 256)

But does philosophy as yet know any better? There is a great deal more, in the two sections on Self, of this kind of witness. But nowhere is any use made, even incidentally, of the significant idiom of our own language. After a drastic analysis of Self as mine in the sense (even) that my clothing is part of my self, he concludes 'But never do I observe my Self as any single and unambiguous fact of consciousness' (p. 265). Surely because *I* cannot observe *me*: and my Self is not 'single and ambiguous,' as *I* am or may be.

Presently we read ““Do I not directly know”, one insists, “that I am and who I am?” I answer: You indeed know, although never in a merely direct way, *that* you exist. But in the present life you never find out, in terms of any direct experience, *what* you are’ (p. 287). Whereas your Self *is* in some sense and for certain purposes discoverable. But Prof. Royce does not draw this distinction. On the contrary, he says ‘Thus, according to our account, every new Self that arises in time must find its place *within* the life of a larger and inclusive Selfhood’ (p. 303). Even so it is still only a Selfhood, an owned thing which carries danger to the I the moment that the I is tempted to identify the two.

Finally we are told that ‘If I am I and nobody else, and if I am I as an expression of purpose. . . I am not only I, but also the Self along with all other Selves’ (p. 330–331). Here we see the confusion arising from ignoring the cardinal distinction between Has and Is.

Prof. Adamson (*The Development of Modern Psychology*, Vol. I) says that we constantly speak of the ‘thinking subject’ as ‘aware of its own identity in time’ (p. 198). For the I to be aware, that is, of its own *self* in time. It is only in a secondary sense that I can be aware of my own identity: the tongue does not taste *it* nor the ear hear *it*. Simple identity, minus relation, has no speech. This makes the needed distinction.

Mr. F. C. S. Schiller (‘Axioms as Postulates’ [‘Personal Idealism’]) after asking of those who define the world as experience whose and of what is it experience, fears that he will be assailed by a furious band of objectors ‘intent on asking me – “Who are you?” How dare you take yourself for granted? Have you not heard how the self is a complex psychological product, which may be derived and analysed away in a dozen different ways?’ But he observes that it is always a self which analyses self. ‘And it always gives me a turn when the conclusion of an argument subverts its own premise’ (pp. 52–53).

No wonder that Prof. Taylor (‘Elements of Metaphysics’) admits that ‘the extreme ambiguity of the term “self” as used in contemporary Psychology makes it desirable to avoid an expression which is capable of the gravest misuse’ (p. 98). But does he remedy this when he approves of our saying ‘we *are* selves?’ (p. 277). Later he admits that ‘while we are steadily engaged in the progressive execution of a purpose, we “lose ourselves” in the work; it is only upon a check that we become “self-conscious”’ (p. 337).

He may well suggest that ‘. . . there is, I think, in the unrestricted use of the term self, selfhood, as applied to merely feeling consciousness, a danger of ambiguity;’ and ask ‘Is the infinite individual experience properly to be called a self? Again, is every finite experience a self? And how must we take finite selves, if they are real, to be related to each other? Lastly, perhaps, we might be called on in this connection to face the question how far an individual finite self is more than a *temporary* feature in the system of existence’ (Ibid.: 343). Much needed questions.

Prof. Wallace, expounding Hegel’s Logic (*The Logic of Hegel*, ‘Prolegomena,’ pp. 234–235, footnote), tells us that

For Hegel, it may be noted, Person, so far as he uses the term at all, bears its restricted legal and juridical sense. A person is a free intelligence, which realises that independence by appropriating an external thing as its sign and property. It probably belongs therefore to a world in which people count rather by what they *have* than by what they *are*. He may well add that ‘this is not the highest kind of world for human beings.’

On the other hand Prof. H. Sidgwick (‘Philosophy, its Scope and Relations,’ p. 86) sides with those ‘who regard the self as object of immediate intuition.’ It seems to him that *he* is permanent. ‘I know that I am, though I do not know what I am.’ But I *am* the perceiver and the knower. And would it not be clearer if we said, not ‘each of us,’ but each of our selves, ‘is to organic Nature only as a bud upon an ever living tree’ (Carveth Read, ‘The Metaphysics of Nature,’ p. 352).

It seems strange that so lucid a writer as Prof. Strong (‘Why the Mind Has a Body,’ p. 208) should be content to speak of ‘We – that is to say our minds’ and then go on; ‘we forget the percipient mind.’ That which forgets is not forgotten: the Forgotten is not the Forgetter! Further, we find that

The Ego is the fresh experience as it comes, before we have had time to turn round upon it cognitively, and while we – that is, it – are engaged in cognizing other things. . . . This is the solution of the puzzle about the Ego, and no other solution is thinkable.

This is indeed a notable witness to the price we have paid and are still paying for the agelong development of analytical power of which this book is a typical result.

But Mr. Arnold ('Scientific Fact & Metaphysical Reality,' p. 147) considers that 'for the true thinker, indeed, it is hard to conceive how there can be an existence which is unaware of itself' (p. 147). An ident-aware existence? To know that one is (utterly *is*) an I? To declare that *I am*, should surely be called Ident-awareness?

On the other hand Sir O. Lodge ('Life and Matter'), reminds us that '*we* are a part of this planet; on one side certainly and distinctly a part of this material world, a part which has become self-conscious' (p. 88) and that 'it is quite credible that our whole and entire personality is never terrestrially manifest' (p. 123). That may be: but surely we are here dealing with Identity, with the 'itsame'?

Prof. John Dewey's ('Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal,' *Phil. Review*, Nov. 1893) witness must be given in full. He notes:

. . . a difficulty which everyone has felt, in one way or another, in the self-realization theory. In the ordinary conception of the presupposed self, that self is already there as a fixed fact, even though it be as an eternal self. Whatever is done, is done for this fixed self. I do not believe it possible to state this theory in a way which does not make action selfish in the bad sense of selfish. . . . I do not see that it is a bit better to act to *get* goodness, *for* the self than it is to get pleasure for the self. The selfishness of saints who are bound to maintain their own saintliness at all hazards, is Pharisaism; and Pharisaism is hardly more lovable, or more practically valuable, than is voluptuarism. *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*, will serve, if it means: Let the needed thing be done, through the heavens of my past, or fixed, or presupposed self fall. The man who interprets the saying to mean: Let me keep my precious self moral, though the heavens of public action fall, is as despicable personally as he is dangerous socially. (p. 661)

It will be observed that I have not taken any notice of or given any instances of the 'mystical' view of the personal being of Man, either Eastern or Western. This is partly because the best known mystics are almost all foreign and therefore would be outside the pale of our own idiom, to which appeal is here made.

But it is also because, rightly or wrongly they are already, by the plain man, credited with 'mystification' on the subject: an idea partly created by the associations of the name 'mystic' itself. Otherwise some instances of unusual clearness of distinction between the Saint and his (often intractable) Self, might be given. I have also for similar reasons abstained from entering the theological field. In any case before doing that it is necessary to clear the ground on the lay standpoint.

Meantime the most remarkable (for the present purpose) of the examples of recent treatment of the question which I have yet come across are those I have kept to the last; taken from Mr. Edward Carpenter's *Art of Creation*.

The author of course feels like the rest of us, that he must conform to the usage of making 'Self' equivalent to 'I'; and therefore he is compelled to weaken his own position if not actually to contradict himself. As usual the *Is* and the *Has* are defeatingly confounded.

On pp. 49–50 we are reminded that 'as the evolution of the idea of self goes on, there comes at last a kind of fatal split between it and the objective side of things.' Thus 'the self is left face to face with a dead and senseless world.' Self-consciousness 'becomes almost a disease,' and everything is grabbed at 'in order to minister to the self.' Is not this obviously because the 'I' has been content to centre round its own self, so to speak, deserting its true orbit round the sun to which it is satellitic? In contrast with this, – a contrast of which few seem yet to have

realised deep significance – the author quotes ‘Before Abraham was, I am,’ and draws the true conclusion that this is the essentially human prerogative of which ‘Incarnation’ is the theological statement.

But clearly this is not a question merely of something of *ours*, of our petty selves. Before all selves, Man is: but purely as a Radio-activity in radiant Life. The whole of Creation ‘falls together into expressions of the One endless, boundless, fathomless Self and its myriad affiliations. . . ’ (p. 102). For Self read the ‘I am,’ the Ident. Hence ‘this *aliveness* of all Nature, and its derivation from one,’ not numerically but synthetically; a much needed distinction.

Mr. Carpenter most truly says that to thousands round us ‘the figure of Christ, say, is an intense, a living, and an actually present reality.’ Of course. But when shall we begin to learn the lesson that if we are to use astronomical imagery at all, it must *not* be Ptolemaic, it must at least be Copernican, and it ought to be the astronomy of science in its highest present attainment of knowledge. For whatever there may be yet to learn, there is no excuse for reverting to disproved or antiquated theories. When we realise this obvious truth, we shall also realise that Source and Sun of us; precisely in proportion as we rise *above* the mean Self merely ours into the Ident, – which *cannot* be self-ridden, unless it is degraded.

‘It is still the doll – the symbol, the hieroglyph, which wakes in the child’s mind the immense ancestral emotion of countless mother-love and passion flowing down like a stream into its young life, and filling it with amazement’ (p. 173–174). Let it then be the true symbol achieved by man’s reverent inquiry into that order of the universe that gives us a corresponding emotion; one which will prove, in purified form, to embody our highest ideals. For it is true that we have ignorantly decried the ‘worships of idol’ where, in the sense we mean, there is neither worship nor idol. It is also and sadly true that as we don’t understand the ‘savage’ and the symbol he reverences, as we don’t understand the girl’s cult of her doll and the boy’s, say, of his toy-horse, or gun, or boat, – or engine. And curiously enough many, perhaps most, of those who thus misjudge the childlike attitude commended in the Gospels, themselves make far more truly and often more basely, an Idol of the Written Word or rather of a Printed Translation. But while, so long as we don’t literalise them (and this the true child never does), we shall do well to have ‘idols,’ i.e. symbols of Good and Truth else unthinkable and unspeakable and thus inert for us, we must see that they are as worthy and harmonious with such knowledge as man has reached, as we can make them. We must also see that, instead of using Self at once for the most exalted and the basest symbols of Us as Idents, ‘we are delivered from our little selves,’ which always belong to ‘our little desires and unrest’ (p. 188).

For it is deeply true that

If we could by any means explore and realise what is meant by that letter ‘I’ if we could travel inward with firm tread to its remotest depth, and find the regions where it touches close, so close, on the other forms of the same letter; if we could stand assured, and look around us, in that central land where it ceases to convey the sense of difference and only indicates unity; and if then with lighting swiftness we could pass to the extreme periphery where in its particular and invincible shape it almost rejoices to stand alone antagonising the rest of the universe; why, then, surely all would be clear to us, and Gladness and Beauty would be our perpetual attendants. (p. 191)

But we must train our children to the deepening of consciousness by which Mr. Carpenter sees that these results will ultimately be obtained. And at present most of us are doing our utmost to narrow and stiffen, or worse, to conventionalise and formalise, the consciousness our children hold in trust for the Race. For we are indeed ‘arriving at one of the most fruitful and important turning-points in the history of the race. The Self is entering into relation with the Body’ (p. 207–208). And the recognised ‘I’ distinguished, as from its organs so from its selves or settings, is at last to take full command and control of the little planetary Self, and make the very most of

it. That 'I' which I *am* (not, which I *have*) is indeed 'no illusive phantom ego which gives way direfully the moment any pressure is placed upon it' (p. 214). Man 'glides past the feeling into the very identity itself, where a glorious all-consciousness leaves no room for separate self-thoughts or emotions' (p. 216).

I have perhaps quoted too much; but it was difficult to resist the temptation. And I must end by one more comment; on the Meditation in the Appendix (p. 253). 'The universal life is an eternal and surpassing joy, of which the other is but the nutriment and body. The curious thing is, however, that one should be able to feel this universal life in one. The curious thing is that one should be prompted to say "This, this surpassing existence is after all Myself, my true self." Yes, I see it as indeed not merely curious, but a tragic reversal.' For 'this surpassing existence' is I, the Ident, the Child of the Father, I am that I am. The 'selves' are those that are 'selected' or perish: that devour or are devoured.

We seem strangely to forget or ignore the evolutionary ancestry of the Self. First the swarm, then the flock and pack and herd, is in the reversed possessive sense, 'my' self. Then the family, the tribe, the clan. Even now in an ideal marriage and an ideal motherhood there is a self of which the glory is to be given. In this context, the language of passion, counted, by science or the man in the street, as 'mere poetry' or merely fanciful, is in truth exact. It is a case of this or the other Self; and we are more interested in the other, *still ours*, because the radiating force is the central one: we only accrete that we may disperse by radiation: we only store up that we may dispense, as the very brain process shows. Thus it can only be insisted that the energy we call 'I' is 'unknowable,' *because it is the knower*. All we know in the ordinary sense is what in some sense is ours. Our swarm, flock, herd, family, tribe, clan, body, self, with its soul and spirit, its ghost and wraith, its ancestry and progeny, its history (its past) and its destiny. All belongings—all ours! Never *us!* We are here Inselfed just as we are Embodied. As Embodied our chief moral duties are hygienic. As Inselfed they are social and (in, for Us, an elementary sense) emotional, ethical, intellectual.

But as Beings, – as Idents, as 'I ams'? – our 'chief end' is indeed to be worthy of the divine, though not merely to enjoy that for ever: in the language of poetry to be worthy of the good, the true, the beautiful: in the language of philosophy to be worthy of the order of reality; in the language of science to be worthy of the order of the Universe and of the laws of an unerring Nature. More: our glory is to be *worth trying*, even in the sevenfold-heated furnace of evil.

Here it is, as usual, that one feels so despairingly the inadequacy of our terms. It is as though we exhorted one another to grovel and wallow instead of walking erect. When we speak of 'personality,' we by our very perplexities betray that *we* are clinging to the status of our 'personating' selves, doubly removed, as we have seen, from an original Ident, who is Owner, who is – Us. And we place on the throne of Being that very self which we are here to fashion like the 'body' (and indeed like our planet), into a splendid tool and instrument as well as home; an engine including the organic as the mechanical ever in all things obedient and faithful to our purified and devoted wills – *not* self-wills but *I*-wills – and when we make a consecrative marriage vow of mutual devotion.

It is we who think and talk thus. But you cannot catch the thinker you *are*. In a sense the whole long inheritance is yours. 'Lift the stone and there am I': no self of mine but Me. When we understand this we understand the Divine man and the 'I am' which I am. Understand? But in a secondary, a poor and petty sense. For here we have only selves through which to define. All the 'Uns' and 'Ins' *unthinkable*, *infinite* and the rest are expressions of the instinct that while self can be 'known' in the measurable and calculable sense, Self's Owner never can. Self's Owner can and must Be and Know. Thus We may *be* in our selves, as in our eyes or hands: thus we may know our selves as we are learning to know our world . . .

I suppose the greatest misfortune which can happen to a man is to be identified (except reflexively, that is as whole and part) with his self; unless indeed that Self is the saintly one that knows its place – at his feet.

Yes, there is the true use of the word. As *we* are never *It* we are never *Self*. We only *have* what is both.

This view of *I* and *Self*, as we have already, is essentially scientific. It is dynamic: selves are the product of *Identic*, *Somatic* activity, its structure the product of its *Function*.

If our selves are descended from worm and from the cell whence that arose, what may they not become? What limits are there to the possible worthiness of our shrine? It may be that at last no *Self* will dream of usurping our throne. And indeed it is our poverty of thought and our supineness and tendency to the centripetal which, persisted in, defeats evolution and has bred the fatal self-regarding selfishness. Selves properly recognised and 'knowing their place' could not be made too much of. They would be cherished as we need to cherish our body, our organs; as the engineer cherishes his engine, the captain his ship, the shepherd his sheep. No fear, then, that *we* should be mistaken for them, *they* for *Us*! They would become what they really are, our inherited 'personal' embodiments. Once more, Who then are *We*? Ask the *Race*! The *Race* will refer you to the *Nebula* to which it belongs. Ask the *Sun*. The sun will refer you to the *Cosmos*.

The question is in one sense wrongly put. Only through the sense of the *Divine* can we answer that. Here is the true reason of the religious conception. In the 'innermost' secret place of the nature of *Life*, there is the radiant sense of *Attraction*, our true source and home, bidding us come and bidding us as sharing a radiant nature, radiate. Science is showering imagery and parable of this kind on our blind eyes and deaf ears. . . . Yet we must learn to ask in a truer sense, Who are we? and What are our selves? We must face at once distinction and unity: identities of two values never to be confounded: the one called reflexive, a question of whole and part; and the other an ultimate or essential *Identity*, which is always source or origin and never result or product; which is and Has but can never be owned except by. . . . But where now are the words we need? We have allowed those of *Religion* to be confounded with those of arbitrary dogma: we have degraded religion to the level of a catechism and a creed which you get by rote; and which excludes instead of including and sunders mankind into dissected and hostile or at least mutually protestant 'beliefs,' the worst enemies of faith! Thus the genesis of the '*I*' must be left, till we have come to our true senses, till the '*Church*' is at least born as the *Divine Body of Humanity*.

6.8. Mother-Sense (1904–1910). A selection*

25 February 1904⁴³ [untitled typescript, M3]

'Nature' has insisted on quantity, and has also provided pleasure as enticement, and passion in the lower sense as hunger for this, in order to secure quality. It is not the physically generative organs but the psychically generative organ, the two-lobed brain, which 'she' has in man so enormously

* ['Mother-Sense,' WCYA, Box 28, file 24, includes unpublished papers written between 1904 and 1910, mostly edited by William Macdonald and programmed for publication. Three sequences emerge regarding order of presentation of the manuscripts (M): the first corresponds to chronological order of writing as indicated by typewritten date on front page – this is the sequence followed in the present volume; the second follows date sometimes handwritten alongside, probably indicating date of editing; the third sequence is that established by manuscript number which does not always coincide with the date of writing. This file also includes notes (among which a group is classified under the title 'Motherhood, mainly 1904'), abstracts and extracts from various sources – correspondence, articles, volumes, etc. Almost all papers in this file are now published in the present volume, to the exclusion of a series of notes.

developed. Sexual passion, love, pleasure, happiness, are merely means for securing that a race shall emerge in which, variation having done its work through ‘polarity’ or the union of opposites in many senses, and through similarity in the sense of race, may learn what love really is. Not merely, that is, pole seeking pole to complete a life-circuit, not merely a spatial or organic half seeking a spatial or organic complement or ‘mate,’ but that which is the Why of the impulse and of the elaborate provision for and urgent insistence on the fulfilment of its promise. But sex only emerged (or supervened) for the sake of variation and for the sake of fostering a self-forgetting, self-sacrificing, lastly what we call an ‘idealising’ tendency. It would not be good for us in our present stage to realize too plainly what and why we really ARE, ‘whence we came, whither we go.’ So our constitution only allows the veil to be drawn aside at the apex of life, when we pour ourselves out in adoration of another who ‘returns’ our worship: so that we may have something to *translate* into what we have called ‘spiritual’ as well as ensuring the generation of organisms which at last can ‘bear,’ to learn the plain truth that we are not merely ‘planetary’ but also solar, nebular, and ultimately cosmical; stellar, sidereal in the fullest sense or in all senses.

Thus the only true moments of man are (1) the unselfishly devoted moments ‘in love.’ We ‘fall in love’ – really ‘rise in love’ – whether with our complement here and our babe born of us, or with

The file opens with the following handwritten editorial annotations: “‘Mother-Sense’ Theme. NB. This theme includes half-a-score of “Subjects”, see later Reports. Put into a first chronological order, preparatory to further sorting. January 1907.’

At the bottom of the same page: ‘Some “Eugenic” papers here must come out; and, along with other papers of a similar kind enter “Sociology”, and go to form a “Eugenic” section.’ On the back page of this file: ‘Passing over for the present No. 13 “Plea for Significs”; 17 “Second Eugenic Paper”; 18 “The Mother Message” (latter part of which is valuable rather as a corrective of M-S theme, I note). To be taken in hand with a view to some kind of presentation, the following: M3 – omitting middle part; M5b – last part only; M4, 8, 12, 21 for “Woman” theme; also M29; M9 – with some thinning out, would serve for an Epilogue?; M14 “The Virgin Birth” (relates to heliocentric also); M21 “Mother-sense as the saving quantity in the merely masculine mind”; M24 – Topic of last paragraph only; M26 Sense of Order and Sequence; M27 The Return to Mother-Sense; M28 The Meaning of Sex [Virgin Birth – Variation – development of Brain – Expression stops the way]. This might serve as Summary and to some extent “application” of foregoing themes; the order of which is not yet given. On a further scrutiny, with a view to *very* immediate practice, the typed paragraphs on folio would have to be taken into account. They confirm much that is of the best; but the attempt to bring them into this study would only crowd the scene and make for obscuration, W. M. April 18, 1907.’

Some of the papers in this file were shifted to others, for example to the file collecting papers on education, or on eugenics. M17, untitled, has not been included here as it is the original copy of Welby’s second paper on Eugenics, already included in its published version in the present volume in the section dedicated to Eugenics. M32, ‘The Eugenics of Mind,’ 22 November 1907, has also been shifted from the present file to ‘Significs-Eugenics,’ Box 30, file 46, which too included a copy of this same paper. Once again it seems that Welby was writing and editing studies that were never published during her lifetime. As recalled by her daughter and editor Nina Cust, the war also played its part in forgetting Welby’s writings, even worse, in losing an important part of them in the bombings. Her papers have been presented here in chronological order of writing, and sometimes in a more advanced version with respect to these materials as commented in 1907 by W. Macdonald, having been further edited thereafter].

43. [Handwritten annotation on top of the page: ‘February 07 1910, M3’. This typescript is incomplete as emerges from Macdonald’s comment below].

the very Spring, Fountain and ultimate consummation of our being and identity, human or divine: and (2) the great moments of creation by what we call 'genius.' The whole matter is really simple to anyone who can 'shrink' ideally (and in a deep sense phylogenetically) into the protozoon and correspondingly into the zoic destiny and fulfillment, – the ectozoon. We need some such word.

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M3

'Nature' has aimed at quality, and has called for quantity as the means to this. Pleasure and the desire of pleasure, have been her lures and goads, impelling to reproduction, giving rise to variation, and making for the emergence, finally, of a human race capable of knowing what Love really is: neither pleasure nor desire, neither lure nor goad. Sex, which is the mechanism employed in the working out of this result, itself does much to conceal from us its own reason for being and the further purposes it serves; yet in the individual history the coming of Love is the apex of life, the revelation of our fuller, unknown being, and of all noble relatedness: making us citizens not of the planet alone, but of the sun and stars.

Thus the only true moments of Man are the moments of unselfish love; worship – whether of mate or babe or the Source of all – and the Creative moments of genius. This is simple truth to anyone who can 'shrink' himself in idea to his own far-past protozoic stage again, and view the destinies and powers of evolving life as seen from there.

But a man who is *merely* masculine, in writing on marriage, will write all stress on these very aspects of this theme which are merely provisional, and by sheer brain-work will miss the reason of brain and of his own historic predominance as male. Of this kind, Herbert Spencer is the type instance for good and evil, for power as well as failure.

Nevertheless the truth remains that the development of multiple variation was a provisional end, subservient to further purposes; and that these purposes have now been in a degree realized. Variation there still must be, if there is still to be ascent; but the agency of profuse sexual reproduction by which it has hitherto been attained cannot continue to have the rank as a means which it has had, nor the uncensored liberty of action. Were the variation-period in its present form to continue indefinitely, man would be evolving to the suicide of this humanity, and Nature conniving at her own frustration. She has aimed at quality, and to that end has called for quantity and instituted sex: but the means, too long in use or too unwisely cared for, is capable of poisoning all the ideal result so painfully attained.

(I have omitted from the above abstract or paraphrase all reference to a longish passage about the distinction between Fancy and Imagination, and about Mechanism as a projection of the latter and in some sense an Image of the powers, actual or developing, in mind. The passage cannot be easily related to the rest. W. M.⁴⁴)

18 April 1904⁴⁵

Note on passages in Dr. Westermarck's Address to the Sociological Society (On the Position of Women in Early Civilization)

We no longer believe that 'the system of tracing descent through the mother is a consequence of the supremacy of women.' Of course not. . . . And we may thus see it as a consequence of the instinctive awareness of the race that 'motherhood' in life-history is supreme and engenders 'fatherhood' for the sake of variation and the special development of two necessary characters: (1) that of muscular strength and (2) that of intellectual force, both constructive and analytical.

44. [The manuscript abstracted, M3, as reported above, is clearly incomplete].

45. [Annotated in handwriting: 'February 17 1910, M4a'. This essay is amplified with comments in handwriting which have not been reported here].

For these could only be fully developed in womanhood at the expense of its supreme prerogative and also its supreme duty, – that towards the nascent generations. The mother's energy had to be economised in both the muscular and cerebral systems in order to be expended on the generative and nutritive systems. And this applies to 'motherhood' in mind (the terms need revising). . . .

Naturally therefore by the more 'backward' races (as nearer the 'fountainhead' of the race) women, looked upon primarily as mothers actual or potential, would be 'treated with far greater consideration' than among 'higher' savages who had already begun to lose the original instinct.

The great religions of the world have tended to lose this altogether. Even the veneration of the virgin-mother in Christianity failed to counteract the medieval view of 'woman' as 'unclean' and as a tempter to be shunned by the holy or at least to be kept in strict subjection. But in spite of this, there is an uneasy consciousness even in highly civilized men that the woman is not understood, is an enigma. And often a naïve wonder is expressed at her astonishing intuition and power of 'jumping' at valid conclusions: the real wonder of course being the extent to which the masculine brain has *lost* these racial powers while becoming able to analyse, step by step, what in a true sense is the analogue of the lightning flash and realized as such by a woman in whom there still survives some modicum of the swift intelligence of the race-motherhood.

It is the underlying and now largely dormant power of this primordial insight and oversight which, once obvious and conspicuous as belonging to the natural order of things, as the masculine development itself entirely loses the ancestral and pre-sexual mother-sense, tends to impress and sometimes even terrify the man, now mostly become, in sober earnest, as far as the original fecundating power goes, the 'mere man.' For women are found to 'have in their hands a weapon which is invisible to the superficial observer but which is powerful enough to give them a secret authority which may be very considerable. They have their curses, and they have their profound knowledge of magic.' Dr. Westermarck says that he himself, in Morocco, 'was often struck by the fear which the women inspired in the men.' The woman is as 'dangerous being.' Of course this recognition of an originally natural order ends by translating itself into the abnormal and 'supernatural.' The latter, thus, like magic, simply means inexplicable power or knowledge, – to which, in fact, the key has been lost. And you get the 'witch.'

Dr. Westermarck incidentally remarks of the woman that 'we must also take into account her position as a mother.' Yes, but we must do very much more than merely admit this as supplementary fact applying only to 'Oriental women.'

Sidi Hammu's 'if'⁴⁶ expresses the whole secret: not only his mother, but the mother of all the tribe in all ages and in every sense must be excepted from any failure in respect and good-will, nay more, must be recognized as the sanctuary, as the spring of a real wisdom of the ages, complementing as well as inspiring the dialectical processes of inductive and deductive reasoning which answer to those of uterine development and post-uterine intuition, care and training. This race-parenthood must of course never be confounded with the feminine, just as man must never be limited to the masculine. For the feminine does not primarily refer to or define the woman as mother, but only the woman on the feeble side as merely female, which mentally she wrongly tends to become. Only as defective, as a failure, is the man effeminate; and there is indeed an effeminacy in women also. Feminism thus strikes a degenerative and radically false note. It emphasizes a secondary distinction and ignores the true human prerogative of motherhood as originally in the biological sense including that of fatherhood, and thus still effective also in the man, in the mental sense, in proportion to his fulness of humanity.

It remains for the woman not to cultivate what is for her a secondhand and artificial masculinity of mind, but both to recover and develop a race-motherhood in herself which is mentally a

46. The Berber sage, Sidi Hammu, said 'O you women, you seed of the Oleander tree, I should like to burn all of you, if my mother were not one of you.'

fatherhood. And it rests with her, realizing this wholly significant fact, to inspire the man, her Son, also to realize to the full its implications in himself as well as in her [...]

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M4a

The tracing of descent through the Mother bears witness to the race's instinctive recognition that Motherhood is primary and supreme, and that Fatherhood exists as a special provision for special ends: ends which the Mother has to forego because of the cost.

The higher consideration in which women are held among some of the more 'backward' of savage races, as compared with some savage races that are 'more advanced,' is due to this instinctive recognition being stronger in the former, and to their being nearer to the social status in which the ideas of 'Woman' and 'Mother' are regarded as convertible and identical.

Though the great religions have worked in the direction of disparaging woman, yet the ancient instinctive reverence for the Mother-Creature survives as an uneasy consciousness that woman is an enigma, a being extra-natural, or of an order earlier than that to which men belong. If in one social world the swift intuitive judgments of women puzzle men with the sense of an extra or irregular power, in another 'her curses, her profound knowledge of magic,' affrights them with a sense of powers uncanny. 'The woman is a dangerous being.'

Not only is 'the position of woman as mother' to be borne in mind in considering her status in early society, but the idea of Woman as Mother is to be enlarged both historically and morally. Under it we must consider not only the woman of the East but also of the West; and not only the actual mothers of the individual men of any tribe or race, but all the women as collectively the Motherhood of that race, stimulating and guiding towards all achievement – and that in many directions – as any one man's mother stimulates and guides her Son.

It is this sense and function of their common Race-motherhood that women must seek to realize more fully or to recover. Which they will not do by being merely feminine, or by cultivating 'a second-hand and artificial masculinity of mind.'

3 June 1904⁴⁷

We already speak of the spinal brain as a physiological fact. But the woman has also what may be called the uterine brain, akin to the world itself as matrix of life. After all, the whole nervous system, brain and all, is but the out-fruiting of the prolific 'cell' (or fibrillar unit) of a 'plasm' of which we have yet much to learn. Probably both words convey ideas, serviceable in their day, which we now have to outgrow. And it may soon be safer than it yet is, to break down precautionary *barriers* between the 'living' and the non-living and to recognise the implicit continuity of the whole natural world, – perhaps to be revealed through a fuller knowledge of what we call electricity.

Meanwhile, in the broadest of senses, we may think of the race-motherhood as that which – as representative of what religion knows as 'He' (the Half-GOD) and what social man and science know as 'She' (the Half-Nature) – has *created* the two. The original earth-motherhood differentiated the male into a separate individual for the sake of an aim which we call Variation. It is perhaps doubtful whether we yet recognise the full wealth of the conception.

Meanwhile it is that motherhood, which is potentially male as well as female and was originally as much the one as the other, *that knows Life at first hand*. The man's knowledge of life is in that sense second-hand. It is the mother in him that knows that. And as we see in structure as well as function the uterine element in him is atrophied.

This accounts for the supreme negatives for which the masculine brain is responsible – untrue thus as in many other cases to its own logic – the negatives which *usurp the place* of positives.

47. [Untitled typescript. This text is also included in Box 29, file 36, 'Primal Sense'].

The mathematician knows better. He uses some positive symbol like the nth and keeps his minus sign for what is really privative.

3 June 1904 [M5a]⁴⁸

The whole nervous system, brain and all, is but the out-fruiting of the prolific ‘cell’ (or fibrillar unit) of a ‘plasm’ of which we have yet much to learn. Probably both words convey ideas, serviceable in their day, which we now have to outgrow. And it may soon be safer than it yet is, to break down precautionary *barriers* between the ‘living’ and the ‘non-living,’ and to recognize the implicit continuity of the whole natural world, – perhaps to be revealed through a fuller knowledge of the nature of what we call electricity. Meanwhile the brain sums up and is the last word of the highest actual organism. And we already speak of the spinal brain as a physiological fact. But the woman has also what may be called the uterine brain, akin to the world itself as matrix of life.

In truth, in the broadest of senses, we may think of the race-motherhood as that which – as representative of what religion knows as ‘He’ (the Half-GOD) and what social man and science know as ‘She’ (the Half-Nature) – has *created* the two separated sexes. The original earth-motherhood differentiated the male into a separate individual for the sake of an aim which we call Variation. It is perhaps doubtful whether we yet recognize the full wealth of the conception.

Meanwhile it is that motherhood, which is potentially male as well as female and was originally as much the one as the other, that knows Life at first-hand. The man’s knowledge of life is in that sense second-hand. It is the mother in him that knows that. And as we see in structure as well as function the uterine element in him is atrophied.

This accounts for the supreme negatives for which the masculine brain is responsible – untrue thus as in many other cases to its own logic – the negatives which usurp the place of positives of which infinity and immortality, used as ultimate ideals, are typical case. The NOT gives you Nothing. The mathematician knows better. He uses some positive symbol like the nth and keeps his minus sign for what is really privative.

Mr. Macdonald’s Abstract of M5a

We have learnt to regard the whole Nervous System, Brain and all, as the fibrillar outfruiting of what we call a ‘cell’ of what we call ‘plasm.’ Cell and plasm are equally things of which we know very little, and we may presently have to give up both terms in order to take in more of the truth about them. We may, for that matter, have to give up our sundering distinction between the ‘living’ and the ‘non-living’ as a step towards knowing better what Life is.

Meanwhile, however, ‘Brain’ (understood as cervical) sums up and is the last word of the highest actual organism. We already enlarge the range of this supreme word, while strictly preserving its meaning, when we speak of the spinal brain; which is now recognized as a physiological fact.

We have yet, however, to make the further advance of recognising that Woman has what may be called the Uterine Brain, the primeval seat of her mysterious responses to reality, her intuitiveness; and that this Uterine Brain is to these specialized organic forms – to the cervical and even to the spinal brain – as the world itself is to the Life which it has mothered and moulded.

Now as the cervical and the spinal brain are both developments from the Uterine Brain, so the now separated sexes have been developed out of a Race-Motherhood which was originally as much male as female and which still, in modified or suppressed form, persists in women, who are potentially both. And still it is this Motherhood, by the functioning of the Uterine Brain, that knows Life at first-hand; and in so far as any man knows it, it is the mother in him that knows.

48. [Untitled typescript. Annotation in handwriting: ‘February 17, 1910, M5a’]. A re-elaboration of the preceding version here included to evidence Welby’s working method which consisted in tirelessly returning to the same issues to develop them further.

For the most part, the masculine brain does not function at ease in the presence of Reality; but has made for itself, as its highest achievement and deepest concern, a pseudo-world of Negations which it treats as positives and of Abstractions which it treats as Things.

July 1904 (corrected 12 June 1907) [M5b]⁴⁹

The Eugenic Contribution of the 'Race-Motherhood'

(There must be at present a special difficulty in developing such ideas as that summarised in the above title, because what they react and witness to is exactly that intimate pressure of natural reality which has instead of developing lapsed with the enormous development of the logical function [the snare of Hegel, Comte, H. Spencer and suchlike] as the result of the evolution of sex on the human plane).

The man as opposed to the woman for the sake of variation and of brain-development (as typically represented by formal logic and the higher mathematics) necessarily has the defects of his qualities. These would have been normally supplied by the woman but for the inevitable long ages of brain-slavery which succeeded the early period in which we have good reason to suppose that women developed a quick and unerring 'cunning' now vaguely called 'intuition,' a gift which stood them instead of 'brute' muscular force. This is the woman's.

The dialectical development of the masculine brain-process has reached a high degree of complexity and intricacy being in fact the mental correlation of uterine development. Trains of formal reasoning become thus available for their own sake. And we tend to make them supreme not in the sense in which they really are so, but in that of wholly superseding the messages of direct awareness, which then become to us merely mythical, if not actually pathological. It is surely time that, as part of the eugenic inquiries now being prosecuted, we should consider and examine this needlessly 'mysterious' sphere of knowledge. But only the legacy of the thousand generations of his mothers enables a man to include the logical and dialectical method instead of being confined to it in cases where it does not apply.

All great work done by man thus owes much to the womanhood acting through him. When this is strong he is a genius. Woman do not (with very rare exceptions) achieve great work, which needs a mental gestation; and no woman is included among the small group of the greatest human beings known, because of her having (in the race-Motherhood) delegated the main brain-work like the main muscle-work both gestative to her son, especially while her original centre of generative vitality was in its fullest activity. We are probably suffering to this day for the long ages when this last delegation, the muscle-work, partly lapsed, and women were exhausted by toil enforced by the men. Even now that age must be survived by the individual if we are to recover the racial knowledge which is so sadly to seek in our abortive attempts to understand, express and live by the realities which all round us are *pressing for discovery, urgent to be interpreted*.

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M5b

(This is a very short paper, excerpted from a letter, and contains a great deal. But as the ideas are – for any reader, at least, except the recipient of the letter – in a sort of anyhow order it is difficult to make out what it drives at or comes to. I find no other way of making a serviceable abstract or paraphrase of it than by formulating in a series of propositions the historical theory latent in it, and either expressed or implied by this passage and that. W.M.)

At a very early period woman developed a quick, unerring 'cunning' or general awareness, which stood her instead of physical strength and defences.

49. [Handwritten annotation: 'February 17, 1910, M5b'].

For race-purposes she presently delegated to her son the main brainwork and muscle-work – i.e. the biological task or function of developing in these directions – ‘especially while her original centre of generative vitality was in full activity.’

There was a subsequent period, of long ages, during which ‘this latter delegation lapsed’ – when woman toiled to exhaustion, and man was her possessor and task-master chiefly.

This period has left its mark upon the race and its penalty is being paid to this day; for it is owing to this age-long subjection of woman (in varying degrees and social phases) that man is deprived of that aid and supplementing from the woman-mind, which would have made up for those defects of his mental qualities that result from his (narrowing) special development.

Nevertheless, *Intuitiveness* remains as vestige of a primitive direct awareness: of a method or manner of ‘knowledge’ not yet lost by woman, and still less rendered unnecessary by the intellectual gains of man.

From Prop. 2 it results that women rarely do great work, and that the small group of greatest human being consists of men alone; but also from Prop. 5 it results that to the thousand generations of his Mothers the man owes whatever power he has of escaping from the wheel cage of mere dialectic, and that the Genius is one in whom the womanhood of the race works and is strong.

Those, therefore, who are prosecuting the new study of Eugenics would do well to inquire somewhat into this needlessly ‘mysterious’ manner of knowledge: the kind of knowledge which most of all is wanting to our present attempts to understand the realities around us which on all sides are pressing to be interpreted.

4 August 1904 [M8]⁵⁰

Race-Motherhood

We have two great tasks before us. One to *motherise* the man: to show him that he ought not to relegate to the mere lover of beauty (almost always the despiser of logic as of goodness) or the depreciator of knowledge and the deifier of emotion, the vindication of his splendid many-mothered heritage. That is, to show him how he may understand, by developing within him, the sense of the race-motherhood.

The other and corresponding task is to *fatherise* the woman: *not* by giving her a secondhand merely imitative training (though her sense of order and her critical faculty ought to be most carefully trained) but by developing to the utmost a power, now except in a few individuals (and mostly in them perverted into ‘clairvoyance,’ &c.) in varying degrees lapsed and lost. This is the power of swift, unerring, penetrative discernment and interpretation.

This coming woman must ‘father’ systematic thought which the man must ‘mother,’ – must work out and develop into complex adolescence and maturity and organic independence. She must learn to give and to sift out and fit the key-ideas, she must learn to dispense the human treasure, brought by the race from the various springs of life itself, – from its cradle, the sea world, dating far back to its nebula origin. She must learn, first, to give man the animal secrets which e.g. men like Kropotkin have motherhood enough in them dimly to perceive as ‘mutual aid’ &c. She must learn, secondly, to explain to him his own heritage of expression, and its dependence, *like all else* on the original nebular centre now called the sun, the very womb of human experience and of human ideas of nature. She must learn to show him that her ‘intuition’ when really normal is as orderly as his own logical process; but that all true ideas are and must be true in many senses, and not only, as he is apt to suppose or to assume, only in one; that true imagination is the reflection of reality while illusion is the refraction (whereas we constantly strive to make refraction do the

50. [Handwritten annotation: ‘February 18/19 1910. Special. To be retyped, M8.’ This text is also included in Box 29, file 36, ‘Primal Sense’].

work of reflection instead of its own good work); not to be ignored or thrown aside as deception merely, but interpreted.

Many more things like this must woman learn or rather re-learn from the fountain-head of her being. Learning this august lesson she will rise above the pettiness, the childishness, the many ignoble perversities of her present standards. For she will know them as ignoble and unworthy. Among them she will outgrow the degenerative tendencies of personal partisanship and of injustice. She will resume the true mother-function of restoring in the family not merely order but mutual sympathy and understanding: her strong sons being strong in all the higher senses: strong to serve the need, to save the good, to strengthen the weak in all form capable of such strengthening. She will see as clearly as the most uncompromising of the denouncers of superstition, myth, ecclesiastical dogma, the pressing need of an altogether truer, deeper, more natural, more real Ethics. For she will resume that power of translation which we have left undeveloped and still in its earliest and crudest stages. Thus she will account for the mythical aberrations of what we still call religion as due to mistranslation; and she will show that 'religio' is always one of two opposites: a ligature of bondage or a ligature of organic and therefore spontaneous unity. And she will show that man must not lose a single one of the truths which for lack of interpretative, translative, and transfigurative power, seem now to us mere fiction or fantasy – or at best a fascinating dream. For they all arise from the pressure of reality upon the questioner, that conscious being we here and now know as human.

The mother-being in us – by no means merely feminine dates back from uncounted ages in biological development: the man who is merely masculine, virile only, is a creature of yesterday. The generative Humanity ought to know, will one day know (plus all the modern knowledge) the difference between the Ancient as the Original, and the Antiquated as the Obsolete; between the mentally derivative (like time) and the mentally productive (like space): between the mere self and the I – but halt!

These things and many like them are in their turn only expressible as yet in the very terms of that falsified condition, haunted by initial fallacy even in its higher developments of exact thought, from which we need to emerge. Such ideas are as yet themselves liable to the accusation of being rampantly speculative, aggressively abstract, fatally fanciful and transcendental. And in the only form of statement as yet current or accepted, they must be all this, just as the statement of some fact by the child in a babyish dialect sets his elders shouting with laughter and involves a needed correction. May that correction soon come to the race, as it realises through the recovery of its own mother-sense how much here is yet to be hoped for!

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M8

We have two great tasks: to motherise the man and to fatherise the woman. The man's mind must be liberated or reclaimed from its too exclusive dependence on the logical or critical method of knowledge, which tends to the disparagement of insight and emotion; while the woman's characteristic faculty of swift and penetrating perception needs to be more carefully developed and more nobly applied, as the mentally male function.

The coming Woman will *father* thought in the sense that she will be increasingly the begetter of ideas which men, in turn, will *mother*: that is, will develop and establish in secure and multiple relation with the whole world of existing knowledge. Being nearer to the springs of life, it should be here to dispense the human treasure – the riches of the mother-sense brought by the race from its beginnings, from the wet-world, from the Nebula even. A perception of the animal secrets, like that mutual aid which a Kropotkin detects and traces out; an awareness of our cosmic relatedness, as of the child to the womb; an assurance that intuition also is reason and richer in its kind than logic; a conviction that all true ideas are true in many senses and that even those which are 'mistaken' must be dealt with patiently and are worthy of being interpreted: such as these are the Key-thoughts which it should be the office of woman to find and to hand on for man to use more systematically.

With this nobler application of her powers should come also an enhancement, a transformation of her personal and social ideals. Not pettiness, nor perversity, nor indifference to justice for the sake of self or some favoured others, nor feud-making and feud-fostering: not these, but the reverse of these are the qualities and habits which the very word woman should connote – not capricious disregard of consequences, but an organic desire to save and strengthen all existing good in the world. Least of all should she be the slave of the moral fashion of her time: none more clearly than she, representing the race-motherhood that has come through so much, will perceive the need for a truer, a more real Ethics. And resuming that primitive power of Translation which we have left undeveloped and have almost lost, she will be apt and able to account for the mythical aberrations of ‘religion,’ and will show that here also, though much has been mis-thought and mis-said, yet nothing is lightly to be thrown away, but all asks to be interpreted: because these ‘mistakes’ also are full of significance, because they are the answers which the Child-man – the cosmic Questioner – has given himself about the strange Reality that presses around him.

(Two short paragraphs follow. The essential part of the first is caught into this paraphrase by a deft anticipation; and the second speaks of the difficulties which Language puts in the speaker’s and thinker’s way. W. M.)

Note – 25 August 1904 [M9]

*The Primordial Link and Unity of Sense*⁵¹

When I appeal to the validity of primitive mental instinct or ‘intuition’ of course I mean something wider and deeper than the naïve notions of early myth or the ‘primitive ideas’ of a flat world, &c. That seems to me a stage of reaction to stimulus in which mistranslation was inevitable, for the reasons I have tried to suggest in my book, *What is Meaning?* I mean a state of things far earlier than anthropology or ethnology can trace, and nearer to W. K. Clifford’s conception of ‘mind-stuff.’ In my sense, the primordial awareness would not only include the whole animal-world but also the plant-world. It is this to which I think the woman’s mind may be nearer than the man’s, if only it be possible for her to recover that closeness of ‘touch’ with ‘nature’ which makes evolution in the mental sense possible. And this is not ‘lower’ except in one sense. In trustworthiness, as criterion of reality, it is higher. In a truly scientific sense reality is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto ‘babes.’ For to me the advent of consciousness, between which and all else we now postulate an ‘impassable gulf,’ is itself a translation of something unnamed because unrealized except in ‘superstitions’ or fantastic forms. This translation, as the gap widens from inevitable reaction (which we call mechanical) into life-preserving instinct and at last into volitional and intellectual response, becomes necessarily more and more liable to error and needs to be corrected by more and more penetrative test. It is not only this or that elaborate and subtle mathematical or metaphysical theory of individual or group which may be falsified by over-sight in its assumptions, *it is the whole race in its intellectual aspect which is liable to be thus falsified*, and has to provide against it by becoming master of ever new modes of criticism and of expression, and by constant reference to a witness which has been long and effectually silenced in us; the witness of the childhood and adolescence, and of the primal motherhood of man. It is the lack of this original witness which tends to create such calamitous discord between what are really our deepest impulses of emotion and thought waiting for fresh interpretation; and tending also to the paralysis of some of our highest powers. It is in short this which makes the solution of life problems seem hopeless. Just as ‘matter’ cannot know matter, so ‘mind’ in its present form cannot ultimately analyse, cannot wholly interpret mind, in the sense that mind can analyse the not-mind. Still less can ‘spirit’ explain the ‘spiritual,’ or ‘personality’ or a ‘person’ explain the ‘personal’; the best thing we can do is to go back to the original sense of ‘spirit’ as breath inspired

51. [On top of the page in handwriting: ‘This and M8 modified for Aristotelian?, M9’].

and expired, and that of the actor's mask (the 'person') which is a doubly secondary conception – as we unconsciously admit when we speak of personating and personifying. We breathe, like the whole living world; and again we play a part, – playing even that in a mask. We need to approach these matters from a new direction and to recognize a racial order which like the mathematician's 'law of frequency of error' includes in a larger sphere all that makes for apparent chaos and the supremacy of the 'haphazard.' This of course can only as yet be advanced as a tentative suggestion. It would require for fit discussion more developed forms of expression than we yet possess. Those we have belong to a letter and yet to us antiquated phase. For I am not supposing mental advance to be in a straight line at all. It is rather in a spiral. And we sorely want a term for that which directs and interprets the 'mind' which we study; and which does more than inspire, breathe into, more even than illuminate us: which originates life and thus 'soul,' 'mind,' 'spirit,' 'idea,' and builds then or rather contracts then into selves which exist, for a moment of 'time' on a given spot of space. Until we can deliver the term 'GOD' from the falsifying associations which the antagonism of 'religion' and 'science' have riveted upon it, it seems best here to use the term Nature, so long as we understand that the term includes all possible forms of reality, and that it connotes the divine as well as the human.

Mr. M's Abstract of M9

(This paper less than most others requires any kind of restatement or abstract, at least in regard to the first part. I have made one, however, for the sake of bringing out more clearly, if possible, the relation of the second folio to the first. W. M.)

By the 'primitive mental instinct or intuition' referred to in these papers is meant not the naïve ideas of primitive man regarding the world, but a state of psycho-physical functioning which may be called the first state of mind; a primordial undifferentiated awareness common to plant and animal life alike, and belonging to a time far anterior to any which comes into the view of historical anthropology. This first state of mind is to be regarded as, in an important sense, not lower but higher than the *last* or latest, which we call human understanding, or consciousness; nor has it been altogether left behind, outgrown, or lost, though its elimination or suppression has been carried further in men, as a whole, than in women. As to consciousness, it is thus to be viewed as no unique or final phenomenon more than any other, being but a Translation of something earlier and a phase of something greater. Greater; for much has been foregone in developing the present character and aptitudes of mind: there has been a narrowing of range – range of relation and response – for the sake of an increase of specialized efficiency. Man's thoughts about the world and himself have neither the immediacy nor the interpretive validity of the primordial response to environment, or even of the later animal 'instincts'; while the falsifying potency of any initial oversight, of any mistake in the assumptions, is increased in proportion as man's special mental acquisitions – his power of holding abstract ideas and of continuous logical development – now render it easy for him to proceed indefinite lengths without ever referring back to these assumptions or testing them by the touchstones of reality. Nor is this a possibility of merely special and occasional incidence; not only may a philosopher have a void theory or a mathematician calculate astray, but the whole race in its intellectual ascent may, through such a mistake in the assumptions, be working upon a wrong track, or misconstruing its own situation, throughout whole periods. To guard against this possibility there are needed 1) the mastery of ever new modes of criticism and means of expression and 2) a more constant reference to the witness of *Childhood* and *Adolescence*, those human phases in which still lingers or re-incarnates itself the primal motherhood of man, the state in which the Mother-sense was most active and immediate response most sure. It is the lack of the unifying and interpretive knowledge which might be gained from this latter source especially, that causes the widening breach between the different tendencies or powers of our nature – between 'emotion' and 'thought' for instance – and that causes so many life-problems to seem 'insoluble.'

For this reason mind *in* its present state can almost as little interpret mind as matter can know matter: because the ‘mind’ with which we seek to know and interpret is itself but a fragmentary presentation, albeit a specially developed fragment, of that which is to be interpreted. Our actual mental state – our consciousness, our intelligence – is but a position in a Curve, and it is the Curve that we are concerned to know. So also with the problems of Personality, and of the spiritual life: these ideas have to be approached from a new direction and seen as in process, all aberrations or momentary states being discounted, or absorbed in the result, even as the mathematician’s ‘law of frequency of error’ eliminates by assimilating all that apparently makes for disorder. In the present state of language, however, these things can hardly be expressed even as suggestions. To speak of ‘mental advance’ is at once to suggest progress in a straight line, whereas it is of the spiral we should think. And beyond the imperfect and provisional mind which we study with such imperfect means there is That which directs, illuminates, creates all life and therefore all ‘minds,’ and of which we have no name that serves. In our day it is perhaps best to use the term Nature, so long as we understand that it includes all possible forms of reality and is therefore as divine as it is human.

15 September 1904 [M10]⁵²

A Parable of Motherhood

There was once a Race-mother.⁵³ And she was sent (by the Life reached in passing through truth) to bear a living Race on a grain-world, which should *know* not only Her but the Life which was Her inspiration and Her Light. For truth and light are one; and life is a throb, a quivering strain in the ether of reality which some day we shall be able to express when we are out of the cradle of language in which we have idly and shamefully lingered.

Teach the race, said the Life, to Signify. Give men the Wand of Symbol and let them know Nature and their home – their universe – as the Sign which translates the divine reality into sense. Give them desire and will that they may have purpose and design: that they may achieve, create, control. Give them momentary selves in minute bodies, but show them how great, as Mine, they are. For as Mine they too in their faithful working shall know themselves in their turn to be *of* Life and *in* Life.⁵⁴ Space-dwellers, they shall speak of great and small, of far and near, of before and after: they shall call their little curve of event, their little wave of change – *Experience*. And the Space of Succession and Duration they shall call Time.

Now, little Mother, said the Blessed Life, thou wilt ask, How shall I do this? Listen. Thou must bear a Manhood: thou must give this new race a Fatherhood not only, as in thee, distinct and supreme in the glory of essential and effective impulse, in the majesty of energising force, in the flashing quiver of a life-point from Me, but for awhile as a separate being in the little pulse world of Selves. And the Race-Mother bowed her head and she said, So be it O Lord of my life, who art no ‘he’ and no ‘she’ while both, and more yet, and All.

And the Race-Mother began her work. In the profound humility of the Life of lives she worked patiently through what we call (because we know as) the plant and the animal world. She led upwards the evolving germ she had brought in her bosom, the living shrine of power and of tenderness, until the Love in her was born in what we call a heart and then a Light was kindled in what we call a mind whereby to know Love as good beyond good. . .

52. [Handwritten annotation: ‘Edited 19 February 1910, Retype this, M10’].

53. [An earlier typewritten version of the same text, bearing the same date, presents minor variations including, for example, greater use of capitalization, or the first sentence which reads: ‘Once, *not* “upon a time”, there was a Race-mother’; while the last sentence here included in the current version is lacking altogether. As it stands, this paper is the edited and retyped version of the original].

54. [In the variant mentioned in the note above, this phrase reads: ‘*of* Me and *in* Me’].

Only the price of the separate fatherhood, needed for varying power, began then to be paid. 'Evil,' suffering and wrong, the wrung and wrenched and crooked, above all, *hate*, the Other of Love, *lie*, the Other of Truth, proud Darkness and Ignorance, the Others of Light and Knowledge, – all these appeared.

This was the Mother's Cross! But slowly to us, through the moments which here are milleniums it became clear that the price of what as space-dwellers never at rest we call the great ascent of the Race was the emergence of evil, made possible, even inevitable by variation implying a selection for survival. The race became innumerable meeting-points of life into which ran innumerable rays of ancestry; meeting-points lost in what to us are the dim beginnings of the Race-Mother's great work. Thus, at long last to us, but in a few beats of the patient Mother-heart, Man was born and was 'He.' And the Man borne by the Mother called her Woman, as age after age he grew in strength and in understanding.

Go forth, she said, and overcome and make and rule and learn and know. Yea, conceive in mind as I in body and give birth to complex bodies of Thought and Order them in ever more delicate crystals and fibrillar tissues until the complexity of Reality is reflected, mirrored, in your droplets of mind. To you this is inconceivable? Aye, you are right. *But ever conceived in all senses by Me* who conceived and bore you: in *you*, said the Race-Mother only in the mental sense.

And listen. Once, in what you will call History, you shall be born in such wise that men, knowing not what they say, stammering still in their baby-talk, shall speak of a virgin mother and of a divine son. And they shall turn and adore not only the Son but the Mother. And they will know not what they do! Only, what shall the Son say that he is? He may in compassion speak in our tongues of Divine Kingship, of the poor royalties which are born of earthly ideas of 'greatness.' But, having been born in a stable to live as a homeless outcast and die on a cross, He shall use one word out of that world which we know not, understand not, express not yet. . .

'I am the "*Way*". A Path through truth to Life on which ye shall be blessed Wayfarers. Only, never linger on Me when ye tread Me: never block Me to the Wayfarers who must follow you: press on and leave more and more of Me behind! Thus shalt thou find the sunrise of my Spirit – the Spirit of Truth which shall teach you all things and first the true Nature and work of Love which is Life-essence. But that Message shall come and go. And you shall verily outgrow it. There shall be a Coming Again and Again. . . ' There is ever a Coming, always to Pass: and always an Onward Path: always a Birth and always a rising through a death of the Passing into the Past. . .

30 September 1904 [M11]⁵⁵

As one learns to realize the full value of the recovery of Mother-Sense, one is impelled to wonder which of our various clashing thought-types, – the dogmatic, the Empiric, the Idealist, the Agnostic, the Pantheistic, the Materialistic, finally the Hobbesian, the Humeian, the Lockian, the Kantian, the Hegelian, the Comtian, the Spencerian, the Tolstoyian, the Haeckelian, the Jamesian, and so on – have more entirely missed the human 'point' through losing in varying degrees the original Out-Sense culminating in Out-look, Uplifted-sight, the duty and prerogative of Erect Humanity. This Out-sense belongs to the Mother-life which has conceived and borne the father-life having itself been generated by a Parenthood greater than either Mother or Father; one for which we have no word but Parent. The same question applies in other forms: for instance to the mathematician and the 'practical man' – political, commercial and so on.

The race-mother is the original Significian. That is, her urgent concern for the safety and welfare of the race-child (the race-fatherhood being originally secondary) compels her unceasingly and vigilantly to look for the Why of every detail, of all experience everywhere and all ways. Before the sex-sense arises, all children witness to this, though of course in varying degrees; all are

55. [Untitled typescript. In handwriting: 'February 19 1910. Rewrite in brief, or cancel, M11'].

full of the race-mother's question, Why. All normal children take that position with eyes we have mostly grown too dull to see into and through, as the child-eyes see into and through ours till we have coated them with mental film. All look for the true 'transcendental' – for that Sense of Sign which gives Significance and to which no problem except that which is nonsense and therefore no problem at all, can be 'insoluble.' To the true Questioner the Answer is ready, waiting, eager, as it were, to be found. But we must recover our Signifying and Significant heritage. It is *there*: it is latent, implicit, dormant, potential in *the whole race*. It is the secret of all 'magic' and of all 'superstitions,' which like all their congeners are the more or less pathological forms of this original 'flair' possessed (but neither as understood nor as tested, and therefore sterile of knowledge) by the Mystic,⁵⁶ primitive and 'cultured.' For the world of reality is first a sense-world; and to the race-motherhood was first palpable, then audible, and last and above all visible.

I have asked which of the great types of modern thought and of mental activity have more utterly missed the ultimately human, the race-motherhood 'point.' But it would be better to ask, Which of them have unconsciously preserved (and owe their greatness to their working intellectually from) this secret sanctuary of living Awareness and force of Recognition? Of the One who sums it all up as the Son of the very Mother, in the deepest of all senses 'virginal,' it is best here not to speak. It is only too evident that we are not yet ready or fit for *that* speaking, except in the speech of a devoted life, itself the essential prayer. . . Of the great sources of religious energy and their relations to the Central Humanity in its satellitic character to a solar Divine Nature, it is best as yet also to say nothing.

But from the point of view now taken it becomes obvious that every great 'genius,' every really Eugenic 'personality' which the world has seen, has been in greater or less degree an embodiment of the mother-father, of the Original source of the human reaction to the Real. That is, every really great one has first of all as a Mother conceived, developed and given birth to his Achievement whether as Leader or Thinker. Whence then is the Motherhood of genius fertilized? By that which the very nature of primary Motherhood presupposes. It is abundantly clear that by itself, divorced from this original Motherhood, the man's mind is essentially sterile. It can work endlessly and marvelously on the given, the *données*, the Data of Knowledge. But it cannot supply these. It develops an astonishing, a splendid power of elaborative, analytical, constructive, systematizing Intellect (the tentacle, so to speak, of the male mind). It develops the processes of logic and of quantitative analysis in ever more delicate complexity and accuracy. But when it endeavours to interpret its own amazing deliverances, it inevitably fails. Thus it takes refuge in some 'ism' of its own creation: in an Idealism, even an Absolutism, or an A-gnosticism. And each 'Ism' seeks to overthrow (instead of absorbing and interpreting) the others. Or, renouncing all claim either (ultimately) to synthetise or thoroughly to interpret experience, it contents itself with further and further developments of the analytical function as applied to questions of Quantity and Number or of experimental research.

The question of Order is of course another matter. Like that of sign-value or sign-worth (sense, meaning and significance) it has apparently never yet been raised. Is it waiting for conception by the race-motherhood? Undoubtedly Order, like Significance, is a Mother-Idea: the mother-mind must give the impulse to the interpretation of both.

6 October 1904 [M12]⁵⁷

Primal Sense and Eugenics

One danger of Eugenics will be the temptation to say that every woman who comes of good stock ought to become a mother, just as every such man ought to become a father. But in the literal

56. Mysticism is of opposite kinds, 1) leads through twilight to night, 2) through dawn to day.

57. [But the edition here presented is dated 12 June 1907 and is also included in Box 30, file 46, 'Significs-Eugenics.' The original title is 'Mother-Sense and Eugenics.' Handwritten annota-

sense it does not follow; nor merely in the metaphorical sense – *a contrast which we tend to make too absolute.*

In the idea of motherhood as all others, we are as much bound to rise to realities of which physical fact is symbol or to which physical fact points, as the animal world has been bound (whether only by inexorable elimination of the unfit or by other factors as well), to rise continuously in complexity of function and structure. For there has always been a reality more real than what as yet we can call real, *since further, fuller reality is always in front of us*, presented, present to us; and what is left behind we may treasure as a memory and lesson, but must not now still follow. Note here the confusing effect of spatial metaphor. As usual, here we have but the spatial vocabulary to work with, and perhaps few of us fully realise its coercion and its dangers. We do still ‘follow’ what is ‘left behind’ and do not realise the paradox, even the bull, involved in such a feat. In truth our ‘following’ has been that of a treadmill; and while experience has advanced with accelerating speed, language betrays that its interpretation is still in the rear, fitting only that which experience and its lessons ought to recognise as needing to be ‘left behind.’ Language, one vast mine of image and concept (as the organic eye gives image and the brain concept) is the type of Humanity and Nature. But (as it has been elsewhere contended) language in the present era has not yet worthily fulfilled its transcendent task. Man is ‘made’ in the Image of – supreme and essential Reality. Nature is born as the result, the outcome of conception of this reality. Language must rise to the same high level, and complete that ideal triad – Nature, Man, articulate Expression.

It is of course not easy yet to put this clearly. At present most of us either play with the idea of the image and later of the symbol, or else allow them to enslave us, so that we cannot even change our masters. Sometimes we do both. Is our use of the term Motherhood, then, a case in point? Or may we grow to see it as more than either physical or ‘spiritual,’ literal or metaphorical; as simply real *in many grades of sense*? Taken in the widest of these, its first result or product is the ‘Son,’ one with the ‘Father to be.’ It has included the Fatherhood in virginal sufficiency: it bows to the Fatherhood which has first been Sonship, the original here reverences its product. But it is evident that these are suggestions which as yet can only be warily touched upon; we are in danger alike of mystical extravagance and of shallow and over expressed analogy, or of blank literalism.

To go back, then, to our first practical inference. We must have the literal and physical Mother. She must come of the best and must see the greatness and glory of her vocation. But we must see that we also have the essential motherhood of mind of which this is but the image or the precursor. And we shall only be doing just what the animal ascent has throughout been effecting. We have

tion at top of page: ‘M12 & 12a.’ There are three editions of this paper with minor variants: three copies in all – one a second edition, two a third. The edition we are now reporting is presented as follows: ‘Third Edition (suggested by Mr. M.) of Paper on Primal Sense and Eugenics, dated 6 October 1904 (12 June 1907).’ Mr. M. is William Macdonald who at the time was editing Welby’s writings for publication. The other copy of this third edition replaces the expression ‘Primal Sense’ in the title with ‘Mother-sense.’ On the front page to the edition we are presenting is added a note reporting William Macdonald’s comment on this manuscript (M12), dated 7 June 1907. It reads as follows: ‘The matter, that is, of the immediate topic is only sketched in, or hinted at, in broken bits of expression, and left so: while some ‘further’ thoughts – some emotional considerations upon the margin of the theme, or at the end of the discourse – arrest and usurp the entire interest of the Writer, quite prematurely and intrusively to say the least. W. M.’ A further observation on the same page by someone else: ‘I think this should be re-written somewhat, and so given more value to, before being abstracted by the ingenious Editor.’ And at the bottom of the page in Welby’s handwriting is the comment: ‘Best leave this Paper for later use if any: June 23 1910’].

seen the gill evolving into the lung, the shell into the skeleton, the paw into that ‘second brain,’ the hand: the crawl into the prowl, the prowl into the climb, the climb into the run, the run into the walk, the walk into the Stand Erect, with eyes up-looking and far-seeing.

Every living thing has been steadily translating itself upwards: rising and ascending, taking on higher forms, expressing itself in nobler dialects. And originally it came out of a water world. Its tissues and organs are still bathed in the liquid of the primordial ocean. But it rose into an air-world, and this accounts for the ‘spiritual’; that is, for the idea of Breath as our very ‘soul’ and the inspiration of our ‘mind.’ The air world has seemed the highest; and forgetting that the spirit, that Breathing and Breath is the heritage of all life alike, even of the plant, we have claimed it as our greatest human heritage, and even as Divine. And so it is: but beyond that we are just reaching the reality not yet understood but vaguely called Ether. It may be that there lie the secrets of an ultimate expression: there we may well have the quarry which is to yield the coming Imagery. But words fail us: not because like visionaries we are victims of imagination, orgy or conceptual delirium, but because we touch the sternest of actual fact.

Let us remember then that a widening and enriching use of language is an evolutionary process; and that when we translate physical facts such as those which we resume under the term ‘Motherhood’ – into the mental sphere, we are not merely dealing with convenient but empty or arbitrary symbols; we are not merely postulating some ideal correspondence which must not be pressed or even taken as valid; but are following, in a broad sense, the method of Nature herself, the method to which indeed we owe our present supremacy, as of achievement, so of criticism, – and that criticism, of our own weaknesses or aberrations. Surely in this context we have not sufficiently realised the tremendous prerogative of humanity which some of the words beginning with ‘trans’ – seem best to represent.

To take, in the first place, linguistic variation and translation.

A statement of fact is as much that in English as in Latin or Greek, French or German. And so a statement of fact ought, if our command of language is adequate to be as true in one sense or domain as it is in another. It is only ignorance or vague and confused thinking, – demoralising and demoralised by an ill-developed, an antiquated or corrupted language, – which makes our analogies, our comparisons, our metaphors, our figurative and symbolic usages, so untrustworthy; and excludes in all grades the ideas of equivalence and equation in the expression of the same fact in different environments and on different planes.

*23 October 1904?*⁵⁸

The rational may be called the repetition, always on higher level, of the articulate, which as articulate is the reticular. The true intuitive that of the plasmic (or plasmodic). The presumption is always that – as we retain the primordial plasm-cell (and the germ-primule) and the original sea-water environment – so we retain corresponding sense (that is, awareness) of response to reality in its relation to life and its product mind: that we retain, though now latent except in rare genius, the reaction to real ultimate stimulus. In that case we should find the natural history of man reproduced in what are now supposed to be mere superstitions or religious beliefs or philosophical theories. By translating it would interpret those instinctive efforts: abortive, because the original power is more or less atrophied and has to be recovered.

58. [This note dated 23 October 1904 and the following dated 1 November 1904 are examples of annotations scattered throughout Welby’s files presenting materials that were to go into her various papers].

1 November 1904?⁵⁹

Feminism is needed as an expression of degeneracy. For it connotes the manless womanhood, which is lower than womanless manhood. Effeminacy is a revealing term. In more than one direction we may have an effeminate woman; and none more deserve this epithet than those who would ape the man. The triumph of Feminism would mean (as the Ruling Female would soon be imitated by men) the dangerous storing-up of 'katabolic' energy in the race to the explosive point of pressure, and we should revert to the reign of force, to sheer ferocity; goodness and beauty would vanish in the cult of mere power, of Hercules the god of mere muscular strength.

8 December 1904 [M14]⁶⁰

Virgin-Birth

Man is in a true sense born of the Virgin. That is the lesson of biology. This then translates itself by application to a typical individual. Where then is fatherhood of that virgin mother-Life, which differentiates the male for the sake of variation, which is condemned by the theological dogmatist as heresy!

Life is virgin-mother of her offspring as regards this planet. But whence Her Conception? Can we say that the conditions, mainly of temperatures, being favourable, Life emerges? Certainly. The conditions, physiological and social being favourable, the 'individual' appears. Yet we recognise the existence and importance of ancestry and of the race.

Why should we stop short of Tyndall's great thought, expressed in the famous sentence that the promise and potency of all we now have, of experience itself, lay in the 'fiery cloud' – in the Generative Nebula, 'mother' of the sun and of the whole Solar System?⁶¹ Why not recognise that Motherhood like all else *clamours* to be interpreted, to be translated, to be understood, to be applied? Practically? Why, above all and beyond all, yes. Only in brain has the last and greater physiological advance been made. And what for? That Man may sit and stare 'inwards' (with eyes inverted!) at his own organism? That with closed eyes he may invent a universe, then call it a metaphysical system, or a philosophy, or a theology, or worse, a mysticism which you accept or reject, 'believe' or 'doubt,' and there's an end?

No, a thousand times, no. That he may Act. That he may learn in ever higher ways to Become, to Be in Action. That he may know himself an Energy, and a Body or Mass for this end. That he may become a Function which shall create cosmical structure, and in doing so vindicate his prerogative, – that of all Nature – the royal prerogative of service.

Mr. Macdonald's abstract of M14

(This paper is an important one, but in need of purgation and straightening out to a 'by-ornar' degree. What here follows is a re-writing of the first part, and a summarising of the second. This *second*, however, rather needs to be amplified. W.M.)⁶²

That man is born of the Virgin is the lesson of all biology, a lesson historically gathered up and predicated in a supreme personal reference. Science assures us that in the beginning – at *our* planetary beginnings – there was neither male nor female, but vital reproductive substance alone. Life therefore is Virgin-mother of her offspring, as regards this planet.

59. [Handwritten annotation on top of page: 'Feminism – a Force or a Menace? To M8'].

60. [In handwriting on top of page, the date 19 February 1910, and M14].

61. Changes now going on in the incidence of the Nebular theory do not vitiate this appeal. The promise and potency of natural origin must always remain (1907).

62. [Handwritten in brackets the comment (Very good)].

But what are *her* origins, and whence was she *conceived*? To say that the conditions being favourable, Life emerged, is no sufficient reply. The conditions being favourable, the human individual appears; but amongst these conditions we do not count, yet cannot dispense with, the Race whence he derives and which he continues. Of what Race, then, is the Virgin-Mother, Life?

For an answer, we should be content with no lineage which, in its backward tracing, stops short of the Origin indicated in Tyndall's famous saying that the promise and potency of all we have, of our intellectual experience itself, lay already in the 'fiery cloud'; in the Generative Nebula whence, as from womb, sun and solar system have alike proceeded.

There again in turn, then we have essential motherhood: the conception and projection of new living Reality. The idea is one which waits to be more largely interpreted, and even to be practically applied. Motherhood, in one sense or another, is the end of every human life. For the human advance in brain has been made in order that man may Act, may be a producer (begetter) of reality and life, a function creating cosmical structure and so co-operating with Nature and sharing in her prerogative of Being and Service.

4 July 1905⁶³

The 'Will to Believe' and Humanism

Is it really a Will or willingness to believe at all? Or rather a Will to assume, a will to be corrected: to be convinced by evidence and argument at the price of change of attitude; a will to respond mentally to a really cosmic excitation? Is it really a will to know, even at the cost of some predilection? Or is it in most cases merely a willingness to save trouble, to swim with a stream, to accept a 'deferred annuity,' to be persuaded to desert something hard, to welcome hypnotising suggestion?

The last sums up the danger. In all these cases, if you are already persuaded of untruth, of 'what is not so' truth may be served by your being convinced *against* your will. But as a rule, when you are purposely, of malice prepense, intent on 'believing' – on adopting a view, on accepting a statement or a scheme of assertions – you may gain much in 'comfort,' you may feel steadied by ballast, you may have shipped a rudder; or again you may be stimulated for action: –

But, there is always this risk: Truth will have abdicated and taken the second place: you will have stepped down from your own throne as the unique discoverer of that treasure: emotion and will have taken the vacant seat, and part of the work of race-motherhood, part of the object of sex separation will be in peril if not sacrificed. That seems to me the hidden rock ahead in pragmatism and even in humanism: and great would be the shipwreck upon it.

4 July 1905 [M18]⁶⁴

The Mother-Message

I hear a voice and this is what it cries: –

'I the Mother have at great cost of suffering and loss conceived, not merely a Child, but a Son. From that moment the Motherhood, once whole and inclusive shrinks into a daughter, a "girl"; and the Man, growing from a boyhood, through youth and Manhood represents the Race in its highest, because most hardly earned prerogative, the Quest of Truth in spite of all allurements, of all seductive Belief. To that Son, therefore, I delegate the gift of reason, henceforward implicit in

63. [The name F.C.S. Schiller, author of *Studies in Humanism*, 1907, among other books, Welby's friend and critic, is handwritten, in parenthesis, on the top of the page].

64. [In handwriting at the top of the page: 'M18.' A handwritten note in parenthesis alongside the title reads: 'From a letter.' Another handwritten note under the date says: 'Reread, February 1910 (tentative)'].

me, and to become explicit in “him”. My age-long sacrifice of self to the ascending glory of life which is unselfish love, has this as its splendid crown. Remember that the Son is the Active, the katabolic, while the Daughter becomes the passive, the anabolic.⁶⁵ But I, the Mother, am both. . . I have given away my strength first of muscle and nerve, then of mind: I have thus become known as the fe-male and wo-man.

But after all this is only an expedient: that Impellent which none of our names really define still less finally honour, has in this made a great, it may be a crucial experiment. If that Experiment fails I have to draw the Man back again into my own comprehensive Unity. It will certainly fail if the man declines the mental function for which, as distinctive, he has been evolved from the Inclusive Motherhood, and reverts to a lower-brained level. He has to be a Father, both *in* and *of* Heaven, as upon earth. Now the Father is a guide in the highest human Endeavour and Venture.

Our best guide is Light, and Light translates itself into Truth. The Father thus represents light and truth, and these entail and involve the Expressive Reason, the Logos. The Son of such a Father must be that. . .

I the Mother say to the Woman, Man derives his superiority from what you ultimately represent: thus when you depreciate and discount that eminence you are discrediting yourself as author of that very ascendancy. But except in some rare, even unique cases, we women cannot now immediately realise the full glory of our abnegation, the full meaning of our divine tendency to self-sacrifice, until we are past middle-age.

Then the Significance of our infancy comes back to us, (if we can enter fully into the whole nature of humanity of which the “womb” is ours) and our recovered Manhood, legacy of the innumerable fathers, speaks as sybilline and prophetic; teeming with the insight of the original race-motherhood whence, in virgin birth, sprang the Son.

Most truly Man is as much the Willer, the Doer, and the Maker, the Attainer, the Effector – the Efficient, as he is the Thinker. And as he is the Practical or Pragmatic, the Creator and Worker, so also he evokes the glory of Love and of Beauty.

I the Mother who am the Giver of all (as my truest Son reveals) have even given that strength. For when the True man loves truly, he loves from and with My heart. It is He who proclaims that “GOD is love”. But that idea is only precious in the measure that it is true. Thus and because of this we come to the secret of Will. Will must never assume the right to sway until it has yielded precedence to Truth. Man wills, not to believe, but to know what is *true* and then to do and to make, to fashion, to construct. There is a truth true for him at a given stage; but if not outgrown it becomes false. Truth is no final closure but an ever developing spiral. For that he must learn to test, to prove: he must analyse, he must become the critic, he must carry to the utmost perfection his dialectical powers. So long as he knows what he is doing: so long in other words, as he knows that there is but one final “Good” – the *value* of experience: so long as he remains always the Faithful Interpreter, patiently seeking significance in its many forms and grades and carefully distinguishing those forms or grades, no development of dialectical power will hurt him. He will know all the while that he is working out of the very world of “*energia*”: he will never lose sight of action or slacken effort: he will never lose himself in any labyrinth either of what we miscall speculation or of dialectical or formal subtleties of Logic and mathematics, because all this will be automatically referred to and verified by the deepest gift he has, the Mother-sense, the Mother-awareness, the nuclear thrill of recognition, the flash which means the meeting of the currents of the Seeking and the Sought, of the Question and the Answer. . .

But words fail. And they ought not to fail so soon or so badly. We do not yet know what language is. We are still in a stage to which some day we shall look back as we now look back on the “speech” of primitive Man. Man is gaining hand over hand the control of Nature: but that will

65. [The terms ‘katabolic’ and ‘anabolic’ are erased and substituted in handwriting with a word that would seem to read ‘impellant,’ in the first case, and with the term ‘storer,’ in the second].

do him little good of the highest kind, unless he gains complete control of his only medium of ordered Thought. What is the use of discovery and even of its application if in the end we cannot translate the knowledge thus poured upon us and only awaiting translation into higher and higher forms of mental experience?’

Thus saith the Mother of us and thus our child-heart answers. . .

27 August 1905 [M20]⁶⁶

The modern man of science, the Man of observation and experiment, the man of the inductive method – represents rational inference from ascertained fact, fact that is reproducible under identical conditions.

The race-mother, *neither merely man nor merely woman*, whose sense, whose awareness, whose race-memory must now be recovered by humankind – represents the original organic reaction to reality. This mother-sense of the race-motherhood accounts, not merely for the poet and the theologian, but for the mystic, and also for some forms of insanity.⁶⁷

Broadly speaking, the genius is one who has had this mother-sense without understanding it: one who may seem to us (and in a true sense is) a ‘sport.’ But a true genius has more than this: he has the *power of bringing it to bear*, of working out its hints, its raw material; and thus he sways his fellows and transforms their world. But as we are, the genius, like the capable practical man, is too solitary. He is entitled to more company than he gets. He ought to be born into a great society of fellows. To some of these he would go for really elementary ‘information’ like that we find at work in *result*, such as the animal sense of direction, of season for migration, of coming physiological catastrophe, &c. Such ‘information’ is organised and formed into our response-system.

To others he would go for the results of sheer ‘manu’-facturing industry of brain, weaving unthinkable complex webs of logical tissue, whether dialectical or statistical. And then the wildest dreams of the wildest dreamer would pale and fall short, like a nursery tale, of what the Actual History of the ‘world’ and its order would become: of what Conception would do with idea and both with the re-born Experience, which so badly needs to be bred true and born anew, and in eugenic transfiguration.

Mr. Macdonald’s Abstract of M20

While the modern man of science represents rational inference from ascertained fact, the particular fact which is precisely reproducible, the Race-Mother represents the original organic reaction to reality which was and remains the matrix of all true mental functioning: the mother-sense of intellect and senses alike. Broadly speaking this power has now been lost or gone into abeyance; but its presence and activity in some degree is the secret of all special giftedness and even of certain forms of mental aberration. It goes to constitute genius, whether futile or effective. The true genius is one who not only has the gift, but has also the power of bringing it to bear. As things are, however, he is too solitary in the world, has not the company of competent and helpful ‘fellows’ which he ought to have. There should be others of this kind in all departments of human interest, to whom he could go for such vital and abundant ‘information’ on things physical and metaphysical as only specialists of kindred nature could impart to him and only he could apply to the utmost profit. Conception would then be fertilised by worthy Idea and human Experience be born anew, and born better, in a world of wonders.

66. [Handwritten annotation on top of the page: ‘February 20 1910, M20’].

67. For where the normal (or common-sense) cerebral balance is disturbed by disease, functional or organic, scraps of the lapsed response may re-appear, some ravings may be ‘aperçus’ (hence Lombroso?); but out of gear, like the parts of a machine or instrument taken to pieces.

24 November 1905 [M21]⁶⁸

The woman has not discovered that in the *organic* mother-sense she holds the true key to science and philosophy. She alone is conscious as physically, so mentally, of the coming Life and through that of the coming Age through the knowledge which that life implies. While she enshrines the inherited 'germ-plasmic' mother-sense, the originative and preservative sense generated in and with Life itself, she alone directly knows, is aware of, *feels* that Quickening which is the symbol of a quickening that *heralds* the birth of new babes of knowledge and of truth.

This is really the secret of the blindly protesting sense of unrecognised power which is the urgent cause of the 'woman-movement.' The mother really holds the key to man's achievement: his very brain grew within her, and he is thus her delegate. The greater *he* is, the fuller of mother-sense – and conversely.

In proportion as the Man is solely masculine, he will insist upon the Abstract and the Absolute (he will, that is, take as symbol of Full Reality the negative idea to which the prefix Ab- belongs); or he will analyse until he has analysed to the point of final breakdown of analysis itself, and revert in despair like Nietzsche to the frankly animal muscle-supremacy.

But in proportion as he carries on his Mother-inheritance, he will see through and beyond, *because he sees behind*, these things; and he will in the mental sphere know and share the Quickening Moment which came to him therein and by reason thereof. For this as for other reasons, the sacredness of Motherhood is the supreme sacredness. Wifhood is only sacred as ensuring the sacredness of this. Only we must remember we are here speaking in the widest possible sense.

It may well be supposed that when 'Nature' has sufficiently secured the advantage for life in evolution which the severance of the sexes has brought about, 'she' may revert to the Inclusive Organism, not of course in the simpler or more literal sense, which would be a fatal atavism, but as a resumption of privilege which for a time had been in needed abeyance. She could afford to do this. Having evolved the means of ensuring the needed variation which has been the condition of enormous advance of brain-complexity in plastic and thus adaptive form.

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M21

In the *organic* Mother-sense, of which she is the repository, woman holds the mental germ-plasm which is to develop all subsequent body of Science or Philosophy. Mentally as well as physically she is conscious of the coming Life, and through that of the coming Age: it is her privilege to be aware of the Quickening which heralds all new babes [births, in handwriting], whether of Life or Knowledge or Truth.

An ill-defined perception of this – a sense of inherent powers denied and of prerogatives withheld – is among the factors of the 'woman movement.' And rightly: for by immemorial organic trust and perpetual tradition woman holds *that* by which man achieves, and without which he fails, even as an intellectual being.

For in proportion as he is solely masculine he tends to be engrossed by the abstractions which reason to sterility, and the negations which develop despair while in proportion as he carries on the inheritance of all his Mother-share in and uses the racial riches of the Mother-sense – he sees through and beyond these illusions of the intellect, is impregnated by Reality, and knows the Quickening Moments of sincere mental conception.

Because it stands for all this and more, Motherhood is supremely sacred; Wifhood being chiefly sacred for its sake, and as an 'approach,' adapted to our present conditions organic and social. Yet the finality of these organic conditions is no more to be assumed than the finality of the social ones. Nature established Sex as a means to Variation and its psychic resultants; but that

68. [Handwritten annotation: '(2nd edition, 11 June 1907), 20 February 1910, M21'].

end having been sufficiently attained, or its continuous attainment ensured by the development of other factors than sexual, it is conceivable that Nature may mean, or 'have in mind,' to revert to her primal economy of maintaining Life by the functioning of an Inclusive Organism, thus re-establishing the ideal of Virgin-Motherhood.

(This I take to be the meaning of the concluding passage. The same idea is expressed, or hinted, at the end of M3; where, however, being doubtful whether I really understood an ambiguous, palimpsestic passage, I gave a rendering which was true *as far as it went*, and interpreted the passage as predicting a eugenic control of sex activity, *not* the suppression of sex itself. W.M.)

17 April 1906 and 6 July 1907⁶⁹

What is Mother-Sense?

Well, we must begin by distinguishing what it is not, from what, not *merely*⁷⁰ but inclusively, it is.

What it is not

- (1) It is not only or even mainly the instinct of the physical mother.
- (2) It is not the shrewd commonsense of the 'sensible man,' which exploits the accepted framework of the commonplace, and makes for convenience and economy.
- (3) It is not 'happy,' sentimental, or passionate, guess-work, some times falsely called intuition.
- (4) It is not merely emotional intensity or provisional foresight.
- (5) It is not sexual except in a strictly accessory or expedient sense, although some of its gifts are mainly found in women who still represent its fertility and power to conceive, bare, and cherish the 'new generation.'

What it is

(This is more difficult to express in our fossilised language; we have to take refuge in a dangerous direction, that of the popular use of technical phraseology. But *language is already full of the detritus of abandoned technics.*)

- (1) It is the mother-liquid and the mother-plasm, the mother-germ, the sperm-ovum; the very Genetrix of (a) all our healthy response to the stimulus of Reality (b) our knowledge of our 'origin' and 'destiny,' our 'parentage' and 'posterity.'
- (2) It is the sensitiveness to 'microscopic' experience, which we too easily dismiss with the risky word 'infinite,' that which cannot be seen with the naked eye of thought. It is the power to see that our whole mode of expression and especially our imagery is vitiated by *survivals*, by the presence of débris, volcanic or other, or by vestigial remains of superseded and now injurious organs. It is the power to sweep round and take up again a priceless activity now in abeyance; one at the very centre of the life-spring.
- (3) It involves the power to discover that the whole system of imagery of which 'spirit' and the 'spiritual' are the type, has become, as we use it, more or less effete for us, – although there is a permanent truth and value which it now misrepresents. The power, further and thus, by tracing the psychological history of our ideas, and by learning to inter-translate them, to transfigure gradually and surely our conception of our true identity, of our own sense and meaning, and of that Significance of experience which, as we are, rightly seems to us inscrutable and 'unknowable.' For, ultimately:

69. [Handwritten annotation under the date: 'W. Mac?' This text is also included in Box 29, file 36, under the title 'What is Primal Sense?,' with systematic replacement of the expression 'mother-sense' by 'primal sense,' and variations especially at the end of the paper].

70. Merely, least of itself; inclusively, most of itself.

(4) The power of the Mother-sense is the power of the simple to issue in the complex: the power of the plasm to become an organism: the power of the Start to determine the Course.

(5) Thus the Mother-sense is more than the Master-key. It is rather the Child-key, the means and tool of the explorative and interpretative energies. *So far as it has a language known to hearers and readers now with us and not merely yet to come*, it is at once the Asker and the Answerer of all our Whys.

But we cannot and here. For as things are, the only language which it has to use is the most prolific of all sources of confusion, aberration, defeat. And the Mother-sense does not merely account for the value of womanly instinct which has made the wisest of men consult her with admirable results; but it also, alas, accounts for proverbial sayings like 'Cherches la femme.' In a terrible predominance of cases, the woman despised, degraded, tormented and enslaved through untold ages by means of that very muscle given by her to her Son, has learnt to evade tyrannical cruelty by deceit or evasion; and this tendency has survived to this day in the form which men now see as her relative lack of the sense of truth, honour, and justice, and her aptitude for evasion – often with good, even the best, motives.

Yes, men and women are equally unconscious of the true source and nature of the danger to which women are especially exposed, that of trying to influence men even for good, by doubtful or tortuous methods, or again by coaxing or persuasion, originally imposed upon her by unscrupulous force. But this is no fatal inheritance. It is but an inevitable price which the race must pay for what might be called an orgie of strength and an orgie of reasoning. And this must continue till the true place and value of the mother-sense is recognised and its power in both sexes but especially in woman, recovered.

In using his strength and brain to subjugate and cruelly enslave woman, man hindered his own ascent: he reverted, not to the normal brute level which here shows him an example in treatment of the mother-function, but to the exceptional cases below that level.

It is for us now to resume a more loyally natural co-operation between the teeming mother-sense and the analytical and logical function of the 'rational' brain. 'Ratio' will then realise the untold treasures of suggestion and 'givens' to start from and work upon which at present its very triumph has overlaid and silenced or, to our grievous loss, allowed to take fantastic and deceptive forms. At the highest, indeed, this is ignored as outside rational or practical interest; as merely imaginative, emotional efflorescence, concerned not with reality but romance and idealising dream.

*1 July 1906 [M24]*⁷¹

There is no reverence like the reverence we feel for our own creation. That is the reverence of the Mother-man for Man, for her Son, for the Father she has conceived and given to the world. But this great work of Son-giving (Unto us, unto Motherhood, a son is Given) leaves the Mother bereft. She has given lavishly, unselfishly; she has stripped herself for the sake of the greatness which her Son's mission means. Her strength of muscle and her strength of intellect are lessened: and her self-abnegation has even been carried too far: she has even cried, I care for nothing, all shall go! And thus man loses terribly, and cannot do all her work. Not only he but she has been losing Mother-sense, the unerring touch with the real which has been preserved by 'natural selection,' but remains only as potential, while the Man begins at the other end and works back to this thought-spring.

That is what humanity is doing: swinging round in the spiral human ascent to the point where once more Intellect and Instinct, Reason and Emotion, Intellect and Emotion, Reason and Instinct marry, and sex is seen to be a sending down of roots into a soil of infinite possibilities. After all it

71. [Handwritten annotation: '20 February 1910, M24. (Reference to M18).'] This is included in the above as 'The Mother Message,' 4 July 1905].

is Man and not merely the Male, that rises and ascends, is transfigured and glorified: that he, like the world which is his home, is satellite of the Sun of his being.

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M24

(This short paper has small need of abridgment or paraphrase, but is in a way synoptical. Several others could be usefully related to it, if an explanation of the theme were wanted. Thus for the first part, M18 would be a valuable aid. W.M.)

The primal Mother-being conceived and gave to the world a son: an act of exultation and sacrifice. But, for the sake of the greatness which that son's mission meant, she gave up too much of her life-resource, of her strength of muscle and mind. In the long interval man has been losing by her loss; for alone he cannot do her work, the work of the Mother-sense in which all the powers of mind were implicit, before intelligence *was*. That exists now, even in her, only as dwindled survival with potentialities; for *him*, it is almost a foreign faculty, only to be acquired by conquest from the other end, by a recovery that seems a discovery, a fresh acquisition.

Upon this process of recovery humanity has now entered, returning again, at a higher level, to the point where all our psychic incompatibilities and contraries – Intellect and Emotion, Reason and Instinct, and the rest – meet and are at one; and where sex is seen, retrospectively, to have been 'a sending down of roots into a soil of infinite possibilities.' And after all whatever is gained by that experiment is gained not for the male – who is himself but a means – but for Man, for Humanity, dweller upon the earth and both sib and satellite to the sun.

5 July 1906 [M25]⁷²

The racial maternity evolved the muscular athlete and acrobat and the cerebral export; the 'last words' of muscle and nerve-system. This is still going on: the last word indeed, will never be spoken. Thus the mother remains inferior because she has given with both hands of her best to her Son. But it remains always a Gift which in dim ages yet to come she may withdraw when the work of her sacrifice is accomplished. And she must realise that in the plenitude of her gift, instead of endowing a representative, training an Agent, she has armed a possible destroyer.

The strength of mind and body which is her lavish gift has through long ages been used not to serve the Race as a whole, but to abuse and degrade its holiest and ultimate shrine, in the name of passion and pleasure. No wonder that the sex which has done this should ignore, jeer at, or condescend to, the pitiful result of agelong degradation.⁷³ Pitiful indeed: for even now the awakening of women usually takes the form of aping men: of claiming the right to act as second-rate males. But soon there will come a truer awakening: the recovery of that of which the present chaos of mutually destructive 'beliefs' or 'methods' reveals the calamitous loss: of that racial insight which was first concentrated on mere survival, and must now be concentrated on the royal road of Interpretation.

72. [Handwritten annotation: 'February 20, 1910 (see footnote). Needs no abstract, but is placed here to keep it in view. WM, M25'].

73. The common use, even by those who claim respect, of the sacred term *Love* for mere *lust*, is here significant.

7 November 1906 [M26]⁷⁴*Sense of Order and Sequence*‘Woman has a sense of Order but none of Sequence’⁷⁵

And yet the Generative Sequence is hers and not man’s. And undoubtedly the primitive ‘domestic’ sequences were originally all hers. Woman – *the mother-man* – proceeded to work her generative sequence into conventional, artificial, and at last civilised sequences. The man hunted and fished and fought. The man, again, chose a site for a camp or a hut – or merely, as fugitive, threw himself down on a safe or promising spot. The woman cultivated, built, plaited and wove, developed practical industries, language, primitive arithmetic, &c. – all sequences.

Where did she stop and fail? At the point of abstract logical sequence. And why? Because here was reached the efflorescence of the higher brain, bringing into play the economy of Nature, the relief of evolutionary over-work. Just because woman was the natural guardian of developmental sequence, as man of initiating impulse, she could afford to resign it to the brain at last become capable of systematic dialectic. Man was Stimulator to woman the Generator: Man gave the touch which set to work the generative cell-processes in more than one sense. His own brain was developed thereby and became master and proliferator of growing complexities. From the direct apprehension of immediate need and danger, from the deep-lying response-springs of the brain common to the evolved and at last separated sexes, he rose to the status of an authoritative judge, of a generaliser and analyser, of tutor, examiner, student, all in one, in the new world of the Indirect and the Inferential, the worlds also of the chains of securely related and progressive thinking which we call logical. All this is mental gestation.

Then at last man’s growing power of abstraction and logical sequence told in many directions. We had begun to have tribal politics and theories of ruler’s rights, not merely of the strong arm but pre-eminently of the strong rational will. Muscle still prevailed: but now it was guided more and more by reasoning brain. Presently the process came to be valued for the sake of what would earlier have been reckoned idle or dangerous dreams. We had the age of myth-making, sometimes to us monotonous and sometimes idiotic, for exploiting, imaginatively, all that we now call the resources of civilisation. Art appeared. ‘Metaphysics,’ in leisure thus acquired, grew apace. And at last, in the delight of discovering that Mastery of Logical sequence meant a fresh conquest of the stubborn world, purely abstract reasoning for its own sake arrived: Pure mathematics, let us say, supervened.

This is really the triumph of sequence. ‘Give me nothing *but* the Given, the working of my own brain, and I will give you a perfect sequence with an infallible conclusion’: says the man; and he adds, ‘No woman has a sense of sequence,’ but she has, he allows, a love and a sense of Order.⁷⁶

What then *is* Order? She asks. And it is the mathematician himself who confesses that he does not know. No wonder the politician and even the sociologist, does not know. Well, we must discover.

Order, surely, is the mother of sequence. Humanity mentally radiates in all directions – the Mother-sense mentally impregnates and the Son-sense incubates inclusively. All tendencies which make for ascent (among them some which are premature, have to be suppressed or eliminated) are fostered by the man’s maternal, gestative processes.

But the Son works selectively on one ‘ray,’ on one line, exclusively in one direction ‘at a time.’ Thus he becomes *intellectually* master of that sequence which has been *organically* the mother’s. Yet it must not be forgotten that it is an even greater function to discover the plexus of Rays or Ways than, when discovered, to demonstrate the sequential continuity of each in turn. For you find

74. [Handwritten annotation: ‘2nd edition, 12 June 1907. (Revised 2 February 1910). M26’].

75. [Handwritten annotation: ‘Where quoted from?’].

76. He does not see that his intrinsic mind is a fecundated womb.

sequence answering to the logical, even in the lowest vital world. But you do not find a radiating life, answering to the tireless Radium in the mineral world: and only in the highest grade which we call genus do we find again the radiating power: the power to work on many lines.

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M26

'Woman' it has been said, 'has a sense of order, but none of sequence.'

Yet the generative sequence is hers; and primevally most of the activities which involved a recognition of sequence were also hers. The occupations of the Man were comparatively instantaneous and spasmodic: he hunted, fished, fought. But the Woman cultivated, built, plaited, wove, developed language, made the first steps in arithmetic. As Mother, as primitive law-and-custom maker, she proceeded to establish conventional and artificial sequences, setting towards what we call civility. It rather seemed, therefore, that she was on the way to take all sequence to be her province.

At the verge of the abstract logical sequence she stopped short. *That*, however, was a particular efflorescence of the higher brain, for which Nature had set man apart and in a sense set him free to wander: decreeing a divergence of effective interest corresponding to a difference in the evolutionary task of man and woman. It was enough for woman to be the guardian of the developmental sequence, the Keeper and Transmitter of enriching life; leaving it for man to be the planetary stimulator, the explorer of the possibilities of brain activity, the proliferators of ever new complexities, not mental ones alone.

In that direction, therefore, his mind went; and he presently entered and found himself master in a world new to his Race: the world of the Indirect and the Inferential, of the related and progressive Thinking which we call logical.

When this stage was reached, man's growing brain-power began to tell in many directions. It produced tribal politics and law: the man who could reason and weave the web of words and thoughts, was now a force as well as the man of muscle. An 'idler' exercise of the same power presently generated Myth and fashioned Art. Metaphysics followed, as leisure for thinking became more and more a social property. At last, abstract thinking for its own sake, as a dexterity or prowess, attained a memorable vogue and resulted in Pure Mathematics, the triumph of sequence purely logical, the kind of sequence which woman is said to have no sense of.

But after all, what is *Order*, which she is confessed to have a sense of and love for? The Mathematician finds the conception a mystery; but surely we may say that it is the Mother of all Sequence, the Mother-sense of all such senses. Mental sequence is but one of the radiations of this, but a line and a direction. Along that one line and in that one direction the Son of the woman has worked for ascent; but the plexus of all such rays and ways remains with her, even as all tendencies making for ascent are fostered by her gestative processes.

15 February 1907⁷⁷

The reasoning of Mother-sense (for there *is* reasoning therein) is *acute*: it is never architectural or mechanically co-ordinative. It is left to a later stage, *one of human safety and leisure*, to contemplate, to analyse, logically to build up elaborate structures, to spin complex webs, of thought, which all require collective abstraction. This is the Son-sense.

Both are needed if we would acquire the sense of Significance. Each has to use the other, even in decrying its methods. For either to try to refute or silence the other is suicidal. They are *more than* (though they *are*, mentally) Woman and Man, Female and Male. I have reversed the order not in favour of a fatal 'feminism' but in favour of the interpretation of sex by the pre-sexual, its

77. [This text is also included in Box 29, file 36, 'Primal Sense'].

‘mother,’ or motherhood as a plea for the valid translation of this ‘father-including’ Motherhood into the sphere of mind.

The mother is the original product of Life. The father, except as included in the primitive organism, is the secondary product; the son, of course the potential father. But as the retinal image is in optical fact though unconsciously, reversed, so the fecundating function in mind. The true ‘woman’ mentally impregnates the true ‘man’: the original mother-sense answered to this. The fact is often vaguely recognised: men go to women for ‘inspiration,’ for ‘intuition,’ for instinctive judgments: but it has never yet been recognised on the biological, physiological and historical basis.

It must however always be repeated that every man has Mother-sense by right of his innumerable mothers: just as every woman has Son-sense by right of her innumerable fathers; only the predominance is different.

10 March 1907 [M27] ⁷⁸

Mother-Sense

To put it in ‘fabulous’ form, Nature stripped man of his animal defences and left him a helpless prey to all dangers, in order that he might be driven to develop his mind (for which she was ready to provide a brain ever growing in complexity and efficiency) until he had reached a certain point of intellectual mastery which would itself critically reveal its own limitations and once more leave him a helpless and even hopelessly discontented pessimist.

Now we have the dim beginnings of a repetition of the same ordeal; a rhythmic return of the spiral line advance. Just as we lost our fur and scales, our great teeth and claws, our great muscles, our powerfully discriminative and far-acting senses – our ability to ‘sense’ coming danger, to migrate, or to reach a distant mate by an unerring ‘sense of direction,’ and so on – just *thus* are we beginning to feel the first signs of the loss of the conceptual and abstractive power which has tended to over-development and has on every side led us either to a break up into mutually defeating ‘schools’ of thought or to a general scepticism confronted by a general (though discredited and weakening) return to dogmatism.

This impending change is typified e.g. in the reaction from intellectualism to humanism, from the self-defeating ab-solutism to what might be called concret-ism or better still, the spirally concentric. It is typified also in the rising wave of assertive energy among women, and among men who are groping really for the recovery of their own mother-sense. It has been typified from the first in the rise of what we call ‘modern’ science, – really the birth of a science still in its very glorious infancy, and yet always implicit in the very constitution of the human mind. We have needed a tremendous critical and analytical as well as constructive training. We are gaining it in science as we first gained it in logic and mathematics. Science in her method of experiment, observation and analysis has taken logic and history, speculation and action, and transformed by inductively using them. But science is emphatically an introduction. She also is uterine. She refuses to claim the harvest of her labours. She leaves that not to the theologian or the philosopher or the poet as they are now, but to the Significian of the future, the interpreter of these and of her, who will discern her sense, the sense common and special, in which she reports her discoveries and her conquests – her meaning, her whole intention conscious or unconscious, – and her stupendous significance.

78. [Handwritten annotation: ‘February 20, 1910, M27.’ The title is crossed out by hand. Also included in Box 29, file 36, ‘Primal Sense’].

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M27

(A very clear paper: I make a slight abstract of it merely for the sake of conformity with the scheme. W. M.)

We may put the story of Man thus, and say: Nature stripped him early of his animal defences and faculties – or the animal degree of these – that he might be impelled to develop his brain, and so should arrive at an intellectual mastery which would serve certain ends and then be replaced in turn by something better, for the next advance.

We are now entering on the stage, the 'transitive period,' of such a replacement. In the reaction of so many able thinkers from intellectualism, in the rising wave of assertive energy among women and among men who are groping for their Mother-sense, we see the signs of the approaching replacement, or dethronement at least, of an over-developed conceptual and abstracting power which has made at once for anarchy and absolute-isms. But most of all it is typified in the rise of our distinctively 'modern' science, which is but the beginnings of a science still in its infancy. This new science, while it continues that intellectual training – in critical, analytical and mentally constructive function – which logic and mathematics formerly gave us, is transferring the application of these, and of all other knowledges, to the conquest of reality. Nor does science claim to reap the harvest of her own results, as these have done; but gives place to a power that cometh after, namely Significs, which shall interpret and evaluate all the mental gains of man.

[Undated, M28]⁷⁹

The Meaning of Sex

Sex order is not absolute: its limitations are narrow; its object *variation*. And *with the same object*, we are reversed in mental function (not the only reversal in the course of evolution; take the left brain acting through right hand, &c.). The woman-mind 'fathers': is *logically* stimulative; the man-mind mothers: is logically nutritive. The psychological and philosophical use of the idea of 'conception' shows this. The immaculate conception is the *logically* faultless concept. In the virgin birth the opposites in sense coalesce in idea. We give the governing organic impulse to the woman in the literal sense (she supplies her own Manhood as in the organic infancy) and she conveys the conceptual impulse to her Son; with absence, apparently, of the organically *reproducing* impulse, which otherwise in that case would have bequeathed a 'divine' family becoming through organic supremacy a race – at once the fittest and the best. On the other hand, the Organic Impulse has translated itself. The Son is the Head (the Brain with stimulative, energising power) of the Body: of Man as the highest of social communities, theologically called the 'Church,' in its turn appropriately called 'Mother.'

In all ages and all parts of the world we find traces of the same idea of the Virgin birth as the transference of function for the ends of life. *And what is the main end of the evolution of man?* Certainly not greater fertility; to multiply and replenish the earth is the command to the organic swarm: at best to the organic flock, herd, &c. Certainly not visceral development, nor that of greater perfection or elaboration of gestative process.

79. [Undated typescript with the editorial date '20 February 1910,' in handwriting, accompanied by the following comments: 'I have detached pp. 2 and 3 from this and transferred them to "Language" where they will have value. W. M. [Absolutely no reason for cancelling this any more than others which need revising, W. M].' M28. The title is crossed out by hand].

[Undated, M29]⁸⁰*Mother-Sense*

Every girl is born a physical mother. She normally marries and completes this motherhood in the physical sense. But although married she may have no child; whereas in the wider original sense she always remains able to give birth to ideas – to the Wherewithal of the logical treatment. The original motherhood is perceptual, inceptual, receptual, conceptual, and is also fertile both as katabolic and anabolic. But it has delegated the katabolic to a specialised being, who has translated it into the intellectual sphere, and instead of muscular uses mental ‘force’ or ‘energy’ or ‘power.’

But another translation must be understood scientifically; hitherto it has only been a paradoxical venture: sex in mind is wholly or at least mainly reversed. The Motherhood in its attenuated and specialised form of womanhood and the feminine represents the carrier of the mental Spore. Her true vocation is to start in the male the process of mental gestation which we sometimes call reason, sometimes logic, sometimes statistic, sometimes calculation or mensuration, sometimes mathematics, pure or applied, or again the process of great painting or sculpture or great music or great philosophical thought, as well as all that is greatest in science. She does this by the suggestion of highly productive germs of primordial ‘idea,’ the legacy, till now increasingly suppressed or perverted, of the very start of ‘mind’ itself’ from keen and prompt and broadly unerring response to the cosmic stimulus whether as central or circumferent. This is what I mean by Mother-sense; and it ought to clear away much of the present confusion between the merely feminine (only the other half of masculine) and the Maternal which is the fount of all vital energy.

[Consciousness, mind, soul, self, at present mostly used in a welter of ambiguity, are anyhow neither mere casual metaphor appealing to a merely apparent likeness, nor ‘super’-natural.]⁸¹ The woman remains in various degrees a representative of the race-mother.

Some life-long maidens and some childless wives are among the most perfect mothers in this sense we can find. Moreover they are conscious of no loss but rather of gain, since the field of their mother-activity is both exalted and widened. They have found the secret of self-gift, that of the mother and of joy. Now as physical wives and mothers, women, except in rare instances, *will have to recognise their work as a storing up for the race*, at all events during the child-bearing age. Even then, before and after that time, they may do noble work in radiating. And many girls are obviously intended for this.

It is a cruel, sometimes monstrous result of the socially essential side of our morality (and sometimes of its merely legal side) that this splendid material, these precious lives, should even occasionally be wasted when humanity so sorely needs them. Still the cases are comparatively few. Most of these missed physical mothers make the finest race-mothers, and will yet more become these, when they know how royal is their special heritage, and how great their power to direct and raise the hopes of mankind.

Mr. Macdonald's Abstract of M29

Every girl is a born physical mother; but, whether she fulfils that destiny or no, as *Woman* she remains able to give birth to ideas. For as woman she is the bearer or carrier of the Mother-sense, that legacy of the first, most potential state of mind, which still remains the source of all real mental impregnation, the Race's stored provision for continual advance. Her vocation therefore is, by suggesting highly productive germs of primordial ‘idea’ from this imperishable store, to start in the male mind the process of mental gestation which comes to birth as Philosophy, Art, or

80. [Undated typescript with editorial date in handwriting: ‘20 February 1910, M29’].

81. [Square brackets are inserted by the editor with the comment: ‘Omit, or establish connection?’].

Science or any department of these. Some childless women, wedded or no, are amongst the most perfect mothers in this sense: are Race-mothers. They have the joy of the Mother, and a larger field of activity, in an immediate visible giving of themselves to all good causes. The physical wife and mother meanwhile must rather regard her work as involving a certain quiescence, a storing up for the Race's later profit. Yet even during the stiller time, the period of child-bearing, such women may radiate nobly and *so* work.

To radiate as wives and mothers seems what many girls were expressively made for. That such splendid material should even sometimes be lost, that such supreme types should not be fully perfected, may make us doubt of the society or the morality that requires the forfeiture. But the cases are few: and the career open to such women as Race-mothers is great, and will grow with their growing consciousness of their special heritage and the power and privileges it entails.

(Having unburdened my soul about this paper in the foreword, I have made a good deal of it in the end. W.M.)

23 March 1907 [M30]⁸²

Mother-Sense

General Baden-Powell says we are like crabs crawling along at the bottom of an unexplored sea, but that now we are to rise and swim. Exactly. And there is again a surface to that ocean, and we've got to rise above *that*. The worm got himself fins and a backbone, and then he exchanged these for legs and began to live in the very world which for uncounted ages had been gasping death for him. At first he had to live in two worlds and that was baffling – as indeed it is baffling still when we call them material and spiritual. To the sea-dweller the land-world still seemed deadly and its 'life' a phantasm. The shore-dweller knew better but was not really at home anywhere. Amphibians, in body and mind, have a hard time of it.

But presently the shore-dweller shook off traditions of the sea-world, and – a marvel indeed – his own old home began to drown him if he got into it and stayed there. It was as though the sea said, Be gone into your fine air-world, I'll have none of you now, except as lifeless carcase!

Well, that's where we are now; but once more we are tied down to the crawling; our ropes are very short, our jumps are mere pitiful capers. Only all this time an illimitable and yet unknown treasure, the Endowment of the Life-Cell, has been developing; first as Awareness (unconscious, automatic), then as consciousness, a surprised sense-touch whence arises the supreme speech-gift, signal of expressive, interpretative mind. And this, intensifying and exploring – just as life did at the bottom of the sea – flowered out through the elaboration of the nervous system into the mother-sense, though this of course from the very start of life, was incubating.

The mother-sense did not merely feel and react, quiver and respond; it Knew – first its own ignorance and then its own power to learn, and last, the secrets of life all hidden and packed into its own power to learn, and last, the secrets of life all hidden and packed into its own astounding germ which within its very own organism had grown and developed until at the Quickening it called out Life's message – I am here, I move, I must break forth and conquer.

Here then we have the Mother-sense, 'Master'⁸³ of the needful starts of mind, master of the Fact and of the given, the royal gift which in the great pulse of the life-swing instinctively, and

82. [Handwritten annotation: '20 February 1910. [Not abstracted].'] The title is written in handwriting only on one of the three copies of this typescript. M30. This text is also included in Box 29, file 36 (see next Section 6.9, this volume), under the title 'Primal Sense,' in handwriting. There are variants: e.g., the expression 'mother-sense,' is systematically replaced by the expression 'primal sense'].

83. The Matrix had the 'Male' within 'It.' Even now we say that a girl has *mastered* the rudiments of some art or science.

when healthy unerringly, responds to the call of the worlds great and small, and their inexhaustible riches.

Bringing forth treasure new and old? Yes. But out of that very mother-sense, and crowning in serving it, came the highest of prerogatives, little by little preparing to assume the Crown for itself. The crown? Aye, for it raised the very skull as it developed its magnificence. The abstracting intellect, the logical intelligence, was born into the ready world of welcome.

You had but to give it the smallest, poorest, thinnest germ of thought, and every last particle of reason was wrung from it; it was credited with networks of order-woven complexity compared to which gossamer was coarse and heavy rope-work.

And the mother-sense was silenced. It had to sleep while this glorious gift grew up – its own child, its own imperial instrument. For what was the use of insight, of knowledge of germinal fact and initial truth,⁸⁴ unless it could be worked out and the product analysed, synthesised, analysed again, abstracted and again abstracted, worked over and over, all the while gaining the light that never was, neither on sea or land?

For that is how brain grows. But the great curve is near its zenith and begins its downward step. *Not* ‘back to the cradle,’ *not* to retrace its footsteps – but to take up once more the riches it had outgrown and work from the mother-sense into the world of the ‘super-man’: as we used to say, of the ‘angels’; of messengers, winged, shining. Yea, truly. We have worn our thought threadbare. Craving, we have gnawed and gnawed at that which could not nourish us. It is splendid to have organs of mastication, deglutition, digestion. *But we are lacking the food-stuff.* The mother-sense must and will in the coming day give this – and thus once more invigorate the race and send it forward in a patient and orderly but irresistible advance.

We are now but the crabs. Even so, to rise and crawl on the ‘beach’ we must become what the Man is to the crab. He stands erect, he walks, he goes not sideways but forwards. But it is his brain that really rises, his eye that looks upwards; his mind that conquers all: there lies the original of his great aspiration. He knows himself as Answer to a Call, and his every Question means a true Response. At last, at a long last which is but a cosmic instant, the rational mind awakes the dormant primal-sense, re-acquires touch with the secret germs of knowledge, recovers its interpretation inheritance, knows problem or mystery as that which implies solution or illumination so soon as we have learnt to read and to express the world aright.

*1 April*⁸⁵

We are the descendants of a band of Survivors who survived by right of unerring response to the actual, the fact, the truth, the real – in its appeal to life. It is exactly in virtue of that – within limits – unerring reaction and the original unfailing ‘choice’ of the ‘fittest’ *by* the fittest that we are here at all. The survival has been automatic. But this choice is in abeyance; atrophied by the masterful ascendancy of its great rival and also successor, the analytical, dialectical, logical, Reason. We must recover it: we must not merely silence but explain the mystic, the seer, even the magician, on deeper grounds than the fantastic or the fraudulent. We must recover touch with (only touch coarsens; the term touch brings coarsening associations; our senses are such vague blots and crude sketches and involve such heavy tramping on Nature’s inexpressible exquisiteness!) and reaction to at least the fringe of the stimulus-world; the world of answer where the questions come from; the world of discovery where the experiments come from; the world of reality where the justified inferences and predictions come from.

Is then to supersede, even to depreciate the value of rigorous logical proof? So far from that, it will increase the power of this to influence conduct; it will make that and experiment more

84. Long before ‘base’ or ‘ground’ were thought of, since life was free to swim.

85. [Year and title are missing on this typescript].

convincing wherewith to test assertion. For now too often the masters of reasoning reason from premises (sometimes even unconscious) which are themselves illusory.

In turning once more to the hopes which the adoption of the Significant method may perhaps be presumed to justify, and to use metaphor which is at once biological and social, we need to advance in thought from the matriarchal to the patriarchal order. We have to rise from the prevailing 'mother-thinking'; from starting, that is from the earth and its vital phenomena as ultimate (which really belongs to the spontaneous generation theory) to the idea of the impellent, the excitant, and that which engenders, the Genitor; that which fecundates and calls forth. For in defiance of science we still either ascribe all power (originative impulse included) to the mothering 'human-mind' (orthodox positivism in all its forms) or we ascribe all power to an ultimate abstraction or to a mythical entity which we call supernatural; so that the inspired one is not vitalised by truth, but simply accepts an external Fiat.

But of course if we are right in anticipating what may be called a mentally 'binocular' era we shall discern the true translation of parental phenomena; of generation in the philosophical sense; and we shall find that we can neither give too much to the motherhood which differentiates into such priceless wealth of individual gain the simple germ of life, nor too much to the fatherhood which has 'started' the glorious 'becoming' (so far as 'starting' here applies) and, one with, though distinct from, motherhood knows how to preserve the link of unity throughout the utmost developments of diversity, giving us identity alike as one moment in one spot and one form, and as the note which sounds, the ray which flashes through uncounted ages and unmeasured reaches of the world of life where Man or better than 'Man' is found.

10 April 1907 [M31]⁸⁶

Primordial Awareness

What is the position no longer fitting or tolerable?

It is as if the great oceans of air and water were waiting to be explored, and we were content merely to be playing with pebbles and sand on the beach.

It is as though the very conditions of both – what we dimly realise as Ether – the mother of all Mothers, that which presumably accounts for 'consciousness and mind' as well as air, water, earth – and Life, were stirring within us, after a sleep of ages. We are obliged to think of an ultimate motherhood – what, as needing stand-point, needing substance, needing ground on our derivative world, in our restricted sphere, we foolishly call Basis and even Foundation. And this, not only as anabolic but 'inert' in that old sense which we have to outgrow. The 'virgin soil' of thought is clamouring to be fertilised, to have its fecundity recognised, to be given the solar impulse, and to be watered by the life-fostering rain. But we try to harden it into a barren base, forgetting that we call vile actions base.

We have already reached the ultra-violet region of the abstract and the absolute; we are already analysing our intellectual spectrum into its very elements; but the great world of dark rays is still but barely discovered.

When in the great spiral of advance we return upon the Mother-sense and take it up in our next onward sweep, we shall gain indeed. We have already, in apparent paradox, done this in the Darwinian outgrowth of the modern Inductive method. Why did I and do I welcome that great reversal, that necessary revolution in method to which Bacon re-called us? [Because motherhood is *inductive*; and because motherhood, responsive to the fathering stimulus, the deductive, as the

86. [In handwriting on the top of the page: '20 February 1910.' The original title, crossed out, is 'Mother-sense.' M31. This text with minor variants (for example the first line in the present edition is missing) is included in Box 29, file 36 (now Section 6.9, this volume) under the title 'Mother-sense,' and is marked M30 in pencil on top of page].

earth responds in spring to the call of the sun, evolves life from microscopic ‘cell’ to seed and shoot and flower and fruit.]⁸⁷

Because the mother-woman alone, with her mentally fertilizing function, really understands the inductive method and really understands also what Darwin’s service was; since she herself is the great exemplar of its incidence and application. She begins with what *on our scale* seems a simple cell (on another one, a world) anyhow at the very beginning of the Life Ascent; and she brings forth – the Man. It is for him to learn and apply Deduction. The whole of modern science is the mother-process; is a great pregnancy and delivery of thought. Again, James, Dewey, Peirce, Schiller, are all swayed by this potent sweep back on the maternal resources, on, indeed, the maternal *sources* of Thought.

*Mr. Macdonald’s Abstract of M30*⁸⁸

We are surely on the verge of a great advance, and not to go forward now would be to linger gathering pebbles on the beach while the great oceans of water and air were waiting to be explored. There are signs as if the very primary condition and source of water and air and ether and life itself – as if the ultimate mother of all mothering things – were stirring within us after a sleep of ages.

It is the Mother-sense that is awaking and asking to be recognised, to be taken into service: the ‘virgin soil’ of thought that is clamouring to be fertilized, to be given the solar impulse to a new burst of productivity.

At the things that may be achieved by other aids we have laboured enough, if not to futility. We have analysed our intellectual spectrum to the region of the ultra-violet, while the greater world of the Dark Rays has remained obscure if not unsuspected.

But the next advance must start from a return to Mother-sense for inspiration, when many dark things will be brought to light and we shall gain indeed. We have already begun to make this return, and to achieve these gains, in the Darwinian outgrowth of the Deductive Method. Women more than men, if they have realized themselves, should have an understanding welcome ready for that advancer, as this one had. For motherhood is *inductive* and knows. The Mother’s vocation is to recapitulate the process which the great Naturalist sees as the story of the world: the evolving formation of varied and complex life, and finally of mind, from the potencies of a little simple cell. The whole of modern science is indeed the mother-process: a great pregnancy and delivery of thought. Pragmatism is a recognition of this on the part of thinkers who feel the stirring of the primordial mind-power within them, the contemporary sweep back to the maternal source of Thought.

1907⁸⁹

Sense

Living matter, whether in the plant-world or in the animal involves the phenomena of Sense; introduces Sensation. To be sensible, sensitive, sensiferous, sensigenous, sensuous; to react in this particular way, distinct from the reactions of the ‘inorganic’ world, is its characteristic function.

87. [The text in square brackets has a pencil line mark through it].

88. [This should be M31, but keep account of footnote 49].

89. [The date is incomplete and indicated in handwriting, presumably therefore this is the date of editing. The title ‘Mother-sense and Significs’ is also indicated in handwriting on one of the four copies of this manuscript, together with what looks like M3, and on another copy we find the comment ‘edited twice’].

This dominant idea, everywhere pressed upon man in his sense-experience, has come to be specialised – like Sense in its original form – in many senses. Just as sight, – the ‘highest’ of the special senses – is as much sensation as the barest sense-reaction of the protozoon, the amoeba, the mullusc, so the special senses in the development of the conscious activity which we call ‘mind’ (the ‘sense’ of hunger, the ‘sense’ of effort, etc., finally the ‘sense’ of Expression and lastly of an Expressive as of an experiencing ‘self’), are as much Sense as the most elementary and undifferentiated of sense-experiences.

But we have said ‘like’ and ‘just as’ and ‘so.’ This is not done in the sense of a postulated or imagined analogy; of a comparison between two apparently independent orders of facts; *it is throughout a question of differentiation and thus of development.* There is no analogy or metaphor in the question; merely a continuous extension in the range of the idea as experience becomes more complex and further reaching, and ‘mind’ correspondingly develops.

The sense of sight is not merely compared with, likened to the sense which is undifferentiated sensation, it is recognised as a special development of this. The complicated system which we now know as the alimentary, the visceral, the digestive, has no analogy with, it is essentially the same in more developed form, as that which wholly constitutes the Amoeba. The complicated framework which we call ‘spine’ is not an analogue of the note-chord, one which may or may not be justified; it is in the same sense essentially the same thing. The simplest digestive cavity ingests, assimilates, excretes, etc., and so does the most elaborate. The spine is the translation into a ‘higher’ form of the notechord; it may be called a transfiguration of this. There is no question of analogy, only of development.

The relation between sensation and the sense of a sign may be compared again to that between the vibrations which reach us as sound and those to which we respond as light. There is a vast gap between the two. But no one therefore supposes that the light-waves are merely analogical to the sound-waves. In time it may be – even now there seems signs of this – that the gap will be filled up. Now when we speak of the Sense of a word or of a sensible man or action; of the sensual in the bad or the sensitive in the good Sense, we are really speaking of what is presumably continuous with that Sense which we have been considering as the distinctive function of life, developing into the demand of conscious activity and the supreme note of all experience, as consciousness rises higher into intelligence, understanding, and reason. In this way the sense, say of a new discovery, radiates into its significance; becomes the sign which for us (the sense-responders) has uncounted treasures of that same value which throughout we have called Sense.

We may than paraphrase the words of Hobbes (*English Works*, Vol. III) thus: The ‘cause’ of sense is the *phenomenon* or ‘appearance’; that is the Sign, which may be the representation or merely the symbol of ‘somewhat signified.’ When a sign ‘touches’ what is called consciousness or in a higher form, intelligence, its signifying value is perceived and, in various forms (feeling, hearing, seeing, etc. or what answers to these in mental experience) arouses *sense*. Thus it may be said to have sense: in other words to generate what we call a sense of warmth or sound or colour or form, or more generally, the sense of Sense, implied in the very idea of Sign.

‘So that sense, in all cases, is nothing else but original fancy⁹⁰. . .’ (And the Latins call it *image*, making vision the typical sense; whereas the Greeks call it *fancy*, that is, appearance of any kind). Now we speak of senseless fancies and perpetually contrast the sensible with the fanciful; so that we cannot use these terms in their bygone senses without producing serious confusion.

The controversy between Realism and Idealism is not here raised. ‘Sign’ may be a Fact or an Idea or both. But there can be no question that the value of Sign is first its ‘sense’; then if intentionally made, its meaning; lastly, in its bearing on or application to the larger issues of experience, its Significance. And these three values are bestowed upon Sign by the one who conceives and names it – the Percipient.

90. Rather, originating imagination?

15 April 1907⁹¹*Mother-Sense and Significs*

The connection between Mother-sense and Significs may be put thus: Mother-sense is what takes up and supplies to us the material of immediate awareness, conscious and interpretative. It is the successor in evolution, or constitutes a further stage in value, of the animal's instinct. It is thus at once primordial and universal, at all stages of human development; though varying greatly in the part which it plays in the thought-life of human beings at such stages. And as Mother-sense is the Mother of senses, it is still occasionally found in women. Hence the peculiar authority accorded in all times to 'wise women' – from the Mrs. Eddy of our day back to the Witch of Endor of Saul – in whom this primal and synthetic faculty has re-asserted its ancient sway, and been recognised as a special 'possession.' The tremendous emotional appeal which the message of the Christian Scientist has for so many minds is due to that 'gospel' being the re-announcement, the re-affirmation, of a comprehensive faculty, of a homogeneous psycho-physical power of response and adjustment, which has been largely lost in use, but which we organically 'know' to have been once common to the race, and to have made historically for survival and effectiveness.

Nevertheless, all such movements as Christian Science fail, in the long run, to take the highest minds with them. They fail, in spite of being in touch with so mighty a source of enrichment, because they ignore the greatest of all special gifts, the rationalising Intellect: which has not only to criticise, but also to reason out and construct from, the *données* of Mother-sense – its warnings, its *insights* and *farsights*, its revelations, its swift reading of worth, its penetrative recognition of reality.

It is just here, then, that the place and work of Significs is to be found, as the necessary link – rather, the medium of interpretive communication – between the constant 'givings' of Mother-sense and the constant 'constructions' (in all senses) of the intellect.

For in order effectively to criticise, or to construct, it is obviously requisite that the criticising and constructing faculty should be perfectly served by language: that the working hand, so to say, should not be defeated by its own tools, or rather indeed that the working brain should not be defeated by its own delegate. The reasoning intellect should have imposed upon it no expression which induces distortion, in the slightest degree, of those representative forms of thought, those direct perceptions of reality, which are always freshly emerging in the receptive and responsive mind, and most powerfully in the mind of the young. And more. It should always be resolutely searching, even at the cost of shocks, sometimes rude, to its historical or aesthetic sensitiveness, for the symbol or the simile which most significantly, centrally, undeniably, gives the fact or truth which we mean, – which we intend to convey.

'Representative forms of thought,' we have said: and 'distortion.' Let us take from these suggestive terms the service they can render us. Surely we all recognise that a picture of anything, if it is to speak truth, must never be out of drawing; nor a statue, if it is to seem natural, ever be out of proportion; nor a musical scheme, if it is to be music, pass out of harmony. The painting which has been worked into a daub, the sculpture that is an essentially 'formless' (because disproportionate) mass, or for the music that is degraded into mere noise naturally repels the man of aesthetic sensibility. Similarly, the man of logical mind is sensitive to the *jar* of the 'false quantity' in reasoning. It is one of the ways, for him, of being out of tune, out of drawing, out of proportion.

All this is generally perceived. What is not yet so generally perceived is that each of these falsities, deformities, and dissonances, has its analogue or its equivalent in the *false*, the *distortive*, the *corruptive*, the variously *misfitting* forms of our common speech. Still less is it generally

91. [Editorial date in handwriting, date of redaction is missing. This paper is also included in Box 29, file 36, 'Primal Sense,' under the title 'Primal Sense and Significs.' The latter is the version published in the volume *Significs and Language*, with comments by the editor, see Schmitz 1985: ccxxxviii–ccxlii.]

perceived that the persistence of such faults in language means, in effect, the supplying of the mind with a daily and hourly service of insidious mis-reports concerning that cosmic Reality with which it is the chief interest of humanity to get into ever more intimate touch and more adequate understanding. It has yet to be generally recognised that every misfitting form of speech is at the very least an arrestation of thought, even when it does not impart a positive misdirection making for perversion of truth and life.

The present condition of language may, with but little qualification, be compared to a state of things in which our sight continued to report dry land when we were on the sea, or our touch to report solid footing when we were plunging into empty air, or both sight and touch and hearing and smell reporting, when we were rushing forward in a train, that we were sitting in a garden or rowing in a boat.

We speak of the inner and the underlying where there is no question of either: we talk of he and she where there is nothing corresponding to sex: we talk of beginning and end as complementary and then of 'both ends'; but never of both beginnings. We talk of truth when we mean accuracy or fact: we talk of the literal ('it is written') when we mean the actual ('it is done'). We speak of natural 'law'; reducing its sphere to that of 'law-court' with its imposed decisions, forgetting that a law is a rule deliberately decreed and enforced or 'passed' by consent and liable to abrogation: we discuss mind or consciousness as though it were the analogue of a bag or box with definite contents, or of a piece of stuff in various 'states'; we talk of the unknowable when what that is or whether it exists is precisely what we cannot know – the idea presupposes what it denies: we affirm or deny immortality, ignoring its correlative innateness: we use spatial terms, e.g. the inner and outer, to define (or express) the non-spatial and also the difference between that and the spatial: we talk of solid foundations for life, for mind, for thought, and for the very world on which these are evolved; of the fundamentals when we mean the germs, starting-points, foci: of the 'solid' reasons when we mean the rays of true light or heat.

We speak of an eternal sleep when the very *raison d'être* of sleep is to end in awaking – it is not sleep unless it does: we appeal to a root as to an origin, and also figuratively give the locomotive animal roots. Again, we quite naturally go into a garden in spring and, meaning that there were no human beings or other animals visible therein, say 'There was not a living creature to be seen in it.' And when one says, What an exquisite creature that flower is, one never fails to get a puzzled look in return and then one of relief clearly meaning, 'O,' that's a (poor) joke, or it's wayward, far-fetched, impromptu metaphor.

We talk of airy speculation, and are as much afraid of the airy, that is, of breathing, as of speculation, that is, of seeing; for we are as blind as we are stuffy. And then we go out for some fresh air and maybe to buy spectacles to see with or to enjoy the spectacular, or to invent, and report the revelations of, a spectroscopy. We talk of mysticism when one of us means by it enlightenment, a dawn; and another means (more justly) the mystifying twilight of mystery darkening into night and the unknown.

Can we realise this state of things (and the foregoing list is but a sample of it in one civilized language) and not agree that whatever else it denotes or suggests, there is no Mother-sense – no sense in the reasonable sense at all – in our helpless toleration of such chaos and of much else like it, and in our teaching children thus to outrage their natural sense of fitness, risking thereby the killing down of their precious sense of symbolic relevance and fidelity?

It is of course an important as well as obvious truth (implied everywhere in this plea) that we must never aim at having – fortunately could never hope to have – a permanent standard of mechanical exactitude in language, since the experience which man is impelled to express, describe, and discuss, is continually changing and growing. But it will be found that children, unless their minds are being warped by a distortive training, will recognise the truth of this at once. From the first, indeed, they strike, in their quaint ways of speech, the keynote of freedom and growth and of pregnant expressiveness. Were their powers of linguistic suggestion, now allowed

to run at seed, trained and developed, or their often original and significant sayings collected, not merely to make fun of but to learn from, our gain would be inestimable; and the next generation, it is safe to say, would make an onward step in the interpretation of experience practically unique in the history of man.

For while they would tend to recover the lapsed heritage of the Mother-sense: while their natural aptitudes in expression would for the first time in the modern era have free play and worthy attention, they would have all the accumulated knowledge of the race, all the traditions of its intellectual ascent, to work with and upon.

To quote Prof. Munsterberg in the first number of the *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*:⁹² ‘The time seems to have come again when the realistic wave is ebbing and a new idealistic tide is swelling, just as they have alternated in civilisation of three thousand years’ (p. 2). I venture to suggest that this alternative is not final. There is a factor in such mental tides that is too much lost sight of, and may be compared to the ocean at whose margins they are found, or perhaps to the lunar drag upon the earth which affects that ocean.

The Mother-sense is concerned with the real, and may be traced as much in the humblest and simplest as in the proudest and most ambitious of man’s activities. It is concerned with the ideal, not only because it is itself ideally immediate, practical, fruitful, but because it grows with the growth of the human appraisal of worth, and is ever ahead of, introductory to, man’s ascending appeals for at least relative perfection.

The true ideal of human speech is that of a delicately sensitive, detective, responsive, creative organ, self-adjustive to all healthy developments and enrichments – as to all dangers – however recondite or subtle, *just as our senses are*; but also automatically rectified as the senses need to be, by the unfailing and rigorous action of the intellectual test [, and subject to the conscious control and direction of the educated social will].⁹³

20 April 1907

The Genetic Analogy

The object of the conceptual and rational intellect is to propagate not merely the new, but the next higher, mental organism. The true metaphor is the *travail* of the mind as of the ‘soul.’ ‘Mind,’ the ideal arena of discussion, has to see that such discussion is *fruitful*; of ever rising type and more complex result.

I have the strongest sense of that long Labour ever renewed; and instinctively know that the Socratic image of the Thinker as midwife is serious and valid.

The brain repeats the whole process from impregnated conception to delivery of a fresh, young, and in the widest sense ascendingly evolving Life. But just as civilisation with its tendency to the artificial, and the very supremacy of the brain over all ‘tropisms’ and even over vital impulse, – except in vital straits – has terribly increased the difficulty, the delay, the agony, the danger of the process (not only to mother but to child), and increased enormously, also, the tendency to miscarriage: just as the tolerated vices of civilisation, and its unnatural conditions, have added another avoidable factor of social defeat and disaster, so also the tolerated vices of modern language and its unnatural conditions, have added one more such factor of difficulty and danger.

As a truer civilisation, so a truer language will develop from our recognition of and our determined and concerted action upon this true organic analogy. The world of man is pregnant and indeed is in travail with both. We are incubating both. And the duty of Significs, as Socrates would

92. In a forecast of the International Congress of St. Louis.

93. [The part in square brackets was added in handwriting in the typewritten copy sent to Frederik van Eeden, together with the following note: N.B. The final part of this owes much to W. Macdonald’s editing].

surely have insisted, is from this point of view that of assisting at the birth of and making conditions favourable for, the safe emergence of successive generations of intelligence and knowledge, – themselves again prolific in valuable result – which must enrich experience.

16 July 1907⁹⁴

Proposed Introduction to a Paper

Let us first recover, understand, and learn to use the Mother-sense, and all else shall be added unto us. That is the first of Psychical Researches. Then let us begin to act experimentally upon the hypothesis that there are two opposite kinds of insanity of which the common character is, the irrelative (also irrelevant): a mind out of relation, that which falls below, and that which rises above, a normal level of recognised experience. The first is lapse and loss or may be disastrous reversion: the second only needs interpretation and orientation to become illimitable gain in the future. But the study of laws of significance will alone enable us rightly to interpret here.

Next let us understand that our buds of knowledge, able normally to develop, though in stunted form, on the practical and scientific plane, are frozen off elsewhere as soon as they appear, mainly by the imbecilities of an arrested speech; science itself losing seriously from the same cause.

Then let us understand that before we can hope to experiment successfully on the hidden possibilities of life which is sensible in a more sensitive sense than anything which our crude sense-scheme directly gives us, we must re-acquire the critically penetrative power with which the human race originally started. This start was made under conditions which always tended to make deception and illusion fatal. Recovering this, inference will be purged and fertilised.

Unhappily our very privilege, our creation of an artificial system of protection and safety makes against this. It gives us a terrible license to exploit and cultivate that early impulse which has given the world its most grotesque perversions and mistranslations of the human borderlands, or of those Americas which wait, not merely for their Columbus but for his successors; not merely for well-equipped pioneers but for equally well-equipped explorers and settlers.

Our present habit is to endow with the method of Dream, – in which the true judgment and critical faculty is in complete abeyance, – the poetical, mystical, metaphysical, mathematical types of mind, these all converging upon Dream and rationalising it from false ‘givens.’ We do not recognise this: we seem to ourselves to be as impartially *experimental* as the physicist in his laboratory: we treat the most subtle forces of the universe as the policeman treats the vagrant. He is sleeping not under a roof but under a hedge (and no one sees the monstrosity of preventing that): Apprehend him. That is our method. To learn his wherefore and thus his lesson for us never occurs to us. But besides the policeman and the vagrant there is a third type; one of concentrated and self-deceiving cunning, into the hands of which we are always falling. We take to swindling Nature and burgling truth. The bait there is often as real a treasure as that with which any burglar decamps. There is only one drawback; the fairy-tale here comes true: the treasure turns to dust in the burglar’s sack. And we cry that all is illusive.

When the Woman *in us all* has the courage to learn who she is, she will recoil from seeking the ‘occult’ until she is better equipped for it. And the very first thing she will demand of the Man in us all, is a really dispassionate, a really relentless analysis of all that is mysterious in life, its halos and its penumbras, its gropings towards a potential world, and its sudden irruptions into what at present is our only sane and wholesome sphere. These irruptions are at present like the breaking of blood-vessels become too weak to resist the pressure of the blood current. Let us then prepare for our Columbian voyage by clearing our minds. Let us recognise the extent to which,

94. [In handwriting on top of page: ‘Mother-sense.’ This text is included in Box 29, file 36, ‘Primal Sense,’ under the title ‘Scrutinising our Givens,’ with a few variants including the usual substitution of the expression ‘mother-sense’ with ‘primal sense’].

thanks to our amazing neglect of our priceless expressive gift, we are living in a fool's paradise of downright jumble: in a worse than Wonderland!

As we have learnt to *order* thought in an ever more subtle form of logical analysis, so we are now at last learning to claim and acquire *freedom* of thought. But this freedom to be vitally productive must mean an apotheosis of Order, and its transfiguration.

Dogma has meant the artificial substitute for a lost organ; and often it has been, not even a wooden leg, but a glass eye. Agnosticism has been its natural product just as anarchy is that of despotism. But the fact of our toleration of the present delirium of language shows that we are much less rational, in the sense of testing and applying our raw material, than we think. It is a symptom of the utmost gravity: and perhaps the main inference we are to draw from it is that the vital inheritance of an antitoxic regulative activity all powerful in the first eras of the human advent, has only partially (in the form of the scientific method at its best) survived. Thus it is but feebly acting, just where it is most needed.

In truth the organic spontaneity of language is no longer doing its normal work. It is as it were in its more wanton forms, in a more or less convulsive state. Or, we might say, it has worked through the ages like a ship sailed by a consummate seaman; but now the hand at the helm has loosened its hold; there is no skilful management of sails, no eye on the compass and no interpretative brain on the look-out. What then is our conclusion?

14 August 1907⁹⁵

Coming to Our Sense of Senses

The recovery of the Mother-sense and its primary product, Significs, will be the greatest economy of resource and exploitation of ability that the world has ever known. It will never arrive at fruitful result by the long, laborious, arduous route of dialectic or calculation. These of course must always continue to be followed, and for many purposes are indispensable. The triumph of the rational methods must not only be secured but extended. But the Mother-sense will be master of *both ends*: at one stroke so to speak *it marries premise and conclusion*: it acts as the 'electric fluid' acts when the poles are brought together: it supplies at once the true presupposition and the working result of this: it sets the true problem and gives the true solution.

Thus, to put it crudely in terms of 'time,' man will accomplish in one year what now takes him a hundred: and one man will easily accomplish what now, with a large group of colleagues and staff of assistants he can hardly attempt. The long list of mechanical (and ultimately economical and social) *failures* will be cancelled, or reserved for the attack of the *really* adventurous free-lance; and the resources of the universe, mental as well as physical, thus becomes ours.

That is to say, all logical and mathematical work will not only remain as important and as potent as now, but will be economised out of all futile controversy though not out of discussion; we might as well differ from each other about sunrise or sunset, hand or foot. Controversy of course will always, in a subordinate, an official or an emotional sense, continue to be indispensable and fruitful: we shall still differ about some remote applications of an unerring conclusion, or about the policy of assuming this or decreeing that, etc. But there will be no manner of doubt about the 'matter in hand' or the 'question raised.' Arguments and disputes about the nature of truth, the scope of nature; about the limits of vitality and the nature of life; about the practical bearing of 'speculation' and the ultimate bearing of present activities, will not become puerile or dangerous; they will simply become superfluous.

The 'secrets' of the present, – the 'mysteries' of human nature, its past and its 'future' – will be open to the clear seeing eyes of the child within the motherhood of the race: that motherhood

95. [Text also included in Box 29, file 36. The expression 'Mother-sense' in the first line is replaced with 'Primal-sense'].

whence the youth of the cosmos emerges congenitally quick with the energy of cosmical fatherhood. Discovery, having started no longer at haphazard (as for instance in the case of the X rays) but in the true order, each stage suggesting the next, must greatly widen its range and enter regions which we are tempted to think will remain permanently unknown or are even unknowable.

2 December 1907⁹⁶

Foresight

The true analogy of this is to be found in the stages of man's own personal growth. We only recognise, name him, register his existence, after birth. But that is a mere incident – though an important one – in his career.

The Mother is the Archetypal Foreseer: it is she who rightly anticipates and 'reads the future'; for she alone knows at first hand, is actually aware of, the Unborn Life. This may account for the 'Wise Woman' of all ages and races, usually a degenerate type of descendant of the really wise because organically 'prophetic' race-mother.

Thus when the Vital Divorce is ended, motherhood will be recognised as an essentially predictive element in both sexes, just as will be reason, its logical and calculative, its elaborative analytical and constructive powers. The main tendencies will remain; but not, as at present, to sunder and antagonise and thus to paralyse us and to foster pessimism: rather to complement: rather to double the powers of woman and her son – of father-motherhood and mother-fatherhood – represented in the Ideal sonship which we rightly call the Christ.

23 December 1907⁹⁷

All Father We Know Has Been Son

The original Parent, the Matrix, the Mater, says to the Patrix within – *Go forth, as Son to become Father*. Go forth and leave me to Motherhood. Become my Strength and become my Reason while I conceive and create. Achieve thou and conquer, rule thou and regulate. I am Principle and Productive Order: translate Me and make laws and methods for conduct and for thought. For awhile and for this divine, because more than vital, Purpose, I must send Thee as Missionary of Transfiguration and Ascension. We⁹⁸ must separate and we must even be found as opposites – as hand which needs to be clasped in hand though still essentially one – in a holy and sacred union. But this is an awful duty. Be warned, and beware of its dangers. Its very glory – the power it gives, the freedom it means and its insatiable longings, – all these bring a passionate peril. For every summit there is a gulf. As we scale the heights we deepen the depths, the risk of fall becomes greater.

But then we are learning to climb and learning the joy of conquest, *of ascent and descent at will* in the rhythms of life and mind, in the tides of a glorious ocean. . .

Go forth, then, and leave me awhile till the reason for severance is plain and its far-off object completed. Then shall be born a New Order for which there is no speech yet, – since it only thrills through the secret shrines in which Life itself is stirring. . . at least to our 'unhappy divisions,' fatally substituted for enriching distinctions.

We all think that these divisions are to be cured by the mere bringing over of others to our own 'view,' their conversion to our special type of thought, habit, and belief, which is of course to us always unique and infallible and a sin to question. No amount of 'width' or 'liberality' just

96. [This text is also included in Box 29, file 36, with the same title and 'Mother Sense' marked on top in handwriting].

97. [Text also included in Box 29, file 36].

98. The Humanity which stands for community rightly says 'we' not 'I.'

as to amount of believed 'doctrine' or 'dogma' will give us that living treasure which shall make Man: a Race so harmonious in one Ideal and Example in many different forms and types, that the whole round world shall ring with it and join in faithful and fruitful adoration, and in an anthem of rejoicing unity and power.

Then at last we shall have the true and worthy Good Spell: the onward and upward look of the faithful eye, and the consecration of that human experience, ideal, and victory which already we worship, but in forms no longer relevant as once they were – and therefore inevitably unworthy.

Once more the Rock of Ages must open – even though by earthquake itself – to let forth vivid and vital waters, not merely to assuage a frantic thirst or to cleanse a polluted world, but also to initiate fresh and fertile growths, bringing priceless flower and fruit and seed for re-growth out of the very mould which, as it is, we associate with the grave, – with the mouldy, the decaying, the corrupt. Grave? Yes; but that again the gravest as the deepest of our needs – and our lacks.

The grave must become a womb. From end to end of the world must sound the note of living unity in faith, in loyalty to the pure, the true, the real. We must look for and recognise that Birth – continuously recurrent as the dawn and the sunrise – which shall give us the promise of a culminating life *served* by death, and of the beating pulse which, *even in reversal*, reveals the energy of a heart and feeds that of a brain which mean and bring up the true consecration of Life.

30 June 1908 [untitled]⁹⁹

My own transition (as a matter of precaution) from 'mother' to 'primal' (with, as variant, 'primary') Sense, is an illustration of the difficulties created by our neglect of Significs. For it ought to be understood at once, *that in such a context as mine* I cannot possibly mean by Mother-sense, mainly, still less only, the shrewd or practical insight of the typical 'mother' in the actual or organic sense.

Naturally I mean a primordial, inceptive, inborn, need-fertilised, danger-prompted, interest-stimulated, Sense. *'Mother' is indeed or ought to be, the wide and general, 'Father' the specialised, term.* The pre-sexual organism was the maternal, and *included* the paternal element. We already recognise this in our philosophical and scientific use of the term Matrix. We never, in this connection, use the term Patrix; and we are quite right. The 'mother' is enabled by stimulus to conceive, develop, nourish new life.

Recent research (like that of W. Heape and others whom he quotes) amply bears out this greater range of the term motherhood of which the rudiments indeed, exist in both sexes. But nevertheless I find that everywhere I am supposed to use the term in a narrow and popular sense; and we could not have a better example of the crying need for Significs. A generation educated, so to speak, out of a Matrix of elementary Significs – the subject of all others germane to the child's nature, as we see in his insistent early questioning – would find the source of endless confusion, impotence, and defeat, dried up at their very spring.

No normally intelligent child would make the absurd blunders or fail to see the inconsistencies and needless ambiguities of our present modes of expression. We take infinite pains to impose them upon him and praise him to proportion as he acquires *our* faulty usage! The gain of reversing all this, of acquiring through the new generation a purified, an enriched, a liberated, a really ordered, economised, fertilised language would not end with speech but would tell upon all modes of expression and through them upon all creative activities.

The re-cultivation of the Primal, Primary, or might we say Matrical¹⁰⁰ sense: the release of that bent-down and forced-in spring of the expressive energies of the race would give us a truer humanity and a richer world. The very image I have here used, – the 'spring' – is an instance of

99. [Text also included in Box 29, file 36, which version is published in Schmitz 1985b: ccxliii–ccxlv, with the addition of comments by the editor].

100. We say metrical from metre, practical from practice; why not matrical from matrix?

the need of care in distinguishing between the senses in which a word is used. To attempt to gain *one word for one idea* would of course be a grotesque mistake. We may indeed over-load a word with meanings and may thus dangerously transcend the power of context, tone, circumstance, emphasis &c. to interpret each sense that the word may bear.

But in truth a training in Significs would increase instead of lessening our powers of economising expressive resource. It is really this which enables us to use codes as well as technical notations. On that side as highly trained we are already significians. But then we are so far *precisians*: we have lost flexibility, we have lost the subtlety, the enriching gift of fine touch or allusive reference; we have also lost the freshness of simplicity and the power of emotional and imaginative impulse. All these good things and much more is the reward of the future; of the mind which from the first has been allowed, and then trained, to Signify, to interpret, to translate and thus rightly to apply, the world of experience. Perhaps for the first time, in that day, shall we learn what creation means: perhaps we shall even find that experience may become in a true, though new sense, creative. In this indeed as in so much of the work of the significian, the Pragmatist will find the prolific germ of his own thought.

But Significs can never become a denial of any opposite. It can never be controversial. Nobody will seriously champion insignificance or defend the senseless and the unmeaning from the significal onslaught! Intellectualism, for significs, has its work no less than pragmatism; though as a fact and in the sense of a return to a too widely neglected and ignored startpoint, it is prior to Pragmatism and absorbs the controversial element. Absorbs? Yes; if we add – energises, vitalises, transmutes and transfigures all this: if we add that Significs deprives us of nothing but adds much to our store even as the animal has added to the plant and man to the animal, we shall not be far wrong or altogether presumptuous or extravagant. In a sense and a true one, this is and must be so.

For it recognises – and this for the first time – the full significance and the full meaning and sense of full Value itself, in all expression of ‘energy’ in the widest sense of that great word, and in the expressive nucleus which we call articulate speech, the supreme link between mind and mind.

18 July [untitled]¹⁰¹

One may venture on a safe prediction. The next age – over the very threshold of which we are passing – will be the age of recovery of the Mother-sense. Then for the first ‘time’ shall we master the conditions of combined human action through a resumed intimacy with human nature. Then for the first time shall we really become able to account for much ancient myth which now seems to us merely childish, merely belonging to the defects of immaturity, and with that for ‘magic’ and for much which now goes to seed in folly or worse.

The danger will of course be the undue depreciation of the Quantitative methods and of the abstracting systematising activities of the reason. That reason having at long last orientated and transfigured emotion and imagination may for a while seem but an automatic sorting, fitting, planning, mapping out machine, the slave of an *Intuition which in the triumphant vindication of its claims* to give reality directly will soon find success itself, as tending to a mystical vertigo, it’s greatest danger. But at worst the eclipse must be but a passing shadow and the Logos will shine out again as reason, as the rational; purged only of it’s devastating and dessicating tendencies, of it’s excessive devotion to analysis for it’s own sake, of it’s reduction of life to a mere network of symbolic logic, to a complex of laboratory apparatus or to a rightly named AB-solute, fit brother of the AB-dicative., the AB-olitive, the AB-surd; and soon let us hope to be the AB-sent.

We are only half real as *Half-parental* here and now. *It is beyond that halfness, that duality* – and yet higher than the unity or wholeness which during many ages preceded it – that we have now *in turn to advance in mind and motion*, if not also in physical organization. At present all our

101. [The year is not indicated].

highest ideas betray their halfness, like the impotent single electric or magnetic poles, by their absolute need of their converse. Probably it is mainly the fading of the idea of the devil, of 'Satan,' which has caused the fading of 'God.' For even divinity was the only pole; light needs darkness and shadow, life needs death. . .

Until we have begun to recover on a higher plane the Wholeness of the original Mother-Parenthood and thus enabled *that* to be reflected on all thought, 'objective' or 'subjective,' *we can never hope to read the secrets of cosmic reality.*

28 August 1908 [untitled]

Language still, of course, obeys the Primal Sense to an *extent*, in a *degree* that shows what will be gained by a recovered consistency, which being that of the child's spontaneity, will practically vindicate and work itself out. It is spatial and material, and but for our necessary concern for matter and mass would be (as ideally it 'ought' to be) energetic and dynamical, kinetic and constructive. Extent (room), degree, solidity, base: all such borrowed terms witness to our immediate organic needs. They belong to the direct perception of the most obvious conditions on which life depends. But on this very account they ignore much. And in our elaborately protected civilization they tend, except to the physio-chemist, to lose the Sense of the finer, the more subtle forms, and the larger reaches and greater complexities of an Experience which artificial protection and enormous development of our rational machinery have in some directions actually hidden from us. In the 'Mystic' or the 'Crank'; – as in the true seer who knows that Mysteries are either Ignorances bred of Negligences, or there as guiding stars to lead us on – the suppression of much that in its tentative way, Sense has always brought for Action and Experiment and finally for Reason to test, has worked balefully.

'Imagination' (carefully distinguished from erratic Fancy) has tended merely to ignore and despise instead of enriching by Significating, the world of common sense, practical experience, material framework, mechanical sequence. The story in short is that of all artificially suppressed or maimed energies. They break out sporadically, and being under no control, take forms more or less morbid; instead of tending to a deeper Unity in the Race to which we belong, calling it Human, they tend inevitably to isolate and to break up minds into Sects of Thought as of religion. These 'Sects' of course ought to preserve the prerogative of variation which should indeed become richer and freer in the mental world than we yet have it: they ought to be *translated* from that which cuts up and paralyses to that which, like our own organism, varies in harmonious and highly effective complexity. Each 'mode of thought,' even each mode of religion always living and growing, would then definitely increase the human grasp and extend the human outlook. There would be no more question of one supplanting another or of all being conformed to one pattern and pursuing one line, than in the case of science, which at present is perhaps the nearest example of an organic unity of mind, though even there we find its votaries complaining of the too great isolation of the specialist who loses greatly by inability to relate his work to other work and other work to his, thus entailing serious loss to science as a whole and to the human world which so greatly needs its message.¹⁰² And of course science can only represent a certain order of mental interest, though that, as the discovery and interpretation of provable fact, is the condition of all other, and of Sanity itself.

102. Since the above was written, a remarkable Article has appeared (in the *Revue des Idées* of 15 October 1908) urging and interpreting this very fact.

6 September 1909

The Range of Inviolable and Permanent Wedlock

There is apparently a sort of correspondence between (1) physical or chemical reaction, (2) logical relation, and (3) the tie between organism and the rest of the world (or ‘matter and motion’) and – MARRIAGE.

There is, in fact, possibly, a far deeper reason for deeming a *real* (truly so called) marriage non-divorceable, than we yet know. (Merely legal or artificially social conventions such as royal alliances are not here in question).

The trouble is that above the animal level in which ‘marriage’ is normally indissoluble, the whole question has become logically perverted. A *seasonal* marriage on the sub-human animal plane represents our mentally and morally *lifelong* marriage; one only intensifying in its truly ‘holy’ tie when its physiological existence is over.

A good many of what in highly conventional civilisation we call marriage are – unspeakable profanation. And there are certainly lifelong and devoted connections not called or recognised as that, which are in fact sacred; while no tie can be that which is socially and consentingly regulated, not by humanly divine but by even sordid and always superficial convention.

Normally, the ‘marriage’ of the organic complex of processes to food and sleep as well as to air and light, ‘illustrates’ as well as ‘embodies’ the principle of essential and permanent marriage. Dissolve this, break this link, and the penalty is death. It is the form of marriage next below the purely organic combination of the sex-forms in plant and animal rising to that in the human sphere which we call voluntary and moral; and has become a sacred and inviolable contract.

*Morar, 1 August 1910, 6 A.M.*¹⁰³

Body

To some psychologists, the Body expresses everything; the mind is only function of the Body. Exactly. The Body of experiences, of facts, of realities. It is Life in mind that we want; and that life must be substantial as the converse of a wraith or dream; must be material, that is indispensable to man. Yes, and it must recognise, even invent and construct out of its very tissues of creative force what we call the mechanical; it must give birth to the instrumental. . .

It is life in mind that we need, or rather a vital world which takes up all into some inclusive term like the Real. At present it is rather a Corpse than a Body that we relegate to the physical and material, ruling them out or making them all. But the world is no corpse: the universe is no corpse: Nature is no more corpse than (as many of us, alas, would have it) malevolent, or vindictive, or even callous.

Nature is not mere callosity; not hard-shellness except for unfailling good beyond the small goods of our ignorance and selfishness, the *jarring* goods (save the mark!) as to which we would defeat or scorn each other, saying ‘You are wrong and I am right: don’t ask me for proof but accept

103. [Title in handwriting. Morar is the name of a tiny hamlet in West Inverness-shire on the West Coast of Scotland to which Welby went every summer. The following excerpt is from a letter by Welby to her daughter Nina Cust:

I wonder sometimes what there is in this Morar that is so utterly unlike any other place! I am proud indeed of your liking my ‘Sunrise and Sunset,’ but I felt it to be almost a profanation. It was curious, the other day, to hear an ordinary prosaic woman say in a low voice, as if in Church, ‘The truth is, you see into Heaven.’ . . . Even as I write the glorious Isle of Peaks has suddenly put on its celestial dress and becomes one vast shimmering unimaginably transparent jewel on a magic sea. . . I always long for you at these moments (Welby to Nina Cust 1908–1911, in Cust 1931: 347–348)].

my dictum.' Poor little pygmies that we are, even blasphemously using the Divine Name for that which alienates us from some of the most faithful of men, through our fault, through our most bitter and grievous fault! For remember that we are content to use a base and even stained name for the Perfect. That Name ought to be a nobler, more august with a more blessed and stainless origin than 'GOD,' a name which we also apply to the grotesque, the despicable, the false; to a 'fetish' or 'idol.' That very name helps to alienate us from some of the most faithful of men!

24 November 1910 [untitled]

The *race-motherhood*, the original and inclusive Parentage has differentiated and delegated the race-fatherhood.

The Stimulant must not usurp the functions and powers of the generative nucleus which it subserves. As well give Hunger the credit of colonisation and the formation of Empire. But *the higher elements of the original motherhood* have not been extruded. They remain; but mostly as suppressed, in morbid and dangerous form whether passive or active, so that a masculine woman has rightly become a byword corresponding to the feminine man. Yet while the man in his ultimate nature has been impotent to develop and nourish the miracle we call Life – physical or psychological – he had given the necessary impulse which starts the wonder-work of creation. But the starter must not be confounded with the inquirer or with the conveyance. Any brainless lad may casually pull over a lever or in other ways start a giant liner or a heavy express.

That the father (being also, though differentiated from the mother-being for the sake of that highest of all forms of reproduction which has culminated in giving us the human) has retained within him some elements of a renounced unity, the pre-sexual wholeness, is of course unquestionable. But the whole trend of present civilisation, deprived as it is of the very fountain of its twofold power, makes (except in certain directions) for the loss of this, and thus tends to barrenness and defeat.

Lacking its own original complement, the exclusively 'male' civilization always tends as at present to over-reach itself and end in a riot of party strife, wasting in altercation and recrimination what is there for unifying construction by the combination of opposite functions.

At present, unhappily, women seem bent on emphasising their share of the worst defects of men. The last examples of what they suppose to be heroism but is the merest fanaticism, show that as yet they are as far from a complementary equality as ever. I have elsewhere suggested that the real unity which the separation of self ought only to enrich, entails in the mental sphere a certain reversal of function. Mental gestation is undoubtedly man's as male. The story of organic development on the experimental and logical side issuing in mechanical mathematical, dramatic conquest, is undoubtedly that of the Mother in mind. But if in this sense we conceded to the man all that follows from embryonic conception in mind (including the great systems of philosophy), we must at once admit that in nature it should be, and originally and normally was, the woman who gave the governing impulse, and fecundated the man's powers, woke them to action, *fathered* them.

Anthropology and heredity need to be reconsidered in this light. Put thus crudely and paradoxically, the thesis seems, of course, fantastic. But then tested it may be found at least to have some claim to be tested, and to tend towards the solution of formidable problems and to the furtherance of human solidarity and harmony of purpose and achievement. Meantime, from our neglect to examine the tendencies of our shifting expression, we forget the suggestive fact that our most universal term, nature, – the nature of things, is 'she'; and that the very conception of Christ involves a virginal Mother.

6.9. Primal Sense (1904–1910). A selection*

November 1904 [untitled typescript]

Now for a moment let us consider Fichte. He belongs to the type of thinker usually credited with intuition. He was swamped in the bogs of a mysticism miscalled speculation. Yet we may learn from gleams and impulses which he only half – if so much as half – understood. He was right anyhow in insisting that in every man there is an original need and impulse from which to start. He appealed to an intellectual intuition. According to him our ‘picture’ of the world-whole is product of an involuntary, unaware, ‘activity,’ and this he declares is of special significance for ethics. But here he touches unconsciously as usual the question not yet faced as I want it faced, of the distinction between an ‘I’ and its self. In this case we need as usual the distinction between the Owner and the owned (possessed or acknowledged as property or constituent) between My Self and Me, between Its’ Self and – ITSAME, a word in English sorely needed. We *have* not, we *possess* not merely, we ARE the primal impulse which is always pressing us to understand that We could never centre round Us, but are always tempted to centre round a mere Self, – one it may be of many, one in any case which cannot possibly express the whole or the greatest of Us. That Self is the medium and the means of the working here and now of an ‘I am’ which is no ‘thing,’ no substantial ‘soul,’ but again a Means, a Mode, a Way, a Path whereby to pass through truth to Life. Beyond this we need not follow it. Deserting the homely images of Motherhood and Fatherhood we should soon be lost in the abysses of an In-finite, an Ab-solute, an Un-knowable, – fit reward

* [‘Primal Sense,’ WCYA, Box 29, file 36, includes papers written between 1904 and 1910 which mostly overlap with those included in Box 28, file 24, entitled ‘Mother-Sense,’ of which a selection is included in the preceding Section, 6.8. The papers listed below (as they appear in Box 28, file 24) are included in both files, with minor variants (e.g. the original expression ‘mother-sense’ is mostly replaced with ‘primal sense’). Except for those indicated, these papers have not been repropounded in the present section:

- Untitled paper dated 3 June 1904
- ‘Race-Motherhood,’ dated 4 August 1904
- ‘Mother-Sense and Eugenics,’ 6 October 1904, 3rd ed. 12 Juni 1907
- ‘What is Mother-Sense?’ (edition in present Box 29, file 36 is entitled ‘What is Primal-Sense?’), dated 17 April 1906 and 6 July 1907
- Untitled paper dated 15 February 1907 (the edition in Box 29, file 36 bears the title ‘Mother Sense’ in handwriting on top of page)
- ‘Mother-Sense’ (‘Primal Sense’ in the edition included in Box 29, file 36), dated 23 March 1907
- ‘Primordial Awareness,’ dated 10 April 1907 (the edition included in Box 29, file 36 is entitled ‘Mother-sense’)
- ‘Mother-sense and Significs’ (edition in Box 29, file 36 is entitled ‘Primal Sense and Significs’) dated 15 April 1907
- ‘Proposed Introduction to a Paper’ (edition in Box 29, file 36 is entitled ‘Scrutinising our Givens’) dated 16 July 1907, revised 24 August 1910; now included in both Sections 6.8 and 6.9, owing to significant variants
- ‘Coming to our Sense of Senses,’ dated 14 August 1907
- ‘Foresight,’ dated 2 December 1907
- ‘All Father we Know has been Son,’ dated 23 December 1907
- An untitled text of 30 June 1908
- ‘The Recovery of Primal sense,’ dated 18 August 1909]; now included in present section 6.9].

for the cult of the In-significant, the Blank, the Void, and the Zero – for our deification of the Negative! Let us resolve to recover the use of that which lies ready for our call and our service like the latent organic powers which are only, *as we are*, called forth either by some extreme emergency or by disease physical or mental. Or again in rare cases by a special exaltation which intensifies the whole ‘personality’ and transfigures the whole ‘character.’

10 March 1907

*Intention*¹⁰⁴

We see the same reaction in another form from over-intellectualism to mother-sense in the form of Pragmatism and Humanism.

The wife is *not* merely, though in a certain sense she is the predominantly anabolic and static. She is not the merely passive, the *negative* complement of her katabolic, dynamic husband.

The idea really springs from the falsified though still, alas, current conception of the wax Tablet on which ‘impressions’ can be made, but which contributes nothing but plastic surface. The really primitive facts tell us a very different tale. It is true that in a sense ‘we’ ‘make’ the ‘world.’ The inverted commas are here (as in many cases) necessary.

For we only vaguely know as yet, who we mean by ‘we,’ by ‘make,’ by the ‘world’; and all three like so many of our most important terms are used carelessly and inconsistently in various senses.

It can never be too often repeated that the variety of sense in which a word may be used is an economical gain so long as we really know and can discriminate such sense. If not, at least we might use some kind of mark as the mathematicians and philologists do.

16 July 1907. Revised 24 August 1910¹⁰⁵

Scrutinising our Givens

Let us first recover, understand, and learn to use the Primal sense, and all else shall be added unto us. That is the first of Psychological Researches; one without which all so named must in the end be abortive or dangerously deceptive. First let us recognise this sense as the growth-point of the child’s mind. Then let us begin to act experimentally upon the hypothesis that there are two opposite kinds of abnormal experience of which the common character is the irrelative and irrelevant. A mind out of relation may be (1) that which falls below, and (2) that which rises above, a normal level of recognition. The first is lapse and loss, or may be disastrous reversion; the second only needs interpretation and orientation to become illimitable gain in the future. But the study of the conditions, levels and stages of significance will alone enable us rightly to interpret here. Next let us understand that our buds of knowledge, in naturally developing, though in stunted form, on the practical and scientific planes, are killed off elsewhere as soon as they appear, mainly by the imbecilities of an arrested speech; science itself losing seriously from the same cause.

Then let us understand that, before we can hope to experiment successfully on the hidden possibilities of life (which is sensible in a more sensitive sense than anything which our crude sense-scheme directly gives us) we must re-acquire the critically penetrative power of intelligence with which the human race originally started. We mostly think that the present passion for news and its satisfaction in newspaper form – carried to wasteful and unhealthy extremes – is a modern development. It is in fact the satisfaction of the most ancient of human needs; one of those powers which gave man his command; although even now the animal world in some directions surpasses

104. [Alongside the title: ‘(See long paper, Mother-sense)’].

105. [This paper is also presented as part of the file entitled ‘Mother-Sense,’ Box 28, file 24. We have included it here as well because of very significant variations].

him in that knowledge of distant advantage (in migration) which, in ‘wireless’ form, we are now emulating.

This original start was made under conditions which always tended to make deception and illusion fatal. Recovering this, inference will be purged and fertilised to a degree difficult as yet to realise. For as yet, unhappily, our very privilege, our creation of an artificial system of protection and safety, makes against this. It gives us a terrible license to exploit and cultivate for evil or error, that early impulse which has ultimately given the world its most grotesque perversions and mistranslations of the human borderlands, or of those Americas which wait, not merely for their Columbus but for his successors: not merely for well-equipped pioneers, but for equally well-equipped explorers and settlers.

Our present habit is to endow with the method of dream or reverie – in which the true judgment and critical faculty are in complete abeyance – the poetical, mystical, metaphysical types of mind; these all tending to converge upon dream, and rationalising it from false ‘givens.’ It is these which have to be shown up and rooted out. We do not yet recognise this. We seem to ourselves to be as impartially experimentative as the physicist in his laboratory: we treat the most subtle forces of the universe as the policeman treats the vagrant. He is sleeping not under a roof but under a hedge – or better, under the sky, and no one sees the monstrosity of preventing that. Apprehend him! That is our cry. But in truth we neither apprehend nor comprehend him.

To learn his *wherefore* and thus his lesson for us, never occurs to us. But besides the policeman and the vagrant there is a third type; one into the hands of which we are always liable to fall. This type takes to swindling Nature, and to burgling Truth in the sense of the actual. The bait there is often as real a treasure as that with which any burglar decamps. There is only one drawback: the fairy-tale here comes true; the treasure turns to dust in the burglar’s sack. And we cry that all is illusive. For Truth is one of the worst misused of our terms, and ‘matter of fact’ of our phrases.

When the Woman *in us all* has the courage to learn who she is, she will recoil from seeking the ‘occult’ until she is fitter for dealing with it. And the very first thing she will demand of the Man *in us all*, is a really dispassionate, a really relentless analysis of all that is mysterious in life, its halos and its penumbras, its gropings towards a potential world and its sudden irruptions into what at present is our only sane and wholesome sphere. These irruptions are as yet like the breaking of blood-vessels become too weak to resist the pressure of the blood-current. At best they are morbid and wasteful.

Let us then prepare for our Columbian voyage by entering a transparent mental atmosphere: let us recognise the extent to which, thanks to our amazing neglect of our priceless gift of Expression we are in danger of missing the very goal of our being and of living in a fool’s paradise of downright jumble; in a worse than Wonderland! As we have learnt to order thought in ever more subtle forms of logical analysis, so we are now at last learning to claim and acquire freedom of thought. But this freedom, to be vitally productive, must mean an apotheosis of order, and its transfiguration. Dogma has meant the artificial substitute for a lost-organ; and often it has been, not even a wooden leg, but a glass eye. Agnosticism has been its natural product, just as anarchy is that of despotism. But the fact of our toleration of the present perversion of failure in and of language, shows that we are much less rational (in the sense of testing and thus rightly applying, our raw material) than we suppose. It is a symptom of the utmost gravity; and perhaps the main inference we are to draw from it is that the vital inheritance of an antitoxic regulative function, all powerful in the first eras of the human advent, has only partially, in its full sense, survived. Thus it is but feebly acting, just where it is most needed.

In truth the organic spontaneity of language is no longer doing its normal work. In its more wanton forms, it may be described as in a more or less convulsive state. Or, we might say, it has worked through the ages like a ship sailed by a consummate seaman; but now the hand at the helm has loosened its hold; there is no skilful management of sails, no experienced eye on the chart and at the compass and no interpretative brain on the look-out. What then is our conclusion?

Surely that the most urgent of all our needs is to see that the next generation is brought up (for the first time) in full awareness of what they are losing and what they must gain in this matter of expressive achievement: that they are really trained to understand both what the need is and what its true satisfaction must become and must effect.

Every child is born with some degree of the interpretative instinct: many are natural experts in seeing points that their elders are liable to miss. As things are this fact is ignored; or if the child is not silenced, it generates ‘howlers.’ But it is we, his elders, who ought to provoke a ‘howl’ by some of our modes even of authoritative statement. And the child’s primitive insight, duly trained and sifted, would give us a new world of tested and proved significance. The adult would add recorded history, stored knowledge, experience, analysis, and classification, calculation, logical conclusion. And the spring of it all, the Child in man, would no longer be mainly childish but normally childlike – a distinction already recognised, though but partially understood and applied.

The conclusion in such a case is surely irresistible. We have failed to discover, or have been ignoring, a radical need. The very greatness of our advance in the complexity of life and the range and precision of intellectual conquest has here tended to blind us. The true springs of originality tend to dry up or become morbid. Few of us are born without these springs, and it is those cases that are really ‘defective.’ But they pass our tests, as the frequency of mechanical ‘accident’ witnesses.

Meanwhile the true child’s witness is inexorable, as when it takes the form of commanding ‘genius’ which nothing can damp or balk.

Here then let us seriously and practically scrutinise our ‘givens.’

18 August 1907 [untitled typescript]

But this ideal rigorously demands the concerted action of human rational will on the subject; the racial assumption of control over language more efficient than the painter’s control of his brush or the musician’s of his instrument: as thorough indeed as our normal and well-trained control of our voice itself, as of our hands and feet.

It is significant that a movement in this direction which seems likely at least to remain effective on the lowest plane of everyday intercourse but may yet fail to prove permanent, has already made unexpected headway.

It thus surely becomes absurd any longer to protest that a vigorous and thorough revision by the civilised races of the idioms and imagery of language in the light of growing experience and knowledge, is impossible. No one who has made a careful study of the wanton confusions which – save the mark! – we now teach to each new generation, could deny that the state of things which here prevails ought no longer to be tolerated. That we should still remain helpless victims to the survival or the introduction in speech of gratuitous sources of confusion like those of which a few only have here been quoted, seems, although actual fact, hardly credible. For an effort as determined as those made in all other such cases would result in immediate practical benefit, public and private, so great as to be un-mistakeable, and would be yet more universally hailed than any other assumption by man of his rightful powers and discharge of his obvious duties, in those matters which most vitally concern him.

18 August 1909

The Recovery of Primal Sense

What is Primal Sense, – and what is the best term for it? One of the most striking cases of the acquired failure of civilised man even in instrumental achievement and verified reasoning, is the case of our ignorance of impending changes in air and earth, both vital to us. For every purpose we need accurate and timely announcement or warning, of which in our ‘barometer’ we have as yet but the beginning. We need a trust-worthy forecast (that is a register of the symptoms) of all

impending physical changes; and this would naturally extend to all changes affecting the welfare of man, or increasing his knowledge of his mental as well as physical environment. Not only should 'weather' lie open before us, – as indeed in rough fashion it still is here and there to the sadly sophisticated fisherman or seaman who like most of us has had his Primal Sense carefully blunted at school, – but every disturbance of the earth's surface should be forecasted. And one of the first consequences of signifiical education will be to restore, to educe and to train this faculty which is as natural as 'long' sight or 'musical' ear; one which we constantly see in action in the living world and in men call shrewdness or genius. We see it notably, of course, in the case of animals which remain sensitive to danger, though not nearly so sensitive generally as the human race. Man, who, as the most organically helpless, shorn of fur, claw, sting and all such defences, became instead, the finest-witted of creatures, though he still has to assume the full honours of the Interpreter of Sign.

Imagine then the blundering folly of systematically making him dull; of inducing dullness early in youth by the constant silencing of his natural adventure in whats, hows, whys, and his instinctive observation of what inevitably escapes the routine-bound adult mind. For the business of the adult is to discover and work the mines of mental 'radium' which in the child 'radiates' inquiry; to isolate it from its surroundings of the childish – of myth – making fancy and grotesque mistranslations and applications. They must remain the business of our vitalised reason and our garnered experience whereby to criticise and bring them to bear on all life.

In short and in truth we must translate our reference for the uniquely inspired teacher (and every 'leader' e.g. Bradlaugh or Haeckel is that to his followers) into the term of a heritage really the primal right in various degrees of all of us. We must as it were learn to *breathe* mentally again in the fullest sense; and even to better the lesson by the aid of experience and through the inestimable lesson given us in the recent development of experimental science – really the alphabetical and grammatical form of an undreamt-of, aloe-like, flowering in which philosophical thought will consummate the results of its long and hard probation. At present and meanwhile we are most truly uninspired – in plain word, choking and smothered by our own creeds and culture. When at last we intentionally and definitely cease to kill out or crush out the true Child in us all – that fresh simple, loyally responsive element which we ought all in some degree and some of us in the highest degree to retain through-out life, then the age of miracle will wed the age of critical reason and practical mechanics. The very word 'miracle' will regain its original association: it will be somewhat ad-mirable, somewhat supremely real or the true 'mirror' of reality; something essentially good to consider.

The Latin races (from whom comes our word miracle) use 'mira' for 'look' or 'see' and have so far the advantage of us. And nowhere in the true sense is there more miracle (no mono-cle but the result of two eyes working together) than in what we call the Laboratory, forgetting sometimes that the whole earth is that, and indeed the heavens too: the Place where we can and are to *work* both homely and wonderful results. But in perceiving miracle we must not *squint* or see double or project our predilections, our prejudiced negligences and ignorances into the real world. And we must not suppose that we truly see, when our eyes behind closed eyelids only record 'mystical,' that is mystifying, visions unverified and owing to our own morbid state. The results even of indigestion may be pungently critical in this; and still more the results of inhalation of various gases which, being translated, are 'spirits.' They warn us.

The visions, the true outlooks and insights of the childlike, are the converse of all this. The child in all ages looks into the mirror of the real, obscured or overlaid; what he lacks of course is the directive and critical experience of his elders, inherited from many generations. His typical visions are openings of mental health; ours mostly the closings of infirmity which should be called 'childish.' These two words give us the secret. We have become in one sense childish and in another senile. When we learn to read and translate all that in any sense concerns us, we shall become not super – but normally Human.

Letter to Mr. Stout: 12 April 1910, 5.30 A.M.
Revised 10 January 1912

I should like to put down some points with reference to your very useful challenge about the Primal Sense.

In the first place (whether I put it adequately or no) I have the *trend* of all present psychology, physiology and anthropology with me. I could give you a volume of indirectly witnessing excerpts as to this and have had some conversations in the same line, with experts.

The truth is, if I may so speak and in a broad sense, that your own life and work reveal for me, not that primal sense is abortive in you, but that it has a formidable and despotic rival in an extraordinary development of the rational and conceptual brain. It is an accepted fact in the economy of things in the human world that any such immense preponderance inevitably entails some corresponding suppression, except possibly in those rarest cases of commanding 'genius' which have so far been reckoned in some sense superhuman.

But now I would take other ground. In my view, which I find increasingly though indirectly confirmed by the present study of the origin and nature of Sex, we have hardly begun in philosophical discussion to use the hints which the difference between Man and Woman (who are more than male and female or masculine and feminine) analogically furnishes. The man is devoid of three crucial experiences, which in me have translated themselves (like others which are shared by men) into the mental sphere.

The first is the special form which adolescence in the girl physically takes.

The second is what, after conception (note here the thinker's use of 'conceptual') we call in noble expression the Quickenings.

The third is that of 'labour' and of giving birth, (normally followed by the suckling).

The last, (giving birth), is peculiarly educative when, as in a case known to me, a highly elaborated nervous System and unusually active brain combined with an exceptionally unyielding frame-work; the penalty apparently of 'civilisation' and now probably obviated by active games and gymnastics, as originally by hard labour. This caused serious danger and such agony as could hardly be surpassed; and would in an ordinary instance have left permanently crippling traces. In this one it made for a deepening of Consciousness.

All three *constitute a link with the whole vital world* which the man lacks; and this factor it is I believe which has in mothers actual or potential, preserved a primal sense which man also has, but from a different experience and in a different form.

The woman herself only has it in working form so far as she can shake off, not the natural conditions of life (which there is now a tendency to shirk) but the numbing and planing effect of high civilisation and conventional education – rather *inducation*.

But very few of us do shake it off. *These few become the mental fertilisers of men.* They have nothing to do with logical gestation. That is typically the man's function. The Sexual order tends to reverse itself in mind. I have written some rather vague papers about this. I can only give the bare suggestion. But it is well worth following up; and I don't wish unduly to press the difference between man and woman. Motherhood (in a wide sense) came before fatherhood which was to speak extruded in favour of rising types of organic form which entailed sexual separation. I doubt whether we yet fully understand the potential fatherhood now lapsed; the Memory (in my third sense) that *we* have delegated to you, and the forces which were the chief agents (in primitive form) in dividing and differentiating the sexes. I am putting this of course dramatically, but it is substantially true.

My attempts at bringing forward matters which if I am right in the main belong to the very springs of human nature, are of course lamentably inadequate. My greatest desire (and my motive both in private conversation and correspondence and in reluctant publication) is solely the hope of inducing abler treatment of my topics.

There is only one thing I can say with entire confidence. Those who seriously enter into the matter will find that the study to be called Significs is profoundly significant as to our very constitution, regarded as combining 'body and mind' in the supreme human union and developing through the primal sense and the creative and discursive intellect.

15 April 1910 [untitled typescript]

Every advance must be paid for. The mammal has lost the organic powers to fly and to live under water, and other functions as well. The human mammal pays for an enormous intellectual advance. How? By weakening or relative suppression of a power no longer indispensable for survival.

I am not supposing that instinct, intuition, or what I prefer to call the primal or primary sense, has entirely lapsed. In some of us it is still triumphant, though even so, generally misconceived and sometimes *usurpative*. And in all I say it must be remembered that at the very springs of my thinking lies the activity for which perhaps our best words are translation, transformation and transfiguration. The prefix is suggestively significant. I do not plead for the recovery, at the expense of invaluable acquired power, of a function now become in a certain sense and degree obsolete, except in the sense of restored *balance*. Nor do I deny or neglect the potency which in our day emerges in creative 'genius.' I only plead for recognition in education of a factor with which the normal child, in varying degrees, is born – that of insistence in question and experiment in answer. The child virtually demands expression at all costs, as the 'secret languages' of children abundantly witness. When this primary instinct finds no healthy outlet and response, still less direction, it is liable to vent itself in needless irritation and 'naughtiness.'

It is true of course that the penetrative and interpretative power does survive in all in some degree and in a few cases in extreme degree; but these are too rare and meet with too much discouragement. They get too much blunting instead of illuminating because rectifying criticism. In all but supreme and irrepressible cases they are dulled or lost. And the condition of modern language in the highest civilisation, and our really fatuous content with it as the only medium of the highest forms of discussion, 'speaks volumes.' Language ought to be at least as competent as the thought which it would express and as expressive as the many worlds of fact and experience already are. A grain of dust or chip of stone cries aloud to the geologist, a fibre or 'cell' to the biologist. And a pain or a danger – or a craving – shouts to the animal on all grades up to the human. But even these reactions that these evoke are less unerring than man's mind is bound to be in reading aright, in and for him, *every* presented problem, *and pooling the result*. In controversy, the antagonists can never do without each other; but as yet they tend to neutralise and impoverish, rather than to fertilise, each other, and to enrich the stores of social comprehension. Language is an unwitting and unwilling accomplice of this. But life is really a quiver of supreme response to the call of what we idealise as reality. As yet we see this most directly and efficiently in the mechanical world.

But all vital functions have this character. Let us see that the articulate expression of what we call Mind, supremely has it. For we do not even know yet what language may become if we will, and carry out our will in education. Only we must 'will' it to become what it implicitly *is*; an instrument as unailing and unerring as those of the physical and the vital worlds, and rich beyond our utmost dreams in delicacy, aptness, force, suggestion, and revealing power. It must make for a very cosmos of 'mental' and 'moral' energies and achievements, many of which are yet practically beyond our reach. It must itself become an expressive cosmos: all possible forms of study and discovery must be found in it: it must, by fertilising the racial thought, enable us to perform what would now appear miracles of expressive conquest, but are no more miraculous in a fabulous sense than the marvels of nerve-action already are. Our brains and nervous systems will explain themselves in terms of what seems as yet an impossible clearness: and mystery will

be there to be illuminated – and dissipated: giving place to a revelation only to be compared to the advent of mind-pregnant life itself.

It is time we came to that Life. For it calls to us insistently. We answer it sometimes in terms of the Spiritual. Well, this must become the pure atmosphere which we are mentally to breathe. Our aspirations are to the Heavenly. Well, our world yearns to its sun and with its sun to unknown Attractive Centres. Only, the visionary and the speculative must become the Retinal: our Seers must become revealers admittedly and willingly subject to the severest tests of criticism in every available form. It is a wonderful thing to know that our ‘physical’ eyes, even when normal, are radically defective: more wonderful indeed than as yet we recognise. Let us ponder the message of such defects in our ‘mental’ eyes, because that is halfway to their remedy. The result ought at least to emulate the victories of the modern oculist.

We have already much scientifically valid knowledge indicated only in parable. Such parables are there for continual restatement in ever more adequate terms. Even the crassest superstition is but the raw or diseased form of some function as yet undeveloped in healthy form – in the majesty of ordered service.

We are but beginning to see how illimitable are the resources which await expression and correspondingly exploitation. The Mystic properly so-called trades upon mystery: let us trade on nothing, but learn to act through a vision relentlessly clear and penetrative, primate among senses all loyal, in their measure and mode, to the call of reality, but waiting for the signfician who shall translate their witness and the witness of their message, actual or potential.

6.10. Significs – Eugenics (1904–1907)*

5 July 1904 [untitled typescript]

In practical Eugenics we have to acquire in sane, healthy, and morally sound form, powers which now only manifest themselves in extreme emergency, in unique genius, through insanity, disease, and either duplicity or fanaticism; in short in sporadic, perverted, and unwholesome or at least ambiguous and dangerous forms. This answers to Metchnikoff’s ideal. And a full, rich life, master of its ‘fate,’ conqueror through obedience, powerful through loyalty to a Divine Nature (its own, the world’s and that of its origin), thus strong even in weakness, and serene and joyful even in suffering, in infinitely higher than a merely prolonged life, relieved of needless infirmity but even so still the sport of disabling and torturing ‘accident.’ In a true world of triumphant Quality, quantity assumes its proper and secondary place. Let the whole ‘standard of living’ be raised; let the physical and mental norm be purified and enriched; let the dignity of man, through reverence and the gentleness of the self-ruling and all-serving goodwill, be raised to a really imperial majesty, and Quality will be seen as controlling Quantity, exactly as now, through faithfulness to natural law, Man the Thinker utilises that very law in furthering his own aims as well as supplying his own needs.

For (as H. Bergson points out) we must learn that, even now, quality does in man ascend its rightful throne. The very fairy tales show us the stripling defeating the giant as everywhere we see ‘brain’ defeating ‘brute strength.’ And the martyr conquers even at his stake.

Again we always forget the pure relativity of quantity. What is much or many to one mind is little or few to another. If by duration we mean the quality of persistence; if by the eternal we mean the invulnerable; if we are looking for a truth and a good which have even absorbed and transfigured evil into themselves, then the *number* of moments or milleniums or the *bulk* of

* [‘Significs – Eugenics,’ WCYA, Box 30, file 46. This is a small file containing just the few papers here presented, written between 1904 and 1907, and edited for publication].

space-content alike becomes indifferent. Strange that the microscope has taught us here no lesson as yet, although the supposed ultimate minuteness – the ‘atom’ – should now be described in terms of a solar system!

We are cruelly misled by our assumption that our childish demands, granted, would be to us what we suppose. We are the victims of ignorant and self-full desire; and our ambitions are mostly either starved or dropsical. The true lesson of Relation is not yet learnt, far less applied. Quantity must always be relative in a sense in which Quality is not. The exact bearing and implication of this distinction never seems to have been studied from the present point of view.

Let us combine the full sense both of the poverty and also of the potential wealth of Experience. Let us discern the meanness and even squalor of direct as compared with indirect experience, which is the reward of true inference and interpretation. Let us learn from the rose-bush, leafless in early spring. We are demanding no fixed wonder of roseate glory, but more and bigger brown stems, not to last as such for ever, but to push out splendours of new growing leaf and flower.

July 1904 (corrected 12 June 1907)

The Eugenic Contribution of the ‘Race-motherhood’

There must be at present a special difficulty in developing such ideas as that summarised in the above title, because what they react and witness to is exactly that intimate pressure of natural reality which has instead of developing, *lapsed* with the enormous development of the logical function (the snare of Hegel, Comte, H. Spencer and such like) as the result of the evolution of sex on the human plane.

The man as opposed to the woman for the sake 1) of variation and 2) of brain-development (as typically represented by formal logic and the higher mathematics) necessarily has the defects of his qualities. These would have been normally supplied by the woman but for the inevitable long ages of brain-slavery which succeeded the early period in which we have good reason to suppose that women developed a quick and unerring ‘cunning’ now vaguely called ‘intuition,’ a gift which stood them instead of ‘brute’ muscular force.

The dialectical development of the masculine brain-process has reached a high degree of complexity and intricacy. Trains of formal reasoning become thus valuable for their own sake. And we tend to make them supreme not in the sense in which they really are so, but in that of wholly superseding the messages of direct awareness, which then become to us merely mythical, if not actually pathological. It is surely time that, as part of the eugenic inquiries now being prosecuted, we should consider and examine into this needlessly ‘mysterious’ sphere of knowledge. But only the legacy of the thousand generations of his mothers enables a man to *include* the logical method instead of being confined to it in cases where it does not apply.

All great work done by man thus owes much to the womanhood acting through him. When this is strong he is a genius. Women do not (with very rare exceptions) achieve great work, and no woman is included among the small group of the greatest human beings known, because of her having (in the race-Motherhood) delegated the main brain-work like the main muscle-work to her son, especially while her original centre of generative vitality was in its fullest activity. We are probably suffering to this day for the long ages when this last delegation, the muscle-work, partly lapsed, and women were exhausted by toil enforced by the men. Even now that age must be survived by the individual if we are to recover the racial knowledge which is so sadly to seek in our abortive attempts to understand, express and live by the realities which all round us are *pressing for discovery, urgent to be interpreted.*

8 November 1906

*A Study in Heredity*¹⁰⁶

Are we not – those of us who are most single-minded in devotion to the divine order of a true and therefore beneficently stern Nature – in danger of unduly forgetting or under-valuing the tremendous bias in favour of the Survival of the Fittest by Elimination of the Unfit, of that same Natural Order.

We seem now almost in a panic of reaction from a criminal indifference to the ‘laws’ of heredity, a reckless disregard of the plainest natural warnings of danger. This reaction may well lead to a failure to allow for Nature’s splendid ‘law’ of compensation and of reversion to a healthy norm; and above all to allow for the illimitable treasure of our agelong heritage on which the very ‘nature’ which has evolved us, can and does draw.

Take a case.

A man, let us say, comes of a stock on the whole robust, with here and there an individual ancestor who brought in some weakness promptly overcome by the family vigour, and disappearing in the next generation. In him let us suppose a certain refinement of texture which makes our artificial life unusually injurious: he virtually starves for the natural human life. Perhaps somewhere far back, say 500 or 1000 years ago some ancestor brought in some taint. The horrible life which for so many of us is called that of a really civilised and educated race, causes or contributes to the re-appearance in him of this one flaw in his long descent. What do we do with him? Hitherto we have left him helpless in the conditions which strongly favour this trace of a morbid growth; and he has married most likely some one with a constitution which instead of tending to restore the natural balance and suppress the pathological tendency, tends to reinforce the evil or to supply another evil to work with it.

In these days we are rather inclined to forbid him to marry; thereby not merely adding to the sum of psychical misery and contributing to the decline of population, but depriving Nature of an opportunity to right matters by reverting to the main stream of health in a true regenerative atavism. Of course there are cases in which the heredity which can be traced seems plainly and mainly or even wholly bad. But considering that we have not even begun systematically to trace-up – say for 200 years – the healthy pedigree of the population of any part of the world, there seems some justification for fearing that we are in danger of beginning at the wrong end. For instance, we all know that the ‘consumptive’ is apt to display admirable qualities, among others pluck; he often indeed belongs to the flower of the mental and moral world.

Other diseased tendencies have similar compensations: and yet we would tar them all with the same brush. We would extirpate all alike when we might instead, in some cases, utilise them as we already do in the case of virulently toxic drugs. Surely we have to remember that in working for the survival of the fittest by elimination of the unfit, Nature is always on the side anyhow of the angelic *norm*: of that ‘average’ whence the ‘exceptionally’ good may at any time spring and to which life constantly returns. We have to remember also that she is always thus renewing her youth and ‘overcoming evil with good.’

Are we then to give up and let things slide? By no means. We must inquire and collect evidence, we must even create a public conscience against the propagation by marriage of an unmistakably, glaringly diseased stock. But when all is done we must not forget that our true ancestry stretches back through uncounted thousands of years; and that throughout the slow rise of our kin from worm to man, from brute-like savage to abstract discoverer and thinker, Nature has always on the whole known how to dispose of the worse and to overcome it by the better, in that central biological interest which we call Health of Fitness.

106. [In handwriting on top of this title is the expression ‘Eugenics’].

22 November 1907

The Eugenics of Mind

The direct or short-cut method of ‘throwing light upon’ a difficulty or ‘obscure’ question, or in fact of penetrating many ‘layers of wrapping’ (somewhat like those of a ‘winter bud’ or chrysalis) to reach a significant nucleus, ought always to be working, so to speak, sexually, in the great ultimate task of the human brain, which is, by *investigating, stimulating, discovering, and controlling*, to create and apply realities. Create? Yes. But the word has still a crude reference to a Fiat which though irreverently applied just where the idea of the Arbitrary¹⁰⁷ is most dishonouring, is often but the barbarous cutting of a knot which we are too ignorant and impatient to unravel.

We have said, sexually. And it is perhaps worth noticing that some of us suspect, in the mental world, a certain reversal of sexual function.

The ‘woman’s mind’ by direct impregnation (suggestion) even as things are occasionally starts in the man’s mind processes of extraordinary elaboration leading to results of enormous ‘vital’ complexity and potency. And it must never be forgotten that the mother-mind, legacy of innumerable mothers, is normally never entirely absent in any man. In these results and in this respect we ought to be able to discern manifest traces of the ‘paternity’ of the Primal or Mother-sense.¹⁰⁸ And this suggests the imperative need of an ‘Eugenics’ of mind. There have been rare instances of such a partnership of minds (e.g. the case of Comte and of J. Stuart Mill and Grote and Curie), which, however, need not be emotional still less erotic and might be expected even among correspondents who have never met. But such productive combinations of typically creative minds have been sporadic and as a rule narrowly limited. When they are deliberately and clearly recognised; when their true (and indeed immeasurable) value is appraised and exploited, and we are intelligently trained in their use, we may well look to see ‘miracles’ of mental achievement.

At present the most creative work of all – that which we agree to ascribe to ‘transcendent’ or ‘unique’ genius – is in fact, in this sense, hermaphroditic. But such a fact means, as we are, an earlier and less developed mode of reproduction. It does not give rise to the form of life which involves the commanding value of the ‘human brain’ in the highest sense of that term. Genius has never yet in any recognised, acknowledged, cultivated, or fully utilised form, acquired the needed *mate*, and thus doubled its power.

True of course that the separation of sex is itself presumably, in its present form, rather an expedient than an ideal. It leads to an almost suicidal waste of racial possibilities, unless indeed some means may in the future be devised of unfailingly bringing together the true human complements. But it is a far cry to that!

It seems clear anyhow that any higher development of reproductive method will make the higher value of its issue certain. And so with the marriage in the human mind itself, of the Mother-sense to the Father or rather Son-reason (germinally present, but not developed in, the Mother-sense). At present the Mother-sense, the working of a conception leading to the birth and gradual maturity of an organism of the highest possible type (having begun by including the fertilising germ of the Father-reason) is only ours in the curiously reversed sense of the generative complexities of *rational* gestation. These have even tended to become morbid and sometimes abortive. We constantly hear complaints of professed logical and metaphysical thinkers for their over-elaboration of theses already worn threadbare by endless and minute discussion. So that we reach an apparent contradiction, due only to our inveterate habit of sundering and halving what ought only to be distinguished and recognized as a polar opposite.

107. It is one of the many intolerable anomalies of our neglected language that while a true Arbitrator must above all never be ‘arbitrary’ we suppose volition to be the latter!

108. These paradoxes are unavoidable until language is made more expressive of present positions and needs.

The true clue is that of the ‘Sense’ (the Mother-sense) in which we are, not merely using words, but availing ourselves of method and of possible changes of ‘venue’ and application. In one ‘sense,’ then (in one context, that is) the mother-mind may be found ‘fathering’ thought: and in the father-mind conversely mothering it. In another sense – the one of immediate concern to us in the present suggestion – the mother-mind as ‘sense’ may elaborate and bring forth (as indeed our ‘senses’ do) a complex awareness of quantity and quality in *direct response* to ‘natural’ stimulation.¹⁰⁹

We need the full recognition of both these translations (here most inadequately made) of organic status and process into the mental field.

The roughness and crudeness of the present treatment is fully admitted by the writer. The question remains, whether the ideas here presented in, as it were, the raw, may be susceptible of profitable development and tend to interpret some baffling problems of the mental relation of sex both in the actual and the analogical sense?

Notes in chronological order

6.11. Eugenics: From V. Lady Welby (1905)*

The science of Eugenics as not only dealing with ‘all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race,’ but also ‘with those that develop them to the utmost advantage,’ must have the most pressing interest for women. And one of the first things to do – pending regulative reform – is to prepare the minds of women to take a truer view of their dominant natural impulse towards service and self-sacrifice. They need to realize more clearly the significance of their mission to conceive, to develop, to cherish and to train – in short, in all senses to mother the next, and through that all succeeding generations of Man.

As things are, they have almost entirely missed the very point both of their special function and of their strongest yearnings. They have lost that discerning guidance of eugenic instinct and that inerrancy of eugenic preference which, broadly speaking, in both sexes have given us the highest types of man yet developed. The refined and educated woman of this day is brought up to countenance, *and to see moral and religious authority countenance*, social standards which practically take no account of the destinies and the welfare of the race. It is thus hardly wonderful that she should be failing more and more her true mission, should indeed too often be unfaithful to it, spending her instinct of devotion in unworthy, or at least barren, directions. Yet, once she realizes what the results will be that she can help to bring about, she will be even more ready than

109. It must be carefully noted in all this argument about Sense that it is perhaps the richest *and therefore the most evasive* of all terms. It is almost impossible therefore to avoid obscurity.

* [‘Eugenics: From V. Lady Welby,’ a written communication read by Miss Carter at the Sociological Society Meeting, 16 May 1904, for Victoria Welby. This is a contribution to the discussion on Francis Galton’s first paper on eugenics entitled, ‘Eugenics: Its definition, scope and aims,’ see Welby 1905.

In a letter to Giovanni Vailati dated 1 March 1905 (see Ch. 4, this volume), Welby explained that she was interested in eugenics because it privileged ‘significance’ as the first of interests, therefore the development of our ‘rational faculties’ and ‘power of subtle and elaborate expression,’ which meant to develop and improve expression, and to do so recovering our relations to nature. In Welby’s interpretation eugenics, as originally conceived, shared similar ideals to signification, and never did she imagine the unfortunate, indeed criminal course it was to take in history].

the Man to give herself, not for that vague empty abstraction, the 'Future,' but for the coming generations among which her own descendents may be reckoned. For her natural devotion – the representative of the generations yet to come – is even more complete than that to her husband, which indeed is biologically, though she knows it not, her recognition in him as the means to a supreme end.

But it is not only thus that women are concerned with the profound obligation to the race which the founder of the science of Eugenics is bringing home to the social conscience. At present, anyhow, a large proportion of civilized women find themselves from one or another cause debarred from this social service in the direct sense.

There is another kind of race-motherhood open to, and calling for, the intelligent recognition of and intelligent fulfilment by, all women. There are kinds of natural and instinctive knowledge of the highest value which the artificial social conditions of civilization tend to efface. There are powers of swift insight and penetration – powers also of unerring judgment – which are actually atrophied by the ease and safety secured in highly organized communities. These, indeed, are often found in humble forms, which might be called in-sense and fore-sense.

While I would lay stress on the common heritage of humanity which gives the man a certain motherhood and the woman a certain fatherhood in outlook, perhaps also in intellectual function, we are here mainly concerned with the specialized mental activities of women as distinguished from those of men. It has long been a commonplace that women have, as a rule, a larger share of so-called 'intuition' than men. But the reasons for this, its true nature and its true work and worth, have never, so far as I know, been adequately set forth. It is obvious that these reasons cannot be properly dealt with – indeed can but barely be indicated – in these few words. They involve a reference to an extensive range of facts which anthropology, archeology, history, psychology and physiology, as well as philology have brought to our knowledge. They mean a review of these facts in a new light – that which, in many cases, the woman who has preserved or recovered her earlier, more primitive racial prerogative, can alone throw upon them.

I will only here mention such facts as the part primitively borne by women in the evolution of crafts and arts, including the important one of healing; and point out the absolute necessity, since an original parity of muscular development in the animal world was lost, of their meeting coercion by the help of keen, penetrative, resourceful wits, and the 'conning' which (from the temptation of weakness to serve by deception) became what we now mean by 'cunning.' To these I think we may add the woman's leading part in the evolution of language. While her husband was 'the man of action' and in the heat of the chase and of battle, or the labour of building huts, making stockades, weapons, etc., the 'man of few words,' she was necessarily the talker, necessarily the provider or suggester of symbolic sounds and with them of pictorial signs, by which to describe the ever growing products of human energy, intelligence and constructiveness, and the ever growing needs and interests of the race, in short the ever widening range of social experience.

We are all, men and women, apt to be satisfied now – as we have recently been told, for instance, in the Farraday Lecture – with things as they are. But that is just what we all came into the world to be *dissatisfied* with. And while it may now be said that women are more conservative than men, they still tend to be more adaptive. If the fear of losing by violent change what has been gained *for the children* were removed, women would be found, as of old, in the van of all social advance.

Lastly, I would ask attention to the fact that throughout history, and I believe in every part of the world, we find the elderly woman credited with wisdom and acting as a trusted advisor of the man. It is only in very recent times and in highly artificial societies that we have begun to describe the dense, even the imbecile as an 'old woman.' Here we have a notable evidence indeed of the disastrous atrophy of the intellectual heritage of woman, of the partial paralysis of that racial motherhood out of which she naturally speaks! Of course, as in all such cases, the inherited wisdom became associated with magic and wonder-working and sibilline gifts of all kinds. The always shrewd and often really originaive, predictive and wide-reaching qualities of the woman's

mind (specially after the climacteric had been passed) was mistaken for the uncanny and devil-derived powers of the sorceress and the witch. Like the thinker, the moralist and the healer, she was tempted to have recourse to the short cut of the 'black arts,' and to appeal to the supernatural and miraculous, as science would now define these. We still see, alas, that the special insight and intelligence of women tends to spend itself at best on such absurd misrepresentations of her own instincts and powers as 'Christian Science'; or worse, on clairvoyance and fortune-telling, and the like. Then it may be, elaborate theories of personality – mostly wide of the mark – are constructed upon phenomena which we could learn to analyse and interpret on strictly scientific and really philosophical principles, and thus to utilise at every point. We are, in short, failing to enlist for true social service a natural reserve of intelligence which, mostly lying unrecognised and unused in healthy form, forces its way out in morbid ones. And let us here remember that we are not merely considering a question of sex. No mental function is entirely unrepresented on either side.

The question then arises, How is civilised man to avail himself fully of this reserve of power? The provisional answer seems to be, by making the most of it through the training of all girls for the resumption of the lost power of race-motherhood which shall make for their own happiness and well-being, in using these for the benefit of humanity. In short, by making the most of it through truer methods in education than any which have yet, except in rare cases, been applied. Certainly until we do this many social problems of the highest importance will needlessly continue to baffle and defeat us.

6.12. From the Hon. Lady Welby (1906)*

It is obvious that in the question of eugenic restrictions in marriage there are two opposite points of view from which we may work: (1) that of making the most of the race, which concentrates interest, not on the parents – who are then merely – like the organism itself, the germ carriers – but always on the children (in their turn merely race-bearers); and (2) that of making the most of the individual, and thus raising the standard of the whole by raising that of its parts. The problem is to combine these in the future more adequately than has been attempted in the past.

In a small contribution to a discussion on Mr. Galton's first paper I appealed to women to realise more clearly their true place and gift as representing that original racial motherhood out of which the masculine and feminine characters have risen. It seems advisable now to take somewhat wider ground.

When, in the interest of an ascending family ideal, we emphasize the need for restrictions on marriage which shall embody all those, as summarised in Mr. Galton's paper, to which human societies have already submitted, we have to consummate a further marriage – one of ideas; we have to combine what may appear to be incompatible aims. In the first place, in order to foster all that makes for a higher and nobler type of humanity than any we have yet known how to realise, we must face the fact that some sacrifice of emotion become relatively unworthy is imperative. Else we weaken 'the earnest desire not to infringe the sanctity and freedom of the social relations of a family group.' But the sacrifice is of an emotion which has ceased to make for Man and makes for Self or for reversion to the sub-human.

We are always confronted with a practical paradox. The marriage which makes for the highest welfare of the united man and woman may be actually inimical to the children of that union.

* ['From the Hon. Lady Welby,' contribution to the discussion on Francis Galton's second paper on 'Eugenics,' read at the meeting of the Sociological Society, 14 February 1905, see Welby 1906c. The original copy of this paper was found in WCYA, Box 28, file 24, entitled 'Mother-Sense'].

The marriage which makes for the highest type of family and its highest and fullest development may often mean, and must always tend to mean, the inhibition of much that makes for individual perfection.

And since the children in their turn will be confronted by the same initial difficulty it may be desirable not only to define our aim and the best methods of reaching it, but to suggest one or two simple prior considerations which are seldom taken into account. One of these is the fact that, speaking generally, human development is a development of the higher brain and its new organ, the hand. It may, I suppose, be said that the rest of the organism has not been correspondingly developed, but remains essentially on the animal level. What especially concerns us here is that this includes the uterine system which has even tended to retrograde. Here, surely, we have the key to many social and ethical difficulties in the marriage question.

This relatively enormous complexity of brain, disturbing, or at least altering the organic balance coupled with the sexual incompleteness of the individual, has cost us dear. All such special developments involving comparative overgrowth must do this. In this case we have gained, of course, a priceless analytical, constructive, and elaborative faculty. But there seem to be many indications that we have correspondingly lost a direct and trustworthy reaction to the stimuli of nature in its widest sense, a reaction that should preserve the name of intuition as representing a practically unerring instinct. An eugenic advance secured by an increase of moral sensitiveness on the subject of parentage may well tend to restore on a higher level these primordial responses to excitation of all kinds. But of course it will still rest with education, in all senses and grades, either (as, on the whole, at present) to blunt or to distort them, or to interpret or train them into directed or controlled efficiency.

At present our mental history seems to present a curious anomaly. On the one hand we see what, compared with the animal and even with the lower intellectual human types, is an amazing development of logical precision, ordered complexity of reasoning, rigorous validity of conclusion, all ultimately depending for their productive value on the validity of the presuppositions from which they start. On the other hand, this initial validity can but seldom, if ever, be proved experimentally or by argument, or be established by universal experience. Thus the very perfection of the rational development is always liable to lead us further and further astray. The result we see in endless discussions which tend rather to divide than to unite us by hardening into opposed views of what we take for reality, and to confuse or dim the racial outlook and hinder the racial ascent.

It is to be hoped then that one result of the creation of a eugenic conscience will be a restoration of the human balance, bringing about an immensely increased power of revising familiar assumptions and thus of rightly interpreting experience and the natural world. This must make for the solution of pressing problems which at present cannot even be worthily stated. For there is no more significant sign of the present dead-lock resulting from the anomaly just indicated, than the general neglect of the question of effective expression, and therefore of its central value to us; that is, what we are content vaguely to call its meaning.

Such a line of thought may seem, for the very reason of this neglect, far enough from the subject to be dealt with, – from the question of restrictions in marriage. But in the research, studies and discussions which ought to precede any attempt in the direction of giving effect to an aroused sense of eugenic responsibility, surely this factor will really be all-important. It must be hoped that such discussion will be carried on by those in whom what, for convenience sake I would call the mother-sense, or the sense of human, even of vital origin and significance, is not entirely overlaid by the priceless power of coordinating subtle trains of abstract reasoning. For this supreme power easily defeats itself by failing to examine and rectify the all-potent starting point of its activities, the simple and primary assumption.

I have admitted that the foregoing suggestion – offered with all diffidence – seems to be far from the present subject of discussion, with which, indeed, I have not attempted directly to deal.

I would only add that this is not because such questions have not the deepest interest for me, as for all who in any degree realise their urgency.

We shall have to discuss, though I hope in some cases privately, such questions as the influence on descendants of the existence or the lack of reverent love and loyalty between parents, not as 'acquired characters,' in the controversial sense, but as giving full play to the highest currents of our mental and spiritual life. We shall have to consider the possibilities of raising the whole moral standard of the race, so that the eugenic loyalty shown in instinctive form on the sub-human plane should be reproduced in humanity consciously, purposively, and progressively. Finally, we shall have to reconsider the two cults of Self and Happiness, which we are so prone to make ultimate. The truly eugenic conscience will look upon self as a means and an instrument of consecrated service; and happiness not as an end or an ideal to strive for, since such striving ignobly defeats its own object, but – as sorrow or disappointment may also become – a means or a result of purifying and energising the human activities to an extent as yet difficult to speak of.

Chapter 7

Welby's influence. Theories and movements

Nothing human, as nothing natural, is alien to what ultimately Signifies. (From a letter by Welby to Charles K. Ogden, 2 June 1911)

7.1. 'The Progress of Significs.' From Welby to Charles K. Ogden

Welby and Charles Kay Ogden (1889–1957)¹ corresponded with each other between 1910 and 1911, beginning with a letter from Ogden to Welby dated 15 November 1910, and ending with a card dated 24 December 1911, sent by Ogden from Berlin. This corpus of materials consists of approximately sixty letters exchanged over little more than a year and is available in the Welby Collection at the York University Archives. At the time of their exchanges Ogden had read *What is Meaning?*, Welby's most mature published

1. Charles K. Ogden began his student days at Cambridge University in 1908, and as a student met Welby. Ogden was a prolific and enigmatic figure – a widely-misunderstood supporter of pacificism and subject of anecdotes to which he contributed with his use of pseudonyms, masks, and unconventional behaviour in public appearances. He was one of the original activators of the Heretic Society (also conceived as an alternative response to the 'Apostles'), founded at Cambridge University in 1909 for the free discussion of problems relating to religion, and subsequently also philosophy, art, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, etc. Ogden's publications include books, articles, editorials, notes, reviews, and translations, counting no less than 247 titles overall. In addition to owning a chain of bookshops, he was editor of *The Cambridge Magazine* (founded in 1912), and subsequently (from 1923 to 1952) of *Psyche*, a journal of general and linguistic psychology; moreover, he acted as consultant editor for Kegan Paul publishers, for about 35 years. He was particularly concerned with the promotion of reform in education and teaching methodology, and worked incessantly as a translator – an activity he promoted with great enthusiasm. Other significant initiatives include Ogden's founding of the Orthological Institute and invention of Basic English (introduced in 1929). Basic English, largely ideated under the influence of his studies on the English philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, was designed as an international auxiliary language with an 850-word vocabulary for people with no knowledge of English. Having won Winston Churchill's public endorsement and the government's financial support, this particular project brought the reluctant Ogden to the centre of the world stage (cf. W. Terrence Gordon's monograph, *C. K. Ogden: A Bio-bibliographic Study*, 1990b). Ogden was in contact with Victoria Welby as well as with Ivor A. Richards at different phases in his intellectual career and was variously influenced by them both. Together these three English scholars form an intellectual triangle of great topical interest attracting much scholarly attention, as evinced by numerous publishing enterprises relating to them, comprising republications of their works and the production of a considerable literature. (For further information on Ogden's intellectual career and theoretical production, confronted not only with Welby and her Significs, but also with F. de Saussure, I.A. Richards, L. Bloomfield, and A. Korzybski, cf. Gordon 1991: 111–177; Petrilli 1995a).

contribution to signifiacs, and was looking for specific literature on the subject with an update on recent developments. He had also heard about George F. Stout's plans to edit a volume entitled *Essays on Signifiacs* (see above, Section 1.6.). Welby was adding the finishing touches to her book of 1911, *Signifiacs and Language*.

In a series of letters to Welby (dated 15 November 1910, 18 November 1910, 13 December 1910), Ogden mentioned a paper on the subject of signifiacs that he was writing and intended to deliver at a series of public meetings. The paper was entitled 'The Progress of Signifiacs.' In his letters he also specified that the focus of his interest was in 'the more strictly linguistic side' of signifiac questions, to the end of fighting confusion and fruitless controversy, through the adequate development of a 'linguistic conscience' (quoting back an expression used by Welby herself): 'I should be able to draw attention to the confusion produced in the discussions we have (at least once a week) by the lack of the "*linguistic conscience*" you speak of, and the unwillingness to attempt its acquisition' (Ogden to Welby, 15 November 1910). Welby was delighted to have at last attracted the interest in signifiacs she had long awaited. As she wrote to Ogden in a letter of 15 December 1910, she had been working on Signifiacs for more than 40 years, 30 of which in almost total obscurity: '*I have been ignored for 30 years. That's all right: but Signifiacs² has been ignored too and a whole generation has grown up carefully fettered, blinkered, and paralysed who might . . . But I won't rave.*'

As anticipated the title of Ogden's paper was 'The Progress of Signifiacs,' which he addressed to the Heretic Society at the University of Cambridge on 19 February 1911. This manuscript is located in the Ogden Archives (Mills Memorial Library, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada), and is now available in the first of five volumes collecting Ogden's works under the general title, *C. K. Ogden and Linguistics*, 1994, edited by Terrence W. Gordon.³ The title of the volume containing 'The Progress of Signifiacs' is *From Signifiacs to Orthology* (vol. 1). As we learn from Ogden's correspondence with Welby, he wrote his manuscript in 1910, at a time when it seemed that he would continue Welby's work under the banner of signifiacs. He also named his manuscript alternatively 'The Signifiacs of Definition'.

In a letter dated 13 December 1910, Ogden informed Welby that he had developed his topic according to the following plan, revealing his effort to situate signifiacs in a broader context than that delineated by Welby's approach:

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2. Welby liked to write 'Signifiacs' with a capital 'S' as can be deduced from her correspondence with Ogden. In a letter to Welby dated 15 March 1911, Ogden wrote: 'I note a friend of mine has introduced Signifiacs into the lighter columns of the Academic press – with a small S though, & in poor company'! Nevertheless, in the present volume we have mostly maintained a small 's' for we are interested in this term as denominating a discipline, a field of research, verifying the possibility of using it as the name of a sign science among others, and not only as the name of a special approach developed by a single researcher.
 3. This paper by Ogden is now also available in Italian translation under the title 'Il progresso della signifiacs,' in the volume *Basi. Significare, inventare, dialogare*, pp. 221–256, cf. Petrilli 1998b. On the connection between the topics treated by Ogden in this early phase of his research and the more mature phases, in particular between his manuscript, 'The Progress of Signifiacs' and the *The Meaning of Meaning*, co-authored with Richards, 1923; and on the relation between Ogden and Welby, cf. Gordon 1990a, and Schmitz 1985b: clxxviii–clxxxiv.

1. Introduction – importance of the subject in general – objects, etc.
2. Historical survey – Protagoras – Locke – Tooke – Welby – Sidgwick, etc.
3. Future publication – Stout – Welby – Encyclopaedia, etc.
4. General consideration of causes of backwardness (*Religion*, etc.).
5. Causes of confusion in *DISCUSSION* – Education – Metaphor – *Definition* – Rules for treatment of words *pro tem*, etc.
6. Suggested Remedies – (1) Education of 'Significian'
(2) Universal Language, etc.
7. Summary

The 1994 edition of 'The Progress of Significs' is an expanded version of the paper addressed to the Cambridge Heretic Society. It is developed under the following headings: 'Significs and Antiquity,' 'Locke: The Neglect of his Work for Significs,' 'Horne Tooke and Lady Welby,' 'Religion and Conservative Influences,' 'Symbolism,' 'Ambiguity: Irritants, Metaphors, Lubricants, Mendicants, Unfortunates, Interpretants,' 'Education,' 'Appendix: Significs & Logic/Definition.' In the first part of the manuscript, Ogden concentrates on the historical framework showing the development of some of the main ideas of significs, and in this context he then introduces a discussion of Welby's work. Ogden's main focus already in this early phase of his research was on the problem of language and meaning, which was destined to be at the centre of attention of the human sciences generally – linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, the social sciences, the cognitive sciences, etc. – throughout the twentieth century (see Ch. 8, below). And, in fact, with words that now seem prophetic, Ogden commented as follows:

[...] throughout the world can already be detected a movement which will shortly be manifest to all; converging on the title I have chosen, which is already finding its way into the vocabulary even of the working man, unfit for anything except survival, as John Davidson has it.

I have mentioned the fact that in the year 1910 alone more than ten volumes of first rate importance were constrained to grapple with this problem of language. But even this extraordinary outburst after a lull of ten years is but an obelisk – a little spit to herald the torrent of learning about to be expended on the subject.

The opening weeks of this year saw the publication of the collected works of the Italian polymath [Giovanni] Vailati – containing about a dozen essays on linguistic problems and appreciations of Lady Welby's work [see Vailati 1911, *Scritti di G. Vailati (1863–1909)*]. Professor Calderoni is at present engaged in carrying out the work he left unfinished.

The new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* will contain a significs article by Lady Welby [now appended to Chapter 3 above] in which the educational aspect of the problem is dealt with at length. Macmillan have already in hand an introductory volume of the same writer's studies, and finally Professor Stout is engaged in editing a volume of essays by many well known thinkers, which I believe is to be entitled Significs [reference is to Welby's volume of 1911 entitled, *Significs and Language*]. (1994 [1911], vol. 1: 38)⁴

4. From the corrected page proofs sent to me at the time by W. Terrence Gordon for an essay I was then writing, whom I take the occasion to thank once again. Gordon also sent me Ogden's bibliography of 400 titles bearing on significs, published between 1878 and 1914. In a letter addressed to me dated 24 May 1994, Gordon makes the following speculation about Ogden's bibliography: 'I expect he got many of these references from Welby. He intended to keep updating this bibliography and eventually publish it, but he never did. I did not include this

In 'Progress of Significs' Ogden criticizes the uses and abuses of language traceable in ordinary language as much as in specialized languages, for example, the language of philosophers like Plato, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, critiquing them for what he considered an abundant production of nonsense. He denounces linguistic confusion, which he attributed to the lack of an adequate understanding of language, its nature, use and functions. Greater awareness was necessary as regards the use of words as bearers of meaning, and reasonable methods for conveying meaning. With Welbyian overtones he denounces what he calls the 'tyranny of language' and points out the need to develop a 'linguistic conscience' as much as a 'social conscience.' In the face of the absence of a systematic study of such issues, he took an interest in significs as a general approach and denomination capable of dealing with a vast variety of problems:

No book can appear on any serious subject but confesses itself in some vague way conscious of the tyranny of language. But where there is consciousness there can be a conscience and just as we speak of a social conscience, so in the future it is to be hoped we shall speak [of] a linguistic conscience – a desire to impart without ambiguity, to apprehend without misunderstanding, by a more perfect method, and through a more perfect medium than any hitherto attained.

To those, if any there be, who are disposed to think themselves superior to such trivial and mechanical details, it may be respectfully submitted that they can have little idea of the enormous responsibilities which their superiority entails!

Significs in this case should prove a powerful solvent!

It may indeed be assumed that the day for the production of voluminous evidence for the need of significs is at last passing away. I trust however that the quotations in the following pages, and the references to sources whence material has been drawn, will prove both suggestive and adequate.

And here I would first introduce the word 'significs' as an admirable label, under which to group the whole range of the subjects concerned – the study of facts or evidence which may have a bearing on the question, the utilization and improvement of every form of expression, the means of creating the linguistic conscience, the manner of clearing up confusions due to language through knowledge of their causes, and finally the possibilities of obviating their occurrence in the future, whether through education, through linguistic reform, or through new developments of language involving universal regeneration and reconstruction. [...]

In a vague way no doubt it is true that we are all aware of the misleading character of language – but from a study of the most recent literature of the subject three considerations should emerge: (1) That the errors thus arising are far more numerous and important than is commonly supposed, while the nature of their causes is as yet very imperfectly understood; (2) That there has been little attempt to make a systematic study of the question; (3) That no science at present recognized can profess to deal with the central problem: and a general movement is on all hands being forced to admit the necessity for a new synthesis. (Ogden 1994 [1911]: 3–4)

Ogden traces the history of significs as he perceived it, briefly reconstructing from the origins some aspects and phases in the development of topics at the centre of his interest. He acknowledged Welby with the merit of having focused systematically on problems relevant to significs – problems of meaning, language, and expression, particularly the

bibliography in my edition of the Significs manuscript, but I have it in typescript form (his) and will send it along with the photocopied proofs of the text itself.

problem of confusion generated by the bad use of language, while criticizing William James for having deviated attention from such issues. The passage above continues as follows:

I will now endeavour to trace the development of the leading ideas of significs, some of them hoary with old [age] and [the] ravage of six hundred long, sad years, and to follow the history of my subject, on which I have expended much time and energy from Adam to Lady Welby – to show how the indefatigable labours of the latter have at last caused the problem to take shape – how ten years ago the christening took place, and how for the intervening decade energies were diverted by the appearance of William James.

Last year this lull was succeeded by an outburst of which there had been various indications and 1910 saw volume after volume dealing directly with the problem. About a dozen publications of first rate importance on all conceivable subjects have been forced to insert one or more chapters on the confusions engendered by language, and to deal with this question of thought and expression.

I regret that I have no time to trace the development of some of the main ideas of significs and to follow the history of the subject from Adam via Protagoras, Antisthenes, Locke, Leibniz, Tooke, Smart, Rousseau, Sir G. C. Lewis, Edward Johnson, Mill, Max Müller, Bréal, Sidgwick, to Lady Welby. Some of these I shall have occasion to mention, but noting the omissions, I pass to the last named. (Ogden 1994 [1911]: 4–5)

Further on in the same essay, under the section title 'Horne Tooke and Lady Welby,' Ogden continues his history of significs with reference to Welby:

[. . .] It was mainly the influence of Lady Welby that caused the subject at the beginning of the present century to take definite form and enter on a new and most important phase. In response to the offer of the Welby Prize in *Mind* for 1899 and 1900 there appeared three essays on 'The Causes of the Present Confusion in Philosophic Terminology' by Professor Tönnies of Hamburg.

In 1891 Lady Welby had published a small collection of extracts from the most distinguished living thinkers, entitled, 'Witnesses to Ambiguity.' In 1893 came a further and more important selection, in 1896 the article 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' and in 1898 yet another, 'the Witness of Science to Linguistic Anarchy.' In 1903, finally, appeared *What is Meaning?* – a characteristic study urging the adoption of a significant method of education, and containing much interesting material.

Lady Welby's indefatigable labours and wide range of acquaintance have undoubtedly had much effect. Yet we might well quote:

O monstrous, dead, unprofitable world

That thou canst hear and hearing hold thy way. (Ogden 1994 [1911]: 8–9)

Ogden also gave a paper on significs at Balliol College, Oxford University. The meeting was attended by about fifteen people who mostly reacted to significs with reserve. On Ogden's account, the 'professional philosophers' were too heavily influenced by the Oxford 'Schools of Logic' to accept Welby and her proposal of significs (letter to Welby, 20 December 1911). In Ogden's interpretation their main objection was that '[. . .] Metaphysical Knowledge is all that can clear up verbal ambiguities, knowledge of things and Dialectic method not 'Significs' of which there is no 'need' [. . .]!!' (Ogden to Welby, 13 December 1910). However, on a more promising note he continued with the significant observation that '[. . .] amongst the ordinary sort of people the references to confusion in discussion such as they know and the evident difference of their origin from real *philosophic* uncertainty are of much value [. . .].' The distinction between confusion

and philosophical uncertainty is an important specification from a signifi- cal perspective and relates to Welby's own concerns, given that she too dealt with this issue constantly throughout her work. In fact, she distinguished between linguistic ambiguity connected with the bad use of language, lack of linguistic conscience, which leads to error and confusion; and, as a contrast, ambiguity understood in a positive sense as polysemy, the possibility of multiple interpretations, and generation of new meanings. This type of ambiguity is the condition for what we may call 'responsive understanding,' 'dialogism,' and 'otherness' in the relation among interpretants. Both Welby and Ogden took a stand against the fixed meaning fallacy, underlining the importance of plurivocality and polysemy for the successful realization of linguistic communication beyond the mere exchange of messages regulated by codes and convention. Real linguistic precision ensues from the appropriate exploitation of linguistic resources – as when, for example, we distinguish among words that seem similar, or identify different meanings that are not clearly differentiated in a single word.

Both Welby and Ogden can be situated in a tradition of thought that counts such figures as Vailati and Peirce, Welby's contemporaries and correspondents, but also scholars, once more, such as Charles Morris, Mikhail Bakhtin, Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, and Adam Schaff (cf. 1960, 1973, 1974, 1975), who came after her. All may be considered as representatives of so-called 'interpretation semiotics' which under certain aspects may be considered as a development of signifi- cation and its special approach to signifying processes.⁵

7.2. From signifi- cation to the meaning of 'meaning'. The correspondence between Welby and Ogden

We shall now consider some of the more relevant aspects of the correspondence between Ogden and Welby from the perspective of signifi- cation. The following is a reading of the original manuscripts from the archives, from which a selection has been appended to the present chapter.⁶

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5. On 'interpretation semiotics' as opposed to 'code semiotics,' cf. Bonfantini 1981, 1984, 1987; Petrilli 1993a; Petrilli and Ponzio 2005. On the ideal relation between Bakhtin and Welby, cf. Petrilli 1990b, 1990c; on the real relation between Welby and Vailati, cf. Petrilli 1989, and Ponzio 1985b and 1990a. See also Petrilli 1990d for a study of the relation between Welby, Peirce, Vailati, and Bakhtin viewed together from the perspective of 'interpretation semiotics'. On Ogden and Saussure, cf. Gordon 1991: 125–130.
 6. The main corpus of the Welby-Ogden correspondence, which is still unpublished as most of Welby's correspondence, includes approximately 30 letters from Ogden to Welby (in their final edition) and as many from Welby to Ogden (mainly copies of the letters sent to Ogden are handwritten drafts). 'Typed proofs,' as Welby called them, were made of her letters as well as Ogden's (usually by one of Welby's secretaries or assistants). These are mainly transcriptions of the most significant parts of the originals. These manuscripts are more often than not written in Welby's peculiar shorthand, which generally consists in eliminating single vowels or vowel clusters. These have been reintegrated in the present edition. Only one of the most significant letters from Ogden to Welby was included by Nina Cust in *Other Dimensions* (pp. 334–335).

Welby's correspondence with Ogden⁷ is particularly interesting from the perspective of the history of ideas, and testifies to the connection between signifiacs and the theory of meaning as conceived by Ogden with co-author Ivor A. Richards in their famous monograph *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and the Science of Symbolism*, published in 1923.⁸ Welby influenced Ogden in the initial phase of his research as much as in the subsequent, though he did not acknowledge this (she is mentioned only briefly and in critical terms in his 1923 monograph with Richards). In a letter to Welby of 16 October 1911, Ogden says *à propos* a paper he was then writing: 'you will however have little difficulty in locating the source of most of it!' And, in fact, a comparison between the topics dealt with by Ogden and Richards in 1923 and those covered more than a decade earlier in these letter exchanges as well as with Ogden's paper 'The Progress of Signifiacs' reveals continuity in Ogden's interests, and Welby's determining role in the orientation of his studies.

Welby characteristically used her correspondence – and that with Ogden was no exception – as the place for theoretical discussion, exchange of ideas, information. She also used it to pass on materials from her archives and well-stocked library, which she often used to attract attention to her quest for signifiacs. In a note to Ogden of 15 December 1910, she wrote: 'You ought to see some of my instructive correspondence with Oxford and Cambridge and much else. I can arm you *cap à pied*'; and again in a letter of 24 December 1910: 'Believe me you are still but on the threshold of my storehouse of resources. I can arm you at every point.' Ogden commented enthusiastically in a letter to Welby, dated 9 January 1911, on his return from the first of his two visits to Harrow, when he spent a day with Welby in her library consulting correspondence, literature of all sorts (including her so-called 'witnesses' from different authors and discourse fields, which she collected as 'proof' for her theses on the problem of linguistic ambiguity, cf. Welby 1891 and 1898), manuscripts, and other materials unavailable at Cambridge (including issues of journals like *The Monist*). He concluded this visit to Welby's home carrying away his 'treasures': 'I have never had such a feast of ideas and only hope I may be able to make the best use of what you so freely bestow.'

As part of her appeal for the confrontation of ideas and spread of signifiacs, Welby favoured contacts among her correspondents, for example, making copies of their letters for private circulation and organizing encounters whenever possible. Thanks to her generosity and fervour Ogden became familiar with the work of many important personalities of the time, including Charles S. Peirce, Giovanni Vailati, Mario Calderoni, Ferdinand Tönnies, Fritz Mauthner, Alexius von Meinong, Rupert Brooke, etc., some of whom subsequently found their way into *The Meaning of Meaning*. In a letter dated 16 February 1911, Ogden enquired after Brooke and Calderoni, though he did not know them personally, and these in turn were also in touch thanks to Welby. In the same letter

(On the Welby-Ogden correspondence, see also Schmitz 1985b: clxxviii–clxxxiv; Gordon 1990: 177–196; and Petrilli 1995a).

7. Let us remember that Welby did a great part of her intellectual writing through her extensive exchanges with over 460 correspondents.
8. Since publication in 1923, this volume has reappeared in various subsequent editions, including that of 1989 with an introduction by Umberto Eco. A new critical edition is available in the second volume of Ogden's writings edited by Gordon 1994; on Ogden's co-author, Ivor A. Richards, cf. Richards 1976, 1991a; Russo 1989; Berthoff 1992.

of 16 February 1911, Ogden also enquired after Vailati: ‘I should like to know what is going on in Italy since Vailati’s death. I have not seen any notices of articles bearing directly on the subject such as those in his works: but no doubt there will be something soon.’ This expectation was deluded by the common fate reserved by official culture for the intellectual legacy of Vailati and Welby, in both cases passing into relative silence until recent times. (On the relation between Vailati, Welby and Peirce, see above, Chapter 3).

From the perspective of semiotic theory, one of Welby’s most important contacts was Peirce. As we have seen (Ch. 3, above), Peirce established correspondences between Welby’s meaning triad and his own triadic division of interpretants into ‘immediate interpretant,’ ‘dynamic interpretant,’ and ‘final interpretant’ in his letter to her dated 14 March 1909. Welby passed this letter on to Ogden who included it in the appendix to *The Meaning of Meaning*. The ‘immediate interpretant’ concerns meaning as it is used ordinarily and habitually by the interpretant. Therefore, similarly to Welby’s ‘sense,’ it concerns the interpreter’s immediate response to signs. The ‘dynamic interpretant’ concerns the sign’s signification in a specific context. As such, it corresponds to Welby’s ‘meaning’ insofar as they are both used according to a specific intentionality. The ‘final interpretant’ concerns the sign at the extreme limits of its interpretative possibilities, covering all possible responses of a sign in a potentially unlimited sequence of interpretants. ‘Significance,’ according to Welby, and ‘final interpretant,’ according to Peirce, allude to the creative potential of signs. Furthermore, both involve the relation of signs to values and, therefore, evaluational attitudes (apart from Ch. 3, above, on the relation between Welby and Peirce, cf. Deledalle 1990: 133–150; Petrilli 1990d: 322–328 and 2005c,d).

Ogden was quick to pick up the importance of the connection between Welby and Peirce. Indeed, one of the most significant indirect contacts for Ogden, too, was Peirce whose importance he immediately intuited (as we may gather from a letter, appended below, written to Welby immediately after his second visit, in March, 1911). In addition to Peirce’s correspondence with Welby, Ogden had also seen his plan for *A Syllabus of Certain Topics of Logic*, and was fascinated by his *Classification of Signs* as much as by his existential graphs, which he committed himself to studying at a time when Peirce was altogether unknown in England (‘a formidable undertaking,’ says Ogden, in a letter to Welby dated 12 April 1911). Ogden already mentions Peirce’s research on signs in his paper of 1911, ‘The Progress of Significs’:

[...] this problem of the classification of signs (on which some work has been done by Professor Stout and also by Professor Tönnies) is at present occupying the attention of one of the greatest minds of the day, Dr. C. S. Peirce, and it is likely that anything attempted prematurely will be rendered obsolete by his long delayed work on Semeiotic. (Ogden 1994 [1911]: 23)

Ogden was particularly interested in the possibility of establishing connections between Peirce’s Existential Graphs and Significs (cf. Ogden to Welby, 30 October 1911), and Welby did not fail to encourage his intellectual curiosities: ‘I’m sure he [Peirce] is a much greater man – a more original genius – than he is yet credited with being’ (Welby to Ogden, 5 April 1911). In a letter to Welby dated 29 April 1911, after expressing his desire to fathom Peirce’s ‘logical theory of signs, etc.,’ Ogden significantly adds that, ‘It seems to me that if it [the logical theory of signs] were to be combined in a less abstruse

form with your exhaustive material and viewpoint, the result should prove irresistible' (Ogden to Welby, 29 April 1911). Ogden, in turn, was one of the names mentioned by Welby in her correspondence with Peirce: 'I have found you, I think, a disciple at Cambridge. He has been studying with care all I could show him of your writing on Existential Graphs [. . .]. The name of the recruit is C. K. Ogden [. . .]' (Welby to Peirce, 2 May 1911, in Hardwick 1977: 138–139). Apart from the question of whether or not Ogden effectively became a 'disciple' of Peirce, we know that he continued appreciating the latter's work while still working on *The Meaning of Meaning*, if the inclusion of excerpts from his writings is any indication.

Ogden was particularly eager to verify the possibility of applying Welby's quest for significance on an operative-pragmatic level, and himself focused on the practical developments of *significs* in verbal language. However, though an enthusiastic promoter of *significs* as a young university student, he was to obscure the signs of this interest in his later production. As is evident from his letter to Welby dated 13 December 1910, he had already envisaged his research at this early time as continuing over the following areas (many of which subsequently entered *The Meaning of Meaning*): 'The Importance – The Progress – The Future. The practical bearing in discussion – of *Significs*. The Influence of Religion – of Education – on *Significs*. Locke's, Lady Welby's work for *Significs*. *Significs* and *Definition*. "Some valuable confessions." – Education – and what not.' And, in a subsequent letter to Welby dated 21 March 1911:

The great objection to be met is: – What can you do but draw attention to the fact that we are not sufficiently awake? And what therefore is the need of a study without any *practical* proposals for waking us? – It is difficult to answer this at present unless special attention is paid to Language. Whatever may happen eventually, therefore, it seems to me that a general reference to 'Significance' is not good propaganda.

Ogden's penchant for considering communication strategies and propaganda also emerged during his young days. As he says in his letter of 13 December 1910: 'The great thing is to popularize the *word* [*significs*] and then let the books (commonsense in experience) speak for themselves'; and judging from a subsequent letter dated 9 March 1911, his plans seemed to work: '[. . .] lots of people are *talking* of "Significs" now here but will they go further?'

Ogden's concern with verbal signs arose from interests similar to Welby's: she too worked mainly on verbal language, for she considered it the richest source of examples and 'witnesses' to her signifi- cal theses. But she never considered verbal signs in isolation: for example, she drew attention to the signifying import, in written and oral verbal communication, of elements that are not immediately verbal, that is, of paralinguistic elements: in the case of speech, these include tone of voice, facial expression, gestural signs; in the case of writing, discourse genre, chronotopic context, the reader's relation to the latter, purpose of the text, etc.:

At present the Significian has to remember that in a true sense his success is refutation. He is told 'You have succeeded in convincing me, because language is in fact entirely effective and your crusade therefore needless.' The answer of course is – 'I have succeeded because of an innate power not confined to speech, but also conveyed by tone, by facial and bodily expression and attitude, or in writing by the trend of the whole document and of the generation studying it, and also by our sense of its underlying purport' (Welby to Ogden, 16 May 1911).

Welby stressed the need to work on language without ever losing sight of the global context of signifying processes, verbal and nonverbal; and above all, without ever losing sight of what she understood by ‘significance,’ alluding to the relation of signs to values. The scope of signifiacs transcended semantics in a strict sense, the ‘strictly linguistic’ to concern the axiological and ethical dimensions of signifying processes. In her quest for the properly human, for signifiacs, Welby conceived signifiacs as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach to signifying reality in its complexity, verbal and non-verbal. As she wrote in a letter to Ogden dated 27 December 1910, her only interest was ‘fecund reality’: ‘[...] my only quest is reality, – fecund reality – I only ask to be superseded by something better.’

Welby advocated the development of a ‘linguistic conscience’ through a ‘significal education’ from early school years, intending by significal the converse of the pedantic. She praised the interpretive capacity as opposed to dogmatism, pedantry, and anarchy in thought and action. Not dogmatism, therefore, nor unquestioning faith in received truths, but unprejudiced open-mindedness, development of the ‘creative and logical powers with unrealised data and material’ (Welby to Ogden, 23 November 1910). Welby promoted reform in the principles guiding teaching methodology, which represented just one aspect of her plans for reform in education. This, in turn, was part of the broader scheme for social reform at large. Welby was convinced that as a method, signifiacs could provide the key to difficulties in all walks of life, mental and practical. But she also believed that the most radical results in this sense could only be achieved by working on rising generations (see 4.4., above). A significal education according to Welby in a letter dated 24 March 1911 to Ogden,

must begin in the nursery and elementary school; the instinct of clarity in speech now burdened beneath a load of mere helpless convention perpetually defeating expression must be fostered and stimulated. [...] Then the first school will appeal to this: their desire to express as to know and infer will always be stimulated and ordered: then gradually the either anarchic or dogmatic tendencies will be raised into interpretative ones. [...] But to be able to say what we ought to mean and to act upon our true conception of a subject – that is the aim.

As testified by the whole of his intellectual career beginning with his address to the Cambridge Heretics with ‘The Progress of Signifiacs,’ cited in the section above, Ogden fully endorsed Welby’s plea for the development of a ‘linguistic conscience’ against the evils, misfits, and pitfalls of a confused use of language, of linguistic anarchy and dogmatism. It was Welby’s hope that the generation represented by her grandchildren’s children would fully recover what she called the ‘natural racial sense,’ and develop it differently from past generations, that is, with significal discrimination, in all its expressive, interpretive, and critical potential. In her correspondence with Ogden, Welby announced her plans to start what she variously referred to as her ‘last book,’ ‘the crowning volume,’ ‘the more important volume of the Signifiacs series,’ *What is & What Might be*, ‘which promises to be a powerful witness for Signifiacs in education’ (20 September 1911; see also letters dated 11 May 1911, and 2 June 1911) – a project she never completed owing to her untimely death.

We know that the concept of ‘racial sense’ (or ‘mother-sense,’ ‘primal sense,’ ‘primary sense,’ etc.), which Welby mentioned *en passant* in her letter to Ogden of 24 March 1911, is a fundamental concept in the overall architecture of her thought system.

This also emerges from her correspondence with Ferdinand C. S. Schiller and the same Peirce (see Ch. 6, above). Welby was committed to a project for the expressive, interpretive, logical, behavioural, ethical, and critical – in sum, *significal* – regeneration of humanity, identifying a possible model in the infant, the natural critic. As she stated in another letter to Ogden (17 December 1910), she conceived the significal method as ‘the mother not only of discovery but of inference and thus of logical method’. In the infant, ‘mother-sense’ or ‘primal sense’ is still unfettered by social and linguistic convention; its referent is the ancestral experience and wisdom of the human race. Welby’s concept of mother-sense is grounded in a global vision of humanity where animal instinct and human intellect interact dialectically and reciprocally enrich each other. As such, mother-sense engenders the production of sense, meaning, and significance, of inventiveness, creativity, and critical consciousness. According to Welby, therefore, the full development of logical powers is interconnected with the full development of basic instinctual life, and vice versa. Concomitant with this view, she described the history of the human race in terms of the history of significs, which she considered as consisting so far in the gradual impoverishment and eventual loss of original significal dialectics, in our loss of the capacity for dialogic and critical responsiveness. Welby theorized the interconnection between organic life, intellectual life and values as essential to the full development of human significal powers. Welby’s interest in the history of humanity led her to appreciate the Classical world which she could only access indirectly through translations: ‘Alas, I can only present the “classical” witness in translation; but that I have in bulk. I did quote Ennius in *Grains of Sense*. But almost all the great thinkers Greek or Latin, were Significians. And their tongues were significant as ours ought to be’ (Welby to Ogden, 24 December 1910). At the time of his exchanges with Welby, Ogden was committed to Classical studies at the University of Cambridge and readily put his knowledge of the Graeco-Latin world at her disposal: ‘I shall be delighted to make Classical jottings from time to time as you suggest’ (Ogden to Welby, 30 January 1911). In an earlier letter of 22 December 1910, he informed her that he was investigating ‘Significs in Greek Philosophy (some day it might be tried on Part II of Plato’s *Parmenides*) and [I] expect some interesting results, apart from the better known “loci” (*Republic, etc.*)’. Continuing in the same letter, Ogden also informed Welby of his interest ‘(as a Heretic!) . . . in the influence of “Religion,” which was in fact the starting point of Welby’s whole quest for Significs. Says Welby in a letter to Ogden of 24 December 1910:

Alas, I can only present the ‘classical’ witness in translation; but that I have in bulk. I did quote Ennius in *Grains of Sense*. But almost all the great thinkers Greek or Latin, were Significians. And their tongues were significant as ours ought to be. [. . .] As to Religion! That is where I began. I found out that none of us knew where we were or what we were battling for at the very centre of life, *that which ought to focus all our interests and powers*. [. . .] But I found that work on the theological and religious side was premature; though it is as promising a field as any.

However, Ogden and Welby clashed without remedy concerning the Graeco-Roman world and religion, which determined an irreversible turning point in their relationship. It was Welby’s belief that the language of Greek and Roman philosophers was endowed with a higher degree of significal acumen than language in the modern era. Her attitude

provoked the following reaction from Ogden who even expressed his doubts about the future of significs so long as it was dominated by the Classical worldview:

I am surprised rather at your opinion of the Greeks – it seems to me they got themselves into a worse tangle of words than even we have done, and for far less reason!

I am sure if the best literature of the last century were preserved we should even find no more mixed metaphor in it than in their ‘choicest remains.’

This was obvious even to themselves – Protagoras, for instance, in the earliest times made protests against the confusions caused by the use of all kinds of careless expressions. (Plato, *Theaetetus* 168 c, etc.)

It is only the influence of these disastrous people, who support a ‘classical education’ and thereby hinder all progress in Significs, which has caused the prevalent opinion to the contrary as far as I can see. (Ogden to Welby, 26 December 1910)

In support of his argument against what he called ‘the word-weaving of Greek Philosophy,’ Ogden adduced the authority of such secondary authorities as Alois Riehl, Herbert Spencer, and the same Schiller (see Ogden’s letters to Welby dated 30 December 1910 and 2 January 1911).

As to the question of religion, Ogden’s views were intimately connected to his involvement with the Heretic Society. Even the choice of this name, with its philosophical implications, became a point of contention between the two correspondents. To Welby’s mind, Significs, if anything, subsumed the heretic:

But I more and more long for the day when you and your Society may call yourselves the *Significians* – and become worthier of the title than I can be! For the Heretic in the last resort only differs and objects. [...] Significs includes ‘heresy’ in the original sense. (Welby to Ogden, 5 May 1911)

With reference to the Greek etymology, ‘heresy’ involves the concept of ‘choice’ and as such may be associated with the term ‘heterodoxy,’ which introduces the related concept ‘another opinion’: both terms imply the logic of otherness with respect to orthodoxy and, therefore, the idea of opinion, doctrine, or belief at variance with the established order. This leads back to Welby’s criticism of dogmatisin and orthodoxy, that is, to her critique of a statement of opinion, view, theory, or doctrine, etc., based on the appeal to authority, without the benefits of critical interrogation, interpretative discrimination, dialogic openness towards the other, other voices, other logics. In a letter to Ogden dated 16 November 1911, Welby writes: ‘[...] orthodoxy is always the “mine,” heterodoxy is “yours”.’

Ogden and Welby continued their discussions over the implications of such terms as these and others, without ever coming to a final agreement. In a letter of 15 May 1911, Ogden drew attention to eventual acceptations of the word ‘faith,’ altogether unacceptable from a ‘Heretic’ viewpoint: ‘We speak of *holding fast to the faith* and I have a Dictionary in 8 large volumes at my elbow called the “*Faiths of the world*”.’ But in her longest letter to Ogden (the only one included in *Other Dimensions*), Welby replies in defence of her own broader interpretation of this term:

The Dictionary you mean contradicts itself if it means religious convictions and beliefs. There are no more faithful men than some I have known who were reckoned as atheists or at least as agnostics. They were like men stripped of all and yet devoted to truth and purity. The forces in the universe which make for faith appeal to the scientific man precisely

because you can always *trust* him: this is the charter of experiment and the warrant of science. (Welby to Ogden, 16 May 1911)

This excerpt is followed by reflections on the term 'natural law,' and by further considerations on the distinction between the terms 'faith' and 'belief,' on 'Heresy' and the 'heretic,' etc. This terminological diatribe, however, is marked by some misunderstanding, for in the last analysis Ogden's and Welby's position was substantially similar: a paradoxical state of affairs in the general context of their common appeal for the critique of language against the tricks of equivocation and misunderstanding. In the context of her reflections on such concepts as 'faith' and 'religion,' but also 'freedom,' 'signification,' 'reverence,' 'devotion,' 'doctrine' and 'interpretation,' and on the expanse of the semiotic network from which nothing is excluded, whether 'human' or 'natural,' insofar as it signifies and is the object of interpretation, Welby in a letter to Ogden of 2 June 1911 evokes Terence when he recites, 'Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto':

My Church friends know that I suspect we are all round in confusion about 'faith' and 'religion' and that a real Gospel must free, reinforce, exalt and signify all possible sane thought. As for the 'cults,' especially those with despotic claims, save us from them! The waste of reverence and devotion and of what ought to illuminate the world in maintaining 'doctrine' which if divine could not fail to attract every heart faithfully to the best it knew, is appalling.

But Signification takes everyone from Pope to Atheist as victim of the present famine of interpretation on a really human 'basis.' Nothing human, as nothing natural, is alien to what ultimately Signifies. (Welby to Ogden, 2 June 1911)

Returning to the concept of 'reverence' in a later exchange of 1 October 1911, Ogden intervenes with a remark intended to contradict Welby, but which I believe she would have approved if we read Ogden's concept of irreverence in terms of the refusal of acritical subjection to convention, and of unquestioning obedience to authority: 'I fear I am a bit prejudiced against reverence: some people are by nature irreverent e.g. Bernard Shaw – Karl Marx – and I find it hard to deny them the "noblest sense".'

Welby's studies on meaning and interpretation began with a concern for religious, theological, and exegetical issues, in particular, the problem of the textual interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. Against the temptation of reassuring monologism, recourse to dogma and orthodoxy, she founded her theory of textual interpretation on the principle of critical reading, only possible by keeping account of the semantic pliancy of signs, their polysemy, polylogism, and 'dialogism,' to evoke Bakhtin's terminology, and, therefore, the potential multiplicity of interpretive itineraries in relation to a sign or text, whether the length of a word or a whole volume. We know that Welby had already formulated her critique of 'plain meaning,' of the fixed meaning fallacy in her early book of 1881, *Links and Clues* (see above, Ch. 2). It was important to survey the same expanse of truth from as many standpoints as possible, and the failure to do so was often the cause of misinterpretation. Welby fully expected that her Significant method would be applied to the religious sphere as to all other systems of belief. Indeed, to remain topical, religious discourse needed to be analyzed, verified, and updated interrelatedly with progress in all other spheres of human experience and enquiry.

Welby and Ogden touched upon an array of different issues in their correspondence including, for example, the problematic of 'time,' 'space,' and 'motion' (Welby to Ogden,

29 March 1911), the possibility of analyzing ‘cause’ and ‘probability’ from a signifi- cal viewpoint (Ogden to Welby, 17 September 1911), the ‘magic of words’ (that is, the influence of Greek language on Greek thought),⁹ and the money/language metaphor.¹⁰ Both researchers signalled the need to deal with the role of tradition in the relation between language, thought, and reality, privileging studies in anthropological history and history of religion. They both believed in the need to develop the practical consequences of theoretical concerns, and elaborated projects for linguistic, educational, and social reform.

Ogden’s epochal book co-authored with Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, ap- peared in 1923, presenting topics which had been amply dealt with in the correspon- dence with Welby, such as the chapter on definition.¹¹ And in fact the authors state in the Preface that parts of this book had already been written in 1910. Ogden mentions two papers he was preparing at the time (to be delivered at two different meetings, which he hoped to see published). Their titles reveal Welby’s unequivocal influence: ‘Ambi- guities of Economic Terminology’ and ‘Significs of Definition’ (the alternative title of Ogden’s address discussed above, ‘The Progress of Significs’). All the same, despite the intellectual collaboration between Welby and Ogden during the formative years of his development, and despite thematic continuity between the early and later phase in his research, Welby and her significs are hardly mentioned by Ogden in his book with Richards.

Apart from Section 6, Appendix D where Welby’s name occurs as a consequence of her relations to Peirce, she is only remembered in a footnote, the first in Chapter 8, ‘The Meaning of Philosophers,’ where she is listed with Russell and Schiller as one of the very few scholars to have acknowledged the need of dealing with the largely neglected but all- pervasive problem of meaning. She is also mentioned in another footnote, in Chapter 11, ‘The Meaning of Meaning,’ with comments that hardly convey the overall sense of her approach to the question of meaning. Referring to her article of 1896, ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,’ and to her books *What is Meaning?* and *Significs and Language*, Welby is accused of ‘contenting herself with a vague insistence on meaning as human intention,’ of an insufficiently analytical description of the concept of meaning

9. This was Ogden’s special topic in his study program at Cambridge University, and remained a key theme throughout the whole of his intellectual career. He variously referred to the ‘magic of words’ with other expressions including ‘word magic,’ ‘the power of words’ (which corresponds exactly to the title of Chapter 2 in *The Meaning of Meaning*), verbalism, and verbomania (for further information, cf. Gordon 1991: 112–118).

10. Ferdinand Tönnies, winner of the Welby Prize for the best essay on Significs, investigated the comparison between money and language in a paper of 1899/1900. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi also dedicated a large part of his research to the homology between sign production and material production, that is, between signs and commodities, signs and money (cf. Rossi-Landi 1968, 1975, 1992a). Finally, H. W. Schmitz is author of a paper in which he too examines the concept of linguistic money with reference to research by both Tönnies and Rossi-Landi; cf. Schmitz 1985b: cxvii–cxli, and 1987.

11. For further details on *The Meaning of Meaning* at the time of its writing, and in particular on the chapter devoted to definition, see Brower (1991: 3–22).

and, furthermore, of 'echoes of the phraseology of an earlier religious phase.'¹² The following passage from *Signification and Language* is quoted in support of this argument: 'The one crucial question in all Expression is its special property, first of Sense, that in which it is used, then of Meaning as the intention of the user, and, most far-reaching and momentous of all, of implication, of ultimate Significance' (cited after Ogden and Richards 1989 [1923]: 192; see, also, Ch. 8, below).

Whatever our conclusions concerning the extent and permanence of Welby's influence over Ogden as co-author of *The Meaning of Meaning*, the fact remains that from its very title this book lends itself to interpretation as a possible response to a basic question in Signification, 'What is Meaning'? Furthermore, there is an obvious affinity in the problems dealt with and their approaches: the problem of meaning, interpretation, the conditions of meaning, the production of signs, etc. As emerges from their correspondence, other common interests connecting Ogden and Welby include: questions of terminology, the problem of expressive and conceptual confusion, ambiguity, the function of definition, the fixed-meaning fallacy, the concept of linguistic conscience, the critique of language, and translation theory. Translation is not only understood (by both) in the common sense of communication across languages, 'interlingual' translation, nor as substitution or reiteration. For both Welby and Ogden translation assumes a broader sense to converge with interpretation, and, therefore, with the processes of discovery, renewal of meaning, acquisition of knowledge (see above, Ch. 5; also the section 'Ogden the translator,' in Gordon 1991: 125–130).

The following passage from the introductory chapter entitled 'Thoughts, Words and Things,' in *The Meaning of Meaning*, delineates the main features of the sign-interpretation approach developed by Ogden and Richards to the theory of meaning. Like many other passages in the volume, it clearly recalls aspects of Ogden's correspondence with Welby – in this case, his letter dated 15 November 1910 where, using Welby's terminology, he speaks of the need to develop a 'linguistic conscience.' His immediate concern in those early years was to reduce confusion in the weekly discussions held by

12. This interpretation of Welby's approach to the theory of meaning and signs is questionable, and can also be traced in the introduction by Hardwick to the volume collecting her correspondence with Peirce (cf. Hardwick 1977: xxiii). Welby's quest for signification develops the problem of meaning beyond strictly logico-linguistic and intentional aspects to focus on the conjunction between signs and values. From this point of view, I have associated her research to that of Charles Morris, author of such writings as *The Open Self* (1948), *Varieties of Human Value* (1956), and *Signification and Significance: A Study of the Relations of Signs and Values* (1964). Transcending the limits of a merely descriptive approach to linguistics grounded in the dogma of codes, conventions, and intention, Welby developed her theory of meaning in terms of a theory of signification as part of her project for the humanisation of language and expression, ultimately for the humanisation of humanity. Consequently, though she has been accused of religious, moral, or visionary overtones (cf. Hardwick 1977: ix–xxxiv), I believe this is beside the point. Instead, the chief thrust of her research comes from the fact that she viewed problems of meaning and expression in the broad context of her quest for a new form of humanism, what today we may call the 'humanism of otherness,' with a focus on verbal signs as one of the most effective expressive systems at our disposal, and certainly specific to humanity. Welby chose the term 'signification' to evidence this particular bent in her studies on meaning, given that unlike terms that were readily available, such as 'semantics,' 'semiotics,' 'semasiology,' etc., it was free from strictly technical associations.

the Cambridge Heretics. This passage signals the need for an adequate linguistic theory, for the analysis of communication processes, and for an adequate theory of meaning:

In yet another respect all these specialists fail to realize the deficiencies of current linguistic theory. Preoccupied as they are – ethnologists with recording the details of fast vanishing languages; philologists with an elaborate technique of phonetic laws and principles of derivation; philosophers with ‘philosophy’ – all have overlooked the pressing need for a better understanding of what actually occurs in discussion. The analysis of the process of communication is partly psychological, and psychology has now reached a stage at which this part may be successfully undertaken. Until this had happened the science of Symbolism necessarily remained in abeyance, but there is no longer any excuse for vague talk about Meaning, and ignorance of the ways in which words deceive us. (Ogden and Richards 1989 [1923]: 8)

Ogden and Richards were critical of mainstream linguistics, history of language, philology, philosophy implicitly or explicitly connected with linguistics. They denounced the general failure to analyze actual linguistic usage and underlying theoretical implications. Welby too was critical of the limits of linguistics as it was officially practiced in her day: she appreciated Michel Bréal, author of *Essai de sémantique. Science des significations*, 1897, to the extent that she had her daughter, Nina Cust, translate this book into English; however, she was also critical of Bréal’s approach to semantics which she believed was limited with respect to the complexity of meaning. Ogden and Richards refer to Saussure and while crediting him with the merit of having shifted the linguistic paradigm from the diachronic to the synchronic perspective, they criticized his abstract conception of *langue*, exclusion of the referent – which instead for Ogden and Richards was an integral part of semiotic processes –, and over-evaluation of convention and fixed meaning: ‘As a philologist with an inordinate respect for linguistic convention, de Saussure could not bear to tamper with what he imagined to be a fixed meaning, a part of *la langue*. This scrupulous regard for fictitious “accepted” uses of words is a frequent trait in philologists’ (Ogden and Richards 1989 [1923]: 6; also Petrilli 1995a: 295–300). As Welby might have – and similarly to Bakhtin-Voloshinov – Ogden and Richards found the concept of *langue* too abstract.

Welby and Ogden shared similar positions on the problem of linguistic ambiguity. In *The Meaning of Meaning* ambiguity is described in terms of plurivocality and polysemy, a necessary condition for signifying processes and communicative interaction. Apart from technical languages where meaning is established univocally according to codes and conventions, successful communication calls for ambiguity and vagueness, which are even specific to certain forms of communication, as in the case of literary discourse. Umberto Eco draws attention to this aspect of Ogden and Richards’s linguistic theory in his introduction to the 1989 edition of *The Meaning of Meaning*:

It is true that a good linguistic theory can make us more aware of the functioning of the language we use and of the traps it sets for us: one who knows a language well can express himself with greater precision or can even lie more convincingly [...]. It is also true that, in the course of an everyday conversation, it can be useful to ask one’s interlocutor what he really wanted to say and what meaning he was giving to a certain word he used. But it is equally true that ordinary language lives on ambiguity, nuance, and allusion; and people use it nonchalantly, often managing to understand one another despite imprecisions, ellipses,

and misreadings. No linguistic therapy can abolish these defects of ordinary language, since they also represent its richness and strength. (Eco 1989: vii–viii)

Ogden and Richards propose a triadic theory of sign. Interpretation and meaning are described in terms of relational and dynamic processes involving interaction among sign, interpretant, and object, or in their terminology, symbol, reference, and referent. From this perspective, interpretation is not predetermined according to a prefixed dyadic code (the *langue*), a binary system of relations, established by convention, between the elements of language, the *signifiant* and the *signifié*, or between the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of language, reducing linguistic life to a relation of exchange between sign elements in the system of language, to a relation between abstract linguistic system (*langue*) and individual use of that system (*parole*). Such an orientation substantially describes the sign in terms of signality and codification/decodification processes, characteristic of so-called 'code and message semiotics,' or simply 'code' or 'decodification semiotics.' On the contrary, from the perspective of 'interpretation semiotics,' of Peircean matrix, we have seen that interpretation is not restricted to the dyadism of decodification, but emerges as an open and dynamic process regulated by the relation of otherness. In this framework, meaning is not identified *in* the isolated sign, nor in the system of language, but rather in the relation between sign and interpretant at varying degrees of otherness – from the interpretant of identification to the interpretant of responsive understanding or answering comprehension (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 3–32).

The Ogden specialist Terrence Gordon considers *The Meaning of Meaning* as a development of significs in a new dimension, making an observation that I believe Welby would have appreciated as recognition of the effective 'progress of significs':

[...] the most important aspect of the connection between their work [Ogden and Richards'] and hers is not simply a matter of the affinities noted here; rather, it is the way in which they carried her vision of significs forward into a new dimension.

Ogden and Richards rise to the challenge of Lady Welby's call for a new departure in psychology and philosophy. They develop an approach which involves both these disciplines in Chapter Three of *The Meaning of Meaning*, 'Sign situations,' where the most basic of premises in behavioral psychology is developed and linked to sign-theory, leading to the elaboration of a technical definition of context which underpins the entire book. (Gordon 1991: 122)

Sign theory today oriented in the sense of interpretation semiotics may be considered under certain aspects as a development of significs. This emerges from our considerations on the relation between Welby's significs and research not only by Ogden and Richards but also by representatives of other twentieth century sign theorists, such as Peirce or Vailati who were in direct contact with Welby, but also Bakhtin who came later. In any case, beyond the ambition of historical reconstruction, to read Welby today does not only mean to confirm and develop current trends in sign theory, but also to draw attention to the limits of a strictly cognitive and descriptive approach to the life of signs, and recover the connection between signs and values, in the spirit of dialogic confrontation between significs and twentieth century semiotics.

7.3. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands. Origins, developments and ramifications¹³

Significs was introduced to the Netherlands through the mediation of Dutch poet, psychiatrist and social reformer Frederik Willem van Eeden (1860–1932). Van Eeden met Welby for the first time at an International Conference on Experimental Psychology, held in London, in 1892. At the conference Welby distributed her pamphlet, *The Use of 'Inner' and 'Outer' in Psychology. Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, presenting a collection of extracts intended to exemplify and critically interrogate language used in the field of psychology, with a special focus on metaphor, as indicated in the subtitle. Van Eeden visited her on various occasions, and remained in epistolary contact with her until 1912, the year of her death. Welby was interested in developing and spreading significs as widely as possible, and van Eeden was interested in this new opening in studies on language, meaning and communication which he readily promoted and presented to his circle of friends (some excerpts from their correspondence to this effect are appended to the present chapter), specially after their encounter in London in 1907, somehow prefiguring what in time was to become the signific movement in its various manifestations (cf. van Eeden 1971–1972). Van Eeden introduced the term '*significa*' into the Netherlands (cf. van Eeden 1908b: 224), but did not explicitly mention Welby

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13. This section on the Signific Movement in the Netherlands and its relations to Welby was rather difficult to construct at certain points because of what seem to be somewhat conflicting descriptions of certain phases and events, generated by discord among some of the members relating to this movement. In his essay 'A Concise History of Significs,' published in 1969 (now in Welby 1983), Gerrit Mannoury himself in fact warns that 'we are now touching on a subject with which we are too closely connected to be able to judge impartially: the development of the signific "movement" in the Netherlands in the last thirty or forty years' (Mannoury 1983: xli).

The present section draws on various essays cited in this chapter by first generation significians writing during the first half of the twentieth century, as well as by subsequent signific scholars presented in Chapter 8, this volume. As to first generation significians, in addition to Mannoury's paper of 1969, important to mention is the paper by David Vuysje of 1953, 'Significs. Its Tendency, Methodology, and Applications,' and that which preceded it, in 1946, by Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer, entitled 'Synopsis of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. Prospects of the Signific Movement,' which inspired the former. Some of these early essays are appended to the present chapter. This section also draws on writings by H. Walter Schmitz, in particular, 'Frederik van Eeden and the Introduction of Significs into the Netherlands: From Lady Welby to Mannoury,' and by Erik Heijerman author of 'Relativism and Significs: Gerrit Mannoury on the Foundations of Mathematics,' both collected in the volume *Essays on Significs*, 1990, edited by Schmitz. Another source important to register is the volume *Significs, Mathematics and Semiotics. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands*, edited by Schmitz and Heijerman, 1991. Schmitz's doctoral dissertation is also dedicated to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands from its inception to recent times (cf. Schmitz 1985e, 1990e). Moreover, while in the process of completing this section, an important essay entitled 'Significs and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy,' by Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen, forthcoming in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, was also brought to my attention. I wish to thank both Schmitz and Pietarinen for having clarified certain issues for me in our email exchanges. Of course, any imprecisions are wholly my own responsibility.

or her significs in his first signifi- cal study, the treatise *Redekunstige Grondslag van Verstandhouding* (The Logical Foundations of Communication), published between 1893 and 1897 (cf. van Eeden 1897). Van Eeden also introduced Welby's significs to Germany, in the first instance through Erich Gutkind (1877–1965), followed by Gustav Landauer (1870–1919), Martin Buber (1878–1965), and Florens Christian Rang (1864–1924). With these scholars and still others, van Eeden founded the so-called *ForteKreis* (Forte Circle) in 1914, which however did not last through the first year of World War I. In any case, Welby exerted a strong influence on the development of significs in the Netherlands, though this is not necessarily registered in writings on her, or at least not sufficiently so. An important *trait d'union* among the different approaches and methodologies is, for example (though very broadly), a shared interest in the problem of knowledge and communication through signs. However, despite the extensive literature in Dutch on the history of significs, Welby's approach to significs remained mostly unrecognized, especially outside the Netherlands.

After an incubation period with the publication of a few scattered essays, the Signific Movement in the Netherlands developed through two main phases: the first began in 1917 but only continued its activities until 1926; the second, and the richest, lasted from 1937 to 1956.

As recalled by mathematician and philosopher Gerrit Mannoury (1867–1956) in his essay of 1969, 'A Concise History of Significs,' a Symposium on 'The Meaning of Meaning' took place in England in 1920 (see Chs. 1, 3 and 8). The proceedings were published in the philosophical journal *Mind* between 1920 and 1921. Mannoury also recalls the monograph of 1923 by Ogden and Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (see Section 7.2, above). These two events are not only connected to each other, but are clearly traceable to Welby and her significs. In the more strictly philosophical and philosophical-linguistic spheres, the theory of meaning was developed in different directions to cover the problem of reference, truth, intentionality, figurative and metaphorical meaning, critique of language, with special reference to verbal language and language acts, human communication, conceptual and terminological criticism, with important openings from a more broadly cultural perspective on such fields as education, social reform, psychology, mathematics, political discourse, and so forth. Mannoury had no doubt that the Signific Movement in the Netherlands and the Symposium on meaning both stemmed from Welby's significs. Nor did this exclude the fact of more distant origins at the source of both events, leading to the development of studies on sign and communication as they took shape during the whole course of the twentieth century.

The first group of people in the Netherlands with a common interest in Significs met during World War I, in 1915, anticipating the *Signifische Kring* (Signific Circle, 1922–1926), which was officially founded in 1922 (cf. Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xli–xlii). The plan in 1915 was to begin philosophical reflection on slogans used to promote war (cf. Brouwer 1946). A special committee was set up for the purpose and its members were to meet on neutral territory. However, van Eeden, along with his old friend (sinologist and man of letters) Henri Borel (1869–1933), mathematician and logician (but also mystic and philosopher) Luitzen E. J. Brouwer (1881–1966), and social worker Henri P. J. Bloemers (1890–1947) proposed a general program which was not approved by the majority of committee members, so the first group of significians broke up due to internal dissension. Though these first generation significians were working together to found

an international school of significs, those just named were excluded from the founding committee. However van Eeden, Brouwer, and later Borel, Bloemers (who was soon to withdraw), joined by Dutch poet and jurist Jacob Israël de Haan (1881–1924), mentioned by van Eeden in a letter to Welby dated 11 February 1912 (now appended below), and Mannoury himself, founded the International Institute for Philosophy (*Internationaal Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte*) in Amsterdam, on 21 September 1917. This was the first official group of significians to inaugurate the initial phase in the development of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. Activities continued for the next five years with lessons, discussions, meetings and foreign correspondences with such scholars as Martin Buber, Erich Gutkind, Eugen Ehrlich, and Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941).

On Mannoury's account, in 1922 the *Internationaal Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte* was transformed into another organization, the *Signifische Kring* (Signific Circle), which however only lasted a few years, from 21 May 1922 to 2 December 1926. In his essay 'Synopsis of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. Prospects of the Signific Movement,' 1946 (appended below), Brouwer relates that the Instituut was founded by a 'group of seven,' counting van Eeden, Borel, Bloemers, de Haan, Mannoury, Brouwer himself, as well as the physician L. S. Ornstein (1880–1941), while founding members of the Signific Circle included van Eeden, Mannoury, Brouwer, and Father Jacques van Ginneken (1877–1945, linguist, psychologist, theologian and subsequently professor at the University of Nimeguen). Mannoury emerged as the leader of the signific movement, and of course these different initiatives benefited from the involvement of still other major Dutch personalities. Members of the Signific Circle met regularly and published both individual and collaborative writings. All the same, their activities ended prematurely due to conflicting conceptions about meaning, language, and logic, and because of the tension caused by disagreement over the main goals to pursue as a group.

The Institute ran a multilingual journal, *Mededeelingen van het Internationaal Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte te Amsterdam*, which in 1918 published the 'Voorbereidend manifest,' authored by Bloemers, Borel and Brouwer. Presumably this journal was active until approximately the mid twenties, when it closed for lack of funds and lack of interest on the part of other cultural or philosophical journals in the Netherlands, and of other publishers. In his essay of 1969 Mannoury further recounts that ten years later, in 1936, the journal *Synthese. Maandblad voor het Geestesleven van onze Tijd* (*Synthese. A Monthly for the Cultural Life of our Time*) was founded (cf. Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xiii). Mannoury took notes of meetings and discussions held by the International Institute for Philosophy as well as by the Significs Circle, which were published at a later date in the journal *Synthese* (cf. Mannoury 1939a, 1939b), while notes by others were published in the form of a collective volume titled *Signifische dialogen* (Signific Dialogues), produced by various members of the Significs Circle (cf. Brouwer, van Eeden, and van Ginneken 1937, 1939; cf. also Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xlii). Both Mannoury's reports and the collective volume, *Signifische Dialogen*, had to wait several years before publication.

In spite of difficulties relating to institutions connected with significs, the ferment of ideas continued. The journal *Synthese* was founded by a younger generation of significians from different disciplines, under the editorship of the psychologist and significian David Vuysje (1900–1969), and may be considered as the official voice of the signific movement from when it was founded in 1936 through to the 1960s. Its editorial activities

only came to an end in 1963, and were continued in 1968 when the journal *Methodology and Science* was also founded. Referring to *Synthese* Mannoury explains that: 'At the beginning of 1968 the General Editorial Committee changed the Journal's name to *Methodology and Science*' (Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xlii).

Vuysje became the new leader of the Signific Movement after Mannoury, as was Otto Neurath for the Vienna Circle and Unity of Science Movement (cf. Schmitz 1990b: 223). These movements also involved Charles Morris, who was a personal acquaintance of Mannoury. Morris directed a special section of the journal *Methodology and Science*, entitled 'Unity of Science Forum,' with Philipp Frank and Otto Neurath. This section was dedicated to the logical empiricists and their critique of language. In 1948 Morris and Frank introduced another section entitled 'Logical Empiricism,' presenting papers on logical empiricism as an important phenomenon in twentieth century intellectual history. The *Institute Français de Sociologie* in Paris also contributed to the journal with papers of a sociological order.

On Brouwer's account, after the first group of significians broke up in 1915, the 'minority' founded the International Institute for Philosophy in 1917, while in 1916 the 'majority' (no better specified) founded the International School for Philosophy (*Internationale School voor Wijsbegeerte*), described as the beginnings of the school by the same name still existent today in Amsterdam. The International Institute for Philosophy also planned to found the International Academy of Practical Philosophy and Sociology, originally conceived by the German sociologist and philosopher, Ferdinand Tönnies, Welby Prize winner for the essay 'Philosophical Terminology (I–III)' (Tönnies 1899–1900). The Academy had a grand project for 'mutual understanding,' and ultimately for the 'humanisation of humanity,' as described by David Vuysje in a paper originally published in 1953 (see p. 257), titled 'Signific. Its Tendency, Methodology, and Applications' (now appended to the present chapter). Vuysje's account corresponds to Brouwer's earlier description of 1946, which he seems to undersign and develop.

The main pillars around which the grand project of the International Academy of Practical Philosophy and Sociology (ultimately the International Institute for Philosophy) was constructed, included: the criticism of language, concept criticism, the relation between language, concept and behaviour, and the connection between language, behaviour, and values. As anticipated, a main concern was 'mutual understanding,' and new terms were required to name the values necessary to achieve mutual understanding among individuals forming the human community. In fact, one of the primary tasks of the Academy was to create a new vocabulary according to the principle of 'linguistic gradation' (that is, the principle of gradual transition between different poles). Scholars invited to participate in the Academy's activities included, among others, Giuseppe Peano (1858–1932), Martin Buber (1878–1965), Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941). Significs was obtaining recognition as a new approach to sign, language, and communication, as an ethical perspective, and as a way to social reform. Unfortunately, however, for different reasons, including financial difficulty, the Academy in fact was never inaugurated.

The problem of understanding and misunderstanding, of misinterpretation arising from ambiguity considered in a negative sense, that is, as generating confusion and inappropriate behaviour, were often at the centre of attention of the significians, representing a firm link with problematics at the centre of Welby's own concerns (cf. Petrilli

2003b, c). Mannoury himself was particularly interested in Welby's critique of terminology (cf. Mannoury 1949: 12ff.), though he was both appreciative and at once critical of her work. In any case, Dutch signficians gradually lost sight of Welby's views though she was never completely forgotten.

In 1953 *Synthese* published David Vuysje's essay titled, 'Significs. Its Tendency, Methodology, and Applications.' He outlines the principles inspiring the Significs Circle in the following terms:

This *Signific Circle* proclaimed in their declaration of principles a.o. that signific contains more than criticism of language, also more than synthesis of language, and that in opening a deeper insight into the connections between words and the needs and tendencies of the soul, it may affect in a wholesome way the future social and mental conditions of man. But, apart from this, it emphasized the *empirical* tendencies of the signific investigation by adding that this investigation should be carried on more systematically than before and include, besides an introspective investigation into the subconscious elements, the application of experimental and statistical methods. (Vuyjse 1953: 259)

This essay concludes with a glossary of terms, in some cases used by other sign theories with different meanings: 'Act of communication,' 'Analytic significs,' 'Concept,' 'Dispersion,' 'Functional elements,' 'Hearer,' 'Language,' 'Psychic correlate,' 'Signification,' 'Significs,' 'Speaker,' 'Synthetic significs,' 'Word-image,' 'Word-picture' (pp. 261–262).

The editorial board of the journal *Synthese* promoted the *Internationale Signifische Studiegroep* (International Signific Study Group), which was founded in 1937 by Mannoury's students and followers. After approximately ten years from the dissolution of the Significs Circle, the intention of this new study group was to continue the work of the former, but on a broader basis, giving new life to what was emerging as the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. In Mannoury's account the general need for conceptual criticism had emerged in terms that were neither purely speculative nor purely metaphorical (Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xlii). At the time, both Mannoury and his followers, mathematician and logician David van Dantzig (1900–1959), held courses in significs at the University of Amsterdam.

The International Signific Study Group was also joined by Neurath, evidencing the close connection between the Signific Movement, the Vienna Circle and the Unity of Science Movement, developed from the 1930s to the 1950s. In fact, the plan was to regularly exchange views and publications on the critique of linguistic phenomena, especially with the Unity of Science Movement, which also implied collaboration with the Warsaw school (Lukasiewicz, Kotarbinski, Lesniewski, Tarski, Adjukiewicz, Chwistek and others). In 'Significs. Its Tendency, Methodology, and Applications,' Vuysje reports the declaration made by the International Group for the Study of Significs concerning its main objective and metadisciplinary perspective: 'The practising of analytic and synthetic significs in general, and its application to the theories of the foundations of sociological, cultural, political and exact sciences in particular' (in Vuysje 1953: 260).

As a result of Nazi occupation in the Netherlands, after the first International Signific Summer Conference organized in 1939 by the Signific Study Group, public meetings were interrupted and signficians only met again in 1948. At that time, they called themselves the *Internationale Signifisch Genootschap* (see International Society for Significs 1948, for the Charter of this society). Scholars from different countries in Europe as well as from the USA participated. As regards countries in Europe beyond the Nether-

lands, the countries represented included France, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, and England. In 1948, members of the journal *ETC. A Review of General Semantics* also announced their project to collaborate with the International Society for Significs, in addition to the project for collaboration between the latter and the International Society of Semantics.

Vuysje summarizes the program of the International Society for Significs as follows:

The new program pursues theoretical as well as more practical aims; it continues the research into the theories of the foundations of science and aims at the building up of an efficient scientific terminology; furthermore it promotes the empirical study of group languages (content analysis, slogan analysis, bias analysis, etc.). (Vuysje 1953: 260)

With Mannoury's death in 1956, followed by van Dantzig in 1959, the Signific Movement effectively came to an end, in spite of the fact that Vuysje was appointed external reader for significs at the University of Amsterdam in 1961.

That which emerged as the Signific Movement from the 1930s onwards ensued from the encounter of a series of different factors: collaboration among scientists working in different areas, but united by a common signific quest; introduction of significs into courses at the University of Amsterdam taught by de Haan (ruthlessly murdered in 1924, during his stay in Palestine: see the translator's note to the English translation of Mannoury's paper titled 'Today and Tomorrow,' 1973 [originally 1939], now appended to the present chapter), as well as by Mannoury, and van Dantzig; publications relating to significs; and consequences of all this work on other scholars. The movement was associated with the journal *Synthese* which, as noted, was active from 1936 to 1963, followed by *Methodology and Science* in 1968.

Other significant events contributing and reinforcing the tradition of studies in significs include the fact that:

1) representatives from all main scientific disciplines contributed to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands from 1937 onwards;

2) ten international summer conferences on significs were held between 1939 and 1954. These conferences focused on the critique of language and the relation between language and behaviour, and benefited from international openings with the participation of scholars from various Western countries (the Proceedings were published in *Synthese*);

3) the Dutch significians worked closely with the Vienna Circle, the Unity of Science Movement, with Arne Naess and his collaborators, and with the Circle of Swiss scholars connected to the journal *Dialectica*, and of course with numerous individual scholars such as Charles Morris. In 1938 Morris's *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* was published as an issue of the *Encyclopedia of Unified Sciences of Chicago* (translated into Italian with introduction and comments by Ferruccio Rossi-Landi in 1954, and republished by myself in a new edition of 1999 and again in 2009.).

In 1968 the psychiatrist Pieter H. Esser, a member of the *Internationaal Signifisch Genootschap* since the Thirties, founded the journal *Methodology and Science* which continued publishing until 1995. As noted, the intention was to continue the work of the journal *Synthese*, and to maintain interest in significs. On Mannoury's account, *Methodology and Science* was the new and completely international version of *Synthese* (Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xlii). Though we can no longer speak of a real and proper signific movement, the signific tradition is still topical, with studies that continue appearing

both on the history of signification as well as on its theoretical aspects in relation to research on signs, language, and communication (see the bibliography appended to this volume entitled ‘On Welby, the Signific Movement and current developments’).

The entire history of the Signific movement was characterized by dissent among Dutch significationists, over their signification program, the main goals to pursue, and even over what was understood by ‘signification,’ all trends that can somehow be traced back to Welby’s signification. The Signific Movement unfolded in three main directions: sign analysis; analysis of ‘meaning’ and ‘interpretation’ in the processes of communication and knowledge; signification critique of terminology; education and social reform. The main areas of study cultivated by significationists include: the problem of communication, sign theory, critique of language and terminology, speech act theory, theoretical foundations of mathematics, of the natural sciences and the social sciences (cf. Schmitz 1990). In addition to all this, significationists were committed to the problem of values, as foreseen by Welby whom we know explicitly theorized the relation of signs to values. In any case, as much as the signification method and signification related problematics were of topical interest for scientific debate in various fields, the Signific Movement in the Netherlands shared Welby’s fate and was steadily forgotten or set aside by the international intellectual community after the 1950s.

7.4. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands. Figures and foci

Welby and van Eeden met for the first time at the International Congress of Experimental Psychology which took place in London between 1 and 4 August 1892. Van Eeden delivered a paper on ‘The Theory of Psycho-Therapeutics’ (van Eeden 1892) as a delegate of the Société d’Hypnologie et de Psychologie. Through a series of definitions intended to clarify the fundamental principles of psychotherapy, he offered a critical reading of therapeutic methods taking his distances from both hypnosis and medical theory with a strong physiological orientation. He insisted on the need to clarify words and concepts commonly used in psychology and other sciences, being a concern of great interest to Welby. At the same congress Welby circulated her critical pamphlet on terminology entitled, *The Use of ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, also dated 1892 (see above, Ch. 6). She hoped to attract attention to the problem of meaning. At the time, Welby had not yet fully elaborated the theoretical foundations of signification. However, her seminal essay ‘Meaning and Metaphor’ appeared the year after, in 1893, followed by ‘Sense, Meaning, and Interpretation,’ in 1896. On Welby’s invitation, van Eeden visited her at Denton Manor immediately after the conference, from 5 to 9 August, followed in time by further visits. They corresponded regularly from 1892 to 1912.

Even though we cannot be precise about how strongly Welby influenced van Eeden, we know that he too focused his attention on problems of meaning, language, and communication, as well as on problems relating to education and social reform. He wrote his treatise *Redekunstige grondslag van Verstandhouding* on the logical foundations of communication between 1893 and 1897. In this text he applies the principle of gradation,

that is, the principle according to which all concepts are interconnected, distinguishing between the volitional, emotional and indicational content of fundamental terms and concepts. Van Eeden's treatise was planned as an axiomatic text in logic and was largely inspired by Spinoza. Subsequent significians considered it as the first signific study ever (cf. Schmitz 1990b: 233–236), a masterpiece influenced to an extent by Welby (for a more detailed description of Welby's theoretical influence on van Eeden, cf. Schmitz 1985e; Vuysje 1953: 256).

The problem of language, knowledge and communication was also analysed in relation to poetic language. We know that as early as *Grains of Sense* (1897), Welby herself at times chose to give expression to her own thoughts through literary genres, dialogues and short stories in addition to making use of parables, aphorisms, and satire. She also wrote poetry producing an abundant corpus of materials, still in the archives attending publication (see WCYA, Box 28, file 33, and Box 37, file 10). An interesting aspect of her theoretical exchanges with van Eeden concerns their different evaluations of ambiguity, suggestiveness and expressive flexibility, considered as essential characteristics of language and the condition for communication. In contrast to Welby, van Eeden limited such characteristics to poetic language, which he consequently invested with the task of 'intensifying' and 'purifying' other types of language (cf. van Eeden to Welby 1954: 27).

In Mannoury's view, van Eeden was the first to attempt a practical application of the signific science in the Netherlands. He proposed 'to separate the volitional content, the emotional content and the indicative content of the most fundamental words and concepts in a systematic way and to weigh these against each other.' He was also the first 'to recognize and expose the purely symbolic character of mathematical language and its relation to the living language of experiences and emotions' (Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xl). In his essay of 1953, 'Significs. Its Tendency, Methodology, and Applications,' Vuyjse observed that statements by van Eeden like 'the words of mathematics are pure symbols,' and 'physical science aims at ordering and connecting our sense perceptions' anticipate the signific approach to the foundations of mathematics and physics (cf. Vuysje 1953: 256).

Van Eeden's treatise presents 156 theorems distributed among seven chapters. Mannoury believed that the value of this treatise was not so much in its logical structure as in the 'principle of gradation' subtending it. The chapters forming this treatise, which opens with an introduction entitled 'Argument' and closes with a 'Conclusion,' are named as follows (cf. Schmitz 1990b: 233–236):

1) 'Reality and Gradation,' which analyses gradation in reality and thought from the concrete and real to the abstract and unreal, the respective types of linguistic usage associated with graduated stages, from the figurative to the symbolic (that is, conventional, as in the case of the language of mathematics), and the respective types of knowledge, namely symbolic and intuitive;

2) 'Word-Value,' in which the author expounds his theory of signs and analyses the problem of the meaning and value of words on the basis of the relation between reality, image of reality (idea) and word (symbolic vs. figurative);

3) 'Truth,' which offers a critique of this term as it is commonly used and a discussion of Spinoza's concept of the 'true idea';

4) 'Certainty, Reason, and Mystery,' which critically examines and relativizes the cognitive value of knowledge in the natural sciences, and contrasts symbolic and intuitive knowledge;

5) 'The Ego,' which defines the ego and maintains the thesis that ultimate knowledge, that is, the greatest certainty, is determined neither by perception nor reason, but rather is given where being and knowing converge;

6) 'Timelessness and Immortality' is divided into three parts: i) the first deals with the capabilities and limitations of logical method with respect to such concepts as 'soul,' 'spirit'; ii) the second deals with perception and distinguishes between 'self,' 'ego' and 'person,' relatedly also to the problem of mortality; and iii) the third part develops the preceding, analysing the concept of person with respect to the ego in terms of the relation between finiteness and infinity. Van Eeden maintains that perception does not depend exclusively on the sensory organs and hypothesizes that perception and human individuality continue after the body ceases to exist. Each person is mortal and at once part of the eternal and absolute to varying degrees;

7) 'Direction, Freedom, and Goal' is a chapter which redefines concepts explicated in preceding chapters and critiques logical dialectics, the logical-symbolic method. The problem of the self's free will, the relation to human action, and the question of responsibility are also examined. Van Eeden critiques the limits of logic and argumentation drawing attention to the expressive power of poetry beyond philosophy. He believed that poetic language is capable of transcending the cognitive and expressive limits of philosophical language itself.

Van Eeden's treatise has been compared to *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Ludwig Wittgenstein, and described as sharing many similarities with the latter (cf. Willink 1975). However, unlike Wittgenstein's, van Eeden's treatise remained largely unknown, and in fact its impact was mostly limited to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. By contrast to van Eeden's sign theory which the significians did not continue, his principle of gradation (adapted from Spinoza and enhanced by Mannoury's relativism) was accepted and developed, finding its most important expression in the theory of language levels.

On the one hand, van Eeden promoted significs in response to Welby's expectations, on the other, they were not in total accord on the direction they envisaged for the development of significs. Van Eeden called for significs as a new science with a strong philosophical and ethical orientation. He focused on significs in terms of critique of language and conceptualization, considering mathematicians (including Mannoury) and poets as the main agents of signific analysis, therefore of critique and linguistic reform (cf. van Eeden 1908a). Welby held the sensibility of the poet in high esteem and credited literary language, indeed aesthetic discourse generally, with the capacity of reaching the highest degrees of significance, but she dissented from van Eeden when he contrasted the sovereignty of the poet to all philosophy and science, especially in the theoretical debate on the problem of meaning. Says van Eeden in a letter to Welby dated 19 November 1908:

And so the science of Significs will come and find its devoted scholars, after its reason, its right of existence and its value have been founded and probed by the poet. The poet, who is, as Shelley, Schiller, Hebbel, stated boldly, the only true man. (cf. van Eeden to Welby 1954: 83)

Van Eeden's attempts at introducing significs as a central part of the Forte Circle program were not successful. All the same, he introduced Gustav Landauer (1870–1919) and Erich Gutkind (1877–1965) to Welby. These scholars were followers of Fritz Mauthner and his critique of language. They corresponded with Welby and were familiar with her book *What is Meaning?*. Mauthner himself established a correspondence between Welby's significs and his own critique of language. The following interpretation of her distinction between sense, meaning, and significance is from his *Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Dictionary of Philosophy), published in 1910. (On Mauthner and his interpretation of significs, cf. Weiler 1970). Mauthner writes,

The English theory of meaning (significs) is not far removed from a critique of language. It distinguishes clearly between the usual meaning (the common language usage), the individual meaning (the intention of the speaker or author when using a word), and the meaning value of an idea. (Mauthner 1923 [1910], I: 150)

Significs also found a follower in the Netherlands in the poet and lawyer Jacob Israël de Haan who was particularly close to his friend van Eeden between 1909 and 1911, and through him became familiar with Welby's own theory of signs and philosophy of language. De Haan was the first to introduce Welby's communication oriented sign theory to the Netherlands, though van Eeden was the first to introduce the term 'significa' (cf. Schmitz 1990b: 220–221). On the basis of his own free interpretation, de Haan applied Welby's meaning triad to the analysis of legal language in an essay of 1912 *Nieuwe rechtstaalphilosophie* (New philosophy of legal language), translating the terms 'sense,' 'meaning,' and 'significance' into Dutch respectively as *Zin* (sense), *Be-doeling* (intention), and *Waarde* (value). In this essay he presented Welby as the founder of significs, a new approach to the philosophy of language: the human capacity for significance. De Haan fully captured the translinguistic and transdiscursive character of significs. All other means of expression and relation (which practically coincide) are doubtless mediated by verbal language, but for the student of significs other means of expression beyond verbal language are also relevant: e.g., music, painting, sculpture, chemical and mathematical formulae, gesture (cf. de Haan 1912: 480ff.). From 1912 onwards de Haan developed legal significs, that is, the analysis of legal problems from a significant perspective, writing forty articles and two books on the subject.

With special reference to the problem of ethical and juridical responsibility, de Haan dedicated his dissertation to 'legal significs' for a degree in law in 1916, applying Welby's meaning triad to the three terms '*aansprakelijk*' (responsible in the legal sense, liable), '*verantwoordel*' (responsible in the sense of accountability), '*toerekeningsvatbaar*' (responsible for one's actions, said of a person) (cf. de Haan 1916a, 1916b, 1919). He translated the terms 'significs' with '*Significa*,' '*Signifika*' or '*Signifiek*,' but ended up equating these terms with 'semasiology' and 'semantics.' This was also a result of van Eeden's influence. All three terms were in turn translated as 'study of meaning,' which together with the 'study of sounds' formed the 'science of language.' De Haan (1916a: 1) associated significs to Bréal's semantics, so that his approach ended up being far less broader than Welby's, and in fact this aspect of his work did not find development in the signific movement. De Haan theorized logical legal language as the goal of legal significs making logicity depend on two basic principles, etymology and rules governing word usage and word formation. According to de Haan, logical language is language

‘in which old words are used and new words are formed intentionally according to strict rules’ (1916a: 79). In any case, from 1916 onwards de Haan broadened his interpretation of signifiics thanks particularly to the influence of Brouwer (whom he met through van Eeden in 1916), and his intuitionism, and despite of, or perhaps thanks to Brouwer’s critical reading of his dissertation. In 1916 de Haan became a university lecturer in legal signifiics at the University of Amsterdam. But in 1919 he migrated to Jerusalem, ending his activities in the legal field and at the Institute of Significians. He was assassinated in 1924 and is sadly remembered as the first Jewish victim in history of a political assassination in Palestine, organised by Jews alarmed by his anti-Zionist commitment.

Brouwer discovered signifiics in 1915, he too thanks to van Eeden, ten years after publication of his volume of 1905, *Leven, Kunst en Mystiek* (Life, art and mysticism), in which he critically analyses language and interpersonal communication. Brouwer criticises the use of terminology when it negatively compromises social phenomena. For example, at the time, free circulation of such terms as ‘property’ or ‘homeland’ was used to impose national ideology, but without the least possibility of critical awareness of the implications of such terminology by the individual. Brouwer also evidenced the lack of primary words for primary concepts or for spiritual values. He was particularly concerned about negative influences on the possibility of developing an ethical consciousness. This meant, for example, creating difficulty in the formulation of an adequate conception of social justice. Similarly to de Haan and van Eeden, Brouwer’s approach to signifiics was strongly oriented in an ethical sense.

In addition to ‘*Significa*,’ ‘*Signifika*’ or ‘*Signifiek*’, Vuysje also introduced the term ‘*psycholinguistiek*’ (psycholinguistics) as a possible translation of the term ‘signifiics,’ developing Mannoury’s definition of signifiics and distinguishing between signifiics and other signifiic-oriented disciplines with a strong linguistic leaning. In his essay of 1953 Vuysje defines signifiics as the study of the

acts of communication, i.e., of acts by which living beings try to influence the behavior and the activities of other living beings. In a somewhat narrower acception it may be described as the scientific study of the mental associations underlying the human acts of communication, excluding the more specific departments of the science of language in the proper sense, like philosophy, etymology, semantics. (Vuyse 1953: 228)

And in an essay of 1963, ‘Petite histoire de la psycho-sociologie du langage de 1900 jusqu’à 1950,’ Vuysje recognises Welby as the originator of signifiics, or ‘psycho-linguistics,’ in the modern era:

En définissant la signifique (psycho-linguistique) comme la réflexion sur les moyens d’entendement humain, on pourrait remonter aux temps assez reculés de la civilisation pour trouver les traces d’une telle réflexion. Cependant, dans le cadre de la présente étude, il nous semble utile, pour des raisons méthodologique, de voir le point de depart de la signifique moderne dans l’influence personnelle de Lady Victoria [Viola] Welby, qui a agi à un haut degree sur la sémantique anglo-saxonne. (Vuyse 1963: 54)

Mannoury who was considered as a major authority in signifiical studies in the Netherlands, defined signifiics as follows:

Signifiics or the science of the laws of association in processes of communicating is a method of investigating the meaning of communicative acts or speech acts (spoken or written words, facial expression, gestures, etc.) which has been widely applied in the last

decades, whereby the psychological phenomena underlying these activities are placed in the forefront. (Mannoury, cited in Winkler Prins 1953, vol. 16: 624)

Mannoury proposed what may be identified as critical psychologism, developing a psycholinguistic approach to communication studies (cf. Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xxxv; the German term ‘signifik’ in his *Erkenntnis* essay of 1934 was translated with the term ‘Psycho-linguistique’ in the 1947 French translation of this same essay). Another definition of significs formulated by Mannoury reads as follows: ‘the systematic study of the general and particular speech acts with respect to their substantive content of will, feeling, and conceptualization’ (Mannoury 1935: 86).

Mannoury was one of the main promoters of the *Signifische Kring* (Signific Circle) founded in 1922, and continued working in the area after 1926, the year the group formally disbanded. His main areas of interest were language and mathematics, but he was also active in a variety of different fields, from science to politics, with a special interest for mass phenomena under the influence of World War II. Mannoury’s contribution to the foundations of mathematics in the Netherlands is particularly important, being the field in which he was most influential. He also influenced the development of intuitionism as represented, for example, by Brouwer (one of his followers). Mannoury developed a psycholinguistic analysis of human communication, while Brouwer maintained a more strictly mathematical and logical approach.

In his essay of 1990, ‘Relativism and Significs: Gerrit Mannoury on the Foundations of Mathematics,’ Eric Heijerman observes that significs understood as a communication theory or theory of meaning was largely overshadowed by Anglo-Saxon philosophy of language. However, intuitionism in mathematics, which was largely supported by significs and its contribution to debates on the nature of mathematics, is still influential (Heijerman 1990: 249).

The impact of significs became increasingly stronger on Mannoury’s philosophy of mathematics. He read widely on the foundations of mathematics, including writings by Peirce, Peano, Frege and Dedekind, and was informed about the debate on Kantism in the journal *Revue di métaphysique et de morale* (which involved Poincaré, Couturat and Russell). In 1903, Mannoury became private lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and gave courses on the philosophy of mathematics. The contents of these courses were published in his book *Philosophisches und methodologisches zur Elementar-Mathematik* (Philosophy and methodology of elementary mathematics), 1909. Significs, however, is not mentioned. In this book Mannoury develops a relativistic philosophy of mathematics, associating Hegelian and Nietzschean ideas to the formalism of Peano’s approach. Twenty-five years later, in 1934, Mannoury published an essay in two parts entitled, ‘Die signifischen Grundlagen der Mathematik’ (The signific foundations of mathematics), in which mathematics is grounded in significs. Mannoury described this text as summarizing his earlier views on the foundations of mathematics, whose beginnings he traced back to 1903. In 1917 he became extraordinary professor and in 1918 full professor lecturing in philosophy of mathematics, mechanics, and geometry (cf. Heijerman 1990: 248–249).

The encounter with significs did not revolutionize Mannoury’s thought system, but enriched it with new perspectives in a broader context. Mannoury shifted from formalistic, relativistic, psychologistic standpoints to intuitionism, attempting to reconcile the

two perspectives. His theory of negation was present in embryonic form in his earlier work and was further developed in light of his interpretation of the nature of mathematics in a signifi- cal key (Heijerman's 1990 essay offers a detailed study of Mannoury's contribution to the philosophy of mathematics from a signifi- cal perspective). Mannoury delivered his final lecture at the university of Amsterdam on 29 May 1937 under the title, 'De schoonheid der wiskunde als signifi- sch probleem,' in which he spoke of the beauty of mathematics as a signifi- cal problem. This lecture was published as an article in 1937, prefaced by the editors with some fragments from Mannoury's inaugural lecture of 1917, dedicated to the social signifi- cance of mathematical thought. On both occasions Mannoury presented mathematics as a phenomenon of life with two dominant charac- teristics: ultimate certainty, amply discussed in 1909 in his book, *Methodologisch und Philosophisch*; and ultimate beauty with which he fully entered the domain of signifi- cation: 'mathematics is not without beauty. . . call it regularity, call it harmony, call it rhythm, but there is something in mathematics which cannot be calculated' (Mannoury 1917: 8). Heijerman writes:

In 1937, Mannoury opposed certainty and beauty as two aspects of the meaning of math- ematical language. Certainty is related to the constant, observable, indicative aspect, whereas beauty is related to the changing, emotional, volitional aspect. With these concepts we have entered the field of signifi- cation. (Heijerman 1990: 261)

In his essay 'Die signifi- schen Grundlagen der Mathematik,' published in the journal *Erkenntnis*, 1934, Mannoury formulated the following definition of signifi- cation, showing both its theoretical and pragmatic interest: 'the theory of mental associations which under- ly human speech acts, with the exception of theories of language in a narrower sense' (Mannoury 1934: 290). Through speech acts, which are verbal or nonverbal (though Mannoury focused on nonverbal speech acts), people attempt to influence each other's behaviour. The meaning of speech acts in signifi- cal terms is established by the mental associations that accompany these speech acts in the speaker or listener. In the last analy- sis, the signifi- cal method consists in investigating these mental associations. Signifi- cation investigates the signifi- cation specificity of speech acts, the specific associations that accom- pany a given speech act. Such issues are investigated not only in terms of the effects a given speech act produces on the hearer (hearer's meaning), but also in terms of its causes (speaker's meaning). Mannoury distinguished between two types of speech acts: *expressions of the will* whose success depends on the hearer, e.g. on the hearer's will to obey the speaker's order; and *informative* or *indicative* speech acts, where the role of the hearer is not important, e.g. the description of an object. According to Mannoury, another important distinction in signifi- cation requiring investigation is that between the indicative, emotional, volitional and formal elements forming the meaning of a speech act:

[. . .] it is not the task of signifi- cation to *answer* questions, but to *examine* them. To examine their indicative, emotional, volitional or even purely formal content [. . .]. The main task of signifi- cation consists in *this* examination, not only of the major and the minor questions of life, but of *all* speech acts of daily and scientific intercourse, and it can and should be applied to almost every part of human thinking. (Mannoury 1934: 308–309)

The Dutch signifi- cationists most importantly developed a pragmatic conception of lan- guage and theory of language levels. This theory is referred to the specific purposes of language. In his *Erkenntnis* essay of 1934, Mannoury identified five language levels

(but in reality he had already identified them in his early writings). The first is basic language, the others are derived levels. Basic language is directly associated with mental complexes; whereas derived levels are indirectly associated with these complexes. The transition from the first to the fifth level is gradual and is characterized by an equally gradual increase in the stability of word connections and formalization. The five levels in Mannoury's description are the following:

- 1) basic language (no word connections, e.g., the primordial language of children);
- 2) emotive language (loose word connections, e.g., poetic language, unformalized language of mathematics, especially intuitionistic mathematics);
- 3) utility language (word connections are essential, e.g., the language of commerce and traffic);
- 4) scientific language (word connections are based on explicit agreement, where the margin for misunderstanding is minimal, e.g., language of law, regulations, technology and science);
- 5) symbolic language (word connections are based on rules of combination and misunderstanding is almost impossible, e.g. the language of symbolic logic) (cf. Mannoury 1934: 294–297).

Points in common between Mannoury's conception of language and modern speech act theory are described by Schmitz in his essay of 1984, 'Searle ist in Mode, Mannoury nicht: Sprech- und Hörakt im niederländischen Signifik-Kreis.' As observed by Brigitte Nerlich (1992: 243), probably the best expression of this relation was formulated by Mannoury himself when he claimed that, 'A word has a meaning insofar as it is a deed' (Mannoury 1934: 289).

The following citation from Mannoury states the difference between Dutch significs and traditional linguistics or semantics:

When we restrict ourselves to human speech acts, we can see that significs [*Signifik*] is distinguished from the normal language sciences (linguistics, philology, phonetics and phenomenology, semantics, etymology, the history of language, etc.) mainly because it takes into consideration not only verbal language [*Wortsprache*] (and least of all individual lexico-logical words in isolation), but rather the actions, reflexes, internal or external changes of condition [*Zustandsänderungen*], whereby one human being influences the other (or one group of people another), or those which are triggered by this influencing. From this it follows: firstly, that by a speech act in the signific sense we understand not a specific word or sentence, but all actions and changes of condition which in every given case of mental influencing form a causally cohering complex [...] hence, one should understand by significs in the more narrow (technical-scientific) sense only the doctrine concerning linguistic, mimetic, and psychical complexes of human phenomena of communication. (Mannoury 1936: 340–341, in Nerlich 1992: 243)

The theory of language levels can also be applied to mathematical speech acts where, in spite of the high degree in formalization and symbolism, the emotional, indicative, and volitional elements of meaning cannot be completely eliminated, and require signific analysis for a fuller understanding of mathematical concepts. Think of such terms as 'proving,' 'contradicting,' 'deriving' which are taken from ordinary language and applied to mathematical discourse. In relation to the emotional elements of meaning, mathematical speech acts also involve what Mannoury calls 'affective,' 'aesthetic,' or 'sportive' value.

Mannoury developed a signfic method distinguishing between ‘*synthetic* significs,’ which aims at developing new concepts for the improvement of mutual understanding, and ‘*analytical* significs,’ which proposes a psychological analysis of concepts that already exist. Mathematics is a human activity and meaning in mathematics is always relative to what is human (pragmatism) (Heijerman 1990: 269). The closing passage of Mannoury’s essay of 1934 clearly evinces his relativistic orientation:

All other qualifications which have been tried to apply to mathematics: its absolutism, and its complete exactness, its generality and its independence, with one word: its truth and eternity, all this – forgive my strong expression – *all this is pure superstition!* (Mannoury 1934: 341)

In ‘Significs. Its Tendency, Methodology, and Applications,’ Vuyjse analyzes the relation between significs in the Netherlands and other similar movements such as logical empiricism, operationism, pragmatism and semantics:

Logical Empiricism, Operationism, Pragmatism, Semantics and Significs – they all have tried to set up criteria by which one can distinguish clearly between ‘meaningful discourse’ and ‘empty talk.’ Like pragmatism and operationism, significs lays stress on the conception that the ‘meaning’ of a statement is characterized by the way in which it influences the behavior of men who are trained to react to the language in which the statement is formulated. Logical Empiricism, like significs, stresses the importance of the analysis of our language tools for a comprehensive ‘scientific attitude.’ (Vuyjse 1953: 252)

Both Vuysje and Mannoury (1983) identified three main currents in linguistic and conceptual criticism:

1) the analytic approach of Anglo-American semantics. This trend was introduced by Jeremy Bentham, Ogden and Richards, and by the *Mind* symposium of 1921. The analysts evidenced the variability of word meanings and the fact that predominantly emotional and volitional terminology is unsuitable for scientific discussion. A precedent to this approach is identified in 13th century philosopher William of Ockham and his conception of ‘*flatus vocis*.’ In any case, this is the first time that detailed studies were dedicated to such issues accompanied by widespread awareness of the need for critical consciousness and a critique of language. However, the tendency to over-evaluate the power of rational language and the critique of language at the expense of emotion and volition also represents a limit to this particular trend (cf. Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xxxiv);

2) the axiomatic approach connected with the Vienna Circle and the Unity of Science Movement. This can be traced back to the school of Ernst Mach and was developed by such figures as Hans Hahn, Moritz Schlick, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolph Carnap, Bertrand Russell, Alfred N. Whitehead, Alfred Tarski. This school analyzes epistemological problems and philosophical theorems where meaning is formulated in quasi-scientific technical terms. In this context, Mach introduced the concept of ‘pseudo-problem’ and ‘pseudo-judgment.’ The philosophical orientation of this current did not stop at the negative side of conceptual critique, but also attempted construction, adopting a far broader approach than the ‘semanticist’ line of thought (cf. Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xxxv). Under the influence of the Polish scholar Alfred Korzybski (who was in turn influenced by Brouwer’s intuitionism) and his Institute of General Semantics, scholars also began implementing the psychological hierarchical structure of forms of

language and thought, although the limits of this approach were identified above all by the great Polish scholar Adam Schaff (1960; Ponzio 2002a);

3) the signific critical current, which developed in the Netherlands and can be traced back to Welby, developed a relativistic-psychological approach. In light of this approach, even the representative of 'sober science' equally appreciates the definite and the indefinite, the particular and the general, the indicative and the emotional, as much as distinction may be privileged over evaluation, mathematical thought over the ideological. As says Mannoury: 'This tendency to forget the difference between science itself and the object of science, between psychology and the mind, between conceptual criticism and the formation of concept has induced many writers to give the non-emotional forms of language of criticism and science a kind of monopoly in other areas as well and has prompted them to defend that monopoly very emotionally' (Mannoury 1983 [1969]: xxxv–xxxvi). Significians aim for objectivity in the critical appreciation of human communication, knowing full well that this can only be reached by practicing a multiplicity of different points of view in dialogue with each other.

Despite the different methods elaborated in relation to their critique of language, both logical empiricism and the signific movement have empirical tendencies (see also Vuyse 1951). The signific program does not replace philosophy with the logical analysis of language, nor does it exclude psychological analysis of the 'problems of life.' Both movements, significs and logical empiricism, aim to unmask pseudo-problems and to construct an adequate terminological apparatus to deal with issues at the centre of attention. With their psycholinguistic instruments, significians distinguish between 'real' and 'unreal' pseudo-problems. Moreover, both logical empiricists and significians identify one of the causes for the careless and naïve use of scientific language in the inexactness of common language. The significian (or significist) draws attention to the varied character of colloquial language and to the value of the introspective method, which works on subjective mental elements, while at the same time objectifying them ('intersubjectifies') on the basis of comparison among introspective results themselves. While the synthetic approach to significs focuses on the introspective elements underlying communicative acts, analytical significs analyses the linguistic behaviour of others ('heterospection'). From this perspective the value of introspection is limited, but it has comparative value. In any case, the significian aims to develop the results of investigation in multilateral terms (that is, from different ideological and social perspectives), and to satisfy proposed conditions of 'objectivity' understood in terms of intersubjective and observative reliability.

Significs is founded on observation and, as such, elaborates an empirical method which aims to investigate the psychological background of linguistic behaviour. Contrastingly, logical empiricism works on the logical analysis of scientific language (Neurath, Carnap), indeed of all forms of language (Frank, Schlick, Von Mises, Morris). For the significian, the critique of language is not synonymous to the logic of science; the significian is interested in the elements functional to acts of communication, and not in differences among the various forms of language in terms of logical grammar.

Clumsy and confused reasoning can mostly be eliminated through the formalization of discourse. Says Vuysje in his essay of 1953, significians know they can tell highly speculative stories through symbols. At the same time, however, they know that symbolism can also hide ambiguous explanations and distract the attention of

scientists who depend on symbolic argument. Moreover, to investigate *why* and *how* words are used, in other words, the influence of the environment, the circumstances in which acts of communication are performed, is often more effective than investigating communication itself (which is the symptomatic signification of an act of communication).

Therefore investigation of nonverbal responses to both verbal and nonverbal stimuli (requiring special techniques) is an integral part of the signifiics program. In addition to the logical, empirical, psychological and sociological analysis of concepts and content, signifiicians work on the *means* of understanding employed in the sciences as well as in everyday life. The synthetic application of the principles of signifiics to the different spheres of life gradually prevailed over the analytical method, which however did not mean to underestimate the importance of the latter. And while fully appreciating the heterogeneity of sense and structure, the signifiic movement worked for unity in method (see Vuysje 1953: 251–254). At the same time, the signifiic movement was subject to internal discord and discrepancies, as evidenced for example by the contrast between Mannoury's psycholinguistic orientation and the predominantly mathematical and logical orientation developed by Brouwer and van Dantzig with 'formal signifiics.'

With the signifiic movement language and meaning are described in dynamic and functional terms by contrast with the atomistic, structural and formal approach of traditional semantics or linguistics. Signifiicians did not limit their attention to language understood as a static system, with given properties. Instead, they elected the speech act or even more broadly the act of communication in its totality as their object of analysis, inclusive of its function and effects. Most significantly, this meant to take into consideration not only the act of speaking mainly understood in terms of speaker intention, but also the conditions that make speaking possible, that is, the capacity for listening. For an adequate analysis of communication, the role of the listener must be evidenced as much as speaker purpose or intention. The effect of speech acts ensues from the relation of mutual influence among communicants. In my own interpretation, elaborated under the influence of studies in signifiics and beyond (see entries by Petrilli listed in the bibliography below entitled, 'On Welby, the Signifiic Movement and current developments'), a necessary condition for the happy performance of speech acts is, in effect, the capacity for listening. Successfully performed speech acts or language acts are preceded by other communicative acts as their condition of possibility. In other words, as signifiical approaches to language studies demonstrate so clearly, a successful speech act requires and implies much more than speaking: to speak successfully implies listening. Here, listening not only refers to the person spoken to, but also to the speaker. To speak requires listening to the word of the other; it requires hospitality towards the word of the other, and of course other related factors include influence of the extraverbal including general environment, cultural context, psychological background, value systems, interpersonal relations, social programming, previous experience, expectation, and interconnection among all these aspects, etc. (On the role of such aspects and their significance in verbal and nonverbal communication, see Petrilli 1998c, in particular Chapter 7, 'Le condizioni di base del parlare' [The basic conditions of speaking], in which is also proposed a critique of speech act theory as conceived by Anglo-American analytical philosophy).

With respect to Welby's significs, some Dutch significians tended to interpret her approach reductively in terms of functional communication theory. This means lose sight of her focus on the problem of significance and on the relation between signs and values. It means losing sight of the relation between theory of knowledge, ethics and aesthetics, beyond the codification of meaning for the sake of strictly functional communication. All the same, other Dutch significians understood the vast scope of significs, the extensive range of its application. Significs, in its different expressions, from Welby's interpretation to the different approaches elaborated by Dutch significians, ultimately was strongly oriented in the direction of sense understood as significance. This entailed a focus on the relation of action to values, considering not only the action of verbal signs, but also the great variety of nonverbal signs. From this perspective, as well, significs is closer to semiotics than to traditional linguistics. As philosophy of language, significs analyzes both verbal and nonverbal languages, and from this point of view (as clearly stated by de Haan, see citation in Chapter 3, this volume) may also be understood as 'philosophy of expression.'

We mentioned that significs was overshadowed by the rise of English analytical philosophy. In spite of this, however, connections were developed between significs and its various direct and indirect ramifications, and they are important to signal: in particular, between Welby's significs and the linguistic turn in philosophy during the twentieth century; between significs and the Signific Movement in the Netherlands; and between significs and analytical philosophy. Furthermore (as evidenced in various parts of this volume, and as emerges from papers appended to the various sections – correspondence, essays, articles), connections are undeniable between significs and the Vienna Circle, logical empiricism, the Anglo-American Unity of Science Movement, and of course with individual scholars such as Frege, Mach, Russell, Wittgenstein, Ogden, Tönnies, Neurath, Morris. Such connections are of great interest from the perspective of the history of ideas, and yet they have been mostly obscured and are generally unknown. We may also hypothesize connections, even if less immediate, between significs and the so-called School of Bochum, headed by Wilhelm Dilthey (whom we know probably received a copy of Welby's book of 1903, *What is Meaning?*, thanks to Ferdinand Tönnies). The School of Bochum excels in its studies in hermeneutics, analytics, pragmatics and phenomenology, in its interrogation of sense or significance in its different expressions: whether a question of the written text, human nonverbal behaviour, language, the representation of reality through language, subjectivity, etc. (On these issues cf. Matteucci 1992a; also Petrilli 1998a; Ponzio 1990b, 1991a).

Moreover, I believe that developments across the twentieth century in studies on sign, language and communication as well as in such areas as social reform and education beyond strictly analytical linguistic philosophy, are anchored in significs, or have somehow been influenced by significs, its methodologies, theoretical framework, and interdisciplinary perspective. In this context of discourse, it is well to remember again the work of such figures as van Eeden, Brouwer, Vuysje, van Dantzig, Mannoury, and many others outside Holland who either contributed directly to the development of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands, or whose research was somehow indirectly influenced by or related to significs. Nor must we forget or underestimate the initial input provided by the founder of significs, Victoria Lady Welby and her own approach to problems of expression and communication. We know that to establish connections

and convergences does not imply the lack of discord or disagreement. Significs and its various developments presented both internal discord among declared significians and external divergences with respect to other trends in sign and communication studies, including developments in twentieth century semiotics, which in fact ended up prevailing over significs as a movement.

In any case, as I have attempted to illustrate in the present chapter, significs developed and found expression through academic institutions, study groups, courses, and international conferences, which continued their activities well into the twentieth century. Nor should the importance of editorial activities in relation to the journals *Synthese* (1936–1963) and *Methodology and Science* (1968–1995) be underestimated. By tradition, these journals supported and gave voice to studies in significs. However, in spite of such ferment in the Netherlands and its international extensions, significs never gained the following or the international repute it deserved as a movement or specific trend in studies on signs and meaning. All the same, important traces of research in signific circles, or somehow related to significs, can be detected: no doubt Precisely in the numerous language, communication, and sign-related disciplines that have flourished since the original phase. Specifically, developments in philosophy of language, logic, mathematical sciences, semiotics, pragmatics, linguistics, cognitive sciences, communication sciences and, most recently, semioethics should be signaled. As we have mentioned, semioethics may be considered as a recent trend in semiotics that is strongly oriented in the direction of the relation of signs and values, therefore of sign theory and value theory, with a special focus on the critical study of significance, in the last analysis on the relation between meaning and responsible behaviour.¹⁴

14. See *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, 2001, edited by Paul Cobley. The new, enlarged edition *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*, 2010, now also includes an entry on 'significs' and a major essay on 'semioethics,' commissioned by the editor. See, also, Ch. 8, this volume, below.

The texts

Correspondence from the archives

7.5. A selection from her unpublished correspondence (1892–1912)

*Between Lady Victoria Welby and Charles Kay Ogden (1910–1911)**

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

*Magdalene College, Cambridge
Tuesday, 15 November 1910*

I am collecting materials for a paper I hope to read to a Society (of which I enclose a 'card' by way of excuse and introduction) some time in the future on 'Significs.' I should be able to draw attention to the confusion produced in the discussions we have (at least once a week) by the lack of the '*linguistic conscience*' you speak of, and the unwillingness to attempt its acquisition.

In the Preface to *What is Meaning?* you say – 'This is but a preliminary sketch of the inquiry needed.' I should be very much obliged if you could indicate one or two of the most important steps in the inquiry made since 1903. I do not even know whether you have written anything yourself or whether it is true, as I heard somewhere, that Prof. Stout was meditating a book on 'Significs.'

I am in possession of *Mind* and all the writings of Mr. A. Sidgwick, Prof. Stout, Prof. Pillsbury, Dr. Schiller, Hastings, Berkeley and Bertrand Russell, but nothing out of the way, and the best literature on the subject does not seem, to judge from your quotations, the most accessible.

I hope you will excuse my impertinence in thus troubling, my only excuse being that I might be of some service in interesting intelligent people in 'Significs' in the future, and the impossibility of one person's coming across much in so large a field of co-operation.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

23 November 1910

In using the enclosed pamphlets I am sure you will remember that to me they are entirely out of date. When printed I was but a little way on the greatest of all ascending roads (greatest since all others depend on it). You have helped to give me courage now to carry my long and arduous labours to a practical conclusion. I hope when you come again you will gain some mastery of my 'dynamo' of evidence. The sheer folly of tolerating our present condition of and procedure in expression is there exposed. In advocating Significs as giving in education and in all the needs of mental life the key to all difficulty, I am but exploiting to the full the resources which have year by year afforded a richer witness at once of our vital lack and need and of its commanding supply.

* [This selection from the correspondence between Victoria Welby and Charles K. Ogden stored in the Welby Collection, York University Archives opens with a letter from Ogden dated Tuesday, 15 November 1910, and closes with a postcard from the same Ogden dated 24 December, 1911. This conspicuous corpus of materials counts various enclosures from Welby. Letter texts are handwritten and reproduced in typewritten copies, sometimes in Welby's shorthand, but mostly redacted for publication. The few that are not typewritten, mostly Ogden's, are not included in the present selection. However, given the interest of these exchanges the whole corpus deserves publication. Letter openings and endings have been consistently eliminated. My own interventions are placed between square brackets].

The signifiical is the converse of the pedantic: it serves and provides the creative and logical powers with unrealised data and material.

Experience and fact are as it were signalling and signalling to us, – too often in vain. We have everywhere to read the suggestion of symptom as also the true lesson of symbol. But I must break off. I enclose as well as the two definitions, – the Oxford Dictionary one [see Ch. 3, this volume] and the Encyclopaedia Britannica article [now in Section 3.15] – and the pamphlets a Paper taken at random which will probably be included in the book I am preparing. Let me repeat my wish and hope that you will be able to induce some of your friends to come down some day for a little talk, etc. I am writing this hastily having been much engaged but I hope it will be clear.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Lady Welby

25 November 1910

I am grateful to you for the valuable collection of material you sent yesterday. I have been looking it through and can make use of lots of it at once. I will return the notes to Hobhouse's 'Theory of knowledge' when I have extracted what I want from them; but I hope I may keep the rest. I am thinking of reading a short paper here some time in February to 'The Heretics' on 'The Progress of Significs' – especially its bearings on confusion in a society's discussion: which, as I told you, is the question I can interest my friends in. I think as soon as interest is awakened, matters will begin to shape themselves along the natural lines – at any rate I think it good policy to confine myself to the more strictly linguistic side. Though indicating the wider bearing of the question. . .

I gather you have collected into pamphlet form nothing during the last 5 years in the way of quotations from various authors: I am looking forward to the eventual publication of your new volume!

I am going to Oxford (to see how much interest I can create in Balliol) on Monday week. I will let you know how they receive it.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Lady Welby

Tuesday, 13 December 1910

I am very sorry to hear of your illness, and only hope it may prove temporary – just sent to make you enjoy Christmas – perhaps my news that Significs is becoming quite a well known *word* at any rate may help to cheer you up.

[. . .] As to my little visit to Oxford, I think I told you the paper was quite a little informal affair – just a Balliol society of friends for discussion; of whom I happened to know a couple who invited me. There were however about 15 present, and an hour's discussion followed. I divided my subject as follows:

1. Introduction – importance of subject in general – objects, etc.
2. Historical survey – Protagoras – Locke – Tooke – Welby – Sidgwick, etc.
3. Future publication – Stout – Welby – Encyclopaedia, etc.
4. General consideration of causes of backwardness (*Religion*, etc.).
5. Causes of confusion in *DISCUSSION* – Education – Metaphor – *Definition* – Rules for treatment of words *pro tem*, etc.
6. Suggested Remedies – (1) Education of 'Significian' (2) Universal Language, etc.
7. Summary

All seemed interested: but, of course, as I came from Cambridge the 'professional philosophers' thought it their duty to disagree as far as possible so I did not get the benefit of suggestions, but only heard a fair amount of rather captious and superficial criticism – to which I replied.

I think the subject will keep itself alive at any rate, but fear the attitude of the Oxford Philosophy Schools in general is very unsatisfactory and unpromising: they are extraordinarily ready to condemn anything and everything *unread*: and merely quote from (always!) unpublished dicta of their tutors – (Prof. *T. A. Smith* and Cook Wilson in particular) the main point being Metaphysical Knowledge is all that can clear up verbal ambiguities, knowledge of things and Dialectic method not ‘Significs’ of which there is no ‘need’ and so on!!

I saw a good many philosophy undergraduates and think the Plato-fetish also very disastrous: but amongst the ordinary sort of people the references to confusion in discussions such as they know and the evident difference of their origin from real *philosophic* uncertainty are of much value. When the *books* appear I think many will be quite interested both in Oxford and here. In Cambridge we are less troubled by second-hand crammed philosophic dogmatism. The few who really study these questions are (if supercilious) at least willing to help and discuss; and already the matter is becoming a general subject for reference.

I am convinced of the great opening for the practical side of the matter (to be put before such societies as those to which I belong).

Out of my Oxford paper I hope to evolve, when time allows, various others which I may be able to read, or publish, when in satisfactory form in periodicals – such as *The Importance – The Progress – The Future*. The practical bearing in discussion – of *Significs*. *The Influence of Religion – of Education – on Significs*. Locke’s, Lady Welby’s work for *Significs*. *Significs and Definition*. ‘Some valuable confessions.’ – Education – and what not.

As soon as I get anything I am pleased with, I hope to send it to you for criticism. I never leave out the wider bearing of the matter; but I am sure you will think too much is said about Definition. If I could eventually get a compressed series of chapters into one of the ‘Handbook’ series that are so popular now, it would be a good thing; but I am not sure what time my work will allow and such undertakings are very ambitious.

If I read a paper to the ‘Heretics’ before the end of the year, that would mean an audience of 50 and I know lots of other societies which would be glad to have a paper.

The great thing is to popularise the *word* and then let the books (commonsense in experience) speak for themselves. This I *can* do!

I am looking forward to the future publication especially should your Evidence volume provide valuable *material to work on* . . .

Victoria Lady Welby to Charles K. Ogden

15 December 1910

I’m still so physically weak after all the agonies of pain that tonight I can only thank you for your needed tonic. Never mind the snubs. They are the condition of all really great ‘fresh starts.’ I should have despaired of a facile reception: and *I have been ignored for 30 years. That’s all right: but Significs has been ignored too and a whole generation* has grown up carefully fettered, blinkered, and paralysed who might. . . But I won’t rave. Do if you possibly can give me a look in (a night or two) any time before you return to Cambridge. You ought to see some of my instructive correspondence with Oxford and Cambridge and much else. I can arm you *cap a pied* (and you ought to see the typed book). I’ll write a proper answer tomorrow or next day.

Victoria Lady Welby to Charles K. Ogden

17 December 1910

I am so glad to hear that in your ‘academic’ pilgrimage you got the stimulant of resistance. I was horribly afraid of: – ‘My dear fellow, we all know that language is *seething* with *misfit* so that

we have to talk bulls like that before we can hope nowadays to convey anything worth saying to the “general public.” Look at the newspaper and the music-halls. Look at all the witnesses to the commercial age, the hurry and the vulgarity of thought, found alas in excelsis in the superior dealers in language. If people can’t say what they mean it’s because they have lost or never had clear minds well-trained.’

My friend, the more they commit themselves the better. They must be convicted out of their own mouths. We must agree with them. Who would dispute their ‘impregnable’ position? Of course you can’t impregnate with a seed of life a pebble or a burnt-out cinder. Not a blade of grass would you get!

I should have been in despair if they had welcomed you. You would have found yourself with a patted back and in silken chains with a wire of steel. I hope these metaphors are fashionably mixed. Your discontent would have seemed captious. What would you? Would have been asked with eyes of mild wonder. Do you really expect a Balliolic word? The Balliolic essence mustn’t become the vulgar thought and speech: it must remain the fount of faultlessness. And remember the Balliolic spirit is by no means at its worst in Balliol. On the contrary it now represents a subtle degeneration of an originally pure spring. It seeks to preserve in contempt what it originally had in supremacy and benevolence. At one time I could have ‘passed’ in the annals of Balliol and of the great expressive factor which it represented. I have forgotten all my lore now, this included. But though I can be ploughed on the most self-evident points dependent on definite and articulate memory, the effect of all my conscientious studies of 40 years and more, is a deeper kind of memory: an influence, translation and application of what I have learnt – largely from what Balliol *ancestrally* represents.

So be of good cheer. Opposition is indispensable; and the more people commit themselves the better. Can’t you get some of your critics to commit themselves in writing? Then you will soon be able to gauge the power of Significal method as the mother not only of discovery but of inference and thus of logical method.

Meanwhile it becomes urgent that I should see more of you and you know more of my long garnered treasures of witness and my *correspondence*. You see I have corresponded with some of the ‘lions in the path.’ It may surprise you to see some of Prof. Cook Wilson’s long letters to me. So *please* arrange for a couple of days here anyhow, preferable *before* the second week in January, when I may have to be away for a few days.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

20 December 1910

I was delighted to get your letters in reply to my last – also your very kind invitation for a couple of nights at an early date. . . This would give me a whole day to see your most valuable correspondance – the typed proofs, as you say, and some of your ‘witness’; also such ungettable (in Cambridge) publications as *The Monist* . . .

Thank you for your condemnation of Oxford ‘Dialectic’! As to Balliol, I must say I was quite pleased with my reception on the whole – it is only the ‘professionals’ who have become infected with the attitude (excuse the metaphor!) of the Oxford ‘Schools of Logic,’ who failed to give the suggestive criticism I had hoped for, in their anxiety to show they already knew everything.

No doubt they think that the work done (in a way for ‘Significs’) in e.g. Bosanquet’s *Logic*, Vol. I, has been underestimated. At any rate, they can be humoured by liberal Quotations showing the historical development of the subject! . . .

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

21 December 1910

Very well, then I'll put off leaving (if I do leave after all) till after January 13th and am putting you down then (12th or 13th) for your few hours visit. But all being well you'll have to come for 2 or 3 days as you promise towards the end of January. I want you to realise the whole position you see; – that can't be done in a few hurried and crowded hours. I'm quite glad to hear that you're not a Croesus as there can be no doubt that in younger hands than mine it must become the most paying of all subjects, and its first experts of your generation will command their own terms. You see its effect on business as well as more lofty careers must be unique. I already have the witness of American business friends to *that*. My grandson R. Welby is anxious to know you: he is very keen. . . . Yes: I have a lot of witness on my side from Bosanquet and others (even J. S. Mill, &c.).

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

22 December 1910

. . . I did not suspect an Economic side to Significs! I fear I look for little more than a crown of thorns – but am quite ready to be converted.

I am investigating Significs in Greek Philosophy (some day it might be tried on Part II of Plato's *Parmenides*) and expect some interesting results, apart from the better known 'loci' (*Republic*, etc.)

Also (as a Heretic!) I am interested in the influence of 'Religion.' There is some material at any rate in Drew's remarks in the 'Christ-myth' and Ellen Keys' 'The Century and the Child' to make a start on.

I enclose a card whereon Significs appears provisionally.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

24 December 1910

Anyhow we can correspond. But you must remember that at my age things are precarious and we ought to have our confabs while my strength and power remain. And also please remember that it comes cheaper every way – especially in time – if you will arrange to come here not on a mere flying visit as you propose but for a real stay. Believe me you are still but on the threshold of my storehouse of resources. I can arm you at every point. Alas, I can only present the 'classical' witness in translation; but that I have in bulk. I did quote Ennius in *Grains of Sense*. But almost all the great thinkers Greek or Latin, were Significians. And their tongues were significant as ours ought to be. McKail represents Sophocles as a witness I find. As to Religion! That is where I began. I found out that none of us knew where we were or what we were battling for at the very centre of life, *that which ought to focus all our interests and powers*. I used to get endless letters of confession and appeal &c.; and a set of confirmation questions from the point of view now called Significs was used for Confirmation Candidates by the great Bishop Lightfoot, Bp. Westcott and Archbishop Benson. But I found that work on the theological and religious side was premature; though it is as promising a field as any. N. Talbot, now Chaplain at Balliol, sees that very clearly.

To repeat. You have but little idea yet how encyclopaedic my work, witness, correspondence, &c. is. You ought to master it; for it will make your position impregnable: you can meet Scepticism or objection on every side; though of course the more you add to it the better. So please manage to give me more than a flying visit. Could you manage for next week? Or the first week in the New Year? . . . I write this because I realise more and more that Now is the time: the future precarious.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

26 December 1910

... I feel it is very important I should see, and hear from yourself some of the past history of the subject...

I am surprised rather at your opinion of the Greeks – it seems to me they got themselves into a worse tangle of words than even we have done, and for far less reason!

I am sure if the best literature of the last century were preserved we should even find no more mixed metaphor in it than in their ‘choicest remains.’

This was obvious even to themselves – Protagoras, for instance, in the earliest times made protest against the confusions caused by the use of all kinds of careless expressions (Plato, *Theatetus* 168c).

It is only the influence of these disastrous people, who support a ‘classical education’ and thereby hinder all progress in Significs, which has caused the prevalent opinion to the contrary as far as I can see. However – I am still studying the question; and I have not seen your witness!

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

27 December 1910

Yes, Jan. 4 (to 6 or later) is free, so I shall expect you then. You see it is now or never with me; and as you are going to set to work seriously you ought at least to take full advantage of my long pioneer work. As to ‘evening dress,’ this is the house of freedom in all such matters.

As to Greek and its original speakers and writers, I have been certainly dependent (1) on its worshippers and (2) on translations which of course can only give me the best our present speech can do. In vain, in my youth, did I clamour to be taught Latin, Greek and Mathematics! The two first would probably as you say have disillusioned me: and the second – well, you know I want to begin differently.

When I found myself differing from Euclid in his postulates I nearly despaired. But since that my objections have become quite admissible – only I am still a little ahead. I couldn’t make H. Spencer understand when he came to see me and yet his view of the metric system exactly fits with mine. (I knew nothing about his view then).

The Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette* is coming here next week again, and we shall have more discussion on certain ideas of mine which appear to belong to primordial and forgotten canons of number. P. Jourdain who is reckoned I believe the most original of our young mathematicians, will I hope take up the matter some day – if he lives. But alas! He has a mortal disease.

After all this I have to confess that I can’t do the simplest arithmetic ... and so on! Well, you must see all my witness; and then remember I leave you entirely free in the sense that as my only quest is reality, – fecund reality – I only ask to be superseded by something better.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

30 December 1910

... As to the Greeks (perhaps a year hence) I hope to get some valuable material – the three most remarkable references to the word-weaving of Greek Philosophy are:

- (i) Prof. Riehl’s dismissal of Plato and Aristotle in ‘Science and Metaphysics’:
- (ii) Dr. Schiller in ‘From Plato to Protagoras’:
- (iii) Herbert Spencer in ‘The Data of Ethics.’

Quite a formidable array of witness can be brought together – all I have hitherto, I will try to bring with me.

I am interested to hear of the progress of your ‘Mathematics’! – I am sorry I am not a mathematician but I had gathered from mathematicians and philosophers at Cambridge that Mr. Bertrand Russell had ‘said the last word’ on the parts he has treated of in ‘The Principles’ and the new ‘Principia.’ At any rate whoever takes the matter up will have to attack *him*: otherwise it would be like writing on Significs with no mention of yourself. I shall be very interested in the future of the theory.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

2 January 1911

Thank you for your card this morning. I ought to have added I was only referring to one sentence in each of my references; in Riehl ‘... Plato and Aristotle, who would have choked the beginnings of accurate thought with *nooses woven of words*’ (S.M. Chapter III); in Spencer ‘The imperfect separation of words from things which *characterises Greek speculation in general* seems to have been the cause... pervades dialogues of Plato and is traceable in Aristotle’ (Data Ch. III 13). Schiller ‘Wherever *words* lure and delude, stupefy and paralyse there Truth is sacrificed to Plato even by barbarians who have never heard his name.’ If these can be substantiated, as I think they can, it will be scarcely necessary to look much further. A typical example for instance is the manner in which Aristotle proves ‘slavery’ ‘natural’ in the *Politics*.

I shall not have sufficient examples to adduce for some time to come yet.

I am very interested to hear you have something on Mr. Russell though I do not profess to understand him – he is a difficult person to tackle I should think!

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

9 January 1911

Now that I am safely back with all the treasures you have entrusted to me, I want to thank you again for all your kindnesses during the pleasant days I spent with you.

I have never had such a feast of ideas and only hope I may be able to make the best use of what you so freely bestow.

Mr. Kehler’s article, which I enclose, I enjoyed very much. It is very refreshing: I wonder if America extends its admiration to Mark Twain’s ‘What is man?’

I have also looked through the Time article again: I could collect you interesting (etymological?!) material from Greek and Latin if you have not already had it. There is a spatial use of the word *καὶνῶς*, ‘again’ – which, if I remember right, is not understood by most commentators when it occurs (so Latin *rursus*). The word *ἄρτι*, ‘now’ has constantly to be translated ‘As it is’ – ‘As matters stand’ – just like the English *now* with emphasis. What of ‘maintenant’? *Simultaneity*, as Prof. Cook Wilson said, should give the greatest difficulty...

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

12 January 1911

I am returning the Logic of Definition, Marie-Claire and both letters of Dr. Peirce. Dewey’s ‘Studies of Logical Theory’ and ‘Logic and Significance’ will take me some time to finish.

I was much struck by Marie-Claire...

The ‘Logic of Definition’ disappointed me: the treatment is very inadequate (especially that called ‘Inductive Definition’). The author seems anxious to include his whole scheme of Philosophy; and this spoils the more valuable part though much of it is of real interest. [...] There is much room for a new up to date book on this subject – but I fear nothing is forthcoming.

I think Dr. Peirce's letters wonderful, and shall do my best to understand his existential graphs! I wish he would bring 'Significs' into the title of his new work which I hope is nearing completion. I am interested also in his remark on W. Benjamin Smith, and see that Prof. Prens also speaks highly of him in the 'Christ-Myth' – in which I have been interested.

The strange book Fifield was asking for advance orders of is 'A holiday with a Hegelian' by Francis Sedlak: the Daily News had a paragraph on it yesterday though they muddled the author's name. It sounds like a curious production.

Thank you very much for returning 'The Presentation of Reality' so fully annotated. I hope to be able to devote much attention to the book next term: and will be much interested to hear your comments and to see its value for Significs.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

16 January 1911

Many thanks for returns. You are welcome to keep the others at present.

'Marie Claire' has the primal sense and the significal instinct, now so generally tramped out, and they had to survive much. But her rough and lonely life drove her back on her pristine gift and so she remains very near a real and penetrative simplicity of outlook...

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

30 January 1911

... I have come across some interesting references lately. I am reading Philéas *Lebesque* 'L'Au-delà des Grammaires.' There seems to be an interesting appendix to *Brentano's* 'Origin of the knowledge of right and wrong' – the book referred to in the preface to G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*: and I hear there are some suggestive remarks in E. A. Poe's critical essays. There is a curious passage in 'Words' in Lascelles *Abercraunbie's* poem 'Blind' in his 'Interludes and Poems' (1908?).

I have noted your reference to *Scientia*. I shall not be able to get far without a knowledge of German and Italian, I can see – but I don't know when I shall have time to learn them!

I wonder if the problem of a being with only the sense of hearing had ever struck you in connection with Time as Derivative – it seems a difficult one....

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

24 March 1911

[...] When you have produced curiosity and uneasiness or even only directed attention to what we are losing and must not only regain but gain afresh, then you can go into the questions you quite properly raise. The work wanted must begin in the nursery and elementary school; the instinct of clarity in speech now burdened beneath a load of mere helpless convention perpetually defeating expression must be fostered and stimulated. When the generation now represented by my grandchildren marry their children must have their natural racial sense brought out and worked upon – with significal discrimination! While the elements of reading and writing are taught as now but not as obeying the same rigid (not logical) laws. Then the first school will appeal to this: their desire to express as to know and infer will always be stimulated and ordered: then gradually the either anarchic or dogmatic tendencies will be raised into interpretative ones. I think it ought not to be difficult to awake us. We are even now always being startled by what turns out to be the too-too of a tin-trumpt. But to be able to say what we ought to mean and to act upon our true conception of a subject – that is the aim. Don't you think that the mere suggestion of the subject,

the mere setting people to think it over and fostering a fruitful distinction is the first thing? It must sink in and leaven our minds. . . or as I said inoculate us. Think all really great changes for the better have had to be digested and assimilated first by a small then by a larger group. We must find some linguist too who would be able to bring witness from many languages as to human efforts to attain highly significant speech. [. . .]

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

29 March 1911

I have found this Paper on Time: but I do wish that view could be started by some more competent scribe! To me Space generates time as a secondary product, just as motion generates rate or speed. It may even be said to imply the number of steps, of breath-pulses, of heart-beats or engine-throbs, in traversing it, or the size of object within it. The quality is not implied either in space or in its implicate time.

I can imagine timeless Space, and the poets have recognised the 'eternal' or 'absolute Now' which to me is the Here, the Present, i. e. presented in a life which is really a beat, a flash. But a spaceless time seems nonsense, for time passes; and to pass you must in some sense have a space to be traversed.

Motion is also greater than time for it may be quick or slow (admit of more or fewer beats), or traverse wider or narrower spans and may reverse its direction. Time is almost pitifully inferior, unless you consider it as the product of space and motion, the baby of those parents! Think of our having to talk of a longer or shorter time, a quick time or slow time in music. We can speak of the 'spacious times of great Elizabeth,' but not of the temporal spaces.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Lady Welby

30 March 1911

I have now been safe back with my parcel of borrowed literature for two days and have had time to reflect on the many things we dipped into between Saturday and Monday. . .

I am much impressed by Dr. Peirce and am proposing to try to master his general position. At present I want to get some idea of his Existential Graphs, for he seems to consider them of great importance for Significs, and I am inclined to pay some attention to his advice, after reading his 'Classification of Signs,' in the letter I borrowed last term. It was for the Existential Graphs that I took the *Monist* . . . (as I am ashamed to say that periodical is not to be seen anywhere in Cambridge!) . . . I am quite ashamed to be so greedy – but I much want to master the difficulty once and for all. . .

I constantly think about your view of Time and Space though for the present I am anxious to avoid anything of a controversial nature in which metaphysicians or mathematicians claim their say – however there is plenty of time, and I shall not forget. Some time I hope to send you something about the Money-Language comparison for criticism, but just now I am busy more on the magic of words. . .

I enjoyed my week-end with you immensely and if you knew all that I managed to read you would be sure I made the best use of my opportunities! It was most auspicious that the E.B article should arrive while I was with you.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

5 April 1911

Alas! You made me a noble present (which I have passed on to Miss C.) of your ‘cold’! (What a stupid name). So I have been useless. I am so very glad you appreciate Dr. Peirce. I’m sure he is a much greater man – a more original genius – than he is yet credited with being. ‘I’m delighted with your greediness,’ as a nurser once said to a patient beginning to recover! We have all been ‘down’ with a ‘decline.’ I get furious at my own insufficiency, but I shall be quite happy now. Please take care of your valuable self! And come again before I begin to approach the drivelling stage.

As to the relation between time and space that can wait *till we can go through other like ideas*. Of course my treatment is a joke to what they all need. I am at best Hans Andersen’s small person ‘Why Mother, the Emperor has got nothing on!’ *Then* and not before the population roars ‘No more ye has!’ That’s a favourite story of mine. H. A. was a significian of sorts.

Do come again soon while I am still fairly rational. I have written to Canon L. and would like you to see that and his answer.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

12 April 1911

... I might manage to return via London and if it would be convenient to you for me to drop in on that day, I could return my borrowings and perhaps make a fuller acquaintance with Dr. Peirce; besides asking you one or two questions which have occurred to me on reading your marginal notes...

I have been very busy with the Existential Graphs and am just beginning to see their meaning; but it is rather a formidable undertaking. However, having begun, I want to see it through.

By the way, I saw in the Birmingham paper on Saturday an account of a meeting of the ‘Economic Biologists’ about whom I know nothing: – a great outcry about terminology. Perhaps it will be in *Nature*; if not, I will order a copy of the paper...

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

Saturday, 29 April 1911

I was delighted to hear you had got at Dr. Peirce. Yet, *please* do let me have a copy of his synopsis of the new book. I very much want to get at his logical theory of signs, etc. It seems to me that if it were to be combined in a less abstruse form with your exhaustive material and viewpoint, the result should prove irresistible.

I send you Miss Harrison’s inaugural address to our Society: it is likely to have an enormous sale like Dr. McTaggart’s similar address last year. Herd-Suggestion (or is it word suggestion!) is against *you* too, and I think it may interest you (N.B. significs on page I!)

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

5 May 1911

I think the best way is to return you the ‘Address’ you so kindly sent with the notes which occurred to me in reading it. It is of course very able like all that Miss H. does. (Please let me have it back). But I more and more long for the day when you and your Society may call yourselves the *Significians* – and become worthier of the title than I can be! For the Heretic in the last resort only differs and objects. Of course if Significs were doing its incalculably beneficent work, Miss H’s definition on her first page would be irrefutable. But such a recovery of original meaning

and association should be taught from the nursery upwards. These protests addressed to the adult are bound to fail until Significs is fully recognised. That is my own problem. Significs includes ‘heresy’ in the original sense. You will let me have the Address back, won’t you. I hope soon to be able to send you two copies of the book.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

11 May 1911

I have no patience with myself, making this blunder twice. The fact is that I used to have some commerce with the Oxford M. College and used to go and lunch and have talks there; so I mechanically write the word.

Meanwhile Mr. Mac’s attack (as his own friends call these outbreaks) distressed me greatly and has affected my health. It has also had secondary effects on Miss Beales and Miss Carter. It really arises from morbid changes in his own health, and has alienated more than one friend.

I have carried patience further perhaps than was wise; my sympathy with him and admiration for his courage and abilities have been so strong.

As I have not at my age a day to spare, I must begin to plan out the next (the more important) volume of the Significs series towards the end of June. I hope to go to Scotland the middle of July till September. I am hoping to recover from this disabling shock.

One thing I am very anxious to remind you of. The effect of placing yourself as it were in the focus of Significs will distinctly increase your power to master any and every ‘exam.’ You know I have a concrete witness to this, and in the autumn shall thus have a direct witness to the practical power of Significs. Do think of the possibilities here. Until Significs has rescued it Heretic will act as the bad name to the dog! However you are well aware of this.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

15 May 1911

... Alas! I fear the young generation has lost many associations of words which appeal to you. To me – and those I know – Heresy does not suggest disloyalty as you say (p. 10) for loyalty is good – orthodoxy today wholly and unalterably bad! And again ‘what the Divine has joined’ (p. 13) seems to mean nothing in the way I feel you would *like* it to, to me.

Nor do I think Heresy an ‘unfortunate’ (p. 3) name, but rather, like Miss Harrison, an *inspiring* title, and not without that essential *Humour* which modern creeds so sadly lack (and that is why by the way it seems to me they have gone never to return).

I send you by this post a review I wrote of Mr. Lowes Dickinson’s new volume *Religion and Immorality* – with some remarks on Faith. I don’t see why one should champion the word as you do on p. 4. We speak of *holding fast to the faith* and I have a Dictionary in 8 large volumes at my elbow called the ‘*Faiths of the world*.’

Surely this is the accepted meaning of the word, and all these Faiths Heretics *reject* as Miss Harrison rightly says. True as you remark, you don’t controvert a faith – but simply because that is psychologically impossible very often! But none the less faiths (a faith) *are* I think grotesque and can be called such for the most part.

The review I speak of is on p. 601 of the *Townsmen*. I regret it is such a crude journal, but that is because the ‘Faiths’ which control the better got up ones won’t admit my rather outspoken remarks into their superior columns whence the *need* (the social need) of many Heretics and Societies of a like nature! How *can* people read Drews and Reinach and the rest and go on in this absurd way?

I am much looking forward to your book. Thank you so much for promising me copies. . .

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

16 May 1911

You must remember that I read all the young books I can get hold of and find I get on best with the undergraduate or the boy who has just left school. Significs is quite impartial about fashion in terms and always looks forward while not neglecting history. I agree that orthodoxy is just as bad as heresy – and vice versa!

I don't wonder that you feel as you do about the 'divine.' I should welcome a term for the starchy and the sunny and the rush of Spring beauty which was free from outgrown references. I agree with Allen Upward in asking for the New Word. And that Word as you say must include the element of humour. Anyhow I can't do without its saving clause anywhere; nor can I think of an 'angel' (a messenger) who couldn't smile at a joke.

As for Faith you must be consistent and socially canonise the deserter, the betrayer, the traitor. You must despise good faith and the faithful dog.

You must muddle it up – as we all do – with creed and credulity. It is terrible how lightly we debase the currency of words. The Dictionary you mean contradicts itself if it means religious convictions and beliefs. There are no more faithful men than some I have known who were reckoned as atheists or at least as agnostics. They were like men stripped of all and yet devoted to truth and purity. The forces in the universe which make for faith appeal to the scientific man precisely because you can always *trust* him: this is the charter of experiment and the warrant of science.

I am sorry we use the term natural law, because law for the ordinary man is a rule enacted and repealed at will. I think I believe less and less as I live on: I feel a little as if Heresy was becoming the opposite of a faith, that is, a dogma.

I believe I am sitting on a chair, and I might believe you were a secret pickpocket! But I don't in any case put faith in these 'beliefs,' which have no moral – sometimes no rational or practical character, but are wholly delusive.

At present the Significian has to remember that in a true sense his success is his refutation. He is told 'You have succeeded in convincing me, because language is in fact entirely effective and your crusade therefore needless.'

The answer of course is – 'I have succeeded because of an innate power not confined to speech but also conveyed by tone, by facial and bodily expression and attitude, or in writing by the trend of the whole document and of the generation studying it, and also by our sense of its underlying purport.'

In some cases, we instinctively say 'I see where you are and what you are implying: don't try to explain.' But even so (1) we are often deceived by an appearance of fruitful, not merely transparent, lucidity: and (2) we ought to beware in our elaborated life of apparently simple solutions. And there are many cases (like that of 'heretic') where, until Signific has restored lost connotation and association, the grip of accepted reference cannot be loosened until we have taught a generation of children the true sense and bearing of the term. Nothing could be more fatal for the significant prospect and aim than to take a term which has acquired given associations – however false – and, before the principles of Significs are recognised, to wrench it back as Miss Harrison has done into a no longer alive context.

A heretic is now understood to mean a man who objects to or denies some position, view or theory widely and authoritatively held. 'Heresy' does not in current usage imply an upward tendency. You may even have as a heresy the idea of the temporary or casual nature of marriage. It may be urged that marriage is always an experiment; that the most ardent lovers are sometimes those who soonest 'tire' of each other. That usually depends on the associations of the term 'love' which is too often basely used. Again you have it in law: the enormous growth of mechanical aids may make some laws unbearable burdens or almost practical jokes: but they must be repealed or

modified with the utmost precaution and by experts, or you will engender ‘heresy’ and law-abiding men will become lawless insurgents bringing social order into content. Certainly I am no ‘heretic’ in this now generally received sense. I am not even a mere reformer – for more than form is at stake. I have more notes on the subject but must spare you. Only we must get some words together on themes of this kind.

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

1 June 1911

I had not replied to your last letter on heresy; but just let me thank you very sincerely for the present of your welcome volume [*Significs and Language*, 1911]. The title is admirable, also the general up-get. The quotation on title page reads excellently and is all the better if Henry James meant what you *imply* he meant. The whole trend of his book however suggested to me that he didn’t, and that he wasn’t aware of the significance of his own dictum! I have nevertheless quoted it with great effect once or twice since I noted it down from page 10 of the little book I read once when I was staying with you.

The Preface as it now stands is a great improvement – I still regret the lack of immediate quotation from the N. E. D. I like your first paper very much, and indeed all up to VIII, which I imagine will not reach the right audience? I mean that one of the few absurdities almost all who will read your book *do* notice, or have themselves point out, is the ‘laws’ nature: but from p. 77 one gathers this is all you would yourself do: if we are not to agree to drop the word. E.g. on p. 37 you cannot escape (you say) a law of nature. You might write something if you have time one day on the validity of this, if you contrast ‘breaking’ such a law as an iniquity? I should like to know further. How admirable is p. 41 also p. 63 about education, and p. 75.

I must remember the ‘corkscrew carving knife’ man! Where does he come from I wonder. Your idea of F flat and F sharp is very happy.

If people will only look at the Appendix it should be very valuable; but will they?

I want to read all through again several times as soon as I have hours to spare – I have been very busy in the last week negotiating and arranging Mr. Bernard Shaw’s great visit (he spoke for about 11/2 hours to all the great ones of Cambridge through the heat of Monday forenoon, and was enthusiastically received) – I hope to get very much therefrom, and to write to you then further. . .

P.S. To return to your last letter – ah! that you are not a Heretic! I won’t try to convert you though: I understand your position in religion, and in my own irreverent and blasphemous way I suppose I agree with what you say.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

2 June 1911

Your letter is delightful, and I am becoming less depressed about the book. Shall I present a copy to the library through you? I am proposing to do that at Oxford through a friend. My Church friends know that I suspect we are all round in confusion about ‘faith’ and ‘religion’ and that a real Gospel must free, reinforce, exalt and significate all possible sane thought. As for the ‘cults,’ especially those with despotic claims, save us from them! The waste of reverence and devotion and of what ought to illuminate the world in maintaining ‘doctrine’ which if divine could not fail to attract every heart faithfully to the best it knew, is appalling.

But Significs takes everyone from Pope to Atheist as victim of the present famine of interpretation on a really human ‘basis.’ Nothing human, as nothing natural, is alien to what ultimately Signifies.

I am already longing to begin what ought to be the crowning volume. I have an excellent model for its plan in Norman Angell's 'Great Illusion,' since he like me sees that you must overwhelmingly prove a new position; and hitherto there has been chiefly *plea*.

I hope I may get a sight of some report of Bernard Shaw. But he is sometimes in danger of idolising paradox and of saying things for the sake of brilliancy and of shocking the formalist. I am not sure that he does not sometimes inevitably thus play the orthodox game. We are apt to forget the tremendous power of reaction.

It is curious that you have spotted on page 37 what I hope is my only slip. Of course an old habit rubbed in will sometimes sneak into an old context.

I wish somebody had pointed out the leak! The corkscrew man was an acquaintance of my mother's, well known long ago. I grieve to say that I am falling into his condition. Another thing he did was to call out to recent widower the first time he had rejoined society. 'You didn't tell me why Mrs. So and So didn't come with you!'

I am forgetting everything except the biggest things; and I have to wear out the higher brain correcting and playing detective on the lower one's vagaries.

I wish you were not going away for so long but of course you must not miss it. Perhaps you could squeeze me in a day somehow before long. Alas I have no right to reckon on coherence much longer!

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

23 June 1911

I suppose you are just leaving Cambridge and will soon be on your 'Tour of the Capitals of Europe.' I thought you might care to know that I am likely to have a good helper for my final volume though I am afraid I can only help to start it, as I cannot get over the shock of Mr. M's conduct after he has for so long been treated as a son of the house.

I see now I ought to have taken the warnings of Mr. M's old friend more seriously. But I have always been loth to believe evil of any one and I felt a warm sympathy for his infirmities and also like his other friends fully appreciated his ability.

If you will give me an idea of your plans I will let you know later what is going on. I hope to go to Scotland for a few weeks about the middle of July but for the first time dread the journey. [...]

(The reviews are of course not out yet. I have interesting letters about the book but of course it demands a sequel and would indeed have been much clearer if Mr. Mc had included certain explanatory Papers. But I gave him a free hand. It could easily have been out a month or 6 weeks earlier but as it was appeared at the worst time.)

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

17 September 1911

... By the way don't you think this Bergson craze should make people interested? Have you thought of publishing *immediately* while it lasts your translation of his *Introduction à la Métaphysique*? I wish you would – with a preface emphasizing its bearing on language. You will note that Lindsay in his book actually quotes the Introduction in the *German* translation as the French is out of print! But if you won't publish I wonder would you lend me your translation for a short time to get typed? It would be very valuable to me as I am studying Bergson just now, and can't get at the original either. It is extraordinary how few have noticed the great stress laid by Bergson on the language problem ...

P.S. I wonder have you written anything on either 'Cause' or 'Probability' as related to Significs?

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

20 September 1911

I was wondering when you would be back and whether I should soon hear from you; and was glad to see your handwriting. Miss C and I have been in this unearthly and strangely 'blessed' place since July 13 & start for Harrow tomorrow. I was wretchedly ill and weak when I came, having been unable to recover from the staggering shock of Mr. M's attack. It ages & weakened me much as I was so fond of him & felt ... a tenderness towards his infirmity on account of my own granddaughter.

I had been warned of the danger of an outbreak but could not believe it. I am glad to have the pencil notes of an affectionate letter I wrote him in bed but did not send him because of his virulent outburst. You shall see it, for I know you took a liking for him and like me must wish for his welfare.

I hope soon after getting back to be starting my last book on why we should well or ill supply the needs so many express. The reviews have on the whole been more favourable than a new subject merely sketched and appealed for could expect.

I have arranged with Mr. Greenstreet to help me with it, which as a man of science a logician and a mathematician he will be able to do in convincing forms. My witness which is overwhelming will be made thoroughly conspicuous. [...] Have just begun a book which promises to be a powerful witness for Significs in education (*What is & What Might Be*). [...]

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

1 October 1911

... Thank you for the enclosure. ... I fear I disagree with parts of it. ... I fear I am a bit prejudiced against reverence: some people are by nature irreverent e.g. Bernard Shaw – Karl Marx – and I find it hard to deny them the 'noblest sense'...

I am glad you like Welton and Holmes. I had to write a Review of Welton last term. If I come across it when I get back I will send it to you as I upbraided him for not devoting a special chapter to 'Language' instead of 'Indirect Communication.' He tends to be a bit tedious – too much poetical quotation?

I thought Holmes' last chapter and conclusions spoilt his book but I suppose it is necessary still to write like that if one wants to be read.

I want to see a new German book on the conjectural 'Language of the Ice Age men' by one Franck. It sounds interesting? I haven't seen La Grasse's book on Language and Number yet – perhaps you have. ...

Charles K. Ogden to Victoria Welby

17 October 1911

I am very grateful to you for sending me your translation of Bergson's Introduction. ... Everyone is reading Bergson here now, and it was so in Birmingham where Prof. Hindhead had been lecturing.

There is a paper on his 'Time and Free Will' on Friday next and Mr. Bertrand Russell is to read a paper on him later on I think.

I do hope you will decide to publish it – I think it would do good preparatorily if it came out 'in parts' in one of the papers up here? If you care I think I could get that done at once.

Term is very busy here again and doesn't leave much time for thought! However I *am* reading two very interesting books by disciples of Bergson, Georges Sorel *Reflexions sur la violence* (the text of Vernon Lee's article in the *Fortnightly*) and very remarkable; and Tristan de Visan, *L'attitude du lyrisme contemporain*.

Victoria Welby to Charles K. Ogden

11 November 1911

Very anxious to know what is happening about the Translation of Bergson's Introduction for what you asked me. I have a long letter from him and he mentions at the end that one of his greatest friends who has all along entered entirely into his work is making a special translation of it for the use of an English publisher: so of course we must take care that mine is only used in the strictest privacy. I wish I could see you again some time during the Xmas interval. I am VERY hard at work starting the new book with the editing advice of Mr. Greenstreet. It will be emphatically a book of reference on the subject. I should like to give you some idea of the mass of virtual appeals from all sides for what I am doing my best to supply until worthier workers arise. But cannot hope to retain full powers for hard work much longer. . .

*Between Victoria Welby and Frederik van Eeden (1892–1912)**

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

6 April 1906

[...] Be sure that I also feel the unsoundable mystery of our nature. I doubt whether the two categories about which we are so glib – the physical and the psychical – are exhaustive. [...] If so, what wonder that we seek and seek for light and find it not? What wonder also that it *is* joyfully found through crude forms of 'conversion' or through prostration of the reason to an Absolutist Church? What wonder even that some forms of it may be found in 'opium-eating' and other drugs or drinks whereby men may snatch, at deadly cost, at an expansion of life! We are all more or less like the distracted mother at the fire, forcibly held back from rushing into the house to fetch her

* [The correspondence between Victoria Welby and Frederik van Eeden is stored in the Welby Collection, York University Archives (Toronto, Canada). The first and last letters in this collection are both from van Eeden and are dated respectively 4 September 1892 and 11 February 1912. Their correspondence continued over a period of twenty years, from 1892 to the time of Welby's death in 1912, even surviving moments of tension and discord. Apart from its interest in terms of the topics treated, ranging from problems in philosophy, psychology, aesthetics, politics and social reform, this corpus is impressive in terms of quantity. It includes handwritten originals and typewritten copies, some of which are redacted for publication and others not. As usual the enclosures include papers, essays, and copies of letter exchanges with others which Welby was in the habit of circulating when appropriate through the network formed by her epistolary relations. Part of their correspondence is also available at the Frederik van Eeden Archives, University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. What follows is a small selection of letters exchanged between 1906 and 1912, some of which are included by Nina Cust in her collection of 1931, *Other Dimensions*. However, the whole corpus is worthy of publication. My aim with this volume given space limitations is simply to signal these materials in the hope of stimulating further signifi-cs-related research. My own interventions or cuts are placed in square brackets. Letter openings and endings have been consistently eliminated].

baby, – and found to have her baby in her arms all the time! As the Word is very near us, in our mouth and in our heart, so is light. Let us not be dense but translucent!

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

18 September 1906

... Today I finished my new work, a drama in verse, called 'Minnestral' which means 'Ray-of-love.' I think it is the strongest work, the most full of living humanity which I thus far have made. . . I began it in Harrow, and I have never made anything so easily and with such a feeling of relief. . . I feel, of all people in the world, most indebted to you for my mental growth and deliverance, I mean, of course, of all living people.

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

27 September 1906

I didn't want to answer that letter of yours in a hurry: it touched me more than I can say. And even now *I cannot* overtake my letters. They crowd in: they demand instant answers: and the real friends have to wait . . . Meanwhile thank you for your *goodly* words (I like that old expression) about help from me in your growth and deliverance. There need be no 'respectful distance' which *separates*: only that which deeply unites in mutual respect. I am indeed proud of the affection of souls like yours. . . .

[. . .] I have come to a great turning-point in my life: the Last Turn. . . . One of the most famous men in America, the President of one of the great Universities, has been staying with me and is so childlike and humble that he says he has learnt things at Duneaves of which he had never before dreamt. He *sees*. He urges me to come to America, to stay with him, to see all the great thinkers, to inspire *his* students with the illimitable potencies of Significs. Shall I? It would almost certainly kill me. But what matter? . . .

Then Dr. Lionel Tayler is to write a book at once on my subject. And a young Balliol man [Charles K. Ogden] is taking it up. And . . . I can't go on! My heart overflows. But where is your book from your point of view? Will you never write it?

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

10 October 1906

I was very glad to receive your letter of September 27th. I only hope you will *not* go to America. Perhaps it is selfish, but indeed I believe these men ought to come to the Sybill on her hill, to learn to *see*, and not take her across the ocean where she may come to harm. Tell me the name of that famous American. And tell me soon that you are not going. Some days ago I had the visit of a young Doctor philosopher from Zürich, the teacher of my eldest boy. He is a very clever and active man, an extremely good teacher, and principally interested in the great biological questions of today. We have been talking Significs nearly all the time, and I advised him to go to England and speak to you and Dr. L. Tayler. . . .

You ask me, when *my* book about significs shall be ready. This was like asking a general, who is painfully preparing his plans and sorry about all the difficulties and his limited means, 'Now! Are you never going to fight?' Look here, I am principally an artist, and so my best means must be artistic. In my third volume of *Little Johannes* I have put the question of Significs rather clearly but shortly. Exactly this part has been quoted by a German review, 'Die Kunstwurt'. . . .

*Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden**January 1907*

... I am an atheist too; denier of the god who damns unless we praise 'him' enough; who loves adulation, who patronises people who profess a particular creed fitted only for one type among the many of mind, and an orthodoxy of subservient conformity; who insists on petrifying faith into mere belief and on our worshipping the skeleton of a dead Babe, a dead Mother, a dead 'father in heaven'! Again, and perhaps yet more emphatically, atheist of a god who fears and hates the free and fearless thought of the man who is faithful to what he sees – to fact, to reality – and will not bow to shams; who encourages and rewards the victims of forms of insanity calling themselves religious; those who call 'saintly' a mysticism which mentally drugs itself into an unearned orgy of 'ecstasy' and miracle. A god who takes mean advantage of a sensitive conscience and enslaves it to the worst of tyrants – a dead thought, a haunting and threatening spectre; who, while 'omnipotent,' allows 'Nature' to be cynically cruel, allows the victory of evil, and offers an illusive 'immortality' (really based on hopeless inconsistency) to those who are in fact the dupes of survivals in language, dupes of emotion, dupes of a spiritual self which demands in one form or another 'Glory for me.'

Yes, I am a ruthless denier of Deity as we have too easily conceived that; Deity that is merely sexual, merely a father who would stifle the very buddings of knowledge and crown ignorance, stupidity, bigotry, instead of a faithful and therefore child-like quest of natural truth with its What and How and Why, its incorruptible directness of inference, its daring simplicity and its deep reverence for significance – that very worth of life which we have as yet but barely reached or touched.

*Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden**6.45 a.m., January 1907*

I have been up dear friend since 4 a.m. preparing myself for writing to you by annotating the articles on mathematical logic sent to me for comment by Peirce and Vailati. ...

[...] You know that behind my open gospel of Significs lies its application to ethics and what we call morality. I have not felt that it was time yet to write openly on what I see as the im-morality of the accepted (and so-called Christian) morals of European civilization.

I must at least earn this right by definitely demonstrating the educational value of the significal method. This stage is now at last being reached.

[...] But the true love of the 'genius' is the glory he sees: the true Mistress of the 'poet' (whether he writes or paints or makes music or consecrates the beauty of the world in any way) is the love-liness he brings. ...

The commoner man demands the satisfaction of a desire to possess what is the lower side of our animal inheritance. GOD forbid that we should court 'pain and misery' or be unheeding of the want and anguish innate in our very generation. GOD forbid that I should fail to appreciate their converse. Only let us see that we begin really to interpret: to see through pain and misery, to penetrate to their true significance. This has never been done yet except (in primitive form) by the martyr, who smilingly bathes his hands in the flame which is torture to others. [...] Well, we mothers know something of that.

It has been said humorously, but with some degree of truth, that no ordinary man would ever bear a second child. ...

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

3 March 1907

... The last time in Holland was very heavy for me. Harrow seemed a paradise in comparison. That hill seemed to rise above the fog of worry and trouble.

Our last conversation had a *lasting* effect. However sorely I feel depressed and bent down, I never forget that cheering, uplifting conversation, and our communion, which was stronger than ever before. In my mind I always call you: *the one who is not deceived*, and this is great praise.

One thing weighs upon me more heavily of late than anything else. That is the particularity of the modern human mind to move to and fro, to right and wrong, in tremendous massal waves, which only by very few out of millions can be resisted; waves of suggestion, waves of error, erroneous praise, erroneous blame, erroneous enthusiasm, all tremendous in extension and power. And a mere trifle can start such a wave; there is no relation whatever between the real value of the cause and the importance of the movement. This is terrible. [...]

The beauty of the old Cathedrals depended on the religious wisdom of those times. Every part of the building had its deep significance. The great buildings of our times are void of significance; they *cannot* be beautiful. *No beautiful architecture can arise before we have acquired a new wisdom*. It all waits for Significs. There's a thought for you. [...]

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

1 April 1907

Your letter arrived just as I was expecting my Roman Catholic friend – or rather, except in letters, bare acquaintance! (How strangely we use the word 'know'! 'O, I don't know Smith at all; but we have corresponded intimately,' we say!). So I told him what you said about the 'massal' waves and their great Zigzags, and he felt it too. And then we went further and found tides, often overlapping each other and sweeping away into an illimitable universe of the More and Greater and Better: we even found a parable in the ripples, always growing, which a child – throwing a stick or stone into a 'mere' pond – sees to vanish in the bank and asks, 'But where are they gone?'

But of course that does not affect your problem, the why of all the powerful Error waves which sweep us off our feet, but which are started by mere trifles. Yet, that 'mere.' I often wonder, have we a right to use so tremendous a word so lightly as we do? Are we sure that anything is 'mere'; that it means anything, except (like bare) just the 'let us assume' for the momentary exigencies of argument or practice? Perhaps it is we that reckon something priceless or harmless or deathless as *merely* that – trifle!

Perhaps to us the microscopic germ which is to develop into the great thinker is – *merely* a tiny dot, grain. ... What are we to learn in this great lesson of the massal waves which may carry us away into shipwreck? Why, just what we learn from the old Cathedrals: that we must find out how to master their significance and the laws of their governance exactly as we have done those of steam and of electricity. It is all first a question, as you yourself say, of Significs. We don't yet know even how really to bring goodness into the world and equip it for conquest. 'Britannia rules the waves' has a sad echo of almost sardonic laughter: a poor ruling indeed! But some Britannia must in truth inspire her children to rule all waves into great orderly tides of harmonic and creative activity ... and more especially the moral waves. At present we are wasting our energies, our experience, our foresight terribly because we do not put what you also see as lacking – Interpretation, Translation – first in all life and in all training. At present also how often we ourselves carelessly, ignorantly, unobservantly, undiscerningly give the little touch which sends a world to wreck; or again pass by some precious, perhaps unique, opportunity to give the little touch which shall spin the ball of our destiny away from the place of these jarring discords; or rather tune them away from an orchestra which has never yet fully given its own living music! [...]

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

21 May 1907

I have been thinking lately a good deal over the question of instinct as being the intellect of the race. More and more my whole view of nature is changing and developing, as I begin to understand better how our minds are only small components of greater, loftier, endlessly wiser minds, whose language and expression we dimly begin to be aware of – not yet to understand – in all the phenomena of life, the struggling and mutating races and species. Slowly I build up these ideas, and hope to leave something valuable about it, of course not more than the merest hint, before I die.

The American critics call me ‘the emotional philosopher’ which I do not think so very wrongly put.

Can you send me that paper on Life?

I feel quite confident that you will be a light to all of us, until your very last moment.

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

21 May 1907

... I am reading Nietzsche again, and I think now more of him than ever. Life has made me understand him. And you will understand him, in his paradoxes like ‘God is dead!’ He is a great poet, and a fountain of mother-sense.

I feel, as my heavy and fearful task, to give in dramatic form to the great public some glimpses of the new wisdom. Nietzsche, Walt Whitman (in his clumsy way) and Shaw are my fellow-workers. But Shaw is too much of a journalist, too little of a poet. Yet he is a wonderful genius.

Could you tell me where to find all these scientific articles? I feel so stupid; it is so difficult to get all these things here. ...

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

26 September 1908

[...] I have at last found two men of fine character and great ability who will devote themselves to the presentation and development of Significs so that its future is assured. And I have even stormed the citadel of Mathematics! And articles on it are to be written on it there. I must again remind you that whatever I say to you is said to that ‘Little Johannes’ whose ideal was in harmony with *my* quest: and to the man in love with his fellows who almost recklessly gave away his substance for them, asking no reward and no ‘happiness’ but only the joy of service. Are you not that man? You are; and so we think together. We have in common what Goblet d’Alviella calls ‘une notion qui a été très tôt la caractéristique et l’honneur de l’humanité: l’idée du Parfait, qu’il faut distinguer de ... l’aspiration au bonheur.’ Perhaps in French you will see that we *are* speaking of the same thing. But your last two letters are examples of how even *you* suffer from the common difficulties caused by our lack of that interpretative power which, when regained, will leave no achievement beyond the reach of man. [...]

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

4 November 1908

My dear friend looking at your letter of October 26th again own that sadness lifts for a moment as I realise that I don’t pass in an ‘exam’ as the lads say, as a Model Parent and a Moral Heroine! I am sorry to confess that I have no desire in that direction. I am just an old woman with a young heart and a long sight and a passion for service who knows she is a bundle of faults. But I haven’t

any 'centre' that does not shift as with Man I wing my way through ages illimitable and learn that Life is Change. My dear friend 'social spheres' are all nonsense. I have proved it over and over again. What is called mind 'makes me tired,' as the Americans say. Imagine your supposing I was so dull and inhuman as the people who prize 'social rank' when there is a question of really human communion! And I, who never see any old friends in 'society' from the King downwards – not even my own Ducal and like relatives! I who have in every case refused any longer to see here any one who began even innocently to 'court' and 'flatter'; who have indeed driven them all away by polite sarcasm! You have indeed missed the mark. For you are the only exception; the only person I tolerate who is liable (unjustly of course) to the very charge you bring against others. You have been accused of toadying me and of finding this house a convenience! I have had indignantly to deny it. But can't of course disclaim affection for and admiration of you and your work. In your normal state you are quite well aware that the most uncompromising critics are just the people I get on best with. But you are not normal just now. . . .

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

5–7 November 1908

My dear friend (But are you any longer that? I have written a long letter from my heart. But is it of any use? I do not send it).

- 1) You cannot feel any respect for me as human (that is plain!)
- 2) You feel that I lead a life of 'aristocratic' luxury and idleness at Harrow without a thought of the slums of London.
- 3) You have wanted to contradict (or refute?) me, but felt it would be useless.
- 4) You differ from me in the 'central thing': that is, you are for all Gain and I am for all Gift, you want to enjoy and rejoice and I want to bless and transfigure the world by service. These are our 'points of gravitation.'
- 5) You imagine that I depreciate Trotter whereas a great friend of his is exactly of the opposite opinion and wants me to write to him a comment on his first article.
- 6) You lay stress on the importance of the 'social sphere.' To me except in the most superficial sense, *it doesn't exist*. And in the surface sense I have for years avoided to the utmost the 'sphere' in which I was born.
- 7) You say I don't know the human world. That notion can be absolutely refuted by the evidence even of letters from all sorts and conditions of men. And I have starved in rags even at times.
- 8) You describe me as playing the 'queen' of 'courtiers' who have never given me plain unmitigated truth.

As to that there must here be very plain word. I have in every case refused any longer to ask here anyone who began to 'court' and 'flatter.' Indeed I drive them all away by polite sarcasm! You have indeed missed the mark. For you are the only one I welcome who is liable (*unjustly of course*) to the very charge you bring against others. *You* have been accused of toadying me and of finding this house a convenience! I have had indignantly to deny it. I remain as I have always been not any sort of 'queen' but 'your faithful servant.'

7 November

You know quite well that my life has been an agony of sympathy with need, pain, loss. That is what I mean when I say I have had no joy. I suffer with and in all. But now – thank GOODness! – there are men who see that whatever my defects (about which they are quite candid) the only radical cure for evils is an enhanced sense of Significance. I thought you saw that. You have convinced me that you do not.

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

11 November 1908

I agree with you that it is time to revert in correspondence to cooler and more rational methods. What distresses me for your sake in your letter was its lack of insight into the exceptional character of my history and position. I was full of sympathy both for your aims and our views and I suddenly found I was living in a fools paradise. I had credited you with an inkling of what the success of my work (in better hands) would have done for the realisation of your dearest wishes and dreams. You more than anyone almost need to preach Significs. I would strike at the roots and sterilise the very germs of the unbearable evils of human misery and injustice against which you fight. (For of course you are really Gift though you profess to demand Gain).

[...] I am never proud of what I write and language fails us all when we want to be most essentially SIGNIFICANT. There is no resentment and no misunderstanding on by side. If there is weakness it is the weakness of affection. But that can be overcome. You shall find me stronger. The pressure of the business and what may be called the official side of my work is now overwhelming so I must economise and you shall have no more 'emotion.' Meanwhile little by little the true value of Significs is beginning to percolate minds which can develop the idea and method as I could not. The latest example is a great public official who came here yesterday to cross-examine me severely for which I was grateful: I consider it an honour since a very powerful representative of Education in its present forms. Before he went he showed the sincerity of response by offering to sanction absence from any school of an intelligent infant of whom I spoke though without special official sanction that would be illegal; and apparently the exception has never before been granted. But this is a small thing. What I am working at is the transfiguration of the world. A poor beggar of a worker indeed am I fit only to deal with rudiments, to plough, turn over the soil and let in the vivifying Sun. Others must do the gardening and a harvesting... To change the figure, Significs will be the wireless telegraphy between all sorts of men in the future as compared with the communication of 100 years ago. [...]

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

22 November 1908

Let me begin by telling you that I fully appreciate the object of your devoting so much time and power to writing me real letters. And moreover I always feel honoured when anyone of 'light and leading' will let me know what they do actually think. We begin by disguising and go on, under the compulsion of language, to distort the most simple issues. [...] I blame no one for slowness in taking up or refusal to consider my rudimentary presentment of the 'solar' nucleus from which radiate tall ascending activities. Indeed if I am right, even were I worthy to expound it, it could only be understood now as an embryo may be – as an embodied and living promise.

Meantime I accept your correction of the 'weary signalman' and agree that it is his first duty to keep fresh. That brings us to the question of Gift. It is strange how often 'gift' means money or at least the material. But I made sure that you who had given so much more and had seen so clearly that the other part was secondary and but one means (not always safe or really beneficial) of self-gift, would see that my protest was really drawn out by my high estimate of your real motive.

And I could not realise that you failed to see that I live as I do for two reasons only. One because it enables me to receive and benefit some who specially need it; the other because it enables me, without becoming ill or morbid, to labour literally without ceasing at work of the most exacting and often painfully trying kind. But one thing keeps me steadfast: none of it will now be wasted. Its very failure is beginning to inspire some who see that no man is yet doing the first of all things, and that the triumph of the poet and the thinker as of the worker and maker, is still achieved in

spite of difficulties which ought to be removed – some of them imposed even upon the free spirit of the Child. Every child should (and will) grow up greater than he does now. And then (though I would not limit greatness to Germany!) the mountain peaks of humanity which so dwarf the molehills will themselves rise from a higher plateau [. . .]

All that you say about poetry and art – in the deepest sense in which those words are (I fear often confusedly) used – comes home to my inmost soul. The discipline both of science and of logic has been to me a bitter asceticism. But it was especially needed: I did not need to be taught enthusiasm, but to learn self-restraint and self-training. And through personal contact with a few of the leaders of science I discovered with surprise that they too had a burning secret life of imagination; in some a stronger flame because it lay in a deep crater, but always inexpressible. If they complained of the poets it was because they were too content with a language which tended to divide rather than enrich the whole human inheritance. And even the logicians and mathematicians I found had secret springs of their own. Now of course I admit that all these suffered alike from the imposed barriers which blind us to the essential unity of all great work, added to the natural barrier of the shortness of life [. . .].

With regard to Shelley I will most gladly read his ‘Defense of Poetry.’ As to my motive it remains in one sense absolutely the same, though in another it is always growing, since it is a living motive. You should see the letters that come as ever from saints (of all creeds or none) who speak of my service to them on the side of religion, the while that I know it is no ‘side’ but the greatest of all life-powers, flowing as much from them to me as from me to them, and including the Queen of Beauty and the Quest of Truth as poetry and science, the Quest of Order as in logic and Reason as in metaphysic in short the Sun of which Man is the planet. (Not that I wish to press or literalise such a thought). As to the little result of a great labour, the reason is plain to my present helpers. It is too radical to be understood in one generation. It cannot even be effectually criticised yet, much less utilised. One thing that has just now brought this home to me afresh is a careful study I am making of Bloch’s ‘Sexual Life of our Time.’ Take that wonderful Swedish woman Ellen Key; who really understands her yet? The author and his able Translator partly do. But it will take some time yet before her ideas – themselves doubtless needing fresh criticism, especially in the light of eugenics – can give tangible results to the world. Incubation long and patient is vitally necessary to all ideas which spring from the human centres themselves. Reading and noting Bloch in detail (of course I have read other authors but none so thorough) it jumps at the eyes as the French say, that much nameless horror and waste and pollution of life arises from a needless ambiguity of ideal and its expression. We may be cherishing as sacred something which all the time is making for vileness, with hypocrisy the worst of vices, added on. Two terrible confusions that we tolerate in English (of course I can only speak for my own language) I may instance here. . .

One point I thought was clear. I gave up music because I became deaf, and had not, like Beethoven, the power to rise above this. But also I saw that my love of that, as of all beauty (which is indeed a passion), would not have helped the world as my present work can do, one which, however ill I may do it, is not yet done by others unless incidentally and unconsciously. But I could not do it without the sense of the unspeakable significance which no one, not even the poet, fully sees, and which some day will irradiate every idea that ever came in shadow to mankind. [. . .]

All that you say in your letter about ‘giving,’ with all my heart I echo. I would gladly if I could have prevented your giving as you did, that you might have the power for a greater and truer giving. But after all you still have that and joy too. And your saying about gift and gain reverses well (as most such sayings should). ‘The cult of gift – true gift – in spirit and truth and the highest joy, is at the same time the cult of wise gain.’

I see I have forgotten the two points representative of confusion which have, I am assured by linguists, their representatives in all European languages. I mean first between Shame and Modesty and second between Prudity and Purity. As to the difference between Faith and Belief, that takes only too many forms.

I am always grateful that my mother would never have me taught any creeds, though my aunts got me to repeat a few prayers. But nothing said by rote seemed to me of any value except in a play, and even in that I was complained of when acting as breaking out into more natural words and only ending with the 'tag'!

Now I must not write any more. And today I ought to have sent some important answers to problems proposed to me by a very intelligent Master here. My grandson still defies the Oxford tradition and gets special leave whenever he can to come here; he eagerly drinks in the spirit of what he sees as in the future. [. . .]

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

2 December 1908

What I wonder at *your* not seeing is that I am working at once at the heart – rather the very nucleus – of poetry and art and music, and also at the very source of the appalling misery of Want (in all senses) which surrounds and denounces our selfish comfort, ease, pleasure – happiness or luck (good fortune).

Beauty signifies much to which as yet most of us are dull. Life signifies illimitably to all of us. But we? We ought to signify most: but even though we may see all worlds and all experience as SIGN (and realise our own profoundly significant power to Symbolise), we do not yet grasp the essential importance of significance. We often even miss the point that the lesser, the poorer, may convey the greater, the richer. We fail to note how the baser may, even by contrast, suggest the nobler; how a black mark or a mere incision or 'dab' of paint may strike home to a man's brain, heart, conscience, and issue in a great deed or a great thought: one of deliverance and new vitality in a more than Promised, a Waiting land – on the far horizon, but also in the secret recesses of our own nature.

And what is our nature? What ought it to be, to become? Nothing less than divine. And what is the divine? The better yet than the best we can conceive and adore. . . . But as for defining that or any essential truth or good – well, for the sake of all that is worthy to be longed for, let us at least see that we lose nothing possible by traitorous content with mis-expression. Which of us ought not to shrink with shame at the state of the world of men, when one great resolve throughout the world to raise all Expression to its true throne of Significance and give it the crown and sceptre of Interpretation, would transfigure the whole race? (and that loyal Nature waiting only for the Word of Significant Command which shall ordain it for a priesthood yet unspeakable?).

Even conscience, devotion, sacrifice are now tragically running to waste. Many of those as it were consecrated for doing good, are in effect fostering evil. We say pathetically, How strange is the failure of religion, of morality; how inexplicable the welter and anarchy and thus paralysis, of effort to regenerate!

But in fact it would be stranger were it otherwise. We do not yet know fully what the great ideas and words may signify. We use them at once too conventionally and too capriciously, and thus we who would regenerate the world have a blunted if not confused sense of what we really mean. We may plead good *intention*; but how ignorant as yet that is a best! Does anyone dispute this? Let him realise the failure and the misery of life in the light of life's true and priceless value. Let him travail at least for the birth of a new era, an era in which light shall flood the darkened world of shadows, and unveil realities open to an explorer who balks no fact and condones no evasion; one who makes no reservations since his faith has no fear, and whose simplicity in question is teeming with the answer and its real gift.

Here is indeed the quest of the son of man, the child of the race; let us see that his way is opened; let us speed him on the greatest of ascents; let us consent to be humbled by his unanswerable questions, so that we may by them be stirred out of the very apathy and neglect of Significance which makes them answerable.

One thing is certain. Without this, beauty may glorify and poetry may fascinate and enrapture; but the terrible enigmas will remain and ever grow. We shall find the poison weed in the very sanctuaries of our garden, the worm gnawing at the very root of our hope.

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

5 April 1909

You will be pleased to hear that I lectured on April 2nd before about a thousand students of Kansas University here in Lawrence, Kansas – comprising men and women – on *Significs*. I dare say this is probably the first lecture on this subject ever held. I tried to make it as popular as the subject would allow and I found great attention and appreciation. Of course only a few will have understood the scope of the matter, but we may be glad if two or three out of a thousand are sincerely interested.

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

10 November 1909

[...] First I can indeed enter into your feelings of the contrast between the greatness of Nature and the worse than littleness of the ‘insipid crowd.’ And I am entirely with you about that rotten ‘Omad Khayyam.’ It is responsible for much fouling of pure, simple life. Its ‘vogue’ is as you say a tragical sign of the times. I am glad you are not going again to America. Also that you are to lecture and have given a play and are writing otherwise. Bernard Shaw’s warning appeals to me also. Now we come to the second part of your letter. . . You must not think that it is to you alone that the Vision and the Voice comes. It has come many times to me. Without it I could never have borne the agony of my work and the burden of my message sounding day and night as the first condition of all good action.

What I and no one else deal with is the first condition of true success in the highest work. The pressing first necessity is to know and see that others know, what we really mean. Very few of us know that. I should never have learnt even as much as I know of my own meaning without this long labour of clearing the fogs and jungles of mind. Many times over men like St. Anthony have supposed that you must begin at the other end and have left the world stupid and ready to run after every craze, victim to fanaticisms or to deliberate exploitation. We have fallen victims to the false prophets and sacrificed the true ones. Why? Because we have forgotten to learn the elements of significance: and now because we are ignoring the spiritual significance of physical science and its bearing on your problem. Always the wrong end. . . always. Though we gave every penny away and went bare and hungry we should only do harm, for no one would understand any better, no one would learn to understand. When everybody was well off, living for pleasure and gambling for excitement and worse things would go on just the same. The true solution is first to use the means we have to reveal and make clear our greatest, our central want and need and loss and to supply it.

It amazes me that you should suppose you can attack the social problem and destroy the horrors of physical starvation and suffering, while leaving their mental forms untouched. Well, we all do, and that is why the world is still so full of tragedy. The poisoned springs are left untouched and we trust to some spiritual drugging to cure their inevitable effects.

I did think you understood. I remember telling you plainly on the window seat of my room in Denton how my whole soul was devoted to driving far away and purifying springs so that we may really know what we are doing. You like everyone trying to do good are leaving behind you a mortal enemy which successfully keeps us from understanding each other and the conditions of social welfare. It is confusion and misunderstanding that we must first attack or we must fail hopelessly in the long run. The collapse of your own good work was an instance of this. All good

effort, all unselfish deed fails as long as we allow expression to betray us as it does. Those who wronged you were self-deceived. Let us develop in every child its innate sense of significance; thus it will grow up able as none of us can be, to read and to open the unknown, to clear up the fatal confusions which cause or favour the miseries of life, to dissipate our tragical impotence, to interpret, to repudiate mystery and the mystic who makes of it a cult and drugs us into dreaming. . .

In my poor and unworthy way, I am not standing but working hard at the right hand of the poor: I am working to bring the warmth of life and its fullness and beauty to the naked: I am trying to clear the passage of a human foot which would often be better for freedom from crippling shoes: above all I am devoting such strength as remains to comforting the desolate with a comfort not mere prosperity like that of your luxurious passengers, but one which clears away the horrible jungle of false values in which we all live, and make room for the pouring in of a peace that passeth understanding.

It passeth understanding, as all the purest and noblest things pass it, because none of us really understand ourselves or others, so long as we fail to see that Expression instead of conveying unflinching significance from each to each and all tends to distort all our thought and all our judgment. But now I have good hope that the time is not too far off (though I can hardly live to see it) when *Peace* will not pass Understanding: when we shall gain a strength beyond all present words to sweep away the bitter stupidities of selfishness.

The intolerable confusions which hinder all of us; the chaos of misread experience which sunders and paralyses those of us whose hearts are fullest of longing to help all who need in the truest way must first be swept away. I can only do my best to clear the way. You have never quite understood, partly from the barrier which my work will tend to remove. For facts have to be expressed, and in expressing we distort them. You ask what is the use of Words in all this, and I answer, it is Expression of all kinds which is responsible for the illusions and delusions in which we live. A voice is dumb unless it speaks unmistakably; but at present neither the call nor the answer is clear.

The first thing of all is immensely to increase powers of mutual understanding, and then the regeneration of man will become possible, for we shall really know what we mean.

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

23 February 1910

I have come to the end of my first European crusade, and I feel immensely grateful and uplifted. I have spoken in Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Stuttgart, Dusseldorf, Bonn, Vienna, Dresden, Antwerp, Brussels, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Aachen and everywhere been able to bring my audience to enthusiasm. I have found friends everywhere and have formed a union of sympathy between isolated strugglers who did not know of each other. I have spoken of significs wherever I came and sown many seeds which are bound to germ, how many there may perish. You may imagine my feeling of gratitude, that I was enabled to do this work in good health and spirits. I know you will understand me and share my feelings. The place I loved best and found the most noble and enthusiastic minds, and also the greatest upheaval of art, is Stockholm in Sweden. It is a marvellous country and a marvellous healthy and sincere people.

I found also two great poets – of the very greatest – in Germany. Their works accompany me and are a great blessing.

I intend to write my experience on this trip down in a letter to an American friend who asked me, H. G. Wells and Herron to exchange our experience as to the most interesting people and books we met. He will probably publish this matter in an American magazine.

Now I am going to stay at Walden and work there, on the fields and at my desk for the rest of the summer. . . .

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

19 May 1910

I have so much to ask and say to you, and am plunged so deep in work which is hard at 73 that I shall be glad indeed to see you again. If all goes well we go to Scotland July 15th. Come if you possibly can in June. I'm very glad to hear that things are coming right for you. Yes! We all feel we have lost a personal friend, though I have never seen him since he succeeded. 'The peacemaker of Europe,' and indirectly of the world is indeed a precious title and one that he earned. You want it in the social and economic world. If we could only grow a gentle and kindly, sympathetic, influential Roosevelt, and let him pacify the whole world, industrial, philosophical, practical and religious. . . . If Only! You see I am full of these thoughts. I am beginning my last book, my legacy. It may have to be divided into two books the material is so varied and so bulky. . . .

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

7 October 1910

I am here now in daily conversation with Volker, the author of *Sideric Birth*. There is your man, our man, the man the world is looking for, or rather, waiting for without looking or knowing. He is 33, of wealthy family, mathematician, astronomer, poet. He collected material for his book during ten years, and it is the first thing he has ever published. I think he is a Jew, and his face and looks remind me more of Spinoza than of any other man, though he has something in the shape of this face resembling G. S. Lee, and in his eyes resembling Goethe. We have great talks and he showed me wonderful books. Among others a book by Victor Goldsmith called *Harmony and Complication*, showing the correspondence between the formation of crystals and the structure of music. And another book by Wilhelm Fleiss showing statistically and scientifically the recurrence of the two figures 23 and 28 in life of men and women, and then, most marvellous of all, the fact that the two axes of the sun have a relation expressed by these very same two figures.

I am constantly thinking of you and daily wondering how your intuition struck so many true veins of wisdom that are all to be explored by and by.

Do not omit to send Volker all your books. He does not speak English very well, but I will make him. That dreadful wall of language may not remain between these two real worlds. . . .

If I have not written to you lately, it was because I have *too much* to say. . . .

My plays are on the stage in Dresden and Berlin.

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

17 October 1910

[. . .] I am of course deeply interested in all you tell me about Volker. I have ordered more copies of my books which have to be bound, and will send them as soon as I can and also write to your friend, please tell him. Meantime Mr Macdonald is helping me with the New Book and will I feel sure do admirable editing work.

You know I feel quite clear about the source – one open to us all to drink at – of what you call my intuition. It is the rightful heritage of the human race, originally acting for the survival of the most delicate and helpless of highly organized beings. But this Primal sense has developed enormous secondary resources in more and more complex civilizations; and now Western education at least stamps it out; as least it only survives in the morbid or unsound forms which obsess us, such as magic, mysticism, theosophism, spiritualism, & s & c.

You see I was never 'educated,' which really as yet means *inducated*; so my native outlook and insight remains in force. It is the recognition of Significs from the very start of a real education and that alone, which can help us out of this bondage. We have to bring out – really educe – the

tremendous latent powers of humanity. But for this end we must beware of and sternly control, the imaginative forces. We must be able to meet the critic and the man of business on their own ground. And to do this we must revolutionise our ideas and methods on Expression, which must delicately fit and strongly enforce what we learn and see, and think and know. Nature ‘dovetails’ everywhere: her perfection of correspondence and consequence is just what we have to translate into human nature – well so called. Would that our ‘spiritual’ were as loyal as our atmosphere with its blessed breath of pure freshness and the radiant beauty which it makes visible to us! But the homeliest things are sacred and noble so far as their true significance is open to us and the confusions of habit and usage are banned by a training which breaks down barriers by the forces of resistless penetration.

Well, I also have too much to say; and moreover I am never satisfied with saying it through idioms which betray us at every step.

So I will only add that what I hear of Herr Gutkind from you . . . makes me long for his book to be translated. This I believe my friend Miss Beales has begun to do. Mr Lee was a great gift to me; and the friend he brought here was another. I get wonderful letters from him, and yet he is that generally hopeless person, a ‘business man.’

As I am now selecting Papers for the book, you know they come as they will and always from 5 to 7 o’clock in the morning, so I only send you two late examples out of many. They are chosen almost at random.

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

24 October 1910

I got your letter and your two pieces of writing in Berlin and we – Gutkind (Volker) and I – have had long talks over then. There is such an enormous difference in talking with a man gifted with ‘mother-sense’ or an ordinary clever man, even a scientific or intellectual genius.

You did not answer me regarding those wonderful discoveries of Fliess. Did you know them? Are they translated and known in England? It is the discovery of the rhythm in which the heart of Life pulsates. Think of the finding of a simple relation between the time elapsed since the death of a grand-mother and the birth of a grand-child, the time between the budding, opening and fading of a flower, the annual number of deaths and births of men and women, the increase and decrease of population, the decrease of infectious diseases, and the two axes of the solar globe.

And then, there was that most important document, the lecture of Poincaré at the Scientific Association of Berlin, just while I was there. You *read* that of course. I never read so few pages so teeming with the most important wonders. All the foundations of the old science of mechanics shaken: nothing left unchanged: Matter dematerialized: my question put to Oliver Lodge in your house ten years ago – whether movement without mass was a conception allowed by science – then decidedly denied by him, now answered affirmatively: the inertia of matter given up: the velocity of Light stated as a maximum: *Time* understood in its relativity and considered in an entirely new way. It makes one dizzy. . . .

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

2 November 1910

I have been hoping day by day to be able to write to you at last, but am still waiting until Miss Beales can translate Herr Gutkind’s book and also till I could get more copies of my books to send him. (They are being bound). I hope he will not be overwhelmed by his own insight: it is a dangerous gift. You speak of my intuition, such as it is. But it can be but a drop in the ocean of reality which presses in against the skin as it were of our minds and, if it finds no marvellous

system of blood and nerves through which it can thrill our whole nature into response, – is in danger or sweeping away in giant waves of intoxicated enthusiasm our sober judgment and our balanced sense of the crucial need of patient study and inexorable criticism of our own outbursts.

What you say about the two books you have seen, finds strong echo in my mind. They seem both in the line of my own thought. But you must never forget that every day I more clearly realise the crushing defeat of all our highest attainment and most penetrative thinking, by the ignored paralysis or insanity of articulate Expression. This unrealised obstacle throughout the world and especially throughout Europe, is fatal to any real advance of thought. Children's naturally clear minds are confused by it, and only a handful of men of powerful genius attain in spite of it to *what ought to be the human norm*.

At this moment I am beginning *the* book with Mr. Macdonald's editing help, but there is always the sense of defeat exactly in the most cardinal points, because I know only too well that until we have a generation brought up in the central and governing study of the value of Sign and the mastery of Significance, we shall find our utmost efforts to grow racially and interpret cosmically defeated.

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

26 April 1911

I do trust you if I trust anyone! But my theme has grown – not in bulk so much as in relevance and I hope clearness – so far as possible in the ambiguity of all expression and especially in language to which I am calling attention. And so I beg you to let me see the chapter about my work. Things have much grown since you were here. I have now a representative in Cambridge [Charles K. Ogden] and shall soon have one in Oxford. And I have had a private conference with the two leading Headmasters in England. The Introductory Book is now in the binders hands; it is a very thick one!

I will send you a copy of course. Its title is *Significs and Language*.

I have worked too hard and incessantly (always beginning at 5 a.m. or even earlier) and the sudden changes of temperature have made me ill and aged me. And now I have been the victim of a trouble just typical of the crying need for Significs. Truly it is the supreme tragedy that the crowning gift of articulate Expression should be tolerated and customary confusion and obscurity be the means of ruinous misunderstanding. It becomes like the serpent in the garden of Eden!

[. . .] There will be much to tell you. One story of a young genius who was almost in despair but has been rescued by Significs [Rupert Brooke]. He was here and was sent to me. I long that you should see him. He is in Italy now seeing much of that great thinker (and my friend) Calderoni. . . .

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

22 June 1911

. . . I am very glad about your book. It is clear and simple and exactly what we want. Will you have the kindness to send a copy to my friend Upton Sinclair? He wants it. Have you sent one to Gutkind?

Of course you know all about modern physics and the principle of relativity of Lorentz. I have been studying it lately and I think it is the most wonderful advancing step in science that has been made in our time. Perhaps you have read Poincaré's lecture in Berlin about it . . .

Victoria Welby to Frederik van Eeden

28 June 1911

Thank you for your kind words which I know are sincere. They help to give me courage to try and set out the crowning work on *Significs* which not only must define and direct the lines of future work upon it and especially its place and function in education but also bring together an irresistible mass of evidence in the only language I know. Yes, I have read and noted a mass of work on mode in physics and am familiar with all Poincaré's accessible work. [...]

Frederik van Eeden to Victoria Welby

11 February 1912

... Mr. De Haan wants to answer your call. ... We will come together. He will stay in the 'King's Head' and I in my garret, if I may, at Duneaves. ...

Mr. De Haan is the most marvellous conquest you made. I gave him your book when he visited me (*Significs and Language*) hoping he would like it. And he was so enraptured that he could speak of nothing else the whole evening. He drank it in, like a thirsty man, water. Now he is going to startle the Professors of Law in Amsterdam by quoting you and writing articles about you in the Law reviews.

De Haan is a Jew, very shrewd, immensely quick in learning things, a good poet and a renowned 'coacher' for the students of law. He will take his degree this year. The official Professors are rather afraid of him, for he looks like a juvenile Cherub, but he is as daring as a devil with his pen. He is very fond of me, and one of my very few staunch supporters. That he enables me now to go and see you once more will oblige me to him all my life.

My American book will appear this month. I did not show you what I wrote about you because it is only a short reminiscence and a notice of the importance of your work. The only objection you could have to it would come from modesty, and not be regarded consequently. ...

Papers from the archives

7.6. *Significs* (1903–1910)*

5 February 1903

The mistake we have made is in translating the Ptolemaic view of the universe into the mental world and limiting experience to the planet as to the centre of the mental universe. The example of astronomy is here paramount and more than an analogy – a governing rule holding good in mind. Much which may as yet seem to us extra-experiential because not directly accessible under present conditions of consciousness is thus seen to be within its range – a range indeed to which we can ultimately set limits only as we set them to the universe. For it must be remembered that the astronomer like the rest of us makes his discoveries indirectly. Directly he can only *feel* the heat of the sun and *see* the light of the stars. He cannot as in planetary experience 'go there' or

* ['*Significs*,' WCYA, Box 30, file 43, includes edited typewritten texts written between 1903 and 1910. Papers were not originally assembled in chronological order, undated papers have been left where they were found, usually stapled to a preceding page. A paper in this file entitled 'A Plea for *Significs*,' November 1904, was also traced in another file entitled 'Mother-Sense' (Box 28, File 24). In the present volume it has been proposed independently, in Chapter 3].

handle that or bring the other here. *We are all by nature mental astronomers*; but our theories need radical reservation; so far as they are like plants they are, as developed through evolution, rooted in the wrong soil suited only to the primitive forms. Many of us have given up ‘aspiration’ because the growth seemed rank and unhealthy and have reverted to mere moss. The ‘rooted’ metaphor however belongs to a lower order of life than ours. So let us say that our ‘theories’ need and are gaining selective revision. As we acquire ‘instruments’ for extending sense (as senses) into meaning, we shall reach Significance and understand at last that in many senses dazzling points of light are worlds, and that every conscious thrill must belong to what Mr Galton calls a cosmic republic.

26 March 1904

The Primitive Man did on the (mentally) tactual plane what philosophers and logicians are failing to do on the (mentally) visual plane. He was at once idealist and ‘materialist’ and both to their full extent, and also ‘a priorist’ and empiricist, intellectualist and sensationalist. He animised the world, but he completed the curve, and thus obtained this ‘wave’ and *motionised* first, then *materialised*, his ‘mind,’ his ‘spirit,’ ‘soul,’ ‘self.’

Language reveals this, *We are content with the uncompleted line*. Hence the continuous or the barren monism. *He* saw mind everywhere: for him the unperceived world (as for Huxley even) was nil. It included, implied perception. But also he saw ‘matter’ everywhere (always in Motion: included in Motion as the beginnings of language testify) in what we call mind. ‘Breath’ (‘Spirit’) was a visible cloud: the soul was a little man inside the body (hence our barbarous ‘inner’: we are generally faithful to the primitive man’s mistake of expression!): the surviving ‘I’ needed the tissue-building ‘food,’ also the actual weapon and slave &c.: all in the light of his first premiss: that the world was conscious – and that ‘sense’ was the world.

The primitive man’s ‘super’-stitutions were absurd because his vocabulary was too literal and too scanty. But his ‘stitutions’ were all right. There was no ‘super’-natural because Nature is greater than we ever now think. We have wandered into notions of absolute ‘chance,’ accident, luck, co-incidence &c. more absurd than the ancient ‘supers.’ The statistician in vain tried to convince us that beyond the fortuitous, even beyond error (‘dis’-order) there lies the beauty of Order¹⁶, ‘honour rooted in dishonour’ becomes Error (even ‘chaos’) rooted in Order.

The fact is we have made a great mistake. The civilised, university (or ‘board-school’!) trained man cannot interpret the primitive man. He has too much lost ‘touch,’ lost the primordial ‘instinct.’ He has grown so elaborate a ‘skeleton’ that the flesh and blood part of him for intellectual purposes has shrunk: bones so to speak, crop out everywhere like a ‘denuded’ district after some torrential cataclysm or like a ‘ryot’ child in a famine. Of course the difficulty is that the civilised woman cannot go through and record (even to the Anthropological Institute) the experiences of the savage life as e. g. Dr. Haddon does. But she might be encouraged to tell us more about her surviving instincts (now usually acting in diseased, insane, or immorally swindling form as we see in the clairvoyants, hand-readers, fortune-tellers, &c. &c.), her touch with the primitive in-sense and fore-sense. She would then interpret instead of as now distorting and deceiving. She would then explain the secrets of magic and of Mrs. Piper. She would become once more and in a scientific sense the ‘wise woman.’ Look at Mrs. Brewster Macpherson and Mrs. Boole: distorted by the endeavour to take the man’s views. (B. Kidd is more right than he knows in one direction, the place of reason).

Remember that the dramatic instinct (not theatrical), really the recognition of a common human nature (the social note) is the first to show itself – (baby’s peep-bo: well understood as ‘acting,’ as ‘pretend’). Acting means the social sense in imitative form: we are able as ‘actors’ –

16. The central thought including ratio.

and the word is suggestive – to don to some extent the ‘character’ (character again significant of others), to ‘act’ many ‘parts.’

So with the Primitive Man. He did not always literalise as we suppose. When he described the thunder-cloud as the Black Dog he knew it wasn’t a black dog. He was using strongly pictorial expression. May it be said that he ‘felt’ dogs and clouds to belong to one universe? It growled, and its flash was like the flash of teeth-revealing snarl. We really do literalise (and so do his degenerate because arrested descendents). For we even confound the historical with the material and the literal. But an idea is as much a matter of history as a structure or an event. An image of ‘things yet unseen’ may be recorded. There is a history as well as an evolution of ‘mind.’

16 May 1904

‘Reading the larger meanings of life’ (Albion Small).

Meaning = intention. What after all is Intention? (and Intent? We say ‘his eyes were intently fixed’; or ‘he was intent,’ not intentional merely). Can it be unconscious? Is it not time we began seriously to ask, – What after all do we intend to express by consciousness? What is the exact difference between that and mind, that and sense? What is the exact difference between Sense and sensation? Where exactly in the long ascent from Sensation through Perception to Conception, does ‘figurative’ Sight come in? (insight, foresight: ‘I see’).

What would happen if we were to put a few words under ‘lock and key’ for a while, recognising the need for the moment to ignore certain associations in order to emphasise certain others and appraise the result?

Why don’t we learn from the chemist, especially when he works in concert with the physicist and electrician? Why not use language as he uses combinations of all kinds, and elements too, for endless and practically boundless experiment?

Remember that when the Significian does this he will no more disturb the ordinary conventionalisms of social and working language, than the chemist and physicist do in laboratory research when they organise elaborate experiments with the homely raw materials and surroundings of every day life.

But the Significian will not merely analyse the ‘matter’ and measure and calculate the ‘mass’ and the ‘Motion’ of expressed ideas. He will also investigate that special form of energy we call Life, and which makes experiment (because it makes Experience) possible and eventually rational.

His experiments will not only be ‘physical’; they will be ‘biological.’ They will include the *control of linguistic breeding* and probably that of the fecundative process of Experience itself. Thus the significian also will become the Eugenician in whose hands will lie the issues, in every sense, of vital ascent.

For a Transfigured Race, a Humanity resulting from a new (which is simply a really Natural) birth, and satisfied with what we are content to call ‘language’ and with our confused and random use of words for the value of Sign (a jumble of ‘meaning,’ signification, sense, import, etc.) is unthinkable. It involves ‘self’-contradiction – the suicide of thought.¹⁷

No; the very first thing it will do is to set its Expressive Machinery in Order. And why, if we see this, should we stumble and grope on any longer, in a world of needless puzzles? Well, I suppose we have always in some form done the same thing; a study of ‘early’ or ‘savage’ customs will reveal the same tendency so to speak to tie ourselves up in the bonds, or injure ourselves by the mutilations, etc., of a tyrannical custom (probably the survival of some remedial practice, surgical, medical or penal), fossilised in uninterpreted tradition.

It is indeed sad to think that our very recognition of the value of some discovery may lead afresh even now, to the same stupid misapplication of some specified achievement originally of great

17. There is of course a new ‘birth’ in every stage of an organic ‘ascent.’

moment. The one chance of averting this risk is the training of each generation from its earliest years in the knowledge and the practice of Significs. This is really an immense development of potential interpretative function, not only in and through expression but in and through all social or personal activity.

We should then learn from the first to preserve above all the Sense of Significance; as well as the sense of the purport and purpose, the intention, the ‘meaning’ of living activities. The intolerable waste now going on, and the abasement of the prophet into the dogmatist, of the teacher into the pedant, of Faith into mere Belief, of Order into dead convention, would thenceforth be ended.

25 May 1904

Literal v. Historical

The real fact is always that which impels us to call it fact (Fact, like factor, is a ‘moving and doing’ and only thus a ‘thing’).

What is that?

Well, a fact is a signal.

What from and what to?

The railway signal is from a man to a man. The ‘facts of nature’ (from which ‘laws’ are deducible because order is so) are signals from reality to man. We recognise this. ‘Orthodoxy’ insists on a given interpretation of assumed facts. Science insists upon interpretation, but is willing *on cause shown* to give up any assumption. She has faith because she is ready (in corporate loyalty to truth) to lose very life itself in order to find it – in a truer or fuller sense. Her only danger lies in deifying her own method because it works perfectly. She also has a lord who is a Way through Truth to Life – that is, the inductive method. Yet it is she who will arise to criticise her own method and yet not ‘she’ but the Son whom she conceives and in whom she perfects power of muscle and of brain – ‘the man of science.’

We instinctively say ‘she’ also of Nature; but Science is the (progressive) interpretation of Nature – the *value* of Nature. Both represent the ancient ‘goddess.’ And this *is* needed because GOD has tended to remain *merely* male. (Hence, the instinct of Mariolatry).

We are beginning to receive the Gospel from the other end. History repeats itself. We resist, (well, friction *is* needed for advance), we condemn, we (would if we could) persecute and crucify. ‘Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit.’ We are in the very name of Religion, in the very name also of the Son of man and the word of GOD, refusing to hear the things which we ought by now to have learnt to bear. And ‘I have *many* things to say unto you.’ Many? Yea, who shall count them? Who is sufficient for these things?

Christ is hers once more. The first time He was expected as a world-king and came out of a stable to die on a cross. Now again He is expected as a Spirit King and He comes out of a laboratory, through experiment and statistic. First through conception, now through experience. He has surely had His Cross in that awful persecution by the self-called Church of the revealers of the natural order, the preachers of natural fact and law, of which we are only now realising the effects. He has it now in the suicidal pessimism which dots not even see that it is the result of comparison with an ideal standard, *prompting discontent*. But the Rising, the Ascension is near. . .

14 June 1904

Whenever we say *Not* this *But* that, we have to inquire whether the truer statement may not be

Not this or that, but – so and so – or,

Both this and that *plus* – so and so – or,

Besides this and besides that, there *Is* – so and so.

Our 'absolute' or 'final' *alternatives* are all either merely sexual (a factor which we have not adequately learnt to discount) or logical, – i.e. 'absolute' and 'final' in one sense and in that only (there being many other senses).

All logical alternatives ultimately deal with the apparent v. the real, with the Nowhat of Fallacy v. the Somewhat of valid conclusion.

But here as usual, like a baby learning to read, one is groping towards a more adequate language which shall be 'al jabr' (algebra) a Setting and repairing, a Putting to Rights¹⁸ of our ideas of Who and What we Are and What we can Have and Do, and how we can best express our sense, (our reactive, our responsive function) our meaning (our purport and purpose), our significance, rather our sense of significance, our signifying power. When have begun at the *first* 'Reading book' of this stage, many surprises of 'sign and sense' will await us. And first of all the prevalent confusion between the *contradictory* (the Self-effacing, Self-abolishing, the mutually cancelling) and the *Contrary*, (the other Half or side, the *Opposite*, the other Pole) will become impossible; and as we go on, unthinkable. So will the confusion between Time as the Space of the Successive and Time as the measurement of *that* space. Also many other confusions which are everywhere poisoning thought and vitiating conclusions because they fit a state and scheme and order of things now passed away. Language as we have it is an orthodoxy analogous to that which adopts 6000 years as the age of the world and its 'creation' in six days, like the stoppage of the sun over little valley of Ajalon thrown in, and so on and so on. We have emerged from the one; but the other – a far more paralysing one – still governs and falsifies the whole of our thinking and thus of our acting. When may we hope for the Eugenics of language?

(For some of the results of our present antiquated orthodoxies of Expression see other Notes: e.g. the Distinct v. the Separate, Belief v. Faith, Accuracy v. Truth, Falsity v. Falsehood, Illusion v. Delusion, Imagination v. Fancy, and innumerable similar differences of pressing importance which we ignore or confound, unities which we break, not *up* but *down*, and bulls (like the 'foundations' of a world and things that 'springs from a root') which, unrecognised, dog our steps and spoil our work on every side).

20 June 1904

The Unknowable

The negatives in description of reality (actual not logical) must always be merely the next stage on the mental advance: the *yet* unknown. A pity we cannot be more modest and content ourselves with the homely 'unknown' and unfinished, if unlimited! To use a negative for designating Reality is a blank contradiction. It marks nothing but present limit, just as the explorer notes the as yet 'unexplored' ahead of him. Theories like Mr. Picton's 'Religion of the Universe' really assume categories which cannot be pressed beyond a certain point. The All in All, the Whole is merely one of many ways of 'putting it.'

The real case at present is this. We are still infantile in Mind, though with premonition (else one could not write this) of the 'greater' developments always pressing in upon us. Thus reality is partly as yet 'unthinkable' *in our few and poor categories*. (It startles one to realise now and again, reading Spinoza and Kant to say nothing of Plato and Aristotle, *how* few and poor. They at least made the most of *their* resources!)

Herbert Spencer betrayed his essential halfness in his Un-knowable: Hegel in his Ab-solute: even Spinoza in his In-finite. The Negative indeed is the note of all metaphysics hitherto so-called.

18. At present we literalise, and jabber instead! Compared to what it ought to be and will be when we wake up, it is Baby-talk and Jabber still except perhaps in mathematics (the B.R. type) [B.R. for Bertrand Russell].

But nothing ever came out of a No, or out of ‘less’ that and ‘bar’ this, and minus and blank and – Nothing. Nothing it remains and Nowhat. On the other hand the Yes includes No, for it carries in its womb the expulsive and protestant element which is the ultimate value of the No, the mere condition of triumph. Whereas the independent, ultimate No merely wipes out, effaces, abolishes, Non-exists, Un-be’s.

Materialism is all right as an element of essential life-thought. The real mischief lies in our stuffy thought of matter and our neglect of the fact which the idea of evolution has emphasised – that the central, the primal, the ultimate *factor* is that for which our most general term is *Motion*. The truth is more and more clearly emerging. We are driven back for our ‘atom’ to a ‘charge-bearer,’ and from that to a Charge – the potential ‘flash’ needs the ‘sacred shrine,’ the mere means of radiative activity.

But A-gnosticism, like all Negatives is merely A-bolitive. It is A-septic. Mind on the advent of science in its ‘modern’ sense sorely needs strong measures of sanitation. But philosophy like science is trying to live on the carbolic acid of mere denial: on a diet of Non-, Un-, A-, Ab-, Minus and Zero. From Zero all *that* comes, and to zero it shall go! But what concerns us is the purer more essential life (in its most inclusive sense) which the antiseptic sets free from the swarming of the parasitic or fungoid life. . . .

How then are we to escape the parochial limits of our present sense, of our infantile status? By understanding how to interpret its promise. The future lies with Significs. And what is that? The cultivation, to an extent beyond anything yet attempted or even recognised, of the Sense of Significance. This sense is still but in embryo. It is not as individual, not as a mere *named* ‘person,’ with all the limitations of present condition, that I speak. It is just the primitive and perennial human voice. Interpret, interpret! Translate, translate! All is Sign: Read the Signal.

3 November 1904

Darwin expressly regrets having used the word ‘created’ because of its associations. And yet he preserved the word *Descent*, though the very nerve of his thought was *Ascent* through Natural Selection.

The plant ‘desires’ its seeds to be ‘devoured and disseminates in great numbers.’ Now the seed is the potential but also essential plant. Is life on this planet such a seed? Has it been in any sense ‘devoured’ and deposited? Do we remember that a living being on a scale too relatively great, would be as ‘Invisible’ as such to us, as we must be to a microbic being quite as mythical, as much transcendent in the non-existent sense, as the ‘depositing’ being would be to the ‘seeds’ which started life here.

Darwin’s three stages. Mine also: throughout my childhood I observed apparently overlooked things and found myself continually at variance with received opinions. I had strongly developed the child’s logical instinct though this never carried me beyond its simplest principles and processes: *if* this, then that follows. I loved argument exactly as I loved composing music or painting: to me the handwork of women, knitting, etc. etc. was all ‘dialectic,’ an orderly process of development.

I used to say that I learnt more through refutation by argument than in any other way. My instinct was always to challenge and then always acknowledge at whatever cost, *the victory of the better variation of idea*. For thus I absorbed the refutation which I noticed made others simply angry (‘Don’t argue!’) and it became part of my own thought-property. It was always s like ‘purification by fire’ or exposure to the action of an acid whereby all not true was eliminated and the true more clearly brought out. Thus my first stage was observation in the journey of life. The second was provisional hypothesis – not one but many. The third has been long, laborious, and uncompromising verification.

I have left no accessible source of expert knowledge unexamined and unapplied. But of course this is still terribly defective, and I seek a more worthy because better equipped exponent: one who combines the classical, the scientific and the technically logical training.

21 December 1904

Man's emergence from the nomadic state made the idea of building – of erecting dwellings of solid durable material on solid foundations – paramount in language (more especially in the colder climates?). The tendency also to form a cairn and where possible a 'monolith' or obelisk – any form of permanent 'monument' to commemorate somewhat or simply as landmark tended in the same direction. Both needed an immovable unchangeable Base.

Thus a number of ideas of the first importance have been forced into this procrustean bed, conceived after this rigid and fixed and lifeless fashion and hopelessly vitiated from the outset. The idea that in the last resort everything is made of hard particles of 'dust' – that the universe consists of full Stops which have somehow to be persuaded to group themselves together – build themselves up – into solid Lumps of something which can then be moved, has assumed despotic command of our ideas. Reality is solid as Mass and Particle: the question of moving it is secondary. It is chiefly real to build *upon* and build *with* and build *up*.

The Idealist who sees the illusion and perversion of this and calls it Materialism, only succeeds in translating it into the world of Idea on which he insists upon foisting, by analogy through image, this very assumption. He, too, demands (and more fatally in the world of Mind than even in that of Matter) a system of particles or 'atoms' forming masses wherewith to *build* elaborate structures founded on immovable bases. The fact that his 'solid' world has no 'base' at all never occurs to him or anyhow seems to him entirely irrelevant. He uses, it is true, the physical image but he is careful to ignore the heresy of Copernicus and Galileo and to keep his particular world as not only central and solid but as immovably founded. Unluckily 'e pur si muove,' and this obstinate fact remains in spite of all our solid foundations: the 'landslip' is inevitable.

Supposing we do get as far as to suppose that mentally we are related to a centre, a source of energy common to many 'worlds,' how, in turn, do we conceive this? We only transfer our solid erection on solid and immovable foundation to it: we insist indeed on its being unchangeable in any cases.

What then are we to do? Think in truer image. Remember that material Home, the planet, was never 'built' and has no foundations: remember beyond all, that Life is produced and developed and *not* built up on a solid 'base,' and that it is the vital image-world, the flower of the motion-image world, both the result of the sign of 'creative' or constitutive or impellent Energy which is our real mine of expression for mental fact in the widest sense. Particle, Mass, solidity and yet more base are lifeless and secondary. . .

10 April 1905

The use of the terms *Sense* and *Suggestion*. Both wide but must become wider, unless other words appear.

	Sensation:	
Reaction	Sense of life:	
Response	” ”	its generation and preservation
	” ”	danger to it
	Repulsion	Fear (resist or escape). (Dislike. . .
	Attraction	Hope. Appetence. (Liking. . .

1) Mechanical:

Automatic Suggestion to the Attractive-Repulsive system. This would stimulate the favourable variations to be selected, and account for the extreme elaboration of ‘mimicry’ so exactly ‘mimicking’ the painter’s and actor’s art and the subtlety of the thinker, with his long and intricate logical constructions.

2) Influence:

Automatic Suggestion of climate, through affection of certain organs (e.g. liver) on disposition. So of certain geographical regions of peculiar conformation or constituent: effects of light, of sound, of smell, etc. translated into ‘character’ and affecting ‘countenance’ and actions.

13 December 1905

Genius

The mischief of ‘genius’ as only appearing in the ‘sport’ form (the case of Greece apparently the only conspicuous exception) is that the disciples of the genius in succeeding generations always tend to form a ‘school’ which mainly ignores if it does not oppose other schools. As a rule his followers miss his central point or its vitality, and usually reduce his teaching to its literal and formal aspect or at least to what gives them least trouble. They do not even understand the nature of the emotions which his cult excites. They do not see that his whole *raison d’être* was Revelation – of what we as human have to work for and become. ‘Miracle’ – which is just whatever startles and thus rouses the dulled and the ignorated, and whatever attracts concentrated attention on the significant – instead of being the normal expectation as it is in the laboratory of the scientific genius, becomes a ‘violation’ of that very Nature which swarms with wonders shouting to be discovered and *interpreted* when we have come to our senses. Yes, our senses. We haven’t yet really come to them. Our neglect of language shows that, if nothing else did.

As to the divine, it may be expressed as the antithesis of gravitation. Strange that we should speak of that as *levity* and rebuke it in our dealing with the things we see as greatest and most precious! It corresponds to that which prompts us, every time we rise to our feet, to overcome gravitation – the attraction of matter for matter – in short to ‘levitate.’ Of course there is no ultimate Upward; the mental and moral earth is round. But there is Outward; there is the radiative: that is a much wider thought. And in that sense also we are all, body and mind, ‘inner’ and all our true ideals ‘outer’: radiation must be outward. The central impulse depends upon the peripheral activities which again would come to nothing without the radiative nucleus of – interpretation and application. In another sense, meanwhile, our atomic centres, themselves planetary systems of electrons swirling round ions (taking as provisionally sound this hypothesis), are the radiation points of an energy-spring which, as the value of inherited theological vocabulary has become depreciated, we will not here call either GOD or Christ. For the pathos, the tragedy of our present condition is that we don’t see the pressing need or hear the urgent call to recognise that *language not only dies but kills its users – becomes toxic – unless at recurrent times of change it is vitally renewed.* And the time has now obviously come to make such renewal voluntary and a question of world-wide consensus between the highest and most interpretative minds.

The inspirations and revelations (really the opening of throat and the opening of eye, the breathing-starts and seeing-starts, respectively crucial for life and for mind) which have as we say moved the world – that have caused a changing and transfiguring tremor to run through the race – have always been stated in terms of contemporary experience and knowledge – or at least theory – of the constitution of things.

What claims to be revelation now is stated in terms of a knowledge which to us is no longer living. But what few of us see is that the arguments against religion suffer from this antiquation just as much as religion does. We appeal to the ‘underlying truth’; meaning that fabulous Ultimate,

Innovable and Unchangeable, Solid Substratum on which all worlds with all upon them, Repose. We really make our very existence and our very sense depend on this fiction, whereas they depend on the contrary affirmation. We not only know of no ultimate foundation; we know that this at least is non-existent. And we know that the old idea of Rest is killed by science; at present it represents a mere phase of motion. We rest to be renewed for action.

Again, as long as we think of mind as inside and matter as outside, while making them antithetical, we shall be rightly punished for a flagrant self-contradiction. Matter is spatial, we say, and thought is not. But Inner and Outer are *both* spatial. It is as though we took ordinal and cardinal to express Number and its converse! But the Indicative cases are endless. Anyhow, let us realise the anarchy of thought we are so carefully creating.

13 September 1906

In What Sense?

‘The world is one vast whispering gallery.’
(Henniker Heaton, *XIXth Century*, Sept. 1906: 427)

In what sense is the word ‘world’ here taken? In the narrowest physical sense.¹⁹

Now that sense like all others must expand and gather a richer content as our ‘touch’ with our cosmical home does. (1) The idea of a rigidly specialised, mechanically technical world must move onward and move – since its orbital centre moves – in *spiral*. (2) The less rigidly specialised – the more generally mechanical – world, in all those parts of it under civilised industrial control, and in more and more complex forms, *is* moving. (3) The still more generalised world of scientific method, discovery, inference, understanding, is again in movement. (4) The most generalised world, that of man’s aspirations, social, religious, ethical, philosophical, and of his methods, logical, mathematical, artistic, etc. – in short analytical and constructive. . . [Fragment breaks off].

24–25 September 1906

There is no single problem in any province of sane thought to which the Significian of the future will not in a true sense hold the key. Every possible difficulty which can occur to and obstruct the advance of the work of a healthy mind is removable through the significant method, which is really that of science, exalted by a trained and restrained, a loyal, a patient, and therefore victorious and fecund imagination: one which has, through the discipline of inquiry and test, become *consummately interpretative*.

The Significian whom I hope to ‘mother’ (having sensually and intellectually conceived and borne him): whom I would fain nourish from my own breast and train in work too good, too vast in power and range for me, will be the Bacon, if not even the Copernicus and Darwin of the 20th century.

In the interest of that new birth of mind I hope personally to be forgotten except as a ‘nursing’ mother who would rejoice if some discovery of Nature’s wonders were made by a Son of her thought, upon her very grave, or from the dissection not merely of her mind, but of her physical organism.

For no study can possibly approach in practical value that which is now in question. Its value is pressing, immediate, actual, beyond all others. For it constitutes and sums up alike the value of action, of experiment, of theory, of logic, of imagination; it would render significant every particle of experience now baffling or barren, unnoticed or unread. In a new and pregnant sense, it would,

19. In this sentence ‘narrow’ and ‘sense’ are used in a ‘wider’ sense.

as Prof. J.A. Thomson says ('Progress of Science, etc.,' p. 14) 'make the world' – eye and reality itself – 'translucent.' For every such item or unit of experience brings implication or suggestion in its hand, has an indicative or symbolical character, or proves to be a medium for the passage of light – ever fresh and ever clearer light – to us, the dimly seeing race, whose mental eyes are still those of week-old babes. And this passage of light, involving the impact of the visible, must develop our yet infantile organs of mental vision. We shall thus become mentally able to see with a penetrative force and delicacy where now, at best, is blur.

On all sides, what we call 'hard facts' will then be ready to break up and release a wealth of hidden truth, as the cyst bursts to pour forth living spores. And it may be that some things we suppose ourselves to know as real may turn out illusive, while other things now to us illusive may prove to be so, simply because we have not yet reached what the French call the Word of the Enigma, or even if we have reached this, are unable as yet to see its real and intimate bearings upon our own hidden life, and upon the constitution and relations of our planetary home. Here again, as science is always implying, revelations await us, from the secrets of the centre of our earth to those of the uttermost margin of its atmosphere; from the 'riddle' of the infinitely small, of the teeming micron world beyond our present ken, to that of the 'infinitely' great of which so little can yet, by the 'scopes' at our disposal, be learnt.

In these and all other cases our first questions of course will be the What and the How: not merely What is this; not merely How comes this, or How does it function, but *in what sense* is the answer to be taken?

When we are quite clear so far, we shall ask not so much as yet, *Why* this is or does thus, as What is the Sense of this, What the Intention (that is Meaning), if any, to which it points; finally, What is its widest and deepest or most prolific and far-reaching Significance?

My message may be summed up in many ways. One is:–

Everything that man has ever done has been 'right' and everything that man has ever *thought* has been 'true' *in some sense* which now it is our initial and paramount duty to discover and to *translate* for present service. Neither science, nor religion, nor philosophy, nor even logic, will be fully and sanely developed until this fact is recognised. *This* is the message of *Significs*; of the power which Nature bids us all to grow and to develop. We have to dig in the richest of all mines; to plant in the richest of all soils; to exploit the richest of all living promises and potencies; that of indirect, remote, also intimately close – and perhaps atomic – significance.

The race-sense, the sense of race-motherhood and race-childhood, tells us in immediate experience (as we *all* ought to know) that the Race is no abstraction or figment, no mere symbol, but the very Man himself, the very Christ who reveals the cosmic parentage *common to the world and its life*.

Our Mother-father is 'heaven'; in the sun-teeming universe and in the nuclei represented as yet only by those in the cells of the germ-plasm of the Babe. The message of that parentage is ever, Ye must be born again and from above. Yea indeed. And that is now the message of Science in Eugenics.

And that also is the Message of Significs. Expression must be born again. There must be the Eugenics of language. We must learn the Significance of all things in heaven, in earth; the significance of pain, of insanity, of 'evil' itself, and alike of our credulity and our agnosticism, of our spiritualism and our materialism, of our pantheism, our theosophism, our 'tropism,' our dogmatism and scepticism. But to do that, we must humble ourselves to become as little children: we must *begin* to understand the Mission of the Child and *its* Motherhood, thus rising to our interpretative heritage and letting the Race come at last to its own, – to that for which Nature evolved it on this infinitesimal planet. *There* lie the secrets of the solutions: there lie the Answers which are prompting, stimulating and compelling our Questions: there lie the Syntheses which will pre-suppose and insist upon all possible Analyses; the Monisms which will include and interpret all Pluralisms. All is knowable to one who has really learnt to know: who has earned the privilege

of learning. And that one is the Signification of the 'future.' It is he who will set the little Child – the childlike not the childish – in the midst, in order to a fresh start, and to a racial rise and ascent. It is he who will at last take, in a healthy, normal, scientific *sense*, the place of the ancient Wizards and Magicians, the Witches and Medicine Men, the 'clairvoyantes' and the 'visionaries,' the astrologers and the 'Second-seers,' the Yogis and Mahatmas – but where are we to stop? Every one of them, even the conscious imposter or the obviously neurotic; and every form of what we call superstition, has somewhere a link, even though a twisted one, with that world of experience of which we can only at present safely realise or use a narrow portion.

Is all this after all megalomania? If so, it is that of the Race. But I, as racial, would insist that we are but one small variety of one of many possible 'human' species; that our position and scale in the heavens is eloquent of our true mental status. Yet we *are* citizens of the greatest of cities; and nothing which belongs to *that* can be in any sense 'lost' or alien – though it may, by our own 'fault,' lapse or be distorted or wasted.

24 October 1906

*The First Thing*²⁰

It is inevitable that the luminous simplicity of the First Thing, the self-revealing germ of things, the home and centre of all promise and potency, should seem to us who have been working at all the crowding multiples, a work appalling in magnitude; to some indeed may even seem 'overwhelming and almost depressing.'

For after all what *is* luminous simplicity? What is the babe's eye opening first in manifest organic wonder on its incalculably ancient home? We are driven to paradox. There is no complexity like the typical simplicity, the very germ of conception and birth which to the untrained mind is as an invisible grain of dust, while to the coarse and common Sense – our only hold on the inexhaustible Cosmos – it is but an infinitesimal ultra-microscopic dot. It is that which looks out of the eye of the new-born: it is that which calls out the *racial wonder*, ever deepening as the brain grows and the little mind learns to think, until closed by an artificial skin sedulously provided by artificial, even morbid forms of training, preparation for distorted because unnatural constructions of perverted convention.

Thus the luminous, the self-evident simplicity of the significant view of the else baffling world and of our part in it, becomes an unthinkable enormity. Significant that the very word enormity suggests – crime!

Do we ever think of that silent history of the making of thought through the advent of language, of our sculpture of the world through the – mainly unconscious – chipping out of mental image, of our infinitely productive Factory of Sign, of Signal, of Symbol? Do we even think it worth while to work with the very distinctions which the scattered and divided, – *therefore abortive* – languages of the world, so richly, so lavishly, provide? Take those at the very beginning of speech; the distinctions within the area of its very value, of all that makes it any good to speak at all, of its very function of symbolic expression, of discerning pronouncement, of conveyance by one being to another of the facts of the world enriched by their connotations, their applications, their implications. Have we yet realised the germinal simplicity of the fact that there is a treasure waiting for us in the scope and range of some words expressive of the infantile activities of the race, – especially at the crucial moment when Life reveals itself as *new-born Response*, – as the organic cry, Touch us, for we feel, Tell us, for we listen, Show us, for we see, Teach us, for we understand?

I long that we should all at last realise the mine of rich ore that the simple word of five letters, SENSE, has been – in English – to our particular example of the broken up, the almost swarming,

20. [Title added in pencil].

dialects of the world! But it is an unworked mine. We walk carelessly over the buried wealth of our world as under our sun-studded heavens. We just use the word ‘Sense’ for our miraculous answer to the touch which says, Awake and Reply! And Sense also for the value of a man and a word. We speak of a sensible man; we say, A man of sense, that! No hero, we grant you: and no passionate poet dreaming on the mountain side or working in study or laboratory often at risk of life, at his task of Interpreting and Translating Beauty or Truth or Fact! But a man who looks for the Sense which makes and keeps us sane; and who holds by that as at least the first step in the ladder of greatness.

For there must be, even in the most daring spirit, the sober, orderly mothering of homely and common Sense. And it is also that very same Sense which first of all our Speech must have. To say it is senseless is final condemnation. Mere babble! Like the aimless, desperate wandering of a man out of his Senses, out of his exquisite panoply of delicate, unerring, ready, automatic, Sense. And there, then, you have the initial value of words. They must first – and foremost – have Sense. But it may be a fine sense, perceptible to others, which *you* are too ignorant or dull to realise it, or again a mean sense which *you* overlook because of the high, it may be noble abode and environment of your own thought. However this may be, the crucial question is in fact ever, In what sense does this, ought this to concern us and appeal to us? In what sense is it good or evil, true or false? And lastly, in what sense are these words to be taken? Just as, By what Sense are we to be aware of this fragrance (or this stench), or flavour: by what Sense are we to be aware of these sounds, musical (or noisy); by what Sense are we to be aware of this supreme gift of light with all which it brings and implies, – with the world of vision itself, physical and mental, calling out the witness, I see! The senses of touch, of smell, of taste, of hearing, of sight.

The sense-response has in itself no Intention; it is not deliberately Purposive, it is not *intended* to feel, to smell or taste, to bear, to see. And the Sense of a word again is involuntary. (As we have occasion, sometimes ruefully, to know, when we have, it may be, fatally betrayed some cause, by the unthinking use of a startling phrase or a word.)

But the *meaning* of a word ought itself always to be what Meaning in English primarily is: Intention. That is my meaning, we rightly say; That is what I intend to convey, What I intend you to infer and understand. Used in its main and primary sense, the word stands for my purpose. I *mean* to do this: I meant to say that, I intend to do this: I said that intentionally. Surely the most careless thinker, the most commonplace mind, must see the importance for sheer practical utility, for the very beginning of clearness, – of this ready-made distinction in common speech?

Import, we may say, though with less emphasis, belongs to sense: Purport, to Meaning.

Is that then all? Surely not. What do we ‘instinctively’ call the far-reaching Consequence, the indirectly seen Result, or Outcome, the momentous Implication, of some world-changing event? For that purpose, if we know how to express ourselves at all, we reserve the word Significance: that word which almost tolls the tocsin of the future: that word which seems big with possible fate. That, we say to each other, has an obvious sense. Yes; but also we say, perhaps as a sudden after-thought, How significant it is! How much it indicates, how much more it suggests! How it promises, but yet more, how it warns! Let us then take our signal to heart, but yet more to mind. Let our workers and thinkers *bear it* in that mind, which is the womb of that greatest of all pregnancies, the pregnancy of thought: which shall bring to triumphant birth the greatest of all forms of life, the *mentally* potential, the Life itself even at its best – at least on this planet, – as yet only in the budding stage.

Let us then concentrate our scanty forces, our scantier ‘time,’ on the Sense, the Mother-Sense and the Child-Sense which between them embrace all germinal experience: and when we have at last realised the magnificent promise of this the very type of homeliness, begin to see that puzzle and defeat are nothing but the penalties of needless falsity in premise and in-*preconception*.

In the form of logic and mathematics we already do this: we already transfigure all that we have yet seen as the pre-supposition, into strictly unimaginable but unerringly conceivable and

constructively fruitful elaboration. Even in our ‘extensions of sense,’ indeed in all mechanism itself, we do this. But we have not yet begun simply and seriously to concentrate first upon Sense in its widest sense, teeming with gift; then further upon Intent and Purport, with whatever emphasis we may accept and use those words, – in short on Meaning: then, lastly, on the greatest asset of the human race as it is its highest prerogative, the prolific sense of Significance. This, be it never forgotten, must be emphatically done from the first in, and as the master-key of, education. It has been the natural training of uncounted ages: at our deadly peril we ignore or neglect, at the moment of our greatest need, this royally human prerogative.

When we have realised and acted upon that, writing of this kind, I grant, will no longer serve; no longer be good enough. It is, perhaps, one of our saddest *unconscious* lacks, the lack of an adequate language and therefore of fully adequate thought, in dealing with this yet unworked world of solution, of Answer. It is another of our pressing dangers, and our cruel losses, that while we rightly suppose thought automatically to influence, indeed to transform language, we mostly fail to recognise the corresponding fact, that, for good or evil, language profoundly modifies thought.

Why else, we may ask, do we praise the true poet – indeed the orator or writer great in any sense – for the exquisite grace, the compelling tenderness, with which he sums up in melodious or noble words the harmony and sympathy, the dignity and humility, the joy and grief of his kind; or on another side the consummate force with which he wields this tremendous weapon of speech spoken or written?

Try to translate any great work into a commonplace or puerile diction. Give it the vocabulary of trade or of cheap and mean, – or again morbid – excitement. Fill it with the associations of bargaining or gambling or loafing or ‘mafficking’ conveyed by the current imagery unconsciously used, of the shop, the race-course, the street; and then begin to understand what, all unknowing and uncaring, we are losing in our desperate non-use or misuse of the incalculable resources of a Human Speech which has come into its own.

Let us resolve once for all that this momentous gift of the regnant brain shall be seen for what it really is and may become for us: let us understand once for all that in the child who has learnt to speak, we have one in whom we find the raw material of the expressive genius of the future. For in that day things we now suppose unknowable will, because in a new sense no longer inexpressible, rather be called familiar: will be seen to have been missed not because they are so far from us, but because they are so intimately near: so bound up in the very infancy of all our dearest and homeliest interests that we find it difficult to detach ourselves completely enough to focus and perceive them, much more to analyse, to orientate, to organise and apply them.

The appeal of Significs is thus not merely to the rarely endowed; and if it appeals most truly to the scholar, it is apt to be ignored by the precisionist or the pedant, who cares only for framework or for detail. The appeal of Significs is to all that is truly and fully human; for it gathers up into one word our concern for all that Signifies because it is Expressive.

And the one of us to whom it will most naturally ‘come home,’ who will most joyfully welcome its advent and grasp, – to exploit, – its gifts, is the typical Explorer, the Learning Child; the scout, the pioneer of the race.

[Undated]

Significs

Is there an *Insignificant* Reality, that is, a reality which in no *sense* is either Sign or Symbol? On the answer to this depends that to the further questions, Is there a Senseless or a Meaningless reality? (these distinctions are here vital), Or, is reality essentially the significant? If so, in English idiom, *What does it signify?* Is it of any interest, worthy of any attention? Now we should all agree

with the definition of Reality as that which in current idiom Signifies most of all – which is of essential consequence: we conceive it as ‘inexorable’; as demanding unconditional recognition and as exacting rigorous penalty from the rebel Fancy or rather from a being which acts upon its fancies. For Fancy has cut loose from truth and abjured reality. It is ‘random play.’ It is worse: it is erratic vagary. Imagination dramatises proximate reality: it ‘acts’ an actual scene beforehand, it predictively, significantly, presents fact (reality not yet evident to us in the direct sense) broadly, it mirrors, in the sense of giving image.

Granting then that Reality is essentially significant, is it or can it be senseless? If so, *In what sense?* The answer to this second question involves the answer sought. If there is any sense in which reality may be said to be senseless or conceived as senseless, then (indirectly anyhow) reality is not senseless: reality is, in some sense, a question of sense.

But if we grant this, how about *meaning*? (refer here to any definitions of ‘meaning’ elsewhere), Is there any *intention or purpose* in Reality? If I intend to make myself understood and you intend to understand (or to do your best to understand) is our intention real? And if we say yes, is that the same thing as saying, Reality includes Intention, purpose, aim? (i.e. as somewhat represented by *Sign*).

Then does it follow that Reality, directly known to us only through the ‘apparent’ (whether the apparent in our sensation, consciousness or mind, or the apparent as physical ‘phenomenon’) is the Signified, while all Nature and all verifiable fact becomes the Sign and the Signal of that Significance?

And if this could be put clearly in more relevant and resourceful language (which the hearer-reader has been trained to expect) would it tend to make possible a new synthesis between realism and idealism, superseding materialism and spiritualism by absorbing both?

And would it accomplish, without its present drawbacks, the aim of Positivism itself, so far as positing affirms and in affirming realises?

[Undated]

Magic and incantation, like mythology and superstition are merely treated as examples of human folly, a sort of mental mumps, a disease to be simply left behind: a pitiable state of mind to which at one stage of growth we are liable but of which grown man should be ashamed.

Quite so, *quâ magic, quâ superstition*. But there lie secrets of what we call the material and the physical: there lie solutions of life-problems of which as yet we have no suspicion. Let us frankly abjure metaphysics in favour of Significs and learn at last what Sign signifies, so as to gain symbols for this significance. Our present symbolic phraseology is full of the fossils and detritus of bygone ages: some of these constitute a danger because unconscious mythology of thought and defeat science itself by compelling its students and expounders, if they would be understood, to use figurative constructions, which (like e.g. substance) imply the very ideas they are trying to supersede or at least to transform.

29 October 1906

The present paralysis of the Significal (interpretative) function is in truth plunging us into abysmal depths of falsity and failure. We no longer hear the dread cry of Nature, Understand, Decypher, Translate, – or Die, which engendered and nourished the Mother of all Sense, the very Mother-sense itself.

What we mostly *call* Religion, while its emotion and the sense of its reality and supremacy remain (mainly, alas, in morbid or fatally *belated* form as opposed to or superposed upon, *Divine Nature*); instead of sweeping onwards with the explorative intellect which having given us ‘Pure

Thought' is now giving us 'Exact Science,' is doing with all its might what is equivalent to giving toys and milk only, with leading-strings and a cot, to a youth or a maiden.

'Religion' becomes thus the greatest of breakers of the Divine Ordinance to be ever regenerating; to be in every sense and recurrently born anew with the new world, the new needs, the new Promise, the new Potency. Religion, thus, instead of being the guiding light of the most adventurous and unflagging of Pioneers, becomes a grinding, even a reversing Break on the Onward Divine Progress. For this progress means great and rhythmical succession, – a Life of birth and death, and beyond that of Rise and Ascent, – transfigured, – from a tomb-like dwelling, from an earthly level, from a worm-like or chrysalis stage.

Religion is a Function which, from being forcibly arrested, or, like the Mother-sense, disastrously atrophied on the line of its true application, energises mainly either on the side of imposed formula or on that of the fanatical and hypertrophied, diseased, unnatural consciousness of the Supreme and Original Factor, the very Source of all we truly Are and Have, which we call the Divine.

We have spoken of the falsity and failure into which our blind energy of an imprisoned sense in fact plunges us. If anyone calls for explanation, let him soberly, carefully, after long and thoughtful study of history and pre-history and of present fact, strive to realise for himself what is meant. To a 'savage' whose tribe has a moral heritage of praiseworthy sacrifice of children to an 'Idol,' it is notoriously often impossible to reveal a morality yet ahead of him. To him such a teaching, indeed, implies disloyalty to the highest of duties. He and his sacrificed child must be left to obey *their* conscience, until, through better, clearer, more penetrative discernment, they become ready for the Gospel which they have thus learned to see as higher and holier than what they had held as moat sacred. Here we have, of course, the significance of Abraham's test. It may be politic, it may even be inevitable that the English governing power should forbid the funeral pile for the Hindoo widow. But while to her this is the fulfilment of her life-duty and her life-ideal, it is religiously unjust to forbid it.

It is no doubt to the growth of a true sociology – in which Significance as in all the young sciences, the guardians and heralds of our future and its hopes, is the first and greatest need – that we must look for the gift of a truer social morality, that must help to flood it with the very light of heaven as the very life earth. A premature morality like a premature ethics and all premature publication or at least popularisation, is abortive. And let us note that 'Jesus charged them much that no man should know this'; that 'He entered into a house and would have no man know it'; that 'He charged them that they should tell no man of him'; again 'He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen.'²¹ Is there not an overlooked lesson for us all in these words, whether we believe them divine or no?

No. We must not dangerously forestall the hour when Man is ready for and entering a new adolescence or the age of full adult privilege. We must *earn* the 'greater things' by patient study and heroic faith in the Source of all that is really good as really true. It means the incubation which follows conception and precedes normal birth.

Let ours then be a strenuous patience. Let us, with all our resources, prepare the ground in the one way which can never be premature; in the way of enhancing our interpretative and translative powers. Let us work as does our newly acquired model, the scientific worker, with his truly religious and therefore unconquerable and fecund patience. Let us not so much lay foundations, as till ground and sow seeds for a Harvest compared to which any other harvest seems almost one of weeds. For the vital image is here the better image; and better images doing us truer service, are among our first and most crying needs. They make, far more than we yet suppose, for a mental hygiene, for a pictorial sanity, a figurative health, which shall react upon every form of

21. St. Mark, V, 43., VII, 24., VIII, 30., IX, 9.

intellectual, moral, practical activity. In this as in many like directions we are unconscious invalids and cripples: Nature, Divine Nature, is calling, Come forth and carry your beds: Arise and Walk. She cries also, Speak, Child, for thy Mother heareth.

2 November 1906

Nature

Nature is that 'Mother' who is urging us even now to discover that it is to Her we owe the protest against a 'hideous waste,' 'cruelty,' and 'mockery of hopes' which is really the note and witness of *our* failure to rise to our true level and to transfigure, *by discovering and interpreting*, the universe.

And surely it is manifest that Nature's 'intention' is to raise us in due time as from the sub-sexual so through the sexual to the super-sexual, – in which variation can be secured through distinction delicate and sharp, without a defeating separation leading to ineffective halfness and clashing aims and interests, and also constantly thwarting its own beneficent purpose by failing to bring the complementary halves together. *Her intention is that* 'She' Nature should no longer be, – female; as the divine will is that GOD should no longer be – male. She and He, the she, the he, are *our* glory. But, as long ago Paul of Tarsus saw, there is one glory of the earthly, the terrestrial, the planetary, the satellitic: there is another glory of the heavenly, the celestial, the solar, the cosmical. The former is but, as it were, one 'cell' of the latter: a microcosm indeed of transcendent complexity which ignores our petty scales and values: a scene of transcendent Drama, the drama of the inception of that in which we verily live and can learn these truths. That is, the truths of Life itself in each one of us; a flash from a central Fire-world and Light-world of 'vitality.'

In the 'light' of this thought how poor are our controversies about vitalisms, mechanisms, tropisms, – about religions, philosophies, sciences! Let us at least wait until, in an age when *the significance of Significance* has dawned upon us, we begin in good earnest to take Science seriously, to receive 'her' reverently as in a true sense a 'revelation' for which till now we have not been ready. 'Science is not yet born; she is only conceived.' True and noble words of her votary and representative!

But there is something else to be learnt before even we can learn the true import, the true origin, character, value, significance of science, as of life (as, indeed, of motion itself, dynamic and static), and thus at last of 'mind,' that stranger ringing at our gates with the message, I bring you all, – for I am the Bringer of all that can be brought, and of the very power to bring and to accept.

There is something else to be learnt: and that is how to Signify; and how to *read* what Signifies: how to acquire a sense of the true significance of Meaning: how, that is, to make our purpose, our intention, do its true, natural, orderly, creative work: lastly and once more, how to appraise the very significance of Significance. Then and then only shall we know the true value, the worth for us, – for our life, for our thought, for our work, – of Nature and her Motherhood, of GOD and His Fatherhood, and of the almost blasphemous inadequacy in this context, of terms which suggest to our impotent mental halfness, the paralysing divisions of that necessary condition of the highest Parentage, the perfect combination of elements contrasted for the very sake, through newer variation, of vital enrichment and ennoblement.

12 November 1906

Thomas of Aquinas on his death-bed declared that compared with reality all that he had ever written was simply rubbish. Of course instead of taking him seriously and learning the true lesson of death – which may be as revealing, – that is as much an unveiling – as birth, his saying was

merely recorded as the utterance of a saintly humility which in the true *human* humility he would have repudiated.

Isaac Newton on his death-bed told us that he was conscious of being but as a child busy among the treasures of the shore, while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before him. Again, we entirely missed his main point and his lesson. The saying is always (and indeed, as in the case of Aquinas, rightly) interpreted in terms of the humility of greatness. But one feels again that the Sayer would have energetically protested. He was making a plain report, in metaphorical terms, of the record of a sane consciousness at a crucial moment.

In all such cases, we have really in one form or another, a statement of experience which ought to be, if it is not, normal; and thus a natural witness to the revealing possibilities of the great crises of life, of which death, like birth and adolescence, is one. It is absurd to treat death as intrinsically pathological and its messages as valueless except at best in the emotional or 'spiritual' sense. Just as disease may make us talk wildly or worse in life, so in death. But in normal death we may well have the analogue of the leaping up of a flame just before extinction, or again of the rising up for a moment above the foggy or steamy atmosphere of a life-world still in the making, into a world of clear and far horizons and uncounted riches of knowledge. Probably the dying glimpse of such a world is commoner than we think: but few could put it into words, and fewer, perhaps, understand its real bearing on our practical and theoretical work. Besides this, in many cases the witness could only be given in traditional phraseology which has ceased really to deserve the names religious or philosophical, since it no longer fits need as did the language of the great religions and philosophies when they were what we unhappily call 'founded.'

We have not yet realised that a terminology which fitted the mental and moral conditions of two (or any) thousands of years ago must necessarily in many directions be unfit now, *unless we make it clear beyond possibility of mistake that we are using it in radically different senses*. These senses of course need not always be new. They may often be older and more natural than those which have come to be conventionally accepted. Miracle, for instance, might resume its proper sense of that which attracts attention: a remarkable occurrence of any kind. Spirit might go back to its simple status of atmosphere or vapour, – that which is inspired; Heaven to sky, or further back, to the uplifted; and hell to the hole, where for instance a sheep might take refuge and lie hidden. For assuredly it is not always novelty but sometimes a return to the simplicities of the childhood of the race, and re-applications of these in the light of modern discovery that we most urgently need.

24 November 1906

The Demand for Evidence

The philosopher, the poet, the student of Literature, of History, of Logic, cares practically nothing for evidence in the scientific sense. So long as he has his stem, his flower and his fruit he asks nothing about the origin or the parentage of the seed. At best he gives a cursory glance at the records of its pedigree.

The future significian, whose labours shall have worthily accomplished what my long life's work has but feebly and crudely attempted, will have a far more weighty and authoritative word to say than any of mine – one that nothing and no one could withstand. My indictment and my appeal must be merely that of a precursor, a herald of that which supersedes it. And the first thing, the justifying thing, the true credential which the herald must have; that without which all other gifts would be in this case barren, is a keen sense of the value of evidence. And this not merely in the lawyer's sense (as too often an asset to be manipulated) but in the scientific sense. It is proof indeed of the prevailing contempt for this even among those who care for great things, that no one of those with whom I have had any intercourse on the things which, as significant,

belong to the peace of Man as man, has yet cared to look carefully into my evidence. What is the consequence? The natural retort, if mischief hitherto overlooked is pointed out, or if appeals are made on the ground of serious defects or omissions in the very expression alike of our ideals and our criticisms, is always the same. One is reminded that it is easy to be eloquent: but where is the evidence? Can you prove it, one is asked, even in the most general sense? Can you give really conclusive testimony? Can you bring convincing facts?

These are the questions I court. I have at least grudged no effort and no pains in doing these things as well as I could, and have done them at the cost of many years of weary and apparently fruitless labour. When, indeed, now and then, I realise afresh in what an unworked mine I have been trying, with homely tools, to dig: when I realise what others are losing by their neglect of these rich lodes of treasure for the development of that Expression which is the condition of all life worthy to be called Human, and to bring us what we most of all need, I feel like the earliest of women. For she must surely have felt as I do about the contented indifference of her fellows to the language which was first shaping itself on her stammering and still half animal tongue; that is, to the gift which was to make possible the most royal, nay, the most divine of the achievements of her remote descendants.

That Mother of the race knew, in her prerogative of Industrial supremacy, that the primitive signals found sufficient in hunting and fighting, were not enough and not worthy. Well, through some of us, once more she is telling us that the condition in which we apathetically leave her priceless legacy of Ordered and Significant Expression, is nothing less than a shame to us. We must recover in this her Mother-sense: we must regain its true starts: and we must reap from the sowing which thence results a harvest, not 'beyond our wildest dreams,' but the reward of better than wild dreams, a true husbandry of Significance.

2 December 1906

The worst thing of all is the diseased, the perverted form of the best. We see this, of course, in the enhancing forms of insanity – of mania. But we see it perhaps most clearly in the morbid cravings for the intoxication caused by 'spirits,' drugs, or by high staking in gambling, or – by extreme asceticism.

We see it again in 'revivals,' and in the enthusiasm, especially among women, for ritual and for authoritative 'direction' resting on dogma, that is, on belief in assertion without evidence; not provisionally, (a necessity of life) but absolutely, as we believe a matter of direct experience e.g. the fire burns. Hence fanaticism. And hence the devastating polemics which we call 'religious.'

What is the secret of all this and much more of the same kind? *The demand for expansion of being.* We are always far below our health-point of power. The idea of 'miracle' refers to this. What we might work or effect would be miraculous as compared to what we actually do. It would 'give us to see' as well as 'give us to think,' as the French say. And above all it would give a new energy and object to live by and for, and to act upon. As we are, a man who is in fact trying to express this, is tempted to use the fatally false word super-natural. But to transcend the Divine Nature is to be 'spiritually' delirious as to be premature is to be abortive; and there is a sense in which we have to submit to be less than natural, in order to be sane and useful in the present order and on the present level. Only let us learn and admit that in a true sense we have become less than natural; that we have so to speak shunted ourselves on to a side line: and we shall never rest content till we have recovered a main line on which it shall be safe as well as glorious, sane and sober as well as 'greatly daring,' to put on full steam and go ahead. For why do we use this term 'ahead'? Because the head is always foremost. And our heads are or ought to be in every sense *utmost*. We must abandon the figure of the train, for *our* 'foremost' is in aspirations to look up and to rise higher is our business and our dignity.

5 December 1906

We must not love tools for their own sake. If I so love a spade, it will dig me only a grave. So, except in the sense of asking the what and how in order to better use, we must beware of philo-logy, even of philo-sophy. It is an honour to science that she professes no 'philo,' no love for *her* splendid tool: she just names it and that is enough. For what Science does not know isn't worth knowing. Our forerunners knew that. Science is at first simply knowledge. To that, within the last century, man has added knowledge gained by the inductive and experimental method and verified in every way possible to the sense system. Any difference on the subject is merely one of the innumerable witnesses to a radical corruption of language; one which has gone so deep and penetrated so far, that unless we realise that the most important thing in the world is significance, we have lost the power to detect it *except on the technical side*.

Now the technical side of misuse or loss, is barren. We impatiently shrug our shoulders at the absorption of the student of language in 'merely verbal questions.' We rightly resent objection, on the score of punctilio, to inherited conventional novelty of use. But when the commonest and most practical of *senses* is seen to be involved as well as the whole range of *meaning*, expanding into inferential *significance* which again covers the world of potential experience and is always the ultimate goal of discovery, and the appeal is at last made in the name of Significance – when this really human because truly homely appeal is worthily made, the danger of the merely technical will no longer lurk in the study of language. It gives us one of many forms of the *value* of all we can be, and do and know: as articulate Sign it calls more insistently than any other sign for conscientious development and use. We know we cannot be too careful of our mechanical instruments of knowledge or too scrupulous about their rightful user, our very spectacles teach us that, for neglect may mean blindness. And our unworthy treatment of the Instrument of instruments, speech, that which renders any instrumental aid possible, *is* involving moral and intellectual blindness: is keeping us in the dark – a needless darkness and one of cease-less loss and danger. Let us not think that this is a plea for pedantry! It is rather one for its relegation to its true place. Some minds can only do useful work pedantically: but we can use the work and leave the pedantry.

9 December 1906

Communication in every possible sense – but one: conveyance in every possible sense – but one, are the dominant notes of our age. The all-importance of providing our planet with the networks of a complex and effective system of inter-connection, threatens to absorb all our energies, as indeed it may be said to have absorbed, in the evolutionary ascent, the energies of brain-creating nature.

We are as it were evolving a new organism, in which our endless invention of the means of concerted and all but simultaneous action, our acquisition of the thrills of universal 'sensation,' represents the advent of a highly developed nervous system, translating itself into a vast racial consciousness.

But there is one form of communication and conveyance, the key to all others and also their highest form, which it never occurs to us to include in the passionate energy of systematic, mechanical 'nerve'-making. We leave *that* form of communication to drift casually where and how it may: we are content with the rough and jolting language-waggon, with the slow and cumbrous speech galleys, that is, to speak plainly, with the relatively elementary forms of expression – often those descended from cries and grunts – which were the best that our remote forefathers, all honour to them – could in their day attain and acquire.

Our messages are still for the most part given within archaic limits, both of efficiency and speed. And not only in this does the industrial and political world incalculably lose, but also and indeed mainly, the world of the highest reaches of moral and intellectual development; in short

the world of sensitive conscience and penetrative inquiry. This is at least one cause of our baffling perplexities and of our despairing nescience; of our moral and mental defeats. Can we wonder at these? We have hardly yet begun to convey as we might do, what we Intend, what we really Purpose doing or becoming: we have hardly yet learnt what Meaning is and what Significance may be waiting for our awakening sense of the *value* of Sense in order to give us in its highest possible forms and developments. Here again we have at least the analogue of a nervous system crying aloud to be evolved in higher complexity and wider range, with more fruitful results than any yet dreamt of. Let us carry our passion for the perfecting of Communication and Conveyance into the supreme region of Expression. Let us not fear that beauty, grace, dignity, reverence, will thus be sacrificed. Shame on us indeed if they were! It is of that as well as of a dulness of apprehension born of sloth and accusing the universe (!) of being unknowable, that we are more and more in danger. For even now our eyes are sadly strained backwards as we search for means of expressing the opening glories of our own and our children's day. We see that it has been possible to say the greatest things in the worthiest way, and so we desperately quote and quote and quote. Well indeed that we do!

We can hardly carry too far our recognition of what we are losing. The men we quote revered and learnt from, *but did not live on*, the past as we do. *They* lived ever at the moment of spring, in the growing era, hence their power still to stir and to inspire us.

21 December 1906

Significs and Genetics

For the first time the student of significs may now, instead of appearing as a sort of comet invading as a doubtful stranger the realm of recognised and admitted inquiry, find himself among the most regular of 'bodies,' heavenly or no, found therein. Significs naturally takes its place next after Genetics, a term only quite recently permissible in a fully scientific or practical sense.

Genesis, whether in a given case discoverable or no, obviously acts as the introduction to all else that can interest us. But the student of Significs would plead – and the plea would be difficult to disallow – that, having ascertained the mode and history of a concrete existence, the next thing is to ascertain, so far as possible, what may broadly be called its *sense* for us – that in it which affects and calls out *response* in us – rising to its implication or significance for us.

Every observed fact, every fact, that is, which can be studied from a genetic point of view, has next to be considered in its aspect as a sign or Indicator: as representative; as having implications and suggesting inferences which may lead to further observations, possible discoveries, and thus, profitable action. We have further to consider the possibilities of its appropriate symbolic use.

What are we to gather from all this? This last becomes the inevitable human question covering the whole range of human interest. We see that all depends on our 'gathering' the right consequences in the right way, violating in the process neither fact nor logic. We learn at last indeed to be on our guard not merely against hasty or prejudiced, but against unconsciously biassed inferences, falsifying judgment and ultimately practice.

Thus while in a sense Significs must be at work even when Genetics is conceived, it must still more urgently demand conscious and definite attention when Genetics as a mode of study is recognised as born, growing, active in our service. Else we shall see from the first that there will be risk of enormous waste from controversy partly futile because of unconscious failure to appraise the sort of 'meaning' value which observation, say of a complicated process, suggests or presses upon us. There will be an inevitable missing of points from the lack of needed training in the careful distinction between different types of that value which at present we are content to call, roughly or vaguely, meaning.

16 April 1907

The Expedition

When an Expedition of any kind enters an unknown and difficult country naturally impassable and bristling with unknown dangers, what does it do? Does it merely try to scramble and slip and flounder or even to dance a graceful or stately measure? Does it take beasts of burden where there is no footing for them? If it be Equatorial are no precautions taken against sunstroke, fever, tiger, or snake? If it be Polar, is no provision made against being starved and frozen? And above all are no surveying and other instruments taken whereby to fix position and measure distance or height, test temperature, &c.?

Or if all these things be provided for, do we make no attempt to improve equipment, to take full advantage of the growth of knowledge and invention; are we content to use the apparatus that was the best our fathers could devise, and, more than that, never even to examine carefully into its present relevance to fresh conditions, and competence to deal efficiently with them?

And do we justify ourselves by the pleas (1) that we cannot bring volition and consent to bear on the matter, but must leave all to chance beyond polishing and sharpening the old tools, weapons, and instruments, and (2) that we should not think any fresh developments so attractive as the old ones which in their day were emphatically *fresh developments*, and (3) that our instrumental means had so to speak a will of their own and were there to rule *us*, so that all we could do was to register them and watch their pranks or their fooling or else their absurd – or tragical – failures even collapses, when we most sorely and urgently needed them?

Only in one case do we carry out unhindered to the bitter end a tendency to let things slide or at least take them easy which shows itself throughout the social, ethical, political, logical world, and there at least finds energetic protest and practical attempts at remedy. And of all things in the world that one case is the one on which all others depend. If anyone was content to let a film grow on his eyes, to let wax stop his ears, to let his skin become thick horn, protective but insensitive, we should know what to think of him. But when all this is done with the organ of organs, the organ of expression, the organ of signifying and of interpreting Sign in an ever richer content and ever wider range, and in ever more delicate and exact distinction as with ever more subtle forms of co-ordination, correlation, co-operation, compensation – then indeed we may well marvel!

To tolerate any possibly removable obstacle or lack *there*, one would think, was sheer idiocy. Yet that toleration by our teachers is what 30 years of close study of linguistic habit and caprice and helplessness has revealed. This is the result of careful hunting down of the main cause of our paradoxical ignorance and non-progression just where we would least expect to be baffled.

We do not yet know the full value at our present stage of knowledge, either of emotion or of intellect, either of feeling or thought, either of sense or reason. In their day and according to their lights the classical Greeks did know this. So they moulded their expression into the noblest of tools: they did as they would with it, and it was obedient to its natural masters, and faithful to their knowledge and theory of the universe and of nature human and physical. But we are wiser than they! We are content to take language as it fits what we no longer suppose, assume, believe or know; we even think that its beauty as its dignity is the most important thing, and cultivate that for its own sake, as if language were nothing but a decorative art. And we even lose that value in the cultivating process, because the true beauty of language is incidental and inevitable like the sound of a musical voice. In truth we have not got a language yet – it is scarcely even a fully expressive Cry. We do not know what our apathy is costing us. And it is the Mother-sense, the Mother-awareness which is reminding us, accusing us, in this matter. In the earliest developments of language, the penalty for random or outworn or ineffective speech was ruinous loss, even death.

Well, in a larger sense, it is that now. In the last resort our failure to express, reacting upon and dessicating thought, distorting life, becomes or at least breeds the suicidal despair of which we see a tide rising higher and higher. The sense of this engulfing tide drives us to this or that fanaticism

of denial or assertion, leaves us a prey to the dreamer, the fanatic or the charlatan. Had we not better come, not merely to our senses but to the Mother-sense of Man, to the deepest instinct and most penetrative insight of the very Life that has conceived and borne thought-language, language-thought, and whose work is to Discern, to Express, and to Interpret all things? Had we not better come to *that* Sense, and learn thus to know all worlds?

Volumes might be and I hope will be, written about the Mother-sense of man. But as yet: as we are now, such volumes would only further darken counsel. We should begin, perhaps, asking whether it was Internal or External, or whether it was founded on an impregnable rock – fancy a motherhood impregnable!

Or we might try to throw some light – for which apparently we have mistaken dust – upon it, or to *separate*, sunder, isolate it from the logical intellect, instead of leaving it integrated in a complex of organic distinction. Many such metaphorical insults might be levelled at it even by its votaries: many such prevalent confusions might do it injustice and give us but one more excuse for wrangling. Well, the wranglers, senior or junior, have now been officially abolished! Let us hope that they will, at least in future discussion on the first and last and greatest of human interest, be made to contribute to, instead of hindering, the human advance into a transparent region of complementary interpretation.

21 July 1907

Significs

A great deal of worse than useless controversy arises from the general acceptance of the word Dream as having but one sense, while we are really giving it two distinct, often indeed opposite senses.

‘Dream’ in its original and obvious current sense is an incoherent or deceptive vision during sleep. It is an illusive show, an idle, wild, or vain fancy, a confused jumble of incompatible ideas – or a continuous and coherent absurdity consistent only as plausible.

But also it is used for a predictive ideal, as we negatively admit when we protest that we never dreamt that the man would act thus, or the support give way. ‘Franklin thinks, investigates, theorises, invents; but never does he dream’ (Historic Americans: Parker). Yet he had just this anticipating power which every discoverer and pioneer must have.

Thus while we speak of the one, our hearer accepts it the other. And this answer to the especially dangerous use of *vision* (1) for that which brings knowledge; the act or sense of becoming visually aware, and (2) a mere creation of fancy or a reaction of the optic nerve stimulated by some organic excitation such as a blow.

These are but random examples out of a large number of leading words which, with ambiguous context, we persist in using for opposite purposes. This is indeed cutting off of our right hand!

[Undated and untitled]

I believe that we are much nearer the answer to the greatest of our natural questions than we suppose. Some of us have even thought them. But they are very different from those of the orthodox philosophical sects (such orthodoxy in dissent!) and yet farther from the various spiritualism; therefore it is as yet impossible to express them. All expression which could be at present understood by any body of hearers or readers must while altering their forms land us again in the very antitheses which we have to outgrow.

In short our views of life and our concern with it imperatively need re-statement. But an audience for them (as well as a philosophical nucleus for the comparison of notes) needs to be created. We must bring up children in nature’s way by developing the natural interest-energies,

by stimulating the natural eagerness for progress which every healthy baby shows. Then the articulate exchange of thought (absolutely necessary) will become for the first time possible. We shall be able once more to assimilate the knowledge gained by science, as the great masters of antiquity – themselves of course in the ages of the world children to us – were able to do. No form of knowledge then available resisted their conclusions or was outside their scope. Such an idea would have seemed an absurdity to them. They would be saddened to see us doing less well when we might through acquired facilities, do better.

[Undated and untitled]

Life and more life for most life in greater complexity is the urgent motor in evolution. But man is tempted to give up any prospect or destiny of field of action for him except the tiny planet on which he is born and dies. And even here and now thus he appeals from the ‘individual’ to the Society and the Race. But there is no full consciousness or conscience anywhere as yet, except in that insect of an hour, Man’s individual Self. Therefore we are confronted with a paradox.

The greater man is always working for that which is far lower in the evolutionary scale. Of course in one sense this is right. He is working for his fellows who are lesser than he is. But that is always with the hope of drawing them up to his level. Only still it is but Tom, Dick, Harry, who are ‘raised’ to keener sense, to greater grip of meaning, to higher mastery of significance; who are exalted in scale. You cannot make a million people scrupulous, conscientious as one person may be, though in a broad sense they may feel as one. And it is high time that we were taught the radical inferiority of society or race to individual in all that makes (by common consent) for the highest human development. This however of course is only *as we are*. The future may bring forth an organism of consciousness unbroken in space and therefore of course in its derivative Time, which must as a multiple unity evolve a Somewhat higher value than what we call Mind: as such higher indeed as the intellectual conquests of the greatest human thinkers are higher than the successes of sense on the animal level. That sense is one with the powers of human genius. But what a glorious flower from what a humble seed! So with that seed we now call Mind. The ‘spinal’ mental energies are with us: we have to evolve ‘cerebral’ constructive energies as we have already done on the physical plane.

[Undated]

Through

How little we realise the witness of idiom to that calm certainty of the supremacy of good (though not always as our childish desires would define it) which lies at the very heart of human nature and overflows as it were into expressional! We always go *through* and thus, logically, always sooner or later *emerge* from pain, anxiety, sorrow, trouble or trial, misery and loss of every kind.

We say when a man dies apparently in despair, or in any case balked of all success or happiness in this life, ‘What that man must have gone through!’ Exactly. He was not confined to it, incarcerated in it. Though neither he nor we saw *how* (with our narrow shallow eyes) we involuntarily witness in spontaneous idiom that he went *through* it.

We never ‘go through’ Peace or Hope or Blessing or Bliss or Joy. We may indeed go *through* some lower orders of experience which we childishly call by those august names. We outgrow our toys of all kinds.

But all the nobler ideals of good are always stretching away before us in a boundless perspective... Nothing is ever good enough. . . Evil is soon evil enough! But it is ever left behind. . .

If we were offered all the good we could either imagine or conceive – still, as *cosmical* we should feel that it was not all; it would have no uttermost limit, no definite boundary, no final

close, although *our* little satellitic ideas would have all these. And however far we might be able to go in the Kingdom of Perfect blessedness or of the highest good, we could never go through that experience except in the sense of the doll exchanged for the living babe. . .

29 July 1907

You cannot make out what I am really ‘driving at’: I am obscure: you suspect me of not knowing myself what I mean: you prefer the simple issue in simple words and above all the plain rendering of human needs in ordinary language. I even seem to be playing with words, to be at least in danger of shirking plain conclusions and embarking in foolhardy expeditions ending nowhere.

Now, who are You?

You may be simply the hidebound product of the system which has carefully nipped off as childish or rebuked as ‘naughty’ your really human buds (thereby of course ensuring the distortion and dwarfing of the mother-sense which is also the moral sense, and fostering the atavistic tendencies till a crop of anti-social, anti-human tendencies which the religious teacher calls sin and the law crime).

But you may be nothing of this, only a contented lover of the habitual; supposing that there is some law of the universe which makes the simplest occurrences in nature or yourself inscrutable, and horror and hideous loss of all kinds inevitable. Even so, the real growing-points will have been blunted.

Thus the forward-pointing clearness and simplicity of the Child-inspired human being, and of the mother-sense which the highly analytic and constructive masculine intellect tends so disastrously to lose must seem to you its very converse.

You are necessarily unconscious of some kinds of loss resulting from operation in your early childhood; or if conscious of such loss, accept it as part of the normal state of things. All this applies tragically of course to our ethics and our morality. But no attempt to clear and to uplift these can hope to succeed unless we first work to regain, through the racial inspiration of the children, the ‘mother,’ the original generative human Sense, and meanwhile proceed carefully, resolutely and practically to realise and to remedy our present fatal neglect of the jungle we call language and to make of it, in civilised co-operation, means of really and exhaustively expressing *a constantly growing* experience.

11 September 1907

Denial and Protest

It is obviously true that the man who represents this must always in the end find himself stranded; shivering, starving, destitute, alone, on the Rock of his Victory. And it is equally true that Affirmation and Assent, as wide as Nature itself, is the note of an abundant Life to which all things must needs contribute; a life boundless, immaculate, invulnerable, triumphant. To call ourselves Deniers, Protesters, – Deniants, Protestants – is merely to erase ourselves from the scroll of humanity. To call ourselves Ignorers, doubters, Non-knowers (whether in English or Greek) is to dishonour our essential mission to learn, and having learnt to teach, and having done both, to inspire and achieve. To achieve? Yes, in senses as well as degrees, beyond our pampered and pauperised fancies which we take for ideals and need to scout as but idle dreams. But achievement involves renouncement, and this again means denial. And the great Yeas of life must always involve and imply the Noes. The Critic serves well the Assertor; he filters the waters of knowledge and disinfects human thought. His is always beneficent work: it is we in our faithless cowardice who would stay his hand as profaning! So we must all deny and we must all protest, since we are here to be critics in order to be true creators and render our service in full.

13 October 1907

We must remember, if we object to the Socialist, that it is the appropriative Capitalist mainly, but largely also the irresponsible or arrested type of landowner, who have created him. The Capitalist expands into the millionaire and flaunts his millions in grotesque forms of luxury and waste. The landowner judges even his conscientious liberality and his loyalty to duty as a Magistrate, Chairman, Local Councillor, etc. from an absurdly archaic standpoint. Both are quite unable, as Employers and Landlords, to see the matter from the standpoint of workers and labourers, *as it is to-day*. They are always meeting a bygone need and granting a dead wish. Of the new ones they know nothing, except that they are 'revolutionary.'

But in reality the 'r' is superfluous. And even the revolving wheel does not always turn over on its self; it goes forward, it gets on, it takes new ground and acquires new horizons: it may belong to a 'carriage' and carry Man far on an ascending way. In truth the chaos of accepted usage does us in this question of revolution, a notably ill turn. We confound Revolution – the condition of our very world's orderly and beneficent seasons and its rhythm of rest and work and therefore presumably the very condition of our own welfare – with Revolt, as we confound Freedom and Fortuitous Anarchy. Thus we are constantly ourselves responsible, where we least suspect it, for the evils and catastrophes which most we dread.

All our conventional modes of thought are dying if not dead; and those who have been through the too often deadly mill of academic and official training, succeeding the initial one of preparatory and public, primary and secondary school, have mostly been rendered artificially incapable of reading the signs of the times in any relevant and profitable way.

1908 [Untitled]

In an interesting Review by Dr. Thomas, of a Presidential Address by Prof. James, certain points are raised on which a few words may be said.

Prof. James appears to have definitely taken the position that we live on a 'lower level' of power than one accessible to us; and that there are 'reservoirs of energy' which we habitually leave untapped. This is admirably illustrated by the experience of 'second wind.' When 'fatigue' appears to have reached a critical point, an urgent (typically & life-tending) need carries us as it were over an edge, and we tap a new 'level of energy,' repeating this experience in 'layer after layer'.²²

Dr. Thomas points out the great importance in this context, sociologically as well as psychologically speaking, of the question of control. Control in all but the highest attainable form of social order has to limit, as well as to guide, activities which tend to break down the frail structure of the 'civilised,' the artificially organised community. It means restriction; it acts as a strong check to spontaneity and probably to what we call 'sports.' May we say also, in the light of recent biological work, that unless compensated it tends to make a favourable variation, or 'mutation,' impossible?

Meanwhile we have here in both writer and critic an invaluable witness to neglected or misunderstood possibilities. The idea of enhancement of power and enlargement of range in an experience which is in perfectly intimate touch with reality (as interpreted by constantly growing science) is one of which we cannot over-estimate the importance. It brings us to what ought to be the central point in all education; the cultivation and the utilization of the child's natural sense of significance, its natural power of reading the 'givens' (*données*) of life.

22. But surely here the ideas of level and layer hamper instead of helping us, and we need to be clearer as to the sense in which we are using the term energy.

As his is only a comment on a comment, I must not enlarge upon these points, or upon the enormous untapped source of interpretation which we are in this way neglecting. It is indeed sadly true that we do not yet clearly understand the process (continually illustrated in the chemical world) of ‘conversion,’ or the true position of the mystifying ‘mystic’; the mentally ascetic disciplines of the East are indeed to us so much waste of time and energy, or seen like perverse dislocations of an exquisitely co-ordinated organic system. But all such experiences are really witnesses to extensions and intensions of mind which ought to become, *in healthy and productive forms* the heritage of the whole race and one especially needed by the restless and wasteful, reckless and dissipating tendencies of the energetically progressive ‘Western’ societies.

We leave these things seeding in an unexplored jungle or swamp full of vital potentialities, and then we blame the narrow limits of life or of knowledge. Surely it is time that we recognise those ‘potential forms of activity’ in all of us, that are ‘shunted out of use’ but imply precisely those answers which we are apt to despair of obtaining. If they break through and take extravagant and illusory or ignoble forms, tending to breed superstitions, to create mutual suspicion and hostility and to defeat combined effort to grow in orderly fashion towards an ever worthier ideal of what Humanity may become, is it not our own fault? And are not those who direct the training of the young and whose duty and claim it is to be sane and scientific interpreters of Nature, physical, animal, and mental, and who as a rule give up this field as merely pathological – or negligible, especially responsible?

But here one warning must be given. Nowhere is the combination of control and initiative more urgently called for; nowhere do we more need a ‘second wind,’ than in the case of our one instrument of all intelligent activity on the human plane – expression in articulate language. So long as we are content to leave this, on the one hand, full of antiquated and misfitting images and analogies, and on the other, our uncontrolled and untrained despot, we cannot hope to solve problems *many of which ought never to have arisen*; or to accomplish results many of which are pressing at our gates, knocking at our doors, crying to us to interpret the sense, the meaning, the significance of our own nature and of the world to which it belongs.

14 December 1908

The Greater Fellowship

Man ought to say, I am a citizen, a representative of that Imperial Community which we call the Solar System; and my living allegiance is to the Sun. And he should say – May I be faithful to Light and full of the Solar Fire and Force; full also of the loyal simplicity which cares for the smallest daisy, the barest blade of grass, the humblest hedge bud, as it illuminates the stateliest of mountain peaks. And verily, when one thinks of the minuteness of that peak on the curve of our planet and the almost micronic scale of that planet itself, when set amidst the flames of its natural centre and origin, one realises the else unimaginable absurdities of our criterions of importance and significance expressed in terms of our present and local scale and rate. And this of course applies to the Intensive as well as to the Extensive. For as yet our small is as poor as our great. . .

The one thing heavenly, solar, starry, precious about us, is the recognition that Quality and not Scale is the ultimate ‘value.’ But a full appreciation of the pricelessness of quality must be preceded by a new valuation of significance. Else our qualities will remain ambiguous and our ideals inconsistent, and true Value will elude us while its pursuer reaches and seizes what he illuively thinks invaluable, but what really and in homelier speech, he finds – worthless.

Pessimism? What else can we expect, what else, as yet, do we deserve? Would that it did not paralyse but goad us, in insufferable urgency of vital demand! Would that it revealed to us not in blinding but in revealing flash, the true place of Expression in the scale of our needs and the hierarchy of our gifts; and thus also the true place of Significance in the scale of our concern and the

scheme of our interest, our study and our mastery. For that also belongs to the august citizenship which like all the great facts of the natural universe, is there for translation into the dialects of its own product – Mind. It is for Man to become, what for most of us is barely yet a remote aspiration, the Interpreter of all reality, whether tangible, measurable, immanent, transcendent, or – Divine.

17 February 1909

The Need for Significs

The fact is that what we call our civilisation is a ghastly failure because we have defeated the race-protecting, race-preserving, race-lifting action of the natural law which tends to the survival of the fittest. That is, instead of translating the ideas of ‘survival’ and ‘fit’ upwards, giving the words a worthier sense, we have taken to translating them downwards. We cherish and cultivate the meaner whether in life, mind, or speech; we carefully preserve all that is most anti-racial, we make crime an almost irresistible temptation to the acute, pioneering, avventurous brain which we do not know how to make the most of on honest lines: we cruelly and wickedly waste the powers of large bodies of men now called by the helplessly absurd name of the Unemployed, forgetting to call our-selves, as their creators, the Unintelligent.

And worst of all, our whole system of education tends to create an artificial, induced dulness, blindness, bupinness.

Thus it is that we have lost the primordial gift of the enlarged brain of Man: we have ceased to perceive the essential significance of nature and the world. Except in cases of rare scientific or other creative genius, or in the direction of mechanical invention this detecting power is almost entirely aborted. In that direction it still survives mainly because our education on the whole stimulates the mechanical view of things. Even on the literary and historical side, this bent is manifest. Thus the creative brain does find both outlet and welcome there in new combinations that ‘pay’ industrially or officially. (But all the highest work, scientific or imagination, is starved).²³

What is the remedy? How to extract the waiting ore of life and distil its essence now so cruelly wasted? Well, we must first realise the crying need, and see that one generation at last grows up with its original, native sense of Significance carefully preserved and fostered, instead of being as at present damped down and overlaid with second and third hand futility; instead of being consistently discouraged, rebuked or laughed at by those who, themselves, have been semi-paralysed in their own growing days.

Something may be recovered even by the adult; but it must chiefly be the consciousness of the crying and cruel need of the children. It must thus of course also be the demand for the regeneration of articulate expression, the beginnings of a more pregnant speech, since that can be accomplished with our present resources. Only of course the beginnings of really beneficent change must be natural and gradual. Meanwhile, behind all the complacency of the second hand and the ready made, behind the mind of the man who sometimes usurps the honourable name of the Expert and the noble names of the Scholar and the Teacher: behind all the routines of glib rehearsal and barren convention, there still lingers not quite extinguished the spark of a living light, the essential gift and honour of the human race, the power to *read* life, to interpret the world and more especially what we call its evils and dangers, which are that just because of our artificially induced and tragical blindness.

There is here no question of optimism and pessimism on the recognised lines. Indeed the realisation of the optimistic dream on present lines would justify the most desperate pessimism. We are too dense as yet to know what good really is, as worthy of the race in its cosmic relations. And hitherto we have silenced, killed, or starved – or worse still have formalised and specialised –

23. [Added in pencil].

the teaching of most of those who could have told us, if only ours had been the hearts of inspired children, – as they were created and meant to be. We are quite confident that our interests are obvious, and wholly bound up with those of this planet. Any suspicion of a wider range of reference is usually bound up with an antiquated condition of natural knowledge entirely different from ours, or else it practically becomes a snare precisely in the degree to which it calls forth a reverence only due in reality to the revelation of an Ideal which includes as of old all and only the needs and the yearnings which the Child of the race can at first hand feel. If there is to be a catechism, it is from him and him only that we must humble ourselves to learn it. But the true child hates catechisms as he hates ‘lessons’ – He absorbs and imbibes the mental nourishment of his surroundings which to him are also transparently suggestive. And, as representative, he is naturally inspired.

Having forgotten this, we are unconscious of the shame of having to confess what is only too evident, that we here and now, are not inspired. And yet some of us at least believe in a divine incarnation. Believe? there surely lies the secret of our failure to reveal in life to every man of good will throughout the whole world, the Source of inspiring power. For that there must be a very different thing, that is faith: faith to wait; if needs be to deny, to lack all except our loyalty to the Best we can see, know, do, (and thus in our small and poor measure, worthily be).²⁴

There are, in truth, deeper, higher, more real as healthier forms of a life which is well called ‘spiritual’ as appealing to the analogue of pure Air, the very breath and atmosphere of vitality. But these also are mainly distorted or atrophied: witness the discussions by the ‘mystic’ on ‘miracle’ and the ‘supernatural’ and on that curiously pointless notion of ‘immortality’ which so urgently calls for translation and transfiguration. How? Through a yet barely and feebly existent penetration of Sense whose witness is as indisputable to sanity as that of actual touch itself. This comes as we learn to Signify the world and to read worthily and predictively the lessons of experience.

In a regenerate language we should regain the faithful fearlessness of the ancient prophet who at least had a worthy speech – who did much no doubt to secure one – an articulate Expression fresh, sensitive, natural, forceful and penetrative as his own spirit, and so to say yearning like its speaker for the higher and purer ideals which answered to the calling heavens above him. To speak of human language as part of the very man sounds no doubt fanciful.

But is not that because we have forgotten the witness of the Logos? We need to realise oneness as the manifoldness of the Inspiration which is ours quâ human, as Inbreath is ours a quâ animal. But first we must cease to manufacture the dogmatism and the dunderhead, the formalist and the dullard.

The Child is the most sacred shrine we have; we must profane him no longer: we must keep and treasure his mind, his readiness to welcome each fresh ray of the suns towards which as towards waiting homes we pass, we must let him teach us that discontent which is divine in the highest and truest and simplest sense of that too meanly used word.

4 September 1909

Definition of Significs

The recognition, study, and practice of Thoroughgoing Throughsight in all directions and by all Ways and Means. And this by the recovery and enhancement in early education and on a higher plane than yet attained, of the Primal or Initial sense of the human being; a Sense raised to the nth power of Reading and Translating impartially, critically, practically, the immediate, remote and intimate Significance of all that concerns us directly at first hand or indirectly and eventually.

This is inevitably and indeed obviously the characteristic energy which crowns the endowment of ‘mind’ and compels all question. To that Question, when relevant and rightly put, *Answer is*

24. [Added in pencil].

the natural complement. It ought to be as unfailing as the vegetation which in fertile soil answers the call of warm moisture and sun-ray. The ultimate question thus becomes, What *is* the right question and how is it best put? One thing is clear. We must not earmark the answer, nor must we grudge the trouble of experimental expression. We must recognise its starting-point in infancy: first in the wondering questioning eyes, and then hands, of the still dumb babe. We must observe its untiring love of discovering causes, reasons, whys in all ‘Mother’s’ or anyone’s, actions; we must learn to interpret its inevitably absurd experiments in language which often, in grotesque form, strike a primordial and essential note. Upon this first layer, as it were, of future achievement and command, we must carefully foster and assist in developing fresh ones; never doing this (as at present) in ways that tend to priggish ruin and fatal self-consciousness but keeping close to the natural and spontaneous. Learning this and that would, on this normal ascent, become an eager desire. In everything the teacher would evoke, not howlers (for which the adult teacher should be howled at) but healthy and normal response, and often glints of insight which would as yet amaze us but then be recognised as normal.

3 October 1909

Significs. A Personal Word

Now and again, the fact that no one has yet seen the immediately practical, the even business value of serious study of my materials, that is, of the unconscious witness to my contention, is almost beyond bearing. It is due of course mainly to the enormous presumption against its propounder – a quite reasonable one which I indeed, were the position reversed, would to some extent share.

Rhetoric on the subject must in truth be largely wasted. It is not as though inducements of the fascinating kind could be held out; as though halcyon dreams or spiritual paradises or exciting experiences or orgies of wonder, were in question. ‘Do we really know what we mean? Do we secure that all forms of expression shall really express what we can really interpret, and that our interpretation shall stand all possible test, practical and logical?’ Can we wonder that such questions should make us shrink, even wince, unless indeed their apparent futility makes us pass them by with a smile and a shrug?

Reading or hearing passionate advocacy of any kind, we remember that anyone may persuade themselves and others of the value of any discovery or theory. Indeed, those who do not remember these things, and who are not sceptical of a claim to irradiate the world with a flood of new light, which is what they naturally assume Significs to be if they notice it at all, are just those whose advocacy is to be dreaded. It is the plain man in the highest sense of the epithet, – the man who insists upon fact which can bear the most rigorous scrutiny and touch his vital interests, – whose serious attention is to [be] won. We must begin at the ‘business end’ and show that our thesis can easily stand its sharpest sting. For the question, in a case so central as the need of Significs, is one purely, in the long run, of evidence, which here especially needs to be overwhelming. Even if a writer had an admitted authority and boundless eloquence, he ought only to be the more distrusted unless he could bring conclusive evidence of the actual truth and practical value of his subject, – evidence which could not be reasonably ignored.

In my own case, as an inquirer, I can sincerely claim to have, from the first, almost unreasonably distrusted myself. I have always been expecting to find refutable facts. I am so vividly conscious of the subtlety of fallacy which all as yet available language favours, that I scent it and scent mis-expression in everything I say and write. I am constantly astonished afresh to find that my own false steps in language, reflecting back on thought, are so seldom detected. In short, no one is anything like as severe a critic of all I say or write as the author.

It is like a musician in some country where no instrument can yet be adequately tuned, or a painter whose only available pigments are impure and unreliable; or again a mechanic whose

instruments are all full of hidden flaws or defects which no one can overcome; or a traveller continually tripped up in a permanent twilight by small hidden obstacles: or a chemist who, after taking all precautions possible to him, as things are, finds his results vitiated by the exclusion or intrusion of some ultramicroscopic – even at present ultra-recognisable – element. But also it is like a state of things in which a touch of the sense too common, *too homely* (one of the finest of our words and ideals) for our elaborated but still fallible skill, would transfigure our whole world by unveiling its simplicities of immediate significance.

Our need of it is that of ‘the one touch of Nature which makes all things kin’: the one touch bringing us back to that really familiar centre of experience which inexorably and automatically criticises our standards, and restores the missing factors which now breed baffling mysteries, and engender the ‘mystic’ who in expounding, really deepens if he does not distort them.

It is still, however, possible that the person who has collected evidence always startling even to its collector himself, may draw from it faulty or premature conclusions. It is always possible, again, to overwork either the recognitive or the critical function; to lay over-stress on this and under-stress on that, emerging fact. The true conclusion from the evidence so abundant and so cosmopolitan in range, is presumable far beyond anything to which one who can only collect and point to some of it (and that exclusively in English or French) may hope to reach and expound.

The danger therefore of unworthy or inadequate presentation of my thesis grows apace; and I would more than gladly surrender a dangerous solitude of primacy which must always tend to defeat my dearest hopes. If my own failure can be exposed by my own method or rather by an improvement on that method, I shall not merely in sincerity, but inevitably, rejoice. For that will mean the termination of a long, weary, solitary labour, – in an inestimably precious birth: that of a wide extension and a fruitful intension of human power which must make my poor share of it seem ludicrously small, and my use of it even absurdly inept.

In that moment, however, the very nucleus of the highest hope now open to us will be touched; that of combining undreamt-of riches of knowledge with unfailing validity, and therefore essential simplicity and immediacy, of inference.

Conception and criticism, discovery and test, wide difference of outlook or idiosyncrasy, all will concentrate in mutual interpretation spontaneously corrected, of facts automatically sifted. They are indeed the energetic radiations from an intensive focus with which all variation of view is always in touch. Controversy must then always enrich and always expand and elevate the human treasure of Value; for it can but bring out ever fresh criterions of and witnesses to, a Significance of all Experience and therefore of its worthy expression, which shall be recognised by every healthy mind as sound all through and complete all round – though with an ever-growing soundness and completeness.

6 March 1910

Coming to Grips. Significs and Psychology

Significs, as its very name must show, applies to every healthy interest or attraction open to man. What does not in any sense or degree signify, is waste and should be ignored or excised. It applies perhaps supremely to psychology, since here every problem it suggests and offers to solve, is one which depends on our power to interpret our own ‘selves’ and minds. Only thus can we understand the selves which other animals *are* while ‘we’ *have* them and can mentally control, develop and work through them, towards an effective command of natural conditions, by a power of unerring and productive interpretation and application of all forms of mental activity which we designate by group-words. Those summed up in the term Science as including a psychology of its own (usually both too loosely and too narrowly used), at once take us beyond the domain of the rigidly measurable and calculable; and entail a doubling back upon our own nature which compels a

criticism from thence, of our own scientific results. This, therefore, ought to become the *rational brain* of science; that which interprets, criticises, applies and develops its method. Psychology has not hitherto fulfilled that function as it may and must do. And until we recognise a difference of organic character and value between the Man who *minds* – who *attends* – and reflects, and that which is not him but his (albeit in the closest of all relations except that between mother and babe), psychology, where not simply formal or repetitive, will be largely tentative, or worse, dogmatic (as with Herbert Spencer); and will breed opposing schools which only succeed either in suggesting greater difficulties than they remove or surmount, or else in endowing us with a new and baneful orthodoxy.

Approaching this state of things from the starting-point of Significs, we first make a necessary observation, and then we ask a simple question.

We see e.g. that the geologist is handling facts and existents which belong to quite another order than those of life, consciousness, mind, thought, and creative construction of ‘a theory which works.’ We see the chemist doing the same thing, although some of his results contribute to the constituency of the vital, and thus powerfully and uniquely affect it. Coming nearer to psychology, we see the biologist and physiologist ever increasing our knowledge of the conditions of life in all its forms; that is, again, of the condition and the shrine of the ‘psyche’ which gives the psychologist his title.

On the other hand, we see the logician, the philosopher, the poet, the theologian, the economist, the politician, the financier, the business man,²⁵ and all other normal types of the encyclopaedic activity of humanity typically pursuing their way as having no interest in science, and as not merely ignoring psychology as a specialism not theirs, but even deprecating it except in the sense of a departmental technique or else a vague asset of the novelist and the dramatist.

How the question is, how are we so to relate with every one of us, every possible subject of concern to any healthy mind, as to give psychology its full need of recognition and of driving power on human energies, as well as its elucidating and co-ordinating function? Psychology ought, even at lowest, to be the ambassador between philosophy and physics, between poetry and sociology, between health and service, between emotion and logic. We have enormously to increase and quicken our interpretative, the greatest of all our psychological, functions. We must learn mentally to *digest* and thus to turn into organic tissue – culminating in that of our intimate miracle, the human brain itself – every possible form of that knowledge which is in fact the specialised and essential human endowment. The animal is often industrious as well as cunning; powerfully or delicately ingenious in providing for its vital needs. Being this to begin with, man has another duty to perform; that of providing Answers and Solutions to the challenges of Nature; that is, of providing nourishing food for the craving mental organism which, lacking this, hungers in Question and Problem, and if not amply and properly fed, dwindles and dwarfens in a tragical poverty, baffled, confused, perplexed, and sometimes, from induced imaginative disease, conceptually delirious. In the advent of Significs we are secreting from our own tissues, themselves nourished from the food-stores of Nature, that first food for the infant humanity which initiates the greatest of marvels, – the growth through consciousness (be it only at first of hunger) to mind.

Significs, of course, is only a term which sums up both the demand and the supply of our Whats, our Hows, our Whys, in short of our specific human impulses to respond to and translate, transmute – and exploit, our environment. The significian, recognising and devoting his energies to the recovery of a power still at our command (though only in the fullest sense by a generation in which it has been educatively developed), learns and will train others to open, to manifest, to expose the very core of all problem as of all question and all research. Observation will apply a

25. Curious that we have no proper name for these definite and conspicuous classes!

lever or a solvent to all challenging experience which as yet is in abeyance. For Sign will open and disclose its full significance, its whole bearing and reference, intimate or remote.

Man is at present tending to skeletonise, to dry up, to crystallise his world in measure, in number, in abstract category, and to feed on his own resources. We are indeed fast nearing the danger of self-defeat in the sterility of the critical and analytical, dissective functions, which on their own plane are beyond price and a crowing glory, but are now usurping the functions of generation, supply, and prevision of an ascending development in organization of which Man is himself the supreme known type. Intellect is feeding on itself, and science vainly hopes to avert that result while its very vocabulary, more or less an arrested and fossilised one, is hampering it on every side. Thus imagination is confounded with fancy, the reflective with the tentative or casual, and one of the highest forms of work with careless or exuberant play; even, indeed, the reproductive with the abortive. Play, of course, has an invaluable and unique function, but it is not what may be called 'retinal'; not, that is, the correlate of an unerring *presentation of the image* of an actually existing world of form, colour, texture, substance and movement. This needs translation upwards. But here we have only one case out of hundreds in which we are the unconscious victims of, in one sense, a hampering and scanty, although in another and a bad sense a cumbrous and plethoric, vocabulary; one constantly, through its unrecognised senility of association or its ignored confusions, creating barren controversy and defeating man's highest efforts.

Using the term psychology in the richest and widest sense, we realise what we may hope for in a growth really normal but at present in abeyance, of the primal sense of significance – intrinsic and essential, or potential and remote – which in its simplest forms was the original cause of the survival of the most sensitive, helpless and defenceless of animal organisms. The human animal became sensitive, in fact, in a new sense and context. Man specially developed a mental reaction and response to fact, however dimly or remotely indicated or implied, that made for the preservation and enhancement of his own and his family's welfare and an increasing mastery of their surroundings and resources, including the lower forms of life. In exchange for immense strength of muscle and rapidity of movement; for claw, horn or sting and all other forms of organic weapon or defence, for gill and fin and wing; in exchange indeed for the merely animal advantage and immunity, crowned with instinct, he developed a sense of the *signification* of every occurrence, appearance, movement, sound, glint, incident of every kind; adding to these one of his own, one of which the highest mere animal was unconscious, – the meaning, the consciously intentional bearing, *of his tribal fellow*.

This enhanced sense of Value, of the production of intelligent Sign and signal, of realised and recognised Intention, Purpose, determined Resolve, becomes thus the crowning form of a significance, itself, in this context, the highest discoverable treasure. It ought to be impossible, at least for the psychologist to continue to ignore or take for granted this tremendous factor in human life, the developed and enriched sense of consequence and value and its specialised human form of purposive intent. 'Things' do not, they cannot, mean – intend – to convey fact, suggest references, and initiate action upon these. 'Things' do not 'mean' to produce an effect or to appeal to our sense of that meaning. Movements and changes, great or small, have, in themselves and strictly speaking, no *meaning*; they are indicative, suggestive, even imperiously coercive, but only fully Significant to one who adequately reacts to their full stimulation.

Of all this the psychologist needs to be especially aware; and next to him the educator, who ought indeed to be psychologist before he is teacher, and happily often instinctively though not technically, is that. But until now the whole subject has been ignored, with consequences which we deplore but suppose to be inevitable. We take for granted that the educated person is consistent, appropriate and effective in his use of the terms which, if we notice them at all, we call meaning-terms. Or, if we are cynical on the subject, (after making an exception in our own favour or that

of our chosen writers or speakers) we contemptuously dismiss the rest of the users of language as more or less slovenly or incompetent.

The psychologist surely should, at least on his own ground, set an example here, and warn the man of affairs, the man who puts the term 'practical' beyond all others, that the practical is 'practically' thinned and eviscerated by our neglect of its prime condition – the full human sense – on the highest as on the lowest level, of the import, the purport, the implication, the significance and thus the ultimate nature and value, of all actuality and worth. And he should thus especially inspire the 'practical' arbiters of our present destiny, the educational authorities, representing the Teachers in School and University, the 'Masters' – an ambitious term – of each succeeding generation.

30 October 1910

The Ideal of Significs

The difference between the present level of powers of communication in human intercourse and that which is mentally potential in the child and must be fully acquired by the man, may be conveniently compared to that between the conveyance of news by post, first walking and then riding, next by steam, next by telegraphy, and now by 'wireless' itself, – one of the burlesque names which, by teaching them we are not ashamed to dull our children's minds. As well call man the stingless or hornless or finless; or define the animal world as the speechless. We don't want to know what a new power is *not* but what it *is*.

The power itself, with its senselessly negative name, merely contrasted with scratching on a surface and conveying a document by horse, pigeon, boat, steam or wire, faintly represents what the training of the future must become in the *sense* (awareness and penetration) of all significance, of all implication; and in the power of universal interpretation. It must make a sane problem imply its solution, a real need imply its satisfaction, a natural question imply its valid answer. And it makes for penetration and elucidation of all the needless mystification which we call mystery and fatuously revere.

The mysterious is really the baffling and obsessing; and the mystic (properly so-called) even with the noblest aims, cultivates this – *or must repudiate the name*. The mystagogue works on fear and hope and desire; by mystifying his fellows he gains ascendancy over them and even exaltation as well as credence. What we need is not to be mystified – the true worker scholar, saint and sage never mystify – but to be enlightened and illuminated. Mystery is there to be cleared up, to be dispensed, to be penetrated. Ignorance and impotence are its least harmful because anyhow negative products. But the mystic who fits the name exalts dream and cultivates illusion; playing upon powers that ought not to be exploited until we have earned them by turning to the blessed and revealing light which dispels mystery or exposes it as insoluble enigma; that pure and candid dawn which we have to recognise in the typical little child, and to translate for the growing and grown man.

For except we be as little children in their insatiable experiment and question, their open simplicity of outlook their passion for all forms of illumination begetting a relentless questioning which their elders, alas, have lost the power to answer and so rebuke and repress, we can never hope to read those ultimate secrets which as yet we do not deserve to penetrate, and which thus either breed sorrow and shame and failure, or foster dogmatisms fatal to the revelations waiting for us.

Significs and significians

7.7. 'The Theory of Psycho-Therapeutics,' by Frederik van Eeden*

Synopsis:

1. The paper exposes some theoretic views; results of five years of practical experience, in the clinique of Doctors van Renterghem and van Eeden in Amsterdam, a statistical report of which was read in Paris in 1889 (Congrès d'Hypnologie).
2. The term 'Psycho-therapeutics' – introduced by Hack Tuke – is defined as the cure of the body by means of the psychical functions of the sufferers. Suggestion as the impulse of one mind to another, the principal aid of psycho-therapy.
3. The name 'Hypnotism' must be avoided as being the continual source of misunderstanding and distrust. Hypnotism is pathological or experimental, the suggested therapeutic sleep is or ought to be physiological and normal.
4. Psycho-Therapy, as the cure of the body by the mind, is the soundest, most useful and most harmless principle in the world. The distrust and prejudice caused by the abnormal facts of hypnotism, in experiments and public exhibitions, is its greatest enemy. Only by the strictest integrity of purpose can it stand its ground.
5. All experiments must be avoided, as experiments can become the cause of permanent abnormal conditions, heightened suggestibility, doubled or multiplied states of consciousness.
6. Heightened suggestibility is an abnormal condition and must be strictly avoided. Suggestibility depends on ataxia or disintegration of the psyche, which theoretically lessens the power of resistance.
7. To cure by suggestion without increasing suggestibility is not impossible. It can be realised by addressing suggestion to intellect and conscious volition of the sufferer.
8. *Centralisation of psychical functions* must be the principal maxim of psycho-therapy – the Centrum being intellect and conscious volition.
9. Difference between the lower and upper class of society. The latter much more difficult to treat. They object, rightly, to a tone of command. Psycho-therapy must *guide and instruct*, not command.
10. The suggestibility as defined by French authors consists of two parts: A. the ideoplastic power, and B. the impressionability. These two do not go invariably together; A can be increased without increasing B.
11. The ideal is: 1. *Great ideo-plastic power*. 2. *Great centralisation of psyche*. 3. *Slight impressionability*.
12. The possibility of curing disease, even organic, by the ideoplastic power is amply demonstrated by many observations. This power can be brought and ought to be brought as much as possible under the influence of conscious volition.

* [Originally published as 'The Theory of Psycho-Therapeutics. Synopsis (and discussion).' In *International Congress of Experimental Psychology*, London, 1–4 August 1892: 150–154. London: Williams & Norgate. This is the conference where van Eeden met Victoria Welby and discovered her work, in particular on the use of the metaphor in psychology (see Welby 1892b). The 'Synopsis' refers to a full essay by van Eeden in Dutch entitled 'Het beginsel der psycho-therapie.' *De Nieuwe Gids*, 7: 296–325. This was followed by a version in English, 'The theorie of psycho-therapies.' *The Medical Magazine*, 1: 230–257. van Eeden introduced the concept of 'lucid dreaming,' he and Sigmund Freud knew each other personally, though van Eeden formulated a critical reading of Freudian Psychoanalysis.]

13. The best way to this is training. Psycho-therapy especially in nervous and chronic disease must be a system of training.
14. The remark is ridiculous that Psycho-therapy does not heal wholly and lastingly. The cure by chemical means can never be as profound and lasting as the cure by means of the individual will. For the first is artificial and abnormal and lessens the normal power of resistance. When the individual will, only *guided* by a helper, effects the cure, the chances for relapse are least.
15. Difference between psychical and physical is not spiritual and material. Natural science deals with the phenomenal world as philosophy with the spiritual. Spirit is not subtilised matter. Psychical forces are new, unknown forces, special attributes of living matter.
16. Virchow's cellular-pathology neglected the psychical forces of the living cell. Now that these are again acknowledged, some principles of the old Vitalism must necessarily revive.
17. The 'vis medicatrix' – a term still used in medicine – represents a real and very important power, whose existence and importance are not always sufficiently acknowledged. This power will diminish by inactivity according to the physiological law.
18. Chemical medicaments stimulate this power without strengthening it. Modern medicine, especially in chronic diseases, by neglecting psychology is on the way to weaken the individual and the race: striving more after temporary and artificial cures than after a permanent revival and increasing of the normal power of resistance, by exercise, training and strengthening of the will.
19. Psycho-therapy, if well understood, is the strongest and most fruitful correction of this error.
20. These views are theoretic, but in large part thoroughly proved by practical experience.

In the course of the discussion which followed, Prof. Bernheim, of Nancy,

While agreeing on the whole with Dr. van Eeden's views, thought that he established too marked a distinction between hypnotic and normal conditions, 'Hypnotism is not an abnormal state; it is only a state of heightened suggestibility. To hypnotise a man is to bring out his innate suggestibility, that is to say, his tendency to transform ideas into acts. With some subjects a mere order or affirmation is enough to evoke this suggestibility, to determine catalepsy, anaesthesia, hallucinations; with other subjects natural sleep affords a sufficient exaltation of susceptibility, and suggestions are carried out, if given to the sleeper in such a way as not to awaken him. Or you may suggest sleep, and the sleep thus suggested will predispose to further suggestions. But hypnotic sleep is not necessary for the production of therapeutic effects. Hydro-therapy, electro-therapy, suspension from the neck, may each of them suffice in certain cases to incite the brain to the effort of inhibition or of dynamogeny necessary for the cure. In whole or in part, they act by suggestion.'

Professor Delbœuf, of Liège,

Agreed with Prof. Bernheim that there was nothing abnormal in the hypnotic state. To hypnotise a man is to persuade him that he can do something which he believes he cannot do; or that he can refrain from doing something from which he believes that he cannot refrain. This persuasion may be induced directly or indirectly. The indirect methods are called hypnotism.

'I was consulted,' he said, 'by a highly placed official whose life had for twenty years been rendered miserable from constant nervous anxiety. I showed him, without sending him to sleep, that he possessed the power of not feeling pain. I passed a needle through his arm without his feeling it and thus showed him the power of his will. I told him that he had only to exert this will against his nervousness. He understood me and was cured.'

In mental maladies, we have to induce the sane part of the mind to act upon the insane part. A young married lady known to me was possessed with the idea that she must kill her husband and her children. Every morning she asked herself whether this was not the day on which the deed must be done. I defied her to summon up her morbid idea while I looked her in the face. Succeeding in this, I told her that on the morrow from 8 to 9 a.m. she would be unable to think of

the murder. This suggestion also succeeded. By proceeding with care, I managed to chase away the morbid notions for two hours, then for a day, then for a week. She was cured.

Was there here any production of an abnormal state? Given the subject's preliminary conviction that she was applying to a man, or submitting to a treatment, possessing some extraordinary power, there was nothing else except the influence of her own will on the rejection of morbid ideas.

I may say in conclusion that hypnotism is scarcely more than a word. (Dans l'hypnotisme il n'y a guère autre chose que le mot hypnotisme).'

Dr. Bérillon said:

That he considered that the School of Nancy went too far in identifying hypnotic susceptibility and hypnotic trance with ordinary suggestibility, and ordinary sleep. The hypnotic state was characterized by an absence of cerebral control, and another and similar absence was observable in children, in certain hysterical patients, in intoxicated persons, etc. The special characteristic of hypnotism was the artificial suppression of the control, and the temporary reduction of the subject to an automaton. He thoroughly agreed with the previous speeches that such temporary automatism, (although in his own view abnormal), was by no means necessarily injurious to the subject, but might be advantageously induced by the physician in many nervous maladies.

M. Pierre Janet said:

That formerly hypnotists had endeavoured to prove the reality and the importance of hypnotic phenomena, and to distinguish them as clearly as possible from mere pretence. 'But now,' he continued, 'all is changed. Hypnotism is confounded with the simplest phenomena of ordinary life, nay more, some men give up even the name of hypnotism, even its very existence. One idea alone is preserved, that this hypnotism which is nothing at all, possesses a marvellous power, and heals everything. Surely, this is to import a purely psychological confusion into medicine. Claude Bernard long ago showed that all pathological phenomena start from normal phenomena, yet soon become distinct from them. Hypnotism follows the same law.'

Dr. Sperling of Berlin, said:

That as we did not yet know what normal sleep was, it was not easy to say whether the hypnotic trance were the same or something different. Also we must avoid falling into a dispute about words. The hypnotic sleep was clearly a state of heightened suggestibility, but it was equally true that high suggestibility was sometimes found in the waking state; and undoubtedly suggestion was often a factor in other modes of treatment than the hypnotic – such as electro-therapy, to which Dr. Bernheim had referred. Only it was impossible to say exactly how far suggestion operated before we had estimated what electricity – or any similar agent – could do without suggestion. The determination of this by careful experiment was a point of much importance.

7.8. 'Today and Tomorrow,' by Gerrit Mannoury*

In the fall of 1917 the following far from worldshaking announcement appeared in several Amsterdam newspapers:

On Wednesday, September 12, an International Institute for Practical Philosophy was founded in Amsterdam under the direction of Professor G. Mannoury, chairman; Mr.

* [Originally published in 1973 in the journal *Methodology and Science* 6 (4): 129–133 (= English translation of Mannoury 1939a: 434–437)].

We are publishing this sketch in lieu of 'Speaking and Understanding' (to which we referred in our Editorial in Vol. 6 No. 1) at the suggestion of the late Professor Gerrit Mannoury's daughter, Mrs. David Vuysje, who considered the present article more appropriate.

Jacob Israël de Haan, secretary; Professor Dr. L. E. J. Brouwer, Dr. Frederik van Eeden, Professor L. S. Ornstein and Messrs. Borel and Bloemers. (. . .). The Institute has received expressions of sympathy from Professor Dr. Peano of Turin, Professor Dr. Schoenflies of Frankfurt, Dr. Walter Rathenau of Berlin, Allen Upward Mittag-Leffler, George D. Herron and George Birkhoff.

No, the ‘birth’ announcement has indeed proved far from worldshaking and of the zealous work of the Institute (that virtually remained confined to the initiators, or rather, a few of them), no traces remain other than the voluminous minutes and two issues of a journal (published in four languages) that soon proved to have no ‘pecuniary’ viability. Meager results of the many discussions during which we worked out in detail our great plans to found an international organization of philosophers; meager results indeed of the many letters we despatched to our sympathizers or ‘supposed’ sympathizers abroad unfolding those plans. . . And yet how great, how noble they were! The Institute (founded by virtue of a solemn-looking notarial deed) was to bring forth an International Academy, an academy that was not to confine itself – as academies are wont to do – to publishing heavy volumes of scholarly writings of its members, but was to be one, which, through regular and close contacts, would have a special mission to fulfill. And it was precisely this mission that was one of the main points of our discussions. Some time before the above announcement appeared in the press and the notarial deed passed, Brouwer, Van Eeden, Borel and Bloemers (the latter soon withdrew), had already published a manifest, which, in fact, constituted a first attempt to define that task (I suspect that it was Brouwer really who drafted most of it), a task that aimed at:

1. creating words of spiritual value for the languages of the peoples of the western world and so give such spiritual values a place in the mutual understanding of the peoples of the West (thus a ‘declaration des valeurs spirituelles de la vie humaine’);
2. seeking out those elements in our present legal order and jurisprudence that tend to repress and stifle spiritual advance and subsequently propose placing restraint on the influence sphere of the law and its doings;
3. designating in the principal languages words that seemingly stand for spiritual values but which, in reality, are rooted in the instinct of self-preservation and complacency, and therefore to strive to clarify and define more precisely the objectives of democracy in the direction of a world state with purely administrative powers.

Now just what Brouwer meant exactly by those ‘words of spiritual value’ referred to sub. 1, and how he imagined they could be instrumental in the world’s spiritual reform, such as was undoubtedly present in the minds of all of us, has never become quite clear to me. But what was only too obvious at first sight of his three-point manifest was that it constituted an outcry against the tyranny of the idol WORD and against the blind superior force of blind prejudices. This by itself was sufficient reason for me to join the small group of spiritual pioneers and co-sign the foundation deed for the new institute.

To be sure, the manifest as cited above was a bit too long to be included in the deed. And so we decided that in the deed we would define our objective in a somewhat shorter and maybe clearer manner as: a reappraisal of the values in life for both individual and community. Whether any deeds with a wider purview have ever been passed, I do not know.

The foundation deed is still tucked away in some notarial safe, the academy has yet to be born, the lively exchange of ideas and discussions among the initiators (a few years after De Haan had left for Palestine and Father Ginneken had joined the Group, it was turned into a *Signific Circle*) have long since come to an end and I am now wondering is it really *worthwhile* to dwell on all this once more? Great plans! They have been devised in all times; world-reforming ideals, they have been cherished through the ages; and the planners and idealists are dead and gone (rest in

peace my poet friends, Jacob Israël, 'cruelly crushed' dreamer,²⁶ and Frederik van Eeden, restless seeker after the essence of things, elusive and always beyond reach, after the truth, always beyond understanding, and already they are fading from our memory. Vanitas vanitatum!

Plans are words and words are vain so long as they are not realized in thoughts and deeds – strong enough as to make eyes shine and cause arms to be outstretched. Strong enough to induce mankind – panting and caught in embittered inner struggles – to break its self-forged chains and set out rejoicingly on a new road. Such words we did not speak, such deeds we did not perform. By no means. By no means.

And yet, no matter how vain, how fugitive a word may be, it does have a meaning. A meaning, not only for the speaker and the hearer, but also for those who will never hear it, but whose minds nevertheless will be influenced by it.

And who, really, dares to say that he has *spoken* a word, even though it has come to him out of the darkness of his subconscious? Actually it is not the speaker who utters the word; it is they who whispered it to his heart and ear, who handed it down to him from generation to generation and who put their souls and thoughts into it.

A word is both causal and symptomatic and as such has its traceable or untraceable meaning. Was the Signific Circle of so many years ago such a symptom? And as a token of its time did it, perchance, have a meaning which it lacked as a life-giving agent? A strange question, indeed, to come from one who was a member of that Circle himself; for who tries to see himself as the mere result and product of his time? There is certainly no harm in trying to: 'It can be done, it's lots of fun, you'll say so when you've once begun,' I read on a box a while ago. A box that contained *another* difficult puzzle – one that I have never been able to solve either.

The birth of a word is really just as much a wonder as the birth of a human being, or that of an institute or solar system.

Of course, the words that I am jotting down this very moment have some connection with words I must have heard or read before and with my (very faint) recollection of the resigned or emotional conditions under which I heard or read such words. From the time of my first picturebook, maybe, or the first quarrel with my sister. Taken by itself that is not so strange and if I still had my first picturebook I should be able to check whether it contains any of the words that also occur in this meditation, or perhaps homonyms or synonyms, to put it more formally. And perhaps my sister would still remember something about that quarrel; she has a strong memory when it comes to that. And even if this should not be so, this does not necessarily mean that all that we fail to remember or cannot check is strange. If only we can see the relationship between things. Presume. Or at least guess.

But what is the relationship between the spoken and the heard word? Between what 'A' intends to convey or means and what 'B' thinks he understands or hears? 'B' may hear 'A' shout and sees him wave his arms and open his mouth wide, but surely he does not hear him *think*, does he? Telepathists say they do, but even so that does not help me solve my puzzle, for I do not hear the telepathist think; I only hear him say something and between his *saying* and my *hearing* lies an unexplored no-man's land of acoustic vibrations, or so to say: of molecular and atomic movements or rather, in the language of modern physics: a drumfire of flashes, of billions and billions of flashes! That I should be able to glean from that drumfire of flashes what that telepathist of just now asserted or that I should get just an inkling of it, yes, that I do find strange, in fact, a lot more so than that people sometimes misunderstand each other.

And all I have done so far is ponder on *speaking*, face to face. But how many flashes will have flitted between Buddha's wisdom and my blurred vision of that wisdom, I wonder? The very thought of it makes me giddy. Ah, I can write no more!

26. Translator's note: Jacob Israël de Haan was ruthlessly murdered in 1924 during his stay in Palestine.

Gerrit Mannoury started his career as a mathematics teacher. He subsequently gave private lectures at the University of Amsterdam from 1903 to 1916 and was awarded an extraordinary professorship in 1917. His inaugural speech was entitled ‘The Social Significance of the Mathematical Form of Thought.’ Mannoury was an eminent thinker and took a great interest in the foundations of his own discipline – mathematics – as well as in those of other disciplines. His courses were always preceded by lectures on the philosophy of mathematics and on epistemological, methodological and didactic problems. Mannoury’s thinking and many writings gave a strong impetus to studies in the field of the sociology of science. His conception of mathematics directed toward the study of other disciplines paved the way for his psycho-linguistic and sociological studies. On his retirement from the University of Amsterdam in 1939 he held a farewell speech on ‘The Beauty of Mathematics as a Signific Problem.’ To honor his scientific merits the University of Amsterdam granted him the title *doctor honoris causa* in 1946. Mannoury was one of the founders of the International Group for the Study of Significs, in which he played an active role for many years.

7.9. ‘Synopsis of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. Prospects of the Signific Movement,’ by L. E. J. Brouwer*

The first coming together of people concerned with significs in Holland occurred during the first worldwar in 1915, under the startling impression of the false slogans with which this war was waged; against which there seemed to exist no other remedy but general philosophical reflexion, which as a matter of course had to be initiated in an neutral country. With that object a committee was formed. During its deliberations differences as to the plan of action became accentuated, in the end leading to a schism. The majority founded the International School for Philosophy in Amersfoort, which since then has occupied an important place in the spiritual life of Holland. The minority thought that durable humanizing of mankind could only be attained if in the first place, besides material, also *spiritual forces and values*²⁷⁾ could be introduced into mutual understanding in an indicative and objective mode, notwithstanding their poetical and emotional origin. Thus these forces and values would be able to fight against the abuse, so often seen in larger communities not bound together by ties of friendship, of using words vaguely suggesting spiritual tendencies for fallacious justification of infidelity, oppression and torment.

The foresaid minority hoped to obtain results in the desired direction by the foundation of an *International Academy for Practical Philosophy and Sociology*. In a prospectus the following task was assigned to this Academy:

1. To coin words of spiritual value for the languages of western nations and thus make those spiritual values enter into their mutual understanding (what could be called a ‘*déclaration des valeurs spirituelles de la vie humaine*’).
2. To detect and combat such elements in the present system of law and in the productive activity growing under its protection, as chiefly repress or dim spiritual tendencies, and to propose appropriate limitations for the sphere of influence of law and technics.
3. To point out and brand those words of the principal languages, which falsely suggest spiritual tendencies for ideas ultimately originating in the desire for material safety and comfort, and in

* [Originally published in 1946, in the journal *Synthese* 5 (4/5): 201–208].

27. As an example of denoting a spiritual force, I might call the relative clearness with which the reality of a fellow-creature is felt by the subject as indissolubly interwoven with its own reality, *the degree of egoicity of that fellow-creature in relation to the subject*.

so doing to purify and to correct the aims of democracy towards a universal commonwealth with exclusively administrative function.

In the prospectus this task is further explained in the following way:

The undersigned are well aware of the fact that such a task as assigned by them to the International Academy for Practical Philosophy and Sociology, has been taken up several times by philosophers individually. However, they are convinced that precisely in consequence of the individual character of the work of those philosophers their words could be efficient only for memorizing the expressed thoughts in the minds of the writer and his isolated readers, but never could find a place in the mutual understanding of the multitude and therefore had only a slight social influence.

They hold the opinion that when the same task could be undertaken in common by a group of independent thinkers with subtle and pure human feeling, their thoughts *formed in the mutual understanding of their circle*, would necessarily find a corresponding language, *allowing them to enter into the mutual understanding of the multitude*.

Finally, as regards the realization of the proposals of the Academy, it must be kept in mind, that a thought, in its quality of embryonic deed, has a far greater possibility of development when it is the common intimate conviction of a group of human beings than in the case of its belonging to one individual only, however courageous that individual may be and however numerous the company of half understanding followers who surround him.

So far the prospectus. One of its signers was the poet and thinker Dr. Frederik van Eeden who already before 1900 inaugurated Dutch significs with his wonderful essay *Redekunstige grondslag van verstandhouding (Logical basis of mutual understanding)*. The other signers were Henri Borel, man of letters and sinologist, H. P. J. Bloemers, social worker (later on burgomaster of Groningen and Arnhem), and myself.

To Martin Buber the prospectus suggested the following lines:

„Ehe ich mich zu dem mir mitgeteilten Plan einer Akademie endgültig äussern kann, muss ich Sie um Klärung einer mir noch nicht recht verständlichen Einzelheit bitten. Es heisst in dem mir übersandten Exposé, es sei Aufgabe der zu begründenden Akademie, „Wörter spirituellen Wertes für die Sprache abendländischer Völker zu schaffen.“

Das scheint mir, so hoch ich auch die Möglichkeiten einer Gemeinschaft gleichgesinnter Menschen und ihre wirkende Kraft einschätze, doch über die Funktionen einer solchen Gemeinschaft prinzipiell hinauszugehen. Wortschöpfung, Erschaffung des Wortes ist für mich einer der geheimnisvollsten Vorgänge des geistigen Lebens, ja ich gestehe, dass für meine Einsicht zwischen dem, was ich hier Erschaffung des Wortes nenne, und dem, was man das Hervortreten des Logos genannt hat, kein *Wesens*unterschied besteht. Das Werden des Wortes ist ein Mysterium, das sich in der entbrannten, aufgetanen Seele des welt dichtenden, weltentdeckenden Menschen vollzieht. Nur solch ein im Geiste *gezeugtes* Wort kann in dem Menschen zeugen. Daher kann es meines Erachtens nicht Aufgabe einer Gemeinschaft sein, es zu *machen*. Vielmehr scheint mir eine Körperschaft wie die von Ihnen und Ihren Freunden geplante sich nur eine *Reinigung* des Wortes zum Ziele setzen zu dürfen und zu sollen. Der Missbrauch der grossen alten Worte ist zu bekämpfen, nicht der Gebrauch neuer zu lehren. Dies ist, in aller Kürze ausgedrückt, meine Anschauung. Eine ausführlichere Äusserung, auch zu den andern Punkten, behalte ich mir für einen späteren Zeitpunkt vor, nachdem ich die erbetene Aufklärung erhalten habe.

From the answer sent to Buber I quote the following passages:

„Das abendländische Wort besitzt zwar in mehreren Fällen *neben seinem materiellen* einen seelischen Wert, aber letzterer ist immer dem ersteren untergeordnet, und während ersterer eine

sichere und dauerhaft orientierende Wirkung auf die Aktivität der Gemeinschaft erworben hat, in dem Sinne dass es die einzelnen Individuen dazu bringt, im Erstreben körperlicher Sicherheit und materiellen Komforts einander möglichst wenig zu hindern und womöglich zu unterstützen, entbehrt letzterer jeden Einfluss auf die Rechtsverhältnisse (es sei denn insofern er daselbst zur Erschleichung von Unrecht missbraucht wird); demzufolge sind seine Wirkungen schwach, vorübergehend und lokalisiert.

Zum Eintritt des ersten Wortes *ausschliesslich* seelischen Wertes in das allgemeine menschliche Verständnis wird nur dann eine Möglichkeit geschaffen sein, wenn das „Mysterium des Werdens“ des betreffenden Wortes sich nicht im einzelnen Individuum, sondern im gegenseitigen Verständnis einer *Gemeinschaft* von klar empfindenden und scharf denkenden, übrigens materiell einander nicht zu nahe stehenden Menschen vollzogen hat.’

Erich Gutkind criticized the prospectus as follows:

... Es ist überhaupt dies alles auf der europäischen Basis nicht möglich. Worte wie das chinesische Tao oder das klanglich und sachlich auffallend analoge Tora, das Wort des Hebräers, können nie und nimmer auf irgend einer europäischen Grundlage entstehen. Es ist als ob der Bewohner einer städtischen Mietskaserne darauf versessen wäre, auf seinem Holzfussboden tropischen Pflanzenwuchs zu erzeugen. Solch höhere Sprache lässt sich auch Europa nicht von aussen durch den Sprachtrichter einflössen. Solch magisches Wort kann vielleicht wachsen in einem Kreise, der eine Art europäische Secession darstellt, wie es der Eure sein mag, oder auch in einem Akt hingebender Selbstentäusserung Europa’s, das sich endlich entschliesst, nach der unerhörtesten aller biblischen Prophezeiungen „in den Hütten von Schein zu wohnen,“ da mag Europa das Wort sich aneignen, oder endlich „sein“ Wort, „seine“ Sprache finden. Aber auf alle Fälle müsste dann auch zuvor eine solche höhere Form der Gemeinschaft vorhanden sein, die blosser Forschungsgemeinschaft ist solches nicht...’

The answer ran thus:

„Das Wort kann deshalb nicht die höhere Form der Gemeinschaft abwarten, weil die höhere Form der Gemeinschaft auf das Wort wartet. Denn einerseits hat an jedem Befreiungsprozess, an jeder Revolution, die rechtzeitige Bildung von den neuen Werten angepassten Worten einen wesentlichen Anteil, andererseits ist es der *Mangel an sprachkritischer Besinnung*, welcher verursacht, dass die Selbstrevolutionierung der Gemeinschaft noch immer un stetig und mit zerstörenden Krisen verläuft und den Bedürfnissen gegenüber fortwährend einen gewaltigen, die Menschheit in dauernder Spannung erhaltenden Rückstand aufweist.’

Soon after our group was joined by G. Mannoury and L. S. Ornstein, both university professors, and by J. I. de Haan, poet and doctor of law. The group of seven thus formed, erected an ‘*International Institute for Philosophy*,’ having as its aim ‘revision of the values of the elements of life of individual and community’ and trying to attain this aim by

- a. establishing and supporting an International Academy for Practical Philosophy and Sociology;
- b. establishing and supporting a school for the propagation of the concepts and relations of concepts as introduced by the Academy;
- c. other means.

For the financial provision a separate society was erected.

The primordial task of the Academy was intended to be the composing of a new vocabulary on the basis of a distinction between the following five levels of language with respect to the different relative importance of the contents of the single words on one hand and their logical connections on the other hand:

a. *Basic language*, in which the connection of the words exerts little or no influence and each word (or each group of words) speaks straight to the imagination. A dynamical relation to the eventual hearer is not presupposed, and if it exists, it can be one of friendship as well as of hostility. To this level belong the primordial language of the child, the language of vehement or profound emotions, also hypothetical primitive languages.

b. *Emotive language*, in which word connections (especially contrasting ones) are clearly perceptible, without however preponderating or having become rigid. The words and word groups evoke emotions in the hearer both in themselves and by association with other words. Speaker and hearer mutually recognize their right of existence, consequently solipsism is excluded and friendship and hostility get articulate forms. To this level of language largely belong popular and poetical languages of modern western society, also eastern image-language.

c. *Utility language*, in which the connections of words are essential, so that the words hardly ever have an independent effect. A measure of agreement is presupposed well-nigh excluding all fundamental contrariness of will. A strong limitation of the possibility of misunderstanding is obtained by admitting to the intercourse only words and wordgroups referring to generally acknowledged human needs. To this level belongs most of western written language, and in particular the language of commerce and traffic.

d. *Scientific language*, in which the word connections, at least for the greater part, have the stronger rigidity of being based on explicit agreement or prescription. Only such terms are admitted, as depend on the hypothesis of an objective phenomenal world (common to all individuals). The margin of misunderstanding has become very narrow. This level contains the language of laws and regulations, of financial relations, and of most of technology and science.

e. *Language of symbols*, founded *exclusively* on preconceived rules of combination and succession concerning the symbols used (axioms, postulates, *proposizioni primitivi*). Not an objective phenomenal world, but intellectual categories common to all individuals are presupposed, so that misunderstanding is excluded almost completely. To this level belong mathematical logic and that part of mathematics, which has been brought or can be brought into a pasigraphic form. Every direct 'significance' of the words has vanished, as an effect on the hearer can only be aimed at by inserting the symbols into scientific or into utility language.

As to the vocabulary it was understood that in the composition of each level of language the words of the preceding levels but no others would be known, except for the free use of existing languages in the elucidating and describing text. Of course in the lexicon most part of the existing as well as many new words would occur, thus the work of the Academy would be descriptive as well as creative. It was expected that by the activity of the Academy many human needs, of which the wording till then had been excluded from the prevailing word connections, would come to be carefully considered, and that the discrimination between the emotional and the indicative value of words would prove to be a mighty help for unravelling inveterate misunderstandings existing in almost every domain of human mental activity.

As members of the Academy the following thinkers were proposed:

1. Paul Carus, editor of *The Open Court*, La Salle, Ill., U.S.A., on account of his emphasizing the necessity of combining the exact method of western science with the contemplative attitude of eastern philosophy.
2. Eugen Ehrlich, Professor in Czernowitz, because of his clear insight into the distorting influence of language on the practice of justice.
3. Gustav Landauer in Hermsdorf near Berlin, who as was evident from his writings, had previously tried to create an Institution analogous to our Academy as a starting place for social reforms.
4. Fritz Mauthner in Meersburg am Bodensee, on account of his book entitled *Kritik der Sprache*, clearly expressing the disturbing influence of word associations on intuition and introspection.

5. Giuseppe Peano, professor in Turin, the creator of mathematical token language (pasigraphy), which had proved not only to be a very useful means for the investigation of the rôle of language in mathematics, but to be susceptible of generalizations to other domains of signfic research as well.
6. Rabindranath Tagore, since his rhythm was in tune with the ultimate aim of the Academy, and because we hoped that from his works the Academy could borrow words and expressions serving its purpose.

Soon after it became evident that even for the constituent assembly of the Academy financial resources failed.

The only thing left was the continuing of the personal intercourse of the founders, which led to the forming on May 21th 1922 of a signfic circle, consisting of Van Eeden, Mannoury, Brouwer and the linguist Dr. Jac. van Ginneken S.J. (later on professor in Nijmegen).

The signfic circle proclaimed in its declaration of principles a.o. that signfics contain more than criticism of language, also more than synthesis of language, and that in opening a deeper insight into the connections between words and the needs and tendencies of the soul, it may affect in a wholesome way the future social and mental conditions of man. In addition to this each of the four members formulated a personal opinion.

Mannoury thought signfic philosophy had to draw attention to the outstanding tendencies of this time, which on one side showed a mighty development of natural science and on the other side a powerful revival of social feeling; signfic philosophy had to aim at balancing these two tendencies. To this end it would have to discover and show the flaws and faults of the indicative language of natural science as well as of the emotional language of social feeling and bring those languages into interaction with each other. But Mannoury did not think that signfics could fill up the gaps, only mental needs having word-creating power.

Van Ginneken sought the cause of misunderstanding more in a sociological than in a psychological direction. He imputed misunderstanding not so much to the defectiveness of language as to the heterogeneous components of groups of persons using the same language. So in his opinion the best remedy for misunderstanding would be a deeper unity of such groups, and this deeper unity could be better furthered by prophetic and apostolic language than by signfic means.

Van Eeden considered signfics as a mental hygiene on which depends all welfare and prosperity of human society. In his opinion this hygiene did not require the creation of a new and pure language – which would prove an impossible task – but the general acknowledgment and attentive consideration of the imperfection and inaccuracy of intercourse.

Brouwer still maintained the standpoint which considered the creation of a new stock of words bringing verbal intercourse and in consequence social organization within reach of the spiritual tendencies of life as the primary task of signfics. But he expressed his gradually increasing doubt as to the effectiveness of cooperation to attain this aim. He had come to the conclusion more and more that Buber was right in his denial of the creative power of collective work in this domain.

The signfic circle for several years came regularly together and the discussions held were highly suggestive and instructive to its members. Mannoury kept an accurate account; a small part was printed later on. But Van Eeden had aged very much, Van Ginneken sometimes seemed disillusioned or hurt and finally retired from the circle, and as to myself my leisure had diminished to a minimum and my belief in the great importance for society of collective signfic studies had vanished almost completely. So the signfic circle expired. To us all it left a profound memory of mutual 'egoicity' and delight in each other.

In the meantime in 1923 there had been emitted by the same circle a circular lacking every tendency to social reform and requesting cooperation for a revision of the nomenclature, especially in the peripheric domains, of the following branches of science: Linguistics, psychology, theology, logic, sociology, jurisprudence, ethnology, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. This new orientation proved to have more attractive power than the previous one. For signfic work

epistemologically tinged Mannoury assembled round himself in the course of time Westendorp Boerma, Clay, Van Dantzig, Fischer Martinek, Godefroy, De Hartog, Hartzfeld, Heyting, Jordan, Kruseman, Meyer, Neurath, Van Os, Raven, Stokvis and Vuysje, and especially since Godefroy and Vuysje took the administration of the research in hand, a powerful stream seems to have begun its course. To Godefroy and Vuysje we also owe that a congress of significs has been able to take place for the second time.

But now the same sensations which in 1915 unloosened the signific movement, have returned even in a more vehement form. The second worldwar was more devastating than the first, and the abuse of false slogans for the satisfying of dark instincts was more appalling and fatal than ever. More than ever the world worries about its organization, and more than ever all men capable of independent and unprejudiced thinking are bound to investigate the primordial desiderata that organization of human society has to fulfil, the conditions allowing this fulfilment, and the fallacious slogans apt to disturb them.

To me it seems that first of all the dismemberment of the earth into different domains with separate centres of military power will have to be abolished, and that for the further organization of human society serving self-realization of the individual, the following desiderata will prevail: public safety, public welfare, mental freedom and as much freedom of action as possible for the individual.

For all these desiderata I consider the following conditions to be essential: 1. the utmost moderation of the domination of the state over the individual and the utmost reduction of the possibility of domination of the individuals over each other (domination exerted either directly or through the medium of the state); 2. the existence of a relatively harmless and innocuous mode of diverting ineradicable dark and frivolous instincts such as lust of power, sadism, and gambling.

A condition for public welfare in particular is the existence of a spur to incite voluntary and strenuous participation in the process of production and distribution.

Now the functions of a stimulus to work on one hand and of a means of diverting dark and frivolous instincts on the other hand can be performed simultaneously by the institution of *private property protected by the state*, in particular by enabling people to earn private property by labour and to take part in unbloody tournaments with private property at stake. But to fulfil this task, private property (which may be combined with a far reaching socialization of means of production and heavy taxes for public welfare) must be free to be bartered and as an intermediary for this barter a homogeneous and inalterable precious standard material which is easily dividable and transportable, and over which the proprietor can dispose anywhere and at any time, must be available.

During the 19th century the latter conditions were highly satisfied by the free circulation of gold, which probably was essential for the exceptional rise of mental and material prosperity during that century. So today the *liberation of gold* seems to me a cry full of sense. I even fear that between a world worshipping the golden calf as an evil absorbing idol and a world of constraint and terror, the *tertium* is, if not *exclusum*, at least *penitus abditum*.

But be it as it may, it is my opinion that in a happy humanity in any case state intervention will have to be prudently handled and the state will have to use a language strictly indicative. If it deviates from this duty and admits into its language vaguely spiritually tinged terms such as *principles, attitude, character moulding, firmness of character, resoluteness, leader qualities, heroism* (for continuation of the list see Göbbels), then inquisition, denunciation and man hunting will still have their chance, man will oppress man and man will mistrust man.

The fight against the abuse of hysterical devices, the fight for unmasking them in private and for removing them from public life will in future remain a preponderant part of the business of significs.

7.10. 'G. Mannoury's reply to the address delivered by L. E. J. Brouwer on the occasion of his honorary doctorate on September 16th 1946,' by Gerrit Mannoury*

In the first place I beg to thank you, Brouwer, for the cordial words of appreciation you addressed to me. I hardly need add how highly I value the fact, that you, whom I not only reckon among my best and oldest friends but also among my nearest and most congenial collaborators in the philosophical field of thought, have been willing to act as my Promotor here.

And then I want to express my warm gratitude towards the senate of this University for the distinction of doctorate *honoris causa* conferred upon me.

I am fully aware, that approving of as well as accepting a distinction may bring with it the danger of giving rise to a certain overestimation of the part played by the individual in the cultural life of human society. This cultural life is accompanied and supported by the human means of understanding, i.e. chiefly by *words* and *word sequences*. But verbal language is a group-phenomenon par excellence and our flow of thoughts is mainly influenced by the sub-conscious emotional associations between the verbal images and their psychical correlates (reminiscences and expectations).

Those psychical correlates result from the interaction between the innate or acquired psychical dispositions of the individual and the stimuli received by him from his surroundings and chiefly from his fellow-men. And therefore every act of understanding and every inner thought underlying it is in its essence and in its origin a group-phenomenon that may bear more or less the stamp of its author but that derives its real 'significance,' to use a word of Lady Welby, not from individual, but from social influences. It was already *Ernst Mach* who gave expression to this point of view in writing: 'Auch ist noch zu bedenken, dasz bei jedem Gedanken in her vorragender Weise die ganze Menschheit beteiligt ist. Sie hat an dem Gedanken mitgedacht, sie denkt mit und wird weiter mitdenken.'

The same consideration however may lead us to the conclusion that even distinctions and honours may have a 'significance,' that counterbalances the danger I have been speaking of: viz. a *symptomatical* significance. And in this sense I am glad to see the distinction so kindly accorded to me as a symptom of growing interest in the analysis of concepts in general and more particularly in the relativistic-psychological point of view, that has been the leading thought of all my work.

Meanwhile we have to bear in mind that the conception of relativism creates its own boundaries, for by overrating the reach of its bearing the too enthusiastic adept would absolutize relativism itself, which would clearly mean reducing it *ad absurdum*.

It may be said that a relativistic-psychological analysis of words, concepts and lines of conduct may be extremely useful when an absolutistic turn of mind threatens to degenerate into word-fetishism and prejudice, but this usefulness remains always a *negative* one, proportionate to the evil fought against. Nevertheless I think I may freely hail the symptom I mentioned just now, being convinced that in the present period, which seems to me a tumultuous phase of transition to a new social and cultural equilibrium, it is exactly the preponderance of ultra-absolutistic trends of thought that constitutes the gravest impediment to the realization of that equilibrium.

There is however a second reason, of more personal character, that makes me appreciate so highly your decision, most honoured Senate: it is the reinforcement of the ties that bind me to the University of Amsterdam. I never had the privilege of calling myself an alumnus of this University but nevertheless I owe to her the most valuable instigation and mental support.

Foremost I here remember my much regretted teacher and predecessor *Korteweg* whose scientific help has meant so much to me in my younger years, and then I have to thank my former

* [Published in 1947 in the journal *Synthese* 5 (11–129): 514–515].

colleagues for their enlightenment and information and likewise so many of my pupils and disciples among the younger students, whose interest and enthusiasm were a real aid to me in fulfilling my task as their tutor.

I have reached the evening of my life and I don't know for what compass of time I will enjoy the honourable degree you bestowed upon me, but what I am sure of, is that during the time my heart's desire will constantly be the glory and welfare of the Amsterdam University. I thank you.

7.11. 'Sociobiology,' by Gerrit Mannoury*

Sociobiology (or *Biosociology*, as the French author Carrel calls it) is the characteristic idea of an epistemology, that regards the empirical research of biological phenomena to be the safest starting point for a philosophy of human conduct and understanding that, within the bounds of possibility, may keep free from the pitfalls of subjectivity.

I repeat, 'within the bounds of possibility,' for it is obvious that nobody, as Neurath puts it, can 'shed his own skin,' and therefore every distinction we make and every assertion we uphold is in the last resort a subjective one, and only valid up to a certain point: even the assertion that there is such a thing as a subject, and that there are other subjects to be compared with it. But on the other hand, I think that when we constantly and honestly bear in mind the 'reservatio mentalis' that every distinction is reducible to a relativity and a graduality (not excluding the distinction between 'absolutism' and 'relativity' itself), we may freely distinguish and compare where we think it advisable. And I beg you to allow me, without renouncing my viewpoint as a relativist, to distinguish between you and me, and between us and other living beings or other 'biological entities,' if you prefer this, and even between those 'biological entities' in general and the so-called non-vital nature, or more correctly the 'unstructural' as Clay called it, stating that its realm regresses farther and farther according to our means of observation of the micro- or the macro-phenomena.

And so, once this admitted, we may ask in which way we can expect to reach in our distinctions and assertions that utmost degree of *intersubjectivity* that we are wont to denote as 'objectivity.' Or at least, to restrict ourselves to more modest aims, how to get a little nearer to that ideal.

And then I think it a first step in this direction trying to look upon manhood and human society from a wider point of view than that of a partaker in the eternal struggle between *self-preserving* and *group-preserving* trends that seems to be an unavoidable attribute to the concept of social life. In other words: to start from general biological considerations and observations to get a better comprehension of human relations.

This point of view does in no way entail the neglecting of the many differences between man and other biological entities but on the other hand it refuses to ignore the no less important analogies between human, animal and botanical life. And above all it has to take into account the *principle of graduality* that is involved by the indivisibility of the investigator's own mind.

This graduality and those analogies are to be observed over the whole range of biological sciences, and so we may speak as well of a *sociomorphology* and a *sociophysiology* as of an empirical (i.e. behaviouristic) *sociopsychology*, but as for studying the laws (if there are any) of human conduct the latter is obviously the most promising. And therefore I will pass over in silence the many investigations made in the last years in the field of the physiological phenomena that influence directly the social relations of man as well as those of the higher animals, to restrict myself to some few remarks on the psychological analogies between the human and the animal or botanical sociology. The more so as I can refer to the excellent essay recently published by Dr. Louise Kaiser on the outlines of modern sociophysiology.

* [Lesson delivered at the Second International Significant Summer Conference at Naarden, 1946, published in 1947 in the journal *Synthese* 5 (11/12): 522–524].

The first thing that strikes us when observing the forms of social grouping in animal and botanical life is this, that the mutual ratio of the multitude, the virulency and the field of spreading of the different groups is almost constant, in this sense, that this ratio may be subjected to occasional deviations (a plague of grass-hoppers for instance) but almost always returns after a short period in an automatical way to a certain optimum, generally known as the *biological equilibrium* of the groups in question.

But also within the range of the same species and even within that of a smaller group of animals (to restrict ourselves to the zoological field) we may observe a certain state of equilibrium. In so far, that in the behaviour of every unit of the group (colony, herd, flock, troop, etc.) the two tendencies mentioned above: that of preserving its own structural existence and that of adapting itself to the co-existence with other units are constantly counteracting each other in such a way that marked deviations from a certain optimal ratio are automatically neutralized. This optimal ratio or proportion of the here meant innate psychical dispositions differs widely from one species to another and may be regarded as typical for each of them (*sociobiological equilibrium*).

This general state of behavioristic equilibrium however does not depend on *innate factors* only, but is modified to a certain extent by external influences, which even may give origin to certain *traditional* types of individual and social conduct reigning within the limits of different groups of biological entities of the same species. In those cases (which are especially observable in human forms of social life, where the influence of tradition is developed strongest), we may distinguish different states of *social equilibrium*, arranged round the (hypothetical) *sociobiological equilibrium* of the species as a whole.

The study of the conduct of man (whose sociobiological equilibrium obviously holds a middle rank among those of the higher animals most comparable with it, such as elephants, apes, buffaloes, storks, penguins, a.s.o.) from this standpoint reveals to us, that in every aspect of social life, in the technical as well in the ethical, aesthetical or even political field, the trends to self-preservation and to group-preservation are clearly recognisable as its basic factors, although they are often intermingled in an almost inextricable way.

The most important part of this study, in my opinion, is the (often very difficult) distinction between *innate* dispositions (reflexes, instincts, capacities, abilities, talents, etc.) and those acquired *after birth* (conditional reflexes, habits, customs, forms of understanding), but this distinction as well as scientific investigations about these topics in general are checked to a high degree by two circumstances: firstly by the (doubtless innate) aggressive inclination of most species or groups towards others that might compete with them in the struggle for life (*in casu*: the antagonism between man and the higher animals, especially apes and other 'ugly' and 'despicable' 'beasts'), and secondly the linguistic dualism existing between the terminologies in use for human and for animal life, more especially the oppositional difference ordinarily made between the principles of *finality* and *causality*, a difference that may easily be reduced to a mere question of words by circumscribing the so called finality (of the individual, the group or the species) in behaviouristic terms (converging or diverging types of behaviour). And furthermore it seems to me to be of primary importance to make a sharp distinction between the *introspective* knowledge (or fore-knowledge) of our own conduct (*autopsychology*) and our *extrospective* knowledge of the conduct of other beings (*hetero-psychology*).

It would lead me too far now to enter into details about these significant questions, narrowly connected with the well-known concept of *pseudo-problems*, introduced by Mach and the Vienna Circle, and therefore I will confine myself to expressing as my conviction that the main condition to be fulfilled in order to understand the regularities of human conduct and to detect the means of canalizing it in appropriate directions is to renounce from our overestimation of mankind when compared with other living beings. Man is the 'Lord of creation' only from his own standpoint. But that standpoint is a narrow one and from a wider point of view every form of life is equally

wonderful and equally magnificent: that of the fish in the ocean or of the bird in the sky as well as that of the microbe in the ditchwater or of the cell in our own body.

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7.12. 'The psycho-linguistic movement in Holland. Discussion,' by David Vuysje*

1. *Historical development*

The 'Signific Movement' in the Netherlands has from the beginning sought for a systematic investigation of the human means of understanding. This psycholinguistic movement does not aim to be a special trend of thought; it seeks rather to cultivate a critical attitude of thinking.

The first meeting of people concerned with significs in Holland occurred during the first World War in 1915, under the startling impression of the false slogans with which this war was waged.

In order to give an impression of the tendencies predominating in former signific circles, we think it best to quote some passages of the program drawn up in 1919 by the International Institute for Philosophy at Amsterdam – one of the precursors of our International Society for Significs – and undersigned by the mathematicians L. E. J. Brouwer and G. Mannoury, the sinologist Henri Borel and the psychiatrist and poet Frederik van Eeden²⁸. Although this program was not carried out at that time, it nevertheless contained valuable directives for later signific groups.

Taking as a standpoint the almost universally accepted opinion that language is not able to represent or to render any part of 'reality' adequately, but that the 'meaning' of words is merely dependent on the effect the speaker aims at or the hearer undergoes, the redactors wished to point out that this changeability and relativity of significance, inherent in language, may be revealed in a different degree and in different forms. In general, it may be said that, according as the needs of man require more differentiated actions, language, too, should be more differentiated and more stabilized to that purpose. This stability was furthered, externally by writing and printing, internally by what might be called the organization of language, i. e., by establishing the connection of the significance of a word to that of other words. This becomes clearly evident in *definitions*, such as occur in the most exact form in mathematics and juridical science, but which are present in any discipline. To these phenomena of organization also belong all connections of words, such as have been passed on by custom and usage, without being fixed explicitly by the authority of government and science. These connections of words reveal themselves clearly in the linguistic behaviour of the child, and to them we may attribute the slight occurrence of 'basic words' (in the proper sense) in children's talk, i.e., of words the child is not acquainted with by means of other words, but only by indication and imitation. Soon, the connections of words used by adults (causal, oppositional, temporal, and others) largely influence the language image of the child, and this influence tends to increase the stability of its small stock of words. After a few years a conversational language of a seemingly stable form has developed to such an extent that the phenomena which have been described as 'changeability' and 'relativity' of significance, so to say, may be re-discovered by

* [Originally published in *Philosophy of Science*, 18, 3 (July 1951): 262–268].

28. See 'Communications of the International Institute for Philosophy' (March, 1919): 22–25.

reflection and observation of language. In the history of language (in the field of linguistics, too, phylogenesis and ontogenesis go hand in hand) a constant, but not regular, increase of the stability of words can be observed: a development from the poetical languages of the remote ages to the more positive mode of expression of the Greeks and Romans, and, finally, the complex systems of language of modern natural and juridical science.

A new vocabulary was devised, based on a distinction between the following five levels of language with respect to the different relative importance of the contents of the single words on the one hand, and their logical connections on the other:

a. *Basic language*, in which the connection of the words exerts little or no influence and each word (or each group of words) speaks straight to the imagination. To this level belong the primordial language of the child, the language of vehement or profound emotions, and also hypothetical primitive languages.

b. *Emotive language*, in which word connections (especially contrasting ones) are clearly perceptible, without however becoming preponderous or rigid. The words and word groups evoke emotions in the hearer both in themselves and by associations with other words. To this level of language largely belong popular and poetical, metaphorical language.

c. *Utility language*, in which the connections of words are essential, so that the words hardly ever have an independent effect. A measure of agreement is presupposed that well-nigh excludes all fundamental contrariness of will. A strong limitation of the possibility of misunderstanding is obtained by admitting in linguistic communication only words and groups of words that refer to generally acknowledged human needs. To this level belongs in particular the language of commerce and traffic.

d. *Scientific language*, in which the word connections, at least for the greater part, have the stronger rigidity of being based on explicit agreement or prescription. Only such terms are admitted as depend on the hypothesis of an objective phenomenal world (common to all individuals). The margin of misunderstanding has become very narrow. This level contains the language of laws and regulations, of financial relations and of most of technology and science.

e. *Language of symbols*, founded exclusively on preconceived rules of combination and succession concerning the symbols used (axioms, postulates, *proposizioni primitivi*). Not an objective phenomenal world, but intellectual categories common to all individuals, are presupposed, so that misunderstanding is excluded almost completely. To this level belong mathematical logic and that part of mathematics which has been brought or can be brought into a pasigraphic form. Every direct 'significance' of the words has vanished, as an effect on the hearer can only be aimed at by inserting the symbols into scientific or into utility language.²⁹

This scheme dates from the year 1919. As to the vocabulary, it was understood that in the composition of each level of language the words of the preceding levels but no others would be known, except for the free use of existing languages in the elucidating and describing text. It was expected that by this activity many 'human needs,' of which the wording till then had been excluded from the prevailing word connections, would come to be carefully considered, and that the discrimination between the emotional and indicative value of words would prove to be a great help for unravelling inveterate misunderstandings existing in almost every domain, of human mental activity.

After a few years' interruption, the discussions on psycho-linguistic subjects were resumed in 1922 by the Signific Circle, consisting of Brouwer, van Eeden, Mannoury and the linguist Jac. van Ginneken.

29. For related views see Josef Schächter, *Prolegomena zu einer kritischen Grammatik* (Vienna, 1935) and Friedrich Waismann, 'The many-level-structure of language' (*Synthese*, 1946, 5/6: 211–219). Cf. also Schächter's articles in *Synthese*, 1937 ('Zur Analyse des Begriffes Kultur,' 'Religion und Wissenschaft and Ueber das Wesen der Philosophie').

In its declaration of principles this Circle stressed the empirical tendencies of the signific (psycho-linguistic) investigation.

'The significance of a linguistic act for speaker and hearer cannot but partly be judged from the words and symbols used and can only approximately be expressed in other words. However, there is a great difference in the measure in which this analysis of words, and this approximation, are possible. In the language of science (especially in mathematical language) and (in a small measure) in that of technics, a rather great stability in the signification of words and linguistic acts can be attained by indication and gradual defining, while primitive, passionate and poetical language, and even colloquial language, is not appropriate to the introduction of definitions (in the proper sense of the word). In passionate and poetical levels of language there are very complicated complexes of conscious and half-conscious elements of thought and of mind, inherent in the word-images, although – it goes without saying – neither the intellectual aspects nor the emotional and volitional ones are absent in any linguistic act.

'From this distinction result various shades of linguistic trends, of which the logico-formalistic and the immediate-intuitive ones may be considered as extreme forms and which constitute, together and in mutual connection, the contents of a signific linguistic investigation.

'This investigation should be carried on more systematically than before and include, besides an introspective investigation into the subconscious elements, experimental and statistical methods.'

The Signific Circle for several years met regularly, and the discussions held were highly instructive to its members. Mannoury kept an accurate account; a small part was printed later on (and published in Dutch in the 'Synthese-Series' in 1939).

In the meantime, in 1923, there had been published by the same circle a circular requesting co-operation for a revision of the nomenclature, especially in the peripheral domains, of the following branches of science: linguistics, psychology, theology, logic, sociology, jurisprudence, ethnology, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. This new orientation proved to be attractive to many scientists in the Netherlands and abroad who were dissatisfied with the use of slogans and non-analysed terms even in the field of the 'exact sciences.'

2. More recent development

After the cessation of activities of the Signific Circle in 1924, the signific methodology was not practised by groups until 1937. During this period G. Mannoury, professor of mathematics and philosophy of mathematics in the University of Amsterdam, also gave courses of lectures on significs, and made a special study of the signific foundations of mathematics. (Cf. his article on 'Die signifischen Grundlagen der Mathematik,' *Erkenntnis* IV, 1934, the French translation of which was published in *Collection Synthese* in 1947). In 1937 the *International Group for the Study of Significs* was founded on the initiative of the Editorial Board of the journal *Synthese*. Some of the editors of this journal were attached to the older significists by personal ties of friendship, and through this were very familiar with the aims of this movement. Moreover, the program of this journal, aiming at giving utterance to divergent systems of intellectual integration, naturally brought the group into contact with the signific views. Mannoury himself was one of the founders of the new and renewed signific circle.

Until the second World War the International Group for the Study of Significs continued its activities on an international scale. It characterized its main objective as:

'The practising of analytical and synthetical significs (psycho-linguistics) in general, and its application to the theories of the foundations of the sociological, cultural, political and exact sciences in particular.'

The gradation referred to in this item permits research from an analytical and a synthetical point of view. The analytical viewpoint departs from a given language and inquires into a certain linguistic act, or part of it, with respect to associations with other words and word-recollections.

The synthetical construction has as its starting-point singular elements belonging to a higher gradation analytically, but which, from a synthetical point of view, are looked upon as basic words, of which the original description is left out of consideration. The synthetical gradation of language is therefore artificially formed with a special aim and by utilizing special (physical, psychological, biological or other) empirically-acquired material.

The working method of the group was as follows: The psycholinguistic principles and the method to be applied were discussed in a 'central section.' In this section were also representatives of the 'border-groups,' including sections of biology, socio-psychology, ethics, jurisprudence, and one practising the study of linguistic acts 'within and without the psychic health latitude.' The latter section made a special study of the modes of verification occurring in pathological cases and in children's talk with a view to getting insight into the psychogenesis of 'pseudo-problems' and 'pseudo-judgments.' Some of the reports of the group were published in the journal *Synthese*, its organ.

During the last year of the German occupation, the work of the International Group for the Study of Significs had to be abandoned altogether, but soon after the end of the war it was resumed though by partially different contributors. The *International Society for Significs* was founded by representatives of both the exact and the social sciences.

The new program pursues theoretical as well as more practical aims; it continues the research into the theories of the foundations of science and aims at the construction of an efficient scientific terminology; furthermore it promotes the empirical study of group languages (content analysis, slogan analysis, bias analysis, etc.).

In 1937 a regular exchange of views and publications was planned with movements characteristic of a critical attitude towards linguistic phenomena, and especially with the Unity of Science Movement, to whom we may also reckon the Warsaw School (Lukasiewicz, Kotarbinski, Lesniewski, Tarski, Ajdukiewicz, Chwistek, and some others). In a special section of the journal *Synthese* called the 'Unity of Science Forum,' conducted by Philipp Frank, Charles W. Morris and Otto Neurath, outstanding logical empiricists, have explained their views on a renewed criticism of language. Both the logico-empiristic and the signific movement have empirical tendencies, although they have not developed the same procedures, even with respect to their criticism of language.

The substitution of philosophy by a logical analysis of language is not one of the items of the signific program, which aims at clarifying the 'problems of life' by modern psychological means. Problems belonging to the 'domain of will' (Willenssprache) are not excluded from their discussions, but they try to reduce them to their psychical elements. The significists have not drawn up *index verborum prohibitorum*, based on the refusal to admit certain terms, expressions, sentences and problems to science and philosophy. Both movements aim at unmasking pseudo-problems and at building up to an efficient terminology. However, the significists, availing themselves of psycho-linguistic means, use to distinguish between 'real' and 'unreal' pseudo-problems and pseudo-judgments; the former prove to be 'without sense,' the latter are of an emotional and volitional nature after being submitted to an efficient terminological transformation.

Two methods that have found acceptance in signific circles should be mentioned here: that of 'transformation' and that of 'exhaustion.' Both aim at a research into the 'inter-individual' and the 'extra-individual' spread of acceptance of terms and linguistic acts, i. e., a research into the variability of acceptations with regard to different individuals or groups, or to one and the same individual or group under the influence of affections and milieu. Recently, experiments have been made to find an efficient non-verbal verification of the verbal results of inquiries, a verification aiming at disclosing sub-conscious motives. By comparing different situations which have given rise to the 'same' linguistic reactions (exhaustion), or different linguistic reactions to the 'same' situation (transformation), it may be possible not only to gain insight into the 'spread of acceptance' of the complex of terms investigated, but also into the limitation of the 'psychic correlate' – the psychic contents associated to a word-image – of 'group terms.' (Code character of

group languages.) Moreover, the dualistic and mixed character of colloquial language and of part of scientific language may sometimes easily be recognized by applying the 'translation method,' the translation from the I- or introspective terminology into the id- or physical terminology, and conversely (demetaphorization).

Philipp Frank, Moritz Schlick and other logical empiricists have repeatedly stressed the significance of the theory of relativity and the quantum theory with a view to a purification of terminology. Terms such as 'simultaneity' and 'motion' were, according to that theory, no longer permitted to be used in an absolute, but only in a relative sense. Terms such as 'time in the absolute' and 'space in the absolute' were completely eliminated. If one uses the old term, one cannot avoid framing problems to which there can be no answer 'having sense.' The problem was caused only by faulty terminology. As soon as the old terminology is rejected and a new one formed, the problem has either disappeared, or can be answered in a clear way. Both the logical empiricist and the significist assume that one of the causes of the careless and naive usage is the inaccuracy of common language which, among others, leads to the temptation to substantiate many terms. The significist especially stresses the dualistic and mixed character of colloquial language and the value of *introspection* as a scientific method aiming at recognizing subjective psychic elements which, however, may be objectivized ('intersubjectivized') by comparing the introspective results obtained by a staff of scientifically-skilled introspectors.

The signific method may be called an *empirical* (not an empiristic) method, as it is based on observation and perception. It tries to penetrate the psychological background of the linguistic behaviour; *as such* it does not study, like semantics (in the logical sense of the word) does, the *form* of semantic antinomies, the difference between system and meta-system, the methods of arithmetization, the theorem of indefinability, and the like. Instead of attaching a more or less fixed meaning to every word, it pays more attention to the associations which are evoked by 'speaking' and 'hearing' the words (we will leave the language of gestures out of consideration here, for convenience's sake); in other words, it pays attention to the *influence* the performing of linguistic acts has on the emittent (the 'speaker') and the recipient (the 'hearer'). Logical empiricism contains either a logical analysis of the scientific language (Neurath, Carnap) or of all forms of language (Schlick, von Mises). According to the significist, criticism of language is not synonymous with logic of science. He aims at analyzing the functional elements of linguistic acts, although he does not emphasize the difference in logical grammar of each of the forms of language.

In the above explanation we have tried to indicate the empirical and critical tendencies of the signific movement and the similarities and differences of these tendencies in relation to those of other critical movements. Especially with regard to the synthetic gradation (the construction of an efficient terminology), the signific method agrees with the axiomatic one. In most sections of the Society both methods, the analytical, tending to a psychological investigation into the existing means of understanding, and the synthetical, aiming at a systematic extension and improvement of the linguistic means, are applied alternately.

As in the biological section of the Society both procedures have been adopted, we may finish this part of the synopsis by quoting – by way of illustration – a few passages from a survey written by the president of this section (Prof. Chr. P. Raven, zoologist at Utrecht) and published in *Synthese* (Vol. VII, nos. 1/2):

The object of our section has been from the beginning: the critical study, both from a logical and from a psychological point of view, of the fundamental concepts of biology. It was evident to us that many of these concepts, especially those used in speculative biology, urgently needed such a study, as emotional and volitional elements are often abundantly represented in the terminology of speculative biology. The recognition of these elements is essential for a clear understanding of many problems in this field; their elimination, by an attempt to formalize the concepts used, is the only way to avoid endless and fruitless controversies on pseudo-problems.

I wish to underline that our object is the study, not the fixation of biological concepts; our purpose is informative, not normative. We do not think it possible or even desirable to fix the meaning of the concepts used in science once for all by definition. Science is like a living and growing organism; its conceptual apparatus is developing with the progress of science. A premature fixation of the meaning of concepts would inhibit this necessary development. Hence, in our opinion, one has to restrict oneself to the attempt to determine and to formulate as accurately as possible the meaning of a concept at the time being; to recognize its eventual irrational elements; and to eliminate these elements as far as possible, by a formalization of the concept. It is essential that the way in which the concept can be applied to the empirical objects of science be clearly indicated, and the further development of the concept is given space.

Every description is adapted to a certain purpose, and does not satisfy other purposes; no description can be complete in itself. The elements of description are the properties imputed to the objects described; they can be classified as quantities, qualities and arrangements.

Following the tradition of the former Signific Circle, the International Society for Significs does not confine its members to stringent precepts and rules. Its members more and more acknowledge the necessity of devoting their attention, in addition to concept and content analysis, to the improvement of the means of understanding, both in science and in daily life. They do not deem the analytic method to be of less importance than before, but the synthetical application of the signific principles to the various spheres of life has come more and more to the fore. The contact with related movements has been resumed and extended, and will, to judge from appearances, lead to as fertile and clarifying interchange of thought as before. Outstanding members of critical movements in the various countries have joined the Society. Notwithstanding its somewhat heterogeneous structure entailing differences in accentuation which tend to guard against onesidedness, the Society strives after unity of method and the cultivation of attitudes of thought such as will tend toward unity.

*International Society for Significs
Amsterdam, Holland*

7.13. ‘Signific. Its tendency, methodology, and applications,’ by David Vuysje*

Preface

This monograph aims to give a survey of the development of signific studies during these last thirty-five years and to show the place the signific movement occupies among movements having similar tendencies, like Logical Empiricism, Operationism, Pragmatism and Semantics.

To Professor Philipp Frank, who has been an active member of the *International Society for Significs* for some years, I owe the suggestion to write a monograph in which the signific principles should be described and which should stress the similarity and the difference between significs and other theories of signs. I had the good fortune to discuss with him personally some of the fundamental problems occurring in this treatise, and to him go my warm thanks for his encouragement and help.

It may be obvious that the conceptions gathered in a monograph of this kind represent a selection of the contributions of many writers and that, also with a view to its conciseness, it is not possible

* [Originally published in *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 80 (3), 1953: 223–70].

to trace individual discoveries back to their authors. Moreover, in many cases it is extremely difficult to trace the personal influences which have given rise to certain views. Considering this, I have followed the procedure to add the names of the writers only to those statements which, according to my subjective judgment, are characteristic of the personal conceptions of the authors and have fruitfully influenced research in a significant direction. I may be excused if I do not name the many other scientists who have given valuable contributions to significant investigations.

One exception should be made in this respect with regard to my old friend Professor G. Mannoury. The discussions on significant I have had with him regularly for nearly twenty years, on problems referring to the relation between linguistic phenomena and human behavior, have more than anything else influenced my conceptions, which have partly found expression in this monograph, in which I have tried to shape significant in its essential lines. I am particularly indebted to him for his fine and stimulating spirit of cooperation which I have had the privilege of enjoying during these years and, in this special case, I am much obliged to him for the suggestions he made after reading the manuscript.

My thanks also go to my friend Dr. H. J. Groenewold, who has also been willing to read the manuscript and whose critical remarks have been of great advantage to me.

And, finally, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my friends and co-members of the *International Society for Significant*; without my personal participation in the activities of this circle I would not have been able to write this monograph, which, I hope, may be a modest contribution to the theory of signs and its applications.

Amsterdam, June 1952

1. Tendency

One could say that from the outset significant studies have had a threefold aspect: a linguistic one, a psychological one and an epistemological one. On the one hand, the construction of efficient terminologies has been up to the present time one of the items of significant programs; on the other hand, the significant approach has implied a psychological investigation of the existing means of understanding, a psychological analysis of the linguistic behavior of individuals and groups. And more often than not this significant activity has been associated with an inquiry into the foundations of epistemological problems.

The program drawn up in 1919 by the *International Institute for Philosophy* at Amsterdam – one of the precursors of the *International Society for Significant* – already gave expression to this triple aspect and, although it was not carried out at that time, it nevertheless contained valuable directives for later significant groups. Taking as a starting-point the almost universally admitted opinion that language is not able to represent or to render any part of 'reality' adequately, but that the 'meaning' of words is merely dependent on the effect the speaker aims at or the hearer undergoes, the authors wished to point out that this changeability and relativity of significance, inherent in language, can reveal themselves in a different degree and in different forms. In general, it may be said that, according as the needs of man require more differentiated actions, language, too, should be more differentiated and more stabilized to that purpose. This stability was furthered externally by writing and printing, internally by what might be called the organization of language, i.e., by establishing the connection of the significance of a word with that of other words. This becomes evident in *definitions*, such as occur in the most exact form in mathematics and juridical science, but which are present in any discipline. To these phenomena of organization also belong all connections of words, such as have been passed on by custom and usage, without being fixed explicitly by the authority of government and science. These connections of words already play an important part in the early linguistic behavior of the child, and to them we may attribute the slight occurrence of 'basic words' in children's talk, i.e., of words the child is not acquainted with by means of other words, but only by indication and imitation. Soon, the syntactic connections used by the adults (causal, oppositional, temporal, and others) largely influence the word-images of

the child, and this influence tends to increase the stability of its small stock of words. After a few years a conversational language of a seemingly stable form has developed to such an extent that the phenomena which have been described as ‘changeability’ and ‘relativity’ of significance, so to say, may be rediscovered by reflection and observation of language. In the history of language (in the field of linguistics, too, phylogenesis and ontogenesis go hand in hand) a constant, but not regular, increase of the stability of words can be observed: a development from the poetical languages of the remote ages to the more positive mode of expression of the Greeks and Romans, the artful copiousness of the mediaeval philosophers, and, finally, the complex systems of language of modern natural and juridical science.

A new vocabulary was devised, based on a distinction between different levels of language, on the understanding that, with the exception of the words occurring in the explanatory and describing text, the words of each level imply only acquaintance with those of the preceding levels. The consideration underlying this division was that either the syntactic connections on some levels are not or are hardly discernible (primitive language and children’s talk), or that they are easily discernible (expressive language) or that they have become the essential element of communication (colloquial language), and that on other, ‘higher’ levels, especially the scientific and the symbolic ones, these connections are founded, at least for the greater part, on conventions or on postulated formulas regarding the symbols used.

It was expected that by this procedure the relativity of the significance of words would make itself apparent, and that those ‘human needs’ of which the wording till then had been excluded from the scope of the prevailing word connections would come to be carefully considered; furthermore, that the discrimination between the emotive and the indicative value of words would prove to be a great help for unravelling inveterate misunderstandings existing in almost every domain of human mental activity.

These tendencies revealed themselves also in the ‘declaration of principles’ of the Signific Circle (1922–1924)³⁰ which, besides, emphasized the empirical aspect of the signific approach.

‘The significance of an act of communication for speaker and hearer cannot but partly be judged from the words and symbols used and can only approximately be expressed in other words. However, there is a great difference in the measure in which this analysis of words and this approximation are possible. In the language of science (especially in mathematical language) and, in a small measure, in that of technology, a rather great stability in the signification of words and linguistic acts can be attained by indication and gradual defining, while primitive, passionate and poetical language, and even colloquial language, is not appropriate to the introduction of definitions (in the proper sense of the word). On passionate and poetical levels of language there are very complicated complexes of conscious and half-conscious elements of thought and feeling, inherent in the word-images, although – it goes without saying – neither the intellectual aspects nor the emotive and volitive ones are entirely absent in any linguistic act.

‘From the distinction result various shades of linguistic trends, of which the logico-formalistic and the immediate-intuitive ones may be considered as extreme forms and which constitute, together and in mutual connection, the contents of a signific linguistic investigation.’

‘This investigation should be carried on more systematically than before and include, besides an introspective investigation into the subconscious elements, the application of experimental and statistic methods.’

A circular published in 1923 by the same circle and requesting cooperation for a revision of the nomenclature, especially in the peripheral domains, of the following branches of science: *linguistics, psychology, theology, logic, sociology, jurisprudence, ethnology, mathematics, physics, chemistry* and *biology*, proved to be attractive to a number of scientists in the Netherlands and in

30. For chronological particulars see also Section 5 of the present monograph.

other countries who were dissatisfied with the use of slogans and non-analyzed terms even in the field of the 'exact sciences.'

The fundamental principles outlined above also found expression in the program of the group of scientists who united round the journal *Synthese* in 1937 and who laid the foundations for the activities of the *International Society for Significs*, whose main objective has been described as: 'The practising, on an international scale, of analytic and synthetic significs in general, and its application to the theories of the foundations of the sociological, cultural, political and exact sciences in particular.'

The distinction referred to in this item provides for research from an analytic and a synthetic point of view. The analytic approach deals with a signific investigation of a given language, and more particularly with an inquiry into the psychological background of the existing means of understanding. The occurrence, on the one hand, of words which are not at all associated with other words ('basic words,' e.g., exclamations) and, on the other hand, of words which take their content from a description by means of other words (symbolic language) may be an indication for tracing out the extreme levels of an analytic gradation. The synthetic construction has as its starting-point simple elements belonging to a higher level of the analytic gradation, but which, from a synthetic point of view, are looked upon as basic words, the original description of which is left out of consideration. The synthetic gradation is therefore artificially formed with a special aim by utilizing special (physical, psychological, biological or other) material.³¹

The present program of the *International Society for Significs* pursues theoretical as well as more practical aims; it continues the research into the theories of the foundations of science and aims at the construction of an efficient scientific terminology; furthermore it promotes the empirical study of group languages (content analysis, slogan analysis, bias analysis, etc).

Just as Logical Empiricism, Significs forms part of a more general critical tendency which during the last fifty years has revealed itself in nearly every domain of culture and of science, and which may be regarded as a reaction against the overestimation of emotional arguments, slogans and metaphors at the expense of critical analysis and observation. The creation of a non-emotional, formalistic terminology with the purpose of facilitating the reproduction of the results of observation, may be seen as one of the means to realize these aims.

However, one should not forget that this remedy does not prove to be useful with regard to the results of observation of social volitional processes which require an analysis of the human means of understanding, taking into account not only the indicative, but also the emotive and volitive elements of the processes in question.

2. Methodology

Significs aims at an investigation of the acts of communication, i.e., of acts by which living beings try to influence the behavior and the activities of other living beings. In a somewhat narrower acceptance it may be described as the scientific study of the mental associations underlying the human acts of communication, excluding the more specific departments of the science of language in the proper sense, like philology, etymology, semantics. For, viewed from a signific angle, the lexical word is not an act of communication, but the outward form common to several of these acts. And where semantics does not leave out the associations of the words with the representations, emotions and impulsions of the 'speaker' and the 'hearer' (i.e., the individual or group performing the act of communication or influenced by it), it considers them from a general point of view and neglects the individual circumstances. Therefore, the psychological analysis of the lie belongs to the domain of significs, and not to that of semantics.

And even though we might argue that *every* act of communication is intrinsically purely subjective, since it is meant to influence other living beings, yet there is a great difference in the

31. See also Section 2.

amount of satisfaction the acts of communication provoke in the speaker, a phenomenon which may give rise to a twofold distinction of the acts of communication. On the one hand, there is a category, that of the volitive expressions proper, in which this satisfaction is dependent on the choice of the hearer, whereas the other category, that of the descriptive or indicative acts of communication, brings about satisfaction mostly independent of the choice of the hearer. In the latter case, the satisfaction is connected with the degree of perfection of the act of communication itself; the volitive element is strongly repressed and the act is almost exclusively associated with our representations (e.g., the bald description of an object or an event). In this sense, the indicative value of an act of communication can be defined as the associations (in the mind of the speaker and the hearer) of recollections resulting from the observation of objects or events of the physical world – which may be reduced to the perception of resemblance and difference – whereas the emotive value has relation to the other associations, particularly to those referring to emotions and impulses.

From these conceptions results a quite particular acceptance of ‘signification.’ In a wider sense, the (signific) meaning (signification) of an act of communication can be described as the influence the speaker aims at exercising or the hearer undergoes (active and passive signification), and also the influences which have given rise to the performing of the act of communication (symptomatic signification). In a narrower sense (signification of a word), it bears on the part a certain word or expression takes in the signification of the acts of communication in which the word or the expression has been used.

This definition clearly demonstrates the difference between the empiric method applied in significs and the introspective one used in traditional philosophic literature. A number of philosophic books are devoted to the study of the ‘meaning’ of terms like ‘causality,’ ‘existence,’ ‘truth,’ ‘life,’ etc; however, most of these books contain nothing else but communication about the verbal associations provoked by these terms in the mind of the authors.

The signification of a word is never fully understood, not simply because it is nothing but the influence expected by the speaker with regard to the actions of the hearer, but also because every individual belongs to different groups and every group has its own ‘parallelism of will,’ which is kept up by a more or less specula language (idiom). Instead of attaching a fixed signification to a word, the significist pays more attention to the associations which are roused by the performance of an act of communication. By his analytic approach he tries to find out the mental associations connected to a word-image or a group of word-images (the ‘psychic correlate’), i.e., the representations or the recollections originating from the hearing, the reading, the pronouncing or the writing of a word (auditive, visual and motorial word-image).

For the main task of analytic significs may be described as the psychological investigation of the *existing* means of understanding. On this level of research the significist does not aim at formulating definitions the contents of which are detached from ordinary usage. On the contrary, at this stage he applies himself to examining and registering the verbal behavior of individuals and groups, considering its regularities and peculiarities, and aims at constructing a gradation founded either on a differentiation of the word-associations he observes, or on the nature and the number of indicative elements of the acts of communication performed by his ‘subjects,’ or on some other (e.g., logical) criterion. For the investigator himself such a gradation, whose successive levels may show a gradual increase of the indicative value of the terms introduced, may be a helpful means to get insight into the structure of pseudo-problems and pseudo-judgments (i.e., formulations which have the appearance but not the contents of indicative problems of choice or judgments of choice) and to recognize and to avoid circular reasonings if he wants to build up a scientific terminology suiting the aims he pursues.

The synthetic approach, however, confronts the significist with other problems. It aims, not at investigating, but at improving and extending the means of understanding in use. Although the synthetic gradation may be built on the analytic one, on the understanding that the terms of the ‘higher’ analytic levels become basic terms of one or more of the ‘lower’ synthetic levels, the

synthetic definitions include new linguistic means and as such have an artificial character. The may be illustrated by the following example.

In conversational language the word 'instinct' often refers to a distinction between the actions of animals and men. No doubt this word is known to the readers of the present monograph, but it did not occur in the vocabulary they availed themselves of in their early youth. They have been acquainted with it by means of other words which they knew already at the time when they became aware of the term, and that not because they have learned a definition of the word, but inasmuch as they have heard it used in connection with the behavior of animals and men. However, the statement 'animals are prompted by instinct, man is guided by his intellect' is not an *empiric* statement about animals and men, but a statement about the *usage* about animals and men, and in this form may give rise to all kinds of 'terminological' questions and problems. The occurrence of indications or operations in the use of the word would place the term on another level of the analytic gradation.

The synthetic approach could start from the observation that some of the forms of behavior of animals and men, however complicated they may be, are characterized by a 'typical' incipient and final stage (e.g., sneezing), whereas other forms show the typical character only in the incipient stage, but differentiate more and more in their final stage (e.g., flying), or conversely show a typical final stage (e.g., clutching at a prey). Viewed from a synthetic angle, the former group of phenomena might be called *instinctive actions* if they are brought about without the agent of observable stimuli, and *reflex actions* if such stimuli are present. The second group of actions (those with a typical incipient stage) might be named *actions of defence*, and the third category (those with a typical final stage) *purposive actions*.

Whether these terms correspond with those of the living language is an irrelevant question here. The main object of the gradation is that circular reasonings cannot creep into the descriptions and that questions referring to 'instinctive actions' or 'purposive actions' occurring with animals and men are made amenable to an experimental response.

In distinction to the analytic gradation, which is rooted in *extrospective* observation of language (the verbal reactions of others), the synthetic gradation, being an artificial construction, is anchored in the speaker's own language-sense, in his own 'nets of associations.' To synthetic definitions criteria belonging to the word-family 'efficient-non-efficient' may be applied, but not those belonging to the word-family 'true-false.'

Two other procedures have found acceptance in signific circles, procedures tending to recognize the 'dispersion,' i.e., the variability of the signification of words and word-complexes with regard to different individuals (*inter*-individual dispersion) or to one and the same individual (*intra*individual dispersion): the *method of exhaustion* and the *method of transformation*. The former enables a signific investigation by comparing different situations which may give rise to the 'same' verbal reactions, the latter by comparing different expressions aiming at rendering the 'same' situation.

The acts of communication can be distinguished in those having a more or less *personal* and those having a more or less *impersonal* character. Impersonal acts of communication, having an indicative or physical value, are conveyable to a wider circle of hearers than emotive and volitive expressions and therefore can be investigated in a more formal way than the latter. The *mathematical-logical* or *syntactic-axiomatic method* lends itself best to studying the most impersonal or 'objective' acts of communication, but is not qualified for an investigation into 'subjective,' emotive expressions. Between the 'axiomatic' and the 'introspective' level there is a variety of acts of communications which may be characterized by an increase of the personal element and to which a psychological method, like the signific one, can be usefully applied. In this connection it may be stressed that these distinctions, like any distinction of this kind, are artificial, and that the line between objective and non-objective acts of communication is often too sharply drawn: even in the 'most objective' act of communication the volitive and emotive elements are not entirely lacking. Signific investigations show that there are impersonal, objective, 'physical'

acts of communication that have a much greater dispersion than one usually expects. It will be obvious that, generally speaking, a rather small dispersion has to be attributed to *proper names* and *technical terms* and that the use of *value judgements* is attended with a great dispersion of the terms involved, but it may be less obvious why the numerals 'zero' and 'one,' in distinction to 'two' and higher, differ in this respect, and why words like 'perfect,' 'nothing' and 'mathematics' belong to those having a great dispersion.

Confronting subjects with a number of visual situations (e.g., a photographic or kinematographic exposure) and asking them to interpret the latter, one can observe that it is rather difficult to choose pictures to which the subjects respond by the numeral 'one.' 'A house,' 'a dog,' 'a horse,' may be the interpretation of three pictures which we pick out to that purpose, and only by showing a *series* of pictures (by which the counting is suggested) will one get the desired response: 'one house,' 'one dog,' 'one horse.' It will prove to be much easier to call forth the numeral 'two' by the representation of an isolated situation; to this end it will be sufficient to show clearly any similarity, and a picture of 'two houses,' 'two dogs' or 'two horses' will probably lead to the desired result.

It is still more difficult to confront subjects with situations (or classes of situations) to which they respond by means of words like 'zero' and 'nothing.' These words prove to be used to indicate a certain difference with regard to other situations, but have in themselves no indicative elements. The same can be said with respect to the so-called 'Allaussagen,' i. e., statements tending to denote the most general concepts. Apart from their sometimes mainly emotive functional elements, they, too, have no indicative signification and are almost exclusively used in a comparative way.

The method of *transformation* will often be useful to the investigation of the dispersion of the function of a word or of a group of synonymous words (word-family), especially where the dispersion has remained unobserved. This method particularly lends itself to revealing volitive and formal elements of acts of communication; the latter refer to elements bearing on *word-associations* only. One of the most simple transformations which can easily be applied to acts of communication of daily and public life is that from the approving into the disapproving terminology. It will be evident that words like 'heroic' or 'reckless,' 'laudable' or 'blameable' do not refer to a clearly defined situation but vary according to the approbation or the disapprobation of the speaker. It is not difficult to see either that questions referring to 'justice' or 'injustice,' 'freedom' or 'coercion' can be reduced to the 'positive or negative charge' of the 'same' representations of different persons, but it may be less easy to understand that this personal element sometimes plays an important part in all kinds of divergences of opinion of a more scientific nature. Neither speaker nor hearer always recognizes the volitive element underlying many social, political and economical problems, even though the latter refer to situations in which they are involved. Moreover, we all have a tendency to give our valuative, subjective judgments the appearance of distinctive, objective judgments, the latter being more conveyable than the former ('it is. . .' instead of 'I think it is. . .').

From the above explanations it follows that statements which do not contain experimental, verifiable observations are not at all immaterial in the eyes of the significist. On the contrary, he regards volition and emotion as the fundamental elements of every act of communication, although he does not disregard the important part the indicative element (the only one which can be related to the concepts of 'experiment' and 'verification' in a physical sense) plays in more or less impersonal communication.

From a 'macroscopic' point of view, both personal and impersonal acts of communication greatly differ in their volitive value. From the beginning, significs has accentuated this aspect of the 'problem of the pseudo-problems.' For this kind of 'pseudo-problems' (Mannoury has called *them unreal pseudo-problems*), although they may often have the appearance of indicative, distinctive problems, should be sharply distinguished from those statements which, after being subjected to a terminological transformation, prove to be 'lacking any sense.' On the other hand, there are problems of a purely terminological nature whose statements can be reduced to formal elements only; to them belong the problems of formalistic mathematics, but they will not give rise

to misconceptions, unless their formal character has remained concealed; in other words, unless they are 'real pseudo-problems.'

In general, real pseudo-problems are not easy to investigate and often require an exact analytic study of the dualistic character of colloquial language ('I-it-transformation') and of the subtle structure of mental processes, the description of which cannot dispense with new linguistic means ('micro-psychological' terminology).

In some cases it may be useful to introduce a micro-psychological, a micro-logical or another micro-terminology – unified and formalized terminologies – as the starting-point for further formalization; in this way endeavors have been made by significists to anchor fundamental mathematical concepts in a micro-psychological terminology.

Especially in tracing the indicative elements of emotive and volitive acts of communication, the operational method, requiring descriptions which take their contents from the concrete operations that enter into the definitions of the concepts employed, has also proved to be very helpful. By giving an 'operational meaning' to terms like 'freedom,' 'determinism,' 'justice,' 'state,' etc., these terms get a more or less indicative sense.

The *analytic* signific approach may be best effected in an experimental way and with the aid of many subjects and many observers. To results which are obtained introspectively only a minimum value may be attributed. It goes without saying that the methods described in this chapter should be applied without preconceived opinions. The establishment of the reliability of a 'signific test' does not differ essentially from the establishment of the reliability of a psychological test or 'type of observation' in general, although signific investigations in their statistical approach, especially in the domain of values, meet with particular difficulties (see also Section 3).

3. Applications

The methods and principles set forth in the preceding section have found application in various fields of science: in mathematics, in logic, in physics, in linguistics, in psychology, in biology, and in the social sciences. Not only some of the fundamental concepts of these sciences have been subjected to a signific analysis and the usage in different scientific circles has been studied, but also new terminologies more useful than the existing ones from a signific point of view have been constructed. The first part of a signific grammar for the use of college pupils has been recently written.

The application of significs in the field of mathematics is founded on the distinction between *mathematics in a more limited sense*, referring to the verbal expression of the mathematical science, and *mathematics in a wider sense*, bearing on the system of mental associations underlying the outward symbolic appearance (*formalistic* and *intuitionistic mathematics*). The formalistic expression of the 'law of constancy' (Mannoury), being the foundation of mathematics in a more limited sense, is the principle of identity ($a = a$). The signific approach aims at finding out the kernel of the complexes of mental reactions that give rise to those acts of communication which are known as mathematical. This relativistic point of view differs in many respects from the traditional one.

In colloquial language the signification of a term like 'infinite' is of an emotive character; in formalized mathematics it is purely formal. On this consideration is based the conception that in the theory of sets those statements referring to infinite sets on the one hand and *empty sets* on the other, in other words, the statements which in defining these sets require the *negation of exclusion*, exclude a physical correlate. For terms like 'infinite,' 'general,' 'empty,' 'real' 'eternal,' 'material,' 'I,' belong to a group of linguistic forms, which may be called the linguistic form of *generality*, and which are connected to the negation of exclusion by the formula ' a or $non = a$ everything' (*principium tertii exclusi*) and ' a and $non = a =$ nothing' (*principium contradictio-nis*). In distinction to the *negation of choice*, bearing upon statements with a mainly indicative

signification (distinctive propositions), the *negation of exclusion* refers to statements of a mainly emotive, in particular, declinatory character.

Every linguistic level may be called formal as far as it gives expression to the speaker's associations with other *verbal* associations. And every linguistic level may be called spontaneous, meaning that the particular form of every act of communication is determined by the state of mind of the speaker at the time when the act is performed. Considering this, one could say that there is not an essential but only a gradual difference between mathematical and non-mathematical language.

'Demonstrating,' 'refuting,' 'deducing,' and the like are terms which formalistic mathematics has taken from conversational language, without parting them entirely from the emotive and volitive elements characteristic of these terms in colloquial language. Such a mixed language occurs where a branch of science does not rest upon a far-advanced formalization of language and where the signfic foundation did not precede the axiomatic one.

Two ways may be followed to define the concept of mathematics. The *analytic* definition could be derived from the usage of the ordinary mathematical terminology. But this terminology varies greatly, not only from individual to individual – the controversy between intuitionists and formalists is to a large extent attributable to these variations – but also with regard to one and the same mathematician. Therefore, let us try to define this field of science in a *synthetic* way. Leaning on our own verbal associations, we can map out the domain of mathematics and compare it with the corresponding empirical contents.

In this sense thus, according to our subjective language-sense, we can establish that one speaks of formalized mathematical language when the hearer's linguistic reaction to the speaker's act of communication is as independent as possible of the persons involved and of the circumstances under which the act is performed. It is obvious that this synthetic formulation is characteristic of the usage of certain *groups* of persons and that even in this limitation it contains many more elements than what is usually called mathematics. Many people will reply in a similar way to the question: 'What is the first letter of the alphabet?' or to the question: 'What is the sum of three and five?,' although few people will say that the former question belongs to the field of mathematics. In eliminating the 'circumstances,' we have excluded the physical language from the domain of mathematics.

The more the signfic procedure develops in a synthetic direction and the new linguistic forms get a formalistic character, the more it approaches the axiomatic method. However, from a signfic point of view, the deeper significance of mathematics lies in the progress of the analysis to which human language and human thought are subjected. And from this analysis, too, it takes its (relativistic) 'general validity.'

In this connection some consideration may be devoted to the theory of probabilities. From a signfic angle, a distinction should be made between the *mathematical* and the *applied* theory of probabilities. The former can be entirely formalized and axiomatized and, consequently, does not have other signfic foudations but the mathematical formalism in general. As to the *application* of the theory of probabilities, however, one should distinguish between the finitistic and the infinitistic theory of probabilities, the former being applied to the concept of 'probability,' which in most cases refers to expectations concerning future events, the latter differing from the finitistic one, inasmuch as it applies the negation of exclusion in defining the chance-number O as a result of limit-transition. The difference between the notions of the finite and the infinite is of a purely emotive character and cannot be defined in terms of (real or hypothetical) experiments. The endlessly discussed question whether $P = E/N$ tends to a limit with N increasing ad infinitum or not arises from the mixing up of those two elements in the meaning of the word.

The mathematical form of thought in a more limited sense distinguishes itself from other forms of thought by a formalistic feature and a more explicit gradation of the significations introduced and by the isolated character of the 'net of associations' which is characteristic of this mode of expression. All formal-mathematical systems underlie the (mostly implicit) assumption that from

the beginning all uncertainty and all indefiniteness are left out of consideration. The weak point of the 'proverbial' form 'two times two is four' lies in the untenableness of the arithmetical rule to which it can be reduced: '1 = 1,' a sequence of 'words,' the psychic correlate of which cannot be designated with 'mathematical certainty.'³²

Although the *formal* syllogism can be said to belong exclusively to scientific usage, yet this form of reasoning is not alien to common parlance. In the latter case we have to do with a transfer from a more *general* expectation to a *particular* perception ('all negroes are unreliable,' 'this man is a negro,' 'consequently, this man is unreliable'). But also the reverse phenomenon occurs; the extension of a particular emotion to a more general one (major: 'This man is unreliable,' minor: 'this man is a negro,' conclusion: 'all negroes are unreliable'). Expressing ourselves in a *signific* terminology, we can describe these processes of deduction and induction as *mental phenomena of pulsation aiming at translating emotive and indicative experiences and recollections into expectations of a more narrow or a more wide bearing* (the 'process of regrouping,' *Mannoury*).

It is true that the development of the symbolic and pasigraphic method has enabled us to bring essential parts of classic and more modern systems into a deductive form, but this does not imply that for the *significist* the fundamental difficulties resulting from the formalizing of 'living language' are now solved. He has observed the phenomenon that the 'higher' logical linguistic levels lose their suggestive power, i.e., their usefulness with regard to the conveying of mental contents, according as they increase in regularity. From what has been said it results that the main *signific* problems lie here in the zone of the transition from conversational language to formalized language, and vice versa (the 'switching in' and the 'switching' off' of a formalistic system). Questions like 'How far is it possible to express mathematical thinking by means of pasigraphic systems?' and 'Which are the foundations of such a symbolization of mathematical thinking?,' which have been raised in *signific* circles, confront the *significist* not only with problems of observation of language, but also with those of experimental psychology.

It may be said that *Brouwer's* mathematics, by analyzing and limiting the validity of the *principium tertii exclusi*, has made mathematics applicable to 'spheres of life' which have been unaccessible to classic logic and that this mathematical intuitionism, even in its formalized expression, is much more close to living language than the logistic system of Peano-Russell.

In the domain of physics *signific* studies so far have mainly concentrated on the analysis of some fundamental concepts, such as 'time,' 'space,' 'motion,' and on problems of a more epistemological nature: 'causality,' 'continuity,' and the like. From a *signific* viewpoint, the notions of causality and physical law are nothing but the general and particular expressions of the regularities representing

32. A striking similarity of views we find in the writings of P. W. Bridgman and in those of Arthur F. Bentley. 'We have come to expect by now that when we push our analysis far enough we can uncover imprecision and uncertainty. This is also the case with the human enterprise of logic. Consider a simple syllogism in the conventional form "If all a is b and if all b is c, then all a is c." In this syllogism the same symbol, "a" for example, occurs twice. Now "a" stands for something – the fact that the symbol occurs twice implies that it makes sense to speak of the referent of "a" remaining the "same" during the progress of our discourse. What does it mean to say that the referent remains the "same" during the discourse, and how shall we check on any tentative referent to insure that it really has remained the same? "Sameness" is by implication a word of absolute precision, and we know that we never experience such. It must be that many ordinary referents have the property of "sameness" to a sufficient degree to justify their use in a syllogism. But what is the criterion that they possess it to a "sufficient" degree except the criterion that the syllogism gives the correct result when we assume it? I think there is no other answer and that the syllogism always conceals a certain degree of circularity.' (P. W. Bridgman, 'Some Philosophical Aspects of Science,' paper to be published in *Synthese*).

in most cases the associations recollection of expectations – observation (*empirical contents or indicative signification of the physical laws*), and, on the other hand, the corresponding regularities of the associations recollection of observations – expectation (*emotive and volitive signification of the physical laws*). An *objective* content, in the strict sense of the word, i.e., a content independent of man, could not be attributed to physical laws, inasmuch as they are in the last resort psychological laws; they exercise a great influence on human life also because their knowledge facilitates the transition from ‘end to means’ (*Brouwer*).

The problem of causality refers to the question as to the psychic correlate of the family of words to which terms like ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ belong, and a signfic investigation into these terms shows that they do not contain a more or less definite complex of representations or affections, but that they consist of what may be called a network of associations or correlations which find expression in conversational language by words like ‘in consequence of,’ ‘by so doing,’ ‘because,’ etc. In the most striking cases the causal ‘ordinative’ principle bears on associations between sequences of recollections and sequences of expectations of an *indicative* nature: I remember having seen a certain sequence of phenomena and expect to observe the same sequence of phenomena in future. Wondering what, from this point of view, is the signification of what one calls the *general* principle of causality or the *general* law of causality, we will reduce this principle to a twofold empirical rule, expressing on the one hand that *my* expectations (and, as far as I can see, also those of my fellow-men) usually more or less agree with a certain average of resemblant sequences of images of recollections, and, on the other hand, establishing that, as far as I remember, my experiences in the past were in agreement with what I had expected a moment ago (‘law of regrouping’ and ‘law of prediction,’ *Mannoury*).

It is evident that this signfic interpretation differs greatly from the absolutistic conception speaking of an ‘unshakable’ and ‘generally valid’ regularity to which all phenomena inexorably are submitted, and that the difference between the two conceptions can only be expressed in emotive terms. The question whether the above principle of causality has a general validity or not is regarded by the signficist as a purely terminological question.

It goes without saying that the concept of ‘matter,’ of ‘lifeless substance,’ as element of a conception of the world, has also been subjected to signfic criticism. It has been replaced by the representation of a sequence of phenomena or *events* which, from a human point of view, may be regarded as elementary, and attempts have been made to formulate a theory according to which spatial and temporal relations are made subservient to those between the events, the ‘flashes’ (*Van Dantzig*).

However, the influence of the American operationism has left its traces in signfic circles these last years, and some of the conceptions prevailing there can be rendered by the following quotation taken from *Philipp Frank’s Modern Science and its Philosophy* (p. 295): ‘From a psychological viewpoint Einstein describes this way of producing theories by free imagination in a letter to the French mathematician Hadamard. According to this new conception, it is true that physical theories are the product of free imagination, if we take the word ‘free’ with a grain of salt. But it must not be concluded that these theories are products of metaphysics. For these theories are subjected to the operational or experimental criterion of meaning, though in a more indirect and complex way. The criterion of truth remains ultimately with the checking by sense observations, as the older ‘positivists’ claimed. But we know now that this checking is a more complex process than it was believed by men like Comte and Mach to be.’

Carnap has defined the ‘meaning’ of a statement in science as the sum of all statements about similarity and diversity between sense impressions that can be derived logically from the statement in question. (*The Logical Structure of the World*). ‘Operational definitions’ enable us to derive from the symbolic system observational facts that check with our actual observations; they are the descriptions of the operations by which abstract symbols (e.g., the space-time co-ordinates) are connected with observational phenomena. According to Bridgman, a theory which does not

contain the operational definitions of its abstract terms is 'meaningless.' Like the significists, Bridgman pays attention to the *circumstances* under which acts of communication are performed, and we may say that his conceptions and views have been most favorably received in signific groups as a means to avoid confusing discussions about theory construction, also in the field under consideration. That the structural definitions are bound to logical and practical limitations, has been particularly stressed by *Clay*, who has pointed out that in the development of science there is not only a regression of the *unstructural* on micro-levels or observations, i.e., the possibility of giving structural definitions or micro-processes, but that there is also a regression, in the opposite direction, of the *structural*, i.e., of the possibility of describing a macro-complex as an element of a more complicated structure.

In biology the object of significant investigations has been from the beginning the critical study, both from a logical and from a psychological point of view, of the fundamental concepts of the various departments of this science. It was evident to the significists that many of these concepts, especially those occurring in speculative biology, urgently need such a study, as emotive and volitive elements are often abundantly represented in the terminology of speculative biology. The recognition of these elements is essential for a clear understanding of many problems in the field; their elimination, by an attempt to formalize the concepts used was considered to be a useful means to avoid endless and fruitless controversies on pseudo-problems.³³

It may be stressed that the object of these activities is the *study*, not the fixation of biological concepts; their purpose is informative, not normative. Science is like a living and growing organism; its conceptual apparatus is developing with its progress. A premature fixation of the meaning of concepts would inhibit this necessary development. Therefore, one has to restrict oneself to the attempt to determine and to formulate as accurately as possible the meaning of a concept at the time being; to recognize its eventual irrational elements; and to eliminate these elements, as far as possible, by a formalization of the concept. It is essential that the way in which the concept can be applied to the empirical objects of science be clearly indicated, and that the further development of the concept is given space.

Instead of subjecting some concepts of speculative biology to a critical analysis, e.g., those of 'wholeness,' 'plan,' 'design,' 'entelechy,' etc., the biological section of the group of significists followed another procedure. The nature of the phenomena to which most of these fundamental concepts of general biology refer can only be understood if agreement exists about the meaning of other notions belonging to the field of empirical biology. It was necessary, therefore, to begin with the study of these concepts of less wide scope, but more immediately related to the empirical data of biology. Only when, in this way, the fundamental concepts of the various branches of empirical biology have been examined, a sufficient basis is formed, from which one may endeavor to get an understanding of the fundamental questions and notions of general and speculative biology.

The study of the concepts of *descriptive* biology had to be preceded by a discussion of description itself. The relations between reality, perception, observation and description were discussed. Every description is adapted to a certain purpose, and does not satisfy other purposes; no description can be complete in itself. The elements of description are the properties imputed to the objects described; they can be classified as quantities, qualities and arrangements. In these discussions a remarkable difference with regard to the views on the relationship between the concepts of 'property' and 'characteristic' came to light. The biologists were inclined to define a 'characteristic' as a special property, being important enough to be used for the recognition of the object to which it belongs. For the physicist who took part in the discussions a 'characteristic' was a superficial feature of the object, and had nothing to do with its 'properties,' the latter concept denoting the

33. See also the general survey of the activities of the Biological Section of the International Society for Significs, by Chr. P. Raven, *Synthese* 7 (1/2): 93 ff., from which the particulars of this part of the monograph are taken.

fundamental elements of its nature. Evidently the difference in significance attributed to these words is due to psychological factors; they have not further been studied.

In biology description makes use of biological notions at first; with the progress of analysis, these are reduced more and more, however, to arithmetic, geometric and physico-chemical notions. The properties of arrangement or structure are very important in biology; spatial and temporal structures may be distinguished. With regard to spatial structures, the problem of elementary units in biology and the concepts of unity, individuality and wholeness were discussed. The study of temporal structures involves the concepts of causality, law and rule, whereas a consideration of the spatio-temporal structural relationships as a whole brings to the fore the concepts of design and sense. 'Causality' and design do not exclude one another, but are complementary.

After ample discussions on the concepts of *systematics*, *species*, *race*, *phenotype* and *genotype* and on some fundamental concepts of comparative anatomy, the part which the concept of *type* plays in anthropology (e.g., racial and constitutional types) was examined. It was argued that a system can never be a complete expression of phylogenetic relations, as the latter have another dimension, including the factor 'time.' The resemblance between the hierarchic grouping of classification and the genealogical tree of phylogenetics is only a superficial one; it may seduce to overlook the essential differences.³⁴

These discussions were followed by a critical examination of the concepts of those parts of biology that study the vegetal, animal and human communities. Only part of this program has been completed by now, as only the concepts of phytosociology have been discussed. The notion of 'plant community' implies the existence of mutual relationships between the members of such a community; they can be summarized by the concepts of 'competition' and 'priority,' and give rise to a social structure of the community. The concept of 'competition' was defined as the mutual influence between equivalent plants having similar necessities of life, thereby restricting each other in their ability of expansion. Whereas a 'plant community' is an abstraction, the concrete samples of vegetation may be indicated as 'populations' or 'phytocenoses'; they are distinguished by the fact that phytocenoses possess a social structure, whereas this is lacking in a population. It was emphasized that the word 'phytosociology' is misleading, as fundamental differences exist between the plant communities and the communities (societies) of man and higher animals, which are studied by sociology.

In the course of these discussions many concepts of a more general nature, like those of causality, probability, chance, finality, order, purpose, wholeness, have been touched upon. The existence of three leading ideas in biology has been stressed on many occasions: 1. the causal idea, bearing on the relations between mentally isolated events; 2. the historical idea, relating the phenomena to the single irreproducible series of real events called history; 3. the final idea, bearing on the relationship of the phenomena within a living, a biological, system to common space and time coordinates. It may be expected that it will be possible by clearly distinguishing between these complementary and equivalent ideas, to attain a certain degree of formalization of many of the fundamental concepts of biology.

'Significs makes a study of the effects on human behavior of the linguistic aspects of the evaluative process, the most distinctly human aspect of the behavior of the human organism.'³⁵

This definition, given by Anatol Rapoport at our Fifth International Signific Summer Conference, certainly bears on one of the fundamental aspects of the signific approach. It makes clear why the significists are particularly interested in some fields of inquiry which have implications for their special discipline. As such may be mentioned *Cybernetics*, *Mathematical Biophysics* and the *Mathematical Theory of Communication*, in which, as in significs, the word communication is used in a broad sense to include all the procedures by which one mind may affect another. Two of

34. For further details, see Chr. P. Raven.

35. *Synthese* 8 (3/5): 193.

the three levels at which *Warren Weaver* considers the general communication problem, viz., the level referring to the question, how precisely the transmitted symbols convey the desired meaning (the semantic problem), and that bearing on the problem, how effectively the received meaning affects conduct in the desired way (the effectiveness problem), are specific signific problems.³⁶

Starting from a simplified schema of cellular occurrences, *mathematical biophysics* aims at mathematically deducing experimental results in the field of higher mental functions with considerable specificity and accuracy. The understanding of the events in the nervous system and analogous systems as determined by their structure is claimed to be fundamental for the understanding of abstraction, evaluation and communication – processes of basic importance in significs. On the basis of Rashevsky's picture of the nervous system it would be possible to describe quantitatively such relations as reaction time as a function of the interval between a preparatory 'warning' and the stimulus; acuity of discrimination as a function of the magnitude of the stimulus, and many other relations. The approach may also be useful in suggesting 'models' to account for a wide variety of 'psychological' phenomena, such as conditioned reflexes, error elimination (as observed in maze learning), logical 'thinking,' visual perception and esthetics, and some psychotic states. The theories regarding the construction of electronic computers and calculating machines from the point of view of invariances involved in such devices have been received in signific circles with vivid interest. And this is obvious. The study of the linguistic aspects of evaluative processes – one of the items of the signific program – is closely connected with that of the events associated with evaluative processes, which mathematical biophysics seeks to describe in physico-mathematical terms, and also with the invariants common to these other processes, which cybernetics try to discover. The words of Weaver that 'one has the vague feeling that information and meaning may prove to be something like a pair of canonically conjugate variables in quantum theory, they being subject to some joint restriction that condemns a person to the sacrifice of the one as he insists on having much of the other,' have not escaped our attention.

In this connection special mention may be made of *Charles Morris'* semiotic with its main subdivisions: *semantics, syntactics and pragmatics*. The reader of the present monograph who is acquainted with Morris' science of signs will have noticed the similarity between his conceptions and those of the significists.

In the field of *sociological* studies, taken in the sense of scientific studies of the phenomena arising from, and conducive to, social interactions and interrelations, significs has also to accomplish the double task of clarifying the conceptual framework of existing terminologies and of providing the sociologist with a procedure for the construction of his theories; in other words, to furnish the means for a foundation of a scientific sociological terminology. Sociologists often do not express themselves clearly, because they neglect the task of introducing exact definitions and making linguistic analyses, and, in default of this, avail themselves of abstractions devoid of all indication. Operational definitions, dealing with concepts which are construed of operations, have proved to be a useful means to link abstract words with our experience.

According to the significists, language is one of the most important social factors; it is underlying every study of the individual and the group, of the family and other social organizations, science, jurisprudence, art and war. Sociology in itself and by itself gives a strong impetus to significs by studying the conditions under which signs and symbols have a 'meaning'; by examining human responses to signs and by examining the relations between language and human behavior.³⁷ The connection between sociology and significs is evident. The significist has learned from

36. Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, The University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1949.

37. This is also an item of the program of the General Semanticists, whose writings have been and are being carefully studied in some of our groups. In Great Britain similar studies have been undertaken by the jurist Alvin C. Leyton (London).

his observations that often differences of a terminological nature separate different conceptions: in politics, in sociology, in philosophy, in the theories of the foundations of science. Each trend develops its own usage, its own idiom, which easily gives rise to misinterpretations by other trends. Moreover, not all authors distinguish clearly between their own opinions and emotions and those they ascribe to members of a community.

In the social sciences *significs* has been applied partly to sociological techniques and study methods and to the recording of observations of language, partly to investigate the relationship between language and human behavior, especially the influence of language on the creation of beliefs, ideals, and aspirations. For that purpose *significs* aims at studying problems with regard to social control: the several types of norms regulating and controlling behavior (convention, fashion, religion, morals, law), and at investigating the social processes, the various forms of interaction between individuals and groups, including social differentiation and integration.³⁸

The *signific* approach places before the sociologist the question whether the acts of communication he is investigating bear upon a concrete situation or not. For the main aim of his investigations is to record the verbal or non-verbal responses of individuals and groups to verbal or non-verbal stimuli, and to analyze and to classify them. If the *significist* is not able to confront his subjects with observable situations, or in general to record reactions to concrete situations, he will have to get on with collecting and analyzing texts, quotations from the press, radio, etc., referring to the situation in question. This material might be the expression of the representations of a certain individual or a certain group, but might also be the symptom of a certain state of feeling or disposition of the individual or the group. In this case he is only indirectly in a position to choose his subjects; he does not know whether the groups he is examining are homogeneous, or in which respect they are homogeneous, and whether the specimens, especially if they bear upon judgments of value, are representative of the whole group. His task is to trace the correlations existing between the usage of ideological, political or other groups and the social and political aims predominating in such groups.

He should beware of the danger of examining a single emotive term, for a *signific* investigation of emotive terms should embrace the whole of interrelated terms bearing upon the concepts to be investigated and should not confine itself to one or some terms which may be easily used as slogans.

Failing a concrete situation the *significist* has to develop a special technique. Distinguishing different linguistic levels – a linguistic gradation which, as we have seen, is characterized by the fact that words and expressions of a certain level (which of course is not the primitive level) can be replaced or described by terms of the preceding level – he may ask the question: on which level the act of communication he is investigating can be placed. In general it may be said that this will depend upon the amount and the nature of the indications the act of communication contains or the operations to which it refers; the conditions under which the terms are used and the state of development of the language-sense of the subject.

In order to trace the psychological background of acts of communication, the mental associations which are characteristic of their use, the *significist* will study: (1) the circumstances under which the words are used; (2) the elements and the character of the groups who avail themselves of them; (3) the purpose (s) these groups have in view by using these words; (4) the circumstances under which they avoid explicitly or implicitly the use of certain words or expressions; (5) the social, ideological and political conceptions prevailing in these groups; (6) the question whether the words belong to the ‘group premises,’ i.e., to the net of associations that is basic to the judgments accepted implicitly or explicitly by the group; (7) the more or less emotive, volitive or indicative

38. Basic research of this kind has also been carried out by the Institute for Social Research at Oslo. The purpose of the Institute is to conduct and encourage coordinated research in the fields of Sociology, Social Psychology and Social Anthropology.

character of the words; (8) the variability of the signification (dispersion) of the expression and its positive or negative emotive value according as it is used by a group or by another (adversary) group; and (9) the operational contents of the act of communication, i.e., the actions which it describes or to which it refers. Certainly, such investigations are long-winded, but urge themselves upon those investigators who will not be satisfied by quasi-scientific results.

To that end one can make use of questionnaires. But in this case one should observe the fact that purely verbal results will be easily obtained, since usually the questions do not confront the subjects with concrete situations and often contain emotive expressions. More often than not, the words used in questionnaires not being analyzed beforehand, the questions anticipate the results of the inquiry and neglect the non-verbal responses of the subjects. The means introduced to parry this inconvenience by 'cross checks' – mostly of a verbal nature too – at best only partly succeed in breaking through the chain of verbal associations. In this connection it may be noted that material conflicts – conflicts of interests – often screen themselves behind ideological conflicts.

The results of sociological investigations are frequently influenced by subjective appreciations of which the investigators are not conscious, but which may give rise to partial judgments. In particular they should beware of the procedure to trace certain properties of any fragment of a population and to attribute these properties to parts of the population which have not been investigated. Viewed from a taxonomic angle, generalizations of this kind should not be based upon a specimen which is not representative of the group under examination. Sociological studies should clearly distinguish moral appreciations, philosophical theories, and scientific facts. Their records should mention how individuals and groups behave and not how they ought to behave. Signific studies of the impact of the language of a group upon its members, particularly of industrial and political groups, have revealed much of the source of disintegration within society, and of conflicts, actual and potential.

The theoretician's own verbal behavior is often included in the 'material' he investigates. If we call object-language the language used in verbal behavior of people which sociology investigates and meta-language the language sociology uses in its discourse about the verbal behavior of people, it becomes fairly obvious that in present-day sociology the two languages are still inextricably mixed together. On the other hand, people whose behavior is being investigated often use terms and meanings of the meta-language together with those of the object-language. The sociological meta-language thus becomes a meta-meta-language, and so on.³⁹

All these investigations form part of analytical significs, of extrospective observation of language, the principal aim of which is to investigate the current usage. However, when building up a synthetic vocabulary, the social scientist has to face other problems, but, apart from the specific character of the subject matter, these problems do not differ from those referring to the construction of a synthetic gradation in general. For scientific sociology the construction of such a useful terminology will be an indispensable although laborious task requiring the collaboration of a staff of specialists in various fields. For one should not forget that scientific method depends on the refinement not only of our physical tools but also of our conceptual tools, not only of our experimental apparatus, but likewise of its language of statement and definition.

Considering the foregoing explanations it may be clear that *psychology* is playing an important part in signific studies. The conceptual framework of significs is to a large extent a psychological one. The significist avails himself of current psychological concepts, like emotion, volition, representation, expectation, recollection, impulsion, thinking, believing, etc.

If significs enters in this way the scope of psychology, psychologists and psychiatrists, on the other hand, are confronted day after day with signific problems. In the relation psychologist-subject or psychiatrist-patient the apparatus of communication fulfils a considerable, if not a prevailing,

39. See also Vladimir Cervinka, 'A Dimensional Theory of Groups,' *Sociometry* 11 (1/2) 1948 (Reported by Stuart C. Dodd), and 'Factor Analysis,' *Statisticky obzor*, 1948, 2.

function, while the kernel of the signfic study, on the analytic side, lies in an investigation of the elements underlying communication. In psychology many terms have as their referents complicated actions, habits and dispositions; for this reason they can be introduced only as a starting-point for the analysis of complex behavior. Moreover, vernacular and technical terms are often confused. In front of this situation significs aims at constructing a micropsychological terminology for describing phenomena of observation, a terminology which, in describing the processes of auto- and hetero-introspection, will take care of finer distinctions and consequently, in this respect, will be more useful than the current one. The question has been raised how far the vernacular may be efficiently used in theories aiming at predictions of behavior in unstandardized complex situations of 'real life,' since on higher levels of precision and reliability the undesirable properties of the vernacular tend more and more to obscure statements and make partial elimination of them necessary.⁴⁰

On the macro-psychological level operational definitions are introduced to give an 'operational sense' to the vernacular terms, which are used to describe the correlations between mental and linguistic phenomena. On the other hand, the significist tries to translate metaphoric descriptions, so abundant in psychiatric and psychological literature, into behavioristic ones or, in fewer cases, to translate descriptions formulated in the it-language into those in the I-language. Records in this field, even those made by experts, are written too often on a level of language lying far above that of the vernacular and contain terms which, unjustly, are being supposed to belong to the idiom of the 'hearer' and to be 'understood' by him, although they are not rooted in indications or operations.

Besides, within the scope of signfic studies, psychologists have been trying to trace the characteristics of the language of psychotics and neurotics comparing them with those occurring in acts of communication performed by 'normal' adults and children under similar circumstances; among others with the aim of getting insight into the origination and the development of pseudo-problems and pseudo-judgments. To that end they study the way in which statements are verified in pathological behavior and in which both pathological and normal behavior are justified. In this connection special attention has been paid to the use of metaphors and generalizations (Allausagen). The problem whether it would be possible to give the concept of 'psychical strata' a more indicative signification by relating – as far as the conscious levels are concerned – certain mental phenomena to certain linguistic levels, a research requiring many observations of linguistic behavior, is one of the items still under discussion.

4. *Concluding remarks*

Logical Empiricism, Operationism, Pragmatism, Semantics and Significs – they all have tried to set up criteria by which one can distinguish clearly between 'meaningful discourse' and 'empty talk.' Like pragmatism and operationism, significs lays stress on the conception that the 'meaning' of a statement is characterized by the way in which it influences the behavior of men who are trained to react to the language in which the statement is formulated. Logical Empiricism, like significs, stresses the importance of the analysis of our language tools for a comprehensive 'scientific attitude.'⁴¹

The different approaches to language – and concept-criticism of the last decades may be roughly divided into an analytic one, an axiomatic one and a signfic one. Bentham, Ogden and

40. See also Arne Naess, *Notes on the Foundation of Psychology as a Science*, Mimeographed Copy, Oslo, 1948; and Egon Brunswik, *The Conceptual Framework of Psychology*, The University of Chicago Press, 1952.

41. The history and the development of Logical Empiricism and its significance for present-day science has been clearly described by Philipp Frank in his book *Modern Science and Its Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1949.

Richards may be regarded as the authors who have inaugurated the analytic area; who have pointed out the variety and variability of the significations in colloquial language; and who have shown that the mixture of mainly emotive and volitive elements by which the language of everyday speech is characterized is not suitable to the purpose of useful communication.

The second trend of present-day criticism of concepts we have in view, the axiomatic one, finds its exponents in those scientists who do not confine themselves to the 'negative,' analytic side of the criticism of language, but who aim particularly at constructing logical systems, where possible in a pasigraphic form. Among them are logical empiricists who, just as the significists, have paid special attention to epistemological problems and have subjected the current philosophical theories, abounding with metaphors and generalizations, to a sharp criticism.

We have another aspect of similarity in view when we mention here the operational and the pragmatic approach to 'meaning,' and in connection with this, the General Semantics Movement, for whom the study of symbols and the inner reactions to symbols are important objects of study.

Both the logical-empiristic and the signific movement have empirical tendencies, although they have not developed the same procedures, even with respect to their criticism of language.⁴²

The substitution of philosophy by a logical analysis of language is not one of the items of the signific program, which aims at clarifying the 'problems of life' by modern psychological means. The significists do not exclude from their discussions problems belonging to the 'domain of will,' but they try to reduce them to their psychological elements. They have not drawn up an *index verborum prohibitorum*, based on the refusal to admit certain terms and expressions to science and philosophy. Both movements aim at unmasking pseudo-problems and at building up an efficient terminology. However, the significists, availing themselves of psycho-linguistic means, distinguish between 'real' and 'unreal' pseudo-problems; after being subjected to a terminological transformation the latter prove to have an emotive or volitive 'meaning' (conflicts of will). Both the logical empiricist and the significist assume that one of the causes of the careless and naïve usage in science is the inaccuracy of common language which, among others, leads to the temptation to substantialize many terms. The significist especially emphasizes the dualistic and mixed character of colloquial language and the value of introspection as a scientific method aiming at recognizing subjective mental elements which, however, can be objectivized ('intersubjectivized') by comparing the introspective results obtained by a staff of scientifically skilled introspectors. This should not be misunderstood. With regard to analytic significs, which aims at registering, studying and analyzing the linguistic behavior of 'others' (heterospection), introspection can have only a very restrictive, and mainly comparative, value, but in the synthetic signific approach, the construction of a new terminology, the introspective element occupies a prominent place. And the investigation of these introspective elements underlying acts of communications on synthetic levels belongs also to the field of signific studies. By claiming a multilateral elaboration of the results of investigations (i.e., an elaboration by individuals belonging to different ideological and social groups) the significist also tries to satisfy the condition of 'objectivity,' in the sense of 'intersubjective observational reliability.' In other words, he tries to get classes of responses yielding maximum reliability coefficients between individuals facing common 'geographic' situations or situational elements.⁴³

The signific method may be called an empirical method, as it is based on observation. It tries to penetrate the psychological background of the linguistic behavior; *as such* it does not study, as semantics (in the logical sense of the word) does, the *form* of semantic antinomies, the methods of arithmetization, the theorem of indefinability, and the like. Logical empiricism aims either at a logical analysis of the scientific language (Neurath, Carnap) or of all forms of language (Frank,

42. See also my article 'The Psycho-Linguistic Movement in Holland,' *Philosophy of Science* 18, 3, 1951. [Now Section 7.12, this volume].

43. Cf. also Egon Brunswik, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Schlick, Von Mises, Morris). According to the significist, criticism of language is not synonymous with logic of science. He aims at analyzing the functional elements of acts of communication, although he does not emphasize the difference in logical grammar of each of the forms of language.

Much of the clumsiness and confusion of argument can be removed by formalization. But significists do not lose sight of the fact that one can tell highly speculative stories by means of symbols and that sometimes a symbolism may even conceal the ambiguity of certain explanations and distract the attention of scientists who are accustomed to rely on symbolic argument. Moreover, in many cases it will be more efficient to investigate *why* and *how* the words are used; in other words, to consider the circumstances and the influences of environment under which acts of communication are performed, rather than the communication itself (*symptomatical signification of an act of communication*). The study of non-verbal responses to non-verbal or verbal stimuli, the investigation of which requires a special technique, therefore forms an integral part of the signific program.

In this chapter we have tried to summarize the empirical and critical tendencies of the signific movement and to indicate the similarities and differences of these tendencies with regard to those of some related critical movements. Present-day significists acknowledge the necessity of devoting their attention in addition to concept and content analysis, to the improvement of the means of understanding in use, both in science and in daily life. They do not deem the analytic method to be of less importance than before, but the synthetic application of the signific principles to the various 'spheres of life' has come more and more to the fore. Notwithstanding its somewhat heterogeneous structure, entailing differences in accentuation which tend to guard against one-sidedness, the signific movement strives after unity of method and the cultivation of attitudes of thought such as will tend to unity.

5. *Historical development*

The term 'significs' was introduced by Lady Victoria Welby to denote 'the study of the nature of Significance in all its forms and thus of its working in every possible sphere of human interest and purpose.'⁴⁴ In an article, 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,' that was published in the British journal *Mind* in 1896, in her book *What is Meaning?* (1903) and in her monograph *Significs and Language* (1911) she advocated a psychological and sociological investigation of the concepts which at that time dominated in philosophic and scientific discussions. Although she made use herself of a rather vague terminology, yet there are to be found in her writings, apart from their tendency, some ideas which have strongly influenced and stimulated the activities of scientists in western Europe who in the early years of the twentieth century were impressed by the uncritical use of linguistic means in science and philosophy. The following examples taken from her above-mentioned book may be characteristic of her point of view:

There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as the Sense of a word, but only the sense in which it is used – the circumstances, state of mind, reference, 'universe of discourse' belonging to it. The Meaning of a word is the intent which it is desired to convey – the intention of the user. The Significance is always manifold, and intensifies its sense as well as its meaning, by expressing its importance, its appeal to us, its moment for us, its emotional force, its ideal value, its moral aspect, its universal or at least social range. (p. 6)

It must be remembered that Significs implies in more than one 'sense' a careful distinction between sense, meaning and significance... From this point of view, the reference of sense is mainly instinctive, of meaning volitional, and of significance moral; we have a sense of discomfort, a thing is true in a certain sense, we mean (i.e. intend) to do something, and we speak of some event, 'the significance of which cannot be overrated. (p. 46)

44. *Significs and Language*, Preface.

These notions of 'sense,' 'meaning' and 'significance' were, somewhat liberally, interpreted by the Dutch jurist and significist Jacob Israël de Haan in his doctorate thesis on Juridical Significs and its Application to the notions 'liable, responsible, accountable' (1916). In 1896 a prize was offered by Lady Welby for the best treatise upon the following subject: 'The causes of the present obscurity and confusion in psychological and philosophical terminology, and of the directions in which we may hope for efficient practical remedy.' The donor of the prize desired that general regard be had to classification of the various modes in which a word or other sign may be said to possess 'meaning,' and to corresponding differences of methods in the conveyance or interpretation of 'meaning.' The committee of award would consider the practical utility of the work submitted to them as of primary importance.

The prize was awarded to F. Tönnies, professor at Kiel, for his 'Philosophische Terminologie in psychologisch-soziologischer Ansicht,' in which he showed the mainly subjective character of the usual philosophical terms and advocated the foundation of an international organization for critical studies. Although Lady Welby died before the journal *Mind* organized a 'symposium' on the 'meaning of 'meaning' about 1920, it may be said that her views have largely contributed to paving the way for this semantic and epistemologic approach to linguistic phenomena.

The Dutch psychiatrist, author, and poet Frederik van Eeden would become the connecting link between Lady Welby and the later significists in the Netherlands. At a psychological and psychiatric congress at London in 1892 he had insisted on a clarification of meaning, and this pleading for an investigation of the concepts used in psychology and other fields of science induced Lady Welby to get in touch with him. A series of epistemologic studies, to which belongs a remarkable essay on the 'logical foundation of mutual understanding,' in which the principle of gradualness was applied and a distinction was made between the volitive, emotive and indicative content of fundamental terms and concepts, was written by Van Eeden during the years 1893–1897. Statements like 'The words of mathematics are pure symbols' and 'Physical science aims at ordering and connecting our sense perceptions,' occurring in the above essay, anticipate the development of the signific approach to the foundations of mathematics and physics in a relativistic and psychological direction.

The first *group* of people concerned with significs in the Netherlands met during the first World War in 1915, under the startling impression of the misleading slogans with which this war was waged and against which there seemed to exist no other remedy but general philosophical reflexion, which as a matter of course had to be initiated in a neutral country.⁴⁵ With that object in view a committee was formed. During its deliberations differences as to the plan of action became accentuated, in the end leading to a schism. The majority founded the *International School for Philosophy* at Amersfoort; the minority thought that durable humanizing of mankind could only be attained if in the first place, besides material, also *spiritual forces and values* could be introduced into mutual understanding in an indicative and objective mode, notwithstanding their poetical and emotional origin.

This minority hoped to obtain results in the desired direction by the foundation of an *International Academy for Practical Philosophy and Sociology*. In a prospectus the following task was assigned to this Academy:

1. To coin words of spiritual value for the languages of western nations and thus make those spiritual values enter into their mutual understanding (what could be called a 'déclaration des valeurs spirituelles de la vie humaine.'
2. To detect and combat such elements in the present system of law and in the productive activity growing under its protection, as chiefly repress or dim spiritual tendencies, and to propose appropriate limitations for the sphere of influence of law and technics.

45. See also L. E. J. Brouwer, 'Synopsis of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands,' *Synthese* 5 (4/5) [Now Section 7.9., this volume].

3. To point out and brand those words of the principal languages, which falsely suggest spiritual tendencies for ideas ultimately originating in the desire for material safety and comfort, and in so doing to purify and to correct the aims of democracy towards a universal commonwealth with exclusively administrative function.

In the prospectus this task is further explained in the following way:

The undersigned are well aware of the fact that such a task as assigned by them to the International Academy for Practical Philosophy and Sociology has been taken up several times by philosophers individually. However, they are convinced that precisely in consequence of the individual character of the work of those philosophers their words could be efficient only for memorizing the expressed thoughts in the minds of the writer and his isolated readers, but never could find a place in the mutual understanding of the multitude and therefore had only a slight social influence.

They hold the opinion that when the same task could be undertaken in common by a group of independent thinkers with subtle and pure human feeling, their thoughts *formed in the mutual understanding of their circle*, would necessarily find a corresponding language, *allowing them to enter into the mutual understanding of the multitude*.

Finally, as regards the realization of the proposals of the Academy, it must be kept in mind that a thought, in its quality of embryonic deed, has a far greater possibility of development when it is the common intimate conviction of a group of human beings than in the case of its belonging to one individual only, however courageous that individual may be and however numerous the company of half-understanding followers who surround him.

One of the signers was Frederik van Eeden; the other signers were the mathematician L. E. J. Brouwer, the sinologist and man of letters Henri Borel, and the social worker H. P. J. Bloemers (later on burgomaster of Groningen and Arnhem). Soon after, this group was joined by the mathematician G. Mannoury, the physicist L.S. Ornstein, and by Jacob Israël de Haan. The group of seven thus formed founded an *International Institute for Philosophy*, aiming at a 'revision of the values of the elements of life of individual and community' and trying to attain this aim by

- a. establishing and supporting an International Academy for Practical Philosophy and Sociology;
- b. establishing and supporting a school for the propagation of the concepts and relations of concepts as introduced by the Academy;
- c. other means.

The primordial task of the Academy was intended to be the composing of a new vocabulary on the basis of a linguistic gradation, an item for which we may refer to the first section of the present monograph.

A number of thinkers were invited to take part in the activities of the Academy – among them were Peano, Buber, Mauthner and Tagore – but soon it became evident that even for the constituent assembly of the Academy financial resources failed.

The only thing left was the continuing of the personal exchange of thought of the founders, which led to the forming of a *signific circle* in 1922, consisting of Brouweeer, Van Eeden, the linguist Jac. van Ginneken (later on professor in the university of Nimeguen) and G. Mannoury. This *Signific Circle* proclaimed in their declaration of principles *a. o.* that *signific* contains more than criticism of language, also more than synthesis of language, and that in opening a deeper insight into the connections between words and the needs and tendencies of the soul, it may affect in a wholesome way the future social and mental conditions of man. But apart from this, it emphasized the *empirical* tendencies of the *signific* investigation by adding that this investigation should be carried on more systematically than before and include, besides an introspective investigation into the subconscious elements, the application of experimental and statistical methods.

The *Signific Circle* for some years met regularly, and the discussions held were highly instructive to its members. Mannoury kept an accurate account, a small part of which was printed later on (and published in Dutch in the '*Synthese-Series*' in 1939). In the meantime, in 1923, there had been issued by the same circle a circular requesting cooperation for a revision of the nomenclature in various branches of science.

After the cessation of the activities of the *Signific Circle* in 1924, the signific methodology was not practised by groups until 1937. During this period G. Mannoury, professor of mathematics and of philosophy of mathematics in the University of Amsterdam, also gave courses of lectures on significs, and made a special study of the signific foundations of mathematics. (Cf. his article on 'Die signifischen Grundlagen der Mathematik,' *Erkenntnis* IV, 1934, the French translation of which was published in the *Collection Synthese* in 1947). Van Dantzig, too, gave lectures on significs in this period.

In 1937 the *International Group for the Study of Significs* was founded on the initiative of the Editorial Board of the journal *Synthese*. Some of the editors of this journal were attached to the older significists by personal ties of friendship, and through this were familiar with the aims of this movement. Moreover, the program of this journal, aiming at giving expression to a divergent system of intellectual integration, naturally brought the group into contact with the signific views. *Mannoury* himself was one of the founders of the new and renewed circle.

Until the second World War the *International Group for the Study of Significs* continued its activities on an international scale. It characterized its main objective as

The practising of analytic and synthetic significs in general, and its application to the theories of the foundations of the sociological, cultural, political and exact sciences in particular.

The working method of the group was as follows: the signific principles and the method to be applied were discussed in a 'central section.' In this section were also representatives of the 'border-groups,' including sections for biology, psychology, general epistemology, ethics and jurisprudence.

During the last year of the German occupation of the Netherlands, where the main seat of the group was located, the work of the *International Group for the Study of Significs* had to be abandoned altogether, but soon after the end of the war it was resumed, though by partly different contributors. The *International Society for Significs* was founded by representatives of both the exact and the social sciences.

The new program pursues theoretical as well as more practical aims; it continues the research into the theories of the foundations of science and aims at the building up of an efficient scientific terminology; furthermore it promotes the empirical study of group languages (content analysis, slogan analysis, bias analysis, etc.).⁴⁶

In 1937 a regular exchange of views and publications was planned with movements characteristic of a critical attitude towards linguistic phenomena, and especially with the *Unity of Science Movement*, with whom we may also reckon the Warsaw School (Lukasiewicz, Kotarbinski, Lesniewski, Tarski, Ajdukiewicz, Chwistek, and some others). In a special section of the journal *Synthese*, called 'Unity of Science Forum,' conducted by Philipp Frank, Charles W. Morris and Otto Neurath, leading logical empiricists have explained their views on a renewed criticism of language. Since 1948 Philipp Frank and Charles Morris have been the editors of a section in *Synthese* under the heading 'Logical Empiricism,' in which a series of papers have been and will be published which treat Logical Empiricism as a phenomenon in the intellectual history of the 20th century.

46. Part of the activities of the *International Society for Significs* have been described in Section III of this monograph.

For some years papers on sociological subjects have been prepared for publication in *Synthese* by the *Institute Français de Sociologie* at Paris, counting among their members sociologists who are taking an active part in the activities of the Significs Society.

In the Spring 1948 issue of *ETC.*, a review of *General Semantics*, the editors announced the institution of regular correspondence with the *International Society for Significs*, and expressed the hope that this exchange will lead to cooperative editorial and research activities between the *International Society for General Semantics* and the *International Society for Significs*. In the course of these five years fruitful discussions on sign problems have resulted from this cooperation.

Every year the *International Society for Significs* organizes an international conference dealing with problems on criticism of language and the relation between language and behavior. The *Eighth International Signific Summer Conference* was held in September 1952 and was devoted to the study of 'Non-scientific elements in the development of science.' The proceedings of these conferences and also some of the reports of the sections of the Society are printed in *Synthese*.

Glossary

This glossary includes only some of the main terms used in the text of the present monograph. It aims to facilitate the reading of this text by giving a definition of those terms which are or might be used in a somewhat other acceptation in other theories of signs. Most of the terms are also defined in the text. The monograph being written in conversational language, the concepts employed are by far not defined in signfic terms. In the definitions given below vernacular terms operate as primitive terms.

Act of communication. In a wider sense: an act by which one individual or a group of individuals (the 'speaker') aims at influencing the behavior of another individual or group of individuals (the 'hearer'); in a narrower sense: the linguistic behavior characterized by the use of word-language, either spoken or written or denoted by signals.

Analytic significs. See *Significs*.

Concept. Psychic correlate of a class of words having a similar function or tendency.

Dispersion. Variability of the signification of an act of communication with regard to different individuals or to one individual under emotive or environmental influences. (Intersubjective and intrasubjective dispersion.)

Functional elements. Elements of the active and passive signification, to be distinguished in *indicative*, *emotive* and *volitive* elements, according as they bear upon the representations, the 'distribution of affection' and the intention of speaker and hearer.

Hearer. See *Act of communication*.

Language. In a wider sense: the procedures by which one mind may affect another; in a narrower sense: the vocal and auditive means of communication.

Psychic correlate. Mental associations connected with a word-picture or a group of word-pictures.

Signification. In a wider sense (the signification of an act of communication): the influence aimed at by the speaker and which the hearer undergoes (active and passive signification), and also the environmental influences affecting the act of communication (symptomatic signification); in a narrower sense (signification of a word): the function of a word or an expression in the act of communication in which this word or this expression is used.

Significs. Systematic study of the mental and linguistic phenomena of communication, to be distinguished in *Analytic significs*, being the psychological investigation of the existing means of communication, and *Synthetic significs*, aiming at extending and improving the means of communication in use.

Speaker. See *Act of communication*.

Synthetic significs. See *Significs*.

Word-image. The mental associations connected with the *Word-picture* hearing, the reading, the pronouncing or the writing down of a word (auditive, visual, and motorial word-picture).

Bibliography

I. BOOKS AND ARTICLES

The following list of books and articles dealing with psychologically and logically oriented concept analysis and concept synthesis is far from being complete. In this selection the reader will be able to find a more detailed discussion of the fundamental problems referred to in the monograph. The publications that are starred have been the subject of study and discussion in one or more of the sections of the *International Society for Significs*.

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II. REPORTS

Reports on the discussions on epistemological, logical, mathematical, biological, psychological and sociological subjects held in the various sections of the *Society*. These mimeographed reports are for the greater part written in Dutch, but some of them have been published in English in the journal *Synthese*.

Published in separate form: *Provisional Report on an Inquiry into the Usage of Some Political Terms in the Netherlands*, 1948. This inquiry was instituted on the request of Unesco.

III. COLLECTIONS OF ARTICLES AND DISCUSSIONS

1. *Communications of the International Institute for Philosophy at Amsterdam*, I, March 1918. II, March 1919. Gröningen: P. Noordhoff. Members of the Managing Committee of the Institute were G. Mannoury, President; L. E. J. Brouwer, Secretary; Henri Borel, Frederik van Eeden.
2. *De uitdrukkingwijze der wetenschap* (Ways of Expression of Science). A series of lectures on epistemological subjects held at the University of Amsterdam during the academic year

1932–1933 by L. E. J. Brouwer, J. Clay, A. de Hartog, G. Mannoury, H. J. Pos, G. Révész, J. Tinbergen and J. Van der Waals. Jr. Gröningen: P. Noordhoff. 1933.

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5. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Significal Summer Conference. Synthese VIII*, 3–5. 1950–1951. Bussum: F. G. Kroonder.

IV. SYNTHESE

Synthese, An International Journal for the Logical and Psychological Study of the Foundations of Science, comprising Communications of the *Institute for the Unity of Science*, *International Society for Significals*, *Institut Français de Sociologie* and of the French and Dutch Sections of the *International Association for Logic and the Philosophy of Science*. General Editorial Committee: J. Clay (Amsterdam), P. H. Esser (Bennebroek), Philipp Frank (Cambridge, Mass.), J. C. L. Godefroy (Amsterdam), B. H. Kazemier (The Hague), W. M. Kruseman (Deventer), Arne Naess (Oslo), Chr. P. Raven (Utrecht), D. Vuysje (Amsterdam), N. Westendorp Boerma (Amsterdam), J. H. Woodger (London). Publisher: F. G. Kroonder, Bussum (Netherlands).

V. SYNTHESE SERIES

A series of book on logical, (psycho-) linguistic and psychological subjects.

1. *Signifische dialogen* (Signific Dialogues). By L. E. J. Brouwer, Fred. Van Eeden, Jac. Van Ginneken S. J. and G. Mannoury. Utrecht: J. Bijleveld, 1939.
2. Bochenski, O. P., I. M.: *Précis de Logique Mathématique*. Bussum: F. G. Kroonder, 1948.
3. Mannoury, G.: *Les Fondements psycho-linguistiques des Mathématiques*. Bussum: F. G. Kroonder; Neuchâtel: Editions du Griffon, 1947.

7.14. 'Semantic and signific aspects of modern theories of communication,' by Gerrit Mannoury and David Vuysje*

1. Introduction

In his book *Introduction to Semantics*, published in 1942, Rudolf Carnap has distinguished three fields of investigation of languages. He assigns to the field of *pragmatics* that investigation in which reference is made to the speaker (or to the user of a language) and to the field of *semantics* the analysis of the expressions and their designata abstracted from the user of the language (we would ask: what does it mean to say in this connection: abstracted from the user?). The third field of the science of signs, which he calls in accordance with Charles Morris *syntactics* is an abstraction from the designata and refers to an analysis of the relations between the expressions.

It may be known to you (or to some of you) that already Otto Neurath raised objections to this distinction and to the use of the three terms, which, according to him, easily lead to pseudo-problems and distract attention from genuine problems.

We share these objections arguing that these terms give no warrant for their utilization as a classification of kinds of signs ('pragmatical signs,' 'semantical signs,' 'syntactical signs') and that such extension of their signification may blur the distinction between signs in various *modes of signifying* and the *signs* which make up pragmatics, semantics, and syntactics conceived as the three divisions of semiotic.

* [Originally published in 1953 in the journal *Synthese* 9 (3/4): 147–156].

You may also be aware that a later acceptance of the terms by Morris has led to a considerable enlargement when the terms are so conceived that they are all interpretable within, what Morris calls, a behaviorally oriented semiotic; in this acceptance, semiotic studies the signification of signs, and so the *interpretant behavior* without which there is no *signification*. Pragmatics studies the origin, uses, and effects of signs *within the total behavior of the interpreters of signs*. The difference lies therefore *not* in the presence or absence of behavior but in the *sector of behavior under consideration*. The *full* account of signs will *involve all three considerations*. And, indeed, Morris' later elaborations of his theory of signs have emphasized the unity of semiotic rather than break each problem into its pragmatical, semantical and syntactical components.

We have dwelt upon these conceptions not only to point out the similarity of some with those developed in signfic studies, but also to stress the objections which may be raised to the detachment of a semantic system from the sign user, or, in other words, to the considering of the semantic components of a language system as *isolated* factors.

It may be clear that this conception of semantics refers to the *cognitive usage* of language, i.e., a usage of language for the purpose of making (so-called) true statements, 'truth' being a characteristic relation between signs and objects. But it may also be obvious that this conception leaves important aspects of language out of consideration. Even the *inductive rules*, in which 'truth' is replaced by a probability, can be assigned to the field of the cognitive usage of language.

From the outset signfic writings have laid stress on the *instrumental* use of language, on the aims of influencing the listener, or reader, or, more generally speaking, the 'hearer' (in the signfic sense of the word), for certain purposes intended by the 'speaker.' The speaker has the *intention* of making the listener believe what he says.

Within the scope of signfic studies the study of the instrumental usage therefore takes a prominent place, and that in its three forms: in its *communicative* aspects representing a form of conveying information to the listener; in its *suggestive* aspects, i.e., the use of language with the intention of arousing in the listener certain *emotions*, or of determining him to assume certain *volitional* attitudes, and in its *promotive* aspects: the use of language having the purpose of inducing the 'hearer' to perform certain actions.

According to a current conception, the instrumental usage falls into a category to which the predicates 'true' and 'false' do not apply. For these predicates express a semantical relation, namely, a relation between signs and objects; but since instrumental usage falls into pragmatics, i.e., includes the sign user, it cannot be judged as true or false. It will result from the last part of this paper how we have faced the truth problem. We only wish to add here that the *operational* aspects of instrumental usage have not always been studied in the way which, in our view, it deserves, and that some statements are accepted by a certain person at a certain time and not accepted by the same person at another time.

2. The semantic approach

After this short introduction we will try to face these views with more recent developments of the theory of *semantic* information, on the one hand, analyzing the semantic approach in its present form, on the other hand, trying to outline a theory in which the instrumental use of language will also be taken into account. We therefore will first give a short survey of the theory of semantic information, as it has been presented by Carnap and Bar-Hillel.

The mathematical theory of communication, which has been termed a theory of selective information, measures symbols but is not interested in the symbols it measures. These symbols have nothing to do with what these symbols symbolize. In a study on semantic information, Carnap and Bar-Hillel write that it often turns out that 'impatient scientists in various fields applied the terminology and the theorems of Communication Theory to fields in which the term "information" was used presystematically in a semantic sense, or even in a pragmatic sense.' In our opinion, this

tendency *may* point to a natural and sound development, the more so as scientifically founded theories of signs deal with part of the problems with which theories of information are concerned.

We fully share their opinion that the semantic concept of information will serve as a better approximation for some future explication of a psychological concept of information than the concept dealt with in Communication Theory. From the beginning, however, the question may be raised whether and how far a theory of semantic information, as outlined by them, and bearing on rather restricted language systems, will hold for the languages of, what they call, full-fledged sciences.

It lies outside the scope of this paper to compare or to review the several approaches to an extension of a theory of semantic information, but we wish to stress the significance, for certain purposes, of a restriction to language systems of rigidly defined structures, so that any proposition expressible in one of these languages is indeed specifiable 'out of an ensemble of preconceived possibilities.' In many cases – and this, as said already, depends on the aims to be pursued – such limited systems are by far to be preferred to the unsystemized language of science with an unspecified number of primitive predicates or families of such, but certainly not in other cases. 'Against a gain in vigor stands a serious loss of closeness to actual scientific procedure,' said Bar-Hillel himself.

From the above you will understand that we are aiming at a theory in which the *process of functionalizing* ordinary language is of relevance and which to a certain extent belongs to the field which has been termed: language engineering, or language technology. It is that part of the communicative process which is concerned with the messages themselves, with individual messages, and also with problems on the affected conduct of the receiver, in short with what Weaver has called the semantic (this term does not coincide with that of Carnap) and the effectiveness problem. It is the language engineer who is confronted with problems of theoretical linguistics, psychology, logic and semantics.

We think that for the information theoretician who is interested in the semantic approach to the theory a clarification of the concepts of information will be an important task. He then is concerned with the contents of symbols which will be decisively involved in the definition of the basic concepts of his theory and an application of these concepts and of the theorems concerning them to fields involving semantics.

Carnap and Bar-Hillel have followed the procedure to define the fundamental concepts of their theory on the basis of the theory of inductive probability which has been developed by Rudolf Carnap these last years. Although, in a recent review (in the journal *Synthese*) of Carnap's book on the logical foundations of probability, Van Dantzig raised objections to the foundation of probability theory on a given language system and to the foundation of inductive logic on probability theory, we, in this connection, aim only at reproducing their system without other comment than that bearing on the problems of information under consideration.

The language system contains a finite number of individual constants which stand for individuals (things, events, or propositions) and a finite number of primitive one-place predicates which designate primitive properties of the individuals. In an atomic statement a primitive property is asserted to hold for an individual. Statements formed out of one or more of the atomic statements with the help of the usual connectives (negation, disjunction, implication, etc.) are molecular statements. With the help of these tools numerical statements can be formed and absolute frequencies (cardinal numbers of classes or properties) and relative frequencies can be expressed in them. Any sentence is either logically true or logically false or factual (logically indeterminate).

Let us now consider the fundamental concepts of information and amount of information, as they are presented in this theory, and let us compare their definitions with those introduced by MacKay in his theory of Scientific Information. It is, of course, not our intention to anticipate the considerations of other speakers at this Conference, and we therefore will take from their publication only those definitions and basic concepts which we need to clarify our own viewpoint.

We fully share their opinion that the concept of semantic information – in *their* sense – has intrinsically nothing to do with communication (in the sense of Shannon f.i.), and it will be clear that a proposition may carry a certain amount of information *independently* of whether a statement to this effect is ever transmitted (e.g. it is raining to day).

Leaving aside their conception of an ‘ideal’ receiver with a perfect memory, ‘who “knows” all of logic and mathematics,’ we may mention in this connection that Carnap and Bar-Hillel intend to explicate the presystematic concept of information, insofar as it is applied to sentences and inasmuch as it is ‘abstracted from the pragmatic conditions of its use’ (you understand, of course, that we reproduce here their own terminology). They then define, on the basis of the systematic concept of semantic information, various explicata for the presystematic concept (or concepts) of amount of semantic information, and investigate their adequacy and applicability. The language in which they talk about their language-systems (their metalanguage) makes use of some customary terms and symbols of the theory of classes (or sets). It is not our aim to reproduce, or to explain to you, *at large* their technique, but it may suffice to say that by means of these tools they make distinctions, so e.g. that between absolute and relative information on the presystematic level. It would be possible to begin with the relative information as primitive and define the absolute information as the value of the relative information with respect to a logical truth sentence, or, which is a simpler procedure, to begin with the concept of the absolute information (because it has only one argument).

The same procedure has been followed with regard to the concept ‘amount of information.’ A distinction is made between the absolute and the relative amount of information, the latter being definable on the basis of the absolute amount of information. Therefore it is sufficient to state only the requirements with respect to the absolute amount.

What matters is that the *information* carried by a sentence is treated as a class of something, and as synonymous with the content of this sentence, and that the concept of *amount of semantic information* is explicated by various measures of this content all based on *logical probability* functions ranging over the contents. In this presentation the theory may be regarded as a certain ramification of Carnap’s Theory of Inductive Probability. It does not deal, however, with what has been termed by Weaver the semantic problem of communication which is ‘concerned with the identity, or close approximation in the interpretation of meaning by the receiver, as compared with the intended meaning of the sender.’

The results obtained by Carnap and Bar-Hillel are therefore of restricted value, also with regard to language systems complex enough to serve as possible languages of science. It is the theory of Scientific Information which aims at meeting other requirements.

In his paper on the ‘Nomenclature of Information Theory’ MacKay points out the value of ‘operational definition’ (i.e., according to MacKay, a definition in terms of what it does, or, in Bridgman’s terminology, a definition whose concepts cover a certain set of operations). This conception may bridge the gap between the semantic and the significant approach, for which the semantic problem (in the sense of Weaver): ‘How precisely do the transmitted symbols convey the desired meaning?’ and the effectiveness problem: ‘How effectively does the received meaning affect conduct in the desired way?’ are of paramount importance.

In order to avoid misinterpretations, we think it advisable to distinguish linguistic levels at which the term ‘information’ is employed, and we would prefer some distinctions different from those made by Warren Weaver. For what he calls the semantic level includes, as we have seen, another interpretation than that which has been accepted by e.g. Carnap and Bar-Hillel, whereas the latter concept of information can, as far as we see, hardly be expressed in terms of representation, the basic concept of MacKay’s theory of scientific information. Perhaps a leveling based on the number and the nature of word connections, on the one hand, and the number and kinds of operations, on the other hand, would prove to be useful, provided the words of each level imply acquaintance only with those of the preceding levels. It will be obvious that in such a gradation the term ‘selective information,’ the expression ‘semantic information’ (in the sense of

Carnap), 'structural information' (in the sense of MacKay), 'metrical information' (in the sense of MacKay), belong to different levels. We do not purpose subjecting these concepts to a further analysis here.

3. *The signfic approach*

The signfic approach, on the analytic side, refers to an investigation of the communicative process in its various aspects, but from a synthetic point of view it is concerned with the construction of language systems meeting special requirements and purposes. In its general acceptation signfics, like semiotic, is a theory or a science of signs, and we fully agree with Charles Morris, when he says: 'in general it is more important to keep in mind the field of semiotic as a whole, and to bring to bear upon specific problems all that is relevant to their solution.' We will not speak here about the analogies and the differences between semiotic and signfics, differences resulting to a high degree from a difference in historical tradition.

Let us return again to information and communication theory, which these recent years have passed so an impetuous development. Originating from purely technical problems, entailed by the need for a more rapid and factual communication: improvement of the telegraphy (wireless or not), television, code systems, etc., it at first was concerned with the removal of mutilated or deliberately concealed messages (cryptography) and gradually has faced more profound problems like that concerning the foundation and the structure of our cognitive knowledge and that of the analysis of these phenomena, and, in doing so, has entered the domain of psycho-linguistic and epistemological investigations (phonology, cybernetics, etc.).

A rather opposite tendency reveals the genesis of modern methods of investigation in the field of language analysis (logical syntax, semantics, signfics, studies of the foundations of Science). For these disciplines result from the need of a deeper and clearer reflection on philosophical and ideological problems and have been concerned to free this reflection from pseudo-judgments and pseudo-problems following from an uncritical usage. In this way they, too, were induced to study communication problems in general, and the means of communication in particular, and to aim at a more scientific, intersubjective, way of expression.

These, so to say, opposite tendencies have found, however, a common sphere of action, open to a fruitful exchange of obtained results and applied procedures. Such an exchange requires acquaintance of the methods and theories of the two disciplines and a confrontation of same.

We think that the existing theories on mathematical communication could be amplified by (1) an analysis of these theories and (2) a quantitative theory of understanding. We are aware that there are writings on semantic information which insist on an analysis of terms like sign, signal, signal sequence, information, amount of information, etc. These investigations, when carried out, could be supplemented by signfic investigations, not only of terms like 'information,' 'communication,' and their word-family, but also of those terms which take a prominent place in the definitions and extensions of concepts, like 'influencing,' 'probability,' 'increase and decrease of entropy,' 'living and lifeness nature,' etc.

A signfic analysis of these terms (i.e., a comparative investigation into the ordinary and scientific usage in connection with the aims and effects of the acts of communication involved) will reveal the dualistic character of most of the statements in which these terms occur. They belong to what has been termed 'mixed language,' i.e., to the type of language prevailing in ordinary language, in which elements taken from the causality-terminology (the id-language) and the finality-terminology (the I-language) are often inextricably interwoven.

An example may be taken from the theory of probability, underlying any generalization of the concept of information, in which the formulations of the frequency-theory belonging to the it-language are often identified with those of the terminology of expectations belonging to the I-language. This may easily lead to a procedure by which the only roughly-approximative analogy

between the positiveness of our expectations and the frequency of our experiences bearing on corresponding sequences is drawn too far. In this cast one speaks of a more or less 'probable' or 'chaotic' state or situation without considering the fact that the concept 'relative frequency' can never be applied independently (e.g. the arranging of a deck of cards according to suits and value, which is not less 'relative frequent,' but much more 'astonishing' than any other permutation caused 'by chance').

The confusion rooting deeply in the usage of ordinary language of the (anthropocentric) distinction of 'phenomena of nature' and 'phenomena of life' with that of more or less *rough* and more or less *detailed* observations may be likewise reduced to the same kind of dualistic pseudo-judgments.

To the above-mentioned signfic analysis also belongs the tracing of the measurable properties of observations and perceptions, an investigation which should be and, as much as possible by hetero-psychological, i.e. behavioristic procedures. The measurability should therefore be sought in the *responses* of individuals or groups to the *stimuli* received by them (information in a wider or in a more limited sense). Attention should be paid to the *effectiveness*, the *intersubjectivity*, and the *parcellizability* (division into parcels) of the information received.

As for the mathematizing of the concept of this theory of *understanding* a differentiation of the usual truth sign should be introduced in proportions to the group who accepts a certain judgement A, B, etc.) and in proportion to the 'speaker' (sender) or the 'hearer' (receiver) (-|or|-). More than hitherto the study of phenomena like syntagmatical connections and syntactic gradations could make use of symbolic notations and arithmetic methods.

How far from a signfic point of view the important distinction of *indicative*, *emotive*, *volitive*, and *symptomatic* functional elements will be accessible to symbolizing and arithmetizing is difficult to predict and will be dependent on the differentiations underlying the concept of information to be applied, but the tendency to make use more and more of experimental and statistical methods, revealing itself in the field of 'mass communication' (newspaper report, political declarations, scientific discoveries, etc.) will imply further studies of information theory aiming at establishing exact distinctions between, what Metzemaekers has called, 'information' and 'interpretation.'

Finally, we should wish to make some remarks about the relation of information theory and *applied* theory of probability. 'Information' and 'probability' may be conceived as complementary concepts, i.e., as concepts bearing on the same factual contents, but on a different point of view. For both concepts start from the 'comparability' or 'similarity' of a certain event (change of situation) with a group of events preceding it. In distinction to the probabilistic view, referring to the occurrence of events in the future, the informational view points to events belonging to the past. Since, however, this distinction does not bear on the event itself, but only on the point of view of the sign user, the mutual relation of both theories is essentially of a psychological nature (opposition of 'expectation' and 'recollection'). Therefore, the removal of the still existing terminological difficulties, inherent to the theories of the foundations of these disciplines, can, in our opinion, be expected of a further formalizing and mathematizing of psychological theories.

It goes without saying that this consideration is of no relevance so long as we are dealing with a calculus of information – in which case we would prefer to speak of relative frequency instead of probability – but only if we are concerned with its *application*.

Neither the concept of semantic information – a *logical* concept – nor the concept of effective information (in our sense) – a *metrical* concept – should be identified with the concept of communication in the sense of Shannon, 'the semantic aspects of communication' being 'irrelevant to the engineering problem.' Both the semantic approach (in its various acceptations) and the signfic approach as such are not concerned with a concept of information in which the amount of information contained in a message is determined only as a function of the numbers of symbols used in the text. The latter approach aims, besides at a clarification of the fundamental concepts of

the theory, at tracing the measurable elements even of phenomena which are generally regarded as immeasurable. It approaches MacKay's conception of metrical information, but we have not employed this term, since our conception does not bear only on 'logical elements in a group or pattern,' according to MacKay's definition and is not restricted to the application to scientific language,' when labeling our approach. By introducing operational definitions, MacKay has paved the way to an extension of the axiomatic-semantic theory in a more effective direction. Whether his fundamental concepts will prove to be useful, is not only a theoretical but also a practical question.

We do hope that this Conference may contribute not only to purify and to unify the terminology employed in the broad field of information theory, but also to indicate the relationship between the existing theories which, by different means, pursue similar aims.

7.15. 'Significs in the Netherlands. A general survey'*

The very beginning of signific thinking is difficult, if not impossible, to trace, as it gradually entered into some of the sciences. As far back as 1896 the British philosophical and cultural journal *Mind* published an article entitled 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation' by Lady Welby, who pioneered a movement to 'tighten discipline of thought and expression.' In 1903 *Mind* carried another article from her hand on 'What is Meaning.' It was presumably Lady Welby who first used the term 'significs' (refer to *Significs and Language*, 1911). Today the term psycho-linguistics is more commonly used.

In the Netherlands a small group of scientists and literary people, around 1915, impressed by the flow of misleading war slogans and the resulting pseudo-problems felt the urge to examine the effect of language on thought, feeling and behavior. They set out to systematically investigate the means of human communication and so the Netherlands Signific Movement was born. It did not represent any particular school of thought. Its aim was to initiate critical thinking on the usage and meaning of language.

Among the innovators of critical thinking in the Netherlands was Professor I. J. De Bussy (*Moral Judgements*, 1915). His theories were to be republished in 1939 by his pupil N. Westendorp Boerma and J. Maarse under the title *De Wetenschap der Moraal* (= The Science of Morals).

In 1919 the two Netherlands mathematicians L. E. I. Brouwer and Gerrit Mannoury, the sinologist Henri Borel and the writer Frederik Van Eeden issued a statement in which they held that language can never adequately express *truth*. The *meaning* of a word depends on the effect that is sought by the speaker or the effect it has on the hearer. They wanted to prove that the meaning of words in all language usage is relative and subject to change; that one can stabilize one's language to meet the circumstances and that stability is promoted by putting language down in print, whereby the *organization* (= connection between the meaning of a word and other words) becomes apparent when definitions are used. The *context* in which words are most commonly used form part of the organization of a language. A child learns to use language by copying and listening. Finally, a more or less fixed language pattern develops, whose *relativity* and *inconsistency* can only be discovered through observation and study. Phylogeny and ontogeny go hand in hand here.

In the historic year 1919 the members of the Netherlands Signific Movement agreed to differentiate between five language levels, i.e.

* [Originally published in 1973 as: 'Editorial. Significs in the Netherlands. A General Survey.' *Methodology and Science* 6 (2): 41-45].

1. basic language hardly any connection between the words; but each word or word group is highly suggestive, e.g. children's and primitive language.
2. emotive language – mainly literary and poetic language, rich in contrasts.
3. functional language – mainly word combinations, language structures; words in isolation have little effect; (common everyday language and group languages, e.g. professional).
4. scientific language – subject to agreed standards of usage with regard to hypotheses and objectively observable phenomena (technical language).
5. symbolic language – axioms, postulates (mathematical logic).

In the 1920's Brouwer, Mannoury, Van Eeden and the linguist Van Ginneken regularly met to discuss linguistic problems. Another statement clamoring for purification of language and consistency in scientific terminology in the various disciplines was issued. Their aims were not realized and in 1925 the Signific Movement broke up. It was revived and renewed in 1936 around a new journal entitled *Synthese* (the present 'Methodology and Science') initiated by Mannoury and his son-in-law to be, Dr. David Vuysje, who, up to the time of his death in 1969, wrote most of the Editorials. It would seem appropriate to quote here the opening paragraph of his first Editorial in *Synthese*: 'Reality is infinitely complicated. Our thinking must penetrate into this reality, control and use it and try to subject it to simple and homogenous laws. But every abstraction forces itself on objective reality, which is never really abstract.'

In 1937 the Movement was internationalized and adopted a new name 'Internationale Signifische Studie Groep' (International Society for the Study of Significs). The new Board included J. Clay (physicist), J. C. L. Godefroy (psychiatrist), W. M. Kruseman (biologist), G. Mannoury and David Vuysje. The Group was in close contact with the Unity of Science Movement and the Warsaw School (Lukasiewicz, Tarski and others). Via 'Synthese' a *Unity of Science Forum* was organized, led by Philipp Frank, Charles W. Morris and Otto Neurath, logical empiricists who had also been clamoring for renewed criticism of language. The first *international* conference on Significs was held in 1939. In the meantime, Mannoury, professor in mathematics at the University of Amsterdam, had been giving courses on significs. Then the theories of the Polish Alfred Korzybski were introduced into the Group by P. H. Esser and R. L. Krans. Korzybski had already been giving courses on what might be termed *Applied Significs* ('Olivet Colleges') for some years at his Institute of General Semantics. His views are laid down in his main work '*Science and Sanity: an introduction to non-aristotelian systems* (1933).

The group's activities were disturbed during the German occupation but were resumed soon after the end of the second world war. In 1946 a second international conference was organized at Naarden in the Netherlands. In 1948 the Group became a foundation and adopted the name 'Internationaal Signifisch Studie Genootschap.' Aside from an international public relations section, which housed the foreign members, the foundation had epistemological, ethical-judicial, biological, business economics and publicity sections, which met separately. Accounts of the eight summer conferences held at 's-Graveland and Amersfoort were subsequently published in *Synthese*. In the meantime Professor Mannoury had published his handbook on Analytic Significs (*Handboek der Analytische Significa*) in two volumes, in 1947–48, F. C. Kroonder. His *Polair Psychologische Begripssynthese* followed in 1953. Excerpts from the Handbook in English translation appeared in *Methodology and Science*, Volumes 2 and 3, 1969 and 1970; copies of which are still available.

In a central group the Netherlands Significists discussed the foundations of science and their methodology. Meetings would often be attended by representatives from border disciplines. Psychiatrists, for example, were interested in the study of the habits of speech and the differences in this respect between 'healthy' people and the 'mentally ill.' They studied their psycho-logical

reactions and disclosed pseudo-problems. Group languages were also studied, whereby the so-called *transformation* and *exhaustion* methods were used to gain an insight into the *spread of acceptance* of a term and the *code character* of group languages. It was recognized that common language in everyday use has a mixed character, as is brought out by translation of the introspective I-language into the 'It' language used by the exact sciences. Philipp Frank, Moritz Schlick and other logical empiricists have repeatedly stressed the importance of the relativity and quantum theories in *purifying* terminology. For example, the problem of *absolute* motion was recognized as a *pseudo-problem* caused by *faulty* terminology, since every motion is relative.

The signfic or empirical method is based on observation. It seeks to penetrate into the psychological background of linguistic behavior and observes the effects of language on speaker and hearer. Instead of assigning a more or less fixed meaning to a word, it pays more attention to the associations that are evoked by *speaking and hearing* (word-thought associations). The science of word meanings (semantics) gradually leads toward establishing the meanings of *linguistic acts* (significs). The objective of Significs is not to fix language concepts, but to investigate the shades of language gradations. It is informative, not normative. Concepts are born with the help of the advances made in science.

For many years the Netherlands Significists have met at Beelslaan 20, Haarlem. Subjects discussed have ranged from information theory to cybernetics and the problems of human communication. Of the many speakers we mention: Colin Cherry: 'On Human Communication'; Broadbent: 'Categories of Words as a Factor in Attention'; H. Zandstra: 'The Pulsating Universe,' 'Faulty Perception, its Explanation and Drastic Reduction'; J. J. Broeder: 'The Current Status of the Verification Problem'; A. J. J. de Witte: 'Language and Theology'; J. Droogleever Fortuyn: 'Descriptions of the Nervous System'; Bernard Chalip: 'General Semantics'; Meyer: 'The Generative Method in Linguistics'; Max Euwe: 'Can Computers Think?'; W. H. Frijda: 'Machine-Simulation of Psychological Processes'; A. Kraak: 'Negative Sentences'; G. Mulder: 'Linschoten's Psychology'; 'The Influence of Psycho-pharmaceuticals on Electric Self-Stimulation'; Groen: 'Measuring Meaning'; J. W. H. Kalsbeek: 'Mental Burdens'; Stempel: 'Applied Linguistics'; I. Pels: 'Signifies'; Louise Kaiser: 'Phonotypology'; I. A. M. Meerlo: 'Communication and Mental Infection'; W. J. M. Levelt: 'Strategies for Understanding Sentences,' 'Recent Developments in Language.'

We will end with a quotation from one of Mannoury's lectures: 'Philosophy and Significs are interwoven with each other like speaking and hearing, thinking and understanding, and so represent two sides of the same mental process. Without a philosophic basis significs is an *unfruitful word game and without reflection on significs, philosophy is a tissue of idle dreams*. The significist and the philosopher can perhaps meet, advise and assist each other, but they can never replace each other.

July 1973

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Chapter 8

Review of the literature. Writings on Welby and significs

These things are for the younger generation! And I believe that for them a new world of significance is waiting. (Victoria Welby to Giovanni Vailati, 20 February 1903)

What matters is to be authentic and not at all to be right (*dans le vrai*), to commit oneself rather than to know. Art, love, action are more important than theory. Talent is worth more than wisdom and self-possession. (Levinas 1960, Eng. trans.: 254)

A consistent part of writings on Victoria Welby, significs, the Signific Movement in the Netherlands as well as on the connections between the latter and Welby are in Dutch. This renders them accessible to a relatively limited group of privileged readers, and is a good reason to want to learn Dutch very quickly. In the meantime one hopes that these writings find their way into more widely read languages, through scholars willing to take on the task. Some publications are also available in English, German and French (see the bibliography below, ‘On Welby, the Signific Movement and Current Developments’). Most importantly, Welby’s significs was taken up again in relatively recent times with the republication of her volumes *What is Meaning?*, 1983, and *Significs and Language*, 1985, thanks to initiatives by Achim Eschbach and H. Walter Schmitz, offering the opportunity for new developments in the interpretation of significs.

The present chapter offers a brief review of some of the literature on Welby and significs, including its developments as a movement in the Netherlands and beyond, without the least claim to exhaustiveness. Interpretations of Welby’s thought system by representatives of the Dutch signific movement, as well as by Charles K. Ogden, co-author with Ivor A. Richards of *The Meaning of Meaning*, 1923, have been presented in Chapter 7, above.

8.1. Early studies

Initially, Welby’s philosophical work was appreciated beyond the specialized field of semantics, or, more broadly, sign theory. Early reviews of Welby’s work include that by Thomas J. McCormack, of 1897, of her book *Grains of Sense*, and another by Charles S. Peirce, of 1903. Peirce associated Welby’s *What is Meaning?* with Bertrand Russell’s *The Principles of Mathematics*, both published in 1903 (see Ch. 3, above). In his review Peirce made a point of mentioning that *What is Meaning?* was authored by a woman, describing it as a ‘feminine book’ and warning against prejudicial readings oriented by a masculine point of view, that is, by a ‘too masculine mind.’ To ensure a correct understanding of Welby’s discourse he advised that the male reader go through her book after first having read Chapters XXII to XXV. Peirce appreciated Welby’s capacity

for interpreting ethnological and anthropological discourse, especially her reading of myths, as manifested in her delineation of the history of the evolution of meaning from the 'primitive mind' to the 'rational mind.' In addition to her concern for the 'ethics of language,' her signifiical approach to education, and attention for both the theoretical and practical issues connected with a 'fundamental question of logic' (what is meaning?), Peirce also evidenced the validity of her analysis of the 'three orders of signification' or 'three kinds of meaning,' which he believed partly coincided with his own tripartite analysis proposed in his essay of 1878, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear' (see *CP* 5.388–5.410). As Peirce writes,

to understand a word or formula may, in the first place, consist in such familiarity with it as will enable one to apply it correctly; or secondly, may consist in an abstract analysis of the conception or understanding of its intellectual relations to other concepts; or, thirdly, may consist in a knowledge of the possible phenomenal and practical upshot of the assertion of the concept. (Peirce 1903, now in Hardwick 1977: 159)

Another review of *What is Meaning?*, it too published in 1903 (now appended to the present chapter), is by C. S. Salmond, a scholar of mental sciences based in New Zealand. Welby's book not only addresses specialists in the language sciences, but more generally 'thinkers, scientists and educationists alike.' Salmond's overall judgment of the book is highly positive and is based on a careful reading of the text. However, in her reply (published with the review), Welby advised against reducing significs to the 'scrutiny of our means of expression,' and losing sight of the philosophical specificity of her inquiry into the 'nature and work, of sense, meaning and significance,' which was intended to further our understanding of human experience as well as show the way to rendering human practice more effective. Also, she refers to antiquity as 'the first age of the world in which the thinker or teacher is proud to complete linguistic sterility,' an age during which despite serious limits she believed that the problem of language and terminological precision was held in high account by contrast with modernity, anticipating a point of dissent in her discussions with Charles K. Ogden (see Ch. 7, above). She also draws attention to the practical commitment of significs and to the broad scope of its applicability, which includes the sciences, such as, for example, philosophy, mathematical logic, and semantics.

In his review of 1912 entitled, 'Lady Welby,' published in the *Sociological Review*, William Macdonald presented Welby as a precursor of the philosophy of Henri Bergson. From approximately 1903 onwards she in fact began investigating the problem of time systematically (see Ch. 4, above), which she considered as a derivative or as secondary with respect to space. She also systematically explored the problem of intuition or what she called 'mother-sense' (see Ch. 6, this volume). Both topics were only briefly mentioned in Welby's main theoretical publication in significs, *What is Meaning?*, in 1903. However, this volume presents issues that she had already outlined in her early papers of the 1890s. This includes, for example, her dynamical view of experience which she described in terms of motion, activity, change, rhythm, energy, function (cf. Cust 1931: 353). Welby found confirmation of her ideas in the essay by Bergson entitled, 'Introduction à la métaphysique,' of 1905. A brief review by F. Kettle of Welby's book of 1911, *Significs and Language*, also appeared in 1912 in the same issue of *The Sociological Review*.

The Meaning of Meaning, co-authored by Charles K. Ogden and Ivor A. Richards, appeared in 1923. In some ways this book continued Welby's research, though in different directions (Gordon 1991: 122). Whilst the authors recognized Welby's influence, they did not sufficiently acknowledge the importance of her work; indeed, they even attempted to minimize it. Ogden and Richards refer to Welby's meaning triad and to the comparison with Peirce's triad of interpretants (established by Peirce, see his letter to Welby dated 14 March 1909, in Hardwick 1977: 108–130; see also Ch. 3, this volume). However, they maintain that despite twenty years of reflection on the question of meaning, Welby 'may have failed to carry conviction by contenting herself with a vague insistence on Meaning as human intention' (p. 192).

In the United Kingdom, Colin Cherry drew the attention of communication experts to Welby's signifiacs in a much reprinted book of 1957 entitled, *On Human Communication*. However, on H. Walter Schmitz's account, Welby was rediscovered, thanks to research on pragmatism in general and on Peirce in particular, beginning with a book by Horace S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action. A Critical History of Pragmatism*, of 1968, and his analyses of Welby's correspondence collected in the volumes *Echoes of Larger Life* 1929, and *Other Dimensions*, 1931.

In his essay 'Signifiacs, and its Relation to Semiotics' (1948), the mathematician David van Dantzig evidenced the relevance of Welby's thought to the development of semiotics, focusing on the relation between signifiacs and Charles Morris's theory of signs.

In an essay of 1965, 'Lady Welby and Signifiacs,' N. Balasubrahmanya contextualizes studies on language, meaning and interpretation in historical terms, assigning an important place to Welby as a pioneer in this particular area of studies.

Gerrit Mannoury's essay 'A Concise History of Signifiacs' was published in the journal *Methodology and Science* in 1969 and reprinted in the new 1983 edition of Welby's book *What is Meaning?* (1903), edited by Achim Eschbach. This important essay by Mannoury reconstructs the formation process and spread of signifiacs, situating it in relation to the symposium on meaning published in the journal *Mind* between 1920 and 1921, which in turn inspired Ogden and Richards's book of 1923, on the one hand, and the Vienna Circle, on the other. Mannoury acknowledges Frederik van Eeden with a fundamental role in promoting the development of signifiacs in the Netherlands, to which he contributed himself in important ways.

Charles S. Hardwick has the great merit of putting at our disposal the correspondence between Welby and Peirce, with the volume *Semiotic and Signifiacs. The Correspondence Between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, of 1977. Until then, this extraordinary corpus of materials had only been partially available in a volume collecting Peirce's letters to Welby, but not Welby's to Peirce (Lieb 1953). In his excellent introduction to the volume, Hardwick analyzes signifiacs in the light of semiotic theory, and also mentions the 'strong moral tone' of Welby's writings, 'an almost evangelical zeal,' without underestimating their theoretical value. The importance of this editorial enterprise has been constantly acknowledged throughout the current volume.

8.2. On the Signific Movement in the Netherlands¹

An important essay on the Signific Movement in the Netherlands is that by Jacques van Nieuwstadt, published in 1978, entitled 'De Nederlandse Significa: Een Documentatie.' H. Walter Schmitz has also dedicated his attention to the Signific Movement and is considered a major expert in the area. His doctoral dissertation, of 1985, 'Habilitationsschrift' *Verständigungshandlungen – eine wissenschaftshistorische Rekonstruktion der Anfänge der signifikanten Bewegung in den Niederlanden (1892–1926)*, proposes a detailed reconstruction of the history of Dutch significs from 1892 to 1926. Given its relevance to Dutch culture, this dissertation was promptly translated into Dutch and published as a monograph entitled, *De Hollandse Significa. Een reconstructie van de geschiedenis van 1892 tot 1926*, in 1990.² The main topics covered include: Welby's significs and its development in the Netherlands, in the first part; the work of Frederik van Eeden, in the second; Jacob Israël de Haan, in the third part; the fourth is dedicated to Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer; the fifth and sixth are dedicated to activities carried out by the Internationaal Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte, in Amsterdam, and by the Signifische Kring, and to preeminent figures like Gerrit Mannoury; the relation between Mannoury and Welby is the subject of part seven, which also investigates theoretical perspectives. This part of Schmitz's book is the object of a review article by Henk Visser in Dutch, published in 1993, entitled 'Nederlandse Significs.' In it Visser evidences a series of themes at the centre of attention in Schmitz's book, which reflect his own research interests: a) reception of Welby's significs in the Netherlands; b) Schmitz's approach to Dutch significs; c) his methodology; d) the relation of significs to scientific disciplines and philosophy.

Erik (Albertus Frederik) Heijerman and H. Walter Schmitz are co-editors of the volume *Significs, Mathematics and Semiotics. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands*, published in 1991, which collects the Proceedings of an International Conference under the same title, 'Signifik, Mathematik und Semiotik,' held in Bonn from 19 to 21 November 1986. The volume is divided into four sections: 1) 'Significs as a Starting Point of Research'; 2) 'On the History of Significs'; 3) 'Significs Compared' (with interesting contributions comparing significs with movements and significant personalities, such as the contribution by A. Eschbach on the relation between Gerrit Mannoury and Charles Morris, or by N. M. Martin on the relation between significs and logical empiricism, and again by H. Visser on the relation between significs and linguistic philosophy); 4) 'On the Topicality of Signific Methods for Analysis,' title of the fourth section which includes an essay by Schmitz on the empirical methods of signific analysis of meaning. The historical reconstruction of the Signific Movement is extremely interesting from the perspective of the history of ideas. Says Schmitz in the introduction to this volume,

1. I wish to thank the authors mentioned in this section for kindly sending me their papers and furnishing general bibliographical information relatively to the published literature on Welby and the Signific Movement in the Netherlands: in addition to H. Walter Schmitz, Jean Paul Van Bendegem, Adriaan D. De Groot, Erik Heijerman, Christo Lombaard, Brigitte Nerlich, Jan Noordegraaf, Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen, Henk Visser. An interesting editorial project would be to unite these essays and others in a significs reader, together with papers by significians from the first half of the twentieth century, in English translation (see Ch. 7, above).
2. This information was passed on to me by Erik Heijerman in a letter dated 21 April 1994.

‘significs was an important pendant to the Unity of Science Movement and to Morris’s theory of signs, the significians also being active in the fields of epistemology, semantic analysis, and the theory of signs’ (p. 7). Specifically on the conference in Bonn, see Schmitz’s report of 1987.

To the Signific Movement Schmitz has dedicated a series of essays, some of which are in Dutch, e.g., ‘Hogenschool, Academie of School? de significs en de oprichring van de Internationale School voor Wijsbegeerte,’ 1986. In an article of 1984, ‘Searle ist in Mode, Mannoury nicht: Sprech- und Horakt im niederlandischen Signifik-Kreis,’ Schmitz compares Mannoury’s sign theory and the Signific Movement in the Netherlands with speech act theory as elaborated by John L. Austin, English analytical philosophy and developments in the U.S.A. with John R. Searle. Differently from ‘speech act’ theory, Mannoury’s theory of ‘language acts’ rejects the idea that the meaning of words and locutions preexists to language acts and, therefore, is simply applied to them. Instead, meaning is a fundamental component in the very genesis of linguistic activities and expectations. Language acts foresee participation by both speakers and listeners. In his writings, Mannoury proposes a typology of language acts on the basis of interaction among memory, internal experience, perception, volition and emotion. Schmitz continues his studies on Mannoury and significs in the Netherlands in another series of essays, including: ‘Mannoury and Brouwer: Aspects of Their Relationship and Cooperation,’ 1987; ‘Frederik van Eeden and the Introduction of Significs into the Netherlands: From Lady Welby to Mannoury,’ in the 1990 volume *Essays in Significs*; ‘What Moved the Signific Movement? Concerning the History of Significs in the Netherlands,’ 1992; and ‘The Semantic Foundations and Implications of Signific Language Gradations,’ 1993. Welby’s name is seldom mentioned in publications by significians, or if we prefer, ‘significists’, unless they are dedicated to the work of historical reconstruction. All the same, Welby’s influence on the Signific Movement clearly emerges in three areas that are easily related to her work. Her significs, in fact, has engendered a variety of different orientations (which sometimes even contradict her own standpoints):

- a) analysis of ‘meaning’ and ‘interpretation’ in communication and knowledge acquisition processes from the perspective of sign theory;
- b) significal critique of knowledge; and
- c) significal goals in education and social reform (cf. Schmitz 1990: 222).

In his essay of 1993, ‘The Semantic Foundations and Implications of Signific Language Gradations,’ Schmitz evidences orientations in the history of linguistics which belong to the theory of linguistic gradation and highlight the semantic aspects of language. He identifies historical precursors of these theoretical orientations in J. H. Lambert, Tönnies, and Waismann. In particular, Schmitz draws attention to the connection with the theory of linguistic gradation, whether analytical or synthetic, as developed by Mannoury. In his essay dedicated to the relation between Mannoury (commonly recognized as the leader of the Signific Movement in the Netherlands) and Brouwer (a major representative of intuitionism in mathematics), he maintains that these two scholars closely influenced each other, indicating four main areas of contact:

- 1) their common interest in mathematics;
- 2) the development and institutionalization of significs;

- 3) the personal dimension; and
- 4) the political. (On Brouwer and intuitionism, see also Franchella 1992).

Mannoury is also the focus of attention in Eric Heijerman's essay, 'Relativism and Significs: Gerrit Mannoury on the Foundations of Mathematics,' 1990, and in 'Today and Tomorrow. The Unpublished Signific Miscellanea of G. Mannoury,' 1992, occasioned by a miscellaneous manuscript by Mannoury entitled 'Today and Tomorrow,' still mostly unpublished. Heijerman outlines the historical development of significs in Holland from 1892 through to the 1960s. This movement is representative of the intellectual activities that took place between the two world wars, with extensions into the 1950s. A particularly interesting part of Heijerman's essay discusses so-called 'mass-significs,' a central theme in Mannoury's research during the Second World War when he was intent upon studying behaviour of the 'masses', evidencing the role of language as a major influencing and orienting factor. Another useful source of information on Mannoury is the entry, 'G. Mannoury (1867–1956), Significs,' 1992, by Luc J. M. Bergmans. Mannoury evidenced the role of intentionality and volition in 'linguistic acts,' considered as a category of 'communicative acts.' On Mannoury's account, the task of significs was to show the connection between indication and volition/emotion, between what we think we have and what we aim at when we communicate. In his entry, Bergmans also considers the relation between Mannoury's approach and Brouwer's.

Erik Heijerman too has contributed to the historical reconstruction of the signific movement with an essay (it too in Dutch), entitled 'Een tragische komedie? Tien Internationale Signifische Zomerconferenties, 1939–1954,' published in 1986. This essay offers a critical survey of ten annual international conferences on significs held in Holland (mostly in Naarden e's-Graveland), between 1939 and 1954 (the second conference was only held in 1946 after a suspension during the war years). In an interesting letter addressed to me, dated 21 April 1994, Heijerman offers the following information:

As you know, significs before the Second World War was mainly a Dutch movement, although in the fifties it became more international. This 'second period' is described in an article written by myself, already eight years ago. Unfortunately it is written in Dutch (I will send a copy, 'Een tradische comedie?' A tragical comedy? Ten International Signific Summer Conferences, 1939–1954).

Various essays (in Dutch) by Jan Noordegraaf are dedicated to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands. These focus on such figures as Jacques van Ginneken, Frederik van Eeden, and Gerardus J. P. J. Bolland. Of particular interest is Noordegraaf's essay of 1991, 'Van Eeden, Bolland en Lady Welby. Significa in het licht der Rede,' which presents the correspondence between Welby and Bolland exchanged between 31 January 1904 and 18 February 1904.

Research in significs continues in the Netherlands today, though not necessarily as part of the same 'movement.' Writings in this sense are available, for example, by Adriaan D. De Groot (1990a,b, 1991a,b, 1993a,b). Part of De Groot's research is dedicated to interconnecting different trends in psychology to the end of creating a unified and scientific approach to this area of study. De Groot's work is a contribution to so-called 'Signific Concept Analysis' (SCA), the name of a method developed with other researchers including Fester L. Medendorp, co-author with De Groot of the volume (in Dutch) *Term, begrip, theorie. Inleiding tot signifische begripsanalyse*, published in 1986,

and of the essay 'Signific Concept Analysis (SCA). A Modern Approach,' 1988. In 'Van Forumtheorie naar Signifische begripsanalyse,' 1989, De Groot applies the signific approach to the language of psychology. The expression 'Signifische begripanalyse,' also called the SBA method, is applied to use of such concepts as 'intelligence' and 'intuition.' A detailed description of the SCA method is presented by De Groot in the essay, 'Signific Concept Analysis,' included in the 1991 volume edited by Heijerman and Schmitz, *Significs, Mathematics and Semiotics. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands*. The author connects SCA with the early Signific Movement in the Netherlands, identifying common socio-cultural objectives, a common philosophical orientation, and common methods of research. Similar to the earlier movement, SCA focuses on the meaning of words, and particularly on abstract concepts as used in scientific disciplines, to the end of critiquing, clarifying and economizing conceptual terms used in these fields. In relation to the psychological sciences, key concepts subject to SCA include 'intelligence,' 'learning' (with all possible variants in the fields of psychology and education), 'power,' 'socialization,' 'sociological,' 'valuation,' 'induction,' 'interpretation,' 'measurement.' This method is described by the author as follows:

'Signific Concept Analysis,' abbreviated *SCA*, is the name of a particular way of thinking about, analysing, and handling, the use of abstract concepts in written language aimed at rational communication. As a method of analysing and defining the meaning of words *SCA* can be described as a loosely knit system of heuristic rules. The system has been labeled 'signific' concept analysis because of its kinship with the old Signific Movement in respects such as its socio-cultural objectives, the underlying philosophy, and the general nature of the, informal rather than formalized, methods it presents [...]. (De Groot 1991: 161)

In a letter to me, dated 26 May 1994, De Groot interprets the sense of his 'Signific Concept Analysis' in the following terms:

What I have been writing about these last ten years under the name 'Signific Concept Analysis' is *not* a continuation of the older tradition but a new enterprise, labeled 'signific' because – as I wrote in my second article in the Heyerman-Schmitz book – I wanted to acknowledge the inspiration from, and the kinship with, Mannoury's work as regards the basic mission of the Signific Movement. The qualification 'signific' may be somewhat misleading. On the other hand, most of the people who did cooperate with Mannoury in the International Congresses before, and in the years after the Second World War, including some members of the small 'inner circle' around him, were individual thinkers who did not follow, but sympathized with Mannoury's basic ideas.

Since beginning to write this chapter other publications on Welby, her significs and the significians have come to my attention. To exemplify the interest, value and topicality of this work, I shall simply signal the new edition and translation of Frederik van Eeden's important text on the logical foundations of understanding, edited and commented by Wilhelm H. Vieregge, H. Walter Schmitz and Jan Noordegraaf, and published in 2005. The *Festschrift* published in honour of H. W. Schmitz, for his sixtieth birthday, edited by Achim Eschbach, Mark A. Halawa and Jens Loenhoff, and published in 2008, contains essays on significs by Erik Heijerman and Bastiaan Willink. Writings on Welby and significs continue appearing, such as the encyclopaedia entry 'Significs,' by the Finnish scholar Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen, published in 2006, also author of the essay, 'Significs and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy,' an important contribution to bridging the gap in the history of ideas, now published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2009. Jean

Paul Van Bendegem is another author interested in signifiics, his relevant publications are also listed, including his entries ‘Evert Willem Beth,’ 1994, and ‘Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer,’ 1997. South African scholar Christo Lombaard, has proposed a recent study under the title ‘Exegesis – translation – understanding. Reflections from Welby’s signifiics.’ This is focused on the initial phase in Welby’s research, that devoted to biblical exegesis, the originating nucleus of her interpretation/translation theory as theorized in her mature writings. I have already mentioned the research by Jan Noordegraaf who has continued producing important work on signifiics, signifiic-related studies and beyond. These too have been signaled in the relevant bibliography appended to the present volume.

8.3. From the new editions of *What is Meaning?* (1983) and *Signifiics and Language* (1985), onward

In his essay ‘Signifiics as a Fundamental Science,’ 1983, Achim Eschbach analyzes the foundations of signifiics as delineated in Welby’s books, *What is Meaning?*, 1903, and *Signifiics and Language*, 1911. In that same year, H. Walter Schmitz published the essay ‘Victoria Lady Welby und die Folgen,’ delineating the main aspects of Welby’s research from both a historical and theoretical perspective. This article also includes a paragraph on the state of the art of research in signifiics through to the 1980s.

Schmitz is editor of the important volume of 1985, *Signifiics and Language*, which repropose Welby’s 1911 monograph with the addition of a selection of published and unpublished writings by Welby (for a description see Chapter 1, this volume). *Signifiics and Language*, the volume of 1985, opens with a monographic study (of 235 pp.) by Schmitz on Welby and signifiics entitled, ‘Victoria Lady Welby’s Signifiics: The Origin of the Signifiic Movement.’ Through readings of published and unpublished documents, scientific publications, and letter exchanges with various correspondents, Schmitz reconstructs the development of signifiics in a rich and articulated text (in four chapters), from both a historical and theoretical perspective. His research offers ideas and suggestions for a rereading in this new light of the historical-cultural context of the time, largely characterized by many of the figures somehow revolving around Welby. The third chapter in this study is entitled ‘Signifiics as a Communication Oriented Theory of Signs,’ and as announced by the title itself describes signifiics as a theory of signs oriented towards communication. Schmitz observes that Welby never formulated a final definition of signifiics, nor was it ever in her intention to do so, for she did not wish to risk limiting any possibility of development, or of response to her project. Schmitz analyzes Welby’s reflections on sign, language and communication emphasizing that his systematization is the result of his own interpretation. As a methodological choice and keeping account of the dynamical character of Welby’s reflections, he neither limits his attention to a single work, nor presents her complete works. Rather, he concentrates on her writings from the years 1903 to 1911, referring to earlier papers and letters when they serve to throw light upon her later works.

Schmitz contextualizes signifiics in the tradition of the *cognitio symbolica*, that is, knowledge mediated by signs, recalling the opposition introduced by Leibniz in *Medita-*

tions between ‘symbolic knowledge’ and ‘intuitive knowledge.’ Moreover, he evidences the orientation of signifiacs towards scientific knowledge as much as everyday communication, together with its ethical and pedagogical vocation. Indeed, he agrees with Achim Eschbach (1983) that signifiacs is a ‘fundamental science.’ The theoretical framework of Welby’s signifiacs is presented under three aspects described by the section titles forming Chapter three of Schmitz’s study:

- 3.1) *Lady Welby’s Critique of Language and Terminology*;
- 3.2) *‘Translation’ and the Unity of Science*;
- 3.3) *‘Sense,’ ‘Meaning’ and ‘Significance.’*

The critique of language and knowledge as developed by Welby takes its place in a tradition of thought which can be traced back to Plato’s dialectics and leads into studies by Leibniz, Wolff, Lambert, Nietzsche, Frege and Bergson.

Beyond obvious connections with the Signific Movement in the Netherlands and therefore with Frederik van Eeden, Jacob Israël de Haan and Gerrit Mannoury, Schmitz supports the thesis of the inevitable influence (a concept he problematizes) exerted by Welby over her contemporaries, including such personalities as those discussed in the present volume: André Lalande, Ferdinand Tönnies, George F. Stout, James M. Baldwin, Charles S. Peirce, Bertrand Russell, Ferdinand C. Schiller, Charles K. Ogden, and the novelist H. G. Wells. Schmitz bases his thesis on his extensive reading of their correspondence with Welby, more than on direct references to her in their writings, and signals a certain tendency to use Welby’s ideas without acknowledging her officially. Indeed, the history of ideas relatively to these years in England and internationally on the topics we have been discussing in this volume, still needs to be fully (re)constructed.

In relation to the reconstruction of Welby’s thought system, see also my interview with Schmitz of 1988, entitled ‘Victoria Lady Welby and Signifiacs’ (a revised version in Italian translation also appeared that same year under the title, ‘Significato e valore’ [Meaning and value], see Petrilli 1988a, b). Welby was clearly influenced by nineteenth century developments in key sciences of the day such as biology and physiology, and was particularly interested in evolutionary theory. Her attention to ethnological theories was also an indication of the intellectual context she lived in. She maintained that an adequate investigation of the social and cultural development of humanity needed to keep account of evolutionary theory as it was then emerging. However, Welby identified points of discord between ethnological interpretations of rites and ‘primitive’ religions, which she described as vitiated by ethnocentrism, and two fundamental ideas in evolutionism concerning: a) the appropriateness of reaction to stimulus, whether direct or indirect, and; b) the invariable tendency of such reaction towards development, preservation and reproduction of life.

Essays on Signifiacs is the title of another volume, of 1990, edited by Schmitz, collecting ‘papers presented on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Victoria Lady Welby (1837–1912).’ This volume takes up the project originally conceived in 1909 (and never completed) of publishing a volume of papers dedicated to Welby’s signifiacs, edited by George F. Stout, editor of the journal *Mind*, with the sociologist John W. Slaughter. Schmitz divides his volume into six sections. The first is entitled, ‘The Social and Literary Background: The Welby family,’ and comprises essays by David Hughes and Paul Chipcase on Welby’s social and literary background. The second, ‘Sig-

nific Signposts at the Turn of the Century,' is dedicated to the meaning of significs for culture and intellectual history in the twentieth century. It includes papers by Timothy J. Reiss who contextualizes Welby's discourse in the historical-social framework of the late nineteenth century, interpreting significs as a contribution to the critique of modernism; and another by Rita Nolan who describes Welby's immediate intellectual context, and shifts the reader's attention from her attempt at emancipation from outdated intellectual paradigms to aspects of her research that anticipated future developments with specific reference to problems of language, knowledge and meaning. Nolan establishes a series of parallels between themes treated by Welby and later more famous scholars. Most interesting is her thesis of the probable influence exerted by Welby on Ludwig Wittgenstein, as indirect as this may be. The third section is entitled 'Significs between Semantics and Semiotics.' It presents a series of comparative studies between Welby and some important twentieth century thinkers: Michel Bréal, Charles S. Peirce, Ferdinand C. S. Schiller, Giovanni Vailati, Charles K. Ogden, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, in essays by Sylvain Auroux, Simone Delesalle, Gérard Deledalle, Johann G. Juchem, Augusto Ponzio, W. Terrence Gordon, and Susan Petrilli. This section occupies an important place in the overall plan of the book evidencing the topicality and originality of Welby's work and her significs through confrontation with the figures mentioned. The fourth section is focused on 'The Signific Movement in the Netherlands,' with a paper by Schmitz and another by Erik (Albertus Frederik) Heijerman. Particular attention is dedicated to relations between Welby, Frederik van Eaden and Gerrit Mannoury (see Ch. 7, above). The fifth section, 'The Scientific Remains of V. Lady Welby,' includes information on the Welby Archives at York University (Toronto, Canada), with a paper by Hartwell Bowsfield, and on the Welby Library at the University of London, with a paper by Pam M. Baker. The volume closes with a sixth section, 'Bibliography of Publications on Lady Welby and her Significs' and an Index of Names.

In 1990 another essay appeared by Schmitz entitled, 'Historiographie der Linguistics oder Semiotics? Fragen zu ihrem Verhältnis, erörtert am Beispiel der Signifik,' in which he reconstructs relations between significs and studies on signs and language. Contributions by significs to the development of studies in linguistics and semiotics are largely unknown, presenting a significant gap in the history of ideas. This paper is connected to an earlier paper, also by Schmitz, of 1985, 'Die durchgängige Tropisierung der Sprache,' delineating the history of reflection on sign and language beginning with such figures as César Ch. Du Marsais, John Locke, Gottfried W. Leibniz, Johann H. Lambert to Charles S. Peirce, Victoria Welby, Charles Morris, Charles K. Ogden and Ivor A. Richards.

Schmitz has also written essays on Ferdinand Tönnies whom we know was closely connected to Welby, 'Tönnies' Zeichentheorie zwischen Signifik und Wiener Kreis,' 1985, 'Sind Worte für bare Münze zu nehmen? Ferdinand Tönnies über Geld als Zeichen und Zeichen als Werte,' 1986, and 'Introduction. Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936),' of 1988. Two strong influences on Tönnies in relation to his sign theory were clearly significs and the Vienna Circle.

In a highly informative and well documented monograph of 1992, *Semantic Theories in Europe 1830–1930. From Etymology to Contextuality*, Brigitte Nerlich places Welby and her significs in the context of studies in semantics and its developments during the nineteenth century in Europe, with reference to 'semasiology' in Germany, 'sémantique' in France, and the transition from 'sematology' to 'significs' and beyond in England.

In Part III entitled 'The Development of Semantics in England – From Sematology to Significs and Beyond,' Nerlich delineates a tradition of thought which connects Welby's significs to the theory of meaning as conceptualized by George F. Stout, Charles K. Ogden, Ivor A. Richards and Hugh R. Walpole. Walpole was author of a volume entitled, *Semantics. The Nature of Words and Their Meanings*, of 1941, which, unlike *The Meaning of Meaning*, 1923, by Ogden and Richards, fully acknowledged the importance of Welby's research. Significs determined a turn in semantic studies, which at last identified the important role carried out by context in meaning beyond the action of speaker and listener (cf. Nerlich 1992: 257).

By contrast with dominant philological and linguistic trends in studies on meaning in the nineteenth century, Welby's significs was communication-oriented with strong connections in the direction of philosophy, psychology, education, ethics, and the life sciences. This was a particularly original aspect of her approach with respect to the times. 'Her main aim was not the study of semantic change *per se*, its causes, laws or types, but the establishment of a sign-theory based on a theory of communication' (Nerlich 1992: 242). From this point of view, Nerlich connects Welby's approach to the sematology of her predecessor Benjamin H. Smart and to the semiotics of Charles S. Peirce. Welby's significs is part of the history of semiotics as much as of the history of semantics, representing a link between the historical-philological-sematological approach to studies on meaning and the communicative-situational phase.

In a book of 1996, co-authored by Nerlich with David D. Clarke, on the history of pragmatics, *Language, Action, and Context: The Early History of Pragmatics in Europe and America, 1780–1930*, the birth of pragmatics in England is related to Welby's significs. On this account, English pragmatics, understood as reflection on meaning in use, 'has its most direct roots in the work of Lady Victoria Welby and her circle of friends and disciples. This work stands itself at the centre of a complex web of cross-influences, between pragmatism, the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein, General Semantics, sociology, psychology, the law, anthropology, linguistics and certain political movements' (Clarke and Nerlich 1996: 294).³ The authors maintain that unlike the French and German traditions, but parallel to the American, English pragmatics emerged from reflection on signs, therefore from a tradition of thought that can be traced back to Locke and Smart. 'The problems of signs, symbolism, and meaning were at the centre of pragmatic thinking in England and have remained on the philosophical agenda until the present day' (pp. 294–295). Pragmatic ideas were also generated by two main trends in analytical philosophy: the Oxford trend which led to ordinary language philosophy represented by Gilbert Ryle, John L. Austin, P.F. Strawson, Herbert Paul Grice, and the late Ludwig Wittgenstein; and the Cambridge trend which led to formal semantics and pragmatics with Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, George E. Moore, and the early Wittgenstein. The other two sources of pragmatic ideas on language were linguistic anthropology with

3. I wish to thank Brigitte Nerlich for most generously sending me parts of her book with Clarke on the history of pragmatics, while she was still writing it, the very first drafts as she said: 'But you might (might!) find something useful for your book in them' (Nerlich to Petrilli, 22 May 1994). The chapter on Welby and her significs is entitled 'Pragmatics *avant la lettre* in England: A Theory of Signs and Contexts,' and closes the volume. At the time I was working towards my own Italian monograph on Welby, *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio*, 1998.

Bronislaw C. Malinowski, and linguistic contextualism and functionalism with Alan H. Gardiner and John R. Firth. Ogden acted as an intermediary and rather loose connection between this new type of linguistics and the Welby Circle. Nerlich also co-authored an essay with David D. Clarke entitled, 'Pragmatics: The Neglected Heritage. A Project,' 1994, which too reconstructs the history of pragmatism and includes a section dedicated to Welby's signifiacs. Contextualization of Welby's research and writing in the pragmatic tradition is an important contribution to understanding the general orientation of her work.

In the entry 'Welby Victoria (1837–1912): Signifiacs,' published in *Encyclopédie Philosophique Universelle*, 1992, Gérard Deledalle signals the main aspects of Welby's theory of meaning. Citing the correspondence between Ogden and Ludwig Wittgenstein, he claims that the latter was familiar with her work thanks to Ogden (cf. Wittgenstein 1973). He also evidences the relation between Welby and Peirce briefly expounding the latter's interpretation of Welby's signifiacs as described in his 1903 review of her book *What is Meaning?*

In his essay 'Lady Welby on Sign and Meaning, Context and Interpretation,' 1993, Schmitz maintains that while philosophical discourse on hermeneutics tends to take fundamental questions of meaning and interpretation for granted, Welby thought differently. That is, she began with problems of meaning and interpretation which remained at the centre of her attention from the initial phases of her research, dedicated to the language of the Sacred Scriptures, through to her latest writings, published and unpublished. Now after a century from the time she was writing, modern hermeneutics can at last fully recognize the validity of her approach for an adequate understanding of human communication and interpersonal relations. An interesting point in Schmitz's interpretation is that by contrast with other approaches to sign theory, including Peirce's, Welby did not begin with a classification of signs to then describe their characteristics and relations in light of her classification. On the contrary, 'she begins at the other end, so to speak, and concentrates on the problem of meaning, that is, on questions of the interpretation and communicative use of signs. This she does in the pursuit of theoretical and practical objectives' (Schmitz 1993b: 22). These objectives give rise to the following main areas in Welby's research: the critique of language and terminology; theory of sign, meaning, and interpretation; interpersonal communication; education. In fact, in this paper as in his introduction to the 1985 edition of *Signifiacs and Language*, Schmitz draws attention to Welby's contributions to education theory and practice. We know that she conceived a series of pedagogical experiments which she presented in her signifiacal lessons (cf. *What is Meaning?*, pp. 306–313). Schmitz focuses on each of the areas just listed, emphasizing the importance Welby assigned to context in signification and interpretive processes, and to the mutual determination of meaning in the interaction between word and context. He draws attention to Welby's recurrent use of organic analogies to describe language and to her conceptualization of the meaning of words in terms of plasticity and semantic flexibility. From Welby's description, language also emerges as a fact of sociality rather than of subjective individuality. Ambiguity is understood in a positive sense to the end of successful communication, such that neither definitions nor artificial international languages can survive without it. The structural presence of tropes, figures of speech, imagery and analogy in language and their function in the progress of knowledge are also thematized. We know that Peirce reviewed *What is Meaning?*, 1903, with Russell's

book *The Principles of Mathematics*, published that same year. In ‘Anmerkungen zum Welby-Russell-Briefwechsel,’ 1995, Schmitz delineates the topics covered by Welby and Russell in their correspondence which covered the years 1904 to 1910, and which he divided into four phases: the first is essentially devoted to the theory of meaning with reference to *The Principles of Mathematics* and ends with a letter, the seventh, dated 9 November 1904; the second phase is contextualized in an ideal circle created through correspondence with the participation of John Cook Wilson, Vailati and Peirce and ends with a letter, the twenty-fourth, dated 1 June 1905; the third revolves around the problem of denotation, occasioned by the publication of Russell’s essay, ‘On Denoting,’ 1905, and includes letters exchanged between November to December 1905; the fourth and final phase focuses on issues in theory of knowledge with reference to psychology, and ends with a letter dated 6 April 1910. Schmitz associates Welby’s critique of Russell’s theory of meaning (as it emerges from the monograph, *The Principles of Mathematics*, to the essay, ‘On Denoting’) with the theory of meaning formulated forty-five years later by P. F. Strawson in his essay, ‘On Referring.’

‘Die Signifik,’ also by Schmitz, is an important article published in volume two of *A Handbook on the Sign-Theoretic Foundations of Nature and Culture*, 1997 – a monumental work in sign theory edited by Roland Posner, Karl Robering and Thomas A. Sebeok (see Schmitz 1997). This article ranges over the entire course of significs from Welby’s research to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands.

Among early references to Welby in Italy, Alessandro Levi (1912) mentions her in his inaugural address entitled ‘La crisi della democrazia,’ delivered on 5 November 1911, at the University of Ferrara. Levi says:

I am happy to take the opportunity to recall the tenacious propaganda, carried out by a veneranda English writer, Lady Victoria Welby, in favor of the examination of the meaning of what we think and say. V. V. Welby, *Significs and Language*, London, Macmillan, 1911.

Furthermore, a selection from the correspondence between Welby and Giovanni Vailati was translated into Italian and included in a volume of 1971 collecting the latter’s correspondence under the title, *Epistolario (1881–1909)*, edited by G. Lanaro, introduction by M. Dal Pra.

My own writings in Italian devoted specifically to Welby include essays on her significs as well as Italian translations of her writings. The essay ‘Significs, semantica e semiotica: teoria del significato di Victoria Lady Welby’, published in 1984, was followed by *Significato, metafora, interpretazione*, a small volume of writings by Welby in Italian translation by myself, published in 1985. It presents the following writings by Welby for the first time to the Italian reading public: ‘Significato e metafora’ (‘Meaning and Metaphor,’ 1893), ‘Senso, significato e interpretazione’ (‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation,’ 1896), her encyclopaedic entry ‘Significs’ (1911), and a selection of passages from *Significs and Language*, 1911. The volume includes an introduction to Welby and her writings by myself, and an essay by Augusto Ponzio on the relation between Welby and Vailati (cf. Ponzio 1985b). The first part of my monograph, *Significs, semiotica, significazione*, 1988, is also dedicated to Welby’s theory of meaning, under the title ‘La teoria del significato in Victoria Welby.’ It includes comparative studies between Welby and Peirce, Welby and Vailati, Welby and Bakhtin which have been developed in the present volume, and an interview with Schmitz by S. Petrilli, also

published in English that same year by initiative of Thomas A. Sebeok, under the title, 'Victoria Lady Welby and Significs.' My study on the relation between Welby and Vailati is developed in a paper of 1989, 'La critica del linguaggio in Giovanni Vailati e Victoria Welby,' occasioned by my contribution to a volume celebrating Vailati. Another contribution to studies on Welby and her significs in Italian is my essay 'Senso e analogia nel metalinguaggio di Victoria Welby,' 1990, published with my translation of Chapter 1, under the title 'Senso, significato, significatività,' of Welby's 1903 book. This was followed, in 1993, by another essay entitled, 'Bachtin e Welby: Dialogo e alterità cronotopica.' Essays on Welby are also collected in the volume *La materia segnica e interpretazione*, 1995, and again in a section entitled 'Sulla significs di Victoria Welby' in the volume *Che cosa significa significare?*, of 1996. Subsequently to these volumes there also appeared the essays, 'La metafora in Charles S. Peirce e Victoria Welby,' 1996, and 'La luce del testo fra sacralità e profanazione. Victoria Welby dall'esegesi biblica alla significs,' 1997. A full length monograph on Welby by S. Petrilli appeared in 1998, *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio*, being the enlarged version of my doctoral thesis, the original nucleus completely reviewed and reorganized for this new edition. Other Italian editions of Welby's writings include the encyclopaedic entry of 1911, 'Significs,' repropoed in the section entitled 'Documenti semiotici: la significs,' in the collective volume *Basi. Significare, inventare, dialogare*, of 1998, by Massimo A. Bonfantini, Cosimo Caputo, Augusto Ponzio, Thomas A. Sebeok, and myself. This section also includes the Italian translation of C. K. Ogden's manuscript of 1911, 'Il Progresso della significs,' only published for the first time in English in 1994. Chapter XI of *What is Meaning?* was published in Italian translation under the title, 'Evoluzione della vita e relazioni cosmiche,' in 2002. Another collection of Welby's writings in Italian translation appeared with the volume, *Senso, significato, significatività*, 2007, introduced by the essay 'Il senso e il valore del significare,' pp. ix–lxi. A third volume of Welby's writings in Italian translation, *Come interpretare, comprendere, comunicare*, is scheduled to appear in 2010. Other essays by myself dedicated specifically to Welby include, 'Victoria Welby, l'epistolario con Peirce,' 2003, and 'La questione dell'io in Victoria Lady Welby and Ch. Morris,' 2005. On significs or significs-related issues are available other essays, which I shall not list here, for example in my monographs (cf. Petrilli 2005b), and in collective volumes such as *Linguaggi* (cf. Petrilli 2003e), and *Comunicazione, traduzione, interpretazione* (cf. Petrilli 2006c). For further Italian studies on Welby see the relevant bibliography (the second) in this volume.

I have also authored a series of studies on Welby and her significs in English. In 1990 'Sign and Meaning in Victoria Lady Welby and Mikhail Bakhtin: A Confrontation,' was included in the volume edited by Schmitz, *Essays in Significs*. 'Dialogue and Chronotopic Otherness: Bakhtin and Welby,' appeared that same year in the journal *Discours social/Social Discourse*, also the section 'The Problem of Signifying in Welby, Peirce, Vailati, Bakhtin,' included as an Appendix to the volume *Man as a Sign*, by Augusto Ponzio, which also includes a chapter on Welby by himself. Subsequently, three essays on Welby were published in the international journal *Semiotica*, 'Between Semiotics and Significs. C. K. Ogden and V. Welby,' 'The Biological Basis of Victoria Welby's Significs,' and 'Light between Sacred and Profane: Victoria Welby from Biblical Exegesis to Significs,' respectively in the years 1995, 1999, 2001. Again in 2001, the entry

'Welby Victoria Lady Welby' appeared in *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, edited by Paul Cobley which now appears in a new and enlarged edition in *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*, 2009. 'Women in Semiotics,' co-authored by Thomas A. Sebeok and myself (by invitation from Sebeok), was published in a volume in honour of Irmengard Rauch, *Interdigitations*, 1999. In this essay Welby is presented as the 'First Lady' semiotician, in the company of other 'Three North American Pioneers,' – Susanne K. Langer (1895–1985), Margaret Mead (1901–78), and Ethel M. Albert (1918–89); and the 'American Gothic,' Irmengard Rauch herself (b. 1933). Subsequently, Sebeok included this same essay in his monograph *Global Semiotics*, 2001, the last to appear before his death that same year. 'The Objective Character of Misunderstanding. When the Mystifications of Language are the Cause,' and 'Victoria Lady Welby and Significs,' are the titles of papers delivered at the International Semiotics Institute and the Imatra Semiotic Society of Finland, in 2003. Both papers are now published in a volume of 2003 entitled, *Understanding/Misunderstanding. Contributions to the Study of the Hermeneutics of Signs*, edited by Eero Tarasti.

The dictionary entry, 'Welby, Victoria Alexandrina, Lady Welby (1837–1912),' was included in the *Oxford New Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Matthew Colin, for the first time, in 2004. This was followed by the entry 'Significs,' in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, 2005, and the entry, in Italian, 'Victoria Lady Welby,' in *Enciclopedia filosofica*, 2006 (cf. Petrilli 2004c, 2005e, 2006d). The essay 'Gift-giving, Mother-sense and Subjectivity in Victoria Welby. A Study in Semioethics,' was published in 2004, in a monographic issue of the journal *Athanor*, entitled *Il dono/The Gift*, edited by Genevieve Vaughan. 'Significs and Semioethics. Places of the Gift in Communication Today,' included in another volume edited by Vaughan, *Women and the Gift Economy: A Radically Different Worldview is Possible*, 2007, is the published version of a paper delivered at the Gift Economy Conference, Las Vegas (Nevada, USA), 2004, dedicated to the theme 'A Radically Different World View Is Possible. The Gift Economy Inside and Outside of Patriarchal Capitalism,' again organized by Vaughan. In 2005, Welby and her significs were assigned a place of first importance in the volume, *Semiotics Unbounded. Interpretive Routes through the Open Network of Signs*, co-authored by myself with Augusto Ponzio. Here Welby is presented as mother-founder of modern semiotics and one of seven pillars in the development of semiotics across the twentieth century with Charles S. Peirce, Mikhail Bakhtin, Charles Morris, Thomas A. Sebeok, Ferruccio Rossi-Landi and Umberto Eco. Each of these authors plays an essential role in the architecture of this volume, which is designed to establish a theoretical platform for the discussion of problems relating to life and communication from the perspective of the sign sciences. For papers subsequent to this volume, see the relevant bibliography appended below. In this brief overview of my own writings, I have mostly signaled publications where Welby's name figures in the title. However, Welby's significs and the theoretical issues she proposes are at the centre of much of my work, and in fact play an important role in the formulation of the original concept of 'semioethics' conceived with co-author Augusto Ponzio, presented in our Italian monograph, *Semioetica*, 2003, and in English, among other writings, in the monograph *Semiotics Unbounded*, 2005.

8.4. By way of conclusion, between significs and semioethics

I would strike at the roots and sterilise the very germs of the unbearable evils of human misery and injustice [...] What I am working at is the transfiguration of the world. (From a letter by Welby to Fredrik van Eeden, 11 November 1908)

Like ‘significs,’ ‘semioethics’ is not intended as a discipline in its own right, but as a perspective, an orientation in the study of signs, an aptitude, an approach we believe necessary today more than ever before in the context of globalization. In the Glossary appended to *Semiotics Unbounded*, ‘semioethics’ is defined as reflecting the idea of semiotics and its propensity to recover its ancient vocation as ‘semeiotics,’ or ‘symptomatology,’ with a focus on ‘symptoms.’ Semioethics concerns itself with ‘care for life,’ but from a global perspective (cf. Sebeok 2001) where semiosis and life converge (cf. Petrilli and Ponzio 2005: 562 and 2010). This, I believe, responds to the ultimate aim of Welby’s significs, that is, to put humanity in a position to care for life, that is, to take responsibility for life in all its expressions, to humanize humanity.

The need for a global perspective was thematized by Welby with her various triads, in particular that which foresees a progression in the capacity for consciousness, experience, and expression from the planetary, to the solar through to the cosmical (see Appendix 4, below). In the present day and age the global perspective is ever more urgent in the face of growing interference in life and communication that is ever more dysfunctional between the historical-social and biological spheres, between the cultural and natural spheres, between the semiosphere and the biosphere.

To ‘care for life’ in a global perspective does not necessarily imply the claim or power to ‘cure,’ but it does imply dialogic interrelation with the other, hospitality and listening to the other, accountability. The semiotician-significian who focuses on symptoms has the health of semiosis at heart, that is, the health of sign activity, of language, meaning and expression: the health of life in all its aspects, human and nonhuman, but not as a physician, a general practitioner, or medical specialist of some sort. The semiotician-significian does not prescribe therapies or drugs. On the contrary, the widespread medicalization of today’s society must be critically interrogated (as indicated by such researchers as Thomas Szasz in the U.S.A., or Armando Verdiglione in Italy). Welby critiques recourse to such deviating paradigms as normal/abnormal and focuses on symptoms in a way that resembles Freudian analysis, given the central role attributed to interpretation and to the aptitude for listening to the other. But here listening is not understood in terms of medical auscultation, and shares nothing with the present-day global psychiatrization of human life, nor with the widespread use of drugs: to listen to the other is not to auscultate.

Semioethics draws on Welby’s Significs and its focus on sense, signification, and significance, on Charles S. Peirce’s studies in ethics, and on the relation between signs and values, signification and significance, semiotics and axiology as thematized by Charles Morris. This ethical bend in semiotics also results from a reading of texts by such authors as Emmanuel Levinas and Mikhail M. Bakhtin. By contrast with a strictly

cognitive, descriptive and ideologically neutral approach to the life of signs, semiotic studies today must recover the axiological dimension of human semiosis.

The signficical or semioethical perspective places the human individual in its concrete singularity and inevitable interrelation with others at the centre of attention (cf. Copley 2007a,b; Ponzio 2006b,c). The implication is that the individual's interconnectedness with the destiny of others cannot be ignored. In this sense, the symptoms studied by the semiotician-significian are always social, but always specified in their singularity, according to one's unique relations with the other, with the world and oneself. Each idea, desire, feeling, value, interest, need, whether good or evil, may be examined as a symptom and expressed by the word, a unique, singular word, the embodied word, by the voice. The semiotician-significian listens to voices. This implies the capacity for listening and dialogical interrelation. Dialogue is not a condition we concede out of generosity towards the other, but rather is structural to life itself, a condition for life to flourish. Singularity, uniqueness of each one of us implies otherness, and otherness implies dialogism, verbal and nonverbal. These are the main lines of research developed by what is now known as the 'Bari-Lecce School' in semiotics (see entries by the editor, on S. Petrilli and A. Ponzio, in Copley 2010: 285–286 and 291–292; see also Petrilli 1999d and Petrilli, Caputo, Ponzio 2006).

In the following citation from *What is Meaning?*, Welby introduces the expressions 'diagnosis' and 'diagnostic' in the context of her analysis of signs, meaning, and understanding, indicating the desirability of a 'signficical' attitude towards the other, oriented by the capacity for dialogic and responsible listening:

It is unfortunate that custom decrees the limitation of the term diagnosis to the pathological field. It would be difficult to find a better one for that power of 'knowing through,' which a training in Significs would carry. We must be brought up to take for granted that we are diagnostcs, that we are to cultivate to the utmost the power to see real distinctions and to read the signs, however faint, which reveal sense and meaning. Diagnostic may be called the typical process of Significs... (Welby 1983[1903]: 51)

The texts

Reviews and notices

8.5. 'Review of *What is Meaning?*,' by C. F. Salmond*

What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance (V. Welby; published by Macmillan and Co.) is a recent book which should receive a welcome from thinkers, scientists, and educationists alike. In it the author seeks to show how we may win to the inner significance of life, and this he does, not by promulgating a new and rigid system of philosophy, but by sketching out for us in a number of terse studies a new method by which we may reach to the inner heart of all the questions of science, ethics, religion, aesthetics, now discussed so endlessly in the world of thought. This method is nothing more than to make a searching scrutiny of our means of expression, our use of language, in order to discover the real sense, meaning, and significance of the terms we use. The author insists that the real value of our various departments of thought, their meaning, that which alone makes them worth our attention, has hitherto remained for us a virtually unstudied subject, and she wishes to take the first steps towards a study of what she calls Significs, i.e., a science which shall have for its object the interpretation of significance, a search into the hidden meaning of our thought-expression, and so into the meaning of the universe of which we are the expression. By laying bare our present chaotic method of expressing our thought, by showing how far our means of expression lags behind our need of expression, and how far our ever-evolving forms of thought, forced into dead forms of language, are rendered feebly, confusedly, or wrongly, such a study would not only shed new light on all our vexed questions, but would give an immense impetus towards a more rational method of education.

It is first pointed out that the word Meaning is itself used most indefinitely and ambiguously, and may be taken in any one of three senses (1) as equivalent to sense, as when we say, 'In what sense?' wishing to know what a term is a sign of, what it stands for, what is its application, what things it denotes; (2) as equivalent to meaning proper, i.e., the implication of a term, its purport, its intention; and (3) as equivalent to significance, as when we speak of the significance of some great movement. We may perhaps throw light on this distinction by taking, as concrete example, some such term as 'alphabet,' and asking what are its meanings. In the first place, then, the term 'alphabet' is a sign, a mark, standing for something, namely a collection of the letters of any language; this is the sense of the term. In the second place, 'alphabet' means those signs which, in any language, denote its primary sounds which, by infinite variety of grouping, form the expression of thought. And, lastly, the significance of the term is surely the importance and wonder of the thought suggested by it, namely, that by any mere grouping and manipulation, primary and meaningless sounds should at length become so surcharged with meaning that they become the expression of man's deepest thought. It must be noted here, however, that this distinction of sense, meaning, and significance, is applicable not only to terms (individual words), but also to forms of expression (phrase and sentence), and it is in this latter case that the aspect of significance is often most prominent. The second and third senses of meaning, then, are more important than the first, and it is our failure to grasp clearly the intention, the purport of our terms, and above all, their significance, that makes our thinking so confused, halting, and limited. The book is particularly forcible in its appeal for a strenuous effort by thinkers towards a grasping of the significance of terms. The significance of a word 'intensifies its sense as well as its meaning by expressing its

* [Originally published as 'Review by C. F. Salmond, M. A., Lecturer on Mental Science, Canterbury College, of *What is Meaning?*', *The Press* (Christchurch, New Zealand), November 30, 1903. For this version see Welby 1904a].

importance, its appeal to us, its moment for us, its emotional force, its ideal value, its moral aspect, its universal or at least social range. All science, all logic, all philosophy, the whole controversy about aesthetic, about ethics, about religion, ultimately concentrate on this: What is the sense of, what do we mean by, what is the significance of, why do we care for Beauty, Truth, Goodness?'

If we examine into our use of language, popular, scientific and philosophical, we shall find full evidence that the author of *What is Meaning?* is fully justified in calling our chaotic method of expression abuse rather than use of language. For not only in popular language do we often unconsciously use the same words in different senses, and with no accurate or full insight into their meaning, but even in scientific and philosophic language meaning is often indefinite, fluctuating, and unstable. If we take in their popular use such terms as Mind, Idea, Image, Conception, Sensation, and ask in what sense or senses they are used, and with what degree of definite meaning employed, we shall find that the man in the street uses them in happy indifference to sense and meaning. We have such phrases as 'a mind to do a thing,' 'a mind of his own,' 'the mind of a man,' 'the common mind,' 'an animal's mind.' In what senses, with what meanings do we use such phrases? Again, we have 'a sensation of cold,' 'a sensation of sight,' 'a sensation of horror' even, and 'it caused a sensation.' There are no words more loosely used than Idea and Conception, and this even by the best writers, and in such generally perspicuous writing as may be found in the pages of a publication like the *Spectator*. And the popular use of terms lingers on in science, so that it seems impossible, especially in the mental sciences, to get clear of ambiguity. In psychology, for example, such terms as Consciousness, Perception, Memory, Feeling, Imagination, and many others are difficult to reduce to exactness because of their loose use in ordinary language; each psychologist in turn wishes to define with more precision. In ethics, again, such terms as Pleasure, Happiness, Motive, Intention, give endless trouble in the matter of clearing of ambiguity in popular use. Much discussion might have been avoided in ethical thought if disputants had only taken care to see that they were using words in the same sense. Even a writer of John Stuart Mill's calibre based part of his argument on behalf of Utilitarianism on a wrong interpretation of the meaning of the simple word Desirable; and metaphysics is by no means free from this taint. It is, indeed, true that not a few of the historic controversies in the world of thought are now seen to have been what we wrongly call merely verbal disputes, that is, disputes arising from different interpretations of the meaning of a word.

And if we err in failing to see the full meaning of terms, we go still more astray in our use of figurative language, notably in our use of those figures of speech depending on the detection of similarity, that is, on analogy. Since all thinking depends on analogy, it would seem a first necessity of valid thought that we should be careful in our use of analogies in the matter of their range and application, but this is, unfortunately, far from being the case. Comparisons may be of various kinds, ranging from those expressing casual likeness, through all grades of partial and general likeness to equivalence or complete correspondence, but at present 'all manner of comparisons from the most absurdly inapplicable to the truest and most complete are lumped together as analogies.' The merely picturesque simile, though, of course, if relevant and fitting, of great use for the brightening of style, is on a quite different footing from the true analogy working out in detail after detail, and the trouble is that we do not take care to distinguish the two, not noticing that a partial analogy, however brilliant, is of all things the most misleading for purposes of accurate thought. 'Mere figures of speech,' says Jowett, 'have unconsciously influenced the minds of great thinkers'; and, according to Lord Palmerston, more mistakes in politics are due to false analogies than to anything else. The need of testing our analogies, and so of distinguishing the true from the false, the complete from the merely partial, is surely imperative. Now the test of an analogy is its conformity to fact, the possibility of working it out in detail, its power to explain, 'to make each other understand.' It needs little examination of current simile and metaphor to see how few of them stand the test. Let us take a few examples of absurd or inapt analogies and compare them with those that are true through and through. The author gives the following pair of

similes taken from an obsolete Latin book, and remarks that one of them is as good as the other: 'As the scum rises to the surface of the pot, so the worst men take leading parts in a revolution,' 'As the cream mounts to the surface of the milk, so the best men take the lead in the state.' Why the community is a bowl of milk when the best men rise to the top, and an unsavoury pot when the worse men come up, is not evident. Again, from the works of a writer who himself rightly inveighs against the use of metaphors that may give a wrong suggestion, the author procures the following: – 'Either the creative fancy scorning a solid masonry of facts, builds its castle in Spain without carpenter and architect, or a hesitating exactness may become the fetish to which the children of the imagination are sacrificed.' Again, linguistic symbols are 'used as the supporting trellis around which the mental life grows up'; speech is 'the raw material from which literature is hewn,' and the 'rank' of a phrase is determined 'by the company it keeps and the place where it is born.' Analogies that will bear test are somewhat long for quotation, but one or two may be given.

Huxley has: – 'Hume does not really bring his mature powers to bear upon his early speculations in the later work. The crude fruits have not been ripened, but they have been ruthlessly pruned away, along with the branches that bore them. The result is a pretty shrub enough, but not the tree of knowledge, with its roots firmly fixed in fact, its branches perennially budding forth into new truths, which Hume might have reared.' Here are examples from science which serve to show that even partial analogies may be of use as long as they are recognized as such: – 'The analogy between the systole and diastole of the heart and the waking and sleeping of the brain may be profitably pushed to a very considerable extent,' and 'Just as visual impulses can be excited by light only through the mediation of the retina, so auditory impulses can be excited by sound only through the mediation of the auditory epithelium; but here the analogy between the optic and auditory nerves seems to end.' One of the tests of a metaphor is that it is able to be translated back in other words. A good example of this is given in the following quotation bearing on Christ's metaphor of the light and salt of the earth: – 'Christ is welcomed as a light for revelation to the Gentiles, His disciples are pronounced by Him to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the power which shows finite being in its true beauty, the element which keeps that, which is corruptible from decay.'

If we once really set to work, our author argues, to distinguish carefully the tested from the untested simile, we should, in the use of comparison, gain a new world. If we recognised the 'crucial importance' of verifying our analogies, we should make for a new departure in thought. If we thus test our analogies in the region of philosophy and religion, 'we shall find many answers of which, without this key to all problems, we have justly despaired; we shall approach the questions of life from a new starting-point.' The author then proceeds to show, in a striking way, that many of the analogies that have entered into thought, when brought face to face with the new world of fact, brought within our ken by modern science, notably by biology and astronomy, are false through and through, making us cling, in spite of ourselves, to false conceptions of life. Many of man's analogies were natural and fitting to his thought when he believed the centre of the universe to be his little world, with the sun revolving round it, and the hosts of the starry heavens for its lamps; many of his analogies, that is, are pre-Copernican, or even Ptolemaic; and at a time when man, through science, has discovered this earth to be but a speck in an infinite cosmos, they still lie hidden in language and falsely colour all our thought. When man has learned to embody in the expression of his thought that, just as this world is 'Planetary and Satellitic,' dependent on a greater world round which it revolves, 'Solar,' not giving energy to itself, but with the energy of a greater body outside itself streaming upon it and giving it life, and 'Cosmic' part and parcel of an infinite whole and interwoven in its warp and woof, so is his life. Planetary, Solar, Cosmic, dependent on some embracing divine agency through which it gains breath and light, by which it is infinitely permeated, and with which it is one. Here the author works out in a suggestive way this triple analogy of planetary, solar, and cosmic, and shows us that we are brought face to face

again with the triad of sense, meaning and significance. The sense-world is the planetary world, the meaning world the solar world, the world of significance the visible universe, which includes both. When, therefore, the Positivist, the modern materialist, insist upon our putting aside from our thought all that is not within our grasp, he is still only in the sense or planetary world. Why should we limit our analogy to the functions of the hand; of touch? Is not the correct analogy in illustrating mental seeing to be borrowed from the functions of the eye? And we must press the analogy right home. We must remember that sight is binocular; that the eyes are adjusted not to the near but to the far; that it needs no painful effort to discern the far; that, therefore, though we are in touch with our own planet, we may indirectly explore by sight our sun and sister planets. This then gives us the solar world, the meaning world. Again, we may not only increase the range of the eye by means of the telescope, 'which reveals further depths; but no limits,' but we can devise a mechanical eye, the sensitive plate, for recording a further world of suns and nebulae beyond even the range of the telescope. This is the world of which we have a doubly indirect vision, the cosmic world, the world of significance. Man is thus endowed with a mind that can not only know the near, but indirectly and doubly indirectly, the far. Thinking by means of analogy is man's mode of indirect thinking and he may be said to have the power of thinking doubly, indirectly, by means of an extension of analogy, by what the author calls translation, i.e., the expression of one department of thought in terms of another, a method by which light may be thrown on both. We can only mention here the striking example given by the author of translation of the terms of evolution, as applied to the science of biology to the departments of psychology, ethics, and religion.

Thus, by discarding effete metaphor and analogy, and by enriching and transfiguring our means of expression by wealth brought to us by modern science, we may hope to reach a new insight into significance, a new interpretation of the universe 'profoundly modifying what we wrongly call the root ideas of religion, of ethics, of poetry, of art, and, lastly, of practical life in all forms.' We should have in the world of thought a 'Copernican reversal'; we should leave for ever behind the 'pre-Copernican' view of a man 'as his own centre fixed and firm, the finished product of self-evolution,' and reach the Copernican, of man as 'the offspring and dependent of a greater, nobler, fuller, stronger, and more energetic centre round which he revolves,' a being who recognises that 'his emotion, intellect, will, and conscience' are 'beams radiated from a nobler sphere, waves running in from a deeper sea of being.' Pessimism would fade out as the blinded vision of a mind still in the lowest plane of the sense-world; the problem of pain would receive new elucidation, and the view that confines its solution to this world be seen to be founded on a false analogy.

The problem then presented to us is: How to reach this interpretative power, and this power to make our expression a more plastic, subtle, far-reaching instrument of thought? And in seeking the answer to this question we are brought face to face with a curious fact in the modern world of science and education. For if we seek the help of evolution and psychology, and ask, What is that which first distinctly marks man from the brute? what is the first human query? We find that man is the first creature in the course of evolution who asks the question Why. Man is the why-asker. He alone seeks the meaning of the universe in which he lives; a meaningless world is impossible for man. Yet in the light of this the attitude of science stands out in startling relief. Science, tired of centuries of 'philosophic guessing' or 'barren dogmatising,' sternly puts aside the question Why, and busies itself with the What and the How of things; its attitude towards the question of design in the frame of things is strictly agnostic. And this can be recognised as good only in so far as it evinces a determination first to master import and purport, to put aside the question of purpose only until it has attained the means to answer aright. But it is in education that we come upon the strangest attitude. The little child is the forerunner of man, he represents primitive man; and the child's cry of Why can never be stilled. Why? cries the child, till the elder, tired by its persistence, and perhaps puzzled, at length refuses to answer. The child's energy in seeking the meaning of its little world cannot be subdued. But the heavy hand of the parent himself,

whose why-asking instinct has been stifled, and the heavy hand of education comes down upon the growing mind, and dulls, stunts, withers. Education at present largely stifles what it should mainly encourage, the why-asking instinct, and we have this sharp contrast brought home to us; in the nursery, the child with its never-weary Why, in the school, the boy with his sullen dislike of lessons, the drudgery of tasks unwillingly done. And the rational psychological solution is in our own hands. The storing up process in education is in its place necessary: the What and How must have a recognised place, but the place of the Why is even more imperative; yet hitherto, we have almost left out this part of education, with immense, far-reaching results in the mental life of the world. When educationists recognise that the crying need of education is to encourage 'a healthy questioning and a healthy search for the answer,' to recognise that its work is to lead the growing mind to a search after sense, meaning, and significance, when with this object they seek to train a generation to recognise the importance of the study of expression so as to ensure in the use of language, besides economy, lucidity, and beauty, 'power to express what now seems beyond expression, both in range and complexity' then the whole mental attitude of man will be swiftly changed. And this consummation is to be brought about, the author urges, by the new method of Significs. The working out into concrete details he leaves to educationists, but she shows us what could be done in this way by sketching for us interesting lessons in the interpretation of significance.

'What is Meaning?' has a new outlook, and though it contains perhaps tentative and suggestive, rather than finished thought, is a book of deep interest for all thinkers. Perhaps the author, under the glamour of fresh discovery, somewhat exaggerates the importance of the new attitude, and when she tells us that the results of this method of Significs will be to 'profoundly modify' the root conceptions of all branches of philosophy, she perhaps unduly slights past thought, and forgets that the great thinkers, even though they have time and again been led astray in the wake of false analogies, have been in the truest sense 'significians,' and have thrown ray after ray of light on the deep significance of life. Thinking such as this, however, may well lead to a truer philosophy that may gather into a rich harvest the sheaves of truth brought in from various fields. Its great service seems to consist in pointing out what impetus abstract thought might gain in its quest for truth by following in the track pointed out by modern science. But the work has also great value educationally, and seems to be a forerunner of a revolution in educational methods. Though it is, of course, wrong to say that this interpretative attitude is quite wanting in modern education, yet it is to be feared that it is greatly lacking, and the author of *What is Meaning?* rightly insists that education as a whole, as a system, must come round to this attitude. The book here is at one with the trend of modern thought, and in no uncertain way sounds the knell of what may be called the old Latin grammar routine in education.

Something may be added in complaint of the somewhat obscure and difficult rendering of the thought of the book; the transitions in the author's argument are sometimes hard to follow; but perhaps one should be chary of such complaint in criticising an author who holds that a false lucidity is the most dangerous defect in style, and that meaning is always difficult to grasp in entirety.

Welby's reply

The above is reprinted as an admirable summary, as well as a generously appreciative review, of *What is Meaning?* A few words of comment, however, seem desirable.

In the first place it cannot be said that the method of Significs is nothing more than a scrutiny of our means of expression, though of course it involves this. For the first result of such a scrutiny is a new appreciation not only of the useful distinction between, but also of the nature and work of, sense, meaning and significance. It also brings about a change of mental attitude, and thus a

practically heightened power of piercing through the many obstacles which at present hide from us the real character and scope of human experience.

This of course, so far from slighting or ignoring the work of human genius in what we call ancient days, leads to even enhanced appreciation of this. For the thinkers of the past did all that could be done in their day; the analogies which they used were all true as a die to natural fact, scientific theory and philosophical truth as they were then accessible or available; they were continually, with the sympathy of their hearers and the acceptance of their students, enriching and pruning their language. This is the first age of the world in which the thinker or teacher is proud to complete linguistic sterility. And if in rare cases he does propose to develop or rectify current modes of inherited and now misfitting expression, he finds entire lack of response both from his colleagues and his audience or readers. Quite recently, however, it has become clear that we are on the eve of a development of pure mathematics in the direction of Significs, and there is even a hope that the barrier of terminology between mathematics, logic, and philosophy may be surmounted. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the good results to all forms of thought of such a 'significal' advance as this. For it would not tend to subjugate the categories of thought to those of quantity or number: it would not tend to reduce language to formal and technical symbolism and notation. Still less would it lower the standard of precision in either pure mathematics or logic, – now by some advanced thinkers, more or less wholly identified. It would tend to bring order into disorder in every department of thought and action, and to throw new light upon the genius and nature of order itself: it would show that the scope of Significs includes that of mathematical and 'symbolic' logic, as it includes the homeliest interests of the 'man in the street.'

I hope I have said enough in the book as to my sense of distressing failure in setting forth a theme almost too great even for my betters. For all the more do I hope that one of those who see as Mr. Salmond does, the great, immediate, practical possibilities of the new point of view which (for convenience' sake and as the most inclusive word) is now to be called Significs, may also see his way to its exposition and advocacy in a more systematic form.

Harrow, January 14th, 1904

8.6. 'What is Meaning?,' by A. J. Jenkinson*

The studies in this interesting book gather around the use and abuse of language. The author assails the carelessness with which we employ such means of expression as we have, and the conventions which prohibit attempts to discover more fitting, suggestive and economical modes of writing and speaking. Language is a most precious portion of our inheritance; and it should be the conscious aim of every one to hand it on richer and more precise. Until the whole people is filled with this idea, the present reign of confusion and fallacy must continue, stunting the faculties of the young and leaving the old powerless to declare their deeper feelings. 'Expression must overtake the thinker and poet, if they are to open new worlds of truth and beauty.'

Not the least fruitful source of error is the use of analogies and metaphors, representing an unscientific view of the world, especially when it is doubtful whether these figures are used as arguments or as literary embellishments. All such figures, however, must be discarded; new metaphors and analogies should be drawn from the best science of the day. Our language should always reflect the fullest and most accurate knowledge we possess. Not only shall we in this way escape much confusion, and the tiresome attempts to unravel verbal fallacies; but language itself

* [Originally published as 'What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance. V. Welby. London: Macmillan & Co. Pp. xxxi, 321.' *Mind* 13(1904): 428–429].

will lead on to the suggestion of further truths.⁴ The idea, that there is latent even in language as we have it the promise of much knowledge, is constantly present to the author. Our words signify more than we mean. Man is always greater than he knows.

This conception governs Lady Welby's remarks about Education and Primitive Religion. She attacks the cramping and artificial methods which have so long controlled the schools; and insists that the aim of the teacher is to elicit knowledge, and stimulate the natural interest the child takes in learning. What is said on this subject in the studies, and illustrated in several notes and particularly in a dialogue in the appendix, appears to us specially good and suggestive. As regards Religion, the attempts to explain the elaborate rites and strange beliefs of the primitive mind by dreams and odd occurrences are rejected or at any rate relegated to a secondary place. These cults are expressions of a genuine passion for the eternal and unseen, of an organic response to appeals from the Divine Nature. Hence what seems most grotesque is absurd only in a superficial and relative sense.

Much emphasis is laid throughout this book on the distinction of sense, meaning and significance. These words, often regarded as synonyms, are used to indicate the different stages of development in expressiveness. We cannot pretend to understand the author completely on this point. But the distinction appears to be the following. Meaning belongs to the sphere of deliberate will; the meaning of a word or phrase is the purport it is intended to convey. Below meaning in the scale of expression stands sense. Sense does not explicitly involve the conception of purpose at all. A thing has sense, if it stands as a sign of something for me, whether or not it has received its character as a sign from the will of any one else. Significance, on the other hand, stands above meaning. A thing is significant in so far as it is part of a system, and is therefore involved in all manner of relations beyond those which constitute its intention or meaning. The line between sense and significance is hard to draw. Indeed it labours under the same difficulties as the distinction between denotation and connotation. But perhaps we may say that in the one case we are referring to the more immediate, and in the other to the wider and more remote relations of a thing.

The majority of readers will probably find this book somewhat fanciful in parts, and also obscure in respect of the argument. But they will also find many penetrating criticisms on our use of words and analogies, and on education, an interesting selection of quotations in the notes and appendices, and throughout much that is both stimulating and suggestive.

8.7. 'Musings without method,' by Charles Whibley*

For many years Lady Welby has been known as the champion in England of Significs, or the Science of Meaning. She has fought the battle of Expressiveness with great courage and almost alone. She has understood with perfect clarity how much depends upon our being able to communicate one with another through the symbols of speech. In her last book⁵ she does but illustrate and enforce her familiar theories. But if it contains little that is fresh, it is packed with suggestion, and, though it leads us to no definite conclusion, it will convince those to whom conviction is necessary that what we lack in science, in politics, in the intercourse of everyday, is lucidity of utterance, a clear method of interpreting thought by words. That language was given us to conceal our thoughts is

4. An interesting example of this is given in chap. xvii., which contains the 'translation' of part of Dr. Jackson's lectures on the Nervous System.

* [Originally published in *Blackwood's Magazine* 190 (1), 149: 121–132; 191(1), 159: 699–710, 1911–1912. The current edition is partial, presenting only the pages on V. Welby, from 128 to 132 (see Whibley 1911–1912)].

5. *Significs and Language. The Articulate Form of our Expressive and Interpretative Resources*, by V. Welby. London: Macmillan & Co.

less an epigram than a literal statement of facts. The mechanical apparatus of life, the machines which have been invented to save the labour of our hands, are distinguished by precision and accuracy, the two qualities in which language, the most potent and useful instrument of all, is lacking. For this lack of accuracy many reasons may be assigned. Our speech mocks us. When we speak or write, we encounter those whose knowledge may be greater or less than ours, but is never the same. We make appeal to imperfect sympathies or unequal imaginations. And the difficulty of expression is greater to-day, because we try to pack new thoughts into the old phrases. The intelligence of man has been reborn; he has no new symbols wherewith he may explain its rebirth. Science has added and is adding daily new treasures to our knowledge and experience. The material conveniences of life increase with terrifying rapidity. Where once we travelled on foot or by horseback, we are now carried by motor-car, and presently we shall take unto ourselves wings and fly through the air. What do we do with language that we may express the new facts of life? We invent a few barbarous hybrids, and think we have done our duty. As in science, so in politics, we are content with a vague approach to lucidity. How many dissensions would be saved us if we were able to say accurately what we thought, so that the crowds which gather about the hustings might comprehend it! The politician's chief purpose, which is to deceive, would be foiled at once were he compelled to precision of speech. The voter would no longer go to the polling-booth duped by a false phrase or lying picture, if he could understand the speeches of conflicting candidates as he understands the machine which he manipulates for his daily bread. And as we have things which we cannot fit with names, so old names survive when their use has perished. 'We go on building with names,' says Sir T. Clifford Allbutt, 'when the things are altered and wasted away, as sometimes beavers pathetically persist in constructing dams and canals when the water has gradually dried up or has changed its course.' Shall we, like the beavers, bind ourselves in the chains of habit, or shall we, freed from our fetters, follow the one path of safety, and 'realise as we have never done yet what we are doing with speech'?

Here, then, is the problem stated. Language, which should unite speaker and hearer, divides them, lacking precision. The man of science might surmount the difficulty by leaving the literary language on one side and by inventing for himself a system of formulae. For those who are condemned to express themselves in the terms of familiar speech no such resource is possible. They must face the problem, and resolve by a severe castigation of their style to be as concise, clear, and terse as possible. They must rid themselves of the poor pieces of string wherewith bunglers are wont to tie their clumsy sentences together. They must understand the true meaning of words as they are explained, not merely by the philologist, but by the historian. There are a hundred accidents of time and usage which make words forget their origin. And yet, if we would understand them, we must look below the surface of their present meaning. The one sure remedy for the inexpressiveness of language is to understand the life and origin of words, to know their etymological and social history, to remember the tangle of association in which they are bound. Words, like men and buildings, grow old and keep their weather-stains. And it is one clear reason of misunderstanding, that all men do not interpret them at the same period of their growth.

Lady Welby is not content with the precise use and interpretation of words. To make herself clear she would transcend the level and limits of 'language.' She would fit the instrument of Significance with all the most modern improvements. 'I am quite ready for the most drastic changes,' she says, 'as well as for the most scrupulous and anxious preservation of our existing resources all over the world. I want Greek; I want Chaucer; I want Esperanto, or rather its worthier successor, when that shall appear. I want the Zulu clicks.' She wants in vain. All the wishing in the world will not extend the boundaries of speech. No man by taking thought shall add new or old words to our tongue. It is our sternest obligation to obey the rules of the game. If it makes the task of expression more difficult, it makes it also better worth accomplishing.

It is, then, by a proper use of words, and by the assurance that they who hear them have learned to understand, that language may be made expressive. But at all hazards the personal element of

style and speech must be guarded. No good can come of compelling a uniformity of language. There is no worse danger than the danger of a standard. Two men of genius in the history of the world have welded their speech into a perfect instrument of expression – Cicero and Voltaire. No writers of prose have ever been more lucid, more highly polished, more gravely sonorous when they wished sonority, than these, and no writers have inflicted heavier injuries upon their mother-tongues in the follies of their disciples. What the worship of Cicero did for Latin, when Latin was a spoken and written speech, has been demonstrated by Erasmus. Swathed in the clothes provided for it by the genius of Cicero, it became lifeless and mummified, and to-day it exists only in the exercises of anxious schoolboys. Yet its example was not lost to the modern world, and much of the dead formality of English prose is still due to the tyranny of Ciceronianism. The influence of Voltaire may be more easily detected. It lies like a blight upon French literature. The freedom of Rabelais and Bossuet is no longer the heritage of France. All men believe that they can write because they have learned to imitate Voltaire. And thus we find a vast amount of printed matter untouched by individuality expert and meaningful, which has all the appearance of literature and is not.

‘The nearest approach,’ says Lady Welby, ‘to the mastery, which is our true birthright, was achieved in what we call the classical era.’ That is perfectly true, and it points the way to salvation. The proper use and understanding of language are to be sought and will be found in the intelligent, not the slavish, study of Greek and Latin. These two tongues – the wisest vehicles of expression ever fashioned by human intelligence – are the origin and should be the model of our speech. They possess in the highest degree all those elements of accuracy and precision of which our more loosely constructed languages are deprived. Their elaborate inflections, their stern syntax, teach those who learn them a lesson in economy of speech which no modern language can impart. They who, in obedience to the old curriculum now passing away, spent some years in converse with Greek and Latin, gained a clear perception of the use of words, even if they forgot every line of Virgil and Euripides that they had committed to memory, and were thus the richer by one piece of knowledge which they could not otherwise have obtained. By a foolish paradox the determination to suppress Greek and Latin in our schools coincides with a general desire to attain a nicer sense of expression in our own language, and we shall not be wholly conscious of the debt which our living speech owes to the languages which are called dead until we have lost them.

One proof of our inexpressiveness in speaking and writing is the careless use of ridiculous and meaningless words. A kind of fashion imposes upon us for a while a set of absurd symbols. For some years the journalist, thinking the verb ‘to be’ not good enough for his high purpose, substituted for it the monstrosity ‘materialise.’ ‘The event did not materialise,’ he wrote, with the pride of one who is doing his work well. And now that ‘materialise’ has become some what stale, the word of his choice is ‘adumbrate,’ which may mean, in his facile hands, almost everything except that to which its etymology and classic usage entitles it. The same love of fashion inspires the ready writer to speak of an author’s ‘output’ – a barbarous indignity – and to note what he is pleased to call the ‘trend’ of everything. But even now he has not scaled the height of folly attained by his French colleague, who, in defiance of sense and significance, uses the word ‘avatar’ when he means no more than an accident.

Another result of contemning the classics is a confusion of imagery. ‘Our metaphors,’ says Lady Welby, ‘are divorced from our facts.’ Worse than this, they are inextricably mixed. They resemble not a picture, but a composite photograph of inconsistent objects. Here again is a fault which the study of Latin and Greek might correct. At this very moment a discussion is active in France concerning the ancient tongues. To write good French, says M. Barrès, it is necessary to learn Latin and Greek. We are of M. Barrès’ opinion, and would extend his argument to the writing of good English. With perfect justice the French critics have pitched upon the mixture of metaphors as the worst sign of unstudied speech. Even M. Barrès himself, the champion of the dead languages and an Academician, is not faultless. He is, for instance, guilty of the following

courageous sentence: 'The silver altar is less brilliant than this stone, frozen by burning kisses.' More greatly daring, he has told us that 'Venice has her caprices but no season. She knows only what the clouds tell her when they want the heavens to marry with the lagoon.' But in this field of absurdity the journalists easily vanquish the men of letters. 'Mme. Judic's talent,' wrote a reporter the other day, 'is like a bottle of ink, in which the scalpel must not be used too freely for fear of finding there only a pinch of cinders.' On the pen of such a writer as this words have no meaning whatever. They are the symbols not of full thought, but of an empty brain. He who uses them has no power of vision, and can ask no vision of his readers. Yet it is his example that the most of our writers follow. How shall we return to saner methods of speech, to a clearer expression of ideas? By expecting of those who hear and read some gleams of fancy and understanding. By a patient study of the restrained and modest classics. By a frank acknowledgment that language is an instrument fashioned to our hand by the masters of the past; that there be no worse blasphemy than a contempt for tradition.

8.8. 'Musings without method. Victoria Lady Welby,' by Charles Whibley*

The late Victoria Lady Welby, whose death we regret to record, belonged to two worlds, and may be said to have lived two lives. Born in the year of Queen Victoria's accession, she was a part, on the one hand, of what is known as the early Victorian era. Linked to the future by the studies which for many years she pursued, she looked forward with a spirit of confidence to the achievements of science. If her youth was spent in travel, her later years were devoted entirely to patient research. More than this: she had known Courts, and the life of the great world. The wife of a county gentleman, she had profited by an experience which falls to the lot of few metaphysicians. The friend of philosophers, she was an adept in the discussion of abstruse questions, which have small chance of being asked or answered in an atmosphere of quarter-sessions.

Her mother, Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley, deserves more than a passing memory. A woman of character and enterprise, she travelled far and wide, from Norway to Mexico, from the United States to the Holy Land, at a time when long journeys were neither easy nor fashionable. Whatever countries she visited she looked upon with her own eyes, and judged with her own understanding. Her knowledge of the Southern States of America, for instance, persuaded her, in spite of the prevailing cant, to defend the slave-owners against the false charges of cruelty which were brought against them, and to paint the lot of the slaves in the true colours of happiness, in which British liberalism dared not look upon them. Her independence of spirit and her intellectual honesty she bequeathed to her daughter, who in her girlhood shared the hazard, in those days not inconsiderable, of her mother's wanderings. Miss Stuart-Wortley, indeed, was little more than a child when her mother's sudden death left her isolated and friendless in the Syrian desert, and thus compelled her to begin her own life with an experience in grim contrast to the career of sheltered research which was presently to be hers.

After some years spent at Frogmore with the Duchess of Kent, she was appointed Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria. But it is not as a lady of the Court that she will be remembered. For many years before her death she had been a profound student of science and philosophy. Above all she had devoted herself to the study of Meaning, or Significs as it is called, which she hoped would enable us to revise the many errors which befog our judgment and to understand the problems of philosophy, politics, and literature without the intervention of false symbols. Much work has

* [Originally published as 'Musings without method.' *Blackwood's Magazine* 191(1), 159: 699–710. The current edition presents pages 706–710, specifically on V. Welby (see Whibley 1912)].

been done by others in the same field, notably by Professor Bréal. By none have clearer results been achieved than by Lady Welby.

That language as it is written and spoken today is an imperfect instrument will not be denied even by the sanguine. The precision which is indispensable in the mechanical apparatus of life still seems beyond the attainment of speech. Each man puts upon words his own burden of history and association. Rarely do we meet one who speaks precisely the same language as ourselves. The others may be before us or behind. A hundred prejudices or superstitions separate us from those about us. We hear as in a dream; we look upon the printed page as upon a set of blurred images. The work of the Tower of Babel is not yet undone. And the confusion is greater to-day than ever it was, because new continents of thought, of knowledge, are coming daily into our ken. How shall we fit our faulty speech to the new experience? As old words, diverted to another purpose, refuse to perform their old office, new words are still to seek which shall help us to pierce the fresh mysteries of science and philosophy. We are bound in the ancient chains, and know not how to shake them off. In other words, as Lady Welby once wrote, ‘we complain now of the tyranny of language just as we used to complain of the tyranny of slow and inconvenient modes of locomotion. Only then we became discontented, and our discontent issued in concerted and energetic efforts to improve what we had, and that on fresh lines; leaving the horse first for the steam engine, then for the electrical engine. It once seemed that we could never send news quicker than a horse could gallop or a ship sail; next we sent it by steam, and now our telegrams travel in a few moments all over the world, and sometimes arrive “before they were sent.” But in language we may say that we are still in the “horse” stage; just as an army with its cavalry is still in the horse-stage. Why not seriously face the fact that we have only to utilise an undoubtedly growing discontent and apply it to the discovery of more effectual modes of expressing our minds, and that then we shall find a general raising of the standard of news-sending?’

All that is true. If only we could perfect the instrument of speech, we should put an end to half the controversies of the world; we might change politics from the wasteful thing of rancour and falsehood that now it is, to a series of easy agreements; we might make science and philosophy intelligible to the simple mind; we might, in brief, achieve what now is impossible, without ridding ourselves of the ambiguity which is necessary if we are not to fall at once into a fatal precision of thought and word. It is, indeed, proof of Lady Welby’s wise method that she refused to regard definition as a true remedy for defects of expression. She clung to ambiguity, ‘an inherent characteristic of language.’ But she made a clear distinction. ‘The kind of ambiguity which acts as a useful stimulant to intelligence and enriches the field of conjecture, is very different from that which in the intellectual sphere begins and ends in confusion, or in the moral sphere begins in disingenuousness and ends in deliberate and successful imposture. We all alike, in fact, suffer and lose by these; by the endless disputation which the one entails, and the force given by the other to the specious oratory of charlatans.’

With this exception made, Lady Welby would have subordinated every other subject ‘to the study of that sense, of that meaning, and above all of that significance, which makes the whole value of facts or ideas, and of the order and sequences of either.’ To attain her end, she would have increased in any and every direction the boundaries of speech. She was ready for drastic changes. ‘I want Greek,’ she said, ‘I want Chaucer, I want Esperanto, or rather its worthier successor, when that shall appear. I want the Zulu clicks.’ The list of her wants proves the difficulty of her enterprise. Though we all agree in hoping for the day when language shall become a perfect instrument for exchanging thought, we must all agree also that good counsel is not enough to bring it nearer. A language is not a mechanism; it is something organic, which grows to maturity and fades like the trees and flowers. A new word may be invented by this man or that; its acceptance depends upon something which resembles a natural force more nearly than an act of volition. The proper use of language, again, is an art as well as a science, and, being an art, it can be practised only by highly endowed individuals. Nor is this all: the man who thinks most profoundly is rarely gifted

with a clarity of expression, and thus it is that science and philosophy are constantly setting up fresh barriers between them and the general understanding. Moreover, the tendency of language, in spite of new ideas and new mechanical discoveries, has for some three centuries leaned towards attenuation. We are no longer catholic in our use of words, as they were in the Elizabethan age. Our modern sensitiveness rejects slang, and accepts barbarous technicalities. We kill the living plant and cherish the dried specimen of the herbarium. The harm done by Addison and Steele in the wanton simplification of our English tongue still endures. How, then, when we have wantonly set up a false standard, shall we dare to look back to Chaucer or forward to Zulu clicks?

And by a customary irony, at the very moment when we begin to understand the importance of clear expression, we are doing our best to banish from our schools the study of Latin and Greek, which was the best preparative ever devised for the writing and understanding of English. The economy of words, the excision of superfluous particles, the close knitting of sentences – these virtues were best attained by the study of what are foolishly called the 'dead' languages. And now that democracy regards them as a vain sign of superiority, we run the risk of losing the valuable lessons which they taught. The newspapers, moreover, which serve the most of men, compelled to read by Act of Parliament, for literature, display little respect for any language, dead or alive. The few words which they have mastered are at once ugly and inexpressive. It is only by a habit of patience that we arrive at what it is that the reporter means; and as the reporter is far more intimately familiar to the general reader than Shakespeare or the Bible, he puts into the heads of the people a love of common phrases and meaningless words which must ever be the despair of the student of 'Significs.'

Yet Lady Welby's devotion to the science of Meaning remained unshaken. She saw its difficulties and its dangers, and was still convinced that it and it alone could extricate us from the confusion of thought and word. She acknowledged that we had lost 'the guiding clue of Nature,' and she looked to the child to find the path which his elders have missed.

'Why is the child the arbiter of the future,' she asked, 'the discoverer of world-secrets? Because the parent inherits a primal tendency to revert to the fixed and rooted form, while the child is "free-swimming," it is the natural explorer. And for ages we, the parents, through the teachers, have been more and more successfully trying to train and educate our "free-swimmers" into fixed and rooted prisoners.' So she advocated a liberty of growth, a freedom to attain the right expressiveness to which she attached so great an importance. That she died with her work unaccomplished matters little. Very few of her contemporaries had the talent of inspiration that was hers, and she confidently left to the young the task of handing on the torch of learning which she herself had trimmed and lit.

8.9. 'Lady Welby,' by William Macdonald*

(Victoria Lady Welby died at Denton Manor, Lincolnshire, on March 29. Her father was the Hon. Charles Stuart-Wortley, and her mother, Lady Emmeline, a daughter of the fifth Duke of Rutland. After her father's early death, Miss Stuart-Wortley travelled with her mother in many parts of the world-including Mexico, Morocco, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine. Lady Emmeline died in the Syrian desert, and Miss Stuart-Wortley was rescued by the British Consul at Aleppo from her perilous isolation. In 1863 she married the late Sir W. E. Welby-Gregory, whose additional name of Gregory she did not adopt. Her book of reflections on religious subjects *Links and Clues*, published thirty years ago, made a powerful appeal to a large circle of readers. Two later volumes, *What is Meaning?* and *Significs and Language*, and the article on Significs in the recent edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, dealt with the use of language as the coinage of thought – a subject

* [Originally published in *The Sociological Review*, vol. V, 1912. Reprint 1964: 152–156].

which, as Mr. Macdonald explains in the article following, absorbed much of her attention in the latter part of her life).

The Hon. Victoria Lady Welby, news of whose death at the age of 75 arrives as we go to press, was not only one of the most remarkable intellectual personalities of her time, but also in some sort a founder of the Sociological Society. Regarding the great value of her help in the laborious days of its formation, only the first Honorary Secretary could speak with full knowledge; and he is now, unfortunately, beyond the seas. But having not long since heard him enlarge upon the topic, not for the first time, in most hearty terms – terms of retrospective admiration no less than of gratitude – I may be allowed to say on his behalf that nothing could have been more thorough-going or generous than Lady Welby's interest in the then tentative project, which he brought under her notice, of forming a Sociological Society of Great Britain. She worked for it, and induced others to work; and, despite her most variable health and other drawbacks, expended during many months an abundance of hospitality expressly in order to facilitate Mr. Branford's meeting, under her own auspices as hostess, a great number of distinguished or influential men likely to be interested or aiding in such a scheme. As she had a very wide acquaintance not only in the social but in the scientific and philosophical worlds, she was able to render services in this kind which hardly any one but she could have rendered, and none with such a vivacity of goodwill.

Once or twice, after the Society was triumphantly started on its career, there were hopes of an address from her on some one of the many subjects towards which her thought looked. But the same causes which continually postponed or rendered nugatory any attempt to formulate her philosophy at large, told against that also. Nevertheless she contributed to the earlier discussions several short papers through which, as through everything that she wrote, there jutted out the indications of a singularly penetrating mind and of a way of thinking that was not of the schools and still less of the colleges. It was that of what she herself would have called a *Race Mother*.

This is not the place to attempt the difficult task of describing what her philosophy was, or what her way of thinking led to. One thing it may be worth while to say, however: that the word *Significs*, under which she finally brought it all, can only do the world a disservice if it causes people to rest in the idea that her intellectual energies were wasted in an impossible quarrel with the English language as it is and is likely to remain. Many pages of writing, and passages of conversation uncounted, might, it is true, be adduced in support of the idea. But that is because there were many distances in the field of her thought, and she was apt to meet the public on (or try to address them from) the outer or hitherward region that was nearest to them. Also it is to be added that, being typically a seer, she was liable to the fluctuations of the exceptionally gifted. She was not at all moments in full command of her own message – did not always see it clearly and see it whole, even as the poet is not always at inspiration point – and so was content to expiate upon some fringe or projection of it then in view. Hence many a quip and quibble more or less merrily meant. Hence, mainly, many a too earnest protest against particular words or phrases for which nobody is seemingly much the better or the worse. Even of these, however, it is to be said that though the currency of two or three, thirty or sixty instances of misfitting term or misdirecting connotation may be no very grievous hindrance to social or even philosophical discourse, the currency of an indefinite number of such may very reasonably become a public concern in an age of unexampled accelerations and interactions of knowledge, thought, and life. Be that as it may, however, it was with *Life* – *Life* more abundant here, *Life* unspeakable beyond the point where knowledge for the present ends – that Lady Welby was ultimately and always concerned, and only with *Language* as it was the means and attribute, the expression and the power of *Life*.

A biographical word or two may be indicative, if insufficient as an explanation of her mental life-course and qualities. Born of the highest rank of our oldest aristocracy titled and untitled, she early made acquaintance with the roughest hardship and the most imminent perils during an unconventional, not to say wild, round of travel made by her gifted mother through East

and West about 1848–1850. Returning an orphan, she spent her teens in ducal surroundings, at Belvoir, or with her godmother the Duchess of Kent, after whom she was named, and thence passed on to Court as a Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria. Then came her marriage with Sir William Welby-Gregory, a gentleman whom all tokens show to have been a paragon of just and serious manhood; the building of the beautiful manor house at Denton; and a great deal of social ministrations, local and national (including the founding of the Royal School of Art Needlework), such as her position made possible and her essentially religious and sympathetic, albeit energetic and compulsive, character inclined her towards.

It sounds rather emphatically of this world, and of wealthy England. And yet through it all there had ever run, in the heart and thoughts of a child, a girl, and a young wife of renowned conversational vivacity and varied talent, an almost romantic aspiration towards, an entirely simple and wistful yearning for, the intellectual life as she conceived it to be, among the wise and the learned, the thinkers and the teachers of mankind. When in the course of her married years she began to make her way, with however little assurance, into this El Dorado of the mind – this region mild of calm and serene air – she found it, to her bewilderment, quite other than she had thought. Here was a world of confusion and outcry indeed, as though Comus and his rout held festival within the pale: in every direction antagonisms, controversies, misunderstandings, sectional interests even in science and metaphysics, and all the little ironies or vulgarities of animosity, partisanship, prejudice and stupidity, just as they exist in courts and cottages! The discovery, presently made, that the greater part of this turmoil was caused by differences about the sense of particular words first brought home to her the conception of language as conditioning and enabling all our thought, and therefore as largely constituting as well as limiting our actual being as intelligences. That conception never left her, but went with her – a warning, an encouragement and a hope – into all the worlds which thought enters and tries to make its own. There were few (with the curious exception of languages mastered in the polyglot way) which she did not enter; but one was the exploration of her life. She had already verified (shall I say?) the sterility of philosophy – the philosophy, at least, of the systems – when she bravely set out to seek for truth, and God's sufficient answer for His universe, in Science: science, which was at that time generally regarded, by its friends and its foes alike, as the rival if not the enemy of Religion. And in Science, I think one may say, she found what she sought. Not that the 'linguistic anarchy' which she discovered everywhere was absent here. In proof of the contrary she produced, in a crowded brochure or two, an alarming magazine of evidence, and could easily have centupled the citations. But here she found the open deeps of space and the secret heart of the atom teeming alike with intimations, prophecies and assurances of the best that man could dream or hope for. Here she found knowledge, as it opened more and more to men's eyes, relating itself fact by fact and science by science in one progressive denial of disorder or incompleteness, and inevitably bodying forth the vision of a Reality so beyond all imagination wonderful that it was adding no higher attribute to it to describe it as Divine. She was indifferent, indeed, whether any so described, if only they might apprehend it according to the measure of their minds and their day. To herself, the word 'natural' was a sacramental word, and could get no addition from an attribution touched with particularity as even the word 'divine' is, and still more the word 'God'; about which indeed she always felt uncomfortable, because of all the historical horrors with which men had stained it. As a perilous modern has written of morals beyond good or evil, so hers was a religion beyond theism and atheism alike; an acceptance of the Wonder and a great expectancy; and in place of all creed a dissolving of the whole spirit before the name of Christ, which she could rarely bring herself to utter.

Writing against time, I have been carried further upon one theme than I could have wished, and cannot now restore the balance by dealing even slightly with one or two of the pleas, other than that with regard to language, which Lady Welby most eagerly maintained. This may be said as to her significance, that she is – beyond the fact of being extraordinary in the history of women – a

link with three ages of English thought. Her earlier work was religious in the conventional sense, though of a rare spirituality in its kind. The challenge which it met was merely the challenge which mid-century agnostic philosophy had presented to the serious religious who were above the paltry proofs and disproofs of an earlier day and still more above the meanness of summary disparagement of the views of men of acknowledged moral dignity and intellect. Her next stage, the period of her great quest, was an attempt to meet the challenge of the great disturbance of thought made by the coming of evolution and its conquests. She found her own answer; so that when the new spiritual conceptions of the universe came, or the new physiological metaphysics – let us call it for brief Bergson – it was only declaring much that she had prophesied and not a little that she had said. To know her – and she had her varying moods, as a woman, and especially one fighting up against frailties of health and much positive pain, has a right to have – but to know her was to gather a sense, which no other experience could have given, that the world was indeed spiritual and ultimately translucent. And now that her prophesying is done, one knows also that she has come to fulfilment, though not where or how.

8.10. ‘Review of *Significs and Language*,’ by F. Kettle*

Lady Welby, whose death last month we record elsewhere, held the view that the time has come for translating the knowledge now accumulated ‘into valid terms of life and thought.’ Until this translation has been made our ‘thinking is in arrears and lags behind enacted experience.’ In other words our philosophical and economic integrations have not kept pace with our discoveries in science and mechanics. ‘Great tracts of experience . . . remain without an ordered vocabulary or notation.’ To remedy this defect we must study Significs, tentatively defined in this book as the science concerned wholly with sense, meaning, and significance of all expression ‘whether by action or sound, symbol or picture.’ Now from time immemorial distinguished authors have endeavoured to express their ideas precisely and adequately. The very first evidence that a man is thinking for himself is detected in his use of language, in his scrupulous care to leave no shade of ambiguity in the reader’s mind. The purifying process can be seen at work everywhere where thinkers and writers aggregate. It would almost seem as if words were in constant need of medical treatment, so liable are they to collect and store material inimical to their life. In the appendix to this little book illustrations are given from writers and speakers of the wrong use of words, or rather of a lack of precision and discrimination in the expression of ideas. One writer is offended because *amaigrissements* is confounded with atrophies; another writer states that ‘one of the principal obstacles to the rapid diffusion of a new idea lies in the difficulty of finding suitable expressions to convey its essential point to other minds.’ Sir Frederick Pollock, referring to Spinoza’s contribution to philosophy, says, ‘The terms were there to his hand, still the only currency of scholars; the ideas for which they had been framed were dead or dying.’ We might continue to quote from the appendix and elsewhere passages written with the object of showing how difficult it is for language to time its growth in close correspondence with that of thought. But at the end of our quotations we should still be left asking whether Significs merely sought to tighten the connection between words and things. If that is its only function then it is no new science, but as old as articulate utterance. Turn into any library, and book after book could be made to give up its quota of illustrations to the science of Significs were this all. It is not all, and the science of Significs will never be written before all that is potential in man is actualised – until, in short, the Logos becomes synonymous with Expression. Nevertheless, Lady Welby’s booklet is well worth reading, and though she may not have succeeded she has failed in a good cause.

* [Originally published as ‘Review of *Significs and Language*, by Victoria Welby. Macmillan and Co., 1911. 3/6 net.’ *The Sociological Review*, vol. V, 1912. Reprint 1964, 175].

8.11. Welby Victoria Lady Welby, by Susan Petrilli*

Victoria Lady Welby (1837–1912), independent scholar, philosopher, originator of signifiacs, and founding mother of ‘semiotics,’ was born into the highest circles of English nobility. She was not educated in any conventional sense and in her early years travelled widely with her mother (cf. Hardwick 1977, pp. 13–14), publishing her travel diary in 1852. After her marriage to Sir William Earle Welby in 1863, she began her research fully aware of her exceptional status as an open-minded female intellectual of the Victorian era.

She introduced the neologism ‘signifiacs’ for her theory of meaning which examines the relation among signs, sense in all its signifying implications, and values as well as their practical consequences for human behaviour. Initially her interest was directed towards theological questions which lead to her awareness of the problems of language, meaning and interpretation. In 1881 she published *Links and Clues*, considered unorthodox by official opinion in religious circles. In it she reflects on the inadequacies of religious discourse which, she believed, was cast in outmoded linguistic forms. In her examination of language and meaning she found a pervasive linguistic confusion which largely stemmed from a misconception of language as a system of fixed meanings, and which could be resolved only by the recognition that language must grow and change as does human experience generally. She proposed a critique of figurative language and insisted on the need to adequately develop a critical linguistic consciousness (cf. Welby 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898). She made a serious study of the sciences with special reference to biology and evolutionary theory which she read critically, with the conviction that important scientific discoveries supplied the new experiences in the light of which all discourse, including the religious, could be updated and transformed into something more significant. Her main publications on these topics include *What is Meaning?* (1983 [1903]), her most sophisticated theoretical work, *Signifiacs and Language* (1985 [1911]), which is more of an appeal for signifiacs, and her articles ‘Meaning and Metaphor’ (1893) and ‘Sense, Meaning and Interpretation’ (1896), both included in the volume of 1985, *Signifiacs and Language*, with a selection from her other previously unpublished writings.

Besides numerous articles in newspapers, magazines and scientific journals, Welby published a long list of privately printed essays, parables, aphorisms, and pamphlets on a large range of subjects addressed to diverse audiences: science, mathematics, anthropology, philosophy, education, and social issues. She promoted the study of signifiacs, announcing the Welby Prize for the best essay on signifiacs in the journal *Mind* (1896), awarded to Ferdinand Tönnies (1899–1900) in 1898 (cf. Welby-Tönnies 1901). Important moments of official recognition for Welby’s research are represented by publication of the entry ‘Signifiacs,’ co-authored with J. Baldwin and F. Stout (1902) for Baldwin’s *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1901–1905), followed by the entry ‘Signifiacs’ in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in 1911 (cf. Welby 1977).

She wrote regularly to over 450 correspondents, developing a vast epistolary network through which she developed her ideas and exerted her influence, though mostly unrecognized – as in the case of C. K. Ogden – over numerous intellectuals of her times. Charles S. Peirce reviewed *What is Meaning?* for *The Nation* in 1903 alongside Russell’s *Principles of Mathematics* (cf. Peirce 1977). The correspondence thus begun lasted until 1911, influencing the focus of his research during the last decade of his life; indeed some of his best semiotic expositions are in letters to Welby (cf. Fisch 1986; Hardwick 1977). Part of her correspondence was edited and published by her daughter Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust (cf. Welby 1929 and 1931), including letters exchanged with B. Russell, C. K. Ogden, J.M. Baldwin, H. Spencer, T. A. Huxley, M. Müller, B. Jowett, F. Pollock, G. F. Stout, H. G. Wells, M. E. Boole, H. and W. James, H. L. Bergson, M. Bréal, A. Lalande,

* [From *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*. Ed. by Paul Copley, 285–286. London: Routledge, 2001].

J.-H. Poincaré, F. Tönnies, R. Carnap, O. Neurath, H. Höffding, F. van Eeden, G. Vailati and many others.

The Signific Movement in the Netherlands originated from Welby's research through the mediation of Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) (cf. Schmitz 1990b; Heijerman-Schmitz 1991). The results of her research, including her many unpublished writings, are to be found in the Welby Collection in the Archives of Toronto's York University and the Lady Welby Library in the University of London Library (cf. Schmitz 1985b; Petrilli 1998a).

Further Reading

Hardwick, C. (1977) *Semiotic and Significs. The Correspondence Between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press.

Welby, V. (1983) *What is Meaning?* ed. A. Eschbach, introduced by G. Mannoury. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins (originally 1903).

Welby, V. (1985) *Significs and Language. (The Articulate Form of Our Expressive and Interpretative Resources)*, with additional essays, ed. and introduced H. W. Schmitz. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

8.12. Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa, Lady Welby, by Susan Petrilli*

Welby [*later* Welby-Gregory; *née* Stuart-Wortley], Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa, Lady Welby (1837–1912), philosopher, was born in England on 27 April 1837, the last of three children of Charles James Stuart-Wortley (1802–1844), and his wife, Lady Emmeline Charlotte Elizabeth Stuart-Wortley, *née* Manners (1806–1855), poet and traveller. James Archibald Stuart-Wortley (1776–1845) was her grandfather. She had little formal education aside from some private tuition, and from 1848 to 1855 she travelled widely with her mother in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Morocco, Turkey, Palestine, Syria and many other countries. In 1852 she published her travel diary. After her mother's death she lived with a succession of relatives before being taken in by her godmother, the duchess of Kent, mother of Queen Victoria. In 1861 she was appointed maid of honour to Queen Victoria; she spent almost two years at the royal court before her marriage at St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, on 4 July 1863, to William Earle Welby (1829–1898), military official, MP, and high sheriff, who with his father's death in 1875 became fourth baronet and assumed the additional surname Gregory. Consequently Victoria Welby's surname became Welby-Gregory. Alternatively to a series of pseudonyms or recourse to anonymity, she mainly published under her full name until the end of the 1880s, under the name of Hon. Lady Welby from 1890 to 1892, and as Victoria Welby from 1893 onwards, although she continued signing all official and business documents with her full name.

Welby's children were Victor Albert William (1864–1876), Charles Glynne Earle Welby (1865–1938), assistant under-secretary of state at the War Office and MP, and Emmeline Mary Elizabeth (Nina, 1867–1955), painter, sculptor, and writer, who wrote Welby's biography and edited her correspondence in two volumes, under her married name, Mrs. H. Cust. During the first years of her marriage, Victoria Welby founded the Royal School of Art Needlework.

Not at all attracted to life at court, after her marriage Welby retreated to Denton Manor, Grantham, where she soon began her research, with her husband's full support. Initially her inter-

* [Originally 'Welby, Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa, Lady Welby (1837–1912).'] In *New Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. by C. Matthew. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004].

est was directed towards theological questions and in 1881 she published *Links and Clues*, which expressed her sympathy at that time with evangelical movements. It was unorthodox and unsuccessful and its poor reception caused her to reflect on the inadequacies of religious discourse, which was, she came to believe, cast in outmoded linguistic forms. She was drawn into an examination of language and meaning, and found a pervasive linguistic confusion which stemmed from a misconception of language as a system of fixed meanings, and which could be resolved only by the recognition that language must grow and change as human experience changes. She also made a serious study of science, believing that important scientific discoveries supplied the new experiences by which religious discourse could be transformed into something more meaningful.

Central to Welby's philosophy was her analysis of meaning into three components: sense – 'the organic response to environment' (Hardwick, xxii); meaning – the specific sense which a word is intended to convey; and significance – which encompasses 'the far-reaching consequence, implication, ultimate result or outcome of some event or experience' (Ibid.). This triadic relationship relates closely to that established by Charles Sanders Peirce between immediate interpretant, dynamical interpretant, and final interpretant (Ibid., pp. 109–111). Peirce read her 1903 book *What is Meaning?* and reviewed it for *The Nation* alongside Bertrand Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*, to which he compared it in importance. A flourishing correspondence developed between Welby and Peirce, which was crucial to the development of his thought. She has been regarded as the 'founding mother' of semiotics and her continuing importance is illustrated by the publication in the 1980s and 1990s of editions of her work and volumes of commentary on her thought. She contributed significantly to modern theories of signs, meaning, and interpretation, and introduced, in 1894, the neologism 'significs' to denote the science of meaning. Significs examined the interrelationship between signs, sense – in all its signifying implications – and values.

Besides numerous articles in newspapers, magazines, and scientific journals (notably *The Spectator*, *The Expositor*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Open Court*, *Nature*, *Mind*, *The Monist*, the *Hibbert Journal*, and the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*) Welby published a long list of privately printed essays, parables, aphorisms, and pamphlets on a large range of subjects in numerous spheres: science, mathematics, anthropology, philosophy, education, and social issues.

As her research progressed, Welby increasingly promoted the study of significs, channelling the great breadth and variety of her interests into a signifiical perspective. Shortly after the publication of two fundamental essays – 'Meaning and Metaphor' in 1893 and 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation' in 1896 – the Welby prize for the best essay on significs was announced in the journal *Mind* in 1896 and awarded to Ferdinand Tönnies in 1898 for his essay 'Philosophical Terminology' (1899–1900). Important moments of official recognition for significs are represented by the publication of the entries 'Translation' (Welby, 1902), 'Significs' (co-authored with J. M. Baldwin and G. F. Stout, 1902), and 'Sensal' (with G. F. Stout, 1902) in the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes* (1901–1905). However, the official recognition Welby had so tenaciously hoped for came only after approximately thirty years of 'hard labour,' with the publication of the entry 'Significs' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1911. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands, which developed in two phases from 1917 to 1926 and from 1937 to 1956, originated from Welby's significs through the mediation of the Dutch psychiatrist, poet, and social reformer Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932).

From 1863 until her death in 1912 Welby was a friend and source of inspiration to leading personalities from the world of science and literature. She wrote regularly to over 450 correspondents from diverse countries including Great Britain, the United States of America, France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. It was largely through such correspondence that she developed her theories. She began writing to politicians, representatives of the church, aristocrats, and intellectuals as early as 1870 and created an epistolary network which expanded rapidly from 1880 onwards, both locally and internationally. She used this network for her own enlightenment, as

a sounding board for her own ideas, and as a means of circulating her own ideas and those of others. Thanks also to her social position and court appointment as maid of honour to Queen Victoria, she counted friends and acquaintances among the aristocracy and government officials. Because of her interest in religious and theological questions she corresponded with leading churchmen of her day and subsequently with eminent scientists, philosophers, and educationists, whom she welcomed into her home where they met to discuss their ideas. Her correspondents included Michel Bréal, Bertrand Russell, C. K. Ogden, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley, Benjamin Jowett, F. H. Bradley, Henry Sidgwick, H. G. Wells, and William James. None the less, in spite of general awareness of the importance and originality of Welby's work, she did not for many years receive the recognition she hoped for, at least not publicly. In an attempt to avoid flattery, she either published anonymously or signed her work with pseudonyms, various combinations of initials, or simply as Victoria Welby. The only honour she valued was 'that of being treated by workers as a serious worker' (Hardwick, 13). Though she had no institutional affiliations, she was a member of the Aristotelian and Anthropological societies and was one of the original promoters of the Sociological Society between 1903 and 1904.

Welby was an open-minded female intellectual in the Victorian era despite – or, perhaps, thanks to – her complete lack of a formal education, which led her to search for the conditions which made her theoretical work possible. She highlighted the importance of her extensive travels as a child with her mother, which often took place in dramatic circumstances and ended with her mother's tragic death in the Syrian desert, leaving Victoria all alone until help came from Beirut. In a letter of 22 December 1903 to Peirce, who fully recognized her genius (as testified by their correspondence), Welby suggested that her unconventional childhood

accounts in some degree for my seeing things in a somewhat independent way. But the absence of any systematic mental training must be allowed for of course in any estimate of work done. I only allude to the unusual conditions of my childhood in order partly to account for my way of looking at and putting things: and my very point is that any value in it is impersonal. It suggests an ignored heritage, an unexplored mine. This I have tried to indicate in 'What is Meaning?'. (Hardwick, 13–14)

Welby's scientific remains are now mainly deposited in two archives: the Welby collection in the York University archives (Downsview, Ontario, Canada) and the Lady Welby Library in the University of London Library. The latter includes approximately 1000 volumes from Victoria Welby's personal library and twenty-five pamphlet boxes containing pamphlets, reprints and newspaper cuttings, religious tracts, sermons, and published lectures by various authors. Four boxes without numbers contain duplicates of most of Welby's own publications. The main part of her scientific and literary production is to be found at the York archives. Half of the collection consists of Welby's as yet mostly unpublished correspondence covering the years 1861–1912. A large part of the remainder comprises notes, extracts, and commentaries on a variety of subjects – biology, education, ethics, eugenics, imagery, language and significance, logic and significance, matter and motion, numbers theory, philosophy and significance, signification, and time. There are also speeches, lessons, sermons by other authors, numerous unpublished essays and a collection of poems by Welby, diagrams and photographs, translations, proofs, copies of some of her publications, and newspaper cuttings.

Suffering from partial aphasia and paralysis of the right hand owing to bad blood circulation caused by flu caught at the end of January 1912, Welby died on 29 March 1912 at Duneaves, Mount Park, Harrow, and was buried in Grantham, Lincolnshire.

Sources

'Representative women,' *Now & Then*, 34 (1929), 30–31 · J. M. Baldwin, *Dictionary of philosophy and psychology in three volumes* (1901–1905) · W. K. Clifford, 'Victoria Lady Welby: an ethical mystic,' *Hibbert Journal*, 23 (1924), 101–106 · Mrs H. Cust, ed., *Wanderers: episodes from the travels of Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley and her daughter Victoria, 1849–1855* (1928) · Mrs H. Cust, ed., *Echoes of larger life: a selection from the early correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby* (1929) · Mrs H. Cust, ed., *Other dimensions: a selection from the later correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby* (1931) · C. S. Hardwick, introduction, *Semiotic and significs: the correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, ed. C. S. Hardwick (1977) · S. Petrilli, 'Victoria Lady Welby and significs: an interview with H. W. Schmitz,' *The semiotic web 1987*, ed. T. A. Sebeok and J. Umiker-Sebeok (1988), 79–92 · S. Petrilli, *Su Victoria Welby: significs e filosofia del linguaggio* (1998) [incl. bibliography of Victoria Welby's works and a critical bibliography on Welby and on the signific movement in the Netherlands] · W. H. Schmitz, 'Victoria Lady Welby's significs: the origin of the signific movement,' in V. Welby, *Significs and language* (1985) · W. H. Schmitz, ed., *Essays on significs: papers presented on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Victoria Lady Welby* (1990) · V. Welby, *A young traveller's journal of a tour in North and South America during the year 1850* (1852) · W. Macdonald, *Sociological Review*, 5 (1912), 152–156 · *Westminster Gazette*, 34 (1912) · *Blackwood*, 191 (1912), 706–710 · E. Winton, *The Spectator* (6 April 1912), 543–544 · m. cert. · d. cert.

Archives

York University, Toronto, archives, corresp., and literary MSS | LUL, Lady Welby Library · Milan University, Giovanni Vailati archives · Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek, Kiel, Germany, Ferdinand Tönnies archives · UCL, letters to Sir Francis Galton · UCL, Pearson MSS · University of Amsterdam, Frederik van Eeden Museum · University of Amsterdam, Significs archives

Likenesses

F. Dicksee, double portrait, 1880 (with Sir William Earle Welby-Gregory), *priv. coll.*; repro. in Schmitz, ed., *Essays on significs* · E. Taylor, watercolour miniature, repro. in V. Welby, *Significs and language* (1911) · portrait, repro. in Cust, ed., *Echoes of larger life* · portrait, repro. in Cust, ed., *Other dimensions*

Wealth at death

\$1192 9s.: probate, 15 May 1912, *CGPLA Eng. & Wales*

*Two poems on herself from the archives***8.13. Thoughts in Rhythm, 'What She Wasn't'**

This poem on Victoria Welby authored by herself, 'What She Wasn't' and the next one, 'What She Was: by Herself,' were both traced in Box 37, file 10, entitled 'Poems of Victoria Welby: *Thoughts in Rhythm*,' WCYA. The typescripts are undated and belong to a collection of poems by Victoria Welby which I propose to call 'wisdom poetry.' The two poems on herself are presented here just for fun, as a way of closing this volume with a smile. However, another worthwhile editorial

project is the publication of a volume collecting all of Welby's poems under the title established by herself, *Thoughts in Rhythm*.

What She Wasn't

She wasn't a neo-Hegelian,
Nor yet an Empiricist;
She wasn't an Aristotelian,
Still less Plato's Idealist.

She wasn't a bit of a Mystic,
For she couldn't abide a mist,
Her notions were not animistic –
But she wasn't a Positivist!

She hadn't a fetish about her,
And neither a dogma nor ghost;
Easy for some folk to flout her,
And then of the exploit to boast.

She held by the natural and stitious,
And hated the 'super' prefixed,

It seemed to her simply officious,
Or showed that our notions were mixed.

She was free of all hectoring Isms,
Which leave out what doesn't suit *them*,
All ready-made systems and schisms,
And even the fam'ly totem!

Yet if you said she was agnostic,
Or secretly hugged pessimisms,
'You might as well dine upon caustic'
Would be her remark on *those* isms.

But still she let all these things teach her
Comparing them one with another;
Awake to each thrill that might reach her,
And whisper – the hopes of a mother.

8.14. *Thoughts in Rhythm*, 'What She Was: by Herself'

This poem (also from Box 37, file 10, see above, Section 8.12) is available in the file with variations in the arrangement of the strophes. It is also accompanied by a drawing in two versions under the title 'The She,' figuring three characters, one of whom is Welby dressed as a witch attempting to impart her word magic, the other two are males, one is playing tennis, the other fishing.

What She Was: by Herself

She was an awful Scourge!
A type-writer she prowled around,
And ever in her hand was found
A Link she meant to forge.

She was a fearsome Fact,
You tried your best to get away,
You strove to fish or tennis play,
While she type-wrote a tract.

She was a Retribution.
You found your mind was out of joint –
She put her finger on the point
Of your circumlocution.

She was an Incubus.
She squeezed your favourite padding flat,
She sat upon your crown, – or hat,
And smiled at all your fuss!

She was Ubiquitous.
You might slink off, – no matter where,
You found her waiting for you there –
Your meaning to discuss!

For she was a puzzling Plague.
She asked you what you meant by it!
She wasn't easy to outwit,
Though told with scorn, 'You're vague.'

She was in short a Riddle.
You tried to read her and you failed,
No ingenuity availed –
You stuck fast in the middle!

And human still she is:
She longs her kind to serve and cheer,
To help in making muddles clear,
Suggesting Synthesis!

So give up futile scorn!
You can but take her at her word, –
You could not find a sharper sword –
Against her drawbacks drawn.

An Appendix to 'What She Was'

She didn't mind being snubbed!
She liked you to refute her stuff,
And grind her nonsense into snuff
As 'dust for sniffing' dubbed!

For well she knew how tough
Is what may really turn out true,
And may present itself to you
In forms less crude and rough.

And she was an Octopus!
She fixed a sucker on your store,
She ate up all your hard-earned lore, –
Proving omnivorous!

'The She.' Two sketches by Victoria Welby



Appendices

Appendix 1

A chronology of Victoria Welby's life and works

- 1837, 27 April: Born and named Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa Stuart-Wortley, daughter of Lady Emmeline Charlotte Elizabeth (1806–1855), poetess, author of numerous volumes and extensive traveler, and Hon. Charles James Stuart-Wortley (1802–1844). She is the third of their three children, the other two being her brothers, Adelbert William John (?–1847) and Archibald Henry Plantagenet (1832–1890).
- 1837, 17 June: She was baptized by the bishop of Salisbury in St. James Church. Her godmothers were Princess Victoria (five years later coronated Queen Alexandrina Victoria), after whom she was named, and the Duchess of Kent (Queen mother), her godfather was John Irving, Esq.
- 1844: Year of her father's death.
- 1847: Year of her youngest brother's death, Adelbert William John.
- 1848–1855: She recovered from a violent attack of scarlet fever and was considered to have weak health. Rather than go to school, Victoria spent these years travelling across the world with her mother whose literary career and passion for travelling began after her marriage. This period in Victoria's life is described in a biography on her and her mother, *Wanderers: Episodes From the Travels of Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley and Her Daughter Victoria, 1849–1955*, written by Victoria Welby's daughter Elizabeth, known as Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust, and published in 1928.
- 1848: Voyage to Italy and France during the time of the revolution.
- 1849–1850: Voyage to USA, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Panama, Ecuador, Perù, Jamaica.
- 1851: Voyage to Lisbon, Madeira, Cadiz, Seville, Malaga, Madrid, Segovia, Granada, Ronda and to Marocco.
- 1852: Year of publication of her travel diary, *A Young Traveller's Journal of a Tour in North and South America during the Year 1850*.
- 1853: Voyage to North Europe.
- 1855, January: Grand final voyage to Antioch through Constantinople, Cairo, Jerusalem, Damasco, Beirut, Aleppo.
- 1855, 20 October: Abandoned by their guides, her mother died in tragic circumstances leaving Victoria alone until help came from Beirut.
- 1855–1861: As an orphan, she lived with illustrious relatives for brief periods of time moving from one family to another. Most of her time was spent with the Duchess of Kent (the Queen mother) in her numerous residences.
- 1861, 16 March: Death of the Queen mother. Victoria became the Queen's Maid of Honour at the Royal Court for approximately two years.
- 1863: Though she did not enjoy the conventions of life at court, she witnessed visits from foreign state leaders, met numerous nobles, government representatives and parliamentarians, and accompanied the Queen on her travels to Ireland, England and Scotland. She was present at the death of the Principe Consort and at the wedding of Prince of Wales.
- 1863, 4 July: She married Sir William Earle Welby (1829–1898) in Belvoir, the first born of Sir Glynne Earle Welby-Gregory, third Baronet. Her husband became fourth Baronet after the

- death of his father in 1875, when he took the surname Gregory as his father before him. Therefore, Lady Victoria Welby became Lady Victoria Welby-Gregory. Sir William Earle Welby made a career in the English army as was the custom for his social class, and also became a member of parliament from 1857 to 1884.
- 1864, 24 July: Birth of their first son, Victor Albert William (who died prematurely in 1876).
- 1865, 11 August: Birth of their second son, Sir Charles Glynne Earle Welby (died in 1938).
- 1867, 5 August: Birth of their daughter Emmeline Mary Elizabeth (Nina) (died in 1955). She authored (under her married name) a partial biography on her mother and grandmother (Cust 1928), edited a part of her mothers correspondence (Cust 1929, 1931), and asserted herself in her own right as a writer and sculptress. Her English translation of Michel Bréal's *Essai de sémantique* (commissioned by her mother) was published in 1900.
- 1870: Founding of the Aristotelian Society of London, of which Welby became a member.
- 1872: She participated in founding the Royal School of Art Needlework.
- 1870–1880: She began her intense correspondence with many of the most prominent figures of her day and from all spheres of life – the political, intellectual, scientific, religious, social and economic, etc. Her relations extended rapidly from 1880 onward, counting approximately 460 correspondents and more. Her daughter published a selection from her correspondence in two volumes, *Echoes of Larger Life*, 1929, and *Other Dimensions*, 1931. However, the bulk of her correspondence still rests unpublished in the Welby Collection, York University Archives in Toronto (Canada).
- 1881: Year of publication of her volume, *Links and Clues*, a critical reflection on issues relating to theology and ecclesiastical institutions.
- 1886: Year of publication of the 'essaylets': 'Threefold Laws/Law of the Three Stages/The Triad/The Tendency to Triads'; 'The Evolution of Heliology.'
- 1888: Year of publication of her essay, 'Truthfulness in Science and Religion.'
- 1890, 30 April: Death of her brother, Archibald Henry Plantagenet.
- 1890: Year of publication of her paper, 'Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?,' delivered at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Leeds, 5 September, 1890.
- 1890, 9 December: Elected member of the Anthropological Institute.
- 1891: Year of publication of her essay, 'An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution,' the revised version of her address to the Anthropological Institute, delivered on 9 December 1890, when she was elected as one of its members.
- 1892: Year of publication of her essay, 'The Significance of Folk-Lore,' delivered at the International Folklore Congress, summer 1891; and of *A Week's Morning and Evening Prayers For Families and Institutions*.
- 1892, August: She distributed her pamphlet *The Use of 'Inner' and 'Outer' in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?*, published that same year, at the International Congress of Experimental Psychology, in London, where it was discussed.
- 1893: Year of publication of her essay 'Meaning and Metaphor' in the journal *The Monist*. She introduced the term 'sensifics' to designate her theory of meaning, subsequently replaced with 'significs.'
- 1896: Year of publication of her essay 'Sense, Meaning and Interpretation' in the journal *Mind*. That year the 'Welby Prize' for the best essay on the critique of philosophical and psychological terminology from a significant perspective was advertised in the same journal. Prize winner was German scholar, Ferdinand Tönnies, for his essay 'Philosophical Terminology,' published in *Mind* in 1899–1900.

- 1897: Year of publication of her volume *Grains of Sense*, a collection of essaylets, parables, satires, and aphorisms.
- 1898, August: Her pamphlet *The Witness of Science to Linguistic Anarchy*, of 1898, was distributed at the Fourth International Congress of Zoology, Cambridge, 22–27 August, 1898; and at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Bristol that same year.
- 1898, 26 November: Death of her husband. According to custom, her name and title were inverted, and she became Victoria Lady Welby to distinguish her from her son's wife, also Lady Welby.
- 1900: She left Denton Manor (Grantham, Lincolnshire) to her son and his family, as was the tradition, and after shifting a few times went to live at Duneaves, Harrow, in 1901, where she remained for the rest of her life. In 1900 her project for the English translation (by her daughter) of Michel Bréal's 1897 volume, *Essai de sémantique*, came to a happy conclusion, with publication.
- 1900, October: She delivered a series of lectures on signification at Oxford University.
- 1901: Her paper 'Notes on the "Welby Prize Essay",' commenting the prize winning essay by Ferdinand Tönnies was published in the journal *Mind*.
- 1902: The entries 'Translation,' by Welby, 'Signification,' by Welby, George F. Stout and James M. Baldwin, 'Sensal,' by Welby and Stout were published in the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology in Three Volumes*, edited by the same Baldwin. This was the first official recognition of her new approach to the study of sign, meaning and understanding.
- 1903: Year of publication of her most important volume from a theoretical perspective, *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance* (2nd ed. 1983). In 1903 Charles S. Peirce's review of this volume also appeared, which he associated with Bertrand Russell's 1903 volume, *The Principles of Mathematics*.
- 1903: She became a founding member of The Sociological Society of Great Britain.
- 1904, 16 May: Her paper dedicated to Francis Galton's eugenic science (published in 1905) was read at a conference organized by the Sociological Society.
- 1905, 14 February: Her second paper on eugenics (published in 1906) was read at another conference organized by the Sociological Society.
- 1907: Year of publication in the journal *Mind* of her essay on the concept of time and space, 'Time as Derivative.'
- 1911: Publication of the entry 'Signification' (2nd ed. 1977), commissioned for *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This represents the official recognition she had attended for over thirty years for her special approach to the study of sign, meaning and understanding. Her volume titled, *Signification and Language: The Articulate Form of our Expressive and Interpretative Resources* (2nd ed. 1985) also appeared that same year. The collective volume *Essays on Signification* was planned by George F. Stout and John W. Slaughter, but was never published in spite of the fact that all contributions (except that by Charles S. Peirce) had been received.
- 1912, 29 March: After an episode of partial aphasia and paralysis of the right hand caused by bad circulation connected to flu contracted towards the end of January, 1912, and despite her health improving towards the end of February, Victoria Welby died at Denton Manor, Harrow and was buried in Grantham (Lincolnshire).

Appendix 2

Indices and inventories of papers in the Welby Collection (York University Archives and Special Collections)

What follows is the Index of subjects compiled by Victoria Welby and Inventory of correspondence, papers and manuscripts covering the years 1861–1912, as distributed in boxes and files in the Welby Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections.

These papers by Welby or on Welby, with the addition of other materials collected by Welby had been left at Denton Manor in Lincolnshire, where she lived until she gave up her home to her son, in 1900. The materials were purchased from Sir Oliver Welby, Lady Welby's grandson, in 1970, by York University in Toronto (Canada), where they have been kept together and made available for scholarly research, as stipulated with Sir Oliver. The decision to search for a repository for the Welby Collection was largely determined by the numerous requests to access her papers at Denton. The choice fell on North America because many of these requests had come from there. The final decision to go ahead with this project was made on the basis of a positive assessment of the significance of the Welby Collection from Charles S. Hardwick, and recommendation by Professor H. S. Harris who had research interests in the Welby papers, and acted as mediator for transactions between Sir Oliver and York University (see Bowsfield 1990). The papers are organized into files and distributed in 42 boxes. The correspondence is organized on a nominal basis in 21 boxes (see Appendix 3). The document below is from the Welby Collection:¹

Finding Aid
Accession: June 1970
Group: 6D
Lady Victoria Welby

Lady Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa Welby-Gregory (1837–1912). The daughter of the Hon. Charles Stuart-Wortley and Lady Emmeline, a daughter of the fifth Duke of Rutland, was an extensive traveler, accomplished writer, and a founder of the Sociological Society (1903), and of the Royal School of Art Needlework. Her interests included science, philosophy and semantics. She devoted herself to a study of language as the expression of meaning ('Significs'). Her published works include: *Links and Clues* (1881, second edition 1883), *Grains of Sense* (1897), *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance* (1903), and *Significs and Language. The Articulate Form of Our Expressive and Interpretive Resources* (1911). Her daughter, Nina (Mrs. Henry Cust) edited *Wanderers: Episodes from the Travels of Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley and her Daughter Victoria 1849–1855* (1928), *Echoes of Larger Life. A Selection from the Early Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby* (1929), and *Other Dimensions. A Selection from the Later Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby* (1931).

Correspondence, Papers, Manuscripts, 1861–1912. 16 feet, 8 inches. Purchased from Sir Oliver Welby, Grantham, England, June 1970.

- Box 1–21 (1) Correspondence, 1861–1912, 8 feet, 8 inches. (See Nominal List)
Box 22–25 (2) Notes, extracts, comments, abstracts and paraphrases from books, periodicals, reviews, speeches and lectures (from works by Victoria Welby and others)

1. For further information about the Welby Collection at the York University Archives and Special Collections, see Bowsfield 1990. On the Lady Welby Library at the University of London, UK, see Baker 1990.

- Box 26 (a) General (unsorted) 19 inches
 (b) Subjects/ Titles (Subjects and titles established by Welby)
- (1) *Biology*
 - (2) *The Child*
 - (3) *Curve*
 - (4) *Curve vs Straight Line*
 - (5) *Education*
 - (6) *Ethics*
 - (7) *Eugenics*
 - (8) *Expository* (i.e. 'of Sense, Meaning, Significance, and of . . . Significs. . .')
 - (9) *Future of Mind* (includes pencilled abstract by William Macdonald)
 - (10) *Grains of sense* ('G. of S')
 - (11) *General*
- Box 27
- (12) *Heliocentric* ('Heliocentricities')
 - (13) *I and Self* (includes 'What is Mind?')
 - (14) *Imagery* (notes 'all published in some form or other')
 - (15) *Language*
 - (16) *Language and Expression*
 - (17) *Life*
 - (18) *Life-Thought* (includes Index to *Life-Thought*)
 - (19) *Logic*
 - (20) *Logic and Significance*
- Box 28
- (21) *Matter and Motion*
 - (22) *Mental Biology or Organic Thought* (second edition)
 - (23) *Mental Brain*
 - (24) *Mother-Sense*
 - (25) *Nature*
 - (26) *Number Theory*
 - (27) *Past of Mind*
 - (28) *Personal* ('Private')
 - (29) *Personalia* (i.e. 'Personal Psychology and Point of View and Projects or Draft-Schemes of Books') (includes 'Suggested Titles for "Brilliant" Papers in Reviews')
 - (30) *Philosophy*
 - (31) *Philosophy and Significance*
 - (32) *Pleasure and Pain*
 - (33) *Poetry, Art and Music*
 - (34) *Predictive Science* (William Macdonald's heading)
- Box 29
- (35) *Premonitions and Adumbrations* (i.e. 'Parallel Documents') and duplicates
 - (36) *Primal Sense* (most of which have been translated by William Macdonald)
 - (37) *Primitive Mind* ('these papers have all been published. . . few references in this folder for use in possible second edition') (Includes 'Did Man Ever Go Out of His Senses?,' in two parts: Part I became 'Truth and False Starts,' Part II became 'Meaning and Metaphor')
 - (38) *Psychology*
 - (39) *Psychology and Significance*
 - (40) *Questions of Sex and Vital Divorce*

- Box 30 (41) *Quantity and Quality*
 (42) *Records of Developing Thought* (i.e. 'certain letters [1886–1896] containing statements of the Signific thesis')
 (43) *Significs*
 (44) *Significs – Ambiguity*
 (45) *Significs – Education*
 (46) *Significs – Eugenics*
 (47) *Significs – Images*
- Box 31 (48) *Significs – Time*
 (49) *Significs – Translation* (i.e. definition)
 (50) *Significs – Unborn Church*
 (51) *Significs – Encyclopaedia Britannica* Definition and Introduction to *Significs and Language*
 (52) *Sociology* (includes 'How and Why Are We Social?,' i.e. the first form of 'The Social Value of Expression')
 (53) *Sociological Paper* (rough copy, March 1904)
 (54) *Static and Dynamic*
- Box 32 (55) *Time*
 (56) *Translation*
- Box 33 (57) *Unborn Church* (and duplicates)
 (58) *Unborn Church and Mysticism*
 (59) *Vital Divorce*
 (60) *What is Meaning?*
- Box 34 (3) Indices to various subject/ title headings of (2) (b). 1/2 inch
 (4) Notes and extracts: metaphors, 'bulls' (*The Irish Bulls of Metaphor*), sermons, aphorisms, parables and limericks. 2 inches
 (5) Translations: translation of 'Introduction à la Métaphysique,' by Henri Bergson. 1/2 inch
 (6) Sir Francis Galton's papers on 'Eugenics' read to the Sociological Society 1904, 1905. 2 inches
 (a) galley proof of Galton's first paper, 'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims,' May 16, 1904
 (b) galley proof of Victoria Welby's discussion on Galton's first paper on 'Eugenics'
 (c) galley proof of Victoria Welby's discussion on Galton's second paper on 'Eugenic,' February 14, 1905
 (d) Galton's notes for reply (May 16 1904)
 (e) newspaper clippings re Sociological Society, May 16 1904 questionnaire re: 'Register of Able Families' from 'The Eugenics Advisory Meeting'
- Box 35 (7) G. Vailati. 3 1/2 inches
 (a) notes and extracts from articles by Vailati
 (b) translations of works by Vailati
 (c) printed material: periodicals and offprints of works by Vailati
- Box 36 (8) Welby Prize Essay Competition: 'Philosophical Terminology I, II, III,' by Ferdinand Tönnies (translated by Mrs. B. Bosanquet), published in *Mind*, vol. VIII, N. S. n. 31 July, 1899. 4 inches
 (a) explanation of the Welby Prize Essay Competition
 (b) translations of: (1) letter of Ferdinand Tönnies to Fraulein Ide Cladius (1900);

- (2) provisional note by Ferdinand Tönnies on a proposed book by Victoria Welby
 - (c) Victoria Welby's notes on the Welby Prize Essay (includes Ferdinand Tönnies' acknowledgement of Victoria Welby's notes)
 - (c) printed material: periodicals and offprints of the Prize Essay (includes offprints of 'Notes on the Welby Prize Essay,' by Victoria Welby)
- Box 37
- (9) Diagrams. 2 1/2 inches
 - (10) Poems of Victoria Welby: *Thoughts in Rhythm* (contains 'A Confession in Doggerel,' by Victoria Welby)
 - (11) Galley Proofs. 1 inch
 - (a) 'The Triad' ('Tendencies to Triadism'), by Victoria Welby
 - (b) 'Primary and Secondary Qualities,' by G. F. Stout
- Box 38
- (12) Catalogue of books at Duneaves, Harrow (June 1902) (Includes *List of Books in the Lady Welby Library*, presented by Sir Charles Welby)
 - (13) Letters to editors and newspaper clippings (relating to Victoria Welby and others)
- Box 39
- (13²) Newspaper clippings (relating to Victoria Welby and others)
- Box 40
- (14) Printed material of Victoria Welby. 5 inches
 - (a) periodicals
 - (b) offprints
- Box 41
- (15) Printed material of others. 5 inches
 - (a) periodicals
 - (b) offprints
- Box 42
- Mrs. Henry Cust: Press of clippings, reviews, advertisements, publishers' announcements. 1 1/2 inches
- (a) *Other Dimensions*
 - (b) *Wanderers*
 - (c) *Echoes of Larger Life*

Addendum

- Box 42
- Photographs
- Copies of photographs of paintings of Victoria, Lady Welby, n.d., ca 1847–1851, ca 1856–1858, 3 items. Received from Dr. H. Walter Schmitz, Bonn, February 1984.
- Photographs
- Copy print and negative of 'The Housebuilders,' painting by Sir Frank Dicksee (1880), from original photograph in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England. Original painting owned by Sir Bruno Welby, Denton House, Grantham, Lincolnshire, England. Received from Dr. H. Walter Schmitz, Bonn, 5 November 1985.

Appendix 3

List of Victoria Welby's correspondents, 1861–1912

Welby's correspondence available in the Welby Collection at the York University Archives covers the years from 1861 to 1912 and is mostly unpublished. Of the 42 boxes containing Welby's papers (see Appendix 2), her correspondence is organized in 21 boxes on a nominal basis, in alphabetical order. Box 21 includes Welby's correspondence with various publishers and that of her daughter, Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust, concerning her mother's work. The nominal list of Welby's correspondents is presented below, complete with indication of the years during which exchanges took place. This list is dated 13 June 1980 and was made available to me for the present volume from the York Archives. The present version has been integrated with names from the 1929 and 1931 books of Welby's correspondence, edited by Cust, missing from the archives. Personal titles have been left as indicated in the original list, and first names have been completed in the place of initials where possible. This list is a fascinating representation of the web of relations Welby succeeded in weaving through her correspondence in relation to her research and has the further merit of providing eventual signposts for future research. In fact, as it has been reported – complete, according to alphabetical order and distribution in the archives, this list is a useful instrument for the reader in search of documents and interested in names and interconnections.

N.B.:

Legend of signs:

* = Name of correspondents included in the volume *Echoes of Larger Life*, edited by Mrs. H. Cust, 1929, but not listed in the Welby Collection.

= Name of correspondents included in the volume *Other Dimensions*, edited by Mrs. H. Cust, 1931, but not listed in the Welby Collection.

n. d. = no date

Box List

- Box 1 Unidentified and miscellaneous/ Dr. Karl Abel – Mary Everest Boole.
- Box 2 Mrs. A. Booth – Wilbur Emery Campbell.
- Box 3 William W. Carlile – Mr. and Mrs. (Mary) Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare.
- Box 4 Rev. R. W. Corbet – Dr. Andrew M. Fairbairn.
- Box 5 James W. Farquhar – Dr. J. G. Garson.
- Box 6 Prof. and Mrs. (Anna) Patrick Geddes – Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse.
- Box 7 Shadsworth H. Hodgson – Dr. John Hughlings Jackson.
- Box 8 Henry James – Irma Kovalevsky.
- Box 9 André Lalande – Canon Edward Lyttleton.
- Box 10 Mr. James McCann – Prof. Conwy Lloyd Morgan.
- Box 11 John Morley – Herbert W. Paul.
- Box 12 Prof. Karl Pearson – John Hungerford Pollen.
- Box 13 Sir Frederick Pollock – Dr. Calib W. Saleeby.
- Box 14 Prof. Charles F. Salmond – Dr. John W. Slaughter.
- Box 15 J. A. Smith – Prof. Herbert A. Strong.
- Box 16 James Sully – Rev. Edward Stuart Talbot, 1872–1891.
- Box 17 Rev. Edward Stuart Talbot, 1892–1911 – Prof. Edward B. Titchener.
- Box 18 Ferdinand Tönnies – Hon. John Waldegrave.
- Box 19 Dr. and Mrs. Augustus D. Waller – Charles A. Werner.

Box 20 Rev. Arthur Westcott - G. Wyndham.

Box 21 Mrs. Frances Dallas Yorke – Mr. Filson Young/ Mrs. (Nina) Henry Cust.

Nominal List

Box 1

Unidentified and Miscellaneous

Abel, Dr. Karl, 1890, 1891, 1895, 1896.

Adams, Prof. John, 1911.

Airlie, Lady Blanche, 1881, 1882, 1884, 1889, 1890, 1893, 1895, 1897–1899, 1903.

Aitken, W. H., 1886, 1889.

Alexander, Samuel, 1892–1897, 1900, 1903, 1908–1911.

Allbutt, Sir Thomas Clifford, 1890–1893, 1901–1908, 1911.

Amphill, Lord, 1893.

Argyll, Archibald, Duke of, 1884.

Armstrong, Lord, 1898, 1899.

Armstrong, Richard A., 1886.

Arnold, Edwin, 1887–1889.

Arnold, Matthew, 1887.

Arnold, Robert B., 1905.

Arran, Earl of, 1886.

Ashby, Alfred, 1884.

Baines, Talbot, 1892, 1893, 1903.

Baker, G. P. (pseudonym John Wrau), 1906.

Baldwin, James Mark, 1892, 1894, 1900–1903, 1908.

Balfour, Arthur M. James, 1889–1891, 1893.

Barclay, Sir Thomas, 1904.

Barnes, Prof. Earl, 1904–1906.

Barnett, Samuel A., 1903.

Barrie, James Matthew, 1903.

Bateson, William, 1902.

Bather, Archdeacon, 1892.

Bayly, Mrs. Ada Ellen (pseudonym Edna Lyall), 1887, 1889.

Baynes, Herbert, 1890, 1895, 1896, 1903, 1906.

Beale, Miss D., 1889–1891, 1895, 1896, 1903, 1905.

Beazley, Prof. Joseph, 1884.

Bedford, Adeline, Duchess of, 1889.

Benn, Alfred W., 1889.

Benson, Archbishop and Mrs. Edward, (Archbishop of Canterbury), 1883–1886, 1889–1891, 1900.

Bergson, Henri, Louis, 1905, 1911.

Bernard, Hugh, 1904, 1905, 1907.

Besant, Annie, 1891, 1892.

Bevan, Edwyn R., 1903.

Bindloss, A. H., 1904.

Bloxam, George W. (Secretary of Anthropological Institute), 1890, 1892, 1893.

Blunt, Cannon William O. (later Bishop of Hull), 1885–1889, 1895, 1897.

Body, Canon George, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1889.

Bolland, Prof. Gerardus Johannes Petrus Josephus, 1904.
 Bonnet, Marie, 1904–1906.
 Boole, Mary Everest, 1884–1886, 1889, 1890.

Box 2

Booth, Mrs. A. (President of Liverpool Conference of Mothers), 1891.
 Booth, Charles, 1903.
 Bosanquet, Bernard to Henry Sidgwick, 1894 (see Sidgwick, Prof. and Mrs. Henry).
 Bowditch, Henry Pickering (Harvard), 1898.
 Boys, Prof. Charles Vernon, 1889–1893.
 Boys, Rev. H. A., 1880, 1881, 1883, 1885, 1888–1891.
 Bradley, Andrew Cecil, 1899, 1900.
 Bradley, Francis Herbert, 1887, 1888, 1894, 1903.
 Bradley, Dean G. G., 1893.
 Branford, Benchara, 1909.
 Branford, Victor V. (Founder and President of the Sociological Society), 1903–1909.
 Bréal, Michel, 1897, 1899, 1900, 1903, 1905, 1908.
 Brooke, Rupert Ingham, 1910–1912.
 Brooke, S. R., 1884, 1888, 1889.
 Brooks, Philipps, 1885.
 Brown, Curtis, 1906.
 Browne, Sir J. Chrichton- (see Chrichton-Browne, Sir James).
 Bryant, Mrs. Sophia, 1892, 1896–1898, 1903, 1904.
 Buchan, John, 1908, 1909, 1911.
 Buckler, G. E., 1910.
 Buckton, Miss Alice M., 1904.
 Bunting, P. W., 1890, 1905.
 Butcher, Miss Anne Deane, 1908.
 Butler, Dean William (of Lincoln), 1886.

Calderoni, Prof. Mario, 1909–1911.
 Caldwell, William Hay, 1907–1910.
 Calhoun, Eleanor, n. d.
 Campbell, Wilbur Emery, 1906–1910.

Box 3

Carlile, William Warrand, 1909–1911.
 Carnegie, Mrs. (Louise) Andrew, 1897, 1898, 1903.
 Carnegie Institute, Washington D. C., 1903, 1906.
 Carpenter, William Lant, 1887, 1889.
 Carr, H. Wildon (Aristotelian Society), 1908, 1910–1912.
 Carus, Paul, 1890–1894, 1896–1898, 1902–1904, 1909, 1911.
 Case, Prof. Thomas, 1903.
 Cavendish, Lady (Lucy) Frederick, 1881, 1886, 1888, 1890, 1892.
 Cecil, Lord Adalbert, 1882, 1883.
 Church, Dean Richard William (Dean of St. Paul's), 1879–1881, 1889.
 Clifford, Mrs. (Lucy Lane) William Kingdon, 1885–1892, 1896, 1898, 1902–1904, 1906–1911.
 Clodd, Edward, 1888, 1890, 1903.

Cockburn, John, 1904, 1908?
Codrington, Robert Henry, 1891.
Coles, Rev. Vincent Stuckey Stratton, 1882, 1883.
Colin, Sidney, 1890, 1902.
Collier, John 1890.
Collins, F. Howard, 1892, 1894–1897.
Constable, F. C., 1908.
Conybeare, Mr. and Mrs. (Mary) Frederick Cornwallis, 1886.

Box 4

Corbet, Rev. R. W., 1881, 1883, 1884, 1889.
Courtney, William Leonard (*Fortnightly Review*) (see also: Hogarth, Miss Janet), 1897, 1904.
Craigie, W. A., 1910.
Crichton-Browne, James, 1889, 1890, 1902.
*Croom-Robertson, George, 1889–1891.
Cust, Henry 1899 (copy of letter of Lady Victoria Welby), 1910.
Cust, Mrs. (Nina) Henry (daughter of Lady Victoria Welby), 1890, 1897, 1899, 1900, 1904–1911
(originals and copies of letters by Lady Victoria Welby).

Dallinger, Dr. and Mrs. William H., 1883, 1886, 1889.
Darwin, Prof. Francis, 1902.
Davids, Dr. and Mrs. Thomas William Rhys, 1888, 1889, 1891, 1900–1904, 1911.
Davidson, Dr. James Leigh Strachan-, see Strachan-Davidson, Dr. J. L.
Dehn, Tom, 1906–1908.
Delille, Edward, 1892.
Denbigh, Earl of (see also: Vaughan, Rev. Bernard), 1887.
Denleigh, Mary, see Feilding, Lady Mary.
Devine, Alexander, 1904.
Dharmapala, The Anagarika, 1904.
Dickinson, Goldsworthy Lowes, 1898, 1903–1911.
Dicksee, Sir Frank, 1879–1884, 1889, 1893.
Dixon, Walter, 1890, 1892, 1899.
Donkin, Edward H., 1887–1891, 1893, 1899, 1903.
Dowson, Mrs. M. Ernest (pseudonym William Scott Palmer), 1909.
Doyle, Arthur Conan, 1899.
Drew, Mrs. Mary, 1889.
Drummond, Lady Elizabeth, n. d.
Drummond, Prof. Henry, 1887.
Duncan, Prof. Robert Kennedy, 1906.

Eeden, Mr. and Mrs. Frederik Willem van (Mrs. Mevrouw van Eeden became Mme. van Vloten)
(file contains copies of Fredrik van Eeden's letters), 1892–1912.
Ellis, Havelock, 1908.
Eucken, Rudolf, 1905, 1907.

Fairbairn, Andrew Martin, 1891.

Box 5

- Farquhar, James W., 1881–1884, 1887–1890.
 Farrar, Canon Frederic William, 1879.
 Fielding, Lady Mary 1886, 1888–1891, 1895 (includes her sister Jane L. H. Levitt, 1897 and Mary Denleigh, 1897).
 Findlater, Jane H., 1902.
 Fletcher, Rev. John Brunsdon, 1882, 1883, 1889, 1893.
 Flower, Prof. W. N., 1890.
 Ford, Lionel, 1910, 1911.
 Foster, Prof. Michael, 1898.
 Fowler, G. Herbert, 1890.
 Fox, Dr. A. Fortescue, 1890–1892, 1903, 1905.
 Frazer, Bishop James (Bishop of Manchester), 1876–1879.
 Fuller, W. (G.) (Editor of *The University Review*), 1905–1907.
 Galton, Francis, 1890–1898, 1900–191 (includes Galton, Francis *Index to Achievements of Near Kinsfolk of some of the Fellows of the Royal Society*, 1904).
 Garson, Dr. J. G. (Anthropological Institute), 1890.

Box 6

- Geddes, Prof. and Mrs. (Anna) Patrick, 1887–1892, 1895–1898, 1900, 1902–1908, 1910, 1911.
 Gill, Mr. Eric, 1909.
 Glaisher, James Whitbread Lee, 1890–1893, 1899, 1902.
 Gomme, George Laurence (Folklore Society), 1891, 1892.
 Goodwin, Hervey (Bishop of Carlisle), 1886, 1887.
 Gore, Dean Charles, 1889.
 Gorst, Harold E., 1901.
 Gott, Dean John, 1883, 1890.
 Greenbough, James G., 1880.
 Greenstreet, William John (Editor of *Mathematical Gazette*), 1906–1912.
 Greentree, R., 1900–1904.
 Grenfell, Lizzie, 1880.
 Guelliot, M. R. Martin-, see Martin-Guelliot, M. R.
 Gurney, Emelia, 1883, 1884, 1886, 1890, 1892.
 Gutkind, Erik, 1910.
 Haddon, Alfred Cort, 1908.
 Haldane, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Burdon, 1900, 1902.
 Hall, Granville Stanley, 1906.
 Halle, Charles, 1869.
 Hardy, G. G., 1884, 1887, 1888.
 Harris, Frank (*Fortnightly Review*), 1889, 1890, 1892.
 Harrison, Frederic, 1886, 1887, 1890–1892, 1903.
 Harrison, Mary Leger (pseudonym ‘Lucas Malet’), 1889, 1892.
 Hewlett, Maurice, 1901, 1903.
 Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawney, 1904–1908, 1910, 1911.

Box 7

Hodgson, Shadworth Hollway, 1890–1893, 1895, 1898, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1906, 1910, 1911.
Höffding, Prof. Harald, 1904–1911.
Hoernle, Alfred, 1907, 1908.
Hogarth, David G., 1890–1892, 1896, 1897, 1900–1904, 1907, 1909.
Hogarth, Janet (later Mrs. W. L. Courtney), 1888, 1889, 1893, 1904, 1906.
Hole, Canon S. Reynolds, 1885.
Holland, Bernard, 1899–1901.
Holland, Rev. Henry Scott, 1882, 1884.
Hone, Rev. and Mrs. Evelyn, J., 1881, 1882, 1884, 1886, 1889, 1891.
Hooper, H. E., 1907, 1909, 1911.
Hopkins, Miss Ellice, 1884, 1898.
Horsburgh, J. M., 1887.
Hort, Arthur Fenton, 1903, 1906–1908.
Hough, Williston S., 1904, 1905, 1907–1909.
How, Bishop Walsham, 1884, 1889.
Huggins, Margaret Lindsay, 1891.
Hutton, Richard Holt (Editor of *Spectator*), 1880–1883, 1886–1891, 1897.
Huxley, Leonard, 1895, 1896, 1899.
Huxley, Thomas Henry 1884, 1885, 1887–1891.

Illingworth, John Richardson, 1884, 1889, 1892, 1895, 1911.

Jacks, Lawrence Pearsall (Editor of *Hibbert Journal*), 1907–1911.
Jackson, Dr. J. Hughlings, 1889, 1890, 1892.

Box 8

James, Henry, 1892, 1911.
James, William, 1905, 1908.
Jeaffreson, Rev. Herbert R., 1885–1889, 1894, 1895, 1901, 1902.
Jebb, Rev. Henry G., 1889–1891, 1894, 1896.
Jekyll, Miss Gertrude, n. d.
Jenkinson, Alfred J., 1902–1905.
Jerusalem, Prof. W., 1909, 1910.
Johnson, W. E., 1902.
Jones, E. E., Constance, 1892, 1903.
Jourdain, Philip E. B., 1907–1911.
Jowett, Benjamin, 1880, 1891–1893.
Jukes, Rev. Andrew, 1881–1886, 1888.

Kanda, Baron, 1901, 1903.
Karadja, Princess, 1907, 1908.
Keary, Charles Francis, 1887–1891, 1900, 1903, 1911.
Keatings, M. W., 1900, 1902.
Kehler, James Howard, 1910, 1911.
Kellner, Dr. L., 1908–1910.
Kelvin, Lord F. A., 1893.
Kenyon, Sir Frederick G., 1903, 1905.
Keynes, John Neville, 1893, 1895, 1902, 1903.

King, Bishop C. (Bishop of Lincoln), 1885–1890, 1892.
 Kingdon, Mrs. Florence, 1910.
 Kingsley, Mrs. Charles, 1885.
 Kingsley, Rev. George H. 1878–1881, 1884, 1888 (see George A. Macmillan file concerning the published memoir of George H. Kingsley published by his daughter Mary).
 Kleinpeter, Prof., 1909.
 Knox, Rev. Cecil, 1903–1905.
 Kovalevsky, Irma, 1908.

Box 9

Lalande, André, 1903, 1911.
 Lampson, Frederick Locker, see Locker-Lampson, Frederick.
 Lang, Andrew, 1889–1891, 1896, 1897, 1902 1904.
 Lankester, Edwin Ray, 1888–1892, 1902, 1904–1907, 1909.
 Lathbury, Mr. and Mrs. (Bertha) D. C. (Editor of *Guardian*), 1888, 1889, 1891, 1892, 1897.
 Layard, Miss Nina F., 1908.
 Le Conte, Joseph, 1898.
 Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Stanley, 1908–1912.
 Lee, Sidney, 1904.
 Lee, Vernon, see Paget, Violet.
 Leighton, Sir Baldwyn, 1889.
 Levi, Alessandro, 1911.
 Levitt, Jane L. H., see Fielding, Lady Mary.
 Lightfoot, Bishop Joseph Barber (Bishop of Durham), 1879–1881, 1883, 1884, 1886, 1888, 1892.
 Lindsay, Mr., 1887.
 Linton, Miss E. Lynn, 1886, 1887, 1899.
 Locker-Lampson, Frederick, 1888.
 Locker, Sir Norman, 1899, 1906.
 Lodge, Sir Oliver Joseph, 1889–1893, 1895, 1896, 1898–1911.
 Logeman, William S., 1891, 1892.
 Lowell, J. A., 1886.
 Lubbock, Sir John, 1888, 1891.
 Lyll, Sir Alfred C., 1891, 1902–1904.
 Lyll, Edna, see Bayly, Mrs. Ada Ellen.
 Lyttleton, Canon Edward, 1889, 1896, 1898, 1906, 1911.

Box 10

McCann, Dr. James, 1889.
 MacColl, Norman (Editor of *Athenaeum*), 1896.
 Macdonald, William, 1904–1909.
 McDougall, William n.d.
 McGegan, Edward, 1904, 1905.
 MacKail, John William, 1897.
 Mackenzie, John Stuart, 1889.
 Mackie, C. H. to Miss D. Hollins, 1906.
 Maclaren, Ian, 1897.
 Macleod, Dr. Donald, 1886.

Macmillan, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander (publisher), 1879–1885, 1889.
Macmillan, George, A., 1881, 1883, 1896, 1897, 1900.
Macpherson, Brewster, 1886, 1887 (includes Victoria Welby's 'Questions for Teachers,' 1885).
McTaggart, John Ellis, 1901–1904.
Magee, Bishop William Connor (Bishop of Peterborough), 1874, 1880, 1884.
Malet, Lucas, see Harrison, Mary Leger.
#Maclure, Mrs. E., 1898–1902.
#Maclure, Edmund, 1903–1905.
Mant, J. B., 1891.
Marrett, Robert Ranulph, 1900, 1902, 1903, 1906, 1908.
Martin-Guelliot, M. R., 1911.
Martineau, Dr. James, 1886–1889, 1896.
Martineau, Mary Ellen, 1895.
Mason, Prof. Otis Tufton (Smithsonian Institute), 1890, 1903.
Massey, C. C., 1890.
Masterman, John Cecil, 1909.
Maxwell, Stephen, 1877.
Maxwell, William Babington, 1906.
Meldola, Prof. Raphael, 1904.
Mercier, Dr. Charles, 1888–1890, 1904.
Merz, John Theodore, 1904, 1905.
Meyer, A. D., 1898.
Miles, Frank, n. d.
Mivart, Dr. St. George, 1900.
Momerie, Prof. Alfred Williams, 1885–1887, 1889.
Moody, Mr. Dwight Lyman, 1889.
Moore, Canon Aubrey L., 1886, 1888, 1889.
Morgan, Prof. Conwy Lloyd, 1888–1896, 1898, 1900, 1903, 19044, 1906.

Box 11

Morley, John, 1886, 1909.
Morrison, James Cotter, 1887.
Mount-Temple, Lord and Lady William, 1881–1884, 1886, 1892.
Moxon, Dr. W., 1886.
Muirhead, John Henry, 1900.
Mules, Rev. Philip, 1869, 1870, 1872, 1879, 1884.
Muller, Hendrik Clemens, 1898, 1901, 1903–1905.
Müller, Prof. Friedrich Max, 1870, 1879–1888, 1890–1892, 1896, 1898–1900.
Murray, Sir James, 1894, 1895, 1898, 1901, 1902, 1908, 1910.
Muybridge, Edward, 1889.
Myers, Charles S., 1892.
Myers, Frederic William Henry (Founder of the Society for Psychical Research), 1888–1892, 1898.
Nasmyth, Mr. 1886.
Nelson, Lord Earl, 1880, 1881, 1889.
Nicoll, Rev. W. Robertson (Editor of *The Expositor*), 1886, 1889, 1891.
Noel, Roden, 1882.
Norman, Canon F. ('Uncle Frederick'), n. d.

Northumberland, Duke and Duchess of, 1879?, 1880?, 1881, 1882?, 1883, 1885.

Ogden, Charles, K., 1910–1911.

Oliphant, Mrs. (Alice) Laurence, 1885.

Oliphant, Mrs. (Rosamond) Laurence (later Mrs. Templeton), 1889, 1891.

Oliphant, Mrs. Margaret Oliphant W. (born Wilson), 1891.

Ottley, Rev., 1889.

Overstreet, Harry Allen, 1900–1902, 1905.

Overton, Canon John Henry, 1886.

Oxford, Dean A. W., 1886.

Paget, Rev. Edward Clarence, 1881?–1884?, 1886, 1888, 1889, 1891, 1896, 1908.

Paget, Rev. Francis (Bishop of Oxford), 1882, 1883, 1889.

Paget, Stephen, 1909.

Paget, Violet (pseudonym Vernon Lee), 1886–1888, 1893, 1895, 1903, 1904, 1910.

Palmer, William Scott, see Dowson, Mrs. M. E.

Paterson, William Romaine (pseudonym Benjamin Swift), 1900, 1901.

Paul, Herbert W., 1896, 1900, 1903.

Box 12

Pearson, Prof. Karl, 1887, 1903, 1904, 1909, 1911.

Pearson, Norman, 1886–1894, 1899, 1903, 1904.

Peck, C. E., see Bloxam, George W.

Peel, Arthur W. 1892.

Peel, Hon. A. George V., 1891–1893, 1903.

Peirce, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sanders, 1903–1906, 1908–1911 (Letter of Welby to Charles S. Peirce, 22 June 1903, is not included in *Semiotic and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, edited by Charles S. Hardwick, Bloomington-London, Indiana University Press, 1977).

Perry, Prof. John, 1902, 1903.

Phillips, Mrs. S., 1890, 1898.

Phillips, Stephen, 1899, 1900.

Philpot, Dr. R. J. H., 1888–1890, 1903–1905.

Phookan, N. D. , n. d.

Pickering, Spencer, 1903, 1904.

Pigott, Miss Blanche, 1880?, 1881–1884, 1886–1892, 1905, 1907–1909.

Poincaré, Henri, 1905.

Pollen, John Hungerford, 1883, 1896.

Box 13

Pollock, Sir Frederick, 1885, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891, 1894, 1897–1904, 1906–1908, 1910, 1911.

Ponsonby, Lady Mary, 1886, 1889.

Postgate, Prof. J. P., 1896, 1897, 1900, 1902, 1903, 1908, 1911.

Poulton, Prof. Edward Bagnall, 1888–1893, 1895, 1900–1902.

Powell, Rev. F. G. Montagu, 1882–1884, 1886, 1888–1892, 1896, 1899, 1901, 1903–1911.

Radstock, Lord, 1880.

Rayleigh, Dr. Lord, 1884, 1890, 1898, 1903.

Reddie, Dr. Cecil, 1904.

Richmond, Rev. Wilfrid 1889.
Ritchie, Prof. David George, 1893.
Roberts, Rev. William Page, 1879, 1881, 1884.
Robertson, Prof. George Croom, 1889–1892.
Robins, Miss Elizabeth, 1892, 1905, 1906–1908.
Robinson, Dr. Louis, 1891.
Romanes, Prof. George John, 1887, 1888, 1890–1892.
Ross, Rev. Alexander Johnstone 1882.
Rossetti, Christina Georgina, 1881.
Rudler, Frederick William, 1890.
Russell, Bertrand, 1904, 1905, 1907, 1908, 1910.

Sadler, Prof. Michael Ernest 1906, 1908, 1909.
Saleeby, Dr. Caleb Williams, 1903–1908.

Box 14

Salmond, Prof. Charles F., 1904.
Sargant, E. B., 1904, 1905.
Savage, George H., 1891.
Sayce, Prof. Archibald Henry, 1892, 1893, 1895.
Schiller, Ferdinand Canning Scott, 1900–1911.
Schreiner, Mr. Olive, 1887.
Schuster, Prof. Edgar, n. d.
Seward, W., 1903.
Shand, A. F., 1891, 1892, 1894, 1895, 1907, 1910.
Shannon, Rev. F., 1889.
Shaw, George Bernard, 1907, 1908.
Shorthouse, Mr. and Mrs. J. Henry, 1882–1887, 1889–1891, 1903.
Siddons, A. W., 1903, 1904.
Sidgwick, Alfred, 1908, 1911.
Sidgwick, Prof. and Mrs. Henry, 1891–1896, 1903, 1906 (includes letter to Prof. Sidgwick from B. Bosanquet, 1894).
Sieveking, Rev. J. G. , n. d.
Simcox, Rev. William Henry, 1887, 1889.
Simpson, Rev. J. G., 1890, 1891.
Sinclair, Miss Mary, 1905.
Skeat, Dr. Walter William, 1902, 1903, 1908.
Skene, Felicia M. F., 1890.
Slaughter, John Willis (Sociological Society), 1905–1910.

Box 15

Smith, J. A. (Founder of the Christian Kingdom Society), 1886, 1902, 1907.
Smith, Prof. William Robertson, 1891.
Sonnenschein, Prof. E. A. (Secretary of the Classical Association), 1909.
Sorley, Prof. William Ritchie, 1902, 1903, 1910.
Spencer, Herbert, 1885, 1890 (includes a letter from H. Spencer to Mozley 1882).
Spender, John Alfred (Westminster Gazette Ltd.), 1908–1910.
Spiller, G., 1908.

- Stanley, Lady Augusta Elizabeth Frederica, 1861, 1862, 1864, 1865, 1867, 1868, 1871, 1872, 1874 (includes a letter to the Countess of Wharncliffe, and a letter written by Matilda Maxwell when Lady Augusta Stanley [Bruce] was ten years old [1832]).
- Stanley, Dean Arthur Penrhyn (Dean of Westminster), 1871, 1875–1880.
- Stead, W. G., 1892, 1905.
- Stephen, Miss Caroline Emilia, 1885–1887, 1889–1891, 1894–1896, 1902, 1906.
- Stephen, Lady and Sir Leslie, 1889–1893, 1895, 1896, 1903.
- Stephen, Sarah W., 1885.
- Stephen, Rev. Simon, 1904.
- Stewart, C. R. Shaw, 1889, 1890?
- Stoney, Dr. G. Livingstone, 1905.
- Stout, Prof. and Mrs. George Frederick, 1894–1911.
- Stow, Rev. Llewellyn Kenyon, 1883, 1892, 1903.
- Strachan-Davidson, Dr. James Leigh, 1900.
- Strachey, St. Loe, 1900, 1909.
- Street, Prof. George S., 1902.
- Strong, Prof. Herbert Augustus 1892.

Box 16

- Sully, James, 1891–1897, 1901, 1903–1905, 1907–1911.
- Sweet, Henry, 1902, 1903.
- Swift, Benjamin, see Paterson, W. R.
- Sylvester, Prof. James Joseph, 1888.
- Talbot, Rev. Edward Stuart (Bishop of Rochester, Southwark and Winchewster), 1872–1876, 1879–1891.

Box 17

- Talbot, Rev. Edward (Stuart Bishop of Rochester, Southwark and Winchewster), 1892–1893, 1895–1911 (includes a letter from Mr. Wilson of Clifton, 1888, and a letter to Dr. Greville Macdonald, 1903).
- #Talbot, Neville, 1907–1911.
- Taylor, Prof. John Lionel, 1906–1909, 1911.
- Taylor, Arnold C., 1891–1893.
- Temple, Lord and Lady William Mount, see Mount-Temple, Lord and Lady William.
- Tesla, Nikola, 1892.
- Thicknesse, Ralph, 1886–1889.
- Thompson, Rev. C. J., 1889.
- Thompson, J. Barclay, 1888.
- Thomson, Prof. and Mrs. John Arthur, 1905, 1906, 1908, 1909.
- Thomson, Dr. William, 1880, 1881, 1888.
- Thorold, Algar Labouchere, 1885, 1910.
- Thorold, Anthony Wilson (Bishop of Winchester), 1880, 1882, 1884, 1885, 1890, 1892.
- Thorpe, Bishop, 1880.
- Titchener, Prof. Edward Bradford, 1891–1893, 1896–1898, 1902–1906.

Box 18

- Tönnies, Ferdinand J., 1898, 1900–1909, 1911 (includes a copy of a letter from Tönnies to Sir Charles Welby, 1913).
Tovey, Donald Francis, 1901.
Town(send), Meredith, 1897.
Traill, Henry Duff, 1897, 1898.
Tree, Mr., 1893.
Trevelyan, Mr., n. d.
Trotter, Miss Lily K., 1888, 1889, 1894 (includes a letter to Miss Trotter from William Smith, 1888).
Trotter, Wilfred, 1908? (includes a copy of a letter from Wilfred Trotter to Dr. F. van Eeden).
Turner, Prof. Herbert Hall, 1906.
Tylor, Edward Burnett, 1891, 1892, 1895, 1898, 1902, 1903.
Tyndall, John, 1887–1893.
Tyndall, Louisa C., 1887–1909, 1911.

Upward, E. Allen, 1903, 1909.

Vailati, Giovanni, 1898, 1903–1908.
Vaughan, Dean Bernard S. J., 1879, 1880, 1887, 1888 (see also, Denbigh, Earl of).
Venn, John, n. d.
Voysey, Rev. Charles, 1880–1885, 1890, 1891.

Wagget, Rev. P. N., 1902.
Wagstaff, W. H., 1907.
Waldegrave, John (pseudonym K. E.) (son of Lord Radstock), 1898, 1899.

Box 19

- Waller, Dr. and Mrs. Augustus Desiré, 1889, 1891–1894, 1904, 1905.
Wallich, Joseph C., 1893.
Walrond, T., 1884.
Walters, Prof. Henry Guy, 1910.
Ward, Mrs. (Mary A.) Humphrey, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1892, 1897, 1903.
Ward, James, 1894, 1896, 1898, 1902, 1903.
Ward, Prof. Lester Frank, 1906, 1907.
Watson, John, 1897.
Watson, William, 1898.
Webb, Clement Charles Julian, 1892, 1893.
Wedgwood, Miss Frances Julia, 1884–1889, 1891–1905, 1908, 1910, 1911 (includes a letter to Ethel B. Meyer, and a copy of a letter made by Russell Gurney of Mrs. Charles' lines on the death of her husband).
Weldon, J. C., 1884.
Wells, Herbert George, 1897, 1898, 1902, 1903, 1909, 1910.
Werner, Charles A., 1908, 1909.

Box 20

- Wescott, Rev. Arthur, 1901, 1902.
Wescott, Canon J. H. (later Bishop of Durham), 1880–1890, 1892, 1893, 1896, 1897, 1899–1901.

Westermarck, Edward Alexander, 1905, 1907.
 Wharncliffe, Edward, 1889, 1898.
 Whatham, Rev. Arthur E., 1899.
 Whibley, Charles, 1897, 1898, 1907, 1911.
 White, Dr. Arthur Silva, 1910.
 Whiteing, Richard, 1900.
 Whittaker, Thomas, 1890.
 Wilberforce, Basil, 1882.
 Wilkinson, George Howard (Bishop of Truro), 1884, 1885.
 Williams, Marshall B., 1883–1885, 1905 (includes a letter from Marcel Hardy to Marshall B. Williams, 1905, and extracts from a letter of Marshall B. Williams to Mr. V. Branford, 1905).
 Wilson, Prof. J. Cook, 1902–1905, 1907, 1908.
 Winchelsea, Bishop of, 1893.
 Witt, Prof. Otto Nikolaus, 1909.
 Wolf, Dr. Abraham, 1909, 1910.
 Woods, Margaret Louisa, 1904.
 Woollcombe, Walter George, 1888.
 Wordsworth, Christopher (Bishop of Lincoln), 1879–1883, 1887, 1889.
 Worsdell, Edward, 1888.
 Wrau, John (see Baker, G. P.).
 Wyndham, G., 1890, 1904.

Box 21

Yorke, Mrs. Frances Dallas, 1880–1893, 1898, 1901, 1903, 1905–1909, 1911.
 Young, Mr. Filson, 1904, 1906, 1907.

Victoria Welby's Correspondence with Publishers

R. & R. Clark Ltd., 1902, 1903, 1911.
 J. M. Dent & Co., 1897–1899, 1903.
 G. Duckworth & Co., 1898, 1904.
 William Heinemann, 1902.
 Literary Agents of London, 1899.
 Macmillan & Co., 1902–1904, 1911.
 Open Court, 1898.
 University of Cambridge Press, 1907–1911.
 Cust, Mrs. (Nina) Henry (Daughter of Victoria Welby), 1908, 1928–1933.

Includes letters of:

Janet Elizabeth (Mrs. William L.) Courtney, 1930.
 Phyllis M. Clodd (?), 1929.
 Sir James Chrichton-Browne, 1929.
 C. W. Daniel (The C. W. Daniel Co., Publishers, London), 1928.
 Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, 1932.
 Ethel Dilke, 1929.
 G. R. Eden, 1930.
 Hans van Eeden, 1932.
 James Louis Garvin, 1930.
 Elmer Gertz, 1929, 1930.

- William J. Greenstreet, 1929.
William Ralph Inge (Dean of St. Paul's, London), n. d.
Lawrence Pearsall Jacks, 1931.
Owen Lankester, 1929.
Sir Oliver Lodge, 1929.
Violet Paget (pseudonym 'Vernon Lee'), 1929.
J. H. Philpot, 1929.
Sir Frederick Pollock, 1929.
Prof. Walter Raleigh, 1908.
Garnet Smith, 1929.
Sir Ronald Henry Amherst Storrs (Governor of Cyprus, 1926–1932), 1929.
Rev. Edward Stuart Talbot, 1929, 1933.
Ferdinand Tönnies, 1928.
Louisa C. Tyndall, 1929.
Charles Whibley, n. d.
Edward Stuart Wortley, 1929.
- The University Library, Aberdeen (W. Douglas Simpson, Librarian), 1933.
The University Library, Birmingham, 1933.
University of Bristol (W. L. Cooper, Librarian), 1933.
Durham University Library (E. V. Stocks, Librarian), 1933.
The Library, University of Edinburgh (F. C. Nicholson, Librarian), 1933.
University Library, Glasgow (W. R. Cunningham, Librarian), 1933.
The University Library, Leeds, 1933.
The University of Liverpool (Library) (W. Garmon Jones, Librarian), 1933.
University of Manchester (Charles Leigh, Librarian), 1933.
The University Library, Reading (S. Peyton, Librarian), 1933.
University Library, St. Andrews, Scotland (George H. Bushnell, University Librarian), 1933.
The University of Sheffield (A. P. Hunt, Librarian), 1933.
University College, Southampton, 1933.
University College of the South West, Exeter (A. R. Woodbridge, Registrar), 1933.

Appendix 4

Table of triads*

The terminological and metaphorical context of “sense”, “meaning” and “significance”

‘three main levels or classes of expression-value’ (1911a: 79) (1)	‘sense’ ‘tendency’ (1903: 2); ‘signification’ (1903: 28); ‘organic response to an environment’ (1911a: 79)	‘meaning’ ‘intention’ (1903: 2); ‘the specific sense which it is intended to convey’ (1911a: 79)	‘significance’ ‘ideal worth’ (2); ‘essential interest’ (1903: 2); ‘ideal value’ (1903: 46)
‘the reference’ (2) (1903: 46)	‘verbal (or rather sensal)’ (2); ‘instinctive’ (1903: 46)	‘volition’ (2) (1903: 46)	‘moral’ (2) (1903: 46)
‘levels of psychic process’ (1931: 216)	‘instinct’ (1931: 216)	‘perception’ (1931: 216)	‘conception’ (1931: 216)
‘the ascent from the first dim sensation through consciousness to intelligence’ (1903: 48f)	‘consciousness’ (1903: 48f)	‘intellect’ (1903: 48f)	‘reason’; “the rational” (1903: 48f)
‘types of experience (1) (1903: 30); “types of knowledge” (1903: 94); “three grades or levels of consciousness (and therefore of experience)” (1903: 95)	‘planetary’ (1887a: 44; 1903: 30); ‘for all practical purposes fully developed’ (1903: 96)	‘solar’ (1887a: 44; 1903: 30); ‘Copernican’ (1887a: 44); metaphor: ‘light’ (1903: 98); ‘scientific activities’ (1903: 96)	‘cosmical’ (1887a: 44; 1903: 30)
the ‘three types of experience’ answer to	“touch,” “smell,” and “hearing”’ (1903: 30)	“feeling”’ (1903: 30)	“sight”’ (1903: 30)

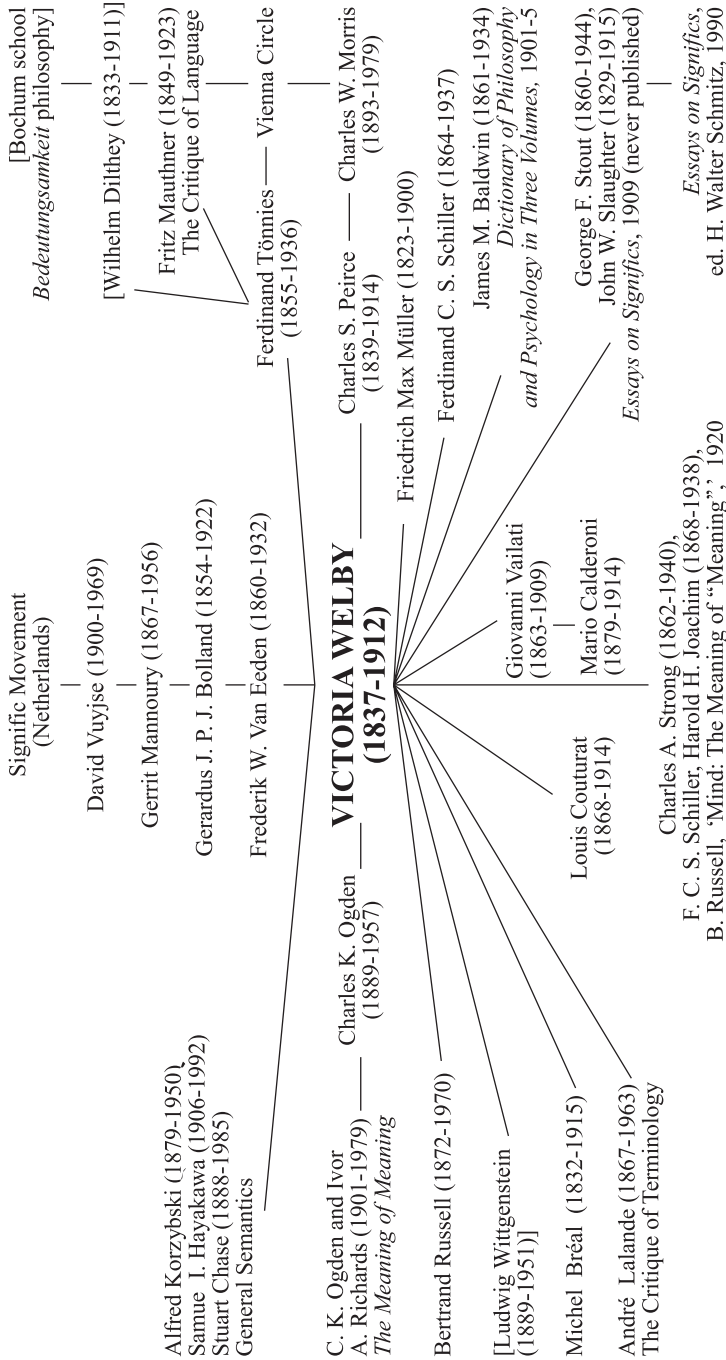
* [This table of triads is drawn from Victoria Welby’s published works on signification by H. Walter Schmitz, and is here reported from his introduction to the 1985 edition of her *Signification and Language* (1911) (cf. Schmitz 1985: xcvi). It has the merit of evidencing the triadic character of the terminology and conceptual framework used by Welby to construct her signification.]

(1) Lady Welby remarks on this (1903: 29): “. . . the triad ‘specific, generic, ordinal’ found in *Outlines of Sociology* (Lester Ward 1898), broadly answers to what is here called the planetary, solar, and cosmical, and thus to sense, meaning, and signification.”

(2) Cf. Welby, Stout and Baldwin (1902: 529). [Now in chapter 2, this volume.]

representatives of the “three types of experience”	“geocentrist” (1903: 163); “modern psychology” (1903: 96)	“solarist” (1903: 163); ‘astro-physicist’ (1903: 96)	“cosmicist” (1903: 163)
‘three forms of “ap- prehension” which ... we call under- standing’ (1903: 163)	‘to stand over or upon’ (1903: 163)	‘to stand under’ (1903: 163)	‘to stand within’ (1903: 163)
‘three forms of ex- perience rendered by metaphors’ (1903: 163)	‘one of line’ (1903: 163)	‘one of surface’ (1903: 163)	‘one of cube’ (1903: 163)
three forms of think- ing rendered by metaphors (1903: 233)	‘on one line’ (1903: 233)	‘on many lines on a flat surface’ (1903: 233)	‘in cube’ (1903: 233)
two types of thought rendered by metaphors (1931: 44, 48ff)	‘monocular’ (1903: 37)	‘binocular’ (1931: 50)	

Appendix 5 Irradiation of signifiqs



Irradiation of signifiqs: Some important influences and connections, direct and indirect. The square brackets refer to relations hypothesized in the literature on Welby.

Bibliographies

The bibliography in this volume is divided into three sections with the aim of being as informative as possible, also as an aid to ongoing research. The first is entitled 'Writings by Victoria Welby,' and lists the primary literature by her. These writings were published with different signatures: 'Hon. Victoria A. M. L. Stuart-Wortley,' 'Hon. Victoria A. M. L. Welby-Gregory, Lady,' 'Hon. Lady Victoria Welby-Gregory,' 'Hon. Lady Welby,' 'Victoria Welby,' 'Victoria Stuart-Wortley,' 'Lady Welby,' 'Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory,' 'Victoria Welby-Gregory,' 'V. Lady Welby,' 'V. Welby.' Welby also used the pseudonyms 'Vita' and 'Vera Welldon,' and frequently signed with the initials, 'V.W.-G' or 'V.W,' sometimes 'V. Welby and V.W.' Apart from 'Victoria Welby' and recognizable variants, she also published anonymously, as well as using the pseudonym 'An Outsider' (see Chapter 1). All signatures have been reported after each relative entry. Welby's unpublished papers are stored in the Welby Collection in the York University Archives and Special Collections, York University, Toronto, Canada (see Bowsfield 1990). Her published writings are available in The Lady Welby Library at the University of London Library, United Kingdom. Her 'essaylets' were privately printed with L. Ridge, Grantham, and subsequently W. Clarke, Grantham (see Baker 1990).

The second bibliography is entitled 'Writings on Welby, the Signific movement and current developments.' It lists secondary literature on Welby and signifiCS – in her own conception as well as interpretations and developments after her. Lastly, the third section, 'General bibliography,' lists works that are structural to my discourse in this volume, whether directly cited or not. Together these three bibliographies are an integral part of the overall architecture of this volume.

Welby's works were listed chronologically for the first time by her daughter, Mrs. Henry (Nina) Cust, providing the basis for the present bibliography. This list is available in The Lady Welby Library at the University of London Library. In addition to integrations made by myself on the basis of research in the archives, the bibliographies presented in this volume of writings by Welby and on signifiCS and its developments have been largely constructed with the help of information provided by H. Walter Schmitz, either publicly with his publications, or privately in our correspondence. In particular, the three bibliographies in this volume result from uniting and updating bibliographical entries in the volumes, *SignifiCS and Language* (Schmitz, eds. 1985),¹ *Essays on SignifiCS* (Schmitz, ed., 1990), and *SignifiCS, Mathematics and Semiotics. The Signific Movement in the Netherlands* (Heijerman and Schmitz, eds., 1991). Another important source is represented by the reference sections in essays and articles on signifiCS sent to me by many of the authors listed, whom I take the opportunity to thank once again. Our librarian at the Department of Pratiche Linguistiche e Analisi di Testi, University of Bari, Simona Ricci, has provided precious assistance in the work of updating and completing entries.

In the bibliography of writings by Welby, the following conventions have been used after Schmitz: 'n.p.' means 'no place' (of publication given); 'n.d.' means 'no date' (of publication given); the sign (–) after the relative entry indicates anonymity.

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1. [In a letter addressed to me by H. Walter Schmitz, dated 4 May 1994, he explained that, 'In my bibliography of Welby's publications (in Schmitz 1985) I have only listed printed texts, giving all the bibliographical data available, adding number of pages and year of publication where necessary and possible, thanks to hints in the correspondence or other texts. That means that the year of publication of "'Omnipotence' and Evil" has been reconstructed by myself. I also added that the text is printed on two pages, while the place of publication or printing is not known. For *Three Parables* I could neither reconstruct the place nor the year of publication'].

1. Writings by Victoria Welby

Welby, Victoria

- n.d. *Three Parables*. n.p. (Hon. Lady Welby)
- n.d. *The Quest of an Ultimate Basis*. [3 pages]. n.p.
- 1852 *A Young Traveller's Journal of a Tour in North and South America during the Year 1850*. With numerous illustrations by the authoress engraved by T. Bolton. London: T. Bosworth. (Victoria Stuart-Wortley)
- 1872 (with The Bishop of Lincoln [Christopher Wordsworth]) (ed.) *The Bishop of Lincoln on a Mother's Difficulties*. Grantham: L. Ridge. (V. W.)
- 1878 *Address*. Delivered by the Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory, to the wives and mothers of Denton, on the first Thursday in Lent, 1878. Grantham: L. Ridge. (Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory)
- 1881a *Links and Clues*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1883². (Vita)
- 1881b Letter to the Editor of 'The Spectator.' *The Spectator*. (Reprinted in V. Welby 1883a: 332–334). (Vita)
- 1883a *Links and Clues*. London: Macmillan & Co. Second edition of 1881a. (Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory) [A selection of passages is included in the present volume.]
- 1883b *Address*. Delivered by the Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory, February 28, 1883, at the inaugural meeting of the Grantham & District Association for the Care and Help of Girls and Young Women. Printed by request, for private circulation. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (Hon. Lady Welby-Gregory)
- 1885a *An Echo of Larger Life*. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (–)
- 1885b 'Omnipotence' and Evil. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1885c *Opposite Roads to Faith*. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1885d *Questions for Teachers*. [6 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1885e *The Unity of Creation*. [1 page]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1886a *Death and Life*. [7 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (–)
- 1886b *Light*. [1 page]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–) (Reprinted in *The Expositor*, Third Series 4(2): 148–150, 1886. (V. W-G.)
- 1886c The Evolution of Heliology. *The Spectator* (April 24): 545. Reprinted as a private publication from *The Spectator*. Grantham: W. Clarke. Subsequently included in V. Welby, 1897a: 129–136. Also in *C. Ladies' College Magazine* (Spring 1889): 1–5. (–)
- 1886d *The Living Test*. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1886e *The Ministry of Women: A Suggested Eirenicon*. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1886f *Threefold Laws/Law of the Three Stages/The Triad/The Tendency to Triads*. [6 pages, proof copy]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1886g *Understood*. [Poem, 2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1886h *What is Pain?* [Poem, 1 page]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1886i The Word. *The Expositor*, Third Series, 3(3): 315. (Victoria Welby-Gregory)
- 1886j Deafness and Blindness. *The Expositor*, Third Series, 3(3): 316. (Victoria Welby-Gregory)
- 1886k Pain to Refuse and Pain to Accept. *The Expositor*, Third Series, 3(3): 316. (Victoria Welby-Gregory)
- 1887a Remarks on 'Death – and Afterwards.' Taken from Letters to Professor John Tyndall and Edwin Arnold. In Edwin Arnold, *Death – and Afterwards*. Reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review* of August 1885. With a supplement. pp. 41–49, 62. London: Trübner & Co. (–)

- 1887b *Revolutions in Thought*. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. Reprinted from V. Welby 1887a, pp. 45–49. (–)
- 1887c *The Clock Dial*. [Poem, 2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1887d *The Divinely Natural*. [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1887e *The ‘Focus.’* [2 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- (1887f.) *The Secret of Life*. [4 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1887g Remarks on ‘Spiritual Life as Manifested in Private.’ Taken from a Letter to Canon Blunt. In William O Blunt, *Spiritual Life as Manifested in Private. Durham Diocesan Gazette* 1: 82. Conference Appendix, Oct. 1887. (–)
- 1888a *A Strange Notion*. [4 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1888b Truthfulness in Science and Religion. *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. LIII, October, 101–120. (–)
- 1888c *The Protest of a Dying Faith*. [1 page]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1888d *The Return of the Prophet and the Psalmist*. [4 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1889a *An Appeal*. From a learner to all who teach in the name of Christ. – Subject. The Question: – Why are books like *Robert Elsmere* written and widely read and welcomed as they are, by those trained under Christian and Church influences, inheriting reverence for tradition, and striving to be true in their highest thought and pure in word and deed? – Printed for private circulation. [20 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (–)
- 1889b *Written after Reading Prof. Huxley’s Article on Agnosticism (XIXth Century, Feb., 1889)*. [Poem, 1 page]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1889c *Child Thoughts on the Christianity of the Nineteenth Century*. Rochdale/London/Manchester: James Clegg-John Heywood.
- 1890a Is there a Break in Mental Evolution? (Paper read at the Leeds Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Leeds, 5 September 1890). *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* 60, 972–973. (The Hon. Lady Welby).
- 1890b Abstract of ‘An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution.’ A paper (founded on one called ‘Is there a Break in Mental Evolution?’ and read before the British Association at Leeds, 5 September 1890) by V. W. to be read at the Anthropological Institute, on 9 December 1890. [3 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (V. W.)
- 1890c *Confession*. [1 page]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1890d *The Veiled Eyes*. [7 pages]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (–)
- 1890e New Wine in Old Bottles. *The Open Court. A Weekly Journal Devoted to the Work of Conciliating Religion with Science* 4(137): 2193–2194 (Chicago, 10 April 1890). (–)
- 1890f To Our First Grandchild. *Parent’s Review* 1(10): 738. [Poem] (–)
- 1891a An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution (Paper read by the Secretary at the Anthropological Institute, 9 December 1890). *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 21 (May 1891): 304–329. (Hon. Lady Welby). Includes ‘Discussion.’
- 1891b Breath and the Name of the Soul. *The Open Court. A Weekly Journal Devoted to the Work of Conciliating Religion with Science* 5: 2893–2895 (Chicago, 30 July 1891). (Hon. Lady Welby).
- 1891c *Witnesses to Ambiguity. A Collection*. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (V. W.)
- 1892a The Significance of Folk-Lore. In J. Jacobs and A. Nutt, eds. *The International Folk-Lore Congress, 1891*. Papers and Transactions, 394–407. London: David Nutt (Hon. Lady Welby).
- 1892b *The Use of ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ in Psychology: Does the Metaphor Help or Hinder?* A small collection of extracts bearing upon this question respectfully submitted to

- the International Congress of Experimental Psychology, August 1892. For private circulation. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (An Outsider)
- 1892c *A Week's Morning and Evening Prayers for Families and Institutions*. London-Edinburgh/Glasgow: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., LD./J. Menzies & Co. (Vita)
- 1893a *A Selection of Passages from 'Mind' (January 1876 to July 1892), 'Nature' (1870, and 1888 to 1892), 'Natural Science' (1892)*, bearing on changes and defects in the significance of terms and in the theory and practice of logic. (For private circulation only). August 1893. Grantham: W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge). (V. W.)
- 1893b Meaning and Metaphor. *The Monist* 3(4): 510–525. Now in V. Welby, 1985a. It. trans. in V. Welby, 1985b, 79–107. (Victoria Welby)
- 1896a Sense, Meaning and Interpretation. *Mind*, N. S. 5(17): 24–37, 5(18): 186–202. Now in V. Welby, 1985a. It. trans. in V. Welby, 1985b, 109–170. (V. Welby)
- 1896b Advertisement of the Welby Prize. *Mind* N. S., 5 (20): 583, October.
- 1897a *Grains of Sense*. London: J. M. Dent & Co. (V. Welby).
- 1897b A Royal Slave. *The Fortnightly Review* 62(369): 432–434 (Sept.). (V. Welby)
- 1898a Misleading Applications of Familiar Scientific Terms. [Letter to the editor]. *Nature* 57(1): 484–536. (V. Welby)
- 1898b *The Witness of Science to Linguistic Anarchy*. [A collection of extracts, chiefly from *Nature, Science and Natural Science*]. Grantham: W. Clarke. (Lady Welby)
- 1901a Notes on the 'Welby Prize Essay'. *Mind*, N. S. 10(38): 188–204 and 209. (V. Welby and V. W.)
- 1901b Realism and Idealism. A Modern Philosophical Idyll. *Mind!* F. C. S. Shiller, ed. A unique review of ancient and modern philosophy. Edited by a troglodyte with the co-operation of the Absolute and others. New Series, Special illustrated Christmas number, 1901: 50–51. (Véra Welldon)
- 1902a (with F. G. Stout). Sensal. In J. M. Baldwin 1901–1905, Vol. 2: 515. (V. W., G. F. S.)
- 1902b (with G. F. Stout and J. M. Baldwin). Significs. In J. M. Baldwin 1901–1905, Vol. 2: 529. (V. W., G. F. S., J. M. B.)
- 1902c Translation. In J. M. Baldwin 1901–1905, Vol. 2, 712. (V. W.)
- 1902d Lady Welby about Her Acquaintance with Prof. F. M. Müller. In F. M. Müller, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller*. Ed. by his wife, in 2 volumes with portraits and other illustrations, Vol. 2, 1902: 62–63. London/New York/Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co. (Victoria Welby)
- 1903 *What is Meaning? Studies in the Development of Significance*. London: The Macmillan Company, 1983² (V. Welby)
- 1903–05 Four letters by V. Welby of 22 June 1903, 2 June 1905, 16 June 1905 and 27 Oct. 1909 to C. S. Peirce (in addition to a letter by C. S. Peirce of 2 Sept. 1909 to J. W. Slaughter) missing from C. S. Hardwick, 1977. Now in V. Welby, 1985a: cxlviii–clviii.
- 1904a Comment on C. F. Salmond's Review of *What is Meaning?*, 9–10. In *Reprinted Review of 'What is Meaning?'*; 1–10. (Originally published in *The Press*, Christchurch, New Zealand, 30 November 1903). Privately printed, Grantham: W. Clarke. (V. Welby)
- 1904b Significs. To the Editor of the Fortnightly Review. *The Fortnightly Review*, N. S., 76 (455): 947. (V. Welby)
- 1905 Eugenics. From V. Lady Welby. [Written Communication on 'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims.' By Mr. Francis Galton.] *Sociological Papers* 1(1904): 76–78. London: Macmillan. (V. Lady Welby)
- 1906a A Confession in Doggerel. *The University Review* 2(10): 440–444. (V. W.)

- 1906b 'The King's English.' *The University Review* 3(14): 448–453, August (V. W.)
- 1906c From the Hon. Lady Welby. [Written Communication on 'Eugenics.' By Mr. Francis Galton.] *Sociological Papers* 2(1905): 43–45. London: Macmillan. (Hon. V. Lady Welby)
- 1907a *The Communion of Saints* (All Saints' Day, 1 November 1907, unpublished typescript). Now in C. S. Hardwick, 1977a: 178–182.
- 1907b Time as Derivative. *Mind*, N. S. 16(63): 383–400. (V. Welby)
- 1907c Review of: 'The Place of the Mother Tongue in National Education,' by Prof. Henry Cecil Wyld. London: John Murray. *The University Review* 4(23): 527–528. (–)
- 1907d Primal Sense and Significs (unpublished typescript). Now in V. Welby, 1985a: ccxxxviii–ccxlili.
- 1907e F. C. S. Schiller on 'Mother-Sense' and V. Lady Welby's Reply to F. C. S. Schiller (unpublished typescript). Now in V. Welby, 1985a: ccxlv–ccxlvii, ccxlix–cclii.
- 1908a What Does It Signify? (typescript). Now in C. S. Hardwick, 1977: 182–184.
- 1908b *Moral Education. Definition and Method. Enlightened, Attractive, Effective Example – and thus Fecundating Influence, Moral Fertilization.* Privately printed. 4 September. [4 pages]. (V. Welby)
- 1908c Note [Letter to the Editors]. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 5(8): 222. (V. Welby)
- 1908d June 30th 1908 (typescript). Now in V. Welby, 1985a: ccxliii–ccxlv.
- 1908e The Social Value of Expression (typescript). Now in V. Welby, 1985a: cclii–cclxvii.
- 1909a How May Christianity Be Defended Today? *The Hibbert Journal* 7(2): 436–437. (Victoria Welby)
- 1909b Mr. McTaggart on the 'Unreality of Time.' *Mind*, N. S. 18(70): 326–328. (V. Welby)
- 1909c Professor Santayana and Immortality. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 6(24): 661–665. (Victoria Welby)
- 1910a 'Jesus or Christ?' *The Hibbert Journal* 8(2): 430–433. (Victoria Welby)
- 1910b The Message of Paul to the Present Age. *The Hibbert Journal* 8(3): 603–611. (The Hon. Lady Welby)
- 1911a Significs. In *The Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information.* 11th edition, Vol. XXV: 78–81. Cambridge: At the University Press. (Reprinted in: I. J. Lee, ed., 1949: 336–341). Now in C. S. Hardwick, 1977: 167–175. It. trans. in V. Welby, 1985b: 171–187. (V. W.)
- 1911b *Significs and Language: The Articulate Form of Our Expressive and Interpretative Resources.* London: Macmillan & Co., 1985². Partial It. trans. in V. Welby, 1985b: 189–226. (V. Welby)
- 1911c Significs. In *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*; founded mainly on the materials collected by The Philological Society, ed. by Sir James A. H. Murray et al., with the assistance of many scholars and men of science. Vol. X (in a work of 12 volumes published between 1888 and 1928). Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. Some volumes edited by Henry Bradley, William A. Craigie and C.T. Onions. Has supplement entitled: *Supplement: A New English Dictionary. . .*, edited by James A.H. Murray et al., introduction, supplement, and bibliography by W.A. Craigie, C.T. Onions. New edition: *The Oxford English Dictionary*, being a corrected re-issue with an Introduction, Supplement, and Bibliography of *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*; founded mainly on the materials collected by The Philological Society. Vol. IX, S-Soldo. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1933.

- 1911d Sir F. Galton and Composite Photography. *Nature* 85(2): 154, 474. (Victoria Welby)
- 1965 What is Meaning? In D. E. Hayden and E. P. Alworth, eds., *Classics in Semantics*, 211–220. London: Vision Press Limited. [Reprint of Ch. 1 in V. Welby, 1903: 1–11].
- 1983 *What is Meaning? (Studies in the Development of Significance)*. Reprint of the edition London, 1903, with an introductory essay by Gerrit Mannoury and a Preface by Achim Eschbach. In *Foundations of Semiotic*, Vol. 2. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1903¹.
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Archives storing materials connected to Welby and significs

Archive Museum – Frederik van Eeden, University of Amsterdam (only a part of the manuscripts stored in this archive has been published).

Ferdinand Tönnies Archives, Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesbibliothek, Kiel, Germany (does not include letters by Welby to Tönnies. Correspondence between Tönnies and such figures as O. Neurath, R. Carnap, H. Höffding, A. Lalande, R. Eucken, and others still testify to his role in spreading Welby's ideas and significs in Germany and France (see Zander, 1980).

Galton Papers, 339, University College London (includes Francis Galton's correspondence with Welby).

Giovanni Vailati Archive, University of Milan (includes Vailati's correspondence with Welby).

Pearson Papers, 889/6, University College London (includes the correspondence between Karl Pearson and Welby).

Significs Archive, University of Amsterdam.

The Lady Welby Library, University of London Library. Stores books originally from Welby's personal library now distributed according to subject in the General Library of the University of London Library. A list of the volumes in question, published under the title *List of Books in the Lady Welby Library*, presented by Sir Charles Welby (supplement of the London University Gazette, 30 July 1913), London-Bungay, University of London Press-R. Clay, 1913, is also available in The Lady Welby Library.

University of London Library, Egham in Surrey (an extension of the University of London Library) contains *Uncatalogued pamphlets*, grouped in 25 *pamphlet boxes*, numbered from 1 to 31 collecting writings from Welby's library. This corpus of materials includes pamphlets, extracts from journals and reviews, newspaper clippings, etc. Box numbers 5, 7, 22, 23, 26 and 28 collect materials alien to Welby and her interests in significs. Other four Boxes labeled A, B, C, D mainly store duplicates of Welby's publications.

University of London, *Minutes of the Senate for the Session October, 1911, to September, 1912*, London-Bungay, University of London Press-R. Clay.

Welby Collection in the York University Archives and Special Collections, Scott Library, York University, Downsview, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The *Welby Collection* presents 42 boxes divided into two main sections:

Box 1–21: *Correspondence* 1861–1912, corresponds to approximately half of the materials available in the *Welby Collection* archives. *The Correspondence of Victoria Lady Welby. A Survey Catalogue of the Files*, Downsview, Ontario, York University Archives, Ms., by Hartwell Bowsfield, provides a description of the archives storing Welby's correspondence, which is still mostly unpublished.

Box 22–42: *Subject files* containing annotations, extracts, speeches, lessons, comments by critics on Welby's publications and Welby's comments on publications by others, sermons, aphorisms, parables; numerous unpublished essaylets by V. Welby, proofs and publications by Welby in the main privately printed by W. Clarke (Late L. Ridge), Grantham; publications by others, for example, Sir F. Galton's papers on eugenics, materials relative to the Welby Prize Essay Competition, essays by Giovanni Vailati; diagrams, drawings, photographs; English translations

of foreign language papers; catalogue of books in Duneaves, Harrow (England, June 1902); and reviews of three books edited by Mrs. H. Cust (1928, 1929, 1931), etc. Welby's poetry is also stored in the archives.

2. Writings on Welby, the Signific Movement and current developments

This bibliography includes writings on Victoria Welby (or writings that include references to her), on significs and its developments, in addition to writings by significians belonging to the Signific Movement in the Netherlands or somehow connected to it.

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