

Chapter 1

The theorists – thinking about language

Words alter, words add, words subtract.
(Sontag 2004)

The academic Certeau and the sociologist Bourdieu appear to share views on the ways in which people live and interact. These theorists see people as existing in a relationship of domination. One group of people, for various reasons, is able to dominate and oppress another group of people. In differing ways, both theorists explore the power that people wield, and to which other people are subject, through language.

As a philosopher-historian and linguist, Ricoeur approaches the use of language from another direction. He is concerned less with language's effect on human behaviour than with humans' effect on language, that is, on the ways in which people can use language to represent their subject matter. He pays close attention to the linguistic element of metaphor, showing how it yields highly significant results.

Klemperer, the Jewish academic and philologist, studies the German language from the point of view of the oppressed. Forbidden to work, among other things, during the period of the Third Reich, he sets himself the task of recording linguistic evidence of the anti-Semitism that he also experiences directly in more practical restrictions and forms of abuse.

Certeau – how we behave

Producing and consuming

Michel de Certeau (1925–1986), as well as being an ordained Jesuit priest, was a French academic of many interests: theology, history, psychoanalysis, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and literature. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau (1984) sees society as consisting of dominant and dominated elements or groups of people. He gives the dominated element, which he immediately defends as not necessarily being 'passive' or 'docile', the title of 'consumers' (Certeau 1984: xii). The dominant element, then, constitutes the producers. 'Everyday life,' Certeau (1984: xii) tells us, 'invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways on the property of others'. In *Practice* he elaborates on the idea of how a group of people – 'group' meaning a collection of people, such as a culture, a race, a community – who have been imposed upon in some way, either by another group or policy or law, for example, manage to live with the strictures by adapting or manipulating them to suit themselves (Certeau 1984). He calls this kind of poaching 'consumption', and believes that 'the weak make use of the strong' through ingenious methods, or 'tactics of consumption' (Certeau 1984: xvii).

As well as tactics, there are two other pivotal notions that run through this work, namely, strategies and the 'proper'. By referring to tactics and strategies by themselves Certeau (1984) may initially give the impression that they are entities. But on closer inspection, tactics and

strategies, according to him, are actions – they are ‘two ways of acting’ (Certeau 1984: 39). In the light of his proposal that tactics are methods by which the consumer makes use of the producer, we can align strategies with producers and perceive of strategies as methods by which the producer makes use of the consumer. A strategy is the ‘calculation of power relationships’ that comes into being when a subject possessing ‘will and power’ – such as ‘a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution’ – can be isolated from an environment (Certeau 1984: 36). The wilful and powerful subject, the producer,¹ through exercising strategies, occupies a place that can be distinguished as its own and that serves as the base for managing relations with an ‘*exteriority*’ that consists of targets or threats – such as ‘customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, ... objects of research’² (Certeau 1984: 36).

Certeau (1984: xix) calls the quality of occupying a position that can be differentiated from other positions the ‘proper’, or simply ‘proper’. We can see the ‘proper’ as a result of the use of strategies on the producer’s part. Certeau believes that this quality has three significant effects. First, the achievement of a ‘proper’ position allows the producer to ‘capitalize acquired advantages’ and ‘prepare future expansions’, and thus brings with it both ‘a certain independence with respect to the variability of circumstances’ and ‘a mastery of time’ (Certeau 1984: 36). Second, and concomitantly, the ability to recognise the difference between one position and another – that is, ‘the division of space’ – allows the producer’s eye to ‘transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured’, and thereby controlled and included within the scope of his vision (Certeau 1984: 36). Being able to see into the distance is being able to predict, and in this way the producer is also able to assert power over time – to ‘run ahead of time by reading a space’, notes Certeau (1984: 36). Third, it would be true to state that another effect or result of the producer’s and the strategies’ ability to ‘transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces’, as implied in the preceding two points, is a ‘*power of knowledge*’ (Certeau 1984: 36). But it would be more accurate, Certeau (1984: 36) believes, to state that the producer and the strategies have a ‘specific type of knowledge’ that is ‘sustained and determined’ by the power to provide themselves with their own place. In other words, this power ‘*is the precondition of this knowledge*’ as well as its effect – this power ‘makes this knowledge possible and at the same time determines its characteristics’ (Certeau 1984: 36).

By contrast, the apparently biddable and weak subject, the consumer, does not enjoy the benefits of the ‘proper’. She cannot distinguish a place of her own, because she cannot use her tactics in this effort: ‘The space of a tactic is the space of the other,’ explains Certeau (1984: 36). Using tactics, she must rather ‘insinuat[e] [her]self into the other’s place, ... without taking it over in its entirety, [but] without being able to keep it at a distance’ (Certeau 1984: xix). She has no base from which to address relations with an exteriority – be it a target or a threat.³ Her life is not independent of circumstances, and she cannot master time. On

¹ The term ‘producer’ is used collectively and generally, because it can refer to any of these things – business, army, city, scientific institution, person-who-produces, and – as we see below – writer, and so on. The producer is soon after referred to as male, and the consumer as female, in this doctoral thesis. This is not intended to imply inequality of the sexes. I present the gender-distinct pronouns partly to facilitate the discussion and partly because Certeau uses a woman in an example of consumption that we examine below.

² Certeau (1984: 36) is referring here, in other words, to consumers, and – as we see below – readers. The term ‘consumers’ is also used collectively and generally.

³ As we have seen above, the consumer *is* the exteriority; she is a target or threat.

the contrary, her tactics ‘depend on time’ and she must always look out for opportunities that she can seize and manipulate (Certeau 1984: xix). She ‘must continually turn to [her] own ends forces alien to [her]’ (Certeau 1984: xix).

As an example, Certeau (1984) portrays a housewife going to the supermarket to buy food for a dinner party. She knows the items that she already has at home, she can go around the supermarket and see what is available and at what price, and she knows what her guests would probably enjoy eating. Her ‘intellectual synthesis’ of these ‘heterogeneous elements’ (Certeau 1984: xix) is an example of her tactical seizure of an opportunity and thus of her small victory over ‘the strong’ (my quotation marks), which in this case comprises the producers of all the items that are for sale in the supermarket.

There are two more characteristics that define strategies and tactics. Whereas ‘*a certain power is the precondition for [the] knowledge*’ that a strategy brings to the producer, Certeau (1984: 36) proposes, through a tactic the consumer neither exercises power nor gains knowledge. Indeed, her tactic ‘is determined by *the absence of power* just as [his] strategy is organized by the postulation of power’ (Certeau 1984: 38). The only ‘power’ with which the tactic is imbued is that gained from the use of tricks, ruses and games. Basing his reasoning on Freud’s⁴ text *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1960), Certeau (1984: 37–8) suggests that with a tactic the consumer ‘boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order to produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place’. In this way, she introduces witty ‘play’ into ‘the foundations of power’ (Certeau 1984: 39).

And finally, Certeau (1984) relates the distinctions between space and time directly to strategies and tactics, respectively. Bearing in mind the three effects of the ‘proper’, through the producer’s abilities to use gained advantages to prepare for future expansion (first effect), to recognise the division of spaces and to make predictions (second effect) and to exercise the knowledge he has gained (third effect), the producer attempts ‘to reduce temporal relations to spatial ones’ (Certeau 1984: 38). By employing strategies and thus the ‘proper’, Certeau (1984: 36) explains, the producer enacts a ‘*triumph of place over time*’. By contrast, through exercising her (time-dependent) tactics, the consumer will be briefly victorious when a series of ‘precise instant[s] of an intervention transforms into a favourable situation’ (Certeau 1984: 38). The housewife’s dinner party will be considered a success by all involved if she shops, returns home and prepares the dinner in good time to receive and entertain her guests that evening. Certeau (1984: 39) sees the producer as desiring to feel secure, while the consumer desires to act: ‘The former ‘pin[s] [his] hopes on the resistance that the *establishment of a place* offers to the erosion of time’, while the consumer pins her hopes ‘on a *clever utilization of time*’.

Writing and reading

Certeau (1984) believes that the production–consumption relationship can be equated with that of writing and reading. The relationship and, as we see below, certain points that Certeau makes imply that the latter two elements are closely linked; however, he also feels that between them there has existed ‘a major division’ (Certeau 1984: 168). For the moment, let us put the link and division to one side and explore each element’s characteristics.

⁴ Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), Austrian neurologist, founder of psychoanalysis.

For Certeau (1984: 134), writing is the activity of ‘constructing, on its own, blank space ... – the page – a text that has power over the exteriority from which it has first been isolated’. He breaks down the statement in the following manner: The blank page ‘is an autonomous surface’ that is ‘put before the eye of the subject [the writer, the producer] who ... accords himself the field for an operation [writing] of his own’ (Certeau 1984: 134). The writer constructs a text in (and on) this place. ‘A series of articulated operations’ – that is, literally, writing – ‘traces on the page the trajectories that sketch out words, sentences, and finally a system. ... an itinerant, progressive, and regulated practice ... composes the artefact of another “world”’ (Certeau 1984: 134–5).⁵ The ‘production of a system’, ‘a space of formalization’, is a possibility whose condition is that ‘it be detached from actual social practices’, Certeau (1984: 135) explains.

The meaning of this space, according to Certeau (1984: 135), ‘refers to the reality from which it [the space] has been distinguished *in order to change it* [the reality]’. ‘Its goal is social efficacy [sic] – it manipulates its exteriority’, as, strategically, do producers (Certeau 1984: 135). And indeed Certeau (1984: 135) feels that writing has ‘a “strategic” function’:

Either an item of information received from ... outside is collected, classified, inserted into a system and thereby transformed, or the rules ... developed in this place (which is not governed by them) allow one [that is, the producer, the writer] to act on the environment and to transform it’.

The page is a place of transition – ‘what comes in is something “received”, what comes out is a “product”’ (Certeau 1984: 135) – and the product shows the writer’s power of fabricating objects. The writer and the writing ‘retain what [they] receive from ... outside and create internally the instruments for an appropriation of [that] external space’, proposes Certeau (1984: 135).

While Certeau (1984: 136) concedes that ‘we all owe [writing] a great deal’, he does not seem to endorse the strategist-producers any further. Instead, he supports the tactician-consumers, and firmly rejects the apparently prevailing view of consumption as an essentially passive experience – Enlightenment ideology claimed that ‘the book was capable of reforming society’, that certain products ‘could remodel a whole nation’, Certeau (1984: 166, 167) comments, and that writing could ‘mould’ the public. In the 1970s the ‘text’ (my quotation marks) that was imposed upon people was no longer particularly a written text, it was ‘society itself, taking ‘urbanistic, industrial, commercial, or televised forms’ (Certeau 1984: 167). The view persists in the mutation from ‘educational archaeology to the technocracy of the media’, and Certeau’s (1984: 167) suggestion that the 70s public was likewise thought to be ‘passive, “informed,” processed, [and] marked’ may perhaps be applied to the public even today.

⁵ Certeau (1984) thus describes the page as a place of transition. It is also a place of transfer – the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (COED) (2004) gives the Greek etymology of the word ‘metaphor’ as ‘to transfer’ and transport. It is not a coincidence, Certeau (1984: 115) points out, that ‘in modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphora*’. In writing and reading, in the use and reception of figures, language and meaning also move: They begin as something and become something else.

This view, along with the accompanying assumption that the public necessarily becomes similar to the products that are imposed upon it and that it absorbs, is precisely what should be examined and refuted, in Certeau's (1984: 166, 167) opinion. He proposes instead that the public has the ability to make that which they absorb similar to themselves, an idea that is carried through in his presentation of a 'fundamental' aspect of consumption – that is, reading (Certeau 1984: 166, 167).

Certeau (1984: xix) believes that many everyday practices – such as 'talking, reading, moving about [and] shopping' – are tactical in nature. Reading is imposed upon by the writing (the consumers are imposed upon by the producers and the products). He traces examples, from the reading of 'the catechism or of the Scriptures' offered by the clergy to girls and mothers, to the more modern "'reading'" of television programmes by viewers, who seem unable to 'trace their own writing on the screen' (Certeau 1984: 169). Extending the argument to more recent times, those of us who turn to the internet for information – whether to satisfy casual curiosity or more formal research requirements – may also be subject to apparently dominant views, in this case of the people who write the text that appears on websites.

Thus even today reading may *seem* 'to constitute the maximal development of the passivity assumed to characterize the consumer', Certeau (1984: xxi) acknowledges. But on the contrary, he explains, reading has 'all the characteristics of a silent production' (Certeau 1984: xxi). 'To read is to wander through [the] imposed system ... of the text' (Certeau 1984: 169), just as the housewife wanders, with intent, through the supermarket; and as we see shortly with reference to an example that Certeau (1984: 169) takes from Descartes,⁶ the reader's function is to 'give a meaning' to that text, just as the housewife's function is to use the items she buys in the supermarket to provide an appetising meal for her guests.

Tactically, readers poach on a text, are 'transported into it' – 'a different world (the reader's) slips into the author's place', Certeau (1984: xxi) suggests. But readers do not replace the author, they 'invent in texts something different from what [the author] intended' (Certeau 1984: 169). A 'text' (my quotation marks), in its various forms, is not a hermetic system of signs and significations that readers receive and consume but on which they cannot 'put [their] own mark'; rather, 'a system of verbal [such as that provided in television programmes] or iconic [provided by a written text] signs is a reservoir of forms to which the reader must give a meaning' (Certeau 1984: 169).

In exploring the very act of reading, Certeau (1984: 170, emphasis added) feels that 'the division separating the readable text ... from the act of reading' is impossible to maintain, and he goes so far as to conclude that 'the text has a meaning *only* through its readers'. He bases this conclusion on Descartes' description of the process of decoding a cipher, or coded text written in ordinary letters: The person who wrote the cipher fulfilled their writing intention by using certain letters in certain positions, while the person attempting to decode the cipher may replace certain of its letters with other letters – 'reading a B everywhere he finds an A, and reading a C where he finds a B' (Certeau 1984: 171). If this method reveals words that have a meaning, the decoder 'will not doubt that he has found the true meaning of the cipher ... even though it could very well be that the [writer] meant something quite different' (Certeau 1984: 171).

⁶ René Descartes (1596–1650), French mathematician, scientist and philosopher.

Using this explanation, Certeau (1984: 171) proposes that therefore meaning is located not in any authorial intention, but in ‘the operation of encoding’. The slight contradiction in his use of the terms ‘decode’ and ‘encode’ in this explanation may be as a result of an incorrect translation from his original French text into English. Or perhaps Certeau sees the actual process of reading a B in place of every A as one of providing a code for a set of letters, in this case for what happens to be already a code. Thus, taken literally, he presents Descartes’ example as a process that comprises both actions – through encoding, the decoder is able to decode the cipher.

The consumer-reader’s memory⁷ – tactical, too – can act on and in the process of reading. Her memory is furthermore enhanced by that process, as we see shortly. The writer provides the product, the text, which tells a story. In the hands of a skilful writer, the story may *seem* to progress in a certain way, but actually it progresses in a different way. If the reader is not paying attention or for some other reason fails to notice that there is something going on beneath or behind the plainer elements of the story, she finishes the story and assumes that what she thinks happened is indeed what happened therein. However, if the reader is sharp-eyed or perceptive, like the housewife shopping in the supermarket her memory, while she reads, takes advantage of an existing occasion, and transforms the occasion into an opportunity (Certeau 1984: 86). The ‘occasion’ may be a hint from the writer positioned within the text that there is something going on in the story other than that which is immediately obvious. The ‘opportunity’ consists of the reader noticing the hint and interpreting its meaning. As well as an example from comic stories and from religious stories, Certeau (1984: 85) briefly supplies an example from a ‘whodunit’ form of story: “‘He must be the murderer, then!’” It seems clear that this exclamation is made by the reader of a crime novel on realising the correct identity of the murderer, which has not yet been revealed (if it will indeed be revealed) by the writer.

This multi-faceted process of realisation is aided, Certeau (1984: 85–7) proposes, by the reader’s memory. It is in the following way that her memory acts on and in the process of reading: I suggest that here Certeau indicates the reader’s memory not only of the preceding facts of and events in the story, but also of her own life and of the behaviour of others, for he comments that the ability of the reader to exercise her memory in the above-described way is ‘given the name of *authority*: what has been “drawn” from the collective or individual memory and “authorizes” (makes possible) a reversal, ... a transition into something different’ (Certeau 1984: 87). Thus for much of her reading of the crime novel the reader may believe that the murderer is person X, and at some point along the way she realises – because of something telling that the murderer or another character says or does, and because of her knowledge of how she and/or other people might behave in such a situation – that the murderer is actually person Y; thereby, she effects a change in her apprehension of the story and in the story’s own elements.⁸

⁷ Certeau (1984: 218 fn 7) uses ‘memory’ here ‘in the ancient sense of the term, which designates a presence to the plurality of times and is thus not limited to the past’.

⁸ There are many such examples in the novels of English detective novelist and playwright Agatha Christie (1890–1976). In *Fine Little Pigs* (1942), for instance, Amyas Crale is murdered by poisoning. A comment that family relations report him to have made about the taste of more than one bottle of beer that he drinks one or two hours before his death is Christie’s first clue to the poisoning having occurred in a way that differed from

Just as through tactics the consumer ‘insinuates [her]self’ into the place of the other, Certeau (1984: xix, 86) suggests that memory, like a cuckoo laying her eggs ‘only in other species’ nests’, ‘produces in a place that does not belong to it’. The reader’s memory ‘produces’ the detail – the ‘little something’, the ‘scrap which becomes precious in these particular circumstances’ of the story, in Certeau’s (1984: 86) words – that had until now been missing. The cuckoo metaphor, rather loosely applied, is effective in illustrating the particular characteristics of memory here: Memory does not create the occasion, the occasion is created by the author and thus already exists, just as the ‘other species’ of bird create the nests. Memory ‘receives its form and its implantation from external circumstances, even if it furnishes the content (the missing detail)’ (Certeau 1984: 86). Each nest of the ‘other species’ of bird is the ‘external circumstance’ (Certeau) that gives a place in which the cuckoo can lay her eggs; each cuckoo egg is the ‘missing detail’ (Certeau). Each story, in other words, is the external circumstance that gives the reader’s memory its ‘form’ and ‘implantation’ (Certeau), even though the memory itself provides the murderer’s true identity, in the case of the abovementioned example.

However, the cuckoo metaphor seems slightly inappropriate in that it implies that the act of memory here is unwanted, or an intrusion; whereas it is Certeau’s (1984: 85–7) opinion that, on the contrary, by noticing the writer’s hint and by interpreting its meaning, the reader comes to the conclusion that enhances the deeper meaning of the story. If the writer reveals the true identity of the murderer at the end of the story, the rather slower witted reader is made cognisant of that identity along with the sharper eyed reader. If the writer does not reveal the murderer’s true identity, the slower witted reader never knows it, while the sharper eyed reader still divines it for herself before the story’s end. By producing the missing detail, the reader generates the ‘practical “harmony”’ of the story (Certeau 1984: 86), and thus the act of memory here is useful and effective.

In being formed by ‘external circumstances’, memory is formed by ‘*arising from the other* (a circumstance) and by *losing it* (it is no more than a memory)’ (Certeau 1984: 86–7). Though she may exercise her memory, the reader does not gain any fixed position thereby; lacking any fixed position – in other words, also unsupported by the ‘proper’ – memory is alterable. And there is a double alteration, Certeau (1984: 87) points out: ‘of memory, which works when something affects it, and of its object, which is remembered only when it has disappeared’. A scent of cut grass – that is, an external circumstance – may trigger a person’s pleasant recollection of a childhood birthday party, causing the memory to come into being, and by the nature of memory, the party itself – the object – is not part of the recollection, it has gone, it is in the past.

Likewise tactical, as we have seen above, since readers cannot collect or keep what they have read, unless they write it down themselves, they are subject to an ‘erosion of time’ – ‘while reading, [they] forget [themselves] and [they] forget what [they] have read’ – unless they buy the book, which even then is ‘no more than a substitute ... of moments “lost” in reading’ (Certeau 1984: xxi). Readers insert into the text ‘the ruses of pleasure and appropriation’, and thus the production of reading is also, in Certeau’s (1984: xxi) view, ‘an “invention” of the

the seemingly most obvious way. However, the reader may easily fail to notice the full import of the comment, just as the family members and the police fail to notice it, as it is hidden among the other details of the scene.

memory': 'Words become the outlet or product of silent histories. The readable transforms itself into the memorable'. We can read Descartes, for example, in Certeau's text, just as we can read Certeau in this doctoral thesis. In this way, the reader's memory is enhanced by the process of reading, and thus we can say that with regard to the reader's memory, the reading process entails the functions of both memory-utilising and memory-making.

Let us now return our attention to the distinction and the link to which Certeau (1984) points with regard to the processes of writing and reading. In explaining his view that there had been a major division between the processes, Certeau (1984: 168) highlights two elements, at first discrete, then related: 'the written and the oral'. He feels that it is only in schools that (the pupils') abilities to read and write have been linked, and fragilely (Certeau 1984: 168). These abilities were separated up until the late 19th century, and may sometimes be separated even today, when adults who have attended school dissociate "'just reading'" from 'writing' (Certeau 1984: 168).

Under the general 'heading' (my quotation marks) of the process of reading, Certeau (1984: 225 fn 6) also makes a finer distinction, based on cited research results: 'Deciphering' is the process of looking at groups of letters and understanding the meanings of the individual words that these groups form, while 'reading for meaning' is the process of looking at groups of words and understanding the meaning that the groupings suggest or represent (or, as could be more accurately presented in the light of the abovementioned discussion on reading, providing meaning to the groups of words to which the reader has been given access). It may seem logical to believe that the former leads to the latter – that being able to read results from being able to decipher. But the cited research shows, by contrast, that schoolchildren's learn-to-read process '*parallels*' their learn-to-decipher process (Certeau 1984: 168).

'Reading and writing' and 'the written and the oral' are not twin pairs of distinctions, and it would be incorrect to conflate the two, to imply that because writing and the written are synonymous, the oral should be aligned with reading, or to imply that the difference between the former is also the difference between the latter. Certeau (1984) does not make such an error either. The reason for his inclusion of both pairs in this part of his discussion becomes clearer when he links the four elements together and proposes that children become capable of reading (for meaning) that which is written if they have participated in oral communication: 'Cultural memory alone', to which children gain access 'through listening, through the oral tradition', 'makes possible and gradually enriches the strategies of semantic questioning [that is, the process of reading for meaning] whose expectations the deciphering of a written text refines, clarifies, or corrects' (Certeau 1984: 168).

Evidently, writing and reading can be included in the category of 'spatial practices' (Certeau 1984: 91) – certain ways of acting in or in relation to a place. As we have seen above, the blank page is the place on and in which the writer-producer constructs the 'system' – the text (Certeau 1984: 134); the reader-consumer enters and travels through this system, and emerges having devised a meaning that may or may not also be that which the author intended. With regard to other such 'practices', Certeau (1984: 97) parallels the effect of the act of walking on an 'urban system' (a city) with the effect of the 'speech act' on language. While his brief explanation focuses on this parallel, he acknowledges that other relations can be as easily identified, such as that between 'the act of writing and the written text' (Certeau

1984: 98). He highlights these as being among the many examples of ‘the first determination of a much more general distinction between the *forms used* in a system and the *ways of using* this system’ (Certeau 1984: 98).

In this regard, Certeau (1984: 93) identifies ‘ordinary practitioners of [a] city’, apparently speaking of people who are native to the city, who were either born in it or have been living in it for so long that they feel it is theirs. ‘They walk,’ he says, ‘they are walkers, ... whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” [that] they write’ (Certeau 1984: 93). Even though Certeau links walkers with writers, I suggest that they can be likened rather to readers.

They may be writers in the sense that they leave traces on the spaces that they traverse while going about their daily business – ‘every “proper” place is altered by the mark others have left on it’ (Certeau 1984: 44). But first and foremost they are, in a sense, readers, because they enact the process of ‘*appropriation* of the topographical system’ (Certeau 1984: 97) just as readers poach on the text, they conduct a ‘spatial acting-out of the place’ (Certeau 1984: 98) just as readers conduct a referential or interpretive acting-out of the text, and their walking implies ‘*relations* among differentiated positions’ (Certeau 1984: 98) just as reading implies relations among the differentiated positions of reader and writer. Moreover, walkers are consumers of a system, a city, imposed upon them by town planners and architects just as readers are consumers of the various texts that authors and the media impose upon them. Finally, Certeau (1984: 115) confirms the implication of a nature that is shared by walking and reading when he tells us that ‘spatial practices concern everyday tactics’.

Incorrectly perceived as *passive* consumers, readers are furthermore mistaken for ‘voyeur[s]’ (Certeau 1984: xxi), that is, for people who watch and do not participate. As we have seen above, Certeau believes that readers do indeed participate in the reading process, by generating textual meaning. When people cannot participate, such as when they look out over a city from a considerable height, Certeau (1984: 92) believes that their ‘elevation transfigures [them] into ... voyeur[s]’. But at street level, his walkers are ‘below the thresholds at which visibility begins’ (Certeau 1984: 93). Not only do their ‘bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” [that] they write’, they write this text ‘without being able to read it’ (Certeau 1984: 93) – they are too close, literally and figuratively, to see the spaces they inhabit. Their ‘knowledge’ of these spaces ‘is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms’ (Certeau 1984: 93). This is a blindness born of familiarity, perhaps, which has led to complacency. Moreover,

it is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of space. (Certeau 1984: 93)

The city is the already existing ‘background’, to borrow a term from Ricoeur (in Reagan 1996: 106),⁹ and is thus the basis on which the walkers’ spatial practice rests. It is the system they ‘read’ – and like readers, they are forgetful and subject to the ‘erosions of time’ (Certeau

⁹ We encounter this term again in the section on Ricoeur (see below, page 33).

1984: xxi); it is the code that they decipher; it is the text from which they create meaning. They are both readers and writers, and neither one.

As we can see, ‘place’ and ‘space’ feature prominently in Certeau’s (1984) discussions. He uses the terms neither lightly nor broadly, and he shows how the notion of the ‘proper’ can be applied to them (Certeau 1984). In his eyes, place seems to have a linear quality. ‘The possibility of two things being in the same location’ is excluded – ‘the elements taken into consideration are *beside* one another, each situated in its own ... distinct location’, a location that is supported by the ‘proper’ because it is self-defined (Certeau 1984: 117). A place implies stability. By contrast, space is multi-dimensional, characterised by ‘vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables’ (Certeau 1984: 117). Space ‘is composed of intersections of mobile elements’ and thus does not have the stability of a “proper” (Certeau 1984: 117).

While thus being distinct, place and space are nonetheless linked, because in Certeau’s (1984: 117) view, ‘*space is a practiced place*’. The street, that is, the place provided by urban planners, ‘is transformed into a space by walkers’; so too a text, that is, a place provided by an author, is transformed into a space by readers involved in the act of reading (Certeau 1984: 117). This point seems to lend support to my abovementioned suggestion of walkers principally resembling readers.

Ricoeur – how we use metaphor

Creating a metaphor

Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) was a French philosopher and historian who studied certain linguistic and psychoanalytical theories of interpretation (EB 2008). In *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur (1977) traces the development of his ideas regarding the concept of metaphor through three linguistic disciplines, each of which relate to particular linguistic entities. The word is the linguistic entity of the discipline of classical rhetoric, the sentence is that of the discipline of semiotics and semantics, and discourse is that of the discipline of hermeneutics. This pairing becomes a tripling when Ricoeur (1977) also points out that metaphor has the quality of a form, then of a sense and finally of a reference, respectively.

Within classical rhetoric, Ricoeur (1977) suggests, metaphor is a single-word figure of speech defined as a trope of resemblance. A metaphor ‘constitutes a displacement and an extension of the meaning of words’ (Ricoeur 1977: 3). Using metaphor, Anne Michaels, for example, writes a poem – and calls it ‘What the Light Teaches’ – in which she ‘says’ that language is a house (What the Light Teaches 128). Using metaphor, she takes a situation or an entity that we accept as standard and displaces its particular (literal) meaning by extending that meaning to reach a different situation or entity. Conventionally, literally, we use language in communication; we cannot live in it. Metaphorically, language becomes something that we can use as a place of residence. By giving language a characteristic that in reality it does not have, Michaels encourages us to imagine it differently. Ricoeur’s (1977: 6) discussion here is

based on Aristotle's¹⁰ theories, a central tenet of which is that 'to metaphorize well ... implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars'.¹¹

Within the discipline of semiotics and semantics, metaphor is transferred into the framework of the sentence, though clearly the single word is never completely left behind. Michaels's sentence containing the abovementioned metaphor reads: 'Language is the house with lamplight in its windows,/ visible across fields' (What the Light Teaches 128). In semiotics, a word is 'treated as a sign in the lexical code'; in semantics, a sentence 'is the carrier of the minimum complete meaning', Ricoeur (1977: 4) explains. He bases this categorisation on Benveniste's¹² distinction between 'the sign [as] the unit of semiotics' and 'the sentence [as] the unit of semantics' (Ricoeur 1977: 69). The distinction is useful in supporting and leading to other distinctions of discourse, in Ricoeur's (1977) view, which he identifies and presents in pairs.

For the purposes of this discussion, Ricoeur's fourth pair is most relevant: the distinction between sense and reference, which takes place at the level of the sentence. Only at this level 'can what is said [house] be distinguished from that of which one speaks [language]', Ricoeur (1977: 74) explains. He highlights this trait as marking the fundamental difference between semiotics and semantics: 'Semiotics is aware only of intra-linguistic relationships, whereas semantics takes up the relationship between the sign and the things denoted – that is, ultimately, the relationship between language and world' (Ricoeur 1977: 74). The verse containing the pertinent sentence in Michaels's poem provides, semiotically, nouns (*language, lamplight, house, windows, fields*), verbs (*is, can, bear*), an adverb (*across*) and a pronoun (*anyone*), for example. Semantically, there is the idea or the image of language standing house-like in a field and welcoming people inside with its lamplight. A corollary to this distinction is that the semiotic is subordinate to the semantic viewpoint (Ricoeur 1977: 217), a notion that Ricoeur (in Reagan 1996: 107) reiterates in the following form: 'What is ultimately important in the text ... is not the object which it depicts but the world that it generates'.¹³ We discuss this idea of the world generated by texts further below.

Upon Ricoeur's fourth pair, it may seem logical to base an alignment of sense with semiotics and reference with semantics. Semiotics is intra-linguistic and sense entails what is said, while semantics seems extra-linguistic in its relating of language with the world and reference facilitates our apprehension of a reality outside of language. However, such an alignment would not be in accordance with Ricoeur's views. He does not categorise the second linguistic discipline as semiotics, with the linguistic element being the sentence and the quality being sense. Nor does he categorise the third linguistic discipline as semantics, with the linguistic element being discourse and the quality being reference. Instead, he combines semiotics and semantics as parts of the second discipline, to which he allocates the element of sense (Ricoeur 1977). The aptness of this combination is evident in his view of 'the *sense* of metaphor as a founding of a new semantic pertinence' (Ricoeur 1977: 6). Thus, sense is applicable to semantics as well as to semiotics.

¹⁰ Aristotle (384–322 BC), Greek philosopher and scientist.

¹¹ In Certeau's copy of Aristotle's *Poetics*, metaphor is described as 'consist[ing] in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else' (Aristotle, in Certeau 1984: 109).

¹² Émile Benveniste (1902–1976), French linguist.

¹³ See below, page 27, footnote 16, for further comment on this aspect of Ricoeur's theory.

In 'What the Light Teaches' the word 'language' is a noun, which means it has semiotic value; *and* it means something, it has a sense – it tells us of a medium of communication. Among the accepted standards of language there is not a capability of serving as a place of residence, or 'housing'. The word 'house' in the poem is also a noun and it also has a sense – it tells us of a physical structure of walls, windows and a roof. One of the accepted standards of that structure is the capability of housing people. By attributing the title 'house' to the thing 'language' – that is, by using metaphor – Michaels is giving language the characteristic of the capability of housing people. The term 'language' has sense semiotically as language and semantically as house.

Within the discipline of hermeneutics, the focus shifts from the sentence to what Ricoeur (1977: 6) calls 'discourse properly speaking'. Discourse, in his eyes, comes into being when words are used to create something, or when they are arranged in a particular way. Through these actions, the product – the discourse, such as a poem or a novel – is entire and cannot be broken down into a collection of words. Moreover, he calls discourse a 'disposition' (Ricoeur 1977: 219), a whole made up of arranged parts, bearing in mind also the verb 'to dispose', which indicates the act of arranging. It is this act that makes the discourse irreducible. In all discourse, Ricoeur (1977: 6) believes, there is a connection between 'sense' (discourse's 'internal organisation') and 'reference' ('its power to refer to a reality outside of language'). In quality the two are contrasted – as we have seen above, Ricoeur attributes the quality of sense to the discipline of semiotics and semantics, and the quality of reference to the discipline of hermeneutics. In the hermeneutic act the two are combined, as we see now.

In an address given in 1971, Ricoeur (1977: 319) defines sense as 'the immanent content of the text' and reference as 'what [the text] says *about* the world'. Michaels's poem proposes that there are similarities between uninhabitable language and an inhabitable house, that words resemble shelter, that sentences can take on tangible form – in being spoken, for example – and thus that, for a time, the impossible can be possible. Aware that the structuralists exclude from their view of a text not only textual 'reference to an external world' but also 'its connections to an author who *intended* it and to a reader who *interprets* it', Ricoeur (1977: 319) follows his hermeneutic urge by attempting to formulate 'a better connection between the [structuralist] stage of objective explanation and the [hermeneutic] stage of subjective appropriation'. In his view, the hermeneutic act is based on a recognition of the contrast between 'the objective meaning of the text' (related to sense) and 'the subjective intention of the author' (related to reference) (Ricoeur 1977: 319). He sees this objective meaning as 'a requirement addressed to the reader' (Ricoeur 1977: 319). The first stage in the process of interpretation would be the reader's 'obedience to this injunction' (Ricoeur 1977: 319).

The process advances 'not so much from an intersubjective relation linking the subjectivity of the author and the subjectivity of the reader as from a connection between ... the discourse of the text and the discourse of interpretation' (Ricoeur 1977: 319). While holding in common 'some basic propositions' (Ricoeur, in Reagan 1996: 101) with theorists such as Dilthey and Schleiermacher,¹⁴ Ricoeur (1977: 220) is opposed to their proposal that

¹⁴ Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), German philosopher. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), German theologian, preacher and classical philologist.

‘harmony’ between ‘the spirit of the author and that of the reader’ is the first principle of interpretation. As an alternative to the ‘difficult’ and ‘often impossible’ quest for harmony, for ‘an intention hidden behind the work’, he proposes a quest that ‘addresses the world displayed before the work’ (Ricoeur 1977: 220). In performing the hermeneutic act, in interpreting a work, the reader will ‘display the world to which [the work] refers by virtue of its “arrangement”, its “genre” and its “style”’ (Ricoeur 1977: 220).¹⁵

The combination of sense and reference is evident in Ricoeur’s (1977: 319, emphasis added) belief that ‘what has to be interpreted in a text is what it says *and* what it speaks about, i.e., the kind of world which it opens up’.¹⁶ As he explains, the final stage of interpretation – ‘the final act of “appropriation”’ – is ‘less the projection of one’s own prejudices into the text than the “fusion of horizons” [in Gadamer’s¹⁷ terms] that occurs when the world of the reader and the world of the text merge’ (Ricoeur 1977: 319), in other words, when the reader has embarked on the quest and is addressing that world. If we read the above-quoted sentence from Michaels’s poem by itself, we may accept her suggestion of language as a house but express the attendant question: ‘What of it?’ We need to read further to find the answer. The metaphor is extended in the verse to represent not only a house, as a structure of housing, but also a home, a place of refuge, for someone who has lost everything but himself, for ‘anyone/ who has only his tongue left’ (What the Light Teaches 128). Michaels seems to suggest that an almost wholly dispossessed person can find sanctuary in a medium of communication that he is able to use by virtue of knowing how to use it and of having the physical attributes that facilitate such use. By extension, and perhaps merging the world of Michaels’s poem with our own world more fully, we can see her metaphor as proposing that (even) a country-less, homeless, family-less¹⁸ person still has himself, which is also the source of his ability to use language.

A corollary to Ricoeur’s line of thought is evident in his acknowledgement of being influenced by the British and American school of ordinary language philosophy. He presents what he sees as two significant contributions that this type of philosophy can make: First, ‘the polysemic feature of our words in ordinary language appears to [him] as the basic condition for symbolic discourse’ and therefore ‘the most primitive layer in a theory of metaphor [and] symbol’ (Ricoeur 1977: 321). Second, ordinary language seems to him ‘to be

¹⁵ According to Ricoeur (1977: 219), there are three ‘categories of production and of labour’ that we can use to describe a text, a work, in order to distinguish each one: First, there is the dispositional character of the work – it is made up of arranged parts and is thus not reducible to ‘a simple sum of sentences’. Second, the work obeys ‘formal rules’ or a ‘codification’ that we call its ‘literary “genre”’ (Ricoeur 1977: 219). Third, the work has a certain style that makes it unique, different from all other works, even if they are of the same genre (Ricoeur 1977: 219). Thus, ‘arrangement, belonging to genres, achievement in a particular style, are the categories proper to the production of discourse as work’ (Ricoeur 1977: 220).

¹⁶ There may be a slight contradiction in this aspect of Ricoeur’s theory: On the one hand, here he argues for the importance, in the interpretive act, of paying attention to what the text says (words and sentences, senses) *and* what it talks about (the text as a whole, references). And on the other hand, as we have seen earlier in this section, he suggests that the world that is generated by a text (made up of the things that the text refers to) is more important than the object the text depicts (the things it says). However, it may also simply be that his ideas have changed over time. He proposed the former idea in 1971 (Ricoeur 1977: 319) and the latter in 1982 (Ricoeur, in Reagan 1996: 107).

¹⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), German philosopher.

¹⁸ This is an adaptation of the line in the poem that reads: Language is ‘a country; home; family’ (What the Light Teaches 128).

a kind of conservatory for expressions which have preserved the highest descriptive power as regards human experience, particularly in the realms of action and feelings' (Ricoeur 1977: 321–2).

Ordinary language, then, is the firm foundation on which metaphor can be built. It is within such language that we may be able to locate sense, or perhaps it would be more accurate to use the term 'senses', in the light of the polysemic nature of words highlighted by Ricoeur (1977: 321). Ordinary language comprises senses, which – through suspension of first-level denotation or reference – become split-referents, in the rather complex process that we explore below, and as such can become instances of instruction and of evocation.

Dealing with Aristotle's text *Rhetoric*, Ricoeur (1977: 33) identifies the instructive value of metaphor, a quality that 'concerns the pleasure of understanding that [hopefully] follows surprise'. This function is carried out in the sudden combination of 'elements that have not been put together before' (Ricoeur 1977: 33). 'Strange words simply puzzle us; ordinary words convey only what we know already,' Aristotle (in Ricoeur 1977: 33–4) believes; 'it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh.' The implication is that 'strange words' are not instructive. And Aristotle (in Ricoeur 1977: 33) uses the word 'only' pejoratively in reference to what he sees as the unhelpful capability of ordinary words in this context. By contrast, I suggest that, in the light of Ricoeur's abovementioned approval of ordinary language, we can take 'ordinary words' as being the basis of the metaphors through which we gain access to something surprising and fresh, and, ultimately, instructive. Aristotle (in Ricoeur 1977: 34) uses an example of 'a withered stalk' to portray the state of old age – we would not be able to imagine that state in terms of a plant that has lost its vitality should we be, and remain, ignorant of the meaning of the ordinary words 'withered' and 'stalk'. We would not be able to conceive of the potential of language to serve as housing should we be ignorant of the meaning of ordinary words like 'house', 'lamplight' and 'home'.

Metaphor's evocative function links to the abovementioned 'realm of feelings' and to Ricoeur's engagement with the work of Paul Henle.¹⁹ In dealing with Henle, Ricoeur (1977: 190) proposes the following additional function of metaphor: 'Metaphor ... adds to the way in which we perceive This still rests upon resemblance, but at the level of feelings'. Northrop Frye²⁰ (in Ricoeur 1977: 226) also identifies this emotional aspect of poetic language, calling it the poem's 'mood', which is 'articulate[d]' by 'poetic images'. Below, we see how Ricoeur's use of this aspect differs from Frye's original intention, as well as how, again in contrast to Ricoeur, Gottlob Frege²¹ uses the term 'feelings' with regard to what he believes is poetry's non-referential nature.

¹⁹ Few biographical details for Paul Henle are available on the internet. He seems to have been affiliated with Northwestern University in America, and presumably he was born in the early years of the 20th century and died in the mid to later part of that century, because JSTOR, the online academic journal archive, provides over 50 articles and book reviews by Henle published in ethics and philosophy journals from 1935 to 1962.

²⁰ Herman Northrop Frye (1912–1991), Canadian educator, literary critic and author.

²¹ Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), German mathematician, logician and philosopher, whose work is influential in the philosophy of language.

Re-describing reality

Still within the hermeneutic discipline, in terms of reference, Ricoeur (1977: 6) believes that ‘the metaphorical statement has the power to “re-describe” reality’. ‘Metaphor presents itself as a strategy of discourse that, while preserving and developing the creative power of language, preserves and develops the *heuristic* power wielded by *fiction*’ (Ricoeur 1977: 6). From fiction, in other words, as readers we can learn something for ourselves, and Ricoeur’s point is that we can do so through an exploration of possibilities that is the underlying motivation of the heuristic function. As he muses: ‘Is not the function of poetry to establish another world ... that corresponds to other possibilities of existence, to possibilities that would be most deeply our own?’ (Ricoeur 1977: 229). The phrase ‘another world’ could have two, simultaneously-operating, meanings here: In the way that ‘poetry’ indicates the genre, the body of poetic work made up of poems, the other ‘world’ could indicate the body of worlds made up of poetic worlds; and the other world (singular) could also indicate each world – established by the author and addressed by the reader – of each poem or work of fiction.

However, poetic discourse ‘*seems* to be essentially non-referential and centred on itself’, suggests Ricoeur (1977: 6, emphasis added). Basing this part of the discussion on the work of Frege, he points out that Frege believes that when we speak and think we are intentionally seeking ‘the truth’, an action that ‘drives us always to advance from the sense to the reference’ (Ricoeur 1977: 218). This drive is evident only in scientific research and the making of scientific statements, according to Frege (in Ricoeur 1977: 218), and not in the making of poetic statements. He (Frege) uses ‘Ulysses’²² as an example of a proper name, in epic poetry, that has no reference – ‘we are interested only in the sense of the [name] and the images and feelings thereby aroused’ (Frege, in Ricoeur 1977: 220).²³ Ricoeur (1977: 224) proposes that, likewise, the ‘dominant current of literary criticism’ has in mind ‘the destruction of reference’ (‘current’ being in the 1970s). In poetry, the fusion of sense and sound, and of sense and images, put forward by theorists such as Pope, Valéry, Wimsatt, Hester and Husserl²⁴ result in the poem – the solid object forged by ‘poetry converting language into matter, worked for its own sake’ – being ‘not the representation of some thing, but an expression of itself’ (Ricoeur 1977: 224–5).

The idea arises also in the linguistic communication theory of Roman Jakobson.²⁵ Jakobson presents six factors and six related functions of communication. His insistence that ‘the difference between poetic and non-poetic texts can be explained in purely linguistic terms’ (Jefferson & Robey 1986: 56) is manifested in his view that the poetic function is not only related to the message factor, it also ‘deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects’ (Jakobson, in Ricoeur 1977: 222). A direct result of this action, according to Ricoeur (1977: 222), is ‘the highlighting of the message for its own sake’.

²² ‘For Frege’s semantics, proper names in logic designate real beings. “Socrates” is the name of the real Socrates’, explains Ricoeur (1992: 29 fn 3) in his subsequent text, *Oneself as Another* – and thus ‘Ulysses’ is the name of the (as it happens) fictional hero of Homer’s epic poem, the *Odyssey*.

²³ Ricoeur (1992: 29 fn 3) elaborates: ‘The name is therefore a tag that is attached to the thing’.

²⁴ Alexander Pope (1688–1744), English poet and satirist. Paul Valéry (1871–1945), French poet, essayist and critic. WK Wimsatt (1907–1975), American theorist and critic. MB Hester (d.u.), author of *The Meaning of Poetic Metaphor* (1967). Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), German philosopher.

²⁵ Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), Russian-born American linguist and Slavic-language scholar.

Ricoeur (1977: 225, 226) identifies Frye as approaching the limit of the argument ‘most radically’ in proposing that ‘in literary discourse, the symbol represents nothing outside itself but links the parts to the whole within the discursive framework’, and in seeing poetry as ‘ignor[ing] reality and limit[ing] itself to forging a “fable”’. From this point of view, ‘meaning in literature is literal; it says what it says and nothing else’ (Ricoeur 1977: 226). As mentioned above, Frye introduces the additional aspect of mood, which apparently colours but leaves unharmed his premise. According to Frye (in Ricoeur 1977: 226), mood ‘*is* the poem, not something else still behind it’.

There is also an epistemological side to the argument, which Ricoeur (1977) sees as having been imported from philosophy into literature. Logical positivist critiques state that ‘all language that is not *descriptive*, that is, gives ‘information about facts’, ‘must be *emotional*, with ‘the emotional’ being ‘sensed purely “within” the subject’ (Ricoeur 1977: 226–7). In this situation, the contrasting elements of cognition and emotion, as well as denotation and connotation, are established. He cites the ‘positivist conviction’ of Cohen²⁶ in this regard: ‘The function of prose is denotative, the function of poetry is connotative’ (Ricoeur 1977: 227).

But if poetry or metaphorical discourse expresses only itself and is incapable of acting referentially, as the above theorists suggest, how can such discourse say something about reality, as Ricoeur would have us believe? Ricoeur is evidently opposed to the abovementioned ideas. His aim is ‘to do away with this restriction of reference to scientific statements’ (Ricoeur 1977: 221), and he questions whether ‘the expressivity of things’ must not ‘find in language itself ... a power of designation that escapes the alternative of denotative or connotative’ (Ricoeur 1977: 228). Bearing up under the weight of Frege’s view that we strive for truth whenever we think or speak, Ricoeur’s (1977: 221) solution is that ‘the literary work ... displays a world only under the condition that the reference of descriptive discourse is suspended’. When the first-level denotation or reference is suspended, a second-level denotation or reference is ‘set free’ (Ricoeur 1977: 221).

In Frege’s terms, the word ‘language’ in ‘What the Light Teaches’ can only denote or refer to a method of communication, and cannot serve as a form of housing. Following Ricoeur’s argument instead, we can realise that the word ‘language’ does not necessarily mean such a thing, and that once we grasp the idea that language is not a method, it is a physical structure, we can suspend our belief in language as language and be free to imagine language as a house of refuge. The second-level denotation of language as house is released, and attained by us. Ricoeur (1977: 229) sees this suspension as the ‘negative condition of the appearance of a more fundamental mode of reference’. And here he brings in Frye’s ‘mood’ for a purpose other than that which Frye intended – he sees mood not as the poem, but as ‘the index of a manner of being’, which thus has an ‘extra-linguistic’ quality and serves as ‘a way of finding or sensing oneself in the midst of reality’ (Ricoeur 1977: 229). A dispossessed person likely feels utterly bereft; the suggestion of a refuge may, to him, bring with it great relief and comfort that in turn lends him the courage to go on living.

²⁶ Jean Cohen (1949–1994), French linguist.

Moreover, while Ricoeur may agree that the creative act figuratively converts language into matter (just as coincidentally language is converted into a house in the example we are using), in contrast to the theorists of the ‘dominant current’ he does not concede that the solid or ‘concrete object’ expresses itself; instead he suggests that the creative act ‘opens up access to reality in the mode of fiction and feeling’ (Ricoeur 1977: 229). Ricoeur (1977: 229) sees this as one of the significant clues in the search for ‘another reference’ or, in Jakobson’s terms, a ‘split reference’ (Ricoeur 1977: 230). Thus Ricoeur (1977: 224) does not reject Jakobson’s views outright – he accepts what he believes to be one of Jakobson’s ‘valuable suggestions’. As he explains, Jakobson argues in favour of an ‘ambiguity’ that affects ‘all the functions of communication’ (Ricoeur 1977: 224): ‘The ‘addresser’ and ‘addressee’ are ‘split’, and by extension so is the message and thus the reference (Jakobson, in Ricoeur 1977: 224). Jakobson (in Ricoeur 1977: 224) locates this case as being played out in fairytales – Majorcan storytellers, for example, tend to begin their tales with the pronouncement: ‘It was and it was not’.

Ricoeur (1977) suggests that the analysis of a metaphorical statement is the two-part action which establishes a referential conception of poetic language that patterns itself on Jakobson’s notion of the split reference. In one part of the metaphorical analysis, the way in which metaphorical meaning is created points to the splitting of reference, because the meaning of a metaphorical statement comes into being when the literal meaning is blocked. ‘In a literal interpretation, the meaning abolishes itself’ (Ricoeur 1977: 230). We can find a metaphorical statement believable only when we grasp its figurative meaning, knowing that there is usually no benefit to be gained from turning a small problem into a much larger problem; whereas we cannot find a metaphorical statement believable when we grasp its literal meaning and contemplate the magic that would be required to make a mountain out of a molehill.

In this creation of metaphorical meaning, Ricoeur (1977) sees the referential act as undergoing a two-phase process, initially negative and then becoming positive. In the first, negative phase, ‘poetic discourse’ seeks to abolish the reference ‘by means of self-destruction of the meaning of metaphorical statements’ (Ricoeur 1977: 230), the destruction being rooted in the loss of the literal meaning. A molehill of earth cannot be turned into a mountain of rock; language cannot house people. In the second, positive phase, the metaphorical meaning is gained through ‘a “twist” of the literal meaning’ (Ricoeur 1977: 230). We can worry about a small problem, the molehill, so much that it becomes a much larger problem – a mountain in our mind. In the event of absence of all other habitations, language can serve as a form of habitation. ‘It is this innovation in meaning that constitutes living metaphor,’ Ricoeur (1977: 230) proposes.

With regard to the other part of the metaphorical analysis, Ricoeur (1977) feels that the semantic study of metaphor is also useful in this discussion. He recalls Aristotle’s point about resemblance: seeing similarity in what is dissimilar. In this process, meanings are paralleled, and he concludes that therefore the objects being metaphorised can also be paralleled (Ricoeur 1977). This brings us the ‘schema’ of the split reference, he suggests: ‘It sets up a parallel between metaphorization of reference and metaphorization of meaning’ (Ricoeur 1977: 231). To substantiate this proposition, he sets out to ‘overcome the

opposition between denotation and connotation’ and to ‘insert metaphorized reference into a *generalized* theory of *denotation*’ (Ricoeur 1977: 231). He uses the theories of Goodman²⁷ (in Ricoeur 1977: 231), whose belief that ‘in aesthetic experience the *emotions function cognitively*’ shows a refusal to distinguish between the cognitive and the emotive with which Ricoeur evidently agrees.

Eliciting metaphorical truth

The destination that Ricoeur (1977) has been travelling towards in his line of argument is the concept of metaphorical truth, and he proceeds to explore the question of whether or not we can speak of that concept with any kind of conviction. Judging by his view that we seek truth only in scientific statements, Frege and like-minded theorists would say ‘no’ to the question. By contrast, in his identification of a world before the work and a reality to which we gain access through fiction and feeling, Ricoeur seems to be answering the question in the affirmative.

One of Ricoeur’s (1977: 7) fundamental conclusions is that ‘the “place” of metaphor ... is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb *to be*’. A copula is a linking verb; it connects a subject and a complement, and indicates a state rather than an action. Ricoeur (1977) narrows it down here to designate a state of existence, and, as we see shortly, a state of non-existence. Based on the abovementioned combination in fairytales of the states of ‘is’ and ‘is not’, his belief that metaphorical statements are equally, essentially dualistic is closely related to this conclusion (Ricoeur 1977).

There are some theorists, Ricoeur (1977) suggests, who deny this dualism, to the detriment of the concept of metaphorical truth. Those who proclaim only that metaphors identify – saying ‘this is that’ – give in to ‘ontological *naïveté*’; those who proclaim only that metaphors compare, that is, who subject a metaphor to the ‘critical pressure’ of the ‘is not’, thereby lose the ‘is’ by ‘reducing it to the “as if” of a reflective judgment’ (Ricoeur 1977: 249). In his view, ‘there is no other way to do justice to the notion of metaphorical truth than to include the critical incision of the (literal) “is not” within the ontological vehemence of the (metaphorical) “is”’ (Ricoeur 1977: 255).²⁸ ‘What the Light Teaches’, perhaps, in Ricoeur’s hands, would not state ‘house’ every time it meant language, it would not say or hint that language is not house – it would make sure that we know that language is not a house while imagining or even believing that it could be. Because it is and is not – language cannot serve as a form of housing, and yet it does serve as a form of housing.

Re-describing the re-description of reality

A few years after *The Rule* was published, Ricoeur (1977: 6) qualified his statement concerning the power of metaphor to “re-describe” reality’. In an interview with philosophy professor Charles Reagan (1996: 106) (at various times Ricoeur’s student, confidant and colleague), Ricoeur conveys his discomfort with the expression ‘re-describe the world’, its

²⁷ Nelson Goodman (1906–1998), American philosopher.

²⁸ In exploring the identity of the ‘irreducible basic particular’ – that is, a person – Ricoeur (1992: 52, 3) proposes something similar: ‘The selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other’.

inappropriateness ‘to what [he] was doing’ in this book and his avoidance of the term in his subsequently published three-volume text *Time and Narrative* (1984–88). By stating that ‘in *The Rule of Metaphor* ... [Ricoeur] speak[s] of the power of metaphors and narratives to redescribe the world, [which] implies first of all a power of description’, Reagan (1996: 106) seems to ground the issue in the place from which Ricoeur is at pains to move on. Taken literally, re-description indeed implies a power of description, but in Ricoeur’s view it is precisely the literal that we must leave behind.

Ricoeur (in Reagan 1996: 106) explains that he took the expression “redescribe” the world (hence his placement of the term in inverted commas) from the field of the theory of models. Model theorists use the premise that there are situations in which ‘something has been already decided in terms of a description’; the benefit Ricoeur (in Reagan 1996: 106) was expecting to gain from this is that ‘the same thing happens with poetic language’. His expectation seems to have been fulfilled, as he argues that ‘it is always against the background of ordinary language ... that there is a breakthrough of metaphorical language’ (Ricoeur, in Reagan 1996: 106). By transferring the premise from model theory to metaphor theory Ricoeur does not commit himself to a ‘representational philosophy of description’, but simply acknowledges that ‘it is impossible to put in question everything in a discussion without having a background’ (Ricoeur, in Reagan 1996: 106).

Bourdieu – how we communicate

Dominating and being dominated through language

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was a French sociologist and anthropologist, positions and activities that differentiate the primary substance of his work from that of this doctoral thesis. As a premise, he distinguishes between objectivism and subjectivism, and, according to John Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 11), the editor of the English translation of his book *Language and Symbolic Power*, regards both as ‘inadequate intellectual orientations’, the former being slightly less inadequate than the latter. ‘His alternative theory of practice is an attempt to move beyond objectivism without relapsing into subjectivism, that is, to take account of the need to break with immediate experience while at the same time doing justice to the practical character of social life’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 12). The details of this theory are beyond the scope of this doctoral thesis, as are Bourdieu’s ‘more concrete anthropological and sociological studies’ to which we should refer, Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 23) recommends, if we are to better understand his ‘rather flexible notions’ of symbolic power and symbolic violence. Instead, it is Bourdieu’s prevailing interest in and work on language that play a significant part here, and I propose that by its very nature the symbolism of which Bourdieu (1991) speaks can indeed, without such reference, be introduced here and included in discussions in subsequent chapters.

A pervasive characteristic of *Language* is Bourdieu’s (1991) use of terminology taken from the field of economics. Words such as ‘capital’, ‘market’ or ‘field’, and ‘profit’ abound, supporting the less easily recognisable ‘habitus’, ‘symbolic power’ and ‘symbolic violence’. Bourdieu (1991) does not refer to this aspect of his book himself, but Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991) feels it necessary to provide some explanation, as well as support. To regard Bourdieu’s perspective as a form of ‘economic reductionism’ would be erroneous, Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 15) suggests; we should rather recognise that his approach is

‘more complicated and more sophisticated’ – he treats the economy as ‘one field among a plurality of fields’, of which some others are literature, art, politics and religion. While these fields have ‘distinctive properties’ and ‘distinctive forms of capital, profit’ and so on, practices within each field may ‘concur with a logic that is economic in a broader sense’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 15). Thus Bourdieu uses the terms ‘in ways that are at least partly metaphorical’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 14).

Two of the major thrusts of Bourdieu’s argument in *Language* are, first and logically springing from his sociological standpoint, that we should not, indeed cannot, separate an act of communication – speaking, writing and reading – from the context in which it is enacted. The approach leading to this error would be ‘to treat language as an object of contemplation’ (Bourdieu 1991: 37), ‘an autonomous object’, and thus to accept ‘the radical separation which Ferdinand de Saussure²⁹ made between internal and external linguistics’ (Bourdieu 1991: 107). Second, the relation between such an act and its context is also a relation of power, a relation in which power is exercised by some people over others. According to Bourdieu (1991: 37, emphasis added), we should see language ‘as an *instrument* of action and power’. Language is a tool to be used by people – ‘used’ in a broad sense, that is, used to various effects and acknowledged as having various effects. And it is people who ‘give’ language power. If we accept Saussure’s distinction, Bourdieu (1991: 107) believes that we are then ‘condemned to looking within words for [their] power ... where it is not to be found’. ‘Authority comes to language from outside’, Bourdieu (1991: 109, 107) explains, and advises that we would do better to look outside words, in the ‘*delegated power* of the spokesperson’.

‘Language at most *represents* ... authority, manifests and symbolizes it’ (Bourdieu 1991: 109). Thus, ‘linguistic exchanges’ comprise ‘relations of symbolic power³⁰ in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized’ (Bourdieu 1991: 37). Bourdieu (1991) presents a circular relationship: There is a group; it can be a political group, a religious group, or any other kind of group. The group appoints a person, or a person volunteers, to speak on its behalf, to voice its views.³¹ The person speaks for, or represents, the group. He would not be in such a position without the group, nor would the group have a spokesperson without him. ‘*In appearance* the group creates the man who speaks in its place and in its name ... whereas *in reality* it is more or less just as true to say that it is the spokesperson who creates the group’ (Bourdieu 1991: 204). The person is ‘the cause of that which produces his power’ (Bourdieu 1991: 204) – he is given power or authority to speak by the group, and he exercises the power of speaking *and* the power of choosing what to say. For ‘when a single person is entrusted with the powers of a whole crowd of people, that person can be invested with a power that transcends each of the individuals who delegate him’ (Bourdieu 1991: 203).³²

²⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), Swiss linguist.

³⁰ According to Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 23), and it seems logical, Bourdieu uses the phrase ‘symbolic power’ to refer not so much to ‘a specific type of power’, but rather to ‘an aspect of most forms of power as they are routinely deployed in social life’.

³¹ Hence Bourdieu’s (1991: 107) use of the phrase ‘delegated power’, above.

³² By extension, the larger the group, the greater the transcendental power, as Bourdieu (1991: 191) suggests that ‘the speech of the *spokesperson* owes part of its “illocutionary force” to the force (the number) of the group that he helps to produce’.

Like Certeau (1984), Bourdieu (1991) thus posits people interacting in situations of dominance – of production and consumption, domination and subordination. As Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 23) reminds us, in daily life, in ordinary situations, ‘power is seldom exercised as an overt physical force’. If it is not physical or literal, it must be figurative – ‘it is transmuted into a symbolic form’, and as a result of this transformation power gains a legitimacy that it would not otherwise possess (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 23). One form of such legitimacy is language designated as the ‘legitimate language’, the ‘official language’, that is, the language that some people use and teach, and that others learn and accept as the appropriate one to be used. Bourdieu (1991: 69–70) defines it as the ‘authorized, authoritative language, speech that is accredited, worthy of being believed, or, in a word, *performative*, claiming (with the greatest chance of success) to be effective’.

The use of this language ‘depends on the social position of the speaker’, on the amount of access he has to the institution that generates and promotes the language (Bourdieu 1991: 109). The spokesperson is believed, is endowed with authority to speak the authorised language, because ‘his reality ... is based not on his personal conviction or pretension ... but rather on the collective belief, guaranteed by the institution’ (Bourdieu 1991: 125–6). We return to this point below.

Symbolic domination occurs partly through the use of the official language. The producers are ‘authors who have the authority to write’ and speak the language, and the consumers are the ‘grammarians and teachers who ... fix and codif[y]’ it and must also use it, ‘inculcate its mastery’ in classes and lecture theatres (Bourdieu 1991: 45). By extension, students, who are the receivers and the learners, are also consumers. The producers produce the language and the consumers accept it as a legitimate product. Such usage and acceptance of usage is affected, to a significant degree, by sociological relationships – by class structures. Basing the idea on the work of Durkheim,³³ Bourdieu (1991: 166) explains that symbols are ‘instruments of knowledge and communication’, and as such effectively facilitate social integration. ‘The different classes ... are engaged in a symbolic struggle ... aimed at imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests’ (Bourdieu 1991: 167). Through the use of symbols, the dominating class can achieve a ‘*consensus* on the meaning of the social world’, which in turn ‘contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order’ (Bourdieu 1991: 166), that is, to the continuation of their dominance.

Someone from a higher class, by which they are attributed with greater social standing or status, can symbolically dominate – as Bourdieu (1991: 167) sees it, commit ‘symbolic violence’ against – someone from a lower class by using the legitimate language. This is evident, for example, in a conversation taking place in a clothes shop between an upper class customer and a lower class sales assistant. Without intending to, the customer can intimidate the assistant simply by speaking the more formal language she has been taught at school. The assistant is ‘condemned to a practical, corporeal recognition of the laws of price formation which are the least favourable to [her] linguistic productions’, and thus her responses may be either ‘embarrassed’ or ‘broken’, or she may resort to silence, ‘very often the only form of expression left to dominated speakers’ (Bourdieu 1991: 97, 99). Symbolic violence can also take place without a word being exchanged, as we see below.

³³ Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), French social scientist.

Expressed in Bourdieu's (1991: 66) economic terms, a linguistic exchange constitutes an economic exchange, in which producer(s) and consumer(s) participate. A producer is 'endowed with a certain linguistic capital' (Bourdieu 1991: 66). 'Capital' comprises various forms of resources. Economic capital is money, cultural capital is knowledge and skills, and symbolic capital is accumulated prestige or honour (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 14). Linguistic capital is 'the capacity to produce expressions' that fit, that best suit the particular context, or market,³⁴ in which the words are used or uttered (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 18). The linguistic exchange is also 'capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit' (Bourdieu 1991: 66).

Thus Bourdieu (1991: 66) sees utterances as '*signs of wealth*, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority*, intended to be believed and obeyed'. By extension, utterances made by the consumer, the dominated person, may perhaps be seen as signs of submission or adherence, intended to be noticed and accepted in turn. In a manner similarly circular to the relationship between the group and the spokesperson, this situation seems to imply that a consumer can turn into a producer – a person not only accepting a language as legitimate but also assimilating it and using it particularly appropriately thereby becomes one of the people who dominate others with that language.

Bourdieu (1991: 50–1) furthermore believes that the situation of dominance would not exist without the acceptance of the dominated, who are similar to but also different from Certeau's (1984) crafty consumers: 'All symbolic domination presupposes, on the part of those who submit to it, a form of complicity which is neither passive submission to external constraint nor a free adherence to values'. For Bourdieu (1991), a consumer's acceptance of a language as legitimate is not conscious, or deliberate; instead, it is rooted in the consumer's habitus.

Learning how to behave – defining the 'habitus'

Perhaps one of Bourdieu's better known and significant usages of an 'old', 'Aristotelean' concept (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 12) concerns the 'habitus'. The habitus comprises a set of dispositions, a series of characteristics and qualities of mind that each person has and that informs the ways in which the person behaves and thinks. Characteristically, Bourdieu (1991: 51) feels that these dispositions are sociologically guided; they are 'unquestionably the product of social determinisms'.

As summarised by Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 12–13), the dispositions have the following characteristics: They are inculcated – from birth we learn things, such as table manners among many others, that gradually become habits of behaviour and thinking. Dispositions are structured in that they reveal the social conditions in which we acquired

³⁴ 'Market' is the slightly less-preferred term that Bourdieu (1991) uses to describe each of the social contexts in which people act. He also uses the term 'game', in some instances, and the more-preferred term 'field', to indicate 'a structured space of positions, in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or capital' (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 14). A field allows one form of capital to be converted into another, for example one can get a certain job if one has the necessary educational qualification, and as such is always a 'site of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to [that field]' (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 14) – one person will wish to keep his lucrative job, another person will try to gain a promotion and improve her career.

them. The very fact that some of us are taught table manners indicates the existence of a class structure, a level of behaviour and thought that is considered appropriate and therefore in opposition to one that is considered inappropriate. Dispositions are also durable, they exist in and of the body, which lasts as long as its organs continue to function. In this they are ‘pre-conscious ... not readily amenable to conscious reflection and modification’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). Dispositions are, lastly, generative and transposable. They can elicit a range of ideas and ways of behaving in social contexts other than the context in which we originally gained them.

The habitus furthermore gives us a sense of what is and is not appropriate, of how to behave and respond in our daily lives.³⁵ In other words, rather than simply carrying out an action, we frequently attach a judgement to that action. Eating a lot of food is ‘bad’ because it can be detrimental to one’s health and can be seen as a sign of greed (itself considered a bad state). Eating moderately is ‘good’ because it can help us to maintain our health and can be seen as a sign of reasonable self-restraint (itself considered a good state). Moreover, these judgements are usually influenced by our perceptions of how other people view us and of what they think of us. I may refuse a second helping of lasagne because I do not want to appear greedy in other people’s eyes, while my own opinion may be that eating two plates of lasagne is acceptable. If I am concerned about other people’s opinion of me, I will refuse the second serving and thus stop myself from doing that which I wish to do but that may seem inappropriate to them; if I am not concerned with their opinion of me, I may happily accept the second serving.

Having introduced the concept of the habitus, among others, in 1972,³⁶ in 1979 Bourdieu published a monograph exploring the judgement aspect of the concept in much greater detail, discussing as it does the relationship between aesthetic taste and class position in France – a person with ‘good taste’ has thereby ‘acquired the distinction that separates him from other class positions in society’ (Partapuoli & Nielsen n.d.). The habitus guides rather than determines our behaviour. It gives us a practical sense that ‘is not so much a state of mind as a state of the body, a state of being’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). This relates to Bourdieu’s concept of the bodily hexis.

Judging ourselves and others – exploring the ‘bodily hexis’ and the ‘linguistic habitus’

Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 13) defines the concept of the bodily hexis as ‘a certain durable organization of one’s body and of its deployment in the world’. The body is ‘a repository of ingrained dispositions’³⁷ that make ‘certain actions, certain ways of behaving

³⁵ Aristotle, as Ricoeur (1992: 94) points out, adds a moral tone to the matter: Together, ‘dispositions ... form our character’. Virtues are ‘voluntary’, for we are ‘somehow partly responsible for our states of character’ (Aristotle, in Ricoeur 1992: 94). The same is true of vices. Thus, Ricoeur (1992: 94) believes, ‘Aristotle’s intention is certainly to extend the responsibility for our acts to our dispositions, hence to the whole of our moral personality’. For Aristotle, then, the dispositions cannot be pre-conscious.

³⁶ Bourdieu introduced the concept in a text that was published that year in French. The text was published in 1977 as *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, which has been described as ‘his breakthrough in English’ (Partapuoli & Nielsen n.d.).

³⁷ There seems to be a slight contradiction in terms in this phrase, as ‘repository’ suggests something being received from elsewhere and stored, whereas ‘ingrained’ describes something already existing within. Perhaps ‘site of ingrained dispositions’ would be a more accurate phrase.

and responding, seem ... natural' (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). There are two things at work here: external and internal guiding factors that give the bodily hexis a dualistic nature. On the one hand, the relation between our habitus and the special social contexts in which we act³⁸ ““orients” [our] actions and inclinations without strictly determining them’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). In other words, our behaviour is influenced but not controlled by this relation that exists outside of ourselves.

On the other hand, we too play a role in organising our body and the manner in which we use it in the world. Within each of us is the capacity to decide how to move and speak, and then to carry out that behaviour. Indeed, the bodily hexis is our ‘practical way of experiencing and expressing [our] own sense of social value’, suggests Bourdieu (1984: 474) in his earlier text, *Distinctions*. Our ‘relationship to the social world and to [our] proper place in it is never more clearly expressed’, he explains, ‘than in the space and time [we] fee[re] entitled to take from others’, that is, in the space we claim physically with our bodies, through ‘bearing and gestures’ that indicate our ‘self-assur[ance] or reserv[e] ... (“presence” or “insignificance”)', and in the ‘interaction time’ that we claim with our speech, as well as the manner – ‘self-assured or aggressive, careless or unconscious’ – in which we do that (Bourdieu 1984: 474).

The bodily hexis’s dualistic nature is further evident in the body being ‘the site of incorporated history’, because ‘the practical schemes through which the body is organized are the product of history and at the same time the source of practices and perceptions which reproduce that history’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). The manners that we have learned at table as children may well become second nature by the time we are adults; they are part of the history of our lives, and if we believe in them we will pass them on to our children.³⁹

Concentration camp survivor Primo Levi⁴⁰ was branded, upon entering Auschwitz in 1944, by a number tattooed on his forearm – a mark on the body that in subsequent decades has widely come to serve as a notorious symbol of the attendant Holocaust horrors. Levi’s body was literally ‘organized’ through the ‘practical scheme’ (Thompson) of branding, as well as through the reasons for and the implications of the branding – he was given the number because of who he was, and because of his number he was forced to be a certain way and do certain things. Without it, for example, at the most literal level, he would almost certainly have starved. As we learn in Levi’s (1960: 34) memoir of his time in Auschwitz as a Jew and Fascism resistance fighter, *If This Is a Man*, only by ‘showing [his] number promptly’ did he receive ‘bread and soup’.

³⁸ We need to bear in mind here Thompson’s careful qualification concerning the production of practices or perceptions in which the habitus is involved (see below, page 76, footnote 42).

³⁹ This is one example among many. Equally relevant would be the ideas and practices that are passed on and enacted without ever having become ‘object[s] of a specific institutional practice, explicitly articulated in language’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). Some of us do not put our elbows on the table while eating because we have been given the verbal instruction not to do so; some of us show respect to people who are several, and many, years older than ourselves not necessarily because we have been told to do so, but because we have seen our parents and siblings doing so.

⁴⁰ Primo Levi (1919–1987), Italian-Jewish writer, chemist and concentration camp survivor.

The number, too, was accompanied by a judgement: Prisoners displaying a lower number had been in the camps for a longer time and were thus given respect because they were seasoned not only in the myriad and mysterious workings of the camp but also in suffering and the art of survival; prisoners displaying a higher number had been in the camp for a shorter time and were a source of amusement to the former because they could be hoodwinked into giving up some of their precious food ration and sent on pathetic, fictitious errands (Levi 1960: 34). More seriously, as Levi (1960: 34) points out, the numbers represented a ‘funereal science ... epitomiz[ing] the stages of destruction of European Judaism’. Thus we can see the number as an example of a site of incorporated history (Thompson).

In *Language*, Bourdieu (1991) does not discuss the concept of the bodily hexis itself, but instead focuses on the relationship between it and the linguistic habitus. The linguistic habitus is ‘inscribed in the body’ and thus forms ‘a dimension of the bodily hexis’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 13). A sub-category of the habitus, the linguistic habitus is the set of dispositions that we attain in relation to speaking. We learn to speak by hearing our family and peers speak, *and* by speaking ourselves – the linguistic habitus is ‘linked to the market no less through its conditions of acquisition than through its conditions of use’ (Bourdieu 1991: 81). The bodily hexis’s dualistic nature is thus shared by the linguistic habitus.

Integral to our linguistic education and practice is, understandably, an awareness of the value, or lack thereof, of what we say and how our speech affects those around us. We learn – through being told, through observation, through perception of others’ reactions – what to say and what not to say. ‘The system of successive reinforcements or refutations has thus constituted in each one of us a certain sense of the social value of linguistic usages and of the relation between the different usages and the different markets’ (Bourdieu 1991: 82). The polite pupil will get a more positive reaction from his schoolteacher than will a rude child; the joke-telling teenager will have more friends than her shy sister. Levi (1960) was obliged to learn German in the camp, where his safety was utterly precarious. In *The Truce*, Levi’s memoir of his return home following the war’s end, we learn that he was advised more than once *not* to speak German, for his own safety, during the slow and circuitous journey (Levi 1965: 223, 227).

The awareness, the knowledge, of how to speak and how not to speak gives us a ‘linguistic “sense of place”’ that ‘governs the degree of constraint which a given field will bring to bear on the production of discourse, imposing silence or a hyper-controlled language on some people while allowing others the liberties of a language that is securely established’ (Bourdieu 1991: 82). As we see shortly, in certain relations one person, consciously or unconsciously, can dominate to the point of silencing another person with their greater linguistic resources – or linguistic capital, as Bourdieu (1991) calls it – or simply with their presence.

A parent puzzled by her son’s erratic behaviour may be further frustrated by his monosyllabic responses to her probing questions; an undergraduate student may be intimidated into silence by a professor’s criticisms of her essay. In both cases the producer-dominator is dominating the consumer-dominated, and one of the places in which the effects of the process are evident is in the dominated’s language – hyper-controlled in the first example, non-existent in the second example. At the start and at the end of his

imprisonment, Levi (1960: 44; 1965: 226–7) could not control his intense desire to speak, formerly because he was profoundly anxious and confused, and latterly because he felt compelled to ‘tell the civilized world [of the things] ... that ought to shake every conscience to its very foundations’. In the first instance, he was told quite literally to ‘be quiet’, and in the second instance his audience simply moved off without responding (Levi 1960: 44; 1965: 227).⁴¹

These examples of course point to the linguistic habitus’s social character – ‘competence, which is acquired in a social context and through practice, is inseparable from the practical mastery of a usage of language and the practical mastery of situations in which this usage of language is *socially acceptable*’, explains Bourdieu (1991: 82). The linguistic habitus’s relation to the bodily hexis is also evident in the way in which our ‘sense of [our] *own social worth*’ governs our ‘practical relation to different markets ... and [our] whole physical posture in the social world’ (Bourdieu 1991: 82). In the above examples the mother and the professor are competently using socially acceptable language, which is mirrored by their body language. Perhaps the mother is standing in the doorway of her son’s bedroom, or sitting beside him on his bed; perhaps the professor is sitting at his desk or striding around his office. Either way, most likely their body language indicates a focus on the receivers of their speech. By contrast, the receivers’ body language likely indicates resentful or fearful submission. The son may be lying stiffly on his bed, refusing to look at his mother; the student may be sitting, cowed, in the professor’s office. For Levi (1965: 379), it was only after ‘many months’ of being at home after the war that he was able to stand up straight, in other words had lost ‘the habit of walking with [his] glance fixed [submissively] to the ground’.

Unconsciously acceding to the legitimate language

Consumers do not simply submit to symbolic domination, or express a belief in that which dominates – they accept or recognise a language as legitimate because their habitus predisposes them to do so. The linguistic market in which they grow up, or in which, as adults, they act, exercises certain allowances and restrictions on their dispositions, and the dispositions are adapted in order for these ‘holders of a given linguistic capital’ to gain material and symbolic profit (Bourdieu 1991: 51).⁴² And this all occurs without the person being aware of it, without their having decided it – bearing in mind the characteristic of durability that Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 13) links with a state of pre-consciousness, a state not easily accessible to conscious reflection. Indeed, Bourdieu (1991: 51) proposes that

⁴¹ In the first instance it was his fellow prisoners who told the babbling Levi (1960: 44) to be quiet – they needed their sleep, and they did not need their feelings repeated for them by him. In the second instance, during a halt in one of the many train trips that he was forced to take in heading for home, Levi (1965: 226–7) stood among a group of Poles who had surrounded him and were interrogating him, perhaps because of his “zebra” clothes’, the shabby striped jacket and trousers that had served as the prisoners’ uniform. A Polish, multilingual lawyer translated Levi’s (1965: 227) German ‘torrent’, and believed he was protecting him by presenting him only partially truthfully as an Italian political prisoner. Levi was not a devout Jew, but it was as a Jew that he had suffered most in the camp. Newly free, having this essential aspect of his person left out and finding that his religious status continued to put him in danger, Levi (1965: 227) felt ‘tired beyond human measure’ at realising that the war was not over, that the nightmare he had frequently had in the camp had come true – he ‘sp[oke] and [was] not ... listened to’, he had found ‘liberty’ and remained ‘alone’.

⁴² Bourdieu (1991: 77) also expresses this situation as being one of making ‘concessions ... to a social world by accepting to make oneself acceptable in it’.

the factors which are the most influential in the formation of the habitus are transmitted without passing through language and consciousness, but through suggestions inscribed in ... apparently insignificant aspects of things, situations and practices of everyday life. ... the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking ... are full of injunctions that are powerful and hard to resist precisely because they are silent and insidious.

Thus, symbolic dominance can even take place in silence, and often without the dominator intending domination. Bourdieu (1991: 52) cites the ‘domestic unit’ as an example, specifically the ‘marital or teenage crises’ that occur from time to time in many families: ‘Therein is a ‘power of suggestion’ that tells the child (or the spouse) not ‘what he must do’, but ‘what he is’, and thus ‘leads him to become durably what he has to be’. The relationship between the parent and the child, between the spouses,

may be such that one of them has only to appear in order to impose on the other, without even having to want to, ... a definition of the situation and of himself ... which is all the more absolute and undisputed for not having to be stated. (Bourdieu 1991: 52)

In this way, we are influential in the ongoing (in)formation of each other’s habitus; we teach each other how to behave, towards us and subsequently towards others – a state of affairs that confirms Bourdieu’s (1991) emphasis on the significant role that social interaction plays in our practices of everyday life.

Closely related to the issue of the consumer’s complicity, or perhaps simply another way of expressing the matter, is Bourdieu’s (1991: 170) proposal that power cannot exist unless people believe in it, accept its legitimacy: ‘Symbolic power ... can be exercised only if it is *recognized*’. The politician

derives his political power from the trust that a group places in him. He derives his truly magical power over the group from faith in the representation that he gives to the group and which is a representation of the group itself and of its relation to other groups. (Bourdieu 1991: 192)

An author derives power from her published work, and from the fact that her work is published. With regard to her chosen subject matter, she must compete with other authors for the readers’ favour, but she need not compete with them over the issue of whether work such as this should be published in the first place. ‘The struggles among writers over the legitimate art of writing contribute, through their very existence, to producing both the legitimate language ... and [a] belief in its legitimacy’ (Bourdieu 1991: 58).

An important point to bear in mind is Bourdieu’s (1991: 113) sense that misrecognition ‘is the basis of all authority’. ‘Symbolic violence,’ he believes, ‘can only be exercised by the person who exercises it, and endured by the person who endures it, in a form which results in its misrecognition as such, in other words, which results in its recognition as legitimate’ (Bourdieu 1991: 140). As Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 23) explains it, dominated people operate within ‘hierarchical relations of power’, and they do not see that ‘the hierarchy ... is an arbitrary social construction which serves the interests of some groups more than others’. Their recognition of the legitimacy of power is based on this observational failure – they do not see and so do not question the arbitrariness; they accept the construction, and therefore they accede the legitimacy. Thus in paraphrasing his own above-quoted statement about

power being exercisable only if it is recognised, Bourdieu (1991: 170) states: ‘that is, misrecognised as arbitrary’. He does not mean that the people submitting to the power see the power as arbitrary; he means that they do *not* see it as arbitrary and therefore they misrecognise it. The consumers’ misrecognition interweaves with their awareness, or exercised lack of awareness, of their own state. For they ‘do not want to know that they are subject to [symbolic power]’, that they are being dominated, nor that ‘they themselves exercise it’ (Bourdieu 1991: 164).⁴³

The conversational relationship may be one of domination and subordination, but as with Certeau’s (1984) producers and consumers, Bourdieu (1991: 37) nonetheless seems to believe that the participants play an equally active role, that the receiver of a linguistic message is just as involved as the sender, and that both are subject to the rules of the field or market in which the exchange takes place – the ‘dispositions of the linguistic habitus’ are ‘socially constructed’. Each speaker is ‘socially characterized’, and ‘fashions an idiolect from the common language’ (Bourdieu 1991: 38, 39); each receiver ‘helps to *produce* the message which he perceives and appreciates by bringing to it everything that makes up his singular and collective experience’ (Bourdieu 1991: 39).⁴⁴ Thus, if we are to understand the symbolic effects of language, Bourdieu (1991: 41) feels, we must view language as ‘the exemplary formal mechanism whose generative capacities are without limits’. We use language to convey myriad meanings; we receive and interpret – thereby producing – myriad meanings from the language used.

This case is altered in the act or context of the spokesperson speaking for, or representing, a group. Bourdieu (1991: 211–12, latter emphasis added) sees this act, this context, as embodying an ‘*oracle effect*’, that is,

the trick which consists in producing both the message *and* the interpretation of the message, in creating the belief that ... the spokesperson, a simple symbolic substitute of the people, is really the people in the sense that everything he says is the truth and life of the people.

By speaking, the spokesperson brings into existence the group in whose name he speaks. Through the oracle effect, Bourdieu (1991: 211) tells us, the spokesperson undergoes a ‘*splitting of personality*’: In order to align himself with the group, to be one of the group, to say what the group says, the spokesperson can no longer be just himself; he must become part of the group, he must abolish that which is purely individual and ‘make a gift of his person to the group’ (Bourdieu 1991: 209). He cancels himself in order to become, as Bourdieu (1991: 211) sees it, a moral person, an institution (that is, a being that has been instituted – with authority). A religious leader who declares himself ‘prepared to die for his people’, a

⁴³ Herein lies a possible contradiction, perhaps one of the ‘various aspects of Bourdieu’s work which could be [and have been] questioned and criticized’ (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1991: 3): The consumers’ exercised lack of awareness points to a degree of consciousness on their part that is in contrast to Bourdieu’s (1991: 51) presentation of dispositions being ‘constituted outside the spheres of consciousness and constraint’. Moreover, symbolic violence cannot be exerted, Bourdieu (1991: 51) implies, on people who are not predisposed to feel it – they ‘will ignore it’ – which also seems to indicate that there are (at least some) people who may perceive the violence but choose not to be affected by it.

⁴⁴ As Thompson (in Bourdieu 1991: 14) emphasises: ‘Particular practices or perceptions’ – such as a conversation or train of thought – ‘should be seen, not as the product of the habitus as such, but as the product of the *relation between* the habitus, on the one hand, and the special social contexts or “fields” within which individuals act, on the other’.

politician who promises to ‘give herself to her country’, are spokespeople playing out the oracle effect.

The spokesperson is not the dupe in this situation. His individual abolishment may seem selfless, but is not. For in becoming ‘Nothing’ he becomes ‘Everything’, Bourdieu (1991: 211) believes. While he may lose the individual that he was, he gains power: The oracle effect ‘enables the authorized spokesperson to take his authority from the group which authorizes him in order to exercise recognized constraint, symbolic violence, on each of the isolated members of the group’ (Bourdieu 1991: 212). In linguistic terms, he shifts from the indicative to the imperative. Bourdieu (1991: 212) questions whether anyone would follow him if he, as himself, says that people must overthrow the government, for example. ‘Everything changes’, he concludes, if he is ‘placed in statutory conditions such that [he] may appear as speaking “in the name of the masses”’ (Bourdieu 1991: 212). All the difference is made when ‘I’ becomes ‘we’, which is when a ‘takeover of force’ occurs symbolically as a ‘*takeover of form*’ (Bourdieu 1991: 213).

Bourdieu (1991: 211) also calls this process ‘usurpatory ventriloquism’. ‘The fact of speaking for someone, that is, on behalf of and in the name of someone, implies the propensity to speak in that person’s place’ (Bourdieu 1991: 209). It is not a case of the spokesperson merely reiterating what the original person has said or told them to say; it is rather a case of the spokesperson hearing what the original person wants him to say, interpreting it, and then deciding what to say. In speaking for someone the spokesperson usurps, tends to take over, and say things on behalf of the original person that they may or may not have said had they spoken for themselves.

In Bourdieu’s (1991) eyes this does not necessarily have the negative connotation it could appear to have – the group is not automatically misrepresented. Perhaps it is in the split, in the process in which a spokesperson becomes something other than the individual he was, that Bourdieu (1991: 214) finds reason for suggesting that he ‘is not a cynical calculator who consciously deceives the people, but someone who in all good faith *takes himself to be* something that he is not’. Because for Bourdieu (1991: 214–15),

one of the mechanisms that allow[s] usurpation ... to work ... in all innocence, with the most perfect sincerity, consists in the fact that, in many cases, the interests of the [spokesperson] and the interests of the [group], of those he represents, coincide to a large extent, so that [he] can believe and get others to believe that he has no interests outside of those of his [group].

This is a mechanism of ‘legitimate imposture’ (Bourdieu 1991: 214), or a person’s authorised presentation of themselves. When we name a doctor or a judge Doctor or Judge, as they name themselves, we and these people thereby affirm that they have performed the necessary studies and gained the medical or legal qualifications that allow them to practise under the title. The ‘pretension expressed by [their] appearance’ – for example the white coat and the black gown – is the tangible manifestation of the person’s legitimate posture (Bourdieu 1991: 76).

Klemperer – how the Nazis manipulated the German language

Surveying the Nazi use of German

Victor Klemperer (1881–1960) was not so much a language theorist as a keen, observant and authoritative philologist. While his work is described in this section alongside that of the French language theorists that are discussed in this chapter, his involvement is more deeply rooted in the practical than is that of Certeau, Ricoeur and Bourdieu. Even though the latter also base their theories on the study of particular cultures and contexts, Klemperer's work is based on his lengthy, first-hand, traumatic experience. He himself describes the work as 'half ... a concrete report on lived experience and half ... the conceptual framework of an academic study' (Klemperer 2000: 12). In the years leading up to the Second World War, he was a professor of French literature in Dresden, favouring the writers of the 18th century. It was a role that seems to have elicited his sensitivity to preceding and current linguistic changes, and in which he developed the skills that helped him to pay such careful attention, during the 12 years of Hitlerism⁴⁵ (1933–45), to the manner in which the Nazis manipulated the German language, as well as to ponder the matter's present and future implications.

Klemperer was Jewish, but because his wife Eva was Aryan, he was spared some of the harsher Nazi strictures in the earlier years. Soon, however, he was stripped of his post and forced to do manual labour in a factory (Klemperer 2000: 18).⁴⁶ From a philological research point of view, this would prove to be useful, because there he mixed with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds with whom he might otherwise not have come into such direct contact. By this time in his 50s and with an unstable heart,⁴⁷ he would wake at three-thirty each morning and record in his diary the previous day's events and conversations, telling himself that 'what matters is that [he] listen in specifically to the everyday, ordinary and average things' (Klemperer 2000: 265) in order to bear witness to 'the typical Nazi way of thinking and its breeding-ground: the language of Nazism' (Klemperer 2000: 2). His diaries formed the basis of the *LTI* – the *Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen*,⁴⁸ which he wrote in 1945–46 and which has been published in German in at least three editions. Half a century later, in 2000, the text was translated by Martin Brady and published in English as *The Language of the Third Reich: A Philologist's Notebook*.⁴⁹

It is arguable whether Klemperer had this intention from the outset – whether the *LTR* had always been, consciously or unconsciously, his goal. His academic training and interests may have led him seamlessly into his new philological role, and his diary moreover had the crucial benefit of regularly coming to his aid:

⁴⁵ Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), leader of the Nazi Party and chancellor and Führer of Germany from 1933 to 1945.

⁴⁶ Klemperer (2000: 87) worked in the envelope and paper bag factory Thiemig & Möbius, the boss of which 'was a member of the SS' but 'did whatever he could for his Jews'.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Klemperer (2000: 262). According to Hans Reiss (1998: 79), however, Klemperer 'seems to have been a bit of a hypochondriac' – 'his medical brothers [physicians Georg and Felix] were unable to find anything wrong with his heart', though 'angina pectoris was diagnosed in 1944'.

⁴⁸ Henceforth, the *Tertii Imperii* language is referred to as the *LTI*.

⁴⁹ Henceforth, the *Language of the Third Reich* is referred to as the *LTR*.

Again and again during these years my diary was my balancing pole,⁵⁰ ... without which I should have fallen down a hundred times. ... in [numerous, genuine] dire straits ... I was invariably helped by the demand I had made on myself: observe, study and memorize what is going on – by tomorrow everything will already look different ... keep hold of how things reveal themselves at this very moment and what the effects are. (Klemperer 2000: 9)

In this way, Klemperer (2000: 9) strove and seems to have managed ‘to safeguard [his] inner freedom’. But the means did not necessarily have the *LTR* end in sight. In the months following February 1945, having narrowly escaped not only Dresden’s fate of being bombed by the Allies, but also his own fate of being included in a final deportation order by fleeing on foot with his wife into American-controlled territory, before they slowly made their safe return, he debated with himself about ‘what work [he] should turn to first’ (Klemperer 2000: 263). His near-future role was not a foregone conclusion.

There is a kind of logic evident in Klemperer’s experiences at the start and end of the Hitler period. While still able to teach and suffering persecution only ‘in a very mild form’, he turned away from the myriad instances of the LTI all around him and ‘buried [him]self exclusively in academia’ (Klemperer 2000: 10, 263). But when he lost his post and was denied all library access, he took on the LTI as his ‘essential tool’ and ‘paramount interest’ (Klemperer 2000: 10). At the war’s end, when a degree of normality had been restored and it was ‘only a question of time before [he] would be able to return to [his] job’ (Klemperer 2000: 263), he was once again able to contemplate the topics he had taught before 1935.

However, while remaining loyal to his ‘Eighteenth Century ... Frenchmen’, Klemperer (2000: 263) also wished to acknowledge his preoccupation ‘with things to do with the Hitler period, which had transformed [him] in so many ways’, as well as his belief that the observations and experiences he had noted in his diary ‘could teach one a thing or two’. From an academic standpoint, he ponders, ‘Had I too also [sic] once thought too readily about THE German and THE Frenchman, rather than keeping in view the diversity of the German and the French?’ (Klemperer 2000: 263). His considered conclusion was a merging of the two roles – philologist and teacher – and his subject matter became the LTI. The *LTR* and his subsequent lectures and seminars enact his view, recorded in his diary during those last months, of the necessity of ‘tell[ing] future teachers in detail about the characteristic features and the sins of [that language]’ (Klemperer 2000: 244).

Friedrich von Schiller⁵¹ (in Klemperer 2000: 14) puts forward the idea of a “cultivated language which writes and thinks for you”. To the individualistic, autonomous ear of the 21st century, this may sound ominous enough; to Klemperer (2000: 14) it can be taken in ‘purely aesthetic and ... harmless terms’. The damage is done, as Klemperer (2000: 14) extends the idea, when the language ‘increasingly dictates [your] feelings and governs [your] entire spiritual being the more unquestioningly and unconsciously [you] abandon [yourself] to it’. Such language is poison. ‘Borne by the drinking water of the LTI’ (Klemperer 2000:

⁵⁰ The metaphor is based on the following ‘old Berlin anecdote’: “Father,” a young boy asks in the circus, “what is the man up there on the tightrope doing with that pole?” – “Silly boy, it’s a balancing pole, and it’s what’s holding him steady.” – “Oh dear, father, what if he lets go of it?” – “Silly boy, he’s holding it steady, of course!” (Klemperer 2000: 8–9).

⁵¹ Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), German dramatist, poet and literary theorist.

87), like arsenic, words can be administered in ‘tiny doses’, ‘they are swallowed unnoticed, appear to have no effect’, but then cause a ‘toxic reaction ... after all’ (Klemperer 2000: 14).⁵²

Even after the war, even from the mouths of the ‘passionately anti-fascist’, Klemperer (2000: 13) heard countless references to ‘innate qualities of “character”’ and ‘the “aggressive” nature of democracy’, two terms that he locates at the heart of the LTI. ‘Language reveals all’; ‘language brings everything to light’, Klemperer (2000: 10, 146) believes, but he also witnessed again and again how the same language could ‘speak for’ a person, could subjugate those who had until a moment before appeared to be rational, educated and able to think for themselves. It is the attempt to enlighten such people and others to come in this matter that supported Klemperer in his post-war work.

In brief digression, in an essay titled ‘Politics and the English Language’ that he wrote just after the end of the war, George Orwell (1968: 128) expresses almost exactly the same concern, about the English language, which he deplores for having become ‘ugly and inaccurate’ owing to English people’s thoughts being ‘foolish’. The source of the problem is politically and economically based – ‘in our age there is no such thing as “keeping out of politics”’ – and ‘politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia’, comments Orwell (1968: 137). He makes the informed guess that German, Russian and Italian have all similarly deteriorated, as a result of dictatorship (Orwell 1968: 137).

It is easy to be lazy, Orwell (1968: 134) points out, and to use ‘ready-made phrases’ rather than ‘hunt[ing] about for words’; scrupulous writers will ask themselves certain questions about each sentence that they write, while others shirk going to such trouble by ‘simply throwing [their] minds open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in’ – the phrases ‘will construct the sentences for [them] – even think [their] thoughts for [them], to a certain extent’ (Orwell 1968: 135). In a pamphlet about conditions in Germany that he received on the day he wrote this essay, Orwell (1968: 137) finds many examples of the stock phrases that, despite having benevolent intent in this case, ‘anaesthetise a portion of one’s brain’.

But the damage, in Orwell’s eyes, is not permanent. Recognising that ‘the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language’, English people should also see that they ‘can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end’ (Orwell 1968: 139). These people generally assume that they ‘cannot by conscious action do anything about’ the situation of ‘the English language [being] in a bad way’, Orwell (1968: 127) notes. He suggests that on the contrary the ‘bad habits’ that spread through modern English ‘by imitation’ *can* be avoided, with some effort (Orwell 1968: 128).⁵³

⁵² French-born American literary critic George Steiner (1929–) (1967: 101) would concur, proposing as he does that ‘to use a language to conceive, organize, and justify Belsen’ is to cause ‘something of the lies and sadism [to] settle in the marrow of the language. ... the cancer will begin, and the deep-set destruction’. For Klemperer the language is used as an agent of infection, while for Steiner the language itself is poisoned. The distinction exists, but in this context it is negligible; the destructive force is equally powerful in both instances. Indeed, this seems to be an instance of the vicious circle the English novelist, essayist and critic George Orwell (1903–1950) (1968: 127) is referring to when he describes an effect becoming a cause, ‘reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form’.

⁵³ In his essay, Orwell (1968: 127–40) provides some examples of problematic language and several more examples illustrating ways in which to go about fixing it.

Though the quotation that is given in the early pages of Chapter 3⁵⁴ in this doctoral thesis seems to reflect an intense pessimism on Klemperer's part, he may well have agreed with Orwell. His intentions are also directed towards continual, if not constant, awareness of the tiny doses of poison that people were still absorbing after the war, and he too humbly puts forward some ideas of how to go about remedying the matter. Understandably, given their professions, Orwell's solutions are addressed to journalists and the common people, Klemperer's to the teachers of the near and further future. But both stress clarity and honesty. Orwell's (1968: 139) opinion that 'political language ... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind' may just as accurately have been Klemperer's.⁵⁵

Returning to the primary discussion, Klemperer's (2000) coining of the phrase 'language of the Third Reich' seems to imply that the Nazis created a new language. This is not the case. Though Klemperer (2000: 10) calls the LTI 'philologically unique', he proposes that the Third Reich coined few words at all, if any. Rather, the Reich used German to promote anti-Semitism in three ways. First, they did so by 'chang[ing] the value of the words⁵⁶ and the frequency of their occurrence' (Klemperer 2000: 14), for example the unique Nazi usage of the terms 'fanatical' and 'fanaticism'. Thinkers of the French Enlightenment used them as terms of censure, evoking strong antipathy; indeed, 'prior to the Third Reich no one would have thought of using [them] in a positive sense' (Klemperer 2000: 54). They were completely transformed by the Nazis into 'a virtue', Klemperer (2000: 53) suggests. From their faith, their beliefs, their journalism and creative writing, to their everyday conversations, their behaviour and even their pets⁵⁷ – their approach to all of these had to be and was taken fanatically. The Third Reich did not invent these words, Klemperer (2000: 14) points out, 'it just changed their value and used them more in one day than other epochs used them in years'.

Second, they did so by making 'common property out of what was previously the preserve of the individual' (Klemperer 2000: 14). In Klemperer's (2000: 17) view, the publication of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in 1925 'literally fixed the essential features' of the LTI; and when the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the Nazi Party) came to power in 1933, 'the language of a clique became the language of the people', infiltrating every 'realm of public and private life'. And third, they did so by 'commandeer[ing] for the party that which was previously common property' (Klemperer 2000: 14). Only members of the Reich's Literary Chamber could 'make [their] voice[s] heard', and 'the entire press' could publish only 'what [was] served up by the central office', which allowed it a minimal amount of freedom in the slight variation of wording of text that was 'binding for everyone' (Klemperer 2000: 19–20).

⁵⁴ In the quotation, Klemperer (2000: 14) expresses the belief that while certain words used in the Nazi period could be disinfected in future, there were certain words that would *never* be freed of the taint of oppression. (See Chapter 3, page 114.)

⁵⁵ As we see in Chapters 2 and 4, Michaels would most likely concur with this opinion as well. (See, for example, Chapter 2, page 79, and Chapter 4, pages 183–4.)

⁵⁶ As we see in Chapter 3 (page 122), through personal experience, concentration camp and torture survivor Jean Améry (in Langer 1995: 121) provides two pertinent examples of this.

⁵⁷ A monograph of Reich Marshal and Nazi Party leader Hermann Göring (1893–1946) 'extolled the man for being, amongst other things, a "fanatical animal lover"' (Klemperer 2000: 55).

Bourdieu (1991: 84) would likely concur with the pervasive and restrictive nature of the LTI, as presented by Klemperer (2000), for he suggests that

as one rises in the social order [at the pinnacle of which the Nazis placed themselves], the degree of censorship and the correlative prominence given to the imposition of form and euphemization increase steadily, not only on public or official occasions ... but also in the routines of everyday life.

Klemperer (2000: 20) proposes that in a sense Joseph Goebbels,⁵⁸ Hitler's Propaganda Minister, was the sole person 'who determined what was linguistically permissible'.⁵⁹ Able to express himself more clearly than Hitler and continuing to speak as Hitler gradually grew silent, Goebbels was also the man who founded the weekly newspaper *Das Reich* in 1940, with the intention of contributing an article to each issue (Klemperer 2000: 17 fn 1). In the latter years of the war, it was customary for Goebbels's *Reich* article to be broadcast on Berlin Radio the evening before its publication, thereby dictating each week 'the intellectual content of all the newspapers in the National Socialist sphere of influence' (Klemperer 2000: 20). Along with 'a vast amount of [Nazi] literature of all kinds' (Klemperer 2000: 17), *Das Reich* was published even in the last days, when Germany was in ruins.

Through Klemperer's eyes, we see that one of the fundamental aspects of the LTI was its rhetorical character. In line with Aristotle's (in Abrams & Harpham 2009: 311) definition of this manner of communication, as orators Hitler and Goebbels sought to 'achieve the ... emotional effects on [their] audience that [would] persuade them to accede to [their] point of view'. And persuade them they did. 'Instead of turning away in nauseated disbelief, the German people gave massive echo to [Hitler's] bellowing' (Steiner 1967: 99).⁶⁰ The *LTR* provides several examples of people's unwavering faith in and support of Hitler and Nazism, from the start of the Third Reich to long past the stage where Hitler's defeat was a certainty.⁶¹

This faith was very much an emotional expression, not one based on any kind of understanding. In the village of Unterbernbach, shortly to be occupied by the Americans, Klemperer (2000: 102) listened to an exchange between four German soldiers from different units. Three of the soldiers expressed bitter recognition of defeat in contrast to the fourth, confident soldier: 'The 'Yanks', the Russians, the 'Tommys' and the French had all 'broken through' there, 'surely even a child could understand that it was the eleventh hour' (Klemperer 2000: 102). The fourth banged on the table with his fist and argued that "understanding has nothing to do with it, ... the Führer ... has always found a way when others have said there is no way out[;] no, ... understanding is useless, you have to have

⁵⁸ Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945), Minister of Propaganda for the Third Reich, and also doctor of German philology (EB 2008).

⁵⁹ John W Young (2005: 53) contests this assertion, suggesting rather that 'Goebbels fell short of exercising "absolute authority"'. Owing to the manner in which Hitler arranged the 'lines of administrative jurisdiction', Goebbels was ever involved in 'bitter rivalries' and never 'gain[ed] for his ministry a monopoly on propaganda and public communications', Young (2005: 53) elaborates.

⁶⁰ Améry (1980: 19) extends this argument even further, believing that not only 'all of Germany' but 'the whole world nodded its head in approval' of the Jews being abused, ostracised and murdered, 'even if here and there' the nods were accompanied by 'a certain superficial regret'.

⁶¹ See, for example, 'Ch 18: I believe in him' (Klemperer 2000: 97–111, 219).

faith” (Klemperer 2000: 102). This seems a logical result of Hitler’s call to the Germans’ emotions rather than their intellects, as we see below.

Even from a person who was against Nazism came assertions of Hitler’s apparently inexplicably persuasive power (Klemperer 2000: 50). Yet there was also evidence to the contrary. Klemperer (2000: 13) certainly does not believe that ‘the most powerful Hitlerian propaganda tool’ was any one of Hitler or Goebbels’s speeches. On many and varied occasions he instead saw that these speeches either bored or were not even understood by the masses, that when the newspapers reported the entire population as having hung onto every broadcast word at least some of the people had in fact been playing cards and loudly discussing meat and tobacco rations and the latest film (Klemperer 2000: 13). Moreover, Klemperer (2000: 47) identifies a possible ‘distrust of public speakers intrinsic to the German national character’. This is based on the fact that there is only one adjective in German that corresponds with the terms ‘speech’ and ‘to speak’, namely, ‘rhetorical’ (Klemperer 2000: 47). And if something is described as rhetorical, it is lent a poor ring: ‘A rhetorical achievement is always open to accusations of being merely hot air’ (Klemperer 2000: 47). At least a part of the existing audience of German people, then, seemed capable of discernment. Acutely aware of the paradox, Klemperer (2000: 49) professes himself as never having been able to (fully) understand how Hitler managed to have such a powerful impact.⁶²

But in the *LTR*, Klemperer (2000) provides some suggestions for the reasons behind such success. He believes that, given the man’s absolute authority as Hitler’s Propaganda Minister, Goebbels was able to exert linguistic influence so thoroughly across ‘the entirety of German-speaking lands’ partly because the LTI saw no difference between the written and the spoken (Klemperer 2000: 20). The Minister’s speech-giving style was the style that he used in his texts. Thus, ‘everything was oration’, everything ‘had to be address [and] exhortation’ (Klemperer 2000: 20). Only in this way, or most effectively in this way, could he reach and take hold of a large and widespread group of people. As we have seen above, ‘everything that was printed or spoken in Germany was standardized to conform to the official party line’ (Klemperer 2000: 11). Just as speech and text were the same in the LTI, so were the private and the public. In fact, there was no private – ‘everything remain[ed] public’, as Hitler would have it, and ‘anything which deviated in any way from the accepted pattern did not [even] make it into the public domain’, Klemperer (2000: 20–1, 11) adds.

Moreover, according to Klemperer (2000), there were noteworthy distinctions between the Nazi leader, Hitler, and Mussolini, leader of the type of fascism on which Klemperer persuasively argues that Nazism was based.⁶³ Declaiming, the Duce spoke smoothly, swimming ‘with the resonant flow of his native language’; the Führer had a ‘raucous voice’ and used ‘crude, often un-Germanically constructed sentences’ (Klemperer 2000: 49). Mussolini was ‘free of strains and cramps’; Hitler ‘screamed, convulsively’ (Klemperer 2000: 49). It is not surprising, then, that the adjective ‘aggressive’ or ‘belligerent’ (*kämpferisch*), which until 1933 had been ‘new and rarely used’, became one of the LTI’s ‘favourite words’ (Klemperer 2000: 4–5), denoting ‘that taut frame of mind and will which in any situation

⁶² Klemperer (2000: 82) wonders, for example, how Nazism could have thrived as it did in Berlin, where the people had such a ‘discerning sense of humour’ and ‘ability to appreciate the dubious side of things’.

⁶³ See ‘Chapter 8: Ten years of fascism’ (Klemperer 2000: 45–51).

[was] focused on self-assertion through defence or attack, and which refuse[d] to countenance any form of compromise' (Klemperer 2000: 5).

Furthermore, a testament to Hitler's cunning and to the fact that he was deeply familiar with, and thus able to exploit, the 'psyche of the unthinking masses' (Klemperer 2000: 236), in the early days of the Nazi movement chanting was prevalent. Soldiers marching, civilians demonstrating – everyone was encouraged to take part in giving voice to loud and wordless sound in a way that was 'much more powerful and brutal than communal singing' (Klemperer 2000: 230). Chanting, according to Klemperer (2000: 231), is 'more artificial' and 'more rehearsed', and 'promotes its cause more violently than song'. It 'hits out with a bare fist at the good sense of the addressee, and endeavours to subjugate it' (Klemperer 2000: 230); there is no discernible language in chanting and therefore no expression of thought. Once assured of their position, the Nazis were able to dispense with it, but it was (eerily) to be heard again when the Russians invited the Germans to surrender – the 'soldiers on the very front line' responded by chanting, 'reaffirming their unshakable faith in Hitler and their mission' (Klemperer 2000: 230).

Klemperer (2000: 50) concurs with 'the widely held psychiatric explanation' for Hitler's magnetism being rooted in his 'never-ending [inner] conflict between excessive megalomania and delusions of persecution' – a disease that Klemperer believes also infected a German nation 'weakened and spiritually shattered by the First World War'. He adds a philological explanation: Hitler was so effective exactly because his rhetoric was 'as un-German as the salute and uniform copied from the Fascists ... and as un-German as the whole decorative embellishment of the [Nazis'] public occasions' (Klemperer 2000: 50). Based on an infection 'caused by foreign bodies', the disease nevertheless became 'a specifically German disease', 'bestial' where fascism had been 'criminal', in Klemperer's (2000: 51) view.

A further purpose of the *LTI* is evident in Klemperer's identification of a point of departure from the Aristotelian definition of rhetoric. The ellipsis in the above citation of Aristotle's definition stands in place of the term 'intellectual'.⁶⁴ While the Classical rhetorician sought to stimulate the audience's intellect, Hitler's aim was quite the opposite – his 'constant stream of new expressions' revealed his 'fear of the thinking man and [his] hatred of the intellect' (Klemperer 2000: 3).⁶⁵ In *Mein Kampf*, while discussing principles of education, Hitler presents these principles in a three-tiered hierarchy: First and by far foremost, physical training takes precedence; second and leading from the first, the character is developed; third and by far the last comes the intellect, which is despised and held in suspicion by Hitler (Klemperer 2000: 3).

Klemperer (2000: 167) proposes that *Mein Kampf* precisely and insistently 'preaches not only that the masses are stupid, but also that they need to be kept that way and intimidated into not thinking'. The intellectual person can and certainly does think, and in doing so is far

⁶⁴ Thus the quotation is as follows: 'In his *Rhetoric*, ... Aristotle defined rhetorical discourse ... and focused his discussion on the means and devices that an orator uses in order to achieve the intellectual and emotional effects on an audience that will persuade them to accede to the orator's point of view' (Abrams & Harpham 2009: 311). (See also above, page 48.)

⁶⁵ By contrast, Orwell (1968: 128) proposes that 'to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration'.

more likely to question or point out faults of logic and sense in what they are told. Logical thought, according to Klemperer (2000: 134), was Nazism's 'most deadly enemy'. Moreover, thinking about something not only meant 'delays and scruples', 'it could even lead to criticism, and finally to the refusal to carry out an order' (Klemperer 2000: 141). In order for his aim of Aryan domination to be achieved, Hitler needed to be obeyed, not necessarily agreed with.

In the factory in which they worked, Klemperer (2000: 220) and the other Jewish labourers were permitted by their boss to spend their lunch half-hour in the 'workers' room' or 'hall' (*Gefolgschaftssaal*), which at all other times was 'cleared of Jews' and reserved for use by the Aryan *Gefolgschaft* (the 'workforce' or 'entourage'; literally: 'group of followers'). His daily observation of the former term painted on the wall of the hall hammered home to Klemperer (2000: 221) 'the whole emotional mendacity of Nazism, the whole mortal sin of deliberately twisting things founded on reason into the realm of the emotions, and deliberate distortion for the sake of sentimental mystification'. Collectively entitled *Gefolgschaft*, Hitler's workers were 'burdened', Klemperer (2000: 221) proposes, with 'old Germanic tradition', 'turned ... into vassals, into weapon-bearing liegemen forced to keep faith with their aristocratic, knightly masters'; it was an expression that led directly to the character portrayed by the sentence displayed 'on every banner: "Führer, command and we will obey {*folgen*}!"

According to Klemperer (2000: 227), the word that the Nazis used most powerfully and frequently to engage their audience's emotions was 'experience' (*Erlebnis*). In normal usage, the word implies a difference between everyday events and the fewer, more emotionally intense 'real experiences' that people have (Klemperer 2000: 227).⁶⁶ The LTI deliberately drew everything into the realm of experience. The provincial head of the Reich's Literary Chamber instructed people to "'experience"' *Mein Kampf*, while a headline claimed that "'young people experience [a performance of Schiller's drama] Wilhelm Tell"' (Klemperer 2000: 227). We have seen above how, for the Nazis, everything had to be approached from a fanatical perspective; similarly, everything was deemed 'historic' (Klemperer 2000: 40). From every speech delivered by Hitler (despite the tendency of subsequent ones to repeat the content of the preceding one), to the victory of a German racing driver, to the opening of a new motorway – 'every single day' of the life of the Third Reich was viewed as *historisch* (Klemperer 2000: 40–1). But what happened once Hitler had engaged the audience's feelings, once he had convinced the German people of the value of their 'fanatical', 'historical' lives? He dulled their senses and turned them into robots of a kind, using a range of terms borrowed from the fields of technology and mechanics.

In late 1933, Klemperer (2000: 30) recalls, he recorded in his diary that the otherwise 'thoroughly moderate and decent' publisher of a philological journal, following a directive that came from "'factory cells"' within the publishing house, requested him not to seek publication for an article that he had submitted. This seems to have been Klemperer's first encounter of a combination of mechanical and organic terms that became more heavily weighted in favour of the mechanical and technical, as illustrated by the following examples,

⁶⁶ So confirms American-English poet, playwright, literary critic and editor TS Eliot (1888–1965) (1963: 191–2) in the poem 'Burnt Norton': '... surrounded/ By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,/ *Erhebung* [upliftment] without motion, concentration/ Without elimination, both a new world/ And the old made explicit, ...?'

among many others: Klemperer (2000: 144) noticed the occasional use of the term ‘power currents’ (*Kraftströmen*) with regard to a leader’s magnetic personality. For quite some time before the SS⁶⁷ came into being, its symbol was ‘painted in red on electricity substations’ along with the warning “‘Danger – High Voltage!’” (Klemperer 2000: 63).

Furthermore, the term ‘wind up’ (*aufziehen*) has had differing uses for many years. In the past it has indicated literally the action one uses to make a clock keep the correct time and to make a mechanical toy perform tricks, and has indicated metaphorically the teasing and light abuse of a person (Klemperer 2000: 42). In more modern times the word has also come to mean ‘to set up’ or ‘to construct’, and has brought with it a pejorative aspect: An advertising campaign that is deemed ‘impressively set up’ is acknowledged as commercially effective, but disdained for its ‘element of excess’, for its ‘sales patter which [does] not precisely match the real value of the thing on offer’ (Klemperer 2000: 42). In Goebbels’s hands, however, the phrase seemed to lose this negative connotation and meant simply what it said. In his statement that the Nazi Party had “‘set up {*aufgezogen*}⁶⁸ a massive organization involving millions of people and bringing together all kinds of activities’”, the term was used ‘honest[ly]’ and did not cause people to associate with it any kind of advertising (Klemperer 2000: 43). A text translated from English into German in 1935 – *The Autobiography of a Japanese Publisher* – expresses the author’s intention of constructing “‘an exemplary organization’” (Klemperer 2000: 43). Klemperer (2000: 43) sees these examples as illustrating ‘one of the foremost tensions within the LTI: While stressing ‘organic and natural growth’, the language was at the same time ‘swamped by mechanistic expressions and insensitive to the stylistic incongruities and lack of dignity in such combinations as “a constructed organization’”.

Characteristically thorough, Klemperer (2000: 142) is quite aware that the rapid and increasingly important spread of technology has been leading to the growth of technical terms used ‘by all languages of the civilized world since the beginning of the nineteenth century’; he feels that the point, once acknowledged, needs to be put aside in the context of the discussion. He speculates whether the abovementioned examples and others he had identified were peculiar to the LTI, and concludes that, because many of them had been in evidence since the Weimar Republic⁶⁹ or even before, they were not. However, there was a significant element that the LTI brought to its usage of such terms, as implied in the above reference to people as robots.

During the Weimar Republic, the technical terms ‘to anchor’ and ‘to crank’ were transported into the common language, and Klemperer (2000: 143) points out that they were only ever used to refer to ‘objects, situations and activities, never to people’ – ‘the explicit mechanization of the individual himself [was] left up to the LTI’ (Klemperer 2000: 144). The pivotal expression carrying out this aim was ‘to force into line’ (*gleichschalten*) (Klemperer 2000: 144). Once again, as with ‘fanatical’ and ‘historic’, the scope and the audience of the term was widespread. Everyone – from teachers to judiciary and tax employees to members

⁶⁷ The SS was Hitler’s Protective Echelon (*Schutzstaffel*) (EB 2008), translated by Brady (in Klemperer 2000: 63) as the ‘Elite Guard’.

⁶⁸ *Aufgezogen* is the past tense form of the term ‘*aufziehen*’.

⁶⁹ The Weimar Republic was the form of German government in existence from 1919 to 1933.

of the *Stahlhelm*⁷⁰ and SA⁷¹ – was brought into line (Klemperer 2000: 144), a state to which they preferably yielded without argument, in other words, blindly.

The term ‘blindly’ (*blindlings*), according to Klemperer (2000: 141), was one of the ‘linguistic pillars’ of the LTI, used almost as frequently as ‘fanatical’. The term denoted ‘the ideal manifestation of the Nazi spirit with regard to its leader and respective subordinate leaders’, and the nature of such a spirit was one of unquestioning obedience – submission, in military training for example, to ‘the inculcation of a series of automated movements and actions’ (Klemperer 2000: 141). The Nazis apparently did not want ‘to encroach upon the [Aryan] individual personality’, in fact seemed to seek ‘to reinforce’ it, but saw no difficulty in mechanising it at the same time (Klemperer 2000: 141–2). Goebbels proclaimed himself “recharged” by the ‘unshakeable heroism’ of the victims of some bombed west-German cities in whom he had initially intended to ‘instil courage’ (Klemperer 2000: 144–5). The tendency to ‘degrad[e] people to the status of machines’ – evident, for example, in the Minister’s simile of the governor of Hamburg “working like a motor which always runs at full tilt” – was extended to the full limit of the metaphor when Goebbels portrayed people as having *become* machines: “In the foreseeable future we [‘the totality of Hitler’s Germany’] will be running at full tilt again” (Klemperer 2000: 145).⁷²

In this way, each (non-Jewish) man and woman seems to have been allowed to retain their individuality while working ‘*in majorem gloriam* of the Führer principle’ (Klemperer 2000: 141), that is, robotically serving their superiors and ultimate leader while being in control of the robots who worked under them. Goebbels enthusiastically related how “everything is back on track”⁷³ after the bombing of a German city because ‘everyone is “working to their full capacity”’ (Klemperer 2000: 145). Klemperer (2000: 142) feels, however, that ‘this construction disguise[d] universal enslavement and depersonalization’.

These examples, among many others, illustrate ‘not only the *de facto* disregard of individuality, something purportedly valued and nurtured, but also ... the will to subjugate the independent thinker, the free human being’ (Klemperer 2000: 146). Similarly, the arousing of emotion in his military and civilian followers was Hitler’s means, not his intended end – emotion had to suppress the intellect, but then it also had to be suppressed, reduced to ‘a state of numbing dullness without any freedom of will or feeling’ (Klemperer 2000: 228). ‘How else would one have got hold of the necessary crowd of executioners and torturers?’ argues Klemperer (2000: 228).

⁷⁰ The *Stahlhelm* was the ‘Nationalist ex-servicemen’s organization formed in 1918’ and from which ‘all members under the age of 35 had to join the SA’ from the end of 1933 (Klemperer 2000: 29 fn 1).

⁷¹ The SA was Hitler’s Assault Division (*Sturmabteilung*), otherwise known as the Storm Troopers (EB 2008), translated by Brady (in Klemperer 2000: 3 fn 1) as the ‘Storm Detachment’.

⁷² Orwell might have seen Goebbels in the same light. He presents the ‘broad truth’ of all political writing being ‘bad writing’, devoid of a ‘fresh, vivid, home-made turn of speech’, and describes watching ‘some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases’ and having the feeling that ‘one is watching ... some kind of dummy ... [a] speaker who has gone some distance towards turning himself into a machine’ (Orwell 1968: 135–6). ‘This reduced state of consciousness’, Orwell (1968: 136) concludes, is ‘favourable to political conformity’. Orwell explores his preoccupation with this situation in detail in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949), in which he envisages the premises of totalitarianism taken to their logical end.

⁷³ The expression is taken from ‘the field of automobile construction ...: the wheels on a vehicle stay on the right track’ (Klemperer 2000: 145), and interestingly has remained a part of figurative language in the Western world up to the present day.

One can imagine that in the face of discrimination and persecution, the sufferers – in this case, Jewish people – may try to find some way of rebelling, of maintaining their independence. In a situation in which you are literally and figuratively branded for all to see, where you have little personal freedom and no human rights, the only place where you may retain some form of self is in your thoughts and feelings. Klemperer seems to have managed to do this, while suffering increasingly severe physical and emotional abuse and facing the possibility of death every day. The *LTR* presents us with the picture of the balancing pole, in which the hands that held it are also sketched, but from which ‘the mass of other things’, that is, most of the events and experiences recorded in his diary, has been separated (Klemperer 2000: 265).

Yet even in this more ‘academic’ text Klemperer is revealed as stable, independent-thinking and -feeling, lucid, never melodramatic yet unafraid to express anger and derision, unembittered but at the same time highly affected and enlightened by his and his wife’s experiences. In all, he seems to have survived with his sense of humanity, his spirit and his rationality intact. The same cannot be said of every Jewish person. How humiliating it may well have been for Klemperer (2000: 155) to be pointed out to a child in the street as being “‘to blame for everything’”, to be spat at and further insulted in various ways, and to have to remain silent;⁷⁴ perhaps how more ethically and philosophically harrowing it may have been for him to witness the third and final stage of the poison, the ‘toxic reaction’, flourishing wherever he and Eva were housed and, later, independently went.

For one of the major themes running through the *LTR* is the fact that the LTI pervaded Jews’ Houses⁷⁵ and conversations and beliefs – Jewish *minds* – just as much as it did that of the Nazis, the Aryans and the other non-Jews. In the first years of the Third Reich, when Klemperer (2000: 11, 10) was working in the factory and receiving regular visits at home from Clemens (the Hitter) and Weser (the Spitter), ‘the principal torturers of the Jews in Dresden’, he was already aware of the lack of any differences to be discerned between ‘how the workers in the factory talked, how the beasts from the Gestapo spoke’ and how the Jews expressed themselves – ‘without a doubt, supporters and opponents, beneficiaries and victims all conformed to the same models’.⁷⁶

The Nazi propagandists’ ceaseless repetition seems to have paid off: Whether the language was printed or spoken, came from the mouths of the educated, the uneducated, the ‘mortal enemies of National Socialism’ and the Jews alike, ‘it was always ... the same clichés and the

⁷⁴ See, for example, ‘Ch 25: The star’ (Klemperer 2000: 155–9).

⁷⁵ In Nazi Germany, Jewish people were crowded together in isolated houses, which were nevertheless situated in Aryan districts and shared with Aryans (Klemperer 2000: 157). Before the wearing of the star was introduced in September 1941, the outside of these houses bore a sign designating their nature, while other, exclusively Aryan, houses bore the declaration “‘This house is free of Jews’” (Klemperer 2000: 157). With the advent of the Jewish star such signs and declarations were no longer relevant, as each Jew was forced to carry ‘his own Ghetto with him like a snail with its shell’, and to affix the star above his name on the front door of the house he inhabited (Klemperer 2000: 157).

⁷⁶ Klemperer was also not immune. He acknowledges catching himself using two LTI terms: Hiding out in the rural Saxon village of Falkenstein in the last weeks of the war, he was plagued by the fear that someone from the Gestapo would come and ‘take him away’ (Klemperer 2000: 254); and after the war, while writing the *LTR*, he speaks of ‘organizing’ some tobacco for himself (Klemperer 2000: 96). In Auschwitz, the latter term even became a proper noun – ‘Organisator’ – thus gaining ‘savage elegance’ in Primo Levi’s (1960: 95) eyes.

same tone' (Klemperer 2000: 18). In 1933, over coffee, Klemperer lost his temper with some acquaintances. Prepared for the wife's parroting of 'the latest tittle-tattle or current opinion', he was less able to stomach the same sentiments from the husband, whom he had until then considered to be 'tolerably sensible' (Klemperer 2000: 34). This is just one example of the political 'fog' that seemed to have enveloped everyone, including 'intellectuals ... [and] quiet and independent thinkers' (Klemperer 2000: 34).

Klemperer (2000: 87–8, 168) encountered and at times experienced similar instances throughout the war years, from the Aryan woman who gave him an apple to take home to his sick wife while expressing surprise that Eva was German, to the young pharmacist – well educated, strongly against the war in general and not a supporter of the Nazis in particular – who simultaneously argued for equality between her Lithuanian heritage and that of the 'pure German' and against the 'somewhat different case' of the Jews, people who 'gave [her] the creeps'.

Time and again Klemperer (2000: 177) came up against – or, as he describes it, was continually 'slap[ped] in the face' by – the 'language of the victor'. The former academic assistant Elsa Glauber declared that she wished her children to become 'fanatical Germans', this being the 'only way' that '[their] Fatherland' could be cleansed of 'this current un-Germanness' (Klemperer 2000: 178). Even when he pointed out that her use of these expressions was evidence of the language of his and her 'mortal enemies', Klemperer (2000: 178) failed to convince her that she was thereby 'admitting defeat and putting [her]self at their mercy and thus betraying that very Germanness of [hers]'. At first compliant, she agreed with his point and promised to improve, but in a subsequent conversation not only used the same terminology but also added more. This time, she defied Klemperer's (2000: 179) reproach, again using the LTI, calling him 'a purist, a school teacher and intransigent' and 'a fanatic'. He goes into some detail in the *LTR* over this case because he wishes it to serve both as a tribute to Glauber's 'courageous intellect', from which he benefited,⁷⁷ and as an indictment of an intellectual, Jewish person's subjugation to the victor's language (Klemperer 2000: 179).

Such subjugation could go to extreme lengths. One of Klemperer's (2000: 180–1) factory foremen, who in pre-war times had been a medical doctor, regarded Nazism as 'a delusion or an illness' that would pass relatively harmlessly. In his new role, the man bitterly appropriated Hitler's anti-Semitic terminology and used it so often and with such conviction that Klemperer (2000: 181) believes he could 'no longer judge to what extent he was ridiculing [Hitler] or himself, or whether this self-deprecating way of speaking had simply become second nature'.⁷⁸ For example, the man always addressed each member of his Jewish work group with the prefix 'Jew' – "Jew Mahn, here is your medical certificate for the tooth Jew [the dentist]" (Klemperer 2000: 181). Most of the workers responded to this tendency either with a sense of humour or with resignation, which symbolised for Klemperer (2000: 182) 'the whole subjugation of the Jews'. However, one man responded with a fury that was ironically articulated in a 'posh foreign expression', a favourite of Hitler's: "I won't let you

⁷⁷ See below, page 58, footnote 86.

⁷⁸ Later, having had the opportunity to study *Mein Kampf* in detail and notice that certain statements seemed 'very familiar', Klemperer (2000: 181) realised that he had indeed heard them earlier, and therefore that the foreman must have known 'long sentences of the Führer's by heart'.

defame me {*diffamieren*}” (Klemperer 2000: 182).⁷⁹ Even in opposition, the poison was revealed.

To Klemperer (2000: 182) it was understandable that this language infiltrated everyday speech – ‘one [was] less careful about what one sa[id] ... [was] more dependent on what [was] constantly in front of one’s very eyes and ringing in one’s ears’ – whereas he was less able to reconcile its prevalence in the Jews’ printed language, which was subject to checking and correction. In the ‘specifically Jewish modern literature’ that was available in the Jews’ Houses, Klemperer (2000: 182, 184) came across one book that adopted the language of the victor with an ‘obsequiousness’ that repeatedly ‘use[d] the characteristic forms of the LTI’ and another that he felt had the LTI at its ‘very core’ (Klemperer 2000: 184). Broadening his disillusioned view, from the various Aryan literary texts to which he gained access in his host’s private library in Falkenstein, Klemperer (2000: 250) perceived betrayal – of ‘education, culture and humanity’, by ‘a multitude of literary figures, writers, journalists [and] academics’ – ‘as far as the eye can see’.

Ignoring the bounds of culture and religion, the LTI also spread across time and land. Klemperer (2000: 36) believes that ‘everything which was later to emerge in terms of National Socialist attitudes, actions and language was already apparent ... in the first months’ of the Third Reich. And in the Klemperers’ journey through Saxony and Bavaria at the end of the war, from the mouths of people ‘of all classes and ages, of every imaginable educational background or lack of it’, of ‘every shade of enmity towards [or] resolute faith in the Führer’, he heard ‘exactly the same LTI’ that he had heard at home in Dresden (Klemperer 2000: 241). A little later, when he was among the refugees and local inhabitants of the rural villages of Unterbernbach and Piskowitz, where ‘there was no longer anyone who believed there was even the slightest chance of victory or of Hitler regaining power’, Klemperer (2000: 260, 261) found that the LTI continued to feature: These people ‘cursed Nazism and did so using its own expressions’.

The dual nature of Klemperer’s (2000: 12) text – a ‘report on lived experience’ and the ‘framework of an academic study’ – is evident almost as soon as one opens the book. Knowing as we now do the decisive conclusion to which Klemperer came at the end of the war as to the subject matter of the work he would resume, it is significant and logical that the *LTR* begins with a dedication to his wife, Eva. When he says that the book would not have come into being, and the author would have ceased to exist long ago, were it not for her (Klemperer 2000: ix), his words are not metaphorical – it is likely that without his Aryan wife

⁷⁹ Here two presumably personal experiences lead to conflicting thoughts. Supporting his argument with evidence from personal communication with Marion Nobel, whose ‘expert assistance and knowledge’ he acknowledges and which appears to be based on first-hand experience, Rob K Baum (2006: 110 fn 3, 102) proposes that ‘the most obvious reduction in language [in the Third Reich] was renunciation of *Fremdwörter* [foreign words], including terms that had been absorbed into German’. Nobel’s (in Baum 2006: 102) examples of *Armee* (army) becoming *Wehrmacht* and *Auto* (car) becoming *Kraftwagen* are credible, yet in contrast Klemperer (2000: 14) finds that ‘in many cases [the] Nazi language point[ed] to foreign influences’. Also citing several examples, Klemperer (2000: 234–6) highlights an apparent ‘predilection for resonant foreign words’ on the part of Hitler, Goebbels and other speechmakers. ‘In every speech and every bulletin the Führer delight[ed] in two entirely superfluous foreign words which were by no means widespread or generally understood: *diskriminieren* [discriminate] ... and *diffamieren* [defame]’ (Klemperer 2000: 235). Hitler ‘kn[ew] the psyche of the unthinking masses’ ‘frighteningly well’, Klemperer argues, and ‘a foreign word impresse[d] all the more the less it [was] understood; in not being comprehended, it confuse[d] and stupefie[d] ...’ (Klemperer 2000: 236).

he would have suffered the fate of most of the Jews in the camps. The love and gratitude, and perhaps a certain amount of guilt or regret,⁸⁰ infusing his dedication is given shape when he discusses, in the first chapter, the word ‘heroic’.⁸¹

From Hitler’s point of view, Klemperer (2000: 2) explains, *heroisch* wore ‘three uniforms’ and was never seen ‘in civilian clothes’. First, at the start of the period of the Third Reich, the “‘brown Storm Troopers’” were Hitler’s ‘first heroes’, his ‘true allies in the battle for the hearts of the people’ (Klemperer 2000: 3).⁸² Second, in the mid-1930s, the ‘most memorable and widespread image of heroism’ was found in ‘the masked figure of the racing driver’ (Klemperer 2000: 4).⁸³ Third, in 1939 ‘the racing car was replaced by the tank, the racing driver by the tank driver’, and from this time to the end of the war ‘anything and everything heroic on land, at sea and in the air wore a military uniform’ (Klemperer 2000: 4). The insidious popularity of the term was evident in the fact that after the war, once again teaching, Klemperer (2000: 2) continually came across young people – men recently returned from the field or from POW camps; women unfamiliar with any aspect of military service – who clung to ‘Nazi thought processes’ even as they strove ‘to fill the gaps and eliminate the errors in their neglected education’. Taking part in discussions of humanitarianism, culture and democracy, these young people became lost in ‘the fog of Nazism’ as soon as they mentioned the concept of heroism, and revealed that they had a ‘most dubious notion’ of its meaning (Klemperer 2000: 2).

Klemperer (2000: 5) recalls explaining, in response to their polite arguments, that there was more to being heroic than being brave and willing to die – the original Greek Hero was ‘someone who performed [often dangerous] deeds which benefited mankind’. Moreover, to his mind heroism was humble and quiet; while acknowledging that ‘even in Nazi Germany there must undoubtedly have been a handful of true heroes amongst the sportsmen and soldiers’, he remained unconvinced by a heroism that involved ‘so much vanity, so much gladiatorial triumph’,⁸⁴ so many awards ceremonies, wreaths, medals and promotions (Klemperer 2000: 5).⁸⁵ For him, true heroism was displayed by ‘the many brave people in the concentration camps’, and by others ‘who recklessly committed illegal acts’ (Klemperer 2000:

⁸⁰ Klemperer (2000) never states the matter outright in the *LTR*, but the tone of several descriptions of their experiences at the hands of the Nazis implies his awareness that while his wife saved his life in many ways, he endangered hers.

⁸¹ See ‘Heroism (instead of an Introduction)’ (Klemperer 2000: 1–7).

⁸² Characteristic of Hitler’s methods, their presence was not as engaging as the description may imply – their task was ‘merely to exercise brute force, to assault political opponents at the rally and throw them into the streets’ (Klemperer 2000: 3).

⁸³ Following his fatal crash, the driver Bernd Rosemeyer gained a place in ‘the nation’s popular imagination’ almost as exalted as was that of Horst Wessel (Klemperer 2000: 4), a member of the Storm Troopers who was killed in a brawl in 1930, possibly by communists, and elevated by Nazi propagandists to martyrdom (*EB* 2008).

⁸⁴ The Third Reich set ‘much store’ in ‘covering up [the] difference’ between ‘a game of sport and the deadly seriousness of war’, Klemperer (2000: 215) believes. To this end, as well as to the end of speaking ‘the language that the people underst[ood]’, Goebbels most frequently addressed Berliners in the Sportpalast, using images he gathered from sport (Klemperer 2000: 217). To him ‘the gladiator [was] both warrior and sportsman’, for him ‘the gladiator [was] the epitome of heroism’ (Klemperer 2000: 217).

⁸⁵ As Baum (2006: 102) puts it,
the myth of one people [the Nazis, the supreme Aryan race] was born, in large part, from a political rally – in Nuremberg, 1934 – whose uniform marching signified disciplined obedience rather than collective belief. Political pageantry displaced the historical record, birthing a new “chosen people”.

6).⁸⁶ They too were part of an army, he suggests, ‘with a firm and unshakeable belief in the ultimate victory of their cause’ (Klemperer 2000: 6). But to him the most important form of heroism, one with which he was personally familiar, was a ‘wretched and much less audible’ one, neither part of any army or political group nor hopeful of ultimate triumph (Klemperer 2000: 6). It was displayed by ‘the handful of Aryan wives’ who ‘resisted every pressure [manifesting in intense physical and emotional trauma] to separate from their Jewish husbands’ (Klemperer 2000: 6). Thus it is unmistakably to Eva that he is referring when he concludes his dedication with the mention of heroism.

Immediately evident, the *LTR*’s dual nature is furthermore observable up to the book’s last page. From time to time Klemperer (2000) recalls the asides he made in his diaries concerning points that he should and wished to verify once he had regained access to other sources of formal and informal literature – re-established access that he seems by no means to take for granted. And more than once he suggests that a point under discussion could lead to significant and substantial academic study, beyond the scope of his book (Klemperer 2000). The final chapter (preceding the Afterword)⁸⁷ is perhaps the richest example of the text’s dual nature, detailing as it does the Klemperers’ varied experiences in the last months of the war as well as, among other literature that was available to him, a close reading, with examples, of two texts whose large print runs implied to Klemperer (2000: 244) their status as ‘privileged and highly influential textbooks’. They serve as samples of the abovementioned educational and cultural betrayal, and as such should be banned, in his view (Klemperer 2000: 244). The chapter also provides the last new expression,⁸⁸ further use of two perennial expressions,⁸⁹ and the possibly final military coinage⁹⁰ of the LTI that Klemperer recorded at the time.

In April 1945, Klemperer (2000: 261) came to the conclusion that the LTI ‘really was total, it truly encompassed and contaminated the whole of Greater Germany in its absolute uniformity’. His final chapter closes with a description of the ‘two visible signs’ of the end of the LTI’s reign: On 29 April, the day that a German surrender document was signed while

⁸⁶ Two such people were Elsa Glauber, who honestly but nonetheless riskily highlighted the Jewish backgrounds of many classic German texts’ editors, thereby having the books allocated to the ‘Jewish library’, to which Klemperer (2000: 177–8) had access, and the Aryan man who crossed the street to shake Klemperer’s (2000: 155–6) hand and stress his opposition to the current anti-Semitic ‘measures’. Interestingly, Reiss (1998: 85) sees this latter ‘act of sympathy’ as equally ‘humiliating’ for Klemperer ‘as verbal abuse from the Nazis’. Perhaps Klemperer expresses as much in his diary of that time; I can find no evidence of such a source of shame in the *LTR*.

⁸⁷ See ‘Ch 36: Putting the theory to the test’ (Klemperer 2000: 241–62).

⁸⁸ The last new expression was ‘people’s pest control’ (*Volksschädlingbekämpfer*), in reference to the many ‘Gestapo officers and military police’ who had been deployed to find and apprehend the ‘soldiers on leave who had become deserters’ and the ‘civilians who were evading service’ (Klemperer 2000: 242).

⁸⁹ The two perennial expressions were as follows: Watching the ‘swarms of silver arrows’, the Allied aeroplanes, fly by, ‘every time, without fail, one of the onlookers would remind everyone, “And Hermann [Göring] said his name would be Meier, if a single enemy plane reached Germany!” And someone else would add, “And Adolf wanted to wipe out {*ausradieren*} the English cities”’ (Klemperer 2000: 258). These two pronouncements, originally made by Göring and Hitler, were repeated frequently and ironically throughout the Hitler period (Klemperer 2000: 119–20). ‘The Führer and his Reich Marshal never summed themselves up more succinctly or more accurately’ than with these two expressions, ‘the one in his true nature as megalomaniac criminal, the other in his role as the people’s comedian’ (Klemperer 2000: 120).

⁹⁰ The possibly final military coinage was ‘overrun’ (*überrollen*), used in reference to the swiftly approaching American troops (Klemperer 2000: 260).

Hitler was still alive (EB 2008), Klemperer (2000: 261) writes, he found on the floor of the lavatory the two halves of a torn piece of paper – their landlord’s ‘certificate of allegiance’ to Hitler, drawn up in Munich nine years earlier almost to the day. And in the week that followed the appearance of the Allies, in the attic of the newly emptied administrative building, the Klemperers warmed themselves at a fire liberally fuelled by wood and cloth from portraits of Hitler, Nazi wall banners, flags and wooden swastikas (Klemperer 2000: 262). Cathartic as the chapter’s conclusion may be to the reader decades later, one does not easily forget that it is often difficult to distinguish between the life and the study. How much more difficult it was likely to have been for Klemperer at the time. He relied on the LTI as his balancing pole, but as such it must also have been an ongoing reminder of the fact that he and his wife were teetering high up on a tightrope.

Defending Klemperer

As the above discussion shows, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate Klemperer’s study of the Nazi use of the German language from his life and experiences before, during and just after the Second World War. Indeed, as some critics may argue, to do such a thing would be detrimental to his body of work. An assumption underlying the approach of several critical essays and articles⁹¹ on Klemperer is that the LTR is inextricably linked with his diaries, autobiographies and academic texts,⁹² and thus with his life and standpoint in general. It is beyond the scope of this doctoral thesis to explore in depth the ways in which the authors of these essays and articles take him to task for contradictions and hypocrisies that they find in his texts,⁹³ not to mention some criticisms they make of his personality and behaviour – this thesis simply touches on the issue here with regard to one article, as being typical of the group of articles, through taking up the challenge of some of its debatable statements.

⁹¹ See, for example, Baum (2004), Reiss (1998), Watt (2000; 2001; 2003) and Young (2005). For some views on Klemperer that are more supportive, see, for example, Baum (2006), Mazower (2000), Mieder (2000), Press (2005), also Reiss (1998), also Watt (2001), and also Young (2005).

⁹² As well as the LTR, these texts include, for example, his two-volume autobiography, *Curriculum Vitae. Erinnerungen 1881–1918* (1989); the Third Reich diaries *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1933–1941* (1998) and *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1942–1945* (1999); the ‘Communism diary’ *So sitze ich den zwischen allen Stühlen. Tagebücher 1945–1959* (1999); the newspaper article ‘Sprachlicher Patriotismus’ (1952) and the extended essay ‘Zur gegenwärtigen Sprachsituation in Deutschland’ (1954).

⁹³ These are the texts Klemperer wrote during and after the Second World War. Some examples of the criticisms are as follows: ‘To participate in public life and to qualify as a “victim of fascism,” with the special benefits conferred by that legal status, Klemperer had to join one of the four political parties sanctioned by the Soviet authority’ (Birken 1999: 63–64 fn 27). In other words, he (reluctantly) became a communist in post-war East Germany. Roderick H Watt (2003: 133) believes that Klemperer joined the German Communist Party and then the Socialist Unity Party ‘in the desperate hope, rather than total conviction, that Communism alone offered a bulwark against a renascent Fascism’. Quickly disillusioned, however, Klemperer also found that his hands were tied; he was ‘compelled to make more and more compromises in his public statements if he wished to ensure that they would pass the censor and thus gain a wider hearing by being published’ (Watt 2003: 133). In Klemperer’s abovementioned extended essay, Watt (2001: 262) finds ‘much of Klemperer’s argument’ in conflict with ‘the analyses and conclusions of his [LTR]’. Moreover, he accepted the omission of a certain chapter – ‘Zion’ – from the second edition of the LTR in 1949, but had it reinstated in the third edition in 1957. Such to-ing and fro-ing serves as an example for Watt (2003: 141) of Klemperer’s opportunism, his learned ability to ‘cultivate and maintain his personal and professional profile as an academic in the German Democratic Republic ... by adapting to and ... exploiting the exigencies of a foreign and domestic policy effectively dictated by the USSR’.

Having extended Schiller's view of language that writes and thinks for you to that which infiltrates the German people's lives like poison, invisible but infused, in the water system, Klemperer 'commits the anthropomorphic fallacy', in Roderick H Watt's (2000: 427) view, 'of attributing to language an autonomous power, quite independent of human intention, to influence language users'. By contrast, language, Watt seems to be arguing, has no such power, and is not independent of human intention. He does not acknowledge it outright, but this way of thinking seems to bring his position in line with that of other academic linguists whom he describes as having become, 'since the early 1960s', 'increasingly sceptical about the theory, promulgated in Germany particularly strongly by Klemperer, that language can somehow be subject to ideological infiltration or contamination' – 'from the strictly linguistic perspective, it is argued [as he seems to be arguing], language has an essentially value-free function in a communicative relationship' (Watt 2000: 431).

Certeau (1984) (from a variety of critical standpoints), Ricoeur (1977; 1992) (from philosophical and hermeneutical standpoints) and Bourdieu (1991) (from a sociological standpoint), not to mention writers and critics such as Abrams and Harpham (2009), Berger (2001), Murdoch (1970) and Young (1988), may well disagree with this notion of language as being value-free.⁹⁴ Similarly, I do not think that Klemperer is committing such a fallacy; he does not seem to see language as independent of human intention. He always provides evidence of the person behind the utterance, be it Hitler, Goebbels, other Nazis, or any one of his colleagues or fellow factory-workers.

It is not language that attempted to rid the world of Jewish people, but Hitler and his followers. They used that language to this aim, and thus we call language that comes from the mouth of a person who wishes to make known their animosity towards Jews 'anti-Semitic language'. But this is not to be taken literally, as perhaps Watt and the other academic linguists do – the *language* is not the anti-Semite, the *person speaking such language* is the anti-Semite. The cases of the anti-Nazis and of the Jewish people themselves that Klemperer (2000) noticed speaking the LTI illustrate not that the LTI existed as an autonomous, powerful entity that controlled these people, but rather that with the aid of the LTI, anti-Semitic users succeeded, partly,⁹⁵ in their aim of turning the German people into an unthinking mass. Behind the LTI were Hitler and Goebbels and all the rest – '*diffamieren*' was a favourite word of Hitler's (Klemperer 2000: 182), not one that arose independently of a user.

Watt (2000: 426 fn 10, 435) feels that Klemperer's extension of Schiller's theory shows Klemperer as taking at face value and reinforcing the 'Nazi claims about their success in manipulating [the German] language'.⁹⁶ But perhaps Watt is again being overly literal. While

⁹⁴ See Chapter 2, pages 78–9.

⁹⁵ They may have been partly successful, according to Klemperer (2000), but Michaels seems to have an oppositional view: In Chapter 3 (pages 114–15), we examine her demonstration of how the Nazis' manipulation of the German language did not totally succeed in portraying the Jews as sub- or non-human (*FP* 165–6) – in other words, in fulfilling their anti-Semitic aims.

⁹⁶ Watt (2000: 435) briefly discusses, without translating the German quotation he provides in this regard into English, Heidrun Kämper-Jensen's 'study of official linguistic self-awareness in Nazi Germany', which, he believes, corroborates such claims. Watt (2000: 453 fn 30) provides the study's reference as "'Spracharbeit im Dienst des NS-Staates", *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik*, 21 (1993), 150–83'.

Klemperer (2000) indeed found evidence of the LTI uttered by Nazis and Jews alike, this does not mean he was consciously or unconsciously endorsing the Nazis' claim. As we have seen above, he was equally aware of people playing cards and discussing food rationing instead of listening to 'the Führer or one of his henchmen ... carrying on interminably' in speeches that were being broadcast on the radio nearby (Klemperer 2000: 13).

Moreover, while Klemperer's (2000: 261, 13) conclusion is that the LTI had 'contaminated the whole of Greater Germany in its absolute uniformity', he is nevertheless able to argue that the Nazis' speechmaking, 'their rabble-raising against the Jews', could not have been defined as 'the most powerful Hitlerian propaganda tool'. He does not state outright what he feels *could* have been defined as the most powerful tool, but certain points that he makes and examples he provides in subsequent chapters of the *LTR* perhaps indicate that the 'tool' was a collection of things working together rather than one specific thing acting alone – such as the dulling of the people's intellect, the encouragement of their base emotions, Hitler's acute understanding of those people and his glorification of the Aryans as world leaders.

Furthermore, there is no evidence in the *LTR* of such claims made by the Nazis. If, as is highly improbable, Klemperer could have gained access to 'the academic publications on the German language that were published in Nazi Germany' that Watt (2000: 435) believes contain such claims, he would certainly have referred to them in the *LTR*. Admittedly, Watt (2000: 426 fn 10) does not attribute the error of endorsement directly to Klemperer – he qualifies Klemperer's apparent role in the error as unwitting rather than deliberate – but he also thereby comes as close as possible to accusing Klemperer of the error (seeing as he does that in doing one thing, Klemperer 'effectively' does the other thing).

Had he been aware of the claims, Klemperer would probably not have taken them at face value, because several times in the *LTR* he recognises the falsity of other claims made by the Nazis. He exemplifies the Nazi tendency to concealment and lies, to portray themselves in military despatches as 'fighting valiantly' when in truth they were 'having a terrible time' (Klemperer 2000: 7), to report in September 1941 that '200,000 people were trapped in Kiev' and a few days later that '600,000 captives were freed from the same encircled area' (Klemperer 2000: 202). As Klemperer (2000: 202) explains,

the bulletins of the Third Reich ... start off in a superlative mode from the very outset and then, the worse the situation, the more they overdo it, until everything becomes literally measureless, twisting the fundamental quality of military language, its disciplined exactitude, into its very opposite, into fantasy and fairy-tale.

Even in December 1944, when the German army was near defeat, a special announcement stated that "“after brief but intensive preliminary fire ... [the] first American position [was] overrun”" (Klemperer 2000: 208). To Klemperer (2000: 208), this was nothing but a 'desperate bluff'.

In Watt's (2000: 435) view, Klemperer is guilty of inconsistency and contradiction when he asserts that 'German Jews living in Nazi Germany were somehow impervious or immune to the linguistic determinism of Nazi propaganda and indoctrination that he claimed to see influencing their fellow Germans'. Watt (2000: 435, and 435 fn 31) cites the *LTR*'s Chapter 28 ('The language of the victor') in this regard, without providing a specific supporting

quotation but referring the reader to ‘the more detailed study of this issue’ in another article of his.⁹⁷ Rob K Baum (2004: 607–8) also briefly takes up this point, endorsing Watt’s criticism and providing Watt’s quotation of Klemperer as follows: ‘No, even if everywhere in the houses reserved for Jews, people had accepted the language of the victor, that was surely only an unthinking enslavement, it certainly did not represent a recognition of his ideology, a belief in his lies’.⁹⁸ The contradiction, Baum (2004: 607) proposes, is in Klemperer’s again unwitting portrayal of Jews speaking ‘a language uncorrupted by the Nazi bureaucratic language that inflected German speech during the Third Reich’ and thereby ‘ironically reforc[ing] Nazi racist theories about inherent linguistic differences between Aryans and Jews’ (see also Watt 2000: 435).

But this passage shows no such contradiction. Klemperer (2000) states and exemplifies more than once in the *LTR* that Jews, himself included, were just as guilty of speaking the LTI as were anti-Semites, thus from a linguistic point of view they were certainly not immune to Nazi propaganda’s linguistic determinism (Watt).⁹⁹ And his view of this issue, of the linguistic enslavement it illustrated on the part of the Jews as being an *unthinking* enslavement, is in line with his argument that one of the Nazis’ primary intentions was to suppress the people’s intellect.¹⁰⁰ Albert, a factory co-worker – ‘rather better at thinking’ than was the kind but prejudiced Aryan woman who sent an apple home with Klemperer (2000: 88) for his sick wife – who ‘harboured his own political opinions’ nevertheless disappointed Klemperer in voicing confidence in the German army with regard to ‘a veiled report of the success of the Allies somewhere in Italy’. “‘We are invincible; they can’t break us because we are so fantastically well organized’”, he asserted (Klemperer 2000: 88). “The use of words associated with Nazism,” John W Young (2005: 53) comments, ‘does not by itself prove that the user is either a Nazi or the dupe of Nazi propaganda.’¹⁰¹ While Albert’s political opinions

⁹⁷ The other article to which Watt refers, ‘Victor Klemperer and the Language of National Socialism’, appears in *The German-Jewish Dilemma: From the Enlightenment to the Shoah* (1999, edited by A Hammel and E Timms).

⁹⁸ Baum (2004: 608) cites the source of this quotation as ‘Watt, 1999, p 200’. In the edition of *LTR* used as a secondary source reference for this doctoral thesis, the quotation indeed appears in Chapter 28 (‘The language of the victor’) and reads as follows:

No, even if everyone had adopted the language of the victor in the Jews’ Houses, it was merely an unthinking enslavement, and certainly didn’t amount to an assent to their teachings or a belief in their lies. (Klemperer 2000: 186)

⁹⁹ See Klemperer (2000: 10, 18, 34, 96, 177–8, 254). Young (2005: 52) also notes Klemperer’s use of the LTI terms, acceding that ‘in many instances he employs them in parody or with deliberate irony’. But he questions, referring to several examples, Klemperer’s use of ‘biological and pathological metaphors’ – by implication, without such ironic awareness – ‘to characterize [the Nazis] corruption of the German language’ (Young 2005: 52, 63 fn 13). If Klemperer’s extension of Schiller’s notion is correct, argues Young (2005: 52), ‘then his use of such typically Nazi terminology strongly suggests a mind tainted by Nazism’. Young seems to see this as an indictment of Klemperer. With an air of defending Klemperer, or out of a desire to criticise more accurately, in answer to his subsequent question of whether anyone would ‘assert that the author of the *LTI* fell even unconsciously under the sway of his subject’, Young’s (2005: 52) reply echoes Watt’s proposal: Instead, ‘Klemperer erred in assuming the autonomous power of language’. In contrast to Young (2005) and Watt (2000), I suggest that it is logical that, as a Jew, Klemperer’s mind was indeed tainted by Nazism. The effect of his journey ‘through the Inferno’ (Young 2005: 62), however, was not to have made a hypocrite of him, but rather to have turned him even further against the Nazis. His awareness of the sway of his subject (Young) seems complete and continual rather than partial, and this makes all the difference.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Klemperer (2000: 146).

¹⁰¹ Young (2005: 53) sees Klemperer’s awareness of this point as being merely ‘intermittent’.

were indeed ‘in no way supportive of the government, nor were they militaristic’ (Klemperer 2000: 88), his strong belief in the army shows that he was in fact duped.

In Michaels’s novel *Fugitive Pieces* (166), the first narrator, Jakob, feels that ‘there’s a precise moment when we reject contradiction’. He sees this ‘moment of choice’ as ‘the lie we will live by’ (FP 166), thus indicating at least some degree of consciousness on our part – in order to make the choice, we must be aware of the contradiction as contradiction. By contrast, Klemperer seems to suggest that, overall, the absorption of the LTI into Jewish people’s conversation – which implies a noteworthy social and ethical contradiction – was unintentional. While those who ‘cursed Nazism’ may or may not have been vaguely conscious of the irony in ‘using its own expressions’ (Klemperer 2000: 261), there is little to indicate that they were fully conscious of it. Glauber seems to have been one of the few examples of those who deliberately chose to use the LTI; in other words she rejected the contradiction and lived by the lie (Michaels) of her version of Germanness – the lie of a Fatherland-cleansing ‘fanatical Germanness’ that so frustrated and saddened Klemperer (2000: 178).

Finally, Watt (2000: 436) suggests that Klemperer was unable ‘to develop and maintain an objective and critical distance to his experiences’. An objective distance is certainly unattainable for someone experiencing the Jewish restrictions and abuse first-hand;¹⁰² however, a critical distance seems to be just what Klemperer managed to attain. Many Holocaust diaries may provide evidence of the LTI in passing or perhaps even unintentionally, but few, if any other than Klemperer’s, contain the makings of such a detailed, meticulous and interpretive study of the language that is his *LTR*.

Young’s (2005: 62) belief that ‘to praise Klemperer’s book does not exempt it from criticism’ seems to sum up many of the critics’ mixed attitudes towards Klemperer’s work. Even in his predominantly reproachful article Watt (2000) pays Klemperer a few compliments. Thus the general approach seems to be one of taking Klemperer’s texts and theories with a pinch of salt. Be that as it may, I suggest that it is useful to attempt in the coming chapter to employ just what is relevant of Klemperer’s philological study in illuminating Michaels’s use of figurative language, partly in the Holocaust context.

Certeau, Ricoeur, Bourdieu and Klemperer each provide differing perspectives on the ways in which language behaves and can be made to behave by those who use it. In the next chapter, we use these theories to gain a better understanding both of Michaels’s grasp of the functions of language and of her methods of employing those functions.

¹⁰² Watt (2000: 436) does seem cognisant of this point, describing Klemperer, in the same paragraph in which he makes the abovementioned criticism, as ‘the persecuted Jew’.