

phonetics and phonology as defined above, he himself uses the terms *phonetics* and *phonology* in a very different sense. I shall continue to use them in the modern sense defined here.)

The distinction between phonetics and phonology takes us back to points made earlier about the linguistic identity of the form *bed*. Phonetics would describe the actual sounds produced when one utters the form, but, as we argued above, the identity of *bed* as a unit of English does not depend on the nature of these actual sounds but on the distinctions which separate *bed* from *bet*, *bad*, *head*, etc. Phonology is the study of these functional distinctions, and "functional" is what should be stressed here. For example, in English utterances there is a perceptible and measurable difference between the "l-sound" that occurs before vowels (as in *lend* or *alive*) and that which occurs before consonants or at the end of words (as in *melt* or *peel*). This is a real phonetic difference, but it is not a difference ever used to distinguish between two signs. It is not a functional difference and therefore is not a part of the phonological system of English. On the other hand, the difference between the vowels of *feel* and *fill* is used in English to distinguish signs (compare *keel* and *kill*, *keen* and *kin*, *seat* and *sit*, *heat* and *hit*, and the like). This opposition plays a very important role in the phonological system of English in that it creates a large number of distinct signs.

The same distinction between what belongs to particular linguistic acts and what belongs to the linguistic system itself is important at other levels too, not just that of sound. We can distinguish, for example, between utterance, as a unit of *parole*, and sentence, a unit of *la langue*. Two different utterances may be manifestations of the same sentence; so once again we encounter this central notion of identity in linguistics. The actual sounds and the contextual meanings of the two utterances will be different; what makes the two utterances instances of a single linguistic unit will be the distinctions which give that unit a relational identity.

For example, if at some time Cuthbert says "I am tired," I

refers to Cuthbert, and understanding this reference is an important part of understanding the utterance. However, that reference is not part of the meaning of the sentence, for George also may utter the same sentence, and in his utterance *I* will refer to George. Within the linguistic system, *I* does not refer to anyone. Its meaning in the system is the result of the distinctions between *I* and *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *we*, and *they*: a meaning which we can sum up by saying that *I* means "the speaker" as opposed to anyone else.

Pronouns are obvious illustrations of the difference between meanings which pertain to utterances only, and meanings which pertain to elements of the linguistic system. To characterize this distinction Saussure uses the terms *signification* and *valeur* ("value"). Linguistic units have a value within the system, a meaning which is the result of the oppositions that define them; but when these units are used in an utterance, they have a signification, a contextual realization or manifestation of meaning. For example, if a French speaker says "J'ai vu un mouton" and an English speaker says "I saw a sheep" their utterances are likely to have the same signification; they are making the same claim about a state of affairs (namely, that at a time in the past the speaker saw a sheep). However, as units of their respective linguistic systems, *mouton* and *sheep* do not have the same meaning or value, for "sheep" is defined by an opposition with "mutton," whereas "*mouton*" is bounded by no such distinction but is used both for the animal and for the meat. There are certain philosophical problems here that Saussure did not tackle; in particular, philosophers would want to say that what Saussure calls the signification of an utterance involves both meaning and reference. But Saussure's point is that there is one kind of meaning, a relational meaning or value, which is based on the linguistic system, and another kind of meaning or signification which involves the use of linguistic elements in actual situations of utterance.

The distinction between *langue* and *parole* has important