THE STANDARDIZATION
OF
AMERICAN ENGLISH

ANDRES GALLARDO

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N° 4

SERIE LINGÜISTICA

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FOREWORD

In this study* I present a view of the process of standardization undergone by American English. I present not a history of American English nor a description thereof, but rather an attempt at capturing the basic forces that have effectively shaped the identity of this language both as an abstract communication system and as a social institution.

The frame of reference of the study is presented in chapter one. Standard-language theory proves to be an optimal research guide, for ultimately it is the functional approach which allows the study to separate what is essential to the standardization process from merely anecdotal details. A standard language is thus conceived of as a cultural objet that possesses certain basic properties which are discovered precisely in their functioning. The relevance of the speech community that uses the language becomes apparent when the people's system of attitudes is fully ingrained into the standardization process.

In chapter two I approach American English from a historical perspective. It deals with how the language acquired a recognizable identity. Noah Webster is presented as a symbol of the emergence of American English. He marked the process of standardization of the language for years to come. First he fought a 'war' for linguistic independence, and then he matured to set up the basic model for language development: a pragmatic language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude (as opposed to a traditional language-as-a-national-treasure attitude characteristic of the parent country), and a type of book that served as the embodiment of the 'soul' of the standardized form of the language: the American English dictionary.

In chapter three I examine the relevance of the dictionary for the development of the English language. Dictionaries both reflect and influence the standardization process to the degree that their study is in fact the study of the standardization of American English as recognizably different from British English. For this reason, it is possible to omit a detailed study of other standardizing agencies, such as schools and language academies, which are of crucial significance in the development of other languages.

In the conclusion I sum up my finfings (and my disappoinments) and present some ideas for possible future research to further clarify the fascinating nature of the standardization process and the development of American English as well as other standard languages of the New World.

There are many general studies of American English which take into consideration cultural aspects, but mone of them has taken the integrated functional view adopted in the present study. In order to highlight the theoretical relevance of each aspect under consideration I have avoided the formalism which characterizes present - day social sciences, especially sociolinguistics. Both the organization of the contents and the analysis of the materials are presented in a quite traditional fashion. In this way I hope that standard-language theory might become stimulating to any linguist interested in understanding the dynamics of language development beyond the boundaries of any school of thought.

CHAPTER ONE

STANDARD- LANGUAGE THEORY AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

1.   The basis of standard-language theory[1]

The linguistic community remembers —and respects— the Prague School of linguistics mostly for its decisive role in the establishment of modern phonology. Praguean linguists, though, were active in many other areas of language-related disciplines and in all of them made lasting contributions. One of these areas is the development of a theory of the standard language whose basic principles, in spite of many revisions and divergent developments,[2] retain their validity even today. In contrast with the commonly-held view that equates standardization with uniformity and conceives of the standard language as a monolithic force that imposes itself upon the speakers, Prague School offered a dynamic view which sees the standard language as a complex and ever-changing factor in the development of both the linguistic system itself and the community that uses it. The foundations of this view lie in the functionalist approach, which postulates that the best way to account for a cultural object such as language is in terms of its functions (Garvin, 1978; Mathiot and Garvin, 1976; Daneš, 1976), for it is only through functioning —i.e. fulfilling some type of role— that any such object becomes the center of our attention, and subsequently of our scientific interest. Thus the first Prague School's formal statement about the standard language was also an assertion of the functional approach:

> La distinction de la langue littéraire se fait se fait grâce au rôle qu'elle joue, grâce en particulier aux exigences supérieures qu'elle se voit imposer, en comparaison du langage populaire: la langue littéraire exprime la vie de culture et de civilization (fonctionnement et résultats de la pensée scientifique, philosophique et religieuse, politique et sociale, jurifique et administrative). (Prague School, 1929, p. 16)

If it is true that a cultural object such as language is defined in terms of its functions, these functions can exist because the object possesses some basic properties, which in turn are apparent because of the functions. In short, there is a relationship of interdependence between properties and functions. From the standpoint of research into the nature

of the object, it is through the study of functions that access to properties is made possible. In the case of the standard language, properties and functions interact with a set of attitudes on the part of the members of the speech community. These attitudes, in addition to their enormous theoretical importance in the characterization of the standard language, are perhaps the most readily observable elements in a first approach to standard-language nature.

By characterizing a standard language in terms of properties, functions, and associated attitudes, room is provided for culture-retaled complexities and, at the same time, a surprisingly rigorous frame of reference emerges, that allows the researcher to make sense of an apparently wild variety of dissimilar facts, for the forces that bind together the standard—language components are but finite. At the base is a principle of codification that determines how and along which avenues language development will take place. Along these lines, Garvin and Mathiot (1956, p. 783) define a standard language as 'a codified form of a language, accepted by and serving as a model to, a larger speech community'. According to this definition, standard language is not the 'langue', in the Saussurean sense of an abstract system of signs, but rather a culture—constrained version of the 'langue'. Standardization is a process that affects both the language and its speakers, although generally to a different degree.

The characterization of the standard language as an aspect of a broader structure has at least two important consequences that should be discussed: (a) statements about the standard language operate at a lower level of abstraction than statements about language as a system of sings. Praguean scholars, who were active within the framework of Saussurean tradition, always thought that they were describing standard language as the 'langue' and not as the parole'. But a standard language, according to the definition quoted above, is open to overt influence from members of the speech community (both as individuals and as groups), and it thus contains many non-linguistic elements stemming from the life of the society in which it exists: in short, it contains many elements of the Saussurean 'parole' as well. In this sense, a standard language is closer to Coseriu's notion of norm, that is, the socially-established ways in which the potentialities of the abstract 'langue' are actualized in a given language situation, according to each specific society's system of cultural rules (cf. Coseriu, 1962, esp. chapter 'Sistema, norma y habla'). The concept of norm as a factor within the 'langue' is indeed relevant. Among other things, it provides a frame of reference to account for the fact that two (or more) different societies that share the same language (in the abstract sense of 'system of signs')

may undergo the standardization process along different avenues, that is, conditioned by different norms stemming from divergent usage models. As it will be seen, this is a crucial element in the understanding of the language situation in the Americas, where a same language —say, English— is a standard language for different societies —say, British and American— in ways that are culturally different: the United States and England share the same English language, but actualize its potentialities differently as 'British' English and 'American' English with no structural contradiction[3].

(b) A second consequence of considering the standard language as a factor within the more abstract system of the 'langue' has to do with the linguist's analysis of the phenomenon: the standard language contains all the elements of the 'langue' but not viceversa, and thus there can be nothing in the standard language that contradicts the system of the 'langue'. In short: 'language' is the genus, and 'standard' is the differentia specifica. This is especially relevant in the description of properties and functions of the standard language. At the property level, for instance, it is not necessary to postulate a phonological system, for this was done when the components of the object language were determined. The thing to do, then, is to state in what ways 'standard' is a qualification of 'language'.

To return to the definition that served as a point of departure to this discussion, let us focus upon the notion of codification, which implies overt intervention in the language. The codification process is clearly conditioned by the types of language-usage models that effectively operate within each speech community. In this area many differences are to be found, and it is here where most of linguistic scholarship on language variation has traditionally centered itself, to the extent that a considerable part of modern sociolinguistics is but a study of the ways in which different norms —standard of not— are codified. Different types of usage models —religious, literary, technological, etc.— are associated with different attitudes among the speakers and will generate different types of language cultivation, i.e. different approaches to codification. As a matter of fact, the correct ascertaining of the types of language-usage models current in a given language situation is a prerequisite for the understanding of the way in which the properties of the standard language are present and the way in which the functions manifest themselves. In this sense, Jespersen's famous 'standards of correctness', proposed in the late 20's (Jespersen, 1964) are more a typology of usage models than a statement about the nature of the standard language and its functions. In the final analysis, Jespersen does not explain how a standard language is structured or how it works, but which the ideal types of language users are, according to whose

performance the rest of the speakers should pattern their own language behavior: the writer (esthetic standard), the scientist (logical standard), the ruling class (aristocratic standard), the common people (democratic standard), speakers from a certain area (geographic standard). Even though these models for adequate or correct language usage are not a definitional component of the notion of standard language, they are always present in the background. Jespersen's importance is to have pointed out the cruciality of models in the makeup of a speeach community and its language.

In the pages that follow, I present my own characterization of the standard language, which intends to be a revision of Prague—School ideas, especially in the updated version found in the works of Garvin (1972, 1973, 1978). [4]

2. The standard-language properties

A standardized language presents some traits that seem intrinsic to its structure as a culturally defined system of communication, and without which it cannot function: these are the properties of the standard language. Prague—School theorists traditionally distinguished two properties: intellectualization and flexible stability [5], but the complexity of standard—language situations described in recent years strongly suggests thet there are indeed some other properties. At least two new properties impose themselves as particularly relevant, namely, rootedness and urbanization, and this poses the need for differentiating between two types of properties, which we shall call structural properties and cultural properties, respectively. Intellectualization and flexible stability are structural properties, and have to do with the standard language as a system of signs, and thus they effect the abstract nature of language itself: its phonology, its grammar, and its lexicon. Rootedness and urbanization are considered cultural properties, and have to do with the standard language in its social dimension, for they affect the speech community more inmmediately than they affect the language. Although this distinction between structural properties and cultural properties is not found in the Prague—School literature or related studies, we do find among Praguean scholars statements and analyses that somehow insinuate the convenience of such a distinction. For instance, Mukařovský's crucial differentiation between poetic language and literary language is established along very similar lines to those that distinguish the standard-language structural properties from its cultural properties. The poetic language is conceived of as a functional dialect whose defining feature is to have expression itself as its aim, i.e. esthetic effect, and it thuspresents some specific structural characteristics, such a

particular phonology and syntax (Mukařovský, 1976, pp. 7 - 16). Poetic language, is a highly abstract system that has its own internal consistency, its own laws, and can —and indeed does— manifest itself in any language regardless of external cultural circumstances, such as the existence of a written tradition or a particular type of poetry. But the historical fact is that, as a rule 'poetic language.....is rooted in the system of a **particular** national language' (p. 15, emphasis by Mukařovský), that is to say, it exists having as its background a certain cultural tradition, and there is some culturally accepted or favored frame of reference within which it is structured and understood. This Mukařovský calls the literary language, which may be missing as such in some cultures. The frequent confusion between poetic language and literary language is a major source of arguments between purists and poetic innovators:

> Purists in particular conceive the interrelation between the poetic and the literary languages in this way: they purge the literary language of all alien elements, not only foreign but also domestic elements inconsistent with the norm of the literary language. But if they also attempt to discipline poetic language in this way, a considerable part of its artistic devices will appear in their eyes as arbitrary violation of linguistic 'purity' precisely because a limitation to only a certain sphere of linguistic means is alien to poetry. (p.12)

Obviously, Schools are concerned with literary language, which is the only one subject to teaching. Poetic language, in spite of its supra-personal and supra-temporal validity, is fully effective only in those texts where it manifests itself. It is, thus, clear that while literary language is a cultural institution, a component of a speech community's traditional identity, poetic language is quite autonomous. This does nos preclude the interaction between the two, but for the purposes of understanding literary tradition and developments of any kind in a national literature it is of the utmost importance to keep them apart. From the standpoint of standard-language theory, only literary language has relevance, poetic language being just a consequence of the structural properties of any language.

A second type of suggestions for the convenience of differentiating between structural properties and cultural properties of the standard language comes from the functionalist approach to language planning. Notably, Neustupný (1974 a) distinguishes two different approaches in the treatment of language problems. In what he calls the policy approach,

'The emphasis is on linguistic varieties and their distribution' (p. 39), and it has to do with social issues a raised in a speech community, such as the national-language problem, literacy campaigns, and the like. The cultivation approach is language-rather than speech-community centered, and

> is characterized by interest in questions of correctness, linguistic levels fulfilling specialized functions, problems of style, constraints on communicative capacity, etc. (p. 39)

The cultivation approach is clearly linked to the enhancement of the structural properties of the language, and the policy approach to the establishment of the cultural properties of it. Language planners' actual practice, then, justifies the distinction under dicussion.

Finally, the need for distinguishing between structural properties and cultural properties of the standard language emerges from the internal cohesion of standard-language theory itself, as presented in this study. In section 5 of the present chapter an analysis is offered of the interaction among properties, functions, and associated attitudes. For the purposes of the distinction discussed, it is enough to say that, of the standard-language functions, a first type is clearly geared to the fostering or maintenance of the structural properties —the frame of reference function—, and a second type is clearly geared to the fostering or maintenance of the cultural properties —unifying and separatist functions, participatory function. At the attitudinal level, something similar happens. The speakers of any standard language seem to understand that one thing is to be aware of standard (that is, of the frame-of-reference function and ultimately of the structural properties of the standard language), and another thing to be loyal to and proud of the standard language and have a desire to participate in the cultural advantages that its use offers (that is, a reflection of the unifying, separatist, prestige, and participatory functions, ultimately a reflection of the standard-language cultural properties).

Let us now examine each of the standard-language properties separately.

The structural property of intellectualization has to do with the adaptation of the language, especially the lexicon and the syntax.

> to the goal of making possible precise and rigorous, if necessary abstract, statements, capable of expressing the continuity and complexity of thought, that is, to reinforce the intellectual

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side of speech. (Havránek, 1964, p.6.)

To be sure, all languages, standardized or not, present a degree of inte-
llectualization, for as Garvin (1972, pp. 191-192) points out, properties and
associated attitudes 'are continuous, sliding-scale features rather than discre-
te, yes-no features'. At the lexical level, for instance, tha fact that a language
of a hunters-and-gatherers society presents a complex lexicon related to hun-
ting and a sophisticated taxonomy of the animal kingdom is already a form
of intellectualization. One difference between this type of folk-speech
intellectualization and that of a standardized language like English is of size
and scope. A true standard language has not only a larger and more complex
lexicon, but a lexicon that covers many different domains as well, in line
with the enormously diversified areas of interest of the members of the
speech community. There are also some qualitative features that differen-
tiate a standard-language lexicon from more folk-speech-type languages.
Intellectualization means a necessary departure from everyday usage, for
its basic aim is clarity and accuracy, the avoidance of ambiguity being a
most important feature. As Prague-School principles state,

> scientific and legal terminologies are adversely affected by a
> close link to expressions of everyday use because this brings
> out not only the kind of multiplicity of meaning which is ill-
> suited for theoretical and legal language, but also the kind of
> emotional coloring of terms which is undesirable. (Prague
> School, 1973, p. 110)

As a matter of fact, definiteness and lack of ambiguity are the very
basis of the intellectualization process. Even within the same language, the
more colloquial a word, the more vague its meaning becomes, unless, of
course, it is a term proper of some type of folk technology. English words
that refer to psychological characteristics or states, such as **idiot, hysterical,
neurotic, moron, genious**, etc., are good examples: when used in everyday
speech they are fairly vague, but when used in psychiatric contexts they
acquire a degree of univocal precision and a series of connotations that
require special training to understand, and which the speakers of the lan-
guage --psychologists and laymen alike— are willing to respect. Some
dictionaries are careful to distinguish folk meanings, with a low degree of
intellectualization, from technical meanings, with a high degree of intellec-
tualization.

The undeniable reduction of emotional coloring concomitant to
a high degree of intellectualization is not really a high price to pay when it

is kept in mind that scientific and technological activities (the conceptual center of gravity of the standard language) by their very nature do not require a rich emotive language, but rather a well-developed set of abstract concepts, manifested in unequivocal words, clear distinctions and taxonomies, constraints on borrowings, etc. As Haugen (1966, p. 22) states,

> the more technical a word is, the more important it is to have a standardized usage, and it is here that comissions of nomenclature can do their best work. Concepts need unit terms in proportion to their frequency and their precision.

At the gramatical level, intellectualization means that certain processes must be strictly codified. Perhaps the best example has to do with word-formation processes, in a great part due to their obvious link to the lexical level. English chemical terminology, for instance, has precise rules for the meanings and uses of derivational affixes, with practically non-existing allomorphy. At the syntactic level, the nature of intellectualization is more difficult to ascertain, and unfortunately the literature provides little or no information on the subject.[6]   Havránek (1964, pp. 7-8) points out that intellectualization affects the gramatical structure of the standard language by enhancing a sort of transparency on the sentence, manifesting a preference for neatly differentiated two-constituent sentences and a high degree of integration of the constituents of compound sentences, as well as an elaborate hierarchy of superordination and subordination manifested, among other things, in the specialization of conjonctive elements. Even though this is an important problem that touches the very heart of the standard-language structure, the fact is that linguists and laymen alike are, when it comes to the structural property of intellectualization, more aware of the organization of the lexicon, and this is the area where cultivation is not only accepted but often called for. All over the modern world academies and groups of concerned individuals work and even reach agreement in order to foster the intellectualization of their respective vocabularies.

The structural property of flexible stability is related to the built-in capacity to change and at the same time remain the same that all languages have. Since standardized languages serve the extremely diversified needs of large, complex societies, they must be flexible enough to function in all   the sometimes contradictory communication networks found in this type of societies, and sensitive to the enormous amount of new information that everyday literally floods modern speech communities. But this high flexibility is controlled, stabilized by appropriate codification.

Most modern language academies devote themselves not just to language cultivation in general, but to specific areas, and closely monitor changes or the need for changes in each of those areas. This is one reason why the concept of uniformity is not adequate to describe the structural properties of the standard language which is, by definition, diversified. The difference between the diversity found in a standard language and that found in folk speech is that in the former, as pointed out, that diversity is highly codified, and in the latter it occurs more spontaneously and in different directions at different levels, a situation that can generate various types of language conflict. Another difference is that in the standard language flexibility is functional, that is to say, it exists only where it is required and to the extent that it is required (and in tune with intellectualization); conversely, non-functional variation is characteristic of unstandardized situations (cf. Neustupný, 1974, pp. 39-40). Prague School scholars were keenly aware of the importance of the flexibility property and its place in the characterization of the standard language. In their declaration of principles they insist that

> since in addition to syntax it is primarily the lexicon that furnishes the means for differentiating the various functions of the standard language, the standard vocabulary must never be reduced to that proper to only one of its functions, nor can it be limited to wat the norm has contained so far. New words again must be judged not only in terms of the way they relate to the formal and semantic types of words already in the vocabulary, but also in terms of their functional value, as well as in terms of the needs of the speech community. (Prague School, 1973, p. 109)

It is important to stress that the stability aspect of the flexible-stability property is at least as important as the flexibility aspect, for it is what gives unity and systematicity to variation. Actually, equilibrium between the two is one of the basic elements in the definition of the standard language. This has been understood by Nida (1977, pp. 11-12), when he refers to the 'overlap language' in which the Good News Bible has been re-written:

> This is the kind of language common to both the professor and the janitor, the business executive and the gardener, the socialite and the waiter. It may also be described as 'the overlap language' because it is that level of language which constitutes the overlapping of the literary level and the ordinary, day-to-

day usage. The overlap area is itself a very important level, for it probably constitutes the form of language used by fully 75 percent of the people more than 75 percent of the time.

The standard-language cultural properties, as said, characterize it as a cultural institution.

The cultural property of rootedness means that the standard language is linked to the historical heritage of the speech community qua functioning society. Stewart (1968) calls 'historicity'[7] the stituation in which a language 'is known or believed to be the result of normal development over time' (p. 535), and aptly stresses that what gives a language historicity is its association with some national or ethnic tradition' (p. 536). All known standard languages are linked to some cultural tradition —are rooted languages— in a form that goes beyond the type of historical legitimacy described by Stewart, and this fact makes it clear that rootedness is a conditio-sine-qua-non for standardization. The reason is that the structural properties of the standard language do not occur in a vacuum, but against the background of a social setting. A language lacking the rootedness property will also lack a speech community willing to carry on its cultivation, and therefore would not be developed as a standard language. A dramatic example is Esperanto. Even though this language manifest the structural properties to a high degree (as a matter of fact, it could be said that Esperanto is overintellectualized and far more stable than flexible), the fact that it is not rooted in any concrete tradition —even its 'native speakers' are artificially trained— makes it a least likely candidate for a world standard language.

Sometimes a language is actually linked to a historical reality, but that reality is viewed as negative. As Stewart points out, this is the case with all pidgins and most creoles. For the purposes of the present study, the important thing is that in all those cases when a Creole begins to move towards standardization, the issue of rootedness arises and the speakers feel a need to find a historical dimension for their language. In the case of a pidgin, the first step is the emergence of a generation of native speakers. This event has been well documented for Tok Pisin in New Guinea (cf. Sankoff and Laberge, 1974; Wurm, 1968). Since this language acquired native speakers, their attitudes towards it began changing and affecting even the internal structure of the creole in the direction of higher intellectualization and flexibility. At the same time, Tok-Pisin could be linked to an emergent Papua-New Guinea nationality and no longer be conceived of as a corrupt and somehow ridiculous version of English. In

short, Tok Pisin seems to be undergoing a process of early standardization.

An important difference between Stewart's notion of historicity and the notion of rootedness developed in this study is that rootedness is basically a synchronic property of the standard language, although it implies the historical dimension. This means that a language is a rooted language not just because it can be traced back to some 'clean' origins but because of its link to a functioning cultural tradition. Along these lines, rootedness is a property that can be actually acquired by means of the willful action of a speech community or its leadership. A case in point is that of Swahili in East Africa. The origins of Swahili are not clearly known, but it seems fairly certain that it developed as a lingua franca with many Bantu and Arabic elements. In spite of these obscure, conflict-laden origins, and in spite of the fact that its spread as a language of wider communication was fostered mainly by the German colonial administration (Polomé, 1975; Whiteley, 1968), this language has steadily been gaining the status of a genuine African creation, as an assertion of African culture, and thus not only Tanzania, but Kenya and Uganda as well are appreciating more its African roots (Whiteley, 1975). It is true that this situation has been favored by the fact that Swahili is perhaps the only language in the area that can fulfill the separatist, unifying, and specially the participatory functions (Gorman, 1973), thereby strengthening its rootedness (cf. section 5 below). But in the final analysis, it was the history-conscious will of East African leaders which brought about the property of rootedness for Swahili 'as a gesture of independence from colonialism and an affirmation of the role that the language has played in Tanzania's achievement of independence' (Whiteley, 1968, p, 155).

Finally, it seems convenient to stress that rootedness is a property of the standard language and not of the speech community, even though it characterizes the language as a component of a society's identity. It is, thus, possible that in some cases the same language can be considered as legitimately rooted by two or more different speech communities. This is actually the case with the standard languages existing in the Americas, notably English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. In a narrow diachronic sense, these languages have a European rootedness, and lie at the base of the English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French nationalities, respectively[8], but they are also the standard languages of Canadians, Americans, Mexicans, Brazilians, Chileans, etc., and therefore should also be rooted in these societies' cultural heritages. The way in which the property of rootedness has been dealt with in the Americas constitutes one of the most fascinating

chapters of New World cultural history, for it is at the very heart of these peoples' insecure sense of identy. For the clarity of the present discussion, it is enough to say that in the Americas there have been two basic approaches to the issue of language rootedness: one is to consider the New World versions of European standard languages as their natural historical continuation, and the other one is to think of them as new cultural expressions, i.e. indigenous New World creations. Needless to say, the predominance of one or the other approach will depende on the types of attitudes that prevail in each case. In the first case —New World languages considered a natural continuation of European languages— there is little or no conflict between language rootedness and speech-community identity (in general, this is the case with Latin American Spanish); in the second case —New World languages as New World creations-conflict is likely to surface , since rootedness and speech-community identy do not coincide. This has been a recurrent topic in the social history of American English. As Loyd and Warfel (1956) point out, there has existed in the United States what might here be called a conflict-laden language rootedness. Since it was widely believed that 'American English is a colonial speech' (p.27), 'it was quite a while before Americans stopped apologizing. Some never have' (p. 28). As will be shown in chapter 2 of this study, Noah Webster could never overcome the uneasy feeling of having a language that he loved but was not sure that it was completely his[9].

The cultural property of urbanization has to do with the quality and extent of the standard-language currency throughout the speech community where it is used. Basically, it means that a standard-language speech community has developed some forms of linguistic scholarship which have as a correlate a degree of availability of the language that transcends interpersonal contacts, for it becomes publicly accessible to all members of the speech community. In short, a standard language must be public property.

Prague-School scholars were keenly aware that a standard language has to be overtly available and accessible to everybody:

> We must keep clearly in mind that the standard language does not exist outside of literary and other public texts, be they written or oral. (Prague School, 1964, p. 104)

The notion of availability implies that the standard language cannot be the property or under the exclusive control of a particular group whithin the speech community, for that would immediately restrict its

functioning. Neustupný (1974) has coined the term 'equality' to cover this aspect of the standardization process, but availability seems more appropriate, because even though the standard language is by definition a public institution available to all members of the speech community, it is not always equally accessible to all due to societal and personal constraints, specific to each speech community and to each individual.

There exists much confusion in the literature about this standard-language feature because it is related to some popular conceptions not always clearly defined. It is, thus, frequent to find that 'standard American English' is associated with economic or intellectual elites, this being a source of negative attitudes or misinterpretation of the nature of this aspect of the language. Along these lines, Wolfram and Fasol (1974) feel that 'Standard American English' is not quite a really active social force:

> The standardized /highly formal, literate / form of a language is nearly always conservative to the point of obsolescence. Because the psycholinguistic forces that account for language change are far more powerful than the influence exerted by the mechanisms of formal standardization, the formal standards are almost universally ignored in spoken usage. (p. 19)

But at the same time they have to recognize that there is a version of the language that does serve as a valid model. The fact that that form is neither 'sub-standard' nor 'superstandard' actually means that it belongs to all members of the speech community and not to particular group, for if a form is too 'correct' or too 'low' it will not be available to everybody —in the view adopted in this study, it will not be standard. That is why

> everything in between substandard and superstandard represents the effective informal standard to which the individual's speech actually conforms. (p. 19)

To be sure, the availability aspect of the urbanization property must be understood within the frame-work of the system of all properties (and attitudes) of the standard language. In particular, it must be related to the property of flexible stability, which implies a multiplicity of norms, each one with a specific degree of currency. In all complex language situations there is a continuum that goes from usage norms actually available to all speakers to norms restricted to a particular segment of the speech community, or to a particular style. At any rate, ignoring availability altogether can lead to very negative views of the standard language. This is the case with Sledd (1973), who associates Standard American English

with only one segment of the speech community, namely the ruling class, and therefore makes it a cast language which is either denied to or imposed upon the less privileged segments of the society, thus being a source of alienation rather than liberation:

> Standard English in the United States is a principal means of preserving the existing power structure, for it builds the system of class distinctions into the most inward reaches of each child's humanity: the language whose mastery makes the child human makes him also a member of a social class. Even rebellion demands a kind of allegiance to the class system, because effective rebellion, as the world goes now, requires the use of the standard language, and the rebel is not likely to master the standard language without absorbing some of the perjudice that it embodies. (p.378)

Sledd's analysis is accurate in the sense that there are class-conditioned values attached to Standard American English and that there is a group of speakers whose access to it is guaranteed, but the language itself is definitely not an instrument that perpetuates a gap in the society. Just the opposite: its high availability works to level that society by offering a real possibility of truly unstigmatized communication. In fact, it is precisely the sub-standard, low-availability condition of certain dialects which tends to perpetuate that discriminatory social stratification Sledd complains about. Sledd fails to distinguish between availability and accessibility. A standard language is by definition available: systematically, through the writing and teaching of linguists and the school system, and informally, through the media and daily perfomance of recognized and accepted public standard-language users. Some speakers have a lower degree of accessibility to the standard language because of ethnic or economic reasons, but this is a problem that affects the speech community or a segment thereof rather than the standard language itself. Ross (1954) has aptly insisted upon the fact that there is a true standard English language, available to all and recognizable as such, and which manifests itself in what Prague-School tradition calls 'public texts':

> A piece of mathematics or a novel written by members of the upper class is not likely to differ in any way from one written by a member of another class, except in so far as the novel contains conversation (p. 23)

In this sense, both the variety of English used at an exclusive New York city club and the one used at a rundown Harlem tenement are

non-standard American English because of their lack of formal availability to the speech community alt large, and not because of their association with a given sub-culture or class. As Dillard (1976, p. 166) observes,

> There is a dialect that is recognizable American, which, in one form or another, is part of the language behavior of all but the most disadvantaged adult Americans, and which does not correlate with any region. Neither, as far as that goes, does it correlate with class or caste.

As a matter of fact, synchronically, the traditional distinction between 'standard' and 'dialect' is based mostly upon the relative availability of either language variety[10]. The standard language cuts across social, ethnic, and geographical boundaries; a dialect is restricted and available basically to only one social, ethnic, or geographic segment of the speech community, and this fact has important consequences for the cultivation of the structural properties of each language variety —high for the standard, low for the dialects. From a diachronic standpoint things can be different, since there is usually one dialect —social, geographic— which imposes itself upon the other ones and becomes the standard language because of its higher rootedness, intellectualization, prestige,etc. Oviously, becoming standardized implies that the dialect is no longer restricted in currency to only one segment of society, even though it might carry over some features of its dialectal past, as it were[11]. The speakers of non-standard versions of standard languages are normally aware of the crucial importance of the availability aspect of the urbanization property of the standard language. Aside from the prestige factor involved, they feel that their dialects are not suitable for formal education and other activities that require standard-language use. The reason is the low degree to which those dialects manifest the structural properties and the fact that they are not public languages, that is, they are not available to the speech community at large: it is availability what makes it possible for the participatory function to manifest itself, as it will be shown Bible translation is a good example of the importance of language availability, for the very nature of this text makes it mandatory that it reach everybody. It could be expected that the Bible be translated into all the more divergent dialects of a language, regardless of their degree of availability. That was precisely the Good News people's belief when they prepared biblical versions non-standard dialects. As Nida (1977, p. 107) reports,

> Typical residents of Harlem in New York city rejected and even resented a translation of the Gospel of John which was

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produced in 'Harlemese' English. Similarly, a group of young people in Norway refused to accept a translation of a Gospel which was prepared in their own 'youth language'. They not only felt it was pratronizing, but they insisted that by the time it was printed many of the idioms were already out of date.

Another aspect of the cultural property of urbanicity is that the standard language, being formally available, is the object of extensive native linguistic scholarship. Language cultivation is fostered not only by the scientific and literary achievements of an intelligentsia, but also by direct research and intervention on the part of grammarians, rehetoricians, lexicographers, and linguists to the point that all relevant aspects of the language can become the object of principled discussion. It is a historical constant that in unstandardized situations either there is no native linguistic scholarship or it exists in terms of a more standardized language. Lexicography is perhaps the best example, as will be shown in chapter three of the present study.

To be sure, the importance of native linguistic scholarship and the influence of language scholars in the standardization process will vary from speech community to speech community. Whatever the case, the scholars' most relevant function in all cases is to provide the intellectual bases that make it possible for the standard language to become a known language, that is, one publicly available.

A correlate of availability and of the existence of native linguistic scholarship is that the standard language be a written language[12]. It has been observed several times that literate and illiterate speakers have a different perception of the standard language. Bloomfield (1964, p. 391) stated that 'literate and illiterate speech in a language like English are plainly different'. A first reason, is that the illiterate speaker has had less access to the standard language, if any at all. But that is not all: the entire cultural identity of the standard language is permeated by its written form (which does not deny the existence of a spoken version of it), and that explains the difficulties that non-standard speakers encounter when learning the written form of a language like English. As Reed (1969, p. 98) points out,

> the relative nearness of standard English to English writing ... makes the task of learning to read and write somewhat easier for the child who has acquired the standard distinctions than

for the ghetto child in whose speech the distinctions are missing. On the other hand, as the ghetto youngster acquires literacy, he gains unconscious knowledge of the phonology of the other dialects, even if his own speech patterns remain largely unaffected.

When firmly established as a cultural institution, writting affects all properties and functions and associated attitudes of the standard language, for, among other things, it detaches the language from the individual and from the speech community (see section 5 below). It is thus more than an accidental, external factor in the process of language standardization: it is an integral part of the cultural property of urbanization.

Sometimes the terms 'development' (Ferguson, 1968) and 'modernization' (Neustupný, 1974) are used to roughly cover this type of standard-language property here called urbanization. I still prefer this term for at least three reasons: (1) it seems less subject to biased interpretations than 'development' and especially 'modernization', which are definitely linked to the notion of 'Westernization', as Scotton (1975) has shown beyond any doubt; (2) it better reflects the cluster of concomitant social forces that make up this aspect of the standardization process; and (3) it can be opposed to 'folk speech' in a very useful way that highlights the standard-language nature within the wider context of language in society (cf. Garvin and Mathiot, 1956; Garvin, 1973).

3.   The standard-language functions

One of Prague-School's greatest contributions to modern linguistics is to have established the theoretical and methodological relevance of the functionalist approach. In line with their humanistic tradition, Praguean scholars conceived of the notion of function not in its logico-mathematical sense, but in a looser sense of 'purpose' (Vachek, 1974, p. 7) or 'role' (Garvin, 1978) to be fulfilled.

In the late twenties and early thirties, the psychologist and linguist Karl Bühler sept up the basis for the study of the functions of language within the framework of Gestalt psychological principles[13]. Having as a point of departure a structural conception of language as a tool (organon), which is used by one speaker to communicate something to another speaker, Bühler determines three functions of language. The basic function is the representative function (sometimes called comunicative), which relates the linguistic sign with non-linguistic objects or states of affairs. If the focus is put on the correlation of the sign with the speaker's own

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internal world (especially in its affective aspects), there is an expressive function; and if the focus is placed on the speaker's action upon the hearer, that is, on the correlation of singn and hearer (usually through questions and commands), there is an appeal function. Bühler's model provided a frame of reference for important research in linguistics. Primary concepts in linguistic analysis, such as that of relevance, are based on the notion of language functions. In phonology, for instance, if two sound segments are considered different phonemes, it is because their substitution changes the notional value of sign, i.e. the representative function of the utterance. The development of stylistics as a linguistic discipline was due in great part to the differentiation of the expressive function from the representative function. To be sure, later research into the nature of language proved Bühler's three-function model insufficient. Always within the Prague-School oriented tradition, the most successful revision of Bühler's view is that of Jakobson's (Jakobson, 1960). Jakobson realized the need to distinguish more primary elements in the basic communicative act, and thus he differentiates the message (the sign) itself from the code (the abstract 'language') according to whose rules it is structured, and further differentiates both code and message from the things referred to by the message —the context, he calls this. He also sees the need to differentiate the contact between addresser and addressee from the participants in the speech act. This gives, then, six basic elements: (1) addresser, (2) addressee, (3) contact between them, (4) a message contructed according to the rules of a (5) code and which makes reference to a (6) context. These six basic elements will give origin to six basic language functions, depending on which basic element is the focus of the speech act. The leading function, called referential, is oriented towards the context, and it is the one that gives notional form to the message. If the focus is placed on the addresser and the expression of his attitudes towards the referent, then the emotive function predominates; conversely, if the focus is on the addressee, then it predominates a conative function. If the contact between addresser and addressee is the predominant aspect, then there is a phatic function. The metalingual function seems to be proper to human language, and has to do with the capacity of language to have language itself as the referent of an utterance. Finally, 'the set... toward the message as such, focus on the message for its own sake, is the poetic function of language' (p. 356). As Jakobson aptly points out, no speech act manifests only one function; to a degree, all functions find their way into most messages. The basic functions are truly universal traits of language, as much as the basic properties they are based upon, and they should thus be part of a definitional model as a communicative instrument. In this sense, they have to be taken for granted whenever the basic nature of language is taken for granted, such

as in standard-language theory (see section 1 above). Since 'standard' is the differentia specifica and 'language' the genus, one cannot give a functional characterization of the standard language that would contradict the basic system of functions, but this system has to be complemented with a new system of functions that account for the difference between standard language and language with no nuancing[14]. All the same, it can be said that some of these basic language functions are found to be particularly well developed in a standard language. Perhaps the most striking case is that of the metalingual function. As a correlate of the development of native linguistic scholarship, the normal capacity of language to refer to itself is greatly increased and codified in the standard language in a highly intellectualized direction, to the point that its mastery requires special training, which creates a wide gap between professional (standardized) and folk metalanguage. Also, the poetic function is specialized in the standard language in the culture-constrained form of literary language, as discussed above. But this is a matter of intensified development of already existing functions, so there must be a new frame of reference to justify a new set of standard language-specific functions.

What is, then, the nature of the standard-language functions? Bühler, and later on Jakobson, set up their language functions having as a point of departure a very sketchy and abstract scheme of the basic speech-act structure in its ultimate elements. Standard-language theory, as said, works at a different level of abstraction and determines the properties of its object taking into consideration new elements, namely, the total complexity of human linguistic communication in its intellectual, social, geographic, historical dimensions. As a result, it comes up with a set of new structural properties —intellectualization and flexible stability— and cultural properties —rootedness and urbanization—, which in the abstract, two-participant, one-referent speech-act model need not appear. This being so, it is but logical to expect that new functions will emerge as a correlate to the new properties.

Mathiot and Garvin (1975), following Gumpertz, offer a frame of reference which, along somewhat different lines, highlights the need to broaden the traditional set of language functions. Based upon the speaker's position, they distinguish two types of functions, namely, personal functions and transactional functions. The former apply to the speaker 'qua individual without reference to his status as a social being', and the latter apply to the speaker 'qua social being' (p. 153). It is evident that a standard language is more appropriately characterized in terms of transactional functions. A minor difference in perspective is that standard-language theory is more interested in the speech community as such than in

the individual as a member of a speech community.

Some standard-language functions are linked to the structural properties and some to the cultural properties.

The frame-of-reference function is linked to the standard-language structural properties, and allows it to serve as the center of gravity for grammatical correctness and the standpoint from wich variation will be measured. It is to be stressed that the notion of grammatical correctness does not refer here to the conservative and usually unrealistic set of norms that Western school grammars have been trying to impose since the Renaissance; rather, it refers to the type of norms that actually function in a particular speech communicaty, and which depend in each case on the types of language-usage models accepted as valid by the speakers. As Daneš (1976, pp. 8-9) points out,

> codification must not be treated as a rigid, static, dogmatic, and authoritarian prescription of the laws of 'correct usage', but as a tool, of an istitutional character, controlling the desirable dynamic balance of S(tandard) L(anguage) and ensuring its relatively smooth functioning according to the actual social needs of expression.

The frame-of-reference function is particularly apparent in the case of widespread languages used by large, diversified speech communities, where much variation is to be expected. In these situations, it is typical that all variation is explained in terms of the socially approved norm, that is, the standard language in its frame-of-reference function. Even in the more extreme cases of dialectal situations, dialects are commonly 'identifiable by their 'tone' or 'melody', sounds, words, and also by expressions and constructions' by the speakers (Wölck, 1978, p. 213), that is to say, in terms of certain peculiarities, which in turn are such in terms of some non-peculiar that serves as a frame of reference. The standard language is thus a sort of lingua franca (but a highly codified one!) where all divergent versions of a language —all dialects— meet. The frame-of-reference function is so apparent that even those who deny the very usefulness of the notion of standard language altogether, such as Meyers (1977), conceive of it as the only possible way towards a definition that would justify the off-hand rejected notion. And so Meyers defines Standard American English as 'those parts of phonology, syntax, and vocabulary that all dialects hold in common' (p. 223). Along these lines, students of variation in American English de facto recognize the existence of a frame-of-reference function when they analyze 'deviant' forms. To mention only one conspicuous case,

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Labov's extremely influential work on variation contains repeated references to the standard norm: when he analyzes the structure of non-standard English (Labov, 1969, 1970), he is actually tracing a parallel between a form of non-standard English and the standard version of the language (with its frame-of-reference function highlighted), which is no less real if taken for granted than if overtly postulated and described. Likewise, his studies on sound change (esp. Labov, 1972)are carried on under the unquestioned presupposition that change (especially change in progress) has to be measured against some relatively stable term of comparison. Thus if the dipthong /aw/ is described as centralized in Martha's Vineyard, it is because the standard language is providing the frame of reference for stating that such a dipthong is not generally centralized. The speakers of Martha's Vineyard English themselves were aware at all times that their speech contained some peculiarities (pp. 169-170) which appeared as such only when projected against the mainland ways of talking (see next section for the notion of awarenes-of-the-norm attitude).

The standard-language cultural properties are at the base of four functions: the unifying, separatist, prestige, and participatory functions.

The unifying and separatist functions are actually the opposite sides of the same basic general function, namely, the maintenance and enhancement of the speech community's identity. The unifying function favors the speakers' cohesion as a functioning group, identifiable as a cultural unit[15]. The separatist function sets the speech community apart from other speech communities, related or not, and thus creates a contrastive type of self-identification. The separatist function normally individualizes the speakers of a language in relation to the speakers of a different language, but it can also work within the same language. This is the case with the New World standard-language situation, where, as said above, the same language is shared by different national entities. Along these lines, English, for instance, serves the separatist function by setting appart the United States from Mexico (where Spanish serves the same function in relation to the United States), but it also has to set the United States apart from England (and from the rest of the English-speaking world, although this is traditionally not an issue, as will be shown in next chapter).

A historical constant is that the unifying and separatist functions manifest themselves overtly only when there is some type of conflict going on in the speech community, and they tend to be taken for granted when there is a well-settled speech community not threatened by any outside force. As a matter of fact, the Prague-School linguists themselves were led to set up the bases of standard-language theory as an assertion

of Czech national and linguistic identity against the pressure of an all-pervading German political al cultural influence. This is also the case with United States and American English. As it will be seen in the next chapter, Noah Webster's life was a continuous and stubborn struggle for language identity: American English had to be differentiated at all cost from British English before it could be defined in terms of itself. More recently, a new and sometimes heated polemic that touches the American concept of linguistic identity has been taking place: the issue of bilingual education. The study of the press reactions to the federal and state governments' bilingual-education actions (for a detailed review see Geffert et al, 1975) provides some interesting insights in regard to the nature of the unifying and separatist functions. For instance, two influential newspapers, The New York Times (national influence) and the Buffalo Evening News (local influence) have considered the issue important enough to devote editorial statements to it, and both papers are, generally speaking, negative in their appraisals. The New York Times rejects the bilingual-education trends inasmuch as they seem to generate a type of separatism:

> It would be ludicrous distortion to suggest that the United States confronts any danger of actual political separtism as a result of a possible growth of Spanish-speaking enclaves.
> But it is no exaggeration to warn that the present encouragement given to making such enclaves permanent, in the mistaken view that they are an expression of positive pluralism, point the road to cultural, economic, and political divisions. (The New York Times, 11, 22, 1976 Editorial)

The reinforcement of the unifying function of American English seems to be the only valid goal of bilingual education:

> We fully support the proper use of bilingual teaching... But the purpose of such instruction must be to create English-speaking Americans with the least possible delay. (ibid.)

The Buffalo Evening News makes an even neater distinction between the unifying and separatist functions. Positive views and attitudes are linked to the assertion of the unifying function:

> ..... our common language is one of the major cultural influences that draws us together, and without that there would have been not a melting pot but a series of linguistic enclaves, resistant to change. (Buffalo Evening News, 4, 22, 1976 Editorial)

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The 'melting pot' ideology is definitely associated with the unifying functions, always in a positive way:

> Just about all of us in America are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, and we all rightly cherish our particular cultural background. But it is the English language that pulls us together, creating the 'melting pot' that is distinctly and uniquely American. (Buffalo Evening News, 7, 4, 1978 Editorial)

In contrast, the separatist function manifests itself in a negative and rather anxious way for it emerges associated with disturbing forces. In a belligerent statement —'Keep America Uni-lingual'— the editorialist strongly opposes the issuance of bilingual election ballots on the grounds that any language other than English would be a patriotic contradiction in the democratic electoral process:

> People coming to America from other countries, and those coming to the States from dependencies such as Puerto Rico, where another language is the common one, should get special help in efforts to meet the voting standard. But there is, in our view, something fundamentally contradictory about voters helping to decide a national debate involving complex issues when they cannot yet understand the language in which the debate is primarily conducted.

Within the same language, the separatist function also arouses militant attitudes. The strongest form of manifestation is the desire on the part of the speakers of one dialect to have their version of the shared language turned into a new language altogether. This has happened frequently in the modern history of English.. Such is the case with young Noah Webster and later on with H. L. Mencken. Although this form of separatism is not fashioable any more subtle forms of separatism do occur. A typical example is Richard Mallery, who in 1974 published a book, a sort of sequel to Mencken's, entitled **Our American Language** (Mallery, 1947), whose confessed aim was to highlight the individuality of American English in contrast, especially, to British English:

> It is the purpose of this book to show how we in the United States use, pronunce, and spell words, phrases, names and expressions which distinguish the American language from other forms of English. (p.v)

The prestige and participatory functions are related to the relative

desirability of the standard language. The prestige function works within the speech community and has to do with the speaker's perception of the language as a worthy institution the familiarity with which makes them better mambers of the group. Obviously, the reasons why a standard language is a prestigious language will vary according to the type of language-usage models current in each situation. Thus a language can be prestigious mostly because of its being the repository of a great literature (e.g. Italian), of its being the vehicle of manifestation of a revered religion (e.g. Arabic), or of its being a powerful instrument (e.g. English). The normal thing is that many considerations contribute to the prestige of the standard language. If there is only one reason, the language will not be a truly standard language. It can be a dead language (such as Latin and classical Greek) or a cast language (such as some forms of Hindi); in sum, a language severely restricted in scope.

The participatory function works in a way that is both external and internal to the standard-language speech community. It implies that important things are conveyed through the language in a way that transcends the interests of local speakers and makes it valid for larger groups, so that speakers of other language —especially languages with a lower degree of standardization— feel attracted to it. This has an internal counterpart: the standard language makes it possible for its speakers to relate to the rest of the world through it, by providing the means to convey cultural, economic, technological, etc., events that take place in other environments, into their own setting. Modern standard languages have a high level of translatability, both from and to other languages, especially in the areas where the structural property of intellectualization is more relevant. In this sense, a standard language can be conceived of as a world language that widens the horizons of a speech community instead of isolating it. This is one of the most striking functional differences between a standard language and a non-standardized folk-speech. A typical tribal language insolates rather than places its speakers in a wider communitive network[16]. In contrast, English (especially American English as a vehicle of technology) is perhaps the language where the participatory function manifests itself to a higher degree than in any other language: it is an internationally widespread language and there is an enormous amount of information that flows through it every day via translations affecting most languages in the world. The way in wich this takes place implies a series of interrelationships with the rest of the standard-language properties and functions, and so it will be dealt with in section 5 of this chapter.

4.   Attitudes towards the standard language

Associated with the standard-language properties and functions there is a set of attitudes on the part of the members of the speech community.[17] Attitude of awareness of the norm. Typically, standard-language speakers believe that there are certain standards to be respected and attach value-judgements to them. Along these lines, Wolfram and Shuy (1974) consider the awareness of behavioral norms in modern, complex urban societies so influential that they link it to a certain inevitability of the standardization process, as they see it (cp. esp. pp. 21-23). In the view presented here, the awareness-of-norm attitude is a consequence rather than a cause of the frame-of-reference function and the standard-language structural properties. Attitudes are always attitudes towards something with al least psychological reality. Nevertheless, since properties, functions, and attitudes are all related, there is a great deal of mutual influence, so that attitudes can bring about the intensification of a given property.

As with the case of the frame-of-reference function, it should be stressed here that the type of codification that the speakers are interested in following is an objetive datum to be ascertained in each standard-language situation, and need not coincide with the type of normative statements perpetuated by good-usage books and school-marms or, in certain cases, language academies. Unfortunately, linguists frequently confuse these two type of norms and create confusion among the speech community members, by making them believe that 'good' and 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong', 'beautiful' or 'ugly', and the like, are labels that make no sense whatsoever and should be forgotten by educated speakers. A now classical example is Rober T. Hall's **Linguistics and your language** (Hall, 1960) first published under the revealing title **Leave your language alone.** Hall's position is that there is nothing wrong with any language or dialect because normativeness and thus attitudes towards correctness are just

> a question of acceptability in certain classes of our society, in those classes which are socially dominant and which set the tone for others. Whether a form is accepted or rejected does not depend on its inherent merit nor yet on any official approval given it, but purely on whether its hearers like it or not —on whether they will react favorably or unfavorably towards a person they hear using it. 'Correct' can only mean 'socially acceptable', and apart from this has no meaning applied to language. (p. 13)

This 'anything goes' attitude is misleading; it is as unrealistic as the school marm's attitude that there is only one 'correct' form valid in all circumstances. Language, like all behavioral systems, requires normativeness to function properly. This normativeness is associated with the properties and functions of the standard language and manifests itself constrained by specch-community specific codification models which are subject to change. Speakers do believe that there are norms and are aware of them, and when those people or institutions that they consider legitimate usage guides fail to provide them with a reasonable rendition of the expected guidelines, the awareness-of-the-norm attitude becomes action. A most dramatic example in the case of American English is the publication of Webster's Third International Dictionary in 1961 and the polemic that followed it. (See chapter 3 below)

Another common misrepresentation of the awareness-of-the-norm attitude is the already mentioned varsion of it found in certain forms of academic activities. The best-known case is that of school grammar, but more sophisticated examples are found at the college level, because here is a more overt attempt at intellectual justification. Along these lines, an there interesting analysis of freshman-composition textbooks and practice is found in Coles (1971). Coles believes that there is a real 'feeling' for language norms among speakers of American English, which is both cultural and formal:

> Purity, culture, tact, and taste: these are not words but the terms of a life stile made openly invitational .... They are terms made by and making the syntax that contains them. (p. 322)

Accordingly, he reacts against the awareness-of-the-norm attitude that manifests itself in freshman-composition activities in terms of a semi-sophisticated purely formalistic skill, 'the use of language conceived of entirely in terms of communication' (p. 325), that is, the conception of norm as another commodity that can be acquired by following some prescribed procedures. Actually, what is behind most rhetoric treatises —old and new— is the belief that the norm can be reduced to a list of do's and don't's. The speakers of the language know better than that. Being aware of the norm means, above all, having the internalized knowledge that the standard language is the complex interplay of certain properties and functions which impose themselves upon the individual and upon the group. One of the things that makes a language standard is precisely the speakers' attitude that it is convenient that it be standard.

The unifying and separatist functions give rise to an attitude of

language loyalty. Since its initial formal definition Weinrech (1968/ 1953/), this is the best studied of all language attitudes. As far as the American situation is concerned, there seems to be a tendency to focus on language-loyalty attitudes among speakers of non-standard languages or non-standard speakers of languages that have standard-language status elsewhere, such as most immigrant languages (see, for instance, Fishman et al., 1966; Shuy and Fasold, eds., 1973; Guitart, 1976). Even though the basic notion is the same —an assertion of language maintenance and language fondness— there are important differences between language loyalty among standard-language speakers and non-standard language speakers. To begin with, as Garvin and Mathiot (1956) point out, in the standard- language situation a greater degree of organization and articulation is observed. This is clearly related to the degree and intensity to which the standard-language manifests the cultural properties. Two of the most frequent aspects of language loyalty, the national-treasure attitude and the powerful-instrument attitude, only manifest themselves in highly organized speech communities. Another important difference is than in non-standard language situations loyalty attitudes are transferable. This is possible because, as Guitart (1976) points out, there a difference between ethnic loyalty and language loyalty. Thus it is very frequent to finf people in the United States who indentify themselves with an ethnic group that has a particular language, but who are no longer proficient in that language and have transferred the language loyalty to a type of group loyalty, that is, ethnic loyalty[18]. Moreover, they can —and usually do— conserve a sort of romantic attachment to the ethnic language, which does not imply use or even knowledge of the language. This situation is obviously not possible in the case of a true standard language. Given our definition of a standard language as a functioning model, proficiency, or at least an active desire for it, is a necessary condition for loyalty. An American Jew can have a type of romantic-ethnic loyalty toward Hebrew without knowing this language (because Hebrew in this case is not a standard language), but if he moves to Israel with the intention to settle there, a fluent knowledge of the language (or an intitial desire for fluency) is the only expected manifestation of that loyalty. In short, language loyalty is not the same as language maintenance (see Fishman, 1964), but in the case of the standard language they occur together.

If language loyalty is to a great extent a propective and defensive attitude, the attitude of pride is a positive one (Garvin, 1972, p. 191). Pride is related not only to the prestige function, but it can appear linked to any aspect of the standard language, for it basically has to do with the speakers' satisfaction with their language at all levels: beauty,

tradition, power, etc. In this section, it is only relevant to point out that the pride attitude, like loyalty, need not primarily be oriented towards the speech community   but towards the language itself.

The participatory function generates an attitude of desire to parti-cipate. It is here where the split between language and ethnic considerations appears more relevant. When the desire to participate occurs within the speaker's own cultural and linguistic sphere, what happens is that the moti-vation to master the standard language will be high but harmoniously inte-grated. If the desire to participate is linked to a language other than that which is native to the speaker, it can produce language shift. Obviously, this can easily generate conflict. This is the actual case with English in many parts of the world. Sibayan's (1975) report about the situation in Philippines reveals a situation similar to that of many other areas:

> When the Pilipino today says publicly that he prefers to have his child educated in English, he is likely to be misunderstood by staunch nationalists, when all that the average Pilipino really wants is to be able to share in the 'good life' that is accessible, al least at present, through English. (p. 128)

To be sure, the staunch nationalists' attitude is teaching the student of the stardardization process a lesson, namely, that it is not possible to consider one aspect language in isolation, but always in its relationship with the totality of all properties, functions, and attitudes. This is the topic of next section.

5.   An integrative view of the standardization process

In line with the functionalist Prague-School tradition, Garvin (1972) states that the standard language functions 'are internally structured that is, they are composed of multiple interrelated factors'[19]. Actually, Garvin's statement can be extended to all the elements that make up the standard language. The standardization process is not just the manifesta-tion in a language of certain properties and functions plus certain speakers' attitudes, but the complex network of interdependence of all those ele-ments as well.

A first system of mutual dependencies is observed among the pro-perties. At the structural-property level it is easy to see how intellectua-lization and flexible stability interact: a higher level   of intellectualiza-tion will require a higher degree of stability and a rigorously codified flexibility, just enough to allow for the natural changes and advances that

take place in any particular field. To be sure, this intellectualization is normally achieved at the price of a reduction in rootedness for, as Jespersen (1968/1938/) aptly noted,

> scientific nomenclature is to a great extent universal, and there is no reason why each nation should have its own name for **foraminifera** or **monocotyledones.**

It is obvious that the high intellectualization of the scientific language and its relatively low rootedness are linked to the necessarily intense action of the participatory function. All the same, examples from scientific terminology illustrate in a neat way the very delicate balance that exists between the structural and cultural properties of the standard language. Rootedness, for instance, can be disregarded only so much. Zoological labels like **canis familiaris** or **ovis aries** can hardly be considered 'more standard' than 'dog' or 'sheep', if they can be considered standard English at all, because they are not rooted in the English-speaking culture (or English normal phonology, at that). Their availability is only theoretically high: for instance, all dictionaries enter them as part of the entry **dog** or **sheep,** as an ascknowledgement of scientific models, but do not enter them separately. Along these lines, language academies and ad-hoc institutions frequently work to standardize scientific and technical terminology, which means, apart from constraining variation (checking flexibility!), an effort to integrate new terms into the 'genious' of the language, i.e. to root them into each specific tradition. Good examples of this type of planning are the Tekniska Nomenklaturcentralen (Center for Technical Terminology) in Sweden (cf. Molde, 1975), and the Committee for Terminology, in Israel (Rabin, 1976). These two typical institutions deal with the incorporation of loanwords in a way that intends to conciliate the enhancement of the participatory function and the separatist function of the languages they represent. The first goal is achieved by being as internationalist as possible; the second one, by respecting and even preferring native roots and constructions as much as possible. The force that maintains the equilibriun is the rootedness property. When the language is still in the process of standardization, as in the case of Hebrew, this is a particularly relevant issue. Closeness ot 'inherited Hebrew roots' is a constant concern among Israely language planners, especially those more aware of the high degree of Europeanization of modern Hebrew, which is seen as dangerous for language identity (Tene, 1969; Blanc, 1968). To be sure, the participatory function imposes some tolerance upon a certain tendency to exaggerate the unifying/separatist function-based assertion of rootedness:

...new words constitute only a small percentage of the standard-

dized terminology lists issued by the Academy. Most of the terms listed are either affirmations of existing usage or re-used vocabulary from ancient sources, and quite a proportion of many lists is taken up by loan-words, mainly internationally used Greco-Latin terms for which Hebraization is not suggested (Chaim, 1976, p. 4)

Whatever the case, the important thing is that the revival of Hebrew from a classical tongue to a standard language and the impressive cultivation of its structural properties has been clearly dependent on the very high degree of rootedness the language has always manifested. This holds true even for matters apparently not immediately related to rootedness, such as phonology. Modern-Hebrew pronunciation was deliberately patterned according to the Sephardi model —even though this version of the language was less urbanized— because

the Sephardi pronunciation symbolized, to its adherents, the spirit of the cultural renaissance, whereas the Ashkenazi, highly reminiscent of Yiddish, represented the Diaspora, the direct continuation of the immediate past which they rejected. (Morag, 1969, p. 250)

It is thus clear that the Sephardi Hebrew pronunciation had a higher level of rootedness than the Ashkenazi pronunciation, and that was the basic factor that decided its codification as part of the standard. In this sense, the other Jewish languages, Yiddish and Ladino, could not compete with Hebrew, even though Yiddish had a higher degree of 'modernity' and Ladino was already spoken in the land, because their rootedness was questioned by some group, making it difficult for them to fulfill the unifying and separatist functions. (Clearly, this is valid only for the Israely situation. In the United States, for instance, it seems that Yiddish has some degree of validity among some Jewish groups as a non-religious language, which leaves Hebrew only as a sacred language, that is to say, a language for religion-oriented activities.) The assertion of rootedness in regard to Hebrew is so important, as the force that gives sense to the rest of the properties and functions of the language, especially the identity-bestowing function, that it could justify a lengthy parliamentary session 'on the need to combat deterioration of the language and to assure the use of correct Hebrew by public figures' (Rabin, 1976, pp. 4-6). This is, in a way, a concrete symbol of the fact that standardization is a never-ending process.[20]

The fact that the standard-language cultural properties influence the development of the structural properties has been noticed by Praguean

scholars. Thus, Havránek saw how pressure from all types of cultural institutions has a definite bearing upon intellectualization, which in turn affects the community's cultural life:

> Etant l'object d'éxigeances accrues par rapport à celles d'une langue populaire, chargée d'exprimer la civilisation ainsi que la vie intellectuelle, les resultats de la pensée philosophique et réligieuse, scientifique, politique et sociale, juridique at administrative, et ce non seulement pour des fins pratiques, mais en vue d'un enseigment technique et de la codification, la langue littéraire a vu son léxique s'étendre considérablement et s'intellectualiser. (Havránek, 1964, p. 253).

And, to be sure, non-Prague-School schorars have also noticed how societal changes enhance standardization. (As a matter of fact, many 'introduction to linguistics' texts have rather anecdotal chapter that deal with this issue.) In regard to American English, Laird (1970, p. 403) proudly observes that, as far as intellectualization is concerned,

> American society has grown more informed and more subtle; so has American English, and no doubt they interact upon each other.

Just as high degree of rootedness favors the cultivation of the standard-language structural properties, the obsence of rootedness or a low degree thereof, is a serious hindrance to cultivation. Somehow the speakers of languages with low or non-existent rootedness feel that it is not right to use such a language for activities considered highly cultured. To be sure, rootedness can actually be acquired to subsequently bring about the rest of properties and functions, as was shown in section 2 above for the case of Swahili in East Africa, but the normal thing is that the cultural properties must be fairly well established for the cultivation of the structural properties to be taken seriously. The rise of European national standard-languages is a very good example of this. Throughout the Middle Ages, Latin was the undisputed language of prestigious intellectual activities. The emergent vernaculars were folk languages used, apart from everyday interaction, for less prestigious and more immediate activities, such as epics and certain types of popular lyric poetry, and later on for the issuance of civil law. This was true not only for those Latin-derived languages, but for all European vernaculars. As Jespersen (1968/1938/) points out

> people who had had their whole education in Latin and had

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thought all their best thoughts in that language to an extent
which is not easy for us moderns to realize, often found it
easier to write on abstract or learned subjects in Latin than in
their own vernacular, and when they tried to write on these
things in English Latin words would constantly come first to
their minds. (p. 122)

It is not, as someone could think, that medieval scholars were
bewildered by Latin, but rather that their native languages were not stan-
dardized, especially they were not rooted enough and were lacking basic
urbanization. This is precisely what language conflict means: the uneven
development of properties and functions in a given situation. By contrast,
a standard language is one where all properties and functions (and associa-
ted attitudes) are developed in an equilibrated way, that is, a situation
where no human activity may be seriously constrained by supra-individual
linguistic factors. In the case of young European vernaculars, we observe
that before their structural properties were paid serious attention to, they
had to become more rooted in their respective national enviroments and
more urbanized. Consequently, this took place as a correlate of the rise of
European nationalities and the growth of well-settled urban centers less
dependent on feudal aristocraties[21], and in any case it took a lot of
effort and frustration, and many false starts indeed, on the part of early
European intellectuals to legitimize the use of vernaculars in all spheres of
life. Even as late as the 16th century, when the codification of literary
prose was in a high stage of development, they had to justify themselves
for using 'vulgar' languages and not the more established Latin. To men-
tion only one case, in Spain fray Luis de León, author of some of the best
Spanish prose of all times, appears as a champion in the defense of early
standard-Spanish structural properties. He dared writing in 'romance'
about all sorts of scholarly and touchy religious topics for which there
was no precedent —i.e. roots— in the language. Fray Luis de León's im-
portance lies in the fact that, unlike most of his contemporaries in and
out of Spain, he did not write Latinized prose but genuine, Spanish cul-
ture-rooted prose, and was aware of the consequences of his actions for
the further development of the language. His theoretical point of depar-
ture was that any language can be developed to serve intellectualized
purposes, and that the structure of the language itself benefits from
cultural activities:

> .....no piensen, porque ven romance, que es de poca estima
> lo que se dice; mas al revés, viendo lo que se dice, juzguen
> que puede ser de mucha estima lo que se escribe en romance
> y no desprecien por la lengua las cosas, sino por ellas estimen

la lengua. (**Los nombres de Cristo**, preface)[22]

Fray Luis was also aware of the flexibility of all cultured languages, so that they should allow space for all types of activities, from scholarly to folksy, which in turn helps to make the language more realistically available to all members of the speech community. His allusion to the language situation in classical antiquity has become famous:

> Las palabras no son graves por ser latinas, sino por ser dichas como a la gravedad le conviene, o sean españolas, o sean francesas. Que si porque a nuestra lengua la llamamos vulgar, se imaginan que no podemos escribir en ella sino vulgar y bajamente, es grandísimo error; que Platón escribió no vulgarmente ni cosas vulgares en su lengua vulgar ... que ... la mamaban con la leche los niños y la hablaban en la plaza las vendedoras. (idem)

Fray Luis also understood the importance of keeping a high level of codification at the more intellectual levels as a condition for the vulgar language to become a real standard language:

> ... dicen que no hablo en romance porque no hablo desatadamente y sin orden, y porque pongo en las palabras concierto y las escojo y les doy su lugar; porque piensan que hablar en romance es hablar como se habla en el vulgo, y no conocen que el bien hablar no es común, sino negocio de particular juicio, así en lo que se dice como en la manera como se dice. Y negocio que de las palabras que todos hablan elige las que convienen, y mira el sonido de ellas, y aun cuenta a veces las letras...... para que no solamente digan con claridad lo que se pretende decir, sino también con harmonía y dulzura. (Idem)

The relevance of native linguistic scholarship and language cultivation as a sort of avant-garde in the standardization process had been understood half a century before Fray Luis by another Spanish humanist: Elio Antonio de Nebrija, who in 1492 published in Spanish a Spanish grammar —Gramática de la Lengua Castellana, the first of its kind in Europe— which was a crucial step in the process of legitimating the emergent standard as a cultural artifact[23]. By then Spanish was becoming a world language badly in need of a well-defined frame of reference to which to link not only formal cultivation but the participatory function as well, for, as Nebrija himself put it, 'la lengua siempre fue compañera del imperio'. The intellectual soundness of Nebrija's Spanish grammar was guaran-

teed by the author's strategy of publishing, ten years earlier, a Latin grammar in Latin. By doing so, Nebrija had established himself as a solid humanist. Consequently, when he wrote in Spanish he was giving prestige to that language as well as enhacing its separatist function.

Not all emergent European vernaculars developed as standard languages. As a matter of fact, most of them were assimilated into more powerful dialects that acquired early strength, or were relegated to the category of folk speech (dialect, patois, bable, etc.). In some cases, a few vernaculars have survived in a way that could be labeled 'restricted sandard', that is to say, languages that manifest only some of the properties and functions that characterize a true standard language. Along these lines, Irish Gaelic seems to lack urbanization; Galician shows a very low intellectualization; Catalan has a desproportionately high separatist function in contrast to a low participatory function; Romansh lacks intellectualization and urbanization in spite of its high rootedness, and so on. These situations, as said before, are at the base of all types of language conflicts. From the standpoint of standard-language theory, the most dramatically illustrative case is that of Norway, as reported by Haugen (1966). Norway, whose ethnic and cultural identity offers no doubt, is linguistically split into two languages that appear to be legitimate Norwegian languages: Nynorsk and Bokmal. Where is the source of conflict? Clearly, in the fact that properties and functions are shared unevenly by the two languages, to the point that both of them as a whole could be considered as one national language in the broad sense. But the point is that their followers think of them as separate languages. Bokmal (formerly known as Riksmal) has a higher share of the structural properties and of urbanization, and Nynorsk presents a higher degree of rootedness. Bokmål has traditionally been codified for intellectual, academic, and political purposes, and seems to serve the participatory and prestige functions very well, in spite of an evident link with the traditional ruling classes. It also serves the frame-of-reference function more efficiently than Nynorsk. (Ivar Aarsen's grammar of Landmal, as he called Nynorsk, had a symbolic function rather than a practical one.) But Bokmal's rootedness is seriously impaired by the fact that it emerged in association with the long Danish domination of Norway —thus it was sometimes called Dano-Norwegian, a label that its present-day advocates carefully avoid. Nynorsk, on the other hand, has traditionally fulfilled the separatist function and to a considerable degree the unifying function, for its rootednees is tied to the Norwegian land (cf. the name of Landsmal) and to Norwegian folk culture, especially traditional poetry, which is very important in a nation where the language-as-a-national-treasure attitude predominates. The conflict generated by this split of properties and function has

permeated all aspects of Norwegian life for over a century and it is far from having been solved, for if Bokmål strives for more rootedness, Nynorsk's adepts strive for cultivation. It is clear that this conflict-laden situation is not perceived of as pleasant by most Norwegians, who would like to see their nation unified at the language level. As Haugen (1966) reflects:

> It can of course be maintained that this schizoglossia makes for a more interesting and diversified culture. But the fact that nearly all writers envisage as an ideal a future state with only a single Norwegian language suggests that many suffer under this condition and feel that both languages are hampered in their attempts to reach the heigths of expression. One of the chief forces behind the movement for fusion has been the feeling that both languages were so solidly entrenched that neither could be wholly displaced. Hence the only solution had to be one of finding a face-saving compromise. (pp. 281-282)

Whatever the final outcome of this fascinating language conflict will be, the relevant lesson for standard-language theory is that the mutual dependency of properties and functions that characterize the standard language is so crucial, that a too disparate development of one of them is bound to cause lasting problems, endangering the normal standardization process or making it impossible altogether [24].

An area where the complex interaction among the elements that make up the standard language is particularly instructive is that of literacy. As said above (section 2), standard languages are written languages, and this is not an accidental feature of the standardization process but an integral part of it (which does not mean that all written languages are standard languages). Writing is an aspect of the urbanization property and, even though it affects the structural properties as well, its consequences are immediately observed at the cultural-property level for, as Ferguson (1968) states,

> the regular use of writing in a speech community, like such other innovations as the use of a steel knife in a stone-age society, has repercussions throughout the culture and social organization. (p. 21)

Nevertheless, in spite of the important repercussions of writing in the development of any language, most of the literature on literacy con-

cerns itself primarily with technical matters, notably the relationship between phonological systems and their graphic representation. This is also the case with concrete language-planning activities. Thus when the Peruvian government declared Quechua one of the two official languages of Perú, in 1975, one of their first self-imposed tasks was to approve a basic alphabet for the language, and the only type of considerations the planners took seriously were the variables affecting Quechua phonology, working as they were under the assumption that the only function of a graphic system should be to reflect a phonemic system and dialectal variation only when phonemic. The decree does not consider orthography-related cultural issues. (Cf. Resolución Ministerial N° 4023, Ministerio de Educación, República del Perú.) It is a well-attested fact, though, that writing is a social institution as much as an instrument to represent the language, and its interaction with the cultural properties of the language is quite revealing of the nature of the standardization process. If it is true that 'literacy is not the same as standard language' (Garvin, 1972, p. 189) because some written languages are not standard languages, it is also true, as said, that all known standard languages are written languages. Let us examine this apparent paradox.

Literacy is a first important step towards standardization because it has a definite bearing upon the cultural properties of the language. Writing systems are always associated with some type of cultural tradition and tend to be rooted in the speech communities' past. Garvin (1954) offers a good case study from Ponapean, that shows how some technically sound orthographic proposals (i.e. phonologically consistent and economic solutions) can be constrained by non-phonological considerations, because some spellings are associated with cultural traditions conceived of either as valuable or stigmatized by the speakers, so that

> the problem of devising an acceptable spelling system, which intially might have appeared purely, or at least primarily, a linguistic matter, upon closer inspection ...... turned out to be a language-and-culture problem par excellence. At each step, linguistic judgment had to be tempered by the consideration of cultural attitudes, traditions, and even prejudices as the closely intertwined patterning of verbal and non-verbal behavior unfolded under the eyes of the observer. (p. 129)

Garvin stresses that the development of orthographies is not only a matter of determining correspondences between phonemes and letters, but even at the technical level, also a matter of determining puctuation, capitalization, treatment of loanwords, etc., all of which is either cons-

trained of enhanced by the way in which the properties and functions of the language manifest themselves in a particular situation. The solutions —it there are solutions— are in most cases difficult. As a matter of fact, orthographic issues, because of their obvious visibility, tend to be the most heated among language-related problems, both in highly and less-highly standardized situations. Along these lines, the case of Haitian Creole appears even more dramatic than that of Ponapean, among other things, because of the weak rootedness of the language (the high degree of rootedness of Ponapean favored native literacy). There have been many attempts at establishing a suitable orthography for Creole, but only two of them are really relevant for the present discussion. In the early fourties Ormonde McConnell, an Irish missionary, and Frank Laubach, an American linguist, devised a very simple Creole alphabet based upon the IPA phonetic principles, seemingly ideal for the largely illiterate Haitian population. This alphablet was violently rejected by the Haitians, especially the educated élite, as a cultural monstrosity, not only because

> it needlessly departed from some of the conventions of French spelling that would not have destroyed the bidirectional correspondence between phonemes and graphemic units (Valdman, 1968, p. 320),

but also because it was felt as foreign and was seemingly hurting the nationalistic feelings of concerned Haitians. As one Haitian intellectual describes the situation:

> De ces deux auteurs /McConnell and Laubach / l'un était un pasteur irlandais, de l'Eglise wesleyenne, et l'autre, un linguiste américain. L'essai en a été fait sous un chef d'état qui était passé sans transition de son poste d'ambassadeur à Washington au fauteuil présidential et qui avait fait d'énormes concessions de terrains à des compagnies Américaines. (Pompilus, s.d., p. 8)

In summary, the McConnell-Laubach alphabet had no rootedness whatsoever for Haitians and was blatantly hurting the separatist function of Creole. That is why a new alphabet, proposed by a Haitian intellectual, Charles-Fernand Pressoir, was much more successful, and not only because Pressoir was Haitian, but because his modified orthography incorporated French spelling conventions, thus linking rootedness-poor Creole to prestigious and rootedness-high French, a situation that reminds one of the origins of the Latinized orthographies still current in many European languages. To be sure, the success of Pressoir orthography has been rather modest, for the fact remains that Haitian Creole is not a properly stan-

dardized language. Without making any judgment about its structural properties (for this see Valdman, 1970), it is clear that the rootedness problem is still a debated issue; and the fact that the overwhelming majority of Haitians do not know how to read and write —and those who are literate are so in French and not in Creole— reveals that the degree of urbanization (and especially availability) of the more codified forms of the language is very low. As a matter of fact, the nation's most cultured activities are carried on in French, and language loyalty, which manifests itself very strongly in favor of Creole in contrast to French (Berry, 1975), does not necessarily imply the use of Creole in all situations, a conflict-laden split characteristic of non-standardized language situations. All this has led to a situation in which literacy in Creole does not always appear justified in the Haitians' view for, among other things, there is practically nothing to read in Creole that is not better available in French. It is, thus, clear that literacy and the standard-language cultural properties and related functions are in a relationship of mutual dependency. Another good case in point to illustrate this is that of China, where all technical problems in regard to the adoption of an alphabetical script, parallel to the ideographic one, seem to have been solved, and only political and cultural issues remain: the deep rootedness of the traditional, all-Chinese ideographic script, against the suspicious alien nature of the Roman alphabet, absolutely not rooted in any Chinese cultural soil, have proved hard to mach. (See De Francis, 1967, 1975)

Even though rootedness plays a crucial role in the establishment of writing systems, the lack of rootedness, or a low degree thereof, can be substituted for by a high level of the manifestation of other properties or even functions, according to the circumstances. For instance, the higher participatory function linked to the use of the Roman alphabet played an important role in its adoption by Turkey in the twenties and thirties (Gallagher, 1975). Undoubtedly, another crucial factor involved was the fact that the old Turkish script, based upon Arabic characters, implied a religion-rather than a nation-oriented rootedness, thus threatening the Turkish-nationalism based manifestation of the separatist function of the Turkish language. As Rodinson (1968) points out

> las causas de adopción del alfabeto latino, a pesar de todas sus ventajas técnicas innegables, desde luego, fueron más que nada causas sociales. Mustafá Kemal quiere crear un estado moderno de tipo occidental, laico, o sea desprendido de sus nexos con el mundo munsulmán. (p. 280)

Perhaps the only case in history of a sucessful, originally non-rooted

writing system, is that of Hangul in Korea:[25]

> among the thousands of kinds of writing developed by man, Hangul is outstanding in that, while others were the result of a gradual process of evolution, this was the product of one man, and was produced at one specific date oractically in the form we have it now. (Lee, 1957, p. 1)

King Sejong, the fourth of the Yi dinasty, is credited with having invented Hangul in 1443 A.D. (1444 of the Western calendar) and promulgated it in 1446. How could such an artificial instrument become so successful? The first reason was that it was conceived of as a patriotic Korean answer to Chinese influence, that is to say, it was an assertion of the separatist function of the Korean language and that sems to have been enough to make up for its initial lack of rootedness. Moreover, its success is also linked to the need for availability of a standard (or standardizing) language. One of the most serious drawbacks of an ideographic script is that it is difficult to learn and very hard to propagate either by handwriting or by printing. Hangul was a phonetic system and its invention was directly linked to technological innovations in the ancient art of printing. As king Sejong himself put it in a public statement to his subjects:

> In order to have a good government, we must read widely. Since Korea is far to the east of China, books are seldom to be obtained. To reprint books, block printing is too laborious; even after being engraved the blocks are easily broken and it is very hard to print all the books we need. I therefore intend to cast movable types with bronze, so that whenever we come to get new books we can reprint them. (Quoted in Wonjong, 1970)

Thus the interest in having the more stable written form of the language readily available and the strength of the separatist function were at the base of Hangul's success. Needless to say, since the times of King Sejong Hangul has been firmly linked to Korean language rootedness and indeed to the whole of its standardization process, for it actually fostered a rich literary activity to justify it, one which in turn was justified by it. In spite of its troubled beginnings (there was fierce opposition to its adoption among priests and established scholars), Hangul is today one of Korea's most dearly revered national treasures.

In modern Western standard languages the close links between writing and the languages' cultural properties and dependent functions are

also clear. A first obvious proof is the enormous difficulty of implementing any major orthographic reform: such is the degree of rootedness of orthographic traditions. As far as English is concerned, its orthography has been attacked many times and from different angles as a 'pseudo-historical and anti-educational abomination' (Jespersen, 1968/1938/, p.231), and writers such as Bernard Shaw devoted a lefetime to campaign against it; alas fruitlessly. The strength of the English orthography and its resistance to change does not lie in its rootedness alone. Clearly, it serves the frame-of-reference function quite well by not being phonemic, that is, not dependent on any specific dialect of the language. (This, at the same time, facilitates the fulfillment of the participatory function, of paramount importance in this language.) Lloyd and Warfel (1936) have understood that the non-phonetic character of English orthography

> is a virtue not to be despised, for the writing system serves as
> a medium to persons of all occupations, all levels of education,
> and all the towns and counties of the English-speaking world.
> (p. 63) [26]

To a lesser extent, orthography can serve the separatist function. As a matter of fact, that was the main motivation behind Noah Webster's orthographic reforms: to have an American orthography, different from British. In spite of Mencken, only a minimal amount of difference has survived , though.

Perhaps the most immediately recognizable effect of writing lies in the complex kinds of interactions it has with the relative availability of the language. On the one hand, it is writing which has made possible throughout the world the development of varied traditions of native linguistic scholarship. And at the same time writing, especially alphabetic writing, has been a most important factor in the spread of the cultured forms of languages to all members of the speech community thus making it more difficult for any particular group (class, caste, etc) to control the process of language development. In this sense, writing is a sure sign of true standardization[27], for an alphabet is by definition public property (unlike some more criptic types of writing). As Goody and Watt (1968) suggest,

> some crucial features of Western culture came into being in
> Greece soon after the existance, for the first time, of a rich
> urban society in which a substantial proportion of the popu-
> lation was able to read and write; and ... consequently, the
> overwhelming debt of the whole contemporary civilization

to classical Greece must be regarded as in some measure the result, not so much of the Greek genious, as of the intrinsic differences between non-literate (or proto-literate) and literate societies —the latter being mainly represented by those societies using the Greek alphabet and its derivatives. (p. 55)

Literate societies have, so to speak, their entire past and present, and the complex variety of their cultural lives, available at all times, without the need for individual intermediaries, allowing the individual to be both participant and witness to his group and his language. The possibility of being user and observer of the language is very important for the standardization process, because it is what allows the frame-of-reference function to manifest itself.

It must be pointed out that in many standard-language situations literacy can have a negative function, namely, that of creating a serious split amidst the speech community by stratifying its members into two extreme groups, the literate ones and the illiterate ones, so that the incapacity to use the writing system automatically relegates the individual to a condition of non-standard or sub-standard user of the language. In the final analysis, this is not a problem created by writing itself, but by societal structure. Alphabets, it should be insisted on, are public instruments and most governments and concerned agencies constantly work to foster thaeir spread, so that the more advanced the standardization process, the more literate individuals there are.

It should also be stressed that these observations intend to be valid only as far as standard-language situations are concerned. In non-standard language situations, literacy can have counterproductive consequences by incorporating damaging social stratifications and institutions ill-adapted to traditional societies. As said above, one frequent problem is that, since writing implies a cultured tradition, its imposition upon non-literate societies creates the frustrating and un-natural situation that in that language there might be nothing to read. As d'Ans (1972) rightly warns, 'la alfabetización no es sinónimo de libertad sino en determinado nivel de estabilidad socioeconómica'. (p. 179). This explains that, in spite of the well-intentioned principles put forward by UNESCO (1968/1953/), many non-literate societies have turned out to be reluctant to have their vernaculars artificially turned into written languages —where there is nothing genuinely indigenous written[28].

As far as the structural properties of the language are concerned, writing also has an important influence upon them. It has already been

pointed out how the flexible-stability-based frame-of-reference function is enhanced by alphabetic writing, whose action as a normative institution has been known for centuries in Western speech communities. People tolerate phonological variation fairly well, but very few people tolerate orthographic variation. As Zengel (1968) has shown in regard to English, 'a leaning towards conservatism correlates to some degree with a literate tradition' (p. 296), that is to say, the stability aspect of the flexible-stability property is more affected by writing. Zengel shows how a predominantly literate sub-specch community, such as the law-related professions, manifests a definite tendency towards a higher degree of stability, a fact indeed dependent on the all-pervasive influence of the written word in the legal profession, where by its very nature there are no illiterates.

Along different lines, Goody and Watt (1968) have given convincing evidence that alphabetic writing greatly intensifies the structural property of intellectualization of a language:

> phonetic writing, by imitating human discourse, is in fact symbolizing not the objects of social and natural order, but the very process of human interaction in speech: the verb is as easy to express as the noun; and the written vocabulary can be easily and unambiguosly expanded. Phonetic systems are therefore adapted to express every nuance of individual thought, to recording personal relations as well as items of major social importance. (p. 38)

The high level of intellectualization that carries the fact that so much complex information is added —and physically stored— continuously in the form of writing in all standardized languages has enhanced the development of history as opposed to mythology, that is to say, people's capacity to see themselves as subjects-actors of culture. Along these lines, Kochman (1974) has analyzed the cultural behavior of American English speakers from the standpoint of their relative nearness to oral or literate patterns. His study shows a neat predominance of an intellectual, unemotional type of communicative behavior among people whose cultural training was mostly book-based, and a high dose of 'feeling', 'heat', and 'loudness', that is to say, less intellectualized communicative behavior, among those people whose cultural training had taken place in an enviroment of predominantly face-to-face interaction.

More research is needed before one can claim that literacy is a structural necessity for standard-language type intellectualization, but the evidence we have shows that indeed the correlations are more than accidental.

The way things are, such research would have to be diachronic in nature. At any rate, one cannot even imagine what Western standard languages would be if alphabetic culture had not been developed. The fact that our languages are written languages has influenced our perception of the standardization process for centuries. What L.H. Morgan thought in 1851 about the Iroquois language is still the overt attitude of most people:

> The language of the Iroquois, like all unwritten languages, is imperfect in its construction, and scarcely admits of comparison, except on general principles, with those which have been systematized and perfected. (Morgan, 1851/1972/, p. 251).

The standard-language functions, as said in section 3, are directly dependent on the properties of the language. The frame-of-reference function depends primarily on the structural properties, and the unifying, separatist, prestige, and participatory functions depend primarily of the cultural properties, but there exists a complex system of interdependencies between all functions and all properties, and among the functions as well.

A first network of mutual relationships and hierachies manifests itself as a direct consequence of the relationships observed at the level of properties. Along these lines, just as a high level of urbanization implies a high level on intellectualization and flexible stability, so the prestige and participatory functions require a well-established frame-of-reference function, especially in the case of so-called world languages, such as Russian, English, French, etc., which serve so many diverse societies. But even emergent standard languages are affected by this type of dependency. To give only one example from Africa, Leopold Sedar Senghor, the learned president of Senegal, stresses that for the native African languages to fulfill the participatory function, which he sees as a necessary goal to achieve, a great deal of cultivation work is needed, notably a native linguistic scholarship working to foster intellectualization:

> .... nous favorisons la formation de linguistes et de personnel qualifié pour réaliser le travail immense que consiste à faire de nos languages négro-africaines des instruments efficaces à exprimer la vie .moderne. (Interview with Le Monde, édition internationale, 2-3 April, 1978)

For well-established standard languages the frame-of-reference function is a necessity in order to allow the prestige function to manifest itself; otherwise, cultivation activities result seriously impaired, since the language has to appear suitable for the kind of more prestigious activities

—literature, science, philosophy-- that are carried aout in complex socie-
ties. In this sence, native linguistic scholarship plays a role quite different
from the one observed in less standardized languages. As Laird (1970)
aptly states,

> ... my guess is this: that the analytic grammar [grammar in
> the sense of language description] is highly appropriate for a
> sophisticated people, and that the growth of analysis in
> English is in part a natural response to a desire for a more flexible
> grammar. (p. 491)

In the long run, the frame-of-reference function is related to all
cultural properties and the functions that depend on them. Prestige for
instance, is not only an incentive for cultivation but a reflection of rooted-
ness, and thus the speakers of a standard language know that important
things or beutiful things have been said and/or written in that language,
leaving behing an aura of dignity which in turn serves as a usage model, a
concrete frame of reference for further development. In consequence, it
can be said that an awareness-of-the-norm attitude is necessary for the
pride attitude to be present in a true standard-language situation.

The network of mutual dependencies affecting the cultural-proper-
ty-related functions and attitudes seems to be even more tightly structured.

Even though the unifying and separatist functions are actually two
aspects of one broad identy-bestowing function (see section 3 above), it
is convenient to keep them separate because they do act differently and
enter into different relationships with other properties and functions. In
general, the unifying function is more linked to a high degree of rooted-
ness, for, unlike the separatist function, is less conflict-laden and more
tradition-oriented. It also seems to be more linked to the participatory
function and the desire-to-participate attitude, and that explains why its
manifestation is normally associated with positive feelings. The following
quotation, from an American book not surpringly called **Our English
heritage,** is characteristic of this type of situation:

> In is difficult to believe that anyone would deny that the effect
> of having a single language has beeb fortunate for the country.
> Few will deny the further proposition that it is, one the whole,
> fortunate, that this language happened to be English. (Johnson,
> 1949, p. 120)

As a matter of fact, the manifestation of the unifying function

usually gives occasion to all sorts of romantic and altruistic emotions, and to the celebration of the rootedness of the language —all this in a confifent atmosphere of joyous pride. As far as American English is concerned (and something similar happens whith the other standard languages of the Americas), the unifying function has generated a special rhetoric and is one of the rare instances where literary issues are raised. (This is relevant, because American English has been characterized by a systematic movement away from literary usage models, as will be seen.) Another typical example of manifestation of the unifying function is a book called **A common language: British and American English,** actually the edited transcrip of a series of radio conversations between Albert Marckwardt and Randolph Quirk some two decades ago (Marckwardt and Quirk, 1964). Markwardt made statements such as the following, which gives a good idea of the dominant mood of the talks:

> The most important thing is that we share a common literary tradition. Writers and reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic always felt especially keenly the need to read the work from the other side. (p. 21)

Quirk agrees, and even lets Americans share in Shakespeare, the single most important symbol of English literary rootedness, and loyalty, pride, and desire to participate:

> it is to the English of Shakespeare's England that we have to look... for the basic common ground that we have in British and American English today. (p. 39)

Of course Marckwardt has to make it clear that the separatist function of American English does indeed exist —even though the puts it mildly—, but he agrees that the unifying function is more important, still within the framework of literary tradition:

> Just as we claim equal rights to Shakespeare (since he wrote before our two nations separated), so too we lay equal rights today to T. S. Eliot, who was born and educated in the United States but who has long since written in England as a British citizen. (p. 70)

Quirk only has to go along with that:

> Quite, quite. (id.)

In contrast to this friendly mood, the separatist function, as said, usually emerges in a belligerent fashion, and more often than not associated with other forms of separatism: political, ethnic, etc. It is also more related to the prestige function and associated pride attitude than to the participatory function, and thus it can overshadow the desire-to-participate attitude. Once again, when this happens it is a sign of a low-standardization situation, for it means that the language affected has not quite developed the structural properties —and thus cannot serve the participatory function— and at the same time there is a more developed language to which fuller participation is attached, which in turn can trigger strong separatist feelings. This conflict-laden situation is quite complex, but no means uncommon. As Okonkwo (1977) points out:

> When African and Asian intellectuals refuse to see themselves as 'lucky' for having inherited prestigious international languages and rather become preoccupaid with discussions of the 'national language issue', they are merely saying that for them, cultural and linguistic independence is more important, and more valuable than any 'advantages' to be gained from permanently adopting an exoglossic language. (pp. 44-45)

No matter how strong the separatist function might be, it cannot ignore the cultural property of rootedness. This is an all-pervading theme thoughout the development of American English. As a matter of fact, the low rootedness of early American English was the most serious constraint on the manifestation of the separatist function, as Noah Webster realized after several years of fruitless fighting, and to this day Americans are perhaps too aware of the problem that the high rootedness of British English represents for their language to be thought os as fully independent. Sometimes the feeling surfaces with a bit of resentment, such as in Read (1962):

> The average Englishman, accustomed to the labels Americanism, Scotticism, Provincialism, etc., for designating locutions to be avoided, is unwilling to concede that his own speech may contain something called Briticism. (p. 221)

That the above quotation is a clear manifestation of the separatist function in its dependence on rootedness is evident if one considers that a few pages before Read had written:

> In the English language, worldwide though it is, the primary split is between the English of England and that of America. (p. 217)

Only when the power-based modern American English is felt as firmly established, is British-English rootedness not conceived of as a serious threat and can be approached with a certain nostalgic grace, such as in the following editorial comment —'There'll always be an England'— which appeared in The Buffalo News (april 8, 1978):

> We know the British pound is not what it used to be, but one thing in this changing world that we expected to remain constant was the slightly stuffy image the British Broadcasting Corporation has cultivated over the years. The BBC has long considered itself the arbiter of spoken English with its impeccable usage and Oh-so-elegant Oxford accent.
> Now it is being democratized, if the BBC will pardon the expression ...
> We'll get used to the new BBC image, we suppose, but some like the old ways best.

All the same, a substantial aspect of American-English history has to do with the relationship of the separatist function to the cultural property of rootedness and a concomitant search for symbols of language identity. These symbols tend to be extremely visible, which proves the militant nature of the separatist function. Perhaps the most successful of them has been the development of the American dictionary, which will be studied in detail in chapter 3 of this study, and which has reflected and enhanced all the properties and functions that characterize American English as a valid version of a larger institution, namely, the English language. At some points in time, the American-oriented separatist function has been so strong that there have been a few attempts at adopting languages other than English as the official language of the land. (Perhaps the most telling case is the proposal of Hebrew: at that time Hebrew was not linked to any politically significant entity and its roots were believed to be deeper than those of any other known language and, as Mathews (1933) correctly noted, its attempted choice was linked to the 'chosen people' attitude (cf. p. 52), an assertion of both separatism and unity.) Needless to say, these proposals were never taken too seriously. But the United States being what they are, the rootedness-linked separatist function has shown more serious attempts at manifesting itself within a more realistic tradition and through the formalisms of the law, and thus Mencken (1965/1919/) reports on several bills introduced at state and federal levels which intended to define the legal profiles of the separatist function. One example should be enough:

Bill introduced by the Hon. Washington Jay Mc. Cormick,

Rep. GOP, Montana. Year of 1923.

A Bill

To define the national and official language of the Government and people of the United States   of   America, including the territories and dependencies thereof.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the national and official language of the goverment and people of the United States   of America, including territories and dependencies thereof, is hereby defined and declared to be the American Language. (p. 81)

Mencken almost laments that the bill did not become a law. But a similar bill did become a law in the state of Illinois, and the separatist function manifests itself even more clearly in it:

> .... Be it enacted by the people of the State of Illinois, repre-
> sented in the general assembly: the official language of the
> state of Illinois shall be known hereafter as the 'American
> language', and not as the 'English language'. (p. 83)

The issue of the name of the language has long been a source of conflict in the Americas, for it actually implies a statement about rooted-ness and thus can be associated with both the unifying and the separatist functions, as well as with the participatory function. The case of Spanish has been superbly studied by Amado Alonso (1948). The native speakers of this language have a variety of names for it, the most important ones being Castellano, Español, Idioma Nacional, Idioma Patrio. 'Español' fulfills a unifying function in Spain, although it is resisted by most Catalans, who think that, at least under the present circumstances, Catalan is also 'español', and is more resisted in Latin America, where 'Castellano' is preferred, because, 'Español' is associated with Spain as a national entity and therefore not suitable for the New World from the standpoint of roo-tedness: since 'Castellano' refers to the Castillian origins of the language and not to a functional national entity, it is not a threat for the South Americans' linguistic indentity. At the same time, in Spain 'Castellano' alludes to a particular region of the nation and therefore awakens separatist feelings, but since it is the only truly widespread language, it has a stronger participatory function. The complex situation, then, is that

> lo que en España es fuerza positiva en América lo es negativa:
> español puede fácilmente evocar una nacionalidad extranjera
> y por eso se evita. (Alonso, 1948, p. 133)

When South Americans want to highlight the separatist function (and the unifying function at the national level) the name of the language becomes Idioma Nacional or Idioma Patrio. (To be sure, at the Chilean military academy the official name of Spanish as a subject of the regular curriculum is 'Idioma Patrio' —the tongue of the Fatherland.) The reason why names such as Idioma Nacional and Idioma Patrio are not heard very often is because in Latin America the unifying function of the language has traditionally been stronger than the separatist function. Moreover, in the last decades, due to an obvious trend toward an increased participatory function, the preferred name of the language in many sectors of the speech community is Español, in line with the internationally accepted names of Francés, Inglés, Alemán, etc., and a more transparent translation of 'Spanish', 'Espagnol', etc. Whatever the final name will be, the important thing is that it will no doubt be sensitive to the action of the unifying, separatist, and participatory functions.

Let us insist here that the types of usage models prevalent in each particular speech community will determine to a great extent not only which language functions will predominate, but the types of mutual relationships established among the functions. When literary models prevail, rootedness will be linked chiefly to the great literary monuments of the speech community, which will strengthen the unifying and participatory functions, as well as the prestige and separatist functions along the lines of a language-as-a-national-treasure attitude. This is the case with most Spanish-speaking countries[29]. In the case of the United States, an early leaning towards technological, non-literary models (see next chapter) gave rise to a language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude, which found its expression especially in the separatist and participatory functions, and by and large has acted as a background for rootedness. Laird (1970) makes this clear beyond discussion:

> ... the program to help people learn English should be expanded rather than curtailed. In the end, we may do more good for world peace, for the well-being of a free, democratic world, with our precious heritage of the English language than with any other tool we have been given or have devised. (p. 520)

'English language', for Laird, really means 'American English', a confident assertion of the separatist function through a power-based participatory function:

> We may logically guess that American speech has shifted

more rapidly than has British speech, and that this leadership among the newer English dialects may be continuing. (p. 421)

Such leadership generates a non-dissimulated pride:

... with a world crying for English as it has never begged for any single language before, the United States possesses, in teachers and in technique, the greatest body of potential disseminators of a language that has ever been available to a learning-starved world. (p. 477)

Laird's own conclusion could not be more revealing:

... the role of American English abroad is demostrating once more the ancient principle that language follows power, influence, and social exchange. (p. 479)

Laird is by no means the only American intellectual convinced that the power-based participatory function of the language is what gives the other functions unity and acts as a modern source for rootedness. A perhaps less sophisticated version of the same attitude is found in Malstrom (1965):

Today, the English language is in a favored position as a transmitter of scientific, technological, and economic knowledge. Maintaining this position may prove vital to the survival of our way of life. So long as English remains the filter through which much of the world acquires its knoledge, our ideals and democratic values can be communicated to its peoples. (p. 122)

(In chapter 3 it will be shown how this attitude can become action and acquire violent overtones when the situation of American English is supposedly threatened by a dictionary not sensitive enough to the cultural development of the language)

The fact that the participatory function can become so relevant that it can even enhance rootedness should not obscure the fact that, in the final analysis, rootedness (as much as urbanization) is a precondition for its manifestation. This explains, for instance, the failure of so-called basic English, a typical case of planning that did not take into consideration important cultural factors. Basic English was devised precisely to serve the participatory function above anything elese, but it was not rooted enough in any established tradition —it was not intended for native

speakers of English but for 'export'— and its structural properties were artificially codified; therefore it could not serve the participatory function (or any other function, at that). Basic English is the negation of a standard language. Laird's position, as oulined above, is, in contrast, culture-sensitive and it shows how the international currency of the English language —its high participatory function— is but one aspect of the total development of the standardization process of the language and must find a reflection in its speakers, who want to see that currency enhanced in line with their system of language attitudes and beliefs. Even the language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude cannot occur in a cultural vacuum.

To some extent, the participatory function can be considered as a utilitarian manifestation of the unifying function at an international level, its ideal goal being to facilitate communication and cooperation among all members of humankind[30]. That is why it can be constrained in its manifestation by separatist-function-based considerations, as discussed above in connection with the manifestation of African nationalistic movements reported in Okonkwo (1977). Nevertheless, many African leaders and intellectuals believe that the advantages of English as a language of international communication are so strong that the use this language seems to be all but declining. The crucial fact remains, though, that English is an exoglossic language in most of Africa (unlike European languages in most of the Western hemisphere), and thus its rootedness is marred by an unavoidable link with a colonial past that African nationalists reject. More recently, the use of English appears ideologically constrained by a rather widespread attitude that links it to imperailistic penetration both at the political and economic levels. (This latter attitude sems to be linked more to American English than to British English and appears as a counterpart to Laird's attitudes.) The situation has the characteristics of a conflict with no short-term solution. But at least one African intellectual has looked for and proposed a solution that incorporates the Africans as equal partners in a truly international English-based language community:

> a sub-federation of Anglophone cultures, each sector of the English-speaking world maintaining its own distinctiveness without departing so far from mutual intellegibility as to render the language useless as a universal currency. (Mazrui, 1975, p. 14)

But this still does not solve the rootedness problem, and so Mazrui envisages as a final step an Africanization of English:

> Those who speak the tongue Shakespeare spoke will by the end

of the twentieth century include the descendants of Julius K. Nyerere, president of Tanzania and translator into Swahili of Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** and **The Menchant of Venice**. (id., p. 16)

It should be pointed out that literary-language based usage models play a very important role in African intellectuals' approach to the property of rootedness. Along these lines Julius Nyrere, as just seen, translated Shakespeare into Swahili (thus enhancing this language participatory function), and Milton Obote, a former president of Uganda, chose his first name out of admiration for the great English writer. The possibility of having a genuinely African literature written in English has been thus an important issue for Africans. This implies, of course, a certain 'de-angliciza-tion' of the language, a goal that was first achieved, according to Mazrui, in Chinua Achebe's novels, where

the characters ...... do not use the Queen's English. They use more credible English in the African context. (p. 13)

And thus the conclusion of Mazrui's book bears the title 'Towards the decolonization of Rudyard Kipling'. The challenge for Mazrui is to turn the author of **The white man's burden** into a useful literary figure for 'the black man's leader'. Along these lines, Mazrui reports how Tom Mboya, at a poli-tical rally in Nairobi, recited Kipling's **If**, loading it with African signifi-cance, so that

when Rudyard Kipling is being called upon to serve purposes of Africans themselves, the phenomenon we are witnessing may... amount to a decolonization of Rudyard Kipling (p. 209)

It is, then clear that the participatory function depends on rooted-ness for its manifestation, and that it cannot contradict the manifestation of the separatist function. Also, the prestige function must be, so to speak, nationalized. In the case under discussion, literary symbols seem to be extremely important. As a conclusion, let us point out that, as in the case of post-independence North and South Americans, the issue of names for the language and the speech community is linked to the identity-bestowing functions. Thus Mazrui, realizing that the Anglo-Saxons are 'white people who speak English as a first language' (p. 39), proposes that if the English language is to take deep African roots, it should become the language of the Afro-Saxons. Whether or not the notion of 'Afro-Saxons' (which in Mazrui's view also includes black Americans) will become an accepted notion is to be seen. The important thing is that its very coinage demons-trates how the participatory function is fully dependent on the rest of

the standard-language properties and functions.

In situations less standardized than that of English the highly structured network of function interdependencies analyzed above does not appear as clearly defined. The prestige function, which is essential in standard-language situations, might be absent, because the degree of urbanization (and, in the case of creoles, rootedness) is not an issue in most folk-speech cases. As Eersel (1971) reports about the language situation in Surinam:

> because the Amerindian and Bush Negro groups are not fully integrated into the society, questions of prestige do not play an important part in their relations with other groups. They use Sranam as a **lingua franca**, but for them it is just that. (p. 318)

But when the need for standardization presses things acquire a different perspective:

> For the descendants of Asian immigrants, the question of status of Sranan relative to Dutch does arise, as also the question of supporting efforts to develop it as a national language. (p. 318)

Similarly, cases of extremely uneven development of one function and associated attitudes at the expense of other functions and attitudes are observed in less standardized situations. This, as in the case of language properties discussed above, can easily generate conflict. A very common case involes the prestige function and language-loyalty attitude. As it was shown in section 4 above, language loyalty is not necessarily associated with language maintenance (which is, let us repeat, something that cannot happen in standard-language situations). Here it can be added that language loyalty does not imply the prestige function, either, and it is not necessarily associated with a positive assertion of the separatist function. A dramatic example of this split is the Quechua situation as reported in Wölck (1973). Wölck observes that, even though 'Quechua is Stigmatized... there is, nevertheless, a great deal of native loyalty shown to the language' (p. 52). The conflict-laden nature of this situation becomes apparent when it is realized that, in spite of the enormous intellectual prestige of Spanish, most Quechua speakers would like to see their language cultivated and learned by most Peruvians, that is to say, they would like to see the Quechua language fulfilling a unifying function that would but enhance Peruvian identity, for it would be based on the high rootedness Quechua has (Wölk,

1972). But as a counterpart of this desire there is a distinct feeling among both Quechua- and Spanish-speaking Perivians that Spanish is the only language that can fulfill the participatory function (Escobar, 1972). As a consequence, the issue of Spanish or Quechua education is still a source of endless debate among Peruvian language planners, educators, and burocrats (Pozzi-Escot, 1972).

This section can be concluded with a new description of what a standard-language situations is. In a true standard-language situation all properties, functions, and associated attitudes have a high degree of manifestation, and form highly structured network of mutual dependencies. In each particular case, some property, function, or even attitude, may in some way be more developed than the rest, according to the types of language-useage models that are current in each of those cases, but this does not alter the general equilibrium that exists. In non-standardized situations some property or function may be missing, or developed at the expense of the other properties and functions to such an extent that it deeply alters the development of the language and hinders the smooth manifestation of the speakers' attitudes. Non-standard language situations are normally at the root of language conflict, because they generally occur in language-contact settings where the speakers need more than one language to fulfill all their cultural needs, whereas a true standard language serves at all times, and in all stituations, and without any serious hindrance, all the speakers' communication needs   allowing them not only to interact among themselves but also to receive through it information from other speech communities.

FOOTNOTES

to chapter one

1

A schematic version of my view of standard-language theory is offered in the first part of my paper 'Dictionaries and the standardization process', read at the conference of the Dictionary Society of America, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaing, July, 1978.

2

The origins of standard-language theory are linked to the development of literary Czech as a modern language brought about by Czech writers and linguists. There are two English-language anthologies of Praguean writing on the subject: Garvin, ed., 1964, and Vachek, ed., 1964. Garvin's book is more literature-oriented, and Vachek's is more concerned with linguistic stuff.

3

In Spanish, a distinction is sometimes made between 'lengua' and 'idioma', both terms covered by English 'language'. 'Lengua' refers to the language as a rather abstract system of signs, and thus grammars are always grammars of the 'lengua'. 'Idioma' refers to the language as a cultural institution with a high degree of historical reality. (See Coseriu, 1968, esp. pp. 103 ff.) Literary issues are always dealt with in terms of 'idioma' (cp. the expression 'cumbres del idioma' –'peaks of the language'–used to refer to literary monuments). Also, 'official language' is always rendered as 'idioma oficial'. Even though the expression 'lengua culta' (cultured language) has been used to roughly cover the notion of standard language, I definitely prefer 'idioma estándar', because it makes it clear that we deal with both structural and cultural issues. Among Latin American linguists, the notion of 'norma culta' (cultured norm) has been developed more in its structural aspects than in its cultural aspects. Along these lines, Lara (1976) offers the following definition:

> Entiendo por **norma** un modelo, una regla, o un conjunto de reglas con cierto grado de obligatoriedad, impuesto por la comunidad lingüística sobre los hablantes de una lengua, que actúa sobre las modalidades de actualización de un **sistema** lingüístico, seleccionando de entre la ilimitada variedad de posibles realizaciones en el uso, aquellas que considera aceptables. (p. 110)

As it will become apparent, Lara's concept of norm would cover only the frame-of-reference function of the standard language, and thus is quite distant from the complexity accorded to the notion of standard language in this study.

4

Modern developments of standard-language theory are due primarily to Garvin's work (Garvin, 1972 and 1973; Garvin and Mathiot, 1956, is a classic). Along somewhat different lines, Neustupný has also offered valuable insights into the problem of the standardization process, clearly within the functionalist approach (Neustupný, 1968, 1974a, and esp. 1974 b for a case-study based on the development of modern Japanese). Although I depart from Garvin's views in more than one way, I owe all the relevant aspects of the present conceptual framework to him. Let me add that I have received so much advice and encouragement from Paul Garvin during the years I have been associated with him, that many times I do not know which ideas I owe to him and which are my own.

5

Garvin and Mathiot, 1956, point out that the property of intellectualization was first defined by Vilém Mathesius, and the property of flexible stability was originally stated by Bohuslav Havránek.

6

In this study I simply avoid any specific reference to the way in which the property of intellectualization is present in English syntax, because my main interest goes along the lines of the development of its cultural properties. Perhaps a good way to begin research in the area of syntactic intellectualization would be Sapir's notion of drift (Sapir, 1921) and its modern development in generative syntax. (See, for instance, Lakoff, 1973.)

7

The term 'rootedness', which was suggested to me by Garvin, pers. com., seems more descriptive than 'historicity' because it highlights the fact that a standard language has to have deep bases in a cultural tradition, as well as the fact it is a synchronic property of the language.

8

For an analysis of the rise of European vernaculars from the standpoint of national and linguistic identity, see Bloomfield and Newmark, 1967.

56

9

The conflict between rootedness and speech-community identity is related to Kloss' (1967, 1968) notion of endoglossic and exoglossic language situations. When the problem is approached within the framework of standard-language theory, these notions appear inadequate because they do not take into consideration the crucial distinction between language properties and language functions and associated attitudes. The New-World standard-language situation cannot be accounted for in Kloss' terms: the United States, for instance, would at the same time represent an exoglossic and an endoglossic situation, according to the perspective adopted. Kloss defines a nation-state as

> a country with a single official language which is the mother tongue of the great mejority of the inhabitants of that ethnic group which feels and claims that it possesses some special title to rule and represent the nation as a whole. (1967, p. 43)

But if one considers that English is the original national language of England 'transplanted' to the United States –and many people think this way– the problem would have no solution. (In synchronic terms, the problem would be whether or not two nation-sates can share the same language and keep their identities separate.) This is not the adequate way to put the problem, though. If English is actually the national language of the United States, it is because it has acquired the required properties and functions of a standard language in an American sense, and because the speakers' attitudes are indigenously American.

10

It should be noted that the notion of availability of the standard language has nothing to do with the relative frequency of occurrence of some elements: it is not the case that the more frequent a lexical item the more available it would be, and vice versa. Availability is an aspect of a cultural property of the standard language, and as such it has a bearing on the structural properties. As Nida (1977) points out, 'some words are used rather infrequently, yet they are known by almost everyone who speaks English' (p. 47). The lexicon is as structured as the syntax, although in a different way.

11

The awareness that the standard language must be formally available is what explains that some people are reluctant to call it a 'dialect' –by definition a restricted version of the language. Along these lines Read (1962) rejects the expression 'standard American English', because he feels

that it refers to the 'standard dialect' talked about in the literature, and favors instead the expression 'generalized American' or, following Paul Elmer More, 'Englistic', patterned after 'Hellenistic'. (Notice, incidentally, that 'Englistic' has never had any serious currecncy because of its lack of rootedness.)

12

'Written language' refers here to those languages that have a fully integrated writing system, in which there is a sizable body of written texts, and a considerable number of members of the speech community able to read them. According to this, not all languages for which written samples are available can be considered written languages. It is useful to differentiate between writing, which implies a native cultural tradition, and transcription which is a technical device normally used by linguists or persons interested in the recording of speech, but which does nor necessarily touch the internal structure of the speech community.

13

Bühler's **Sprachtheorie** is not available in English. I use the Spanish translation by Julián Marías (Madrid, Revista de Occidente, 1951) and Garvin's review for the English version of Buhler's concepts (Garvin, 1964b) Along the lines of functionalism, Rabanales (1967) makes a useful distinction between functions **of** language (communicative, expressive, etc.) and functions **in** the language (subject, predicate, etc.)

14

Okonkwo (1977, pp. 144 ff.) presents a most insightful analysis of the African language situation which offers valuable suggestions in regard to the nature of the standardization process. Unfortunately, he chose two terms that have to do with basic language functions ‒'expressive function' and 'communicative function'‒ to cover functions that, upon closer study, refer to the process of language standardization rather than to language as a basic system of signs. His notion of 'expressive function' is in fact related to the property of rootedness and a language-as-a-national-treasure attitude, and ultimately to the identity-bestowing functions, while his notion of communicative function is linked to the structural properties of the language, on the one hand, and to the participatory function, on the other hand.

15

Barth (1969, pp. 10 ff.) points out the problems involved in defining the boundaries of an ethnic group. He notes that no single criterion can, by itself, set up the profiles of any ethnic group as a cultural unit. Obviously, sharing a language does not create an ethnic group (cf. the standard langua-

ges in the New World), although many ethnic groups do share a language in an exclusive way (cf. many of the American Indian tribes). Okonkwo (1977) develops important aspects of the relationship among ethnic, national, and linguistic identities (pp. 108 ff.) He points out how in Africa these three types of variables do not map into each other, especially because national boundaries have emerged from a colonial past rather than as indigenous developments. Nevestheless, he notes that the new African nations seem to be advancing in their search for identity for, as he sees it, 'natural' factors are not a must in order to establish a cultural unit, but rather 'societal consensus is the ultimate basis for the legitimacy of a nation' (p. 109). All the same, his study shows how important language unity is from the standpoint of national unity. In this sense, most European nationalities (not to be confused with European countries) seem to be 'natural' because they are based to an important extent on linguistic grounds, even though the same language can be shared by two or more nations (German, shared by Germany, Austria, etc.) and one nation can have more than one language (Switzerland is the paradigmatic example). This is frequently a source of conflict, from rather mild, as in the case of Switzerland, to rather strong, as in the case of Spain. For the purposes of defining the unifying and separatist functions, the only relevant thing is that sharing a language does create a sense of cultural community (unifying function) and a sense of being different from other comparable groups (separatist function).

16
Neustupný's notion of alliance is akin to this aspect of the participatory function. (Neustupný, 1974).

17
Oppenheim (1970), Agheyisi and Fishman (1970), Cooper and Fishman (1974), have pointed out the difficulty of defining the notion of attitude. The two important issues in this regard are the following: (a) the relationship between attitudes and beliefs, and (b) the the relationship of attitudes with actions or behavior. The first issue is addressed by Rona (1970) who, in my opinion, points in the right direction when he conceives of an attitude as follows:

A language attitude is an entity more complex than a language sign, but its structure is very similar. It could be described as an association of a language fact and a belief about language, i.e. an association between the symbolic and the symptomatic values of language, or of part of a language, or of a single language sign. This is the same kind of association which was postulated by de Saussure between the **signifiant** and the

signifié. (p.206)

In the case of the standard language, the 'fact' is constituted by its properties and functions, which serve as a point of reference for beliefs to manifest themselves, and keeps them within the boundaries of the reasonable.

An attitude is not a form of behavior, but rather one aspect of a predisposition for certain types of behavior, which may of may not become actions: 'an attitude is a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli (Oppenheim, 1970, p. 105). This is important from the standpoint of standard-language theory. Attitudes manifest themselves only when the standard-language property or function which they are associated becomes an issue or is threatened.

18
I have presented a case study of this split between ethnic and language loyalty in connection with the situation of Puerto Ricans living in Buffalo, New York. (Gallardo, to appear.)

19
The Prague-school notion of 'structure des fonctions' (structure of the functions) of the language has been worked out in detail by Horálek (1964), who defines it as

> la fonction à laquelle les differentes parties des fonctions ne participent pas directement, mais interviennent uniquement come éléments de la structure. (p. 422)

Horálek's notion, thus, has to do with language as an abstract system of sign and with functions in language (see footnote 13). What I attempt here is a first analysis of the structure composed by all the elements --properties, functions, and associated attitudes-- whose interaction characterize the standard language.

20
The present discussion about Hebrew has profited very much from conversations with Debbie Richards, whose help is here gratefully acknowledged.

21
A relatively similar situation exists in the modern world with the emergence of creoles as bearers of national identities and incipient standard

languages.

22

All quotations from Fray Luis de León come from his **Obras Completas,** edited by Félix García, O.S.A., Madrid, BAE, 1968.

23

The notion of standard languages as cultural artifacts comes from Haugen (1968).

24

Ferguson's notion of diglossia (Ferguson, 1959) can be considered an alternative way to account for the type language conflict exemplified by the Norwegian case. Unfortunately, this crucial notion has been applied so indiscriminately in the literature that it has become almost impossible to use it in a univocal way. Moreover, diglossia, as conceived of by Ferguson, implies a high and a low language variety. Standard-language theory, in contrast, only talks about uneven development of properties and function, and uneven manifestation of attitudes.

25

The Cherokee alphabet was never really successful, except as a symbol. Today it does not seem to be more than a curiosity, whereas Hangul is used everyday by millions of Koreans in all situation where writing is needed.

26

It is significant that American linguists of all persuasions have regularly tried to find not just historical, but also structural and functional justificattion for English orthography. Along these lines, Smith (1968) claims that graphic units actually represent morphophonic units. Chomsky (1973), developing ideas put forwrd by Chomsky and Halle (1968), states that

> the conventional spelling of words corresponds more closely
> to an underlying abstract level of representation within the
> sound system than it does to the surface phonetic form that
> the words assume in the spoken language. (pp. 92-93)

27

The present reflections on the relationship between writing and the standardization process intend to be valid only as a description of a a process of becoming written languages. It is indeed possible that, as

Garvin (1973 b) suggests, electronic media might have a similar effect in the future. Actually, from the standpoint of detachment of the individual from concrete speech acts, i.e. the possibility of contemplating them as outside objects, and the facility of storage, electronic devices can be as efficient --if not more-- than phonetic writing. In this sense, there are suggestions that certain forms of the standardization, especially along the lines of language cultivation and availability, are taking place through radio, without the previous mediation of writing. Albó (1973) reports on an extremely interesting situation in Bolivia, where radio programs in Aymara are enormously successful in the spread of knowledge, formal education, entertainment, propaganda, and various other types of diversified content areas, enhancing the cultivation of styles and norms, so that

> la creatividad literaria narrativa que encontraba bloqueado el camino escrito, empieza a descubrir una nueva ruta por el éter. (p. 12)

The relationship of these broadcasts with an incipient standardization does not go unnoticed to Albó:

> Una de las emisoras comerciales más potentes tiene el programa Aymara más sintonizado en el que cada madrugada desfilan centenares de comunidades a veces bien distantes. Los radioescuchas sintonizan por si acaso sale el nombre de algún individuo o lugar conocido. Así, poco a poco, va descubriendo vivencialmente lo ancho y no-ajeno de todo el mundo aymara, antes marginado y disperso. (p. 12)

28

Cases of reluctance to literacy are by no means unfrequent and reveal the type of dependency that exists between writing and the standardization process. Two cases from Guatemala I have had occasion to read about are particularly interesting because they are reported by actual members of the societies involved. Maldonado and Ordoñez (1974), from the community of Ixtohuacán, report on the difficulties of implementing a program of vernacular literacy, even though everybody is aware that writing does have a certain type of rootedness among the Mayas, even though it is a 'broken' rootedness:

> Los grandes mayas estaban en el proceso de hacer ver al mundo su escritura nacida e inventada según la mentalidad que autenticaban sus estudios, pero desdichadamente la cultura nativa fue invadida por la conquista, y así poco a poco se humilló ante la fuerza de los colonizadores. (p. 3)

It is clear that the implementation of Mayan literacy proved hard to be brought about because the lack of intellectualization and of urbanization characteristic of present-day Mayan languages could nor be substituted for by their high rootedness. Thus native literacy is –at least for the time being– practically impossible. One of the problems encountered in the situation under consideration was a lack of materials, both physical and intellectual (schools, paper and pencils, books, teachers, etc.) But more important than that was a structural difficulty. Somehow the vernacular seemed unsuitable for writing, and Maldonado and Ordoñez feel that literacy is easier in Spanish because this language is sort of 'made' for writing. Thus,

> a la persona monolingüe hablante del man, según nuestras experiencias, le es costoso aprender a escribir y leer en su propio idioma, porque desconoce absolutamente las letras y los signos. (p. 11)

Cojtí and Chacach (1973), from Comalapa and Tecpán, realize that even though vernacular literacy is an ideal, it is impaired when the language is not standardized. They feel that 'el español es para un desenvolvimiento nacional e internacional' (p.4) that is to say, it fulfills the participatory function and thus requires writing. This generates a situation where

> hay grupos que piensan en abandonar sus idiomas, para tener un conocimiento amplio en español, pero los que abandonan sus idiomas lo hacen porque no saben valorar la reliquia más grande que nos han dejado nuestros antepasados; lo que es un idioma, un pensamiento puro indígena. (p. 5)

That means that vernaculars have a great degree of rootedness and can fulfill the unifyying and separatist functions, but unfortunately thay have a low degree of intellectualization:

> Una de las razones porque piensan así es por la falta de libros en los idiomas indígenas, tal como la gramática que es una de las bases fundamentales que establece la uniformidad en la escritura. (p. 5)

The frustration, then stems from the fact that, even though literacy is conceived of as a valid goal, the circumstances make it a goal that has to be put off until the varnaculars and their speakers be prepared for it.

Meanwhile, it seems that it is literacy in Spanish which si making gains, albeit modest.

29

Practically every Latin American country has its very identity linked to at least one great literary figure or literary creation. Chileans like to trace their first programatic definition to **La Araucana,** a sixteenth-century epic by Don Alonso de Ercilla; Peruvians feel that they were first symbolized by the person and the works of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega; Argentina owes its name to a poem –alas, a mediocre poem– by Martín del Barco Centenera. In more recent times, the identity of Uruguay is inseparable from **Tabaré,** by José de Zorrilla y San Martín; Cuba's great leader, José Martí, considered himself a poet before anything else, and the poet Rubén Darío caused his native Metapa, in Nicaragua, to become ciudad Darío, etc., etc.

30

I use the term 'humankind' following Farb (1978).

A PROBE INTO THE PAST, OR, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NOAH WEBSTER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

1. Webster's earlier years: fight for linguistic independence

In 1776 Noah Webster was 18 years old, which means that he belonged to the generation that was going to shape the young United States' identity for many years to come. He had direct contact with Benjamin Franklin, with George Washington, and with practically all the important people of his time, and was an active participant in the cultural and political life of his country for over sixty years, precisely the first sixty years of the United States as an independent nation. That was a period characterized by an a acute awareness that everything was to be done, from the formal definition of the country and the drafting of a constitution to more complex and subtle matters such as the place and meaning of culture in national life. In this at times frantic search for self-definition there seemed to be room for a wide variety of options, and in fact the most dissimilar alternatives were at least discussed. In very few issues other than a commitment to freedom and Christianity was there total agreement among early American leaders, but there was one aspect that indeed worked as a cohesive, although negative, frame of reference for unity, namely, that the new nation was needing a readily recognizable identity, and that the new identity had to be, above all, different from England, the former colonial power, as it were. (Little did they realize that by discussing those issues in terms of the future instead of the past they were in fact asserting a new identity.) Thus, if England was a monarchy, the United States was going to be a republic; if England had a national official church establishment, the United States was going to separate church and state, if England had a hereditary nobility, the United States was going to be ruled by a free propertied yeomanry. There was one institution inherited from England whose usefulness was never seriously challenged: the English language, the very language of the country they were trying to be so different from, and the very language in which they were discussing the best way to be different from that country. It seemed that the most practical approach to this apparent contradiction was not to raise the issue at all. Actually, appart from some always marginal attempts at adopting a language other than English for the nation (see preceding chapter) the English language was so much taken for granted by the American leaders that the fact that it was the language of England was not a real problem for them. Let us consider only one nomentous example, George Washington's famous 1796 Farewell Address. The ailing general

kew that he was writing a historical text, and thus was very careful and explicit when he mentioned the institutions that in his view held Americans together as a nation. Among those institutions, the English language is conspicuosly absent:

> Citizens by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has the right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religeon (sic), Manners, Habits, and Political Principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. (Farewell Address, in Cunningham, ed. 1968, p. 47)

It is clear from the above text that Washington understood that an excess of state-oriented loyalty was threatening the nation as a whole, so he saw the need for some institutions to fulfill a unifying and participatory functions, and found that religion, habits, manners, political principles, and the memory of the revolutionary war could fulfill those functions so well that attitudes of loyalty, pride, and desire to participate could be associated with them. The same holds true as far as the separatist function is concerned. Washington warned his fellow countrymen against the evils of foreing influence, which he visualizes basically at the political level, without even mentioning the language:

> Against the insidious wiles of foreing influence (I conjure you to believe me fellow citizens), the jealousy of a free peple ought to be constantly awake; since history and experience prove that foreing influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government. But that jealousy to be useful must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it . . .
> The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreing Nations, is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. (Id., p. 55).

The fact that language problems were not a pressing issue does not mean that in the early years of the United States there was no place for theoretical disquisitions. Just the opposite: all types of doctrines about all types of subjects were blossoming at that time, and what is more, they were taken seriously. As Cunningham (1968) poinst out.

discussions of education or the speculations of Jefferson and Adams on aristocracy were as fundamental a part of the times as the debates on state rights or Hamiltonian finance. (p. 227)

Only language issues seemed to be relegated to a secondary position. A few innovative efforts, such as Franklin's rationalization of English orthography (see below), were short-lived and never a matter of widespread discussion.[1] Even in the field of education, linguistic matters were taken for granted, in the sense that the traditional approach to language arts was not conceived of as a source or conflict and was thus maintained with no change. As another famous text, Samuel Harrison's 1798 Remarks on Education, stated,

> the elements of education, viz. reading and writing, are so obviously necessary that it is useless to enumerate them. (Repr. in Cunningham, ed., 1968, p. 230).

The only real educational issue was then the diffusion of rational knowledge, 'the best, perhaps the only, pledge of virtue, of equality, and of independence' (id., p. 229).

The fact, then, is that the most dearly held ideals of the early United States, above all independence, but also religion, freedom, property, pride in a sense of national mission, and so on, were not overtly associated with the English language or, conversely, the English language, in the United States, was not fulfilling the functions proper of a true standard language, in the sense described in the preceding chapter, and therefore early Americans did not manifest toward their language the attitudes that characterize a standard-language situation. Almost all early Americans, that is: a lonely crusade to convince his contemporaries that the United States needed a true standard language in order to function as a true nation was undertaken by Noah Webster as a very young man and lasted all his life. Webster stood alone in front of the national leaders for whom language was not a national issue because they

> had an almost unfailing conviction that the pragmatic and universal appeals and functions of the English language would establish it as the national tongue in practice without pronouncement of an official choice. (Heath, 1977, pp. 9-10)

'English' was supposed to become 'American' in a natural way. But in fact the challenge was a tremendous one: to make a language that already was a national language of one country the national language of another

country. Webster tried everything in order to accomplish his goal, and his final triumph was to set up the guide-lines according to which American English was to be developed, as well as the types of languaje-usage models that would give a direction to that development. There are two major stages in Webster's intellectual career. First, there was the fight to create an awareness that language was indeed an issue that had to be dealt with within the framework of the new nation, and that the first step was to achieve linguistic independence. This stage is marked by an all-pervading influence of the assertion of the separatist function and a rather insecure search for positive identity symbols. The second period began with the discovery that one of the most efficient symbols of an American English language could be an American dictionary, and is characterized by a new assertion of the properties of the language, notably a new definition of rootedness, by the solid establishment of non-literary usage models, and by the first manifestation of a power-based participatory function.

Let us examine the first period.

To be sure, by the second half of the 18th century America was not a culturally, barren land. There were schools where all the traditional subjects of the English 18th-century curriculum were taught, including the language arts. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary, Walker's pronunciation treatise, and Lowth's grammar were indeed known at all seats of learning. Moreover, the English language, with the exception of a few well-known foreign enclaves --Dutch, German-- was extremely well established throughout the territory of the thirteen colonies, and, due to the special history of its settlement, far less fragmented into dialects than it was in England, so that

> aside from the slaves, whom the cast rules prohibited from using the koiné . . . . and some still unassimilated white groups, the speakers of English in the North American colonies had achieved the kind of unity that astonished European visitors. (Dillard, 1976, p. 59)

This American koiné was also showing clear signs of becoming differentiated from its center of gravity, the English language of England, the accepted London norm. Shortly after independence was consolidated, it was not uncommon to hear the expression 'American language'. Carriere (1960) has found the earliest recorded occurrence of the expression in the proceedings of the Continental Congress in 1793 (the year of Webster's American Spelling Book!), and shortly after a 1796 French document using the terms 'langue Américaine'. Noah Webster himself used the expression 'American tongue' as early as 1789 in his **Dissertations on the English Language** (p.394; see Appendix to this chapter for all of Webster's

texts quoted in this study). The first formal definition of 'Americanism' is due to the Rev. John Witherspoon who in 1781, using the pseudonym 'The Druid', wrote in the Pennsylvania Journal:

> ... an use of phrases or terms, or a construction of senten-
> ces, even among persons of rank and education, different
> from the use of the same term or phrases, or the construc-
> tion of similar sentences in Great Britain. It does nor follow
> from a man using these, that he is ignorant, or his discourse
> upon the whole inelegant; nay, it does not follow in any
> case, that the terms used are worse in themselves, but mere-
> ly that they are of American and nor of English growth.
> (Repr. in Mathews, ed. 1973/1931, p. 17).

Apart from the obvious fact that 'Americanism' is defined in terms of the English of Great Britain, the definitely apologetic attitude adopted by Witherspoon should be noted, which reveals that there was stigma atta-ched to anything that could be interpreted as a deviation from the establish-ed norm. This lack of prestige was derived mainly form the supposed lack of rootedness of the terms and phrases'of American and not of English growth'. It is crucial to understand that by the end of the 18th century British English had reached a high degree of standardization and that Ame-rican English, as spoken in a slow-moving rural society, was not perceived as a threat by Englishmen, but as a rather uneventful version of their own - the only legitimate- language. British intellectuals, as Read (1933) re-ports, had a rather good, if not always accurate, awareness of American speech, and were even able to look at it, at least at its pronunciation, with sympathy, precisely because they conceived of American English as rooted on British English, an attitude that lasted until well after independence had been achieved. In this regard, Read reproduces a significant 1790 text from Henry Kent, which attests to the safe conviction Englishmen had of being the righteous owners of the language:

> The United States of America cannot fail to perpetuate the
> language of their parent country; and the spirit of literary
> and scientific investigation, which is rising among them, will
> conduce to this end; since it will encourage the study of
> those celebrated productions, from which the Americans
> have gained their knowledge of the best system of legislation
> and their most correct principles of liberties. (p.317).

Kent's position, thus, was that political independence did not have to entail linguistic independence, and since all rootedness of the language was to be found in British 'celebrated productions', what Americans had to do was to keep, treasure, and enrich the valuable tradition offered to them by a

fortunate history, hoping to live up to such cultural riches. To be sure, Kent was not alone in his views: that seemed to be the cultural atmosphere in regard to language prevailing even in America by the end of the 18 th century In 1774, when the independence movement was about to explode violenty, 'An American' wrote an anonymous article where the incipient patriotic enthusiasm did not let him forget that the legitimacy of American English lay in its faithful continuation of British English:

> ...as language is the foundation of science and the medium of comunication among mankinf, it demands our first attention, and ought to be cultivated with the greatest asiduity in every seminary of learning. The English language has been greatly improved in Britain within a century, but its highest perfection...is perhaps reserved for this land of light and freedom. As the people through this extensive country will speak English, their advantages for polishing the language will be great, and vastly superior to what the people in England ever enjoyed. (Repr. in Mathews, 1973/1931/, p. 40).

It was in this cultural climate that young Noah Webster began his one-man crusade for American English self-standing. (It was also the begining of a polemic that has all but finished.) In 1783, at the age of twenty five, Webster wrote in a letter to John Canfield:

> America must be as independent in **literature** as she is in **politics**, as famous for **arts** as for **arms;** and it is not impossible but a person of my youth may have some influence in exciting a spirit of literary industry.[2] (Letters of Noah Wester, p. 4)

Since the very begining Webster set himself up as the one to give the first step in the definition of America's linguistic personality. His first strategy was in line with the current grammatical and philological practice of his time, that is to say, a type of cultivation approach to language treatment, 'improving', 'polishing', and 'ascertaining' the language. Thus Webster conceived of the enterprise of building up a 'Gramatical Institute of the English language', which was to comprise a spelling book, a grammar, and a selection of readings. The technical apparatus of the first two books did not contain strikingly new or revolutionary elements. What was definitely new was the attitude behind them: they were actually a declaration of independence, a first time that the separatist function of language manifested itself

in the United States. As Webster himself wrote in a 1785 letter referring to the social function of the 'Institute',

> I have too much pride not to wish to see America to assume a national character. I have too much pride to stand indebted to Great Britain for books to learn our own children the letters of the alphabet. (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 31)

Webster was keenly aware of the need for language in America to fulfill the identity-related functions (unifying and separatist), and he thought that his 'Institute' would play a major role in the establishment of them. To some extent that proved true, but the trouble was that by then he did not understand that the unifying and separatist functions are related primarily to the cultural properties of the standard language and not to its structural properties. His spelling book and his grammar were intended to enhance especially the separatist function, but were actually geared to the improvement of intellectualization and flexible stability. It was a clear case of conflict, ultimately a symptom of low standardization. It took Webster a few more years and many more disappointments to realize that he had first to address the issue of cultural properties, mainly rootedness, of his American English before he could handle cultivation issues with a reasonable hope for success. (Among other things, a high degree of prestige is needed to implement any major language-related reform). All the same, it is instructive to look at the 'Grammatical Institute' because, apart from being a sample of the state of linguistic scholarship of the time and objective proof of the initial disorientation in regard to the direction that the standardization process had to take, it somehow shows that some tendencies were already in a gestation period.

The **American Spelling Book** was first published in 1783, and it is estimated that by the middle of the 19th century it had sold over one hundred million copies. This was an unparelleled success, and the little 'Blue-backed speller', as it was also called, became a sort of symbol of the American capacity to generate its own educational materials. It is perhaps not too exaggerated to believe, as Warfel (1936) does, that

> no other secular book has reached so many minds in America as Webster's spelling book and none has played so shaping a part in aour destiny. (p. 53)

The spelling book was purportedly planned to 'introduce uniformity and accuracy of pronunciation into common schools' (p.22), according to the usage model set up by 'the customary pronunciation of the most accurate scholars and literary gentlemen' (p. 23; all quotations from the spelling

book come from Babbidge, ed., 1967). But the focus on structural properties alone cannot account for the little book's success, even though the interest in literacy was very high at the time. What really made the book relevant was that it was 'American' and that it set the example for other books to announce themselves as 'American' as well. As Warfel (1936, pp. 93 ff.) reports, after the American Spelling Book most textbooks became American, from mathematics to religion, and made overt patriotic declarations, such as the following from Nicholas Pike's 1778 **Arithmetic:**

> As the United States are now and independent nation, it was judged that a system /of Arithmetic/ might be calculated more suitable to our meridian, than those heretofore published. (Quoted in Warfel, 1936, p. 96)

But as said, the assertion of Americanness was primarily approached in terms of a rejection of European ——basically British—— models, and thus in the American Spelling Book the separatist function of the language found a virulent expression:

> Europe is grown old in folly, corruption, and tyranny ——in that country laws are perverted, manners are licentious, literature is declinning, and human nature debased. For America in her infancy to adopt the present maxims of the old world would be to stamp the wrinkles of decrepid (sic) age upon the bloom of youth and plant the seeds of decay in a vigorous constitution. (p. 26)

The problem that remained, after rejecting European models, was to find valid American models to substitute for them. A first solution was that, since there seemed to be no visible indigenous tradition to which to take resource, the model had to be the language itself, conveniently purified of its British roots ——an impossible task which was nevertheless attempted. As a man brought up in the 18th century, Webster was convinced that reason was the only thing able to lead man's life in his search for happiness and earthly fulfillment As he wrote in a militant booklet published in 1787 to gain support for the constitution whose adoption was in the process of being discussed:

> In the formation of our constitution the wisdom of all ages is collected ——the legislators of antiquity are consulted, as well as the opinions and interests of the millions who are concerned. In short, it is the **empire of reason.** (**An exami-**

nation of the leading principles of the federal constitution proposed by the late convention held at Philadelphia. Repr. in Babbidge, ed., 1967)

The second part of the Grammatical Institute, published in 1784, was 'a plain and comprehensive grammar, founded on the true principles and idioms of the language', aimed precisely at establishing the empire of reason in language,[3] always within the framework of the belief that cultivation of the structural properties of the emerging standard language would bring about linguistic independence. This attitude manifests itself over and over again in this period of Webster's life, especially when he was peddling his books around the nation. He theorized about this many times, such as in this letter he wrote to 'the governor, instructors, and trustees of universities and seminars of learning in the United States':

> a language is not only formed, but must arrive to a tolerable state of perfection before a grammar of that language can be constructed. Languages are not formed but by ignorant barbarians; and as nations advance in knowledge, new words and new combinations of words are added to express the new ideas which they may acquire. (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 174)

And his grammar represented the true state of perfection of the English language in its more intellectualized aspects. That is why there is no contradiction in his attitude of loyalty to the English language, for he did not see it as loyalty to England. Along these lines, he could safely write apologies of the language which in many senses were against some established beliefs:[4]

> The English language, perhaps, at this moment is the repository of as much learning as one half the languages of Europe. Its copiousness exceeds all modern tongues. (In **The American Magazine**, 1787. Repr. in Babbidge, ed., 1967, p. 80)

So strong was Webster's faith in the state of development of English structural properties that he did not see any need for Greek or Latin grammar as useful tools in the education of rational and learned men. The languages-as-a-useful-instrument attitude was beginning to manifest itself: first as a rejection of the cultural legacy from Great Britain (under the pressure of the separatist function) and afterwards as the belief that language can be dealt with in purely practical terms. By the time the Gramma-

tical Institute was being completed, Webster was giving strong evidence that a shift in language-usage models --from literary models to technological and comercial models, from the exemplarity of the refined gentleman to the exemplarity of the efficient expert—— was already growing into him. In the same issue of **The American Magazine** quoted above, he explains that the two major classical languages have little or no relevance for merchants, mechanics, or planters, and states that, at any rate, the study of those languages does not justify a heavy investment of time and money. Living languages are different, though, since 'merchants often have occasion for a knowledge of some foreing language' (p. 82), and the practical and economic nature of this view appears even clearer when he says that

> men whose business is wholly domestic have little or no
> use for any language but their own, much less for languages
> known only in books. (id)

It was the cultivation approach to language, plus the influence of the separatist function (coupled with the pragmatic need to do business) that gave form to the third and final part of the Grammatical Institute: **An American selection on reading and speaking. Calculated to improve the minds and refine the taste of youth. And also to instruct them in geography, history, and politics of the United States.** Among the texts selected by Webster for this anthology were the following: Warren and Hancock's orations on the Boston Massacre, congressional speeches, the Declaration of Independence, Washington's Farewell Address, excerpts from American history and geography, and of course, webster's own writings on politics. It is, thus, clear that the last volume of the Grammatical Institute, by being again explicitly American, was insisting on the separation of American English from the so-called parent tongue; that it placed more importance on the structural properties of the language in the belief that it was possible to disregard its cultural properties; and that non-literary language-usage models were already becoming an integral part of Webster's basic system of attitudes.

The first period in Noah Webster's intellectual career found its most coherent expression in his first major scholarly book: the 1789 **Dissertations on the English language.** Still, it is the assertion of the separatist function which acts as the center of gravity of Webster's language concerns:

> As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a
> system of our own, in language as well as government.
> Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language
> we speak, should no longer be our standard; for the taste of

her writers is already corrupted, and her language on the decline. But if it were not so, she is at too great a distance to be our model and to instruct us in the principles of our own tongue. (**Dissertations on the English language,** pp. 20-21)

This quotation reveals all the basic contradictions implied in the conflict-laden situation Webster thought his country was in: having a language and at the same time not owning it, because its rootedness was most definitely British. In spite of that, it shows a hope for a true, all-American system not based upon British models. This would have been a dead-end conflict if it had not been for a beginning of an understanding that the separatist function of the language cannot act in the absence of rootedness:

> We have ...the fairest opportunity at establishing a national language, and of giving it uniformity and perspicuity, in North America, that ever presented itself to mankind. (id., p. 36)

Of course, that was only an ill-defined longing for native rootedness, and there was still a rationalistic attitude that the structural properties had logical priority in the conquest of linguistic identity. Nevertheless, the fact that practical, non-literature based considerations were guiding Webster's ideas about language cultivation, had a crucial importance. If the separatist function was generating only negative views about the language and how to deal with it, this pragmatic attitude was generating a positive way of action, for it was communicative efficiency in an American sense what Webster was ultimately trying to improve upon. Thus, even though English was the national language of Great Britain, and even though it was not quite clear how to make it American, what was clear was that Americans were in practice using that language and it was in their best interest to have it in good functioning condition:

> It will be readily admitted that the pleasures of reading and conversing, the advantage of accuracy in business, the necessity of clearness and precision in communicating ideas, requires us to be able to speak and write our own tongue with ease and correctness.(p. 18)

Within this framework of pragmatic intellectualization Webster also saw a need for language uniformity. Since the ghost of political separatism was strongly present at the beginning of the republic, the stability aspect of a new standard language was more important than the flexibility aspect

and systematic variation. It was a first manifestation of a unifying function for a population that was beginning to be ethnically diverse. To be sure, this was taking place in a rather unsystematic way, but the fact is that functions normally associated with the cultural properties of the standard language were , so to speak, pushing their way into a type of language treatment that wanted to be concerned with structural properties and provide a valid frame of reference before the language was adequately rooted and urbanized. Webster still believed that the unifying function was concerned only with language uniformity and not with a system of commonly-held cultural attitudes ——'our pilitical harmony is....... concerned in a uniformity of language' (p. 20)——, which is consistent with the idea that only rational lawcan guide man's life. It seems that, in the final analysis, the forces leading toward the establishment of English as the standard language of the United States were acting in spite of the formal system of concepts and attitudes present in Noah Webster, and that would explain the rather anxious mixture of disorientation, rejection of old models, and assertion of new ideas found in the **Dissertations on the English language.** It was a period of conflict for an entire country and language was not going to be an exception. Thus the models for language cultivation proposed by Webster were still in consonance with the assertion of the separatist function above all other functions and with the intellectual position that language itself ——the structural properties of the language, that is —— contained all the necessary guidelines for usage; as he put it,

> **the rules of the language itself,** and the **general practice of the nation,** constitute propriety in speaking (p. 27).

Let us insist on the ideological meaning of this position. On the one hand, by adopting language itself as the criterion for correctness, the issue of rootedness was being avoided, and on the other hand, by adding to it the general practice of the nation a democratic attitude was opposed to an elitist attitude, that is, the United States were confronted to Great Britain. But the second part of the quoted statement does contain an important new element more complex than the assertion of separatism, namely, the view that generalized usage, because of its higher degree of availability, has theoretical priority over the language-usage models set up by any restricted group, whatever its nature. As Webster unequivocally put it:

> The principal business of a compiler of a grammar is, to separate **local** or **partial** practice from the **general custom** of speaking, whether it exists among the great or the small, the learned or ignorant, and recommend that which is universal, or general, or which conforms to the analogies of

structure in a language. (p. IX)

Obviously, 'the general practice of the nation' is as utopic a model for language usage as the attempt at imposing any artificial norms, but its importance lies on the fact that, in Webster's case, it lead to the establishment of non-literary language usage models. As a matter of fact, Webster never felt comfortable with the literature-based approach to language he had grown up with. He always associated literature, in the sense of 'belles letres' with a British past he resented, with non-democratic principles, and with downright anti-Cristian values; in sum, with everything he despised. The **Dissertations on the English language** are again unequivocal in this regard:

> The (English) authors who have attempted to give us a standard, make the practice of the court and stage in London the sole criterion of propriety in speaking. An attempt to establish a standard on this foundation is **unjust** and **idle**. It is injust, because it is abridging the nation of its rights: the general practice of the nation is rule of propriety. (p. 24).

One thing Webster was not yet very clear about was that, in sipite of the democratic intention revealed in the declaration of 'the general practice of the nation' and not a lettered élite as the final authority, it was still necessary to ascertain the type of person who was going to symbolize the American language. This was a major step, and it was related to the problem of the cultural properties of the language. For Webster to define the profiles of the "American yeoman" as the bearer of the nation's linguistic identity, the English language had yet to be believed firmly rooted on American soil and linked to a valid American past.

Perhaps it was this distrust of literary authors which was one of the causes that delayed Webster's understanding of the crucial issue of rootedness in the ideal of linguistic identity he was fighting for. Of course, the fact that he was more interested in cultivation problems does not mean that he ignored rootedness completely. He did address it in his Dissertations, but in a rather marginal way, although that way was quite different from the traditional British way, because it was not linked to a language-as a national-treasure attitude, and thus it was not based on literary considerations. Websters would not deny that 'English is the common root or stock from which our national language will be derived' (p. 21), but that was all. English was just the point of departure for an American creation. When addressing the British past of the language, Webster only saw what his separatist - function - based attitude let him see. One strategy to legitimize American English was to demostrate that in England the original Anglo - Saxon tongue was corrupt,

while Americans'seldom use any word except those of Saxon original'(p. 58), that is to say, American was trying to take over the historical legitimacy supposedly possessed by British. That this attitude was generated by the influence of the separatist function appears evident when one consideres that British corruption and American purity were due, according to Webster, to the new nation's superior political and economic system:

> It may surprize those who have not turned their thoughts to this subject, that I should adscribe the manner of speaking among a people, to the nature of their government and a distribution of their property. Yet it is an undoubted fact that the drawling nasal manner of speaking in New England arises almost solely from these causes. (p.106).

This apparently naive statement was going to have major consequences in Webster's understanding of the development of American English, for it actually meant an initial awareness that the United States was generating a new type of person, the literate but non literary yeoman, who was going to embody the 'soul' of the language.

Then other strategy toward solving the problem of rootedness of American English in regard to British English was the assertion that the past was meaningful only insofar as it served the present, which allowed him to disregard as unimportant many old English authors, since "many of them I have not heard of in America' (p. XI). In spite of all the contradictions and insecurity found in the **Dissertations on the English language,** this book is a landmark in the cultural development of American English and the search for its own identity.

In 1790 Webster published another book, **A collection of essays and fugitiv (sic) writings.** As the title indicates, it was a miscellaneous book where he voiced his opinions on practically every topic. In many senses, the Collection is a culmination of the 'youthful, reform minded period in Webster's career' (Peters, 1977, p.VI). As far as language is concerned, the book continues and expands ideas contained in earlier publications, notably **Dissertations on the English language.** The most visible feature of it is the systematic use of a reformed orthography, one of Webster's favorite --and less successful-- youthful undertakings.[5] The desire for a more 'practical' and 'reasonable' orthography was not new in the United States. As said before, Benjamin Franklin had attempted a major reform a few years earlier. In 1768 he had published a Scheme for a New Alphabet and Refromed Spelling where he not only simplified the old spelling

systems to make it more phonetic, but also created brand new letters. But very soon Franklin understood that history and tradition are not easily challenged, and gave up his orthographic revolution to concentrate on more productive business, such as implementing the more general revolution that was taking place at the time. But young Noah Webster, believing that

> America is in a situation the most favorable for great reformations, and the present time is, in a singular degree, auspicious (**Dissertations on the English language, p.405**),

and that 'now is the time, and this is the country, in which we may expect success' (id., p. 406), thought that a major script reform should be attempted, and saw its greatest advantge in terms of the separatist function of the language:

> a capital advantage of the reform in these states would be, that it would make a difference between the English orthography and the American. This will startle those whoe have not attended to the subject, but I am confident that such an event is an object of vast political consequence. (id., p. 397).

The other considerations were of a practical nature: ease of learning, more uniform pronunciation, and cheaper printing costs. Of course, the rationality of the new orthograpy was weighed as an important factor in its favor:

> Every possible reezon that could ever be offered for altering the spelling of wurds, still exists in full force; and if a gradual reform should not be made in our language, it will proov that we are less under the influence of reezon than our ancestors. (A Collection..., p. XI).

The expremely modest success of **A collection of essays and fugitiv writings** helped to convince Webster that the rootedness of orthography was not something to be taken lightly, althougt somehow he knew it form before, for the **American spelling book** and the rest of the Grammatical Institute was published in conventional orthography, with minimal alterations. The important thing is that, in the Collection..., he still believed that it was the cultivation of the structural properties of the language in a rational way what was going to give greatness to the American approach to language. In one sense he was right: his own scholarly books were creating a frame of re-

ference, cultural and technical, for the years to come. At the same time,he was becoming more and more aware of the fact that linking the English language with American life and culture – the little tradition he thought the country had– was at least as necessary as cultivating the language in a scientific way:

> Every child in America should be acquainted with his own country. He should read books that furnish him ideas that would be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty, and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen, who have wrought a revolution in her favor. (p.23)

Also, he was toying with the awareness of the need for rootedness for the American version of the English language. In **Dissertations on the English language** he had included some rather uneventful discussions about pre-English origins of the language, but had not drawn any conclusions, as he was going to do so later. In **A collection of essays and fugitiv writings** he included several articles on etymologies, which were giving him a feeling of ownership of the language. That was also going to take time, and in a way was neve going to be thoroughly achieved.

In conclusion, the earlier years of Noah Webster's intellectual career show that in America the English language was in a rather low state of standardization in spite of the reportedly high degree of uniformity of usage among literate groups throughout the Union. There was a lack of clarity in regard to the types of language-usage models to be followed in the more formal cultivation of the language. An overwhelming influence of the separatist function testifies to the weak or conflict-laden sense of language identity proper of Noah Webster and many early American intellectuals, and prevented other functions from acting in a harmonious way. This led Webster to look for negative symbols of language identity, i.e. an insistence on differences from British English, rather than for positive assertions of identity. The unusual case that the separatist function acting to differentiate two groups within the same speech community and not two societies speaking different languages contributed to the disorientation that characterized the period. This fact, coupled, with an 18th-century faith in the absolute power of reason , led Webster to believe that only cultivation of the structural properties of the language would differentiate and give prestige to the language of the new nation. In spite of this , he somehow understood that intellectualization and flexible stability do not exist in the vacuum and need the support of cultural properties. Timidly first, he did try to relate the English language to American culture.

Unfortunately, the power of the separatist function led him to see most of the rootedness of the language in England, so he rejected the bulk of the tradition where it was most visible: the literary productions. Nevertheless, a slow awareness that new, American, language-usage models were emerging around him (and the fact that those models were non-literary) was changing Webster's attitudes. The frantic and rather disoriented search for identity at all cost was beginning to give fruit. In 1807, at the onset of a new stage in his life, Noah Webster was able to look and define ——by himself and perhaps for himself—— what the past had been:

> My plan has been to furnish our schools with a tolerably complete system of elementary knowledge in books of my own, gradually substituting American books for English and weaning our people from their prejudices and from their confidence in English authority. (To Joel Barlow, Letters of Noah Webster, p. 296)

Maturity was going to come with the systematic presentation of new models for language usage, the firm establishment of an indigenous rootedness, and a new mode of urbanization. That gave a solid base to the separatist function to act in concert with the other functions, and made it possible for the cultivation of the structural properties of the language to be approached in more positive terms. American intellectuals and philologists could, especially after the issuance of the American Dictionary, do their work without being looked upon like dancing bears. To be sure, conflict did not disappear, for even today the fact remains that English is a language shared by different nationalities, with different identities and different expectations.

2. Noah Webster's intellectual maturity: a new identity for an old language.

After the less-than-moderate success of A collection of essays and fugitiv writings, Webster became involved in a series of activities other than school teaching and publishing books about language: he tried to establish himself as a lawyer in Boston, practiced journalism in New York, and published books on medical problems (notably A brief history of epidemic and pestilential diseases, 1779). To be sure, he did not abandon his life-long desire for linguistic independence for his country. But as he was growing older a major change had been taking place in him: he began to gain an increasing awareness that the Americanization of English was not going to be brought about just by insisting on the separatist function of the language,

but by an integrated assertion of its cultural properties and all the functions based upon them. It is important to stress that this was above all a change in strategy, for Webster never really abandoned his old ideas about the intrinsic goodness of the language as the best frame of reference for cultivation (that is, rationalistic upbringing) as well as his anti-British feelings. But he did understand that, even tough he knew that he was never really wrong in his views, he could not always go against his contemporaries' beliefs, because that would alienate them a bit too much. So he looked for —and found— positive ways to assert America's rights to the English language. Perhaps his most crucial discovery was that of the power and influence of the dictionary as the embodiment of the identity of the English language in America. In the following chapter of this study a detailed discussion is offered of the significance of the dictionary in the development of standard American English. At this point it is enough to say that the publication, in 1806, of Webster's **Compendious dictionary of the English Language** marks the beginning of the author's new approach to the issue of American English, as well as an important step forward in the definition of the way in wich the language was going to be cultivated. To begin with, Webster had understood that his insistence on the school system and school books as the most visible and practical symbol of the standardization process was not working. He realized that one thing was the people's obvious interest in literacy and other practical subjects (above all, arithmetic) and another thing the actual prestige and influence of the schools and school masters on the country's cultural life, wich was apparently low. There is confusion about this, because it is traditional to overestimate the importance of formal schooling in early American life. Charlton Laird (1970), for one, thinks that there was a great deal of naive faith in the school system:

> Colonials are inhirently self-conscious, fearful of doing something gauche, and English-speaking America had been rebuked so long and so roundly by the mother country that we need not marvel if natives of the colonies and then the young nation suffered from complexes.... The colonials tried to improve themselves, and for improvement they turned to the schools and to lectures who could, they trusted, tell them how to behave. (p. 293)

The situation depicted by Laird might have been true for a hand ful of more intellectually-minded folks, but the fact is that the vast majority of the people expected very little from the schools other than the three R's, and did not feel guilty about it. Actually, schools were alloted just the

bare essentials in terms of materials and personnel, and the profession of school teacher was, apart from poorly rewarded, surrounded by extremely low prestige. As Hoffstadter (1964) points out, most Americans, seeing that reality,

> tended to conclude that teaching was a trade which attracted rascals and, having so concluded, they were reluctant to pay rascals more than they were worth. (p. 316)

As a matter of fact, Noah Webster realized, perhaps a bit late, that being associated as he had been with the teaching profession, was working against him. Many of his intellectual foes used his school-teaching past as a weapon against the validity of his points of view, so that

> it is not unlikely that his partial failure in political and journalistic work was due to his occupation as a school teacher. (Scudder, 1895, p. 183)

This tough reality convinced Webster that he had to look for valid language-usage models elsewhere. Since, as a loyal English speaker, he never thought too seriously that it was convenient to establish an academy for the English language, the problem of a suitable standardization agency presented itself as a pressing one. Webster's greatest achievement was to strengthen the position of the English dictionary as the best possible symbol to which attach the development of the emergent American version of the English language, that is to say, as a leading standardization agency. (As it will be shown in chapter 3 below, the emergence of the English dictionary was a much complex process, one which involved many different factors.) The implementation of the dictionary as a valid guide for language development requires not only well-established structural properties but also well-established and especially well-defined language-usage models. Along these lines, in what follow I show how Webster, having mellowed his insistence on the separatist function, was able to handle the issue of rootedness for American English in a more confident and positive way, and how he developed the adequate framework for the establishment of non-literary usage models based upon a language-as-a-practical-instrument attitude rather than on the traditional language-as-a-national-treasure attitude.

As said above, the 1806 **Compendious Dictionary of the English Language** was perceived by many of Webster's contemporaries as the beginning of a new trend in the development of language in the United States. It goes without saying that not everybody was happy with the direction

things were taking, and a lengthy polemic followed the publication of the book. Appart from the properly lexicographic issues raised, one of the most important texts in this polemic was a memoir published in 1816 by the prestigious philologist John Pickering: **A Vocabulary or Collection of Words and Phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States of America.** This was not a dictionary, but a purely scholarly piece of research. In the 'Essay' that preceded the Vocabulary, Pickering stated his views about the status of American English, and expressed the attitudes of most of the intellectuals of his time about the issue of language-usage models, the function of literature in language cultivation, and the burning problem of the relationship between American and British English. Also, Pickering attaked Noah Webster as an excessive reformer who was threatening the unity of the English-speaking world, 'a thirsty reformer and a presumptuous sciolist....who would unsettle the whole of our admirable languag(Warfel,1953, p. XXXIX). It was a weighty document that was denying Webster a place in the republic of intellectuals, as it were. Webster, even though he defined himself as being above petty jealousies, and even though he stated that 'to a man who seeks his own tranquility and whose sole object is to enlighten and benefit his fellow citizens, controversy is extreme irksome' (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 342), answered Pickering's comment in an open letter of over 60 pages! The gist of this polemic, which has seen itself repeated with variations several times in the cultural history of the United States, lies in the conception of rootedness in regard to American English, the basic question being whether or not it should be related to British English, and in the confrontation of two opposite attitudes: one that conceives of language in terms of its condition of the cultural legacy of a valuable past, and one that approaches language in terms of its communicative efficiency. They are not by necessity mutually exclusive in a speech community and can coexist, but at times of cultural definition they may appear irreconcilable, and this was one of those occasions. Pickering was extremely conscious of the importance of cultural roots for American English, and thought that rootedness manifested itself, above all, in the literary creations from England. For him, the great English writers were the center of gravity of language, 'the foundation of our English' (p. 75; all quotations from Pickering's Vocabulary come from Mathews, ed., 1973). Thus, if Americans were to ignore those writers or to betray them with deviant usages, they would be in fact Jeopardizing the very legitimacy of their cultural life. Such was the meaning of language 'purity' for Pickering:

> The preservation of the **English language** in its purity throughout the United States in an object deserving the attention of every American, who is a friend of the litera-

ture and science of his country (p. 65),

for in the faithfulness to the roots he saw the communicative efficiency of the language:

> unless that language is well settled, and can be read with ease by all to whom it is addressed, our authors will write and publish, certainly under many disadvantages, though perhaps not altogether in vain. (id.)

The attitude that the basic rootedness of American English lay in British literature generated a strong assertion of the participatory function of the language, and also served the unifying function, for it ultimately meant that if Americans remained faithful to the language they had inherited, their cohesion as a nation was going to be but enhanced. Thus Pickering's literature-based rootedness meant that the desire-to-participate attitude manifested itself in terms of the capacity to read the great British authors of the past and, in the case of American writers, to incorporate themselves creatively into that tradition. This being so, the idea that Americans could eventually generate a language of their own, even though it did have some appeal, was considered as something undesirable due to the loss of participatory possibilities it would entail:

> It is true indeed, that our countrymen may speak and write in a **dialect** of English, which will be understood in the **United States;** but if they are ambitious of having their works read by Englishmen as well as by Americans, they must write in a language that Englishmen can read with pleasure. And if for some time to come it should not be the lot of many Americans to publish works, which will be read out of their own country, yet all, which have the least tincture of learning, will continue to feel an ardent desire to acquaint themselves with **English** authors. Let us then for a moment imagine the time to have arrived, when **Americans** shall no longer be able to understand the works of Milton, Pope, Swift, Addison, and other English authors, justly styled classic, without the aid of a translation into a language, that is to be called in some future day, the **American** tongue! (pp. 65-66)

It should be noted that Pickering was aware that science-based language-usage models were valid models and perhaps available in American culture, but he disregarded their function as valid models for the cultiva-

tion of the language in general, which was to be based on 'works of taste', that is to say, more culture-oriented in a sense of tradition:

> By such a change, it is true, our loss would be not so great in works purely scientific, as in works which are usually termed books of taste .....But the excellencies of works of taste cannot be felt even in the best translations. (p. 66)

It is but consistent with this attitude that the separatist function found only a minor place in Pickering's views, and that place was in the unavoidable American deviations, or rather adaptations, conditioned by different physical and cultural needs. But even then, Pickering chose to play down the elements of separation and weighed them against the need for keeping intact the English-speaking world:

> The reader will not infer ... that our right to make new words is here meant to be denied.
> We, as members of the great family which speaks the English language, have undoubtedly, as well as the other members, a right to make words and to propose them into our common language. But unless those, who are the final arbiters in the case, that is, the body of the learned and and polite of this whole community, wherever they may be, shall sanction such new terms, it would be presumptuous in the authors of them to attempt to force them into general use. (p. 74, note)

Pickering expected some degree of reciprocity on the part of British intellectuals in the sense of accepting mutual differences, because his ultimate effort was geared to the enhancement of the participatory function of the language. Perhaps he sounded too sensitive to British opinion. But he thought that American English, by accepting and treasuring its literature-based roots, was going to be able to stand as legitimate, and therefore prestigious, version of the common language. To his effect, he produced a list of quotations from British critics who lamented the extent to which American English had departed from the parent tongue, but at the same time he showed how some American writers, notably Franklin, had found respect in British circles. In this sense, it is true that Pickering's loyalty to the British past of the language, and the subsequent interest in the participatory function, led him to adopt the attitude that the British usage contemporary to his own was a good index to the frama-of-reference function of the language ——as if they were to the roots—— and therefore his awareness-of-the-norm attitude was rather British-oriented:

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> As a general rule .... we should undoubtedly avoid all those words which are noticed by English authors of reputation as expressions with which **they are unacquainted;** for although we might produce some English authority for such words, yet the very circumstance of their being thus noticed by well educated **Englishmen,** is a proof that they are not in use at this day in England, and, of course, ought not to be used elsewhere by those who speak correct English. (p. 72)

Just as the insistence on the separatist function had led Webster to extremes, and in some cases to dead-end situations, so an exaggeration of a British literature-based participatory function led Pickering to a situation of cultural unbalance, for he was left with practically no American language-usage models, and thus ended up erecting a frame of reference for correctness that was openly hurting the manifestation of the separatist function of the language, and creating a serious lack of a necessary indigenous attitude of pride. Once again, it was a conflict-laden situation, a symptom that the standardization process had still a way to go in the United States.

Noah Webster, even if he had not been personally atacked by Pickering, could not have let the **Vocabulary** .... pass without comment.

Webster had changed, as said. Since the publication of his **Compendious Dictionary** he had learned how to take a positive approach in his challenge of British as the center of the English language and had learned that the right strategy was not to belittle British English but rather to address the issue of

> whether an American citizen shall be permitted to correct and improve English books or whether we are bound down to receive whatever the English give us. (To Jedidiah Morse, 1806; Letters of Noah Webster, p. 269)

It is clear that Webster's anger at Pickering was due more to the man's attitude of receiving 'whatever the English give us' than to personal reasons. In many regards, Pickering's essay was attaking everything Webster stood for, so in his open letter he adressed every one of Pickering's points and refuted then carefully.

One issue to which Webster accorded a paramount importance in this polemic was that of rootedness: on the one hand, and under the influence of the separatist function, he disregarded the British origins of the

language and further elaborated on his idea that there were roots that went beyond the British Isles and, furthermore, 'there are many instances in which we retain the genuine use of words ... which they have corrupted' (p. 392). On the other hand, he asserted a more positive view of the rootedness issue, namely, that American English was becoming more and more rooted in American soil by being a useful instrument serving the needs of American people.

It is important to stress that by now Webster was accepting English literature as part of his past, though only insofar as it did not interfere with the separatist function:

> Far be it from me ... to depreciate the real value of the labors of Johnson, of Blackstone, of Jones, or any other distinguished scholar who has adorned the literature of Great Britain. I venerate the men and their writings ––I venerate the literature, the laws, the institutions, and the charities of the land of my fathers. But I deprecate the effects of a blind acquiescence in the opinions of men and the passive reception of everything that comes from a foreing press. My mind revolts at the reverence for foreing authors which stifles inquiry, restrains investigation, benums the vigor of the intellectual faculties and debases the mind. (p. 382)

Thus, since Webster did not accept British writers as valid models for Americans, he could easily answer Pickering's argument that some British critics scorned American English:

> With regard to the British reviewers, whose opinion you have cited at some length, I would briefly remark that they stand much higher in your estimation than in mine (p. 388),

and therefore

> I will examine subjects for myself, and endeavor to find the truth, and to defend it, whether it accords with English opinions or not. (p. 393)

One of the truths that Webster put forwards was that a language had to be rooted in the daily activities of the people who speak   it , and that its adequacy to changing circumstances is what gives it legitimacy. But, since he was in the process of undestanding that history was such an important force behind the present, and so meaningful for everybody around him, he started

elaborating on an argument that was going to find its final form in the 1828 **American Dictionary**,namely, that there is no such thing as 'new words', for all words are just analogical formations on the basis of already existing forms and, in the long run, 'all languages are dialects of one primitive language ' (p. 343), which placed British and American English at the same level. The cruciality of this argument can never be stressed enough, for it gave Webster a solid theoretical foundation to relegate British records to the category of being just one point in the long-term development of a deeper-rooted language. To be sure, this way of reasoning was conditioned by the still strong presence of the separatist function, for Webster, although having found positive ways to approach the issue of language identity, was never able to rid himself of the idea that the identity of American English was defined in terms of being different from British English. Along these lines, he used the argument that the language's adaptation to changing needs legitimized deviations from the British standard, but he did it in a different manner from Pickering, for he hinted that American English, by becoming different, was becoming livelier and, ultimately, better than its British counterpart:

> Americans are under the necessity of using a greater latitude...than Englishmen. In this country, new objects, new associations of ideas compel us either to invent new terms or to use English words in a new sense. (p.346)

The real point Webster was making was that, if it was true that England had history, America was making history, and that fact both strengthened the rootedness of its version of the shared language and set it apart from the parent country as a new, different reality. This is Webster's justification for the inclusion of new words or usages as legitimate:

> You observe, sir, under the words **locate** and **location**...that the verb and one of the significations I have given to the latter word in my dictionary are not in the English dictionaries. No, sir, and this was one reason why I compiled mine. How can the English **locate** lands, when they have no lands to locate. (p.347)

Notice how 'locate' is not justified in terms of its being used in literary books --which was Pickering's principle-- but on the grounds that it represented a real, practical need which Pickering, even though he accepted it as a reasonable argument, thought of it as less weighty than the literature-oriented, participatory-function-constrained type of language cultivation he was favoring. Webster represented a completely different attitude. Actually, it was the extraordinary strength of the manifestation of the separatist function

that was pushing him farther and farther away from the language-usage mode-
ls current in Britain and among a handful of not-too-influential American in-
tellectuals. Thus, in answer to Pickering's terrible premonition that some day
perhaps Americans were not going to be able to read the great British classics,
what Webster had to say was that, although unlikely,

> if such an event should take place, the people of this count-
> ry must learn English and read the British authors as we do
> Livy and Caesar. One thing is very certain: the works of
> Milton, Pope, and Addison will be read by Americans till
> our descendants divest themselves of their leading strings,
> grow up to manhood in intellectual vigor, and write books
> that they like better. (p.386)

Apart from the fact that Webster had convinced himself that Milton,
Pope, and Addison were foreign authors for Americans, what he had in mind
when he hoped that his descendants would some day write books that they
'like better' was not the type of poetic works Pickering was so fond of. To be
sure, by 1816 he did have models for language cultivation other than literary
writers. He saw that there was a new type of man emerging in the United
States, a man more concerned with earthly and practical business than with
suspicious literary activities.

Webster's move away from the language-as-a-national treasure atti-
tude also came very naturally as a concomitant factor in the move away from
literary language-usage models:

> The prince and the nobleman, having no concern with the
> workshop, will lose or never learn many of the words which
> are necessary to the artisan. The farmer, the artificer, and
> the seaman have each his technical words and phrases, with-
> out which his occupation could not be pursued to advanta-
> ge...But let it be observed, to the confusion of those who
> deride vulgar words, that the terms used by the common
> people of a country are as genuine and legitimate as those
> used by the poet and historian, and as necessary, nay, more
> necessary in proportion as the cultivation of the earth and
> the mechanical arts are more necessary to a nation than his-
> tory and poetry, and as subsistence and comfort are more
> necessary than refinement and luxury. (pp.449-350)

The fact that Noah Webster had made crucial advances in the appropriation
of the English language as rooted America in does mean that a certain feeling

of linguistic insecurity dissapeared among American intellectuals. For instance, in 1829, a year after Webster's monumental **American Dictionary**, Samuel Lorenzo Knapp published an important book, **Lectures on American Literature, with remarks on some passages on American History,** an aggressive but serious study aimed at demostrating that there was indeed an American literary tradition with its own identity and worthy of continuing and being proud of. But Knapp, like Webster and most intellectuals of the time, had the self-imposed responsability of being history makers rather than mere recorders of history, so his book is, in a sense, a statement about a rootedness of American culture as a guide for further improvement. Within his optimistic view of indigenous American culture only the issue of language rootedness showed a melancholic uneasiness:

> Almost everything the people of the United States now possess, has grown form their own sagacity, industry and perseverance...Their language alone is theirs by inheritance. They received it from their progenitors and have kept it unpolluted and unchanged. (Knapp, 1929, p.9)

The convinction that Americans had 'received' the language was only partially balanced by the pride of having kept it 'pure'. Nevertheless Knapp, like Webster, was also trying to find American rootedness for American English, and in order to achieve this he was one of the first American intellectuals who began to incorporate non-European cultural elements into American culture, and thus he mentioned the case of the development of the Cherokee alphabet as a sample of true American cultural creation. He did something else: he placed Noah Webster's **American Dictionary** at the same level as Johnson's, which indicates that Webster was, after all and for some people, becoming an important element in the conquest of an indentity for American English.

Noah Webster was thus becoming an unavoidable name in any discussion about language in the United States. For instance, his polemic with Pickering bacame a frame of reference whenever the issue of the 'naturalization' of English in the United States was discussed, for it clarified the nature of the problem and it helped to define its terms. Pickering was associated with the literature-based language-as-a-national-treasure attitude, and thus with a British conception of rootedness and a preponderance of the participatory function; Webster was associated with a non-literary language-as-a-practical-instrument attitude and a down-to-earth, American style approach to rootedness and a preponderance of the separatist function. The same year of Knapp's book, Theodoric Romeyn Beck published an important paper, 'Notes on Pickering's 'Vocabulary of words and phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States', with preliminary observations' (repr. in Mathews, ed. 1973

1931), pp.78-87). Beck's attitude was that

> the standard writers of a language are, like the guardians of
> a well-ordered state, its preservers from anarchy and revolu-
> tion. (p.79)

Like Pickering, Beck turned to the British literary past to find the
roots of his language, with the consequence that according to this view Ame-
rican English seemed to have apparently lost a form of indigenous rootedness,
and that the separatist function of the language resulted considerably redu-
ced in strength:

> Just and necessary, and indeed indispensable, as it is, for us
> to cultivate the feelings of an independent nation, yet it
> behooves us to recollect that our language is a **derived** one
> --that our literature is, in one some, a foreign one-- and,
> above all, a living literature, assiduously cultivated in the
> parent state. (p. 80)

The only thing for Americans to do, according to Beck, was to acce-
pt literary language-usage models and try to incorporate themselves actively
into the English tradition with a high dose of desire-to-participate attitude
and hope to be accepted.

Things were taking a different course, though.

Noah Webster, as said, never accepted the literary language as a valid
model for language standardization because, among other things, he unders-
tood that the power of British tradition would unavoidably have undermined
America's self-esteem, and because the notion of culture was acquiring diffe-
rent connotations in the New World. Nevertheless, he could not avoid, by the
end of his life, a mild form of rapprochement to British English and its cultu-
re. To be sure, this rapprochement always took place within the framework
of a never-forgotten assertion of the separatist function. In a 1841 letter he
wrote to Andrew Stevenson, he made it very cleat that American English
would join, so to speak, British English, only the day when they could stand
as equal partners:

> Our common language is one of the ties that binds the two
> nations together; & I hope the work I have executed will
> manifest to the British nation that the Americans are not
> willing to suffer it to degenerate on this side of the Atlan-
> tic. (Quoted in Shoemaker, 1936, p. 253)

but a crucial difference was that Webster did not see the participatory function in terms of a common literature and of a language-as-national-treasure attidude, but in more practical terms:

> The diversities of language among men may be considered as a curse and certainly one of the greatest evils that commerce, religion, and the social interest of men have to encounter. (id.)

Webster had definitely found the linguistic identity of his country in a power-based, non-literary attitude:

> The English language is to be the instrument of propagating sciences, arts, and the Christian religion to an extent probably exceeding that of any other language. (p. 413)

Webster's British colleagues were not prepared to undestand this attitude.

Even in the United States it seems that it was still necessary to further settle the issue of rootedness in terms of a participatory function before technology-oriented or practical-matters-oriented (and at any rate non-literature-oriented) language-usage models could establish themselves as the leading force that was going to shape the future cultivation of American English. Just as Pickering had seen this force in his language and disregarded it in favor of literary development, so was the second part of 19th century marked by an assertion of the participatory function and literary language-usage models among many American intellectuals. All the same, Webster's ideas and attitudes found a more fertile soil among non-intellectual ——that is to say, the majority—— sectors of the American English speech community, which began buying Webster's dictionaries and their revisions instead of the traditional grammars, and conceiving of British English more and more in terms of a romantic past that meant no threat and thus culd be approached safely. That is why even intelligent and articulate writers appeared by then to sound somehow outdated in their gloomy predictions that an excess of 'Americanization' of the language was tantamount to 'denaturalization' of its true roots:

> If we cannot prevent so sad a calamity let us not voluntarily accelerate it. Let us not, with malice propense, go about to republicanize our dictionaries, our nursery hymns and our Bibles, until, by the force of irresistible influences, our language shall have revolutionized itself. (March, 1867, p. 676)

To be sure, the language-as-a-practical-instrument attitude that by and large has dominated the development of American English since Webster's mature writings became influential, has not caused the language-as-a-national-treasure to disappear completely. In a complex language situation there is usually one dominant force, but there is also room for divergent tendencies, and thus the conception of language as a legacy that must be loved and kept pure has never disappeared in the United States. A successful contemporary example is Edwin Newman's **Strictly speaking** (Newman, 1975). Newman tells the story of Benjamin Franklin, who when asked what kind of government the Convention where the future constitution for the United Stated was being discussed was going to give de Nation, answered: 'a republic, if you can keep it'. Newman's comment: 'We were also given a language, and there is competition in throwing it away' (p. 168). Of course, Newman does not believe, like pickering, Beck, and Marsh, that it is just Americans who are debasing the English language:

> There is no reason for Americans to feel inferior to the British when it comes to language. The British are as intent on ruining theirs as we are on ruining ours. Americans should also understand that most Britons who come to the United States, sounding polished, are from the upper and middle classes. Lower-class British accents, which are seldom heard here, are appalling. (p. 124)

Even though Newman does not believe that the exemplarity of literary language is the model to follow, he is convinced that the excessive influence of technological language-usage models is destroying the language by transforming it, from a flexible instrument capable of conveying a variety of contents, into a stiff, graceless, pseudo-scientific jargon. And he is by no means alone. As next chapter will show, many American English speakers side with him in this attitude that a cultured language is as important as a 'technologized' language (cf. for instance John Simon's regular column on English usage in Esquire magazine). All the same, the presence of technology-based language-usage models and of 'experts' as the new symbol of American intellectuality and therefore standards for language usage is all-pervading. It is thus useful to take a closer look at the origins of this situation, for all indeed began with Noah Webster.

The drift toward non-humanistic models for language cultivation has its roots, as was said, in a separatist-function-influenced rejection of the British past of American English, but also with the positive realization that a new type of person was emerging this side of the Atlantic. As early as 1709 Noah Webster first identified this human type as a sort of

living incarnation of language in the United States and characterized him as a yeoman in contraposition to the traditional british nobleman. The basic cultural features of the yeoman were defined as a property-centered independence and a pragmatic approach to culture. The latter has been labeled as anti-intellectualism, but it is actually just a different conception of the place of intellect in human life. Webster's view is close in spirit to George Washington's Farewell Address, but is was clearly intended as a background for the way in which the language was going to be approached in the United States in the years to come, that is to say a declaration of principles:

> Let Englishmen take notice that when I speak of the American yeomanry, the latter are not to be compared to the illiterate peasantry of their own country. The yeomanry of this country consists of substantial independent freeholders, masters of their own persons and lords of their own soil. These men have considerable education. They not only learn to read, write, and keep accounts; but a vast proportion of them read newspapers every week, and besides the Bible, which is found in all families, they read the best English sermons and treatises upon religion, ethics, geography and history; such as the works of Watts, Addison, Atterbury, Salmon, etc. In the Eastern United States, there are public schools sufficient to instruct everyman's children and most of the children are actually benefited by these institutions. (Dissertations on the English language, p. 289)

One and a half century later, the yeoman, now baptized as the middle American, was characterized again by another staunch fighter for the American language also in terms of his being the bearer of language in the United States, and the coincidences make all comments unnecessary:

> This highly virile and defiant dialect, and not the fossilized English of the school marm and her books, is the speech of the Middle American of Joseph Jacob's composite picture ——the mill-hand in a small city of Indiana, with his five years of common schooling behind him, his diligent reading of newspapers, and his proud membership in the Order of Foresters and the Knights of the Maccabees. Go into any part of the country... and you will find multitudes of his brothers, car conductors in Philadelphia, immigrants of the second generation in the East side of New York, iron-workers in the Pittsburgh region, corner grocers in St. Louis, holders of petty political jobs in Atlanta and New Orleans, small far-

mers in Kansas or Kentucky, house carpenters in Ohio, tinners and plumbers in Chicago—— genuine Americans all, bawling patriots, hot for the home team, marchers in parades, readers of the yelow newspapers, fathers of families, sheep on election day, undistinguished forms of the Homo Americanus. (Mencken, 1946 /1919/, p. 270)

To be sure, neither the yeoman nor the Middle American represent the whole of American society of their respective times. In the case of Webster, it was true that the 'illiterate peasantry' proper of England was practically absent in America, for the simple reason that the jobs typical of 'illiterate peasants' were executed by imported slaves that did not belong to the national speech community; in the case of Mencken, the language is still not viewed in terms of its spread to the whole of the speech community but in terms of one sector of it, namely, the males. At any rate, both authors offer a valid characterization of the cultural lines along which the American version of the English language was finding its own identity.

A human type which can be conceived of as the counterpart and of the Middle American is the gentleman, which has also had its paladins in America. The best known is Fennimore Cooper, who in 1838 published a book about **The American Democrat, or hints on the social and civic relations of the United States of America** (repr. in Mathews, 1973 /1919/, pp. 123-129). Cooper tried to present an encouraging picture of what he thought should be the ideal embodiment of language in America:

The word 'gentleman' has a positive and limited signification. It means one elevated above the mass of society by his birth, manners, attainments, character and social condition. As no civilized society can exist without these social differences, nothing is gained by denying the use of the term...
To call a laborer, one who has neither education, manners, accomplishments, tastes, associations, nor any one of the ordinary requisites, a gentleman, is just absurd as to call one who is just qualified, a fellow. (p. 125)

There is an obviously apologetic attitude in Cooper, which had its origin in the fact that when he was writing his definition of the American gentleman, gentlemen were being quickly displaced by fellows[6]. As Spiller (1931) remarks,

Cooper was an American gentleman ——a democratic gentleman—— but his countrymen were not in the mood for

gentlemen of any sort. (p. 251)

The fact is that the emergence of the new human type described by Webster has a crucial influence in the development of English in the United States, for he became the living frame of reference for language usage, cultivation, and, in the case of Noah Webster, scholarship. The humanistic approach of traditional intellectuals was displaced early by a different approach which placed more emphasis on practical matters. At the beginning it seems that there was no conflict between these two approaches because the representative types were not well defined:

> When the United States began its national existence, the relationship between intellect and power was not a problem. The leaders **were** the intellectuals... Since it was an unspecialized and versatile age, the intellectual as expert was a neglegible force; but the intellectual as a ruling class gentleman was a leader in every segment of the society ——at the bar, in the professions, in business, and in political affairs. (Hofstadter, 1964, p. 145)

But when Webster's yeomen began having more influence in national affairs —as taxpayers—, their down-to-earth attitude led them to look upon intellectuals with disdain or distrust as unproductive members of society. Eventually, the power-based development of the language mant that intellect was at the service of power and the conflict lessened. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the revolution, poetry had indeed been associated with independence ideals, and a few poets wielded their verse in a romantic sense as weapons against the enemy and in praise of freedom and a bright cultural future. Thus John Trumbull, in a poem to the future glory of American Literature, predicted:

> This land her Swift and Addison shall view .
> The former honnors equall'd by the new;
> Here shall some Shakespeares charm the rising age,
> And hold in magic chains the listening stage:
> A second Watts shall string the heavenly lyre,
> And other muses other bards inspire.
> (repr. in Prescott and Nelson, eds., 1925, p. 135)

The land did produce poets, but their influence on American life was minimal, for things were going in other directions. Trumbull himself defined the future glory of American literature in terms of the glory of British literature. This association of literature with British

culture was always a hindrance for the establishment of literary language-usage models in the United States [7], and and this fact is as relevant as the political and economic structure of the new nation to an explanation of the establishment of technological models for language cultivation. Nida's (1977) statement that 'no English-speaking statesman would even think of denouncing enemies in poetry' has been true in America, in general terms, for many years. The function of literature in general, and poetry in particular, as a powerful factor in the development of language in the United States has been very low. Baskerville (1971), among others, presents a revealing case-study. He studied the evolution of patriotic rhetoric, specifically the forth-of-July oration, and demonstrates how it very soon became a sort of burlesque of oratory under the anti-intellectual pressure of humorists, who reflected the generalized feeling that there was something silly about that aspect of language use. Along similar lines, Laird (1970, esp. chapter 19) shows how poetry was consistently identified with a somehow artificial language, closer to 'tall talk' and proper of people who wanted to live ignoring the hardships of real life. Webster was the champion of preachers against 'belles lettres' as a valid model for language cultivation since his early writings. In 1867 he had written that

> a theatre under the best regulations is not essential to our public and private happiness. It may afford entertainment to individuals, but it is at the expense of private taste and public morals. (Remarks on the manners, government, laws, and domestic debt of America. Repr. in Baddidge, ed., 1967,p.63)

And 36 years later his views were still the same:

> In selecting books for reading, be careful to choose such as furnish the best helps to improvements in morals, literature, arts, and science, preferring profit to pleasure and instruction to amusement. A small portion of life may be devoted to such reading as tends to relax the mind, and to such bodily amusements as serve to invigorate muscular strength and the vital functions. But the greatest part of life is to be employed in useful labors and in various indispensable duties ... I would there-fore caution you against the fascinations of plays, novels, romances, and that species of descriptive writing wich is employed to embellish common objects without much enlarging the bounds of knowledge or to paint imaginary scenes wich only excite curiosity and a temporary interest and then vanish in empty air. (Letters to a young gentleman commencing his education, repr. in Babbidge, ed., 1967, p. 158)

To be sure, the above description of the lesser importance of literature as a guiding force in language cultivation (and in culture in general) does not mean that intellect had no place in American life. It only means that new standards were substituting for old ones. An emphasis on literacy as a useful tool for progress was substituting for an emphasis on literature, by now thought of as mere amusement:

> It seemed to be the goal of the common man in America to build a society that would show how much could be done without literature and learning —or rather, a society whose literature and learning would be largely limited to such elementary things as the common man could grasp and use. Hence, early nineteenth century America was more noted for a wide range of literacy and for the unusual amount of information, independence, self-respect, and public concern possessed by the ordinary citizen than it was for the encouragement of first-rate science or letters or for the creation of first-rate universities. (Hoftadter, 1964, p. 51)

A similar analysis is found in Boorstin (1958).

Noah Webster acted as the avant-garde in the definition and implementation of this new type of models for language cultivation which so efficiently served his vocation. Realizing that a literary approach would lead to British sources, he discovered that the American yeoman was more at ease with newspapers, which are by definition centered on more practical and tangible things, than with long novels or poetry books which contain no useful information. As he wrote in The American Minerva, a newspaper that he founded and directed:

> In no country on earth, not even Great Britain, are newspapers so generally circulated among the body of the people as in America. To this facility of spreading knowledge over our country, may, in a certain degree be attributed that civility of manners, that love of peace and good order and that propriety of public conduct, which characterizes the substantial body of citizens in the United States ... But newspapers are not only vehicles of what is called news; they are common instruments of social intercourse, by which the citizens of this vast republic constantly discourse and debate with each other on subjects of public concern. (Quoted in Morgan, 1975, p. 132)

Later on, Webster was going to compile his dictionaries based more on

newspaper-type materirals than on literary productions, precisely because the yeoman had become the symbol of the ideal user of the language, as it were, and newspapers had become the symbol of his daily intellectual life. As Mott (1931) explains,

> the influence of the magazines was probably out of proportion to the actual number of copies printed ... and ... every page of every copy of every magazine was usually read with care by a number of people. (pp. 67-68)

Mott's monumental study of first American magazines demonstrates beyond any doubt that American cultural life manifested itself through newspaper and magazines to a degree never seen before.

This non-literary, and in many senses non-intellectualizing approach to culture and to language manifested itself everywhere in American life during the nineteenth century. Elson (1959) has studied how it effected scholbooks, and rightly points out how Webster's opinions about cultural independence had a great influence on many authors of texts of study. As far as language is concerned, properly literary issues had a minor influence on these books. Benjamin Franklin and Geoge Washington were consistently presented as models for language use, and not so much because of their intellectual or gentlemanly qualities, but rather because of their condition of pragmatic, self-made men:

> The American-hero figure was stereotyped... as a practical, moral, hard-working man who who needs 'knowledge' to get ahead in the world, but finds scholarship unnecessary and even demeaning. (p. 420)

In summary, in spite of apparently having always been against his contemporaries on practically every issue, Noah Webster was actually acting as the avant-garde in the process of standardization of American English. He moved away from humanistic, literature-oriented models for language culti-vation, and centered himself on a pragmatic approach to culture, where literacy was more important than literature. He proposed a down-to-earth American yeoman as the symbol of the new language treatment. This new language embodiment had an efficiency-oriented view of the structural pro-perties of the language and served as a concrete frame-of-reference for correctness in his capacity of practical user of the language. He had a lan-guage-as-a-useful-instrument attitude, and thus he conceived of rootedness in terms of the inventive capacity proper of yeomen, able to create all sorts of elements to make life more comfortable. He was more inclined to techno-logy than to culture in the traditional sense. This last fact had enormous

consequences for the development of American English, for eventually the yeoman became the expert, a man extremely skilled in one aspect of human activity. As society grew more complex, no individual could handle cultural life in its totaly, so more experts became necessary. Language was not an exception, and it became a rich field for expertise, as language use became a practical skiil, subject to expert-controlled training. Noah Webster produced yet another instrument to reflect this state of affairs: the American dictionary. This book is made by experts in language and it is intended to fulfill the needs that a new technology-oriented view of the standard language had generated. This will be the topic of chapter three of this study.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

1

Discussions about the issue of an Academy for the English language are not an exception, for they were not related to problems specific to the American-English situation, but rather were a reflection of discussions that were being carried out in England.

2

In Webster's time, 'literature' had a more general meaning than it has today. As Warfel (1936) points out,

> in the ebb and flow of words, 'literature' has lost its eighteen century meaning. The term meant 'learning, reading, skills in letters and books', or more distinctively it embraced all the liberal arts as well as belles lettres. (p. 4)

Mc. Clary (1964) makes the same observation about the fact that Samuel L. Knapp, 'like his friend Noah Webster... looked upon literature as **learning**, both formal and informal' (p.8). In the present study, the word is used in the sense of 'belles lettres'.

3

Webster never completely gave up the idea that a grammar was an important instrument in the development of American English. After the 1784 'plain and comprehensive grammar' ha published, in 1790, some **Rudiments of English Grammar** to which a much more important **Federal Catechism** was appended. In 1807, as a sort of complement to his **Compendious Dictionary** he published a **Philosophical an Practical Grammar,** and there is a grammatical sketch of English in the 1828 **American Dictionary.** None of these grammars was really successful or influential, but since the dictionaries became so relevant both theoretically and commercially, there is no evidence that Webster was upset about his modest achievement as a grammarian.

4

It was not uncommon among 18th and early 19th century intellectuals to believe that the cultivation of structural properties should take precedence over any other consideration. 'Ascertaining', 'polishing', and 'improving' the English tongue were common topics, as was the uncomfortable feeling that French was a more 'advanced' language than English as far as intellectualization was concerned. The Rev. John Witherspoon complained that

the French language is as nearly as I can guess, about 50 years before the English, ... that is to say, it is so much longer since their men of letters applied themselves to the ascertaining, correcting, and polishing it. (Repr. in Mathews ed., 1973 /1931/, p. 15)

5

An account of Webster's success as an orthographic reformer is given in Mencken (1946 /1919/), pp. 228 ff.

6

As early as the beginning of the 19th century it was not uncommon to find people trying to defend the 'belles lettres' against the growing feeling of distrust and even hostility found in many Americans. Consider the following quotation, from an 'Address to the Society of Artists', by Benjamin Henry Latrobe:

...we need not dread the encouragement of the fine arts, as hostile to our interests, the interests of our morals, and our liberty. (Quoted in Cunningham, ed., 1968, p. 246)

To be sure, the longing for a poet or a poem that would embody American identity has not been completely absent in the country's cultural history. As Warfel (1936) points out,

the call for an American bard echoed through American poetry and criticism, finding expression in the writtings, among others, of Frenau, Whither, Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, and Whitman. There is no more clearly consistently reiterated subject in American literature than this.

But one thing are the writers, and a different thing is the speech community at large, and American speakers do not seem to desperately miss a poet to define what they are all about.

APPENDIX

A chronological list of Noah Webster's most relevant works for the cultural history of American English.

1783 - 1787   A Grammatical Institute of the English Language.

    1787   The American Spelling Book (the 'blue backed speller').

    1784   ... a plain and comprehensive grammar, founded on the principles and idioms of the language....

1785 - 1787   An American selection of lessons in reading and speaking. Calculated to improve the minds and refine the taste of youth. And also to instruct them in geography, history and politics of the Unites States.

    1789   Dissertations on the English Language. Facsimile reproduction: The Scholar Press, Limited. Menston, England, 1967.

    1790   A collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings.
Facsimile Reproduction : Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints. Delmar, N.Y., 1977.

    1806   A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language... for the benefit of the Merchant, the Student, and the Traveller. Facsimile reprint: The Scholar Press, Limited. Menston, England, 1967.

    1828   An American Dictionary of the English English Language, intended to exibit:

        I   The origin, affinities and primary significations of English words, as far as they have been ascertained.

        II   The genuine orthography and pronunciation of words, according to general usage, or to just principles of analogy.

        III   Accurate and discriminating definitions, with numerous authorities and illustrations. Facsimile reproduction, with an Introduction by Mario Pei. New York, Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970.

1833   Edition of the Bible.

Others collections of Websterian texts:

Babbidge, Homer, ed. 1967. Noah Webster: on being American. Selected writings, 1783-1828. New York: Proebing.

Warfel, Harry, ed. 1953. Letters of Noah Webster. New York: Library Publishers.

Other collections of Webster (or his texts)

Sunbridge House, ed. 1987. Noah Webster on being American, selected writings, 1783-1828. New York, Praeger Publishers.

Warfel, Harry, ed. 1953. Letters of Noah Webster. New York, Library Publishers.

1807   —. ....
1807   An American selection of lessons in reading and speaking. Calculated to improve the minds and refine the taste of youth. And also to instruct them in geography, history and politics of the United States.

1807   Dissertations on the English language. Facsimile reproduction. The Scholar Press, London. Menston, England, 1967.

1789   A collection of Essays and Fugitive Writings.
Facsimile Reproductions / Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, Delmar, N.Y., 1977.

1806   A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language... for the benefit of the Merchant, the Student, and the Traveler. Facsimile reprint. The Scholar Press, Limited, Menston, England, 1970.

1828   An American Dictionary of the English English Language, intended to exhibit:

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DICTIONARIES AND THE STANDARDIZATION OF

AMERICAN ENGLISH

1. Dictionaries and standard-language theory.

From the standpoint of the standardization process, the study of monolingual dictionaries has an enormous importance. As a matter of fact, the very existence of monolingual dictionaries in a speech community is a sure sign that their language is in an advanced stage of standardization, for only urbanized speech communities with a high degree of awareness of their own language can produce this type of books. It is a historical constant that communities with less standardized languages will tend to develop a scholarship centered around some language other than their own (normally a more prestigious or rooted one) and therefore will first produce some type of bilibgual dictionaries. As a case in point, early English 'dictionaries' were glosses whose function was to make Latin translation easier, and later on they became more sophisticated bilingual dictionaries before they could be developed as real English dictionaries. Something similar happened with most European languages. For a contemporary case, it is revealing to consider the situation of American Indian languages: none of them has had its lexicon recorded in a monolingual dictionary, although for most of them there are bilingual dictionaries: English, Spanish, French, Protuguese, etc., according to the dominant national standard or to the lexicographer's language. Thus, as a consequence of the high degree of scholarship implied in monolingual dictionaries, their availability provides an overt and usually reliable frame of reference for all speakers by making the lexicon of the language accessible to the entire speech community . Furthermore, different speech communities will produce different types of dictionaries. It seems thus reasonable to think that the study of the dictionaries produced by a given speech community will reflect the particular way in which the language has become standardized. The study of monolingual dictionaries is especially important to ascertain the crucial issue of language-usage models for, even though a dictionary can become a model in itself ——a rather frequent occurrence—— it will always justify its authority on the grounds that it represents the authority of the standards that actually determine the community's usage: literary, technological, religious, etc. Along these lines, a dictionary will be successful insofar as it reflects the types of language-usage models accepted by the users of the language, thereby providing socially valid guidelines to which the speakers can adjust their usage.

The way in which the properties and functions of the standard language manifest themselves is also reflected by monolingual dictionaries, as

are the attitudes associated to them. The dictionary fosters the structural properties by, among other things, setting up spellings and discriminating among meanings and usages, especially at more technical levels, thus enhancing intellectualization and flexible estability and ultimately intensifying the clarity of the frame-of-reference function. Many dictionaries provide syntactic and morphological, as well as phonological, information, which many speakers are inclined to conceive of as more valid than the same information when contained in normative grammars.

The cultural properties are abrought about —or highlighted— by turning the language into an available cultural object, giving it prestige and providing a channel for participation in the shared culture above and beyond class or caste barriers. By giving etymologies and encyclopedic information, hence relating the lexicon to the cultural heritage of the society, dictionaries enhance the rootedness of the standard language, a basic condition for the unifying and separatist functions to be present.

To be sure, a dictionary, by itself, cannot cause a language to become standardized. As has been said, dictionaries are rather a consequence of an advanced standardization porcess, but they in turn reinforce that process by becoming a concrete repository of the properties of the standard language and a channel for the manifestation of its functions and associated attitudes.

There are no studies of the structure and functions of dictioanries in a speech community from the standpoint of a theory of the standardization process. Wells (1973) deals with British and American dictionaries within the framework of the authoritarian tradition, which is only one aspect of the standardization process, namely, that of language-usage models and decision-making about usage. It is important to insist on the fact that just as the standardization process is a quite complex phenomenon, so is the existence of monolingual dictionaries in a speech community. The dictionary's relative influence in the standardization process is also different from speech community. English-speaking communities are particularly attached to this type of books. In the following pages I try to describe the so-called Modern American Dictionary[1] within the framework of standard-language theory. It is my hope that many poorly uderstood characteristic features of American dictionaries will acquire a new dimension when considered from a unified standpoint. Conversely, the way in which American English has become a standardized language will become more apparent when viewed as reflected in the dictionnary. Also, some not-so-clear aspects of standard-language theory itself will appear a bit more understandable (or acceptable!) when checked against the fact of the concrete cultural existence of dictionaries.

2.   Historical background

The American dictionary reflects very clearly the characteristic trends in the process of standardization of American English, since its beginnings

with Noah Webster. It seems useful, then, to look into the cultural origins of American lexicography within the framwork of standard-language theory.

In 1806, Noah Webster published **A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language,** intended 'for the benefit of the merchant, the student, and the traveller'. Websterian critics have insisted that this rather small book, important as it might be historically, did not represent a serious threat to the them most respected dictionary: Samuel Johnson's **Dictionary of the English Language,** first published in 1755. Friend (1967) points out that the **Compendious Dictionary** did not depart from the tradition of just revising early British dictionaries (cf. p. 14). Mathews (1933) claims that

> when Webster brought out his first dictionary, he had not delved very deeply into the study of language, and had not developed those excentricities which later marked his views of philology. In his dictionary of 1806, however, there were some features which to a greater or less extent characterized his later dictionaries. (p. 38)

Among those characteristic features he mentions spelling and the interest in showing the differences between British and American English.

To make the long story short: modern critics look on the 1806 **Compendious Dictionary** as a lexicographic curiosity. As a matter of fact, for many of them even the 1828 **American Dictionary** has nothing to do with current scientific lexicographic practice. In Friend's (1967) opinion, Webster's name today is 'printed in dictionaries from which virtually every trace of Webster's work has been effaced' (p. 102). Things are not that simple, though. From a merely technical standpoint only can Webster's dictionaries be considered definitely outdated. When they are considered in a historical perspective from the standpoint of the standardization process, it appears clear that they represent a radical departure from the British tradition and a first step in the establishment of American-based, new language-usage standards. Even the 1806 **Compendious Dictionary** itself is an important landmark in the sociolinguistic drift that has sett off American English as a recognizable cultural institution. Precisely the most serious innovation manifested in the **Compendious Dictionary** has to do with the question of language-usage models. Up to Webster's time, literary models had never been questioned by lexicographers as the basic frame of reference against which to measure elegance, purity, correctness. Johnson's most influential dictionary, it has been said, was originally conceived of as something like an anthology of British literature (cf.McAdam and Milde, 1963, p. IX). In fact, even the first 'American' dictionary, published in New Haven in 1798 by Samuel Johnson. Jr. (not related to the famous British lexicographer), was justified by its author in terms of its usefulness as an aid in reading literature. Johnson Jr. explained that he included in his dictionary both old and new words,

and such as are not uaually understood by children, a knowledge of which is necessary in order to read good authors with advantage, and without which no person can either write, or speak our language with purity or elegance. (Quoted in Friend, 1967, p. 9)

Noah Webster, instead, offers his dictionary, as already seen, 'for the benefit of the merchant , the student, and the traveller', thus radically departting from the literature-oriented dictionaries of the time[2]. There are no literary quotations in this dictionary and many of the words considered typically 'poetic' are missing, but there is material that hitherto had not been characteristic of dictionaries. Webster includes here ——and advertises it in the title page—— encyclopedic information adequate to the expected interests of merchants, students, and travellers: tables of moneys and weight and measures, divisions of the time among the Jews, Greek, and Romans, Post-Offices of the United States, inhabitants of the United States and amount of exports, and 'some chronological tables of events ands discoveries', with heavy emphasis on American history. It is obvious that one of the functions of this information was to enhance the rootedness of the language, by linking it both to national events and institutions and to the Judeo-Christian Western tradition (not only to the Anglo-Saxon tradition). When the **Compendious Dictionary** was published, Webster was no longer speaking of the 'federal language' but of 'American English', but was still ——in fact he always was—— insisting on the importance of the separatist function conveyed by the expression 'American English'. It is interesting to notice that by then he was beginning to think that power could be a valuable ingredient of the cultural identity of American English as opposed to British English, as well as a source of pride:

In each of the countries peopled by Englishmen, a distinct dialect of the language will gradually be formed, the principal of which will be that of the United States. In fifty years from this time, the American English will be spoken by more people than all the other dialects of the language, and in one hundred and thirty years, by more people than any other language on the globe, not excepting the Chinese. (**Compendious Dictionary**, p. XXII-XXIII)

The departure form the literary orientation is total. To begin with, Webster considers that a dictionary should be a scientific work, completely different from what is generally called a literary work (even though he uses the word 'literature', but in a sense different from today's. See footnote 2 to chapter two above). According to this, the important thing in a dictionary is the accuracy of the definitions and not the appropriateness or beauty of a literary quotation to illustrate ——or even worse to authorize—— a meaning or a particular usage. That is why careless definitions were intolerable for him:

this species of imperfection is one of the principal defects of all our dictionaries; it occurs in almost every page, defeating,

in a great degree, the objects of such works, and contributing to a want of precision which is a blemish in our best authors. (**Compendious Dictionary**, p. XV)

Webster was perfectly serious when he said that his dictionary was addressed to merchants, students, and travellers and not to poetry readers. He thought that his audience would appreciate accurate definitions more than samples of good literature (which, after all, could be found elsewhere). In a letter he wrote to Thomas Dawes a few years after the publication of the **Compendious Dictionary** he explained with straightforward clarity his new principles of authority:

> I have indeed introduced into our vocabulary a few words, not used perhaps in Great Britain, or not in a like sense; such as **customable,** on the authority of a law of Massachusets; **doomage,** on the authority of Dr. Belknap, and the laws of Conneticut, and a century's usage; **decedent,** for deceased, on the authority of the laws of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 329)

Not a single literary authority! In spite of the fact that, in the same letter quoted above he uses the expression 'the best writers in Great Britain and America', he also criticizes Johnson for using Shakespeare as a source of authority.

Webster's idea of 'good language', then, does not rest on the practice of literary authors (today they are sometimes called 'creative writers') but rather on the usage of learned men (literate more than literary), getting closer and closer to the expert-based language-usage model. As he put it,

> from the practice of the gay and fashionable world, there is always appeal to a higher tribunal: the great body of literary and well informed men in a nation, whose opinion of propriety is not to be seduced, not their judgement perverted by the influence of names and fashions. (**Compendious Dictionary**, p. XVI)

To be sure, Webster's departure from the literary model did not go unnoticed or unprotested. On the contrary: it took a long time before this new concept of the standard language and of the function of the dictionary became itself a standard feature of American life.

Webster started advertising his dictionary many years before he published it. In 1800, while in New Haven, he published a notice in the newspapers in which he anounced his plans for a dictionary, and justified the need for an American book of this type basically in terms of the separatist function of American English against British English:

Mr. Webster of this city, we understand, is engaged in completing the system for the instruction of youth, which he began in the year 1783. . He has in hand a dictionary of the American language...

It is found that a book of this kind is absolutely necessary, on account of considerable differences between the American and English language. New circumstances, new modes of life, new laws, new ideas of various kinds give rise to new words, and have already made many material differences between the language of England and America. Some new words are introduced in America, and many more new significations are annexed to words, which it is necessary to explain. It is probable that the alterations in the tenure of land and the ecclesiastical polity, will dismiss from the language in America several hundred words which belong in the English. The differences in the language of the two countries will continue to multiply, and render it necessary that we should have **Dictionaries** of the **American Language.** (Quoted in Warfel, 1936, p. 289)

The mere anouncement of a dictionary that would be more American than English stirred the ire of 'Aristarchus', an anonimous writer contemporary of Webster, who was very sensitive to the need for rootedness and thought that it was literature the force that should maintain the cultural cohesion of a language, for

> the decline in taste, in a nation, always commences when the language of its classical authors is no longer considered as authority (Quoted in Malone, 1930, pp. 301-302)

'Aristarchus' was not really against a certain form of language separation, but thought, as many Americans did, that the separatist function of American English was to be brought about by the production of a valuable American literature that could stand as an equal in front of British literature, and not by producing dictionaries that would be technical instruments rather than depositories of a literary heritage, then as yet non existent. Thus the 'desirable event' of a literature that would be truly American

> 'would not be accelerated by compiling Columbian dictionaries, or by inventing a jargon, called the Columbian language. ibid., p. 302)

A crucial point here is that 'Aristarchus', whoever he was, did not see the old English literature as something alien to Americans but as part of their roots. Here he was ahead of Webster by many years. From this standpoint, he could not accept a 'Columbian' language ——represented in a 'Columbian' dictionary—— because this would have been a language without a

real literary tradition hence a language with no roots and with no prestige, ultimately not leading to a collective desire to participate in the cultural life of the society where such language was spoken and written. 'Aristarcus' mistake was that he failed to realize that the 'Columbian jargon' was already acquiring its rootedness and its prestige through channels other than literature. In this sense and in spite of the evident lack of sympathy on the part of his more intellectual contemporaries, Webster was on the winner's track with his **Compendius Dictionary.** (A proof that he was not insensitive to criticism is that he did not call his book, as he threatened in the early advertisins, **Dictionary of the American Language;** actually, he did not even call it **American** dictionary at all.)

Krapp's (1925) opinion that

> on the whole, this first dictionary of Webster's is interesting
> more at showing the directions to which his mind was turning
> than at realizing in the treatment of detail new ideas (p. 361)

is, at best, misleading. Even though the **Compendious Dictionary** was received with suspicion by most of Webster's contemporaries (cp. Warfel, 1036, pp. 314 ff.), it represented a qualitatively new concept of the standard language ——and concomitantly a new concept of the function of the dictionary—— which, in the long run, would end up imposing itself. Perhaps because of this, Webster's contemporaries and especially Webster's later critics, saw only the more external innovations contained in the **Compendious Dictionary**, such as new spellings (e.g. **labor** for **labour, music** for **musick center** for **centre, judgment** for **judgement**, and some that did not make it, such as **medicin** for **medicine**, etc.), and were shocked by the inclusion of a few Americanisms with no literary credentials. Most of all, they could not condone what they though that it was Webster's biggest arrogance: his contemptuous attitude towards the great patriarch of English lexicography, Samuel Johnson, the man who had pushed British English into its biggest step toward its maturity as a standardized language. It all boiled down to the lack of rootedness of American English, which made it almost ridiculous for an American to tamper with a language which, after all, was unquestioned British property and only 'used' by Americans. Webster's mission was to change this situation. He was not very gifted either socially or academically, but was able of a great deal of clarity and had the stubbonrnnes of a mule. The **Compendious Dictionary** was a most significant step in Webster's peddling of American English as a legitimate version of the English Language and the establishment of wholly American language-use models. In 1807 he published a revised and abridged version of this book under the suggestive title of **A Dictionary of the English Language, compiled for the use of common schools in the United States** (a sort of culmination of the **Grammatical Institute of the English Language**), in which he departed even more dangerously from established usage models:

> In this book obsolete, improper or vulgar, and learned terms
> found no place, although words of of everyday use in the ho-

me, factory and farm were included. (In Warfel, 1936 p. 316)

Webster's lexicographic theory and practice reached maturity in 1828, with the publication of the monumental **An American Dictionary of the English Language.** By now Webster was able to conceive of American English not as a separate language from British English but in terms of a new valid version of a larger institution, namely, the English language. He began to understand the ––relative–– value of the participatory function of the language and that the efectiveness of the unifying and separatist functions of American English did not necessarily entail the total rejection of British English. Since the United States were rapidly acquiring a recognizable international identity as a nation, the separatist function of the standard would now be seen not only in terms of British English but also within the framework of other foreign languages with which the new nation was having closer contacts. Thus we find the following definition of 'Americanism' in the **American Dictionary:**

> The love wich American citizens have to their own country, or the preference of its interests. **Analogically**; an American idiom. (**American Dictionary.** s.v. **Americanism)**

It is precisely this new concept of the separatist function within the unifying function, i.e. American English as different from British English, but both English and with the same level of cultural validity, which justifies, in Webster's mind, the publication of an American Dictionary of the English language:

> It is not only important, but in a degree necessary, that the people of this country, should have an **American Dictionary** of the English language; for, although the body of the language is the same as in England, and it is desirable to perpetuate that sameness, yet some differences must exist. (**American Dictionary**, Preface)

This dictionary, then, has the added important function of creating awareness of the structural identity of the language by making available, i.e. known to the public, not only the 'sameness' of the British and American versions of the language, but the differences as well. In so doing, Webster appears quite conscious that the dictionary is becoming a repository of the structural properties of the standard language, thus a suitable vehicle for the manifestation of the frame-of-reference function. The property of intellectualization is strenthened through thorough and accurate definitions spelled out in a coherent and scientific style and covering all the fields of human knowledge in an updated way; flexible stability is preserved by informing the reading audience about differences in usage and meaning ––stylistic, dialectal, and semantic-domain-conditioned:

In many cases, the nature of our governments, and our civil institutions requires an appropriate language in the definition of words, even when the words express the same thing, as in England. Thus the English Dictionaries inform us that **justice** is one deputed by the **King** to do right by way of judgment... language which is inaccurate with respect to this office in the United States. (**American Dictionary**, Preface)

And he goes on to explain that the same thing happens with words such as **constitution, law, plantation, and marshal.** An unexpected conclusion of all this is that, since

a great number of words in our language require to be defined in a phraseology accomodated to the conditions and institutions of the people in these states... the people of England must look to an American Dictionary for a correct understanding of such terms. (ibid)

Webster, as an American, is willing to accept the unifying function of the larger institution ——the English language—— only if the British are willing to recognize that both versions of the language ——British and American—— deserve equal treatment. (In this sense, his attitude is even more advanced than Mencken's) As a matter of fact, by the time he published the **American Dictionary** Webster was becoming so confident about the structural and cultural ripeness of the English language ——especially American English as presented in his dictionary—— that his attitudes were leaning towards the highest form of manifestation of the participatory function, that is to say, international currency, which Neustupný has called alliance, as said above. Of course, it was going to take more than Webster's dictionary to reach this stage.

The property of the emerging standard American English dearest to Webster was its rootedness. He worked harder than anybody else in his time to unveil the historical roots of the language, and this struggle found continuous reflection through the **American Dictionary of the English language.** In the title page, he promises to explain 'the origin, affinities, and primary signification of English words, as far as they have been ascertained', and 'the genuine orthography and pronunciation of words', To be sure, 'genuine orthography and pronunciation' means the orthography and pronunciation closer to the origins, as he had explained years before to his brother-in-law Tomas Dawes:

I do not write **publick, republick,** because the introduction of the **k** was originally a useless innovation, wholly unknown to the primitive English, and because the prevailing practice in Great Britain and America has revived the primitive etymological orthography, from **publicus.** (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 239)

The ascertaining of the true roots of the language was so important to

Webster that he spent more than twenty years of his life studying old and new Indo-European languages and Hebrew searching for etymologies. Paradoxically, it is because of his etymologies that he has been most bitterly attacked by his critics, especially modern. Friend's (1967) opinion of Webster's etymological research is typical of this unsympatetic attitude. Friend thinks that Webster's etymologies are

> no more than a curio testifying of the provincial backwardness of American linguistic scholarship at the time. (p. 78)

This statement reveals a sort of lack of historical perspective. It is true that many of Webster's etymologies are inaccurate, and that his philological methods were inadequate even for his time. But Webster's lexicographic work was far from being 'cracker-barrel lexicography' as another critic wants (cf. Laird, 1970, p. 263 ff.). If we look upon Webster's work from the standpoint of its function in its own time and circumstance, it acquires a quite different significance. It is easy to understand that when an Englishman of the XIX century looked at his language in terms of its rootedness, he could be satisfied with the feeling that there was a rich cultural —chiefly literary— tradition that could be thought of as thoroughly English. When a XIX century American looked at his language in terms of its rootedness —say, over one hundred years— he would have found a rich cultural —chiefly literary— tradition that was basically English, that is to say, he would habe been faced with the dilemma of accepting a rootedness that impaired the separatist function of his language, or having a language capable of fulfilling the separatist function at the price —high indeed— of being a language with no real roots. Hence the cultural frustration of so many an intellectual in the New World around the time. The only way out of this impasse was to look for roots that would go beyond that nagging stage of the language that had to be called British and associated with a culture reminded of a colonial past, and that was precisely what Webster tried to do and this is the right perspective to understand the function of etymologies in the **American Dictionary.** This new viewpoint is also related to the issue of language-usage models, and it explains Webster's reluctance to relay upon literary sources as authority: the use of literary quotations would inevitably have led him to British authors, because they had been the first ones to use the most basic words of the language. A contemporary American scholar does not have to face this problem, and he can study, say, Middle English, as part of his tradition, without feeling that the separatist function of his American version of the common English language is endangered. In Webster's time the colonial past was too close (he had participated in the Revolotionary War, as said before) to have positive feelings towards it, so he had to develop this sort of telescopic etymology, jumping from American English to the oldest roots he could think of, in his effort no shun the purely British period. This is quite

sophisticated, if we consider his early strategy of simply rejecting British English as a corrupted version of pure tradition. Laird himself comes close to this interpretation when, studying Webster's attitudes towards Anglo-Saxon and the early forms of English, states that

> he /Webster/ 'found no use' for Middle English because he was not tracing words. He was searching for roots wherever he could find them, and he attached importance to Anglo-Saxon because it was the form of English nearest to the primitive language, and because he supposed that the related Gothic had come from the plain of Chaldee itself. (Laird, 1946, p.6)

Laird's limitation is his inability to relate Webster's search for roots to the necessity of protecting the separatist function of American English.

British lexicographers themselves were not quite immune to this interest in keeping the identity through the enhancement of the unifying and separatist functions of their British English —by mid nineteenth century it was becoming necessary to speak of **British** English. As a matter of fact, Webster's **American Dictionary** had, among others, the consequence of creating among British sholars the awareness that they were no longer the exclusive owners of the English language. Thus in 1850 John Ogilvie published his timely **Imperial Dictionary, English, Technological and Scientific, Adapted to the Present State of the Literature, Science and Art, on the Basis of Webster's English Dictionary.**

'Imperial', of course, was the best answer Ogilvie could have found to Webster's 'American' dictionary, for it was a symbol that neatly synthesized the unifying and separatist functions of British English. In this manner, British English was reflecting something that has become a feature of the New-World language-situation: the need to have the separatist function working within the same language and not only in relation to a different language —for instance, French, as had been the case with British English. Also for the first time, technological and scientific concerns as such found their place overtly in a British dictionary, as a reaction —a positive one— to an American work. In so doing, Ogilvie was further legitimizing the emerging identity of American English, signaling the beginning of an uninterrupted mutual influence of the common language. Webster himself had done a great part of his lexicographic job as reaction to a British lexicographer, namely, Samuel Johnson. Thus the study of the relationship between Webster and Johnson is crucial to understand the intellectual history of Webster and the nature of his immense influence in the shaping not only of American lexicography but of American English as well; for Johnson represented, on the one hand, everything Webster hated and despised, and on the other hand, everything he wanted for himself and for American English. Johnson had been the culminating point in the conquest of the standardization of his language, the English language with no surname. Let us then take a closer look at the relationships between the two lexicographers.

In 1789, in his **Dissertations on the English Language,** Webster wrote that, even though no British writer was a good model for language usage, any of the best one ——Sydney, Clarendon, Middleton, Blackstone, Ash—— was better than Johnson, 'whose pedantry has corrupted the purity of our language' (p.XI).

But is was Johnson's lexicographic work that was the target of Webster's worst attacks. The trust in Johnson's dictionary (especially in regard to Americans) was, in Webster's opinion, 'the greatest injury to philology' (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 289). The whole task of writing a dictionary meant completely different things for these two men. The difinition of the very word 'lexicographer' will serve to illustrate this point. Johnson's famous definition states that a lexicographer is 'a writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge, that busies himself tracing the original, and detailing the significations of words'. Webster, in his 1828 **American Dictionary**, contents himself with explaining that a lexicographer is 'the author of a lexicon or dictionary'. There is more than a little joke to Johnson's definition. It really means that for him lexicography was primarily a creative enterprise (not to mention a source of income), not too different from other types of literature. For him the English Language was a national treasure and his function as a lexicographer was both to make available and to preserve that cultural legacy in a dictionary, through the most valuable manifestation of the language: English literature. Johnson, compiling his book in the middle of the XVIII century, could take for granted that the cultural properties of his language were firmly established. The structural properties, for lack of sufficient native scholarship, were less developed but nevertheless latent, mostly in the rich mine of national literature, waiting for the lexicographer to bring them to the surface and organize them in his book:

> When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found
> our speech copious without order, and energetick without
> rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to
> be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated. (Preface
> to the **Dictionary of the English language**)

The models for good usage were actually there, and the lexicographer brought them together and made them publicly available to the speech community.[3]

Johnson did not have to make an act of possession of his own language, for this was not threatened as a cultural institution by any other speech community: he was English and his language was also English, a legitimate product of the English land and of the English people. Along these lines, the frame-of-reference function of the Englsih language was insured by the acceptance of the literary tradition as the final source of authority, which in turn insured a channel for the prestige and participatory functions. As a matter of fact, Johnson was so proud ——proud in an eighteen-century

fashion—— of the maturity and wealth of his language, that he was convinced that 'few ideas would be lost to mankind for want of English words in wich they might be expressed' (**Dictionary of the English Language**, Preface).

As far as Johnson was concerned, the unifying function of the English language was but a natural result of this identification of cultural, political, and linguistic heritage. Only the separatist function was an issue and had to be insisted upon, in view of the tremendous prestige of French and its all-pervading influence on eighteen-century England. Thus, even though Johnson, in the name of the 'spirit of English liberty', was opposed to the establishment of an Academy of the language, thought that the only justification of such institution would have been the defense of the separatist function of the Englsih language threatened by French influence. Johnson conceived of an Academy not compiling grammars of dictionaries (his was good enough!) but

> endeavour, with all their influence, to stop the license of translators, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of France. (ibid.)

Literature as the basic authority that sets up the guide to usage permeates the entire structure of Johnson's dictionary, for it was its first justification. As has been said, Johnson's original intention was to compile 'a kind of anthology of English literature and learning' (McAdam and Milde, 1963, p. 1963, p. XII). The main reason that deterred Johnson from including all that legacy of English writings was its bulk:

> When the time called upon me to range this accumulation of elegance and wisdom into an alphabetical series, I soon discovered that the bulk of my volumes would fright away the student, and was forced to depart from my scheme of including all that was pleasing or useful in **English** literature. (ibid, with Johnson's emphasis on **English**)

But Johnson did not reduce the quotations enough to to make the reader forget that the use of literary materials is actually more than a technical device to illustrate the meaning or usage of words: rather one gets the distinct impression that the words are ligitimized because they have been used by English writers, thereby becoming part of the English national legacy, even if some writers could not be considered the best:

> Some of the examples I have taken from writers who were never mentioned as masters of elegance or models of style;

but words must be sought where they are used... Many quotations serve no other purpose, than that of proving the bare existence of words. (ibid.)

Since for Johnson the rootedness of the language is inseparable from literature, the literary usage model will determine not only the legitimacy but the meaning and uses of words as well. (Also, this explains why Johnson was not particularly interested in searching for etymologies beyond the Anglo-Saxon period of English.) The power of this literature-oriented attitude is such, that even if the lexicographer dislikes a particular word, it is enough for him to find it in the national literature to register it as a manifestation of the linguistic heritage, the defense of the separatist function being the only valid reason for rejection:

> The words that our authors have introduced by they Knowledge of foreign languages, or ignorance of their own, by vanity or wantonness, by compliance with fashion, I have registered as they occurred, though commonly only to censure them, and warn others against the folly of naturalizing foreigners to the injury of the natives. (ibid.)

In line with Johnson's self-conscious role of keeper of the rootedness of the language as manifested in literature, the treatment of archaisms is determined by the vitality of the writers where they appear:

> Obsolete words are admitted when they are found in authors not obsolete, or when they have any form of beauty that may deserve revival. (ibid.)

To be sure, Johnson's total comitnent to literature as a guide in the direction of the standardization process does not mean that he was unaware of the many technical issues implicit in the preparation of a dictionary. He did have a clear notion that setting up a usage guide for the layman was as important as presenting the wealth of the tradition behind the language:

> I have laboured to settle the orthography, display the analogy, regulate the structures and ascertain the signification of English words. (ibid.)

But Johnson's conception of a scientific approach to a problem was quite different from the modern one. As McAdam and Milde (1963) note,

> In part, Johnson's attitude to science is typical of his era. He

still looks back at the almost medieval view of alchemy, physiology, and medicine, when the transmutation of base metals into gold, the excess of one body fluid over another, and the use of 'mummy' as a drug were worth serious consideration. (p. IX)

It is this attitude towards science which makes Johnson appear as a 'classic' for the twenty-century reader, that is to say , as an author that is to be read with respect and even with interest, but who is definitely something of the past, notwithstanding his livelyhood. In Noah Webster's days things were very different. As Leavitt points out, when Webster began his intellectual career Johnson was a living author and his dictionary was not a classic but a fully functioning source of authority and a model for many a young writer. (Cf. Leavitt, 1947, p. 13) In this sense, Johnson the lexicographer demanded a position in regard to his word and Webster's extremely hostile attitude towards him was justified even on technical grounds, that is, as a lexicographer reacting against another lexicographer's views. It is precisely this technical disagreement that the historians of the relationships between Johnson and Webster have insisted most upon (cf., for instance, Sledd and Kolb, 1955, pp. 193 ff.; Friend, 1967, pp. 38 ff.). It is true that Webster had a scientific approach to lexicography which in a way is closer than Johnson's to present-day practices, and that his attempts at thoroughness and accuracy strike the modern reader ——especially the modern American reader—— as almost contemporary. But Webster's negative attitudes towards Johnson had deeper roots. In the preceeding pages I tried to analyze Johnson's significance for the standardization process of the English language in eighteen-century England, because it determined in a significant manner Webster's career. Webster could not ignore that the British author represented, among other things, a peak of language scholarship that had had as one of its consequences that of placing English as one of the great cultured languages of Europe, at least on the same level as French. Thus the debunking of Johnson as the great language authority imposed itself to Webster as a necessary step in the accomplishment of his primary mission: the legitimation of the version of English existing in the young American nation. In his youthful years, Webster had adopted the strategy of trying to discredit the British version of the English language, on the grounds that it was corrupted, and opposed to it the 'cleaner' American English as the bearer of purest tradition (cf. the preceeding chapter of this study). It was a modestly successful attempt at consolidating the property of rootedness through the separatist funcion. As just shown, the **Compendious Dictionary** stills bears trace of this strategy, which perhaps could have worked if British English had had less prestige.

As he reached maturity, Webster discovered that he could not serious-

ly hurt British English or the authority of Johnson, so he tried other ways to achieve his ends: he decided to produce an equally valuable output of linguistic scholarship that would cast a definite shade over Johnson's dictionary. This forced him to rationalize many times the reasons he had to be so stubbornly opposed to Johnson. One of the most interesting documents in this regard is a letter that Webster wrote to David Ramsey, who had informed him that the 'prejudices against any American attempts to improve Dr. Johnson are very strong'. In his letter, written in 1807, Webster systematized all the reasons he had to reject Johnson's dictionary:

1. 'The insertion of a multitude of words that do not belong to the language' (all these quotations from Letters of Noah Webster, pp. 282-292). These words were inserted in the language by British latinizing writers, and Webster's strongest objection against them was not so much their Latin character but their lack of currency.

2. 'Another class of material errors in the great work of Dr. Johnson proceed from an unjudicious selection of authorities'. Webster attacked, for instance, the use of Thomas Browne's writtings on the grounds that his style was more Latin than English, 'and actually rendered himself unintelligible'.

3. Johnson accepted many vulgar and inadmissible words: 'this work contains more of the lowest of all vulgar words than any other now extant, Ash excepted'. In Webster's opinion, the fact that some of those words had been used by Shakespeare was no excuse at all to allow them into the dictionary, for playwrights sometimes have to present vulgar characters. But 'from plays (those ugly words) pass into other books ——yes, into standard authorities; and national language as well as morals are corrupted and debased by the influence of the stage'. (Webster repeated this warning several times in his lifetime.)

4. Johnson's ability to define words was far from perfect: 'a **want of just discrimination** (Webster's emphasis) is one of the principal defects of his work'.

5. 'Equally manifest is Johnson's **want of discrimination** in defining words nearly synonymous, or rather words that bear some portion of a common signification'. Webster was quite serious about the importance of discerning among semantic and stylistic nuances: 'The pernicious effects of the common negligence of men of letters in making themselves accurately acquainted with the **import of words** are visible in our best authors; and for want of nicely discrimitating the various senses of words somewhat allied, our dictionaries want

half the value which ough to be possessed by such publications'.

   6. Johnson's use of literary quotations is misleading: 'first... no small part of his examples are taken from authors who did not write the language with purity; and, second... a still larger portion of them throw not the least light on his definitions', for 'a great part of English words require no ilustration'.

   7. 'The last defect in Johnson's dictionary... is the inaccuracy of the etymologies'.

   To make the long story short: Webster attacked Johnson on all flanks. As a point of departure, he rejected Johnson's literature-based traditional language-usage models. As far as he was concerned, literature could not justify vulgarity. Above all, Webster thought that the use of literary quotations was but a tool which the lexicographer could ——or could not—— use to further clarify meanings or uses, but not the justification of words. He also attacked Johnson's failure to accurately present the high level of intellectualization the English language had already reached by the eighteen century, as well as his inability to present the subtleties of domains of use and stylistic variations. Finally, he disproved Johnson's short-term, i.e Anglo-Saxon-based, etymologies.

   As a concrete sample of a new approach to lexicography (and a new concept of the standard language as well) Webster had presented to his countrymen a dictionary that was, above all, a scientific dictionary which accurately accounted for the real English lexicon by means of discriminating definitions based upon the practice of learned men well acquainted with their fields of knowledge, and not mere poets. In the 1828 **American Dictionary** the properties and fuctions of American English found a mature expresion. Noah Webster, having discovered and pursued a fresh non-literary language-usage model, opposed his work to Johnson's as a more solid piece of scholarship based upon a different set of attitudes towards language and culture.

   As said, Webster's reluctance to accept literature as the point of departure to organize the lexicon had it basis in the problem of rootedness: the use of literary quotations would have led him to British sources, thereby threatening the separatist function of the emerging American English as Webster conceived of it. For Samuel Johnson it had been a matter of nationalistic pride to find every single lexical item rooted in British literary soil. Webster could never understand this, and in 1828 he had the same negative attitude as in his first works:

   One of the most objectionable parts of Johnson's Dictionary,

In my opinion, is the great number of passages cited from authors, to exemplify his definitions. Most English words are so familiarly and perfectly understood, and the sense of them so little liable to be called in question, that they may be safely left to rest on the authority of the lexicographer, without examples. Who needs extracts from three authors, Knolles, Milton, and Berkeley, to prove and illustrate the literal meaning of **hand**? (**American Dictionary,** Preface)

Things are crystal clear: for Webster the final language authority is the expert, in most cases represented by the lexicographer himself (for instance, when meanings are self-evident), and the function of the dictionary is to give the right meanings of words in a straighforward manner. For Johnson, the dictionary was the repository of the language as one of national treasures, and therefore even the simple word 'hand' needed to be rooted in the great British literary tradition to be an integral part of that national treasure. For each author the dictionary was obviously at the service of different functions, and in this sense, present-day American dictionaries still owe to Webster's attitude a lot more than critics have been willing to recognize.

To be sure, Webster was not completely at ease with the absense of illustrations for all the entries of the dictionary. He was aware that he could not always get away using sentences of his own invention. Moreover, even though he was completely immersed in his non-literary approach to language, he had to pay a toll to his time. Thus, in the Preface of the **American Dictionary** he goes on to say:

> One consideration...which is dictated by my own feelings, but which I trust will meet with approbation in my fellow citizens, ought not to be passed in silence. It is this: 'the chief glory of a nation', says Dr. Johnson, 'arises from its authors'. With this opinion deeply impressed on my mind, I have the same ambition which actuated that great man when he expressed a wish to give celebrity to Bacon, to Hooker, to Milton and to Boyle.

The Webster of the 1789 **Dissertations on the English Language**, or even the Webster of the 1806 **Compendious Dictionary**, could hardly have said a thing like that, but the Webster of 1828 was confident that he was able to oppose great American writers to the great British writers ——hence the praise of Johnson—— to serve as valid guidance for usage. But at seventy odd years of age Webster had been cought in his own game: he had adopted the non-literary usage-model to such a degree that he could not help but show it, even vhen he was trying to produce a list of writers. As a matter of fact, among the

writers he mentioned no more than two could be considered predominantly writers from a strictly literary point of view. Here is the complete list: Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jay, Madison, Marshall, Ramsay, Dwight, Smith, Trumbull, Hamilton, Belknap, Ames, Mason, Kent, Hare, Silliman, Cleaveland, Walsh, Irving. These authors, says Webster,

> and many other Americans distinguished by their writings or their science... it is with pride and satisfaction, that I can place them as authorities. (ibid.)

The truth is that for Webster those writers were authorities more in their capacity of experts in different fields than as representatives of American belles lettres, even though Webster's patriotic rhetoric might lead to believe otherwise. Here is how Webster specifies his sources of authority:

> I ... affirm, with truth, that our country has produced some of the best models of composition. The style of president Smith ...; /the prose/ of Mr. Barlow; of the legal decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States; of the reports of legal decisions in some of the particular states; and many other writings; in purity, in elegance, and in technical precision. (ibid.)

'Purity', 'elegance', and to be sure 'precision', as used by Webster, have very little to do with traditional literary language-usage models.

Those scholars who have examined Webster's and Johnson's dictionaries have noticed how unimportant literary quotations were for Webster, who in many cases didn't even bother to produce quotations of himself. As Reed (1962) noticed examining all the quotations under the letter L, of 1,320 quotations, 872 authorities are identical to Johnson's. Moreover: of the definitions under the same letter, 333 are identical in Johnson and in Webster, 987 are mere revisions on the part of Webster, and 161 are 'influenced'. In spite of all this, there is something different in Webster, which 'may be considered a new concept of lexicography', and this is that

> technical vocabularies of law, medicine, religion, industry, transportation, seamanship, architecture, ancient history, agriculture, heraldry, and all the natural sciences found their way into Webster. (Reed, 1962, p. 100)

Actually, Johnson had presented a type of vocabulary that could be considered technical in his dictionary, but what really matters here is the

lexicographer's attitude to that aspect of the lexicon and the place that he accords to it in the dictionary. And it so happens that the presentation of technical vocabularies was one of Webster's central concerns since the 1806 **Compendious Dictionary**. For Webster a dictionary that did not succed in presenting an updated and accurate version of the lexicon of technical disciplines was simply a bad dictionary, even if it presented all the literary legacy. As he wrote in 1823, criticizing Todd's edition of Johnson's dictionary:

> Todd's edition of Johnson has supplied many words, but I am surprised to find that nine tenths of them are antiquated words old writers now scarcely read at all; the improvements in definitions are very few, while almost all the words introduced by the modern improvements in botany, geology, mineralogy, and chemistry are omitted. (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 411)

Webster means more than a 'new concept of lexicography' in relation to Johnson; he brings a new concept of what the standard language is all about. The dictionary reflects this new concept and then in turn influences it.

At this point, some concrete examples of the treatment of words will serve to illustrate how deep the gap is that separates John's and Webster's attitudes towards the language and its rendition in the dictionary.

Let us take the word 'poet'. Johnson offers a short definition:

> An inventor; an author of fiction; a writer of poems; one who writes in measure. (**Dictionary of the English Language**, s.v. 'poet')

To this definition he edds quotations from Shakespeare, from Milton, from B. Johnson, and from Dryden.

Webster, on the other hand, gives two separate definitions that discriminate between the actual writer and his productions, and his poetic capacity:

> 1. The author of a poem; the inventor or maker of a material composition.
> 2. One skilled in making poetry, or who has a particular genius for material composition; one distinguished for poetic talents. Many write poems who cannot be called poets. (**American Dictionary**, s.v. 'poet')

Webster does not use any quotations from poets: just Dryden's quotation (the same used by Johnson), the only one that actually informs about the meaning of the word: 'A poet is a maker, as the word signifies; and he who cannot make, that is invent, hath its name for nothing'.

Let us now consider the word 'moon'. In Johnson the entry is split in three parts:

1. The changing luminary of the night, called by poets Cynthia or Phoebe. (Here he adds two beautiful poems from Shakespeare, one from Peacham, and one from Dryden. They are poems **to** the moon, not definitions of the object.)

2. A month.

3. /In fortification/ It is used in composition to denote a figure resembling a crescent; as, a half **moon**. (**Dictionary of the English Language**, s.v. 'moon')

Webster's version of 'moon' is quite different:

1. The heavenly orb which revolves round the earth; a secondary planet or satelite of the earth, whose borrowed light is reflected to the earth and serves to dispel the darkness of night. Its mean distance from the earth is 60 1/2 semidiameters of the earth, or 240,000 miles. Its revolution round the earth in 27 days, 7 hours, 43 minutes, constitutes the lunar month.

2. A month. This is the sense in which rude nations use the name of the moon; as seven **moons**. (**American Dictionary**, s.v. 'moon')

For Johnson, it was relevant to let the reader know that the moon was an important ingredient of British poetic tradition, and therefore poets had special names for it. The literary quotations he offers do not really add to the meaning of the word, buy make it quite clear what beautiful things British poets had said about the moon. For Webster that was meaningless. He defines the word in terms of his scientific knowledge of it. It is obvious that Johnson did know the things Webster said about the moon, and that Webster did know that many poets had chanted the moon: the crucial thing is the type of information that each lexicographer thinks has a place as part of a dictionary entry. For instance, the notion of 'moon' as a month was not a part of British literary tradition, and thus Johnson does not elaborate on this point;

but the fact that 'rude nations' identify the moon with a month has, to use a modern term, anthropological interest, and thus Webster offers that information for what is worh. In both Johnson and Webster there is a keen awareness of their obligation, as lexicographers, to ascertain the structural properties of the lexicon by giving precise definitions and information about domains of usage. The great difference is that Johnson had, so to speak, a philological approach to the understanding of the intellectualization of the lexicon, and Webster had what can be labeled a technical approach. Webster does not go to the literary heritage ——valuable as it may be—— to look for information about the meanings of terms belonging to different fields: he goes to experts in those fields, and also establishes himself as an expert in his own field of linguistics and lexicography. He is no longer a 'harmless drudge' but a specialist in dictionary making.

There is yet another important point in regard to the **American Dictionary** and its relationship to Johnson: the issue of rootedness. As it ought to be apparent by now, one of Webster's constant concerns was the historical legitimacy of American English. By 1828 he could no longer claim, as he had done in his youth, that American English represented the true tradition of the language in its pristine purity. But he could not rely on the literary heritage to set up the roots of the language without endangering the separatis function and without betraying the newly developed technology-based language-usage model. He had no way out but to perfect what I have called a telescopic principle of rootedness, that is to say, to find the roots of the language, via etimologies, in sources older than anything that could be considered British. Since he was not familiar with the ongoing research in the recently developed field of Indo-European studies, he accepted the old tradition of the dispersion of tongues in Babel. Along these lines, and discarding Johnson's etymologies as unscientific, he thought that he was legitimizing American English by relating it to the very origins of human language, and at the same time he was proving the validity of the new concept of the standard language he was representing, for his crucial point was that English, as a mature language of science and culture, was not only British but an aggregate of traditions. Consequently, the lexicographer's task was 'ascertain the origin of a great number of English words derived from other languages'. (**State of English Philology**, quoted in Laird, 1946, p.3).

By offering what he though were true etymologies that went beyond English roots Webster did put American English in a new perspective. From this standpoint, it does not matter too much if historically he was more than once wrong or if his methods were inadequate. What his successors did was to improve on technicalities, but the foundations ——and the basic attitude—— have not been touched: the basic function of searching for etymologies is to insure the standard-language rootedness. It is simply not true, and he knew it,

what Sir J. A. H. Murray, editor of the O.E.D., said:

> etymology is simply word-history, and word-history, like all
> other history, is a record of the **facts** which did happen, not a
> fabric of conjectures as to what may have happened. (Murray,
> 1970, p. 44)

When the level of scholarship in a speech community has reached a
high degree of sophistication, it is but natural that research methods be per-
fected. In this sense another British scholar, James Root Hulbert, is closer to
the point here presented when explaining the presence of etymological infor-
mation in mot dictionaries; he says that

> in giving such information lexicographers are following their
> own scholarly bent and not considering the needs of their
> public. (Hulbert, 1955, p. 57)

That there is more than a scholarly bent to etymological research
becomes apparent when Hulbert himself goes on to state that finding etymo-
logies can be useful 'because the origins of words reveal much that is significant
in the cultural history of our people' (p. 58). Obviously, 'our people' are the
British people, and that was precisely what Webster tried to avoid: to find
British people history when tracing the story of American words. In a letter he
wrote in 1837 to the British scholar Charles Richardson, who had manifested
doubts about the validity of his research, Webster made it very clear what he
was looking for in his etymologizing:

> The **contempt** your observations manifest for the oriental
> languages, as auxiliary to English etymology, proves you to
> be an utter stranger to the connection between the languages
> of Asia and Europe. You seem not to know that the words
> **father** and **brother,** and many others, are Persian words to
> this day, a decisive proof that Persia was the original seat of
> the original stock of the German and English nations. (Letters
> of Noah Webster, p. 462)

Persia was so remote in time and space that Webster could safely link
to it the roots of his language and culture, without the uncomfortable feeling
of having to resource to the 'sterling wealth from the great mine of native
English' (ibid.). At almost eighty years of age, Webster was still unable to
overcome the attitude that the enhancement of the separatist function of
standard American English was to be defended at all cost. After all, Johnson's
dictionary had the important function of enhancing the identity of the British

speech community by providing a vivid sample of the great cultural treasure stored in their language through the work of generations of British writers. Webster's dictionary, instead, purported to offer a serious source of information about the actual meaning and usage of words, regardless of their occurrence in literary texts. From that time on, this would be a persistent counterpoint in the not always friendly interaction between British and American lexicographic production: the national-treasure attitude versus the powerful-instrument attitude, both in their own way sources of loyalty and pride. It goes without saying that neither the Johnsonian tradition nor the Websterian tradition are purely and only literature-or technology-oriented. As seen in the case of the 1851 Ogilvie's **Imperial Dictionary**, technological considerations became a part of British dictionaries, and as will be seen with the case of Worcester dictionaries, the national-treasure, more literature-oriented trend is not absent from post-Wesbsterian American dictionaries. As a matter of fact, the 1828 **American Dictionary** marks the beginnings of an exciting lexicographic race, because it not only made Johnson's work antiquated in many respects, but it forced the British to counterbalance the influence of the American lexicographer with a production that would become even more prestigious[4].

A weighty British answer to that book that was doing so much for American English, threatening to install it as a center of gravity of the English standard, was a must. Ogilvie's **Imperial Dictionary**, technological as it purported to be, was no match for Webster's book. What was needed was a book that would oppose the best of the British way to standardize the language against the American standardization way, as it were. Since the strongest cultural property of British English seemed to be its rootedness and the concomitant national-treasure attitude, it was along these lines that the solution was looked for. Dean Richard Chevenix Trench is credited with having realized that rootedness, resting uopon the great British literary tradition, was the liveliest force of the English language in Great Britain. Dean Trench had been preaching the gospel of the English language for many years. Language, he thought,

> is full of instruction, because it is the embodiment, the incarnation, if I may so speak, of the feelings and thoughts of a nation, yea, often of many nations, and of all which through long centuries they have attained to and won. (Trench, 1861, pp. 27-28)

In 1857, Dean Trench read before the Philological Society, in London, a memory 'On some deficiencies in our English Dictionaries', where he complained that the biggest flaw of English dictionaries was their almost total disregard for the cultural tradition that lies behind the language. He had finally found the right track to launch his attack against Webster's book, because, as

he put it,

> even if Webster's **Dictionary** were in other respects a better book, the almost total absence of illustrative quotations would deprive it of all value in my eyes. (Quoted in Friend, 1967, p. 35)

The time was ripe for the impressive **Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles.** This enterprise was almost at once felt as a relevant one, and hundreds of British subjects offered their collaboration as volunteers to read the great British (and some American of course) writers to extract the quotations that would make up the base, the very raison d'être of the dictionary[5].

When the Philological Society decided to undertake the task of compiling a dictionary, such a book had to be not only literary, historical, and philological ——sound from a scholarly point of view——, but it had to be, as the 'Historical introduction' to the OED quotes, 'a dictionary worthy of the English language' (page V of the 1971 Compact Edition). The OED was thus thought of since the beginning as a 'national asset', and in this respect it is the genuine continuation of Johnson's work, and it represented the highest tribute the the British speech community could have paid to its language. The OED reassured the British in the sense that, after all, they were indeed the 'true' owners of their language, ownership achieved and maintained throught the cultivation of the property of rootedness. The OED truly reached the heart of the British speech community and its editors were taken so seriously in spite of all the internal fights that plagued the compilation of the materials, that two of them, Dr. James Augustus Henry Murray and Dr. William A. Craigie, were knighted in recognition of their lexicographic achievements. (No American, to my knowledge, has ever been decorated or publicly honored on linguistic grounds.)

As said, the property of rootedness as asserted in the OED was linked to the national-treasure attitude and strongly based on literary language-usage models. The editors of the OED were first faithful members of their society, and only in second place lexicographic practicioners. As Dr. Murray himself said,

> the evolution of English lexicography has followed with no faltering steps the evolution of English history and the development of English literature. (Murray, 1970, p. 51)

This explains why the OED could present itself to the public and be

accepted by it as a valid language authority. A 1928 advertisement, published in the London papers, boasted that

> the Oxford English Dictionary is the supreme authority, and without a rival. It is perhaps less generally appreciated that what makes the dictionary unique is its historical method; it is a dictionary not of our English, but of all English: the English of Chaucer, of the Bible, and of Shakespeare is unfolded in it with the same wealth of illustration devoted to the most modern authors. (Quoted in E. Murray, 1977, p. 312-313)

In order to avoid any misconception, it should be stressed here that the OED, unlike its cultural predecessor Johnson's dictionary, purported to be ——and was indeed—— a thoroughly scientific work, and in a very modern sense. Its first principal editor, Dr. James Murray, considered himself a professional lexicographer rather than just a 'man of letters' (not to mention 'a harmless drudge') in a way that reminds one of Websterian attitudes:

> I am not a literary man ... I do not write novels, nor essays, nor poems, nor history, I am not especially interested in Arthur and his knights, not in the development of the modern newspaper, I am interested in that branch of Antropology which deals with the history of human speech. (Quoted in E. Murray, 1977, pp. 292-293)

Dr. Murray was able to approach the making of the dictionary as a technical challenge, and the book bears the marks of this approach. The quotations were weighed to make sure that they represented all the tendencies and epochs of the language and were carefully checked for accuracy and not only related faithfully to the original source but dated as well. The definitions were clear and comprehensive ——an recognized debt to Noah Webster. Pronunciation, with its most important variants, was scrupulously noted. The English language was thus made available not only in a synchronic sense —meanings and usages—— but in a diachronic way as well, for the OED presented those meanings and usages along the dimension of time. All this means that the standard-language properties of English were presented and enhanced to a high egree by the OED. It is, though, revealing that the cultural properties had priority over the structural properties in the editors' work.It was especially the property of rootedness ——in a British sense—— which oriented their task. Thus even though the dictionary gave noticeable importance to technical matters, it nevertheless subordinated intellectualization ——as manifested in the presentation of technical and scientific nomenclatures—— to rootedness

——as manifested in the relevance accorded to the **English** condition of those terms. As stated in the dictionary's 'General Explanation':

> In scientific and technical terminology, the aim has been to include **all words English in form,** except those of which an explanation would be unintelligible to any but the specialist; and such words, not English in form, as either are in general use, like **Hippopotamus, Geranium, Aluminum, Focus, Stratum, Bronchitis,** or belong to the more familiar language of science, as **Mamalia, Lepidoptera, Invertebrata.**

The significance of the OED for the cultural history of English acquires still a new dimension when one compares it with Webster's **American Dictionary** for, if it is true that the OED dwelled on a tradition defined by Samuel Johnson, it is also true that Noah Webster's work forced Dr. Murray and associates to redefine and insist upon the forces that shaped the identity of British English. As seen above, Webster's dictionary had been a decisive step in the establishment of American English as a historically valid ——rooted—— version of the English language, and Dean Trench's idea of a dictionary based on historical principles had been actually triggered by Webster's book[6]. The OED explicitly avowed that it intended to be 'a dictionary to rival those of Webster and Worcerster' (OED, Historical Introduction). Webster's dictionary even served as a standard against which to measure the OED, and not only with regard to physical length ——the OED was to be about six times the size of the **American Dictionary)** but to more intellectual matters as well, such as the system of quotations and especially definitions (cf. E. Murray, 1977, esp. ch. XI). The important thing to be noted here is that, just as Webster's work had been an intelligent reaction against Johnson, so the OED was an intelligent reaction against Webster. In a way, these two dictionaries have become characteristic of the American and British versions of the English language: the technology-oriented language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude proper to Webster, and the literature-oriented language-as-a-national-treasure attitude proper to the OED. Webster opposed to Johnson the liveliest aspects of the standardizing forces of American English and the OED opposed to Webster the strongest forces that channeled the standardization process of British English. That is whay both dictionaries have been so influential. As K. M. Elizabeth Murray (to be sure, Dr. Murray's granddaughter) points out,

> The merit of Webster's work lay in the definitions: the etymologies were very brief, the quotations illustrated use and not a complete history of the word. For many words there were no quotations at all, and where supplied they were undated: the references were to authors only, not to works,

and the range of writes used was limited to well known names.
(E. Murray, 1977, p.276)

It is thus clear that the 'historical principle' as a manifestation of the
property of rootedness and not just as nineteenth-century fashion is what gives
the OED its raison d'etre. Quotations from English-speaking authors and not
long-range etymologies were the gist of this approach. In Dr. Murray's words,
they were 'the essence of the work' and, in an overt allusion to Webster's prac-
tice, omitting them in a dictionary was 'like shearing Samson's locks' (quoted
in E. Murray, 1977, p. 274). 'Samson', for sure, is the English language, and
the ruthless barber, Noah Webster.

Subsequent American (not to mention British) dictionaries could not
ignore the significance of the Oxford Englsih Dictionary. They had to unders-
tand that the property of rootedness as expressed in the OED was too strong to
be challenged. It was but natural that they insisted on aspects of the standardi-
zation process in which American English and the American English speech co-
mmunity had proven strong, namely, those aspects that had made Webster's
American Dictionary of the English Language a true landmark in the scholar-
ly development of the language. It is clear that they were to dwell on techno-
logy-oriented language-usage models, even if they were trying to overthrow
Webster as the principal American lexicographer.

For it so happens that Webster's lexicographic approach did not go
unchallenged in the United States. Among the most successful of Webster's
competitors was a series of dictionaries prepared by Joseph Emerson
Worcester, from Boston, who had, in 1829, published an authorized abridge-
ment of the 1828 **American Dictionary**. Worcester soon realized that it was
worth the try and started publishing dictionaries on his own, thus generating
what has been called 'the war of dictionaries', a lengthy commercial and inte-
llectual polemic the story of which has been told several times (see, for a his-
torical view, Babbidge, 1967; for a lexicographic view, Friend, 1967; Leavitt.
1947, offers a account from the vantage point of the Merriam-Webster Publi-
shing Co.) There are many aspects of this publishing quarrel which are signi-
ficant from the standpoint of the understanding of the cultural development
of American English.

To begin with, the dictionary war is a landmark in the intensification
of a phenomenon typical of English-language leardership: overt commercial
competition. As a fact concomitant to the lack of an English Academy, dic-
tionaries have been a most visible source of authority, and therefore a temp-
ting business. As a matter of fact, even before Johnson's time English lexico-
graphy was a clear business and to this day it 'remains essentially commercial'
(Sledd, 1972, p. 135; for a historical account, see Sledd and Kolb, 1955, esp.

ch. I). Since the final aim of a commercial dictionary iss to return profit to the publisher, the lexicographer is supposed to be extremely sensitive to the public's needs at the risk of being a failure, i.e. to end up with piles of unsold copies. (Conversely, lexicographers have educated the public by setting up lexicographic standards: Webster himself is a case in point.)

One of the important consequences of the commercial nature of —especially— American lexicography has been the highlighting and strengthening of some latent tendencies in the standardization process of the language. A crucial one to be mentioned here is the present-day rather than past-oriented perspective in the treatment of the lexicon. Along these lintes, all American dictionaries make it a point of presenting an updated lexicon, while most academic dictionaries, for instance, will tend to offer a tradition- oriented presentation of the lexicon.

Another consequence of commercial lexicography is the continuous addition of new features to the dictionaries: idioms, foreign phrases, lists of everything from universities and colleges to types of dyes or exotic birds. Some of these features can be revealing, as has been noticed in regard to Webster's offering of encyclopedic material.

The hiring of professional editors as well as experts in different areas can also be considered a consequence of commercial lexicographic competition.This affects the types of language-usage models by establishing a de facto preeminence of the specialist over the 'educated' man or the 'man of letters'. In short, the very authoritativeness of the dictionary is affected by financial considerations. But no matter how apparent the economic dimension of lexicographic competition, the fact remains that dictionaries reflect the particular way in wich properties and functions of the standard language manifest themselves, and that dictionaries are a suitable channel for the materialization of the attitudes that functions generate amidst the speech community. In the case of the dictionary war, actually this is the approach taken by the critics: the appraisal of the cultural significance of Webster's and Worcester's dictionaries[7] Webster's dictionaries were more American-English-centered and less tradition-oriented, while Worcester's dictionaries were considered suspiciously British-inclined or at least not American enough. In Friend's words:

> Worcester vs. Webster came to mean not only linguistic con-
> servatives and moderates vs. radicals and liberals but with
> some inevitable extremist distortion and oversimplification,
> Anglophiles vs. Americanizers, Boston-Cambridge-Harvard vs.
> New Haven-Yale, upperclass elegance vs. underbred yankee
> uncouthness. (1967, p.82)

If things are considered within the framework of standard-language theory, labels such as 'conservative' or 'radical', 'elegance' or 'uncouthness' are misleading. Worcester was no more 'conservative' than Webster, he just had a different idea of Standard (American) English. It is true that he was apparently a little more prescriptive than Webster, and the reason for it was that he had not abandoned literary-usage models to the extent to which Webster had done it. Worcester insisted on definig the frame-of-reference function predominantly in terms of the language of literature. For instance, he approached the issue of illustrative quotations in a way that was in between the Johnsonian (and later on the OED) reverence and Websterian practicalness so close to disdain: he used quotation, but not too much, and when he did do,

> these citations, among which may be found many of the gems of English literature, are a very valuable part of the volume. (Worcester, Preface to **A Dictionary of the English language,** 1860)

Worcester, unlike Webster, was no longer afraid of 'English', which means that for him the separatist function of the language was becoming less important than the unifying function. This is coherent with the idea that rootedness ——even of American English—— was but enhanced by the literary production of the past. Webster was never able to accept as his own the literary tradition; Worcester, a generation later, saw no contradiction in it, and thus he stated that

> a dictionary of the English language, in order to be complete, must contain all the words of the language in their correct orthography, with their pronunciation and etymology, and their definition, exemplified in their different meanings by citations from writers belonging to different periods of English literature. (ibid.)

Along these lines, Webster appeared more concerned than Webster with the issue of language rootedness in a cultural sense and within —— no longer against—— the whole of English tradition and the unifying and participatory functions. That is why he was not interested or insistent in a too divergent American spelling and that is why the types of materials not strictly lexical offered in his dictionaries include not only principles of pronunciation, rules of orthography, grammar, history of the language, but a 'history of English lexicography' and a 'catalogue of the English Dictionaries, Glossaries, Encyclopaedias, &c. ' as well, a sign that he wanted his dictionaries to be considered a part ——valuable as it might be—— of the whole of English-language cultural manifestations. Likewise , the more culture- rather than technology-oriented approach is apparent in the enyclopedic materials that Worcerter's dictionaries

offered, leaning heavily towards traditional Greco-Latin studies, foreign phrases used in English, pronunciation of 'names of distinguished men of modern times', pronunciation of several European languages: in short, a proof that for Worcester a dictionary, albeit American, had to link the American culture and language to the rest of the world, the highest form of participation.

To be sure, just as Webster's dictionaries were not completely and exclusively 'technological', so Worcester dictionaries were not exclusively literature-oriented. He even considered his 1860 dictionary 'a complete technological dictionary'. Webster had affected for ever the nature of Englsih lexicography, and technological usage guidance has ever since affected all English dictionaries. Also, the accuracy of definitions which defined Webster's practice has become a trademark of any dictionary of the English language. It is, then, only natural that for Worcester, even if literary language-usage models prevail,

> the definitions of words is regarded as the most important part of the dictionary, and a word should be so defined as to exhibit the meaning, or the different meanings, in which it is used by good writers. (**A Dictionary of the English Language**, 1860, Preface)

The same holds true as far as the audience is concerned. The dictionary should no longer be addressed to a literary elite but to a broad leadership with different types of interests:

> The design has been to give the greatest quantity of useful matter in the most condensed form, to guard against corruptions in writing and speaking the language, to adapt the work to the use of the higher schools and seminars of learning, and also to make it a convenient manual for families and individuals. (**A Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language**, Boston, 1860, pp. 4-5)

It is also important to point out that Worcester was keenly aware of the literate (and not literary) character that had taken the American-English speech community, and consequently keenly aware of the new function the American dictionary had fulfill in order to succeed:

> The Americans have formed their language more from books than the English; and they are more in the habit of having recourse to a Dictionary for instruction respecting the pronunciation and use of words. (**A Dictionary of the English**, preface)

The very intensity of the polemic about dictionaries, which lasted for several dacades, shows that Americans took their dictionaries more seriously than most other speech communities.

In conclusion, the 'dictionary war' meant, first, a competition between two publishing companies to insure a market for their products. In this sense, commercial considerations have played a role in the establishment of language-usage models for the American-English speech community. But that lexicographic fight was also a manifestation of the opposition of two divergent tendencies in the standardization process of American English: on the one hand, the Websterian trend, technological-models-ofiented, product of a language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude and with emphasis on the separatist function of the language: on the other hand, Worcester's dictionaries, more literary-models-oriented, product of a language-as-a-cultural-treasure attitude and with emphasis on the unifying function of the language. In the long run, it was the Websterian trend that won, since Worcester's dictionaries had faded long before the end of nineteenth century.[8]

3. The authority of the dictionary, I

As shown in the preceding pages, the issue of the prescriptive authority of monolingual dictionaries has been a constant topic in English-language lexicography. Consequently, the literature about dictionaries normally centers around the problem of whether the dictionary is a valid language authority or, in a slightly more sophisticated version, whether dictionaries should make judgments about the legitimacy of words or merely register usage as it occurs. This polemic can occasionally assume wide proportions and shake large segments of the speech community's intelligentsia, as will be shown in our analysis of the reception of **Webster's Third International Dictionary**, first published in 1961.

The historical perspective adopted in the first part of this chapter provides a first and partial explanation for the diversity of views centered around the dictionary and its role as language authority: it all boils down to the issue of language-usage models, that is to say, the awareness among the members of the speech community of the need for language behavior to subject itself to certain shared constraints, patterned after some recognized guiding institutions. In this sense, the development of English lexicography shows us that dictionaries have been extremely sensitive to the changing needs of the speech community they represent and serve, in a way the traditional notion of 'authority' cannot satisfactorily explain. The great English dictionaries mentioned in the preceding section have many features in common:

above all, they reflect the particular standardizing tendencies of their time, and provide usage models that are in consonance with those tendencies. Dr. Johnson and the OED offered predominantly literary models as a reflection of a language-as-a-national-treasure attitude; Noah Webster provided technical models reflecting a language-as-a-practical-instrument attitude. In fact, lexicographers always present their dictionaries as authoritative, in the sense that they present language-usage models previously accepted as valid by the speech community rather than create such models. It is a recognized fact that the 'average person' ——English speaking, that is—— goes to the dictionary with absolute faith not because he necessarily thinks that the book itself is the final authority, but rather because a quite coherent lexicographic tradition has led him to expect that the dictionary will offer him the models he has to follow. If the dictionary itself were the final authority, that 'average person' would not expect a complete renovation of the book every generation or so. A comparison of English with a typical language-academy dictionary will make this point clearer. The typical academy dictionary, in spite of being tradition-oriented and literature-based, will always present itself as the final language authority, and thus will omit, as Salas (1964)points out in regard to the dictionary of the French Academy, all literary quotations and make up its own examples of word usage.

Thus the authority of the American dictionary is a delegated authority, in the sense that it has successfully established itself as the exhibitor of the speech community's language-usage models, whose source lies alsewhere. It is only in this sense that the dictionary serves as a point of reference around which to organize either language orthodoxy or language heterodoxy, that is, the speaker's awareness of being for or against certain language-usage models which are always functionally prior to their organization in a dictionary. It is historically true, though, that for many members of the American-English speech community the dictionary's salience is such, that it appears as a source of authority in itself, almost like academy dictionaries. The typical situation is that the prestige of the dictionary is able to legitimize the words it presents. Along these lines, it is common belief that if a 'slang' word is entered in a dictionary it somehow becomes a 'better' word. As Ivor Brown says in an article in **The Observer:**

> slang is often on the upward climb, becoming respectable
> with the years and earning dictionary status. (Quoted from
> Sledd and Ebbit, 1962, pp. 191-193)

As will be seen, the failure to understand this aspect of the function of the dictionary in the American-English speech community ——the 'dictionary-status' -giving function—— was in a great measure the cause of the uproar that followed the publication of **Webster's Third International Dictionary**, for

for no matter how one looks at the English dictionary, one has to accept the fact that it is important for the members of the speech community. This situation has been recognized over and over: Johnson knew it, Webster knew it, and by the end of las century it was not rare to find scholars stating that

> the only standard recognized in America is that of dictionaries which attempt to follow not one locality, but the best usage of the country as a whole. (Emerson, 1894 /1931/, pp. 109-110).

Why is it that the dictionary is so important for the American-English speech community as a sort of avant-garde of the standardization process? The literature offers a variety of answers which now is the time to consider.

A first set of answers has to do with the speech community. It is supposed that there are some societal features that made it possible for the dictionary to establish itself as a visible symbol of the standard language. The extreme diversity of the various ethnic groups converging ——so to spek—— on the English language, the interest in formal education, and the economic structure of the emergent American society are mentioned. Krapp (1925) summarizes the situation:

> Since the days of Dr. Johnson there has been no lack of English dictionaries, either in England or in America, but in America the special condition of an unlettered immigrant population and the elaborate development of general elementary education, both offering opportunities for the exercise of commercial pushfulness, have given to the annals of popular dictionary making peculiar animation and variety. (p. 351).

A basically identical view is found in Whitehall (1958). Haugen (1966) also attributes the high prestige of the dictionary in America to the society's early 'devotion to private enterprise' (p. 11). Even though it is true that dictionaries have traditionally been, among other things, commercial undertakings (see preceding section), it is not easy to see how the society's structure alone could determine that the dictionary should be the single most important reference source to determine language-usage models or to make those models available. All the same. there are some interesting points to consider. First, the fact that the dictionary is so relevant actually means that the speech community accords more importance to the lexicon than to the rest of the dimensions of the language, that is, phonology and grammar. Along these lines Shuy (1973) has observed that, when it comes to make judgments

about the relative quality of a person's mastery of standard American English, 'American society tolerates phonological variation more than it tolerates grammatical variation' (p. 313), the lexicon being the area where variation would be tolerated less. There is thus something like a scale of acceptability of deviation from the standard norm, that would go from the grammar (less important) to the lexicon (more important). Of all people, Ann Landers, unchallenged arbiter of American mores, seems to agree with Shuy's scale: she is not disturbed that some people 'could care less' for grammar as long as they keep their vocabulary straight (cf. her column in the Buffalo Evening News, 11. 1.1976), and is happy with Walter Cronkite's pronunciation of February as 'feb-yoo-ary' (Ms. Lander's transcription) because the dictionaries say it's O.K. and 'what's more, you can be sure that from now on anything that Walter Cronkite says is all right with me' (Buffalo Evening News, 5.24.1978). Where is the explanation for this high standing of the lexicon in regard to phonology and grammar? Perhaps the most stisfactory answer is to be found in Dillard's (1976, passim) account of the origins of American English. Dillard gives convincing evidence that the initial development of American English, and way up to the nineteenth century, presents the sociolinguistic characteristics of a pidgin situation, that is to say, people form diverse language ——and dialect—— origins converging into a contact situation under quite unsettled circumstances. This being so, it is reasonable to speculate that it was the lexicon and not grammar or phonology what had to be taken care of in order to establish the badly needed first communication: hence the way was paved for the dictionary to take over. Whatever the case, this lexicon-centered standardizing tendency to this day gives signs of being active. The broadcasting and advertising industries have not really leveled grammatical and phonological variations in the United States, but they have been able to level the lexicon to a surprising degree.(To mention only one example, what used to be, according to regional usage, **clabber cheese, cottage cheese, curd cheese, curds, dutch cheese, home-made cheese**, is today universally **cottage cheese**.)

An extremely insightful observation in found in Read (1936), who links the rise of the dictionary to the ever frustrated attempts at establishing an academy of the English language. In fact, one of the academies' most important functions is that of channeling the speech community need for authority. Since the English speech community never could bring itself, as seen, to get one,

> in the mid-nineteenth century the desire for an Academy was partially assuaged by the rise of the American dictionaries to a place of authority.

A second set of explanations for the rise of the dictionary to the

category of a leading standardizing agency for American English has to do with the nature of the language it self. It is posited than American English has some internal characteristics that have favored the development of the dictionary. Bloomfield and Newman (1967) think that the arbitrariness of English orthography made it imperative for the users of the language to have a reference book whose authority would not be subject to challenge as a guide in writing (and later on, even speaking). In the beginning, this was the function of the very popular spelling books (Webster's being the most successful of all), but quite soon the dictionary took over this function, to the extent that today the members of the American English speech community go to the dictionary, more often than not, to solve spelling problems. Bloomfield and Newman aptly note that foreigners do not go to the dictionary as frequently as Americans do, and conclude that

> as a result, English speakers give the dictionary an aura of authority and a degree of respect unknown or rare among speakers of other languages. (p. 320)

Morgan (1975) sees the very nature of English lexicon as the determining cause of the high status of the dictionary:

> Dictionaries have become a specialty of the English-speaking world. One reason may be the size of the vocabulary, because English has more words ——more than two million in fact—— than any other known language. (p. 162).

To be sure, mere quantity could hardly explain the importance of the English dictionary, and it seems but reasonable to think that there must be some other factors. As a matter of fact, just as the pidgin-like situation accounts —at least partially—— for some important aspects of the American English speech community, the creole-like origins of today's English lexicon, that is, its basically hybrid nature, can ——partially again—— explain the need for lexical guidance felt by the speakers. For the sake of comparison, one can say that the bulk of Spanish lexicon is Romance, so that if one has words such as **diente, boca, sol, luna,** related words would be **dental, bucal, solar, lunar,** with minimal changes, most of which can be accounted for at the morpho-phonological level. A grammar book can take care of most cases, and this is actually the way it happens. But in the case of English, words like **tooth, mouth, sun, moon,** give **dental, buccal, solar, lunar,** as related words. The only handy way for the speaker (or the learner) of the language to handle this situation is through the dictionary and not through the grammar which would then become, as most prescriptive grammars do, a mere list of lexical items with quite doubtful morpho-phonemic psychological reality, at least synchronically. Morgan also

offers a list of features that can and do determine the relative success of a dictionary, and which comes in as a first useful way to summarize what has been said so far about the rise of the dictionary to a status of authority:

1. the way it handles spelling,
2. the way it treats pronunciation,
3. the way it presents etymologies,
4. degree of modernity,
5. how it handles definitions (Morgan, 1975, p. 164-165).

Most of these features have to do with the structural properties of the language, and therefore with the frame-of-reference function, and would explain the success of the dictionary as a result of the nature of the language (including here the spelling system). Whitehall (1958), who likewise offers a list of features that characterize the 'American Dictionary', also insists on the structural properties, especially intellectualization (cf. 'numbered senses' for entries and 'selective treatment of synonyms and antonyms') but in addition indicates the importance of encyclopedic material which, as I have pointed out repeatedly, is linked to the cultural property of rootedness.

Let us now consider the level of importance reached by the dictionary within the American-English speech community from the standpoint of standard-language theory.

A first observation to be made is that the two basic explanations found in the literature ——the society-centered one and the language-centered one—— are not contradictory but only insufficient. Given the way in which American English has undergone the standardization process, the development of the dictionary appears a natural process. Once American society began finding and defining its identity, the early leaning towards technological development models made it necessary to center linguistic scholarship on the ascertaining of an adequate lexicon, and the later development of the language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude only intensified the need for a formidable and sophisticated lexicon, the cornerstone of word-power ideology. At the level of cultural properties, the detachment from literary language-usage models also made it necessary to have the dictionary as the standard reference book. Since the roots the language were not to be found in English literature, etymologies must be strictly lexical and ——also due to the influence of the separatist function—— Indo-European centered. All this led to a situation in which grammar books could be relegated to a place of relatively old-fashioned books (until the advent of 'scientific' linguistics, that is) because the very nature of prescriptive grammar makes it imperative to go to the classics of the language for examples of good usage.

The above interpretation of the dictionary's relative importance and authority for the American-English speech community does not mean that speech communities where literary language-usage models and language-as-a-national-treasure attitudes prevail do not care about their dictionaries. It only means that in those communities the dictionary will have different functions, and therefore speakers will relate differently to it and to the lexicon. Since the consideration of one such community can throw further light onto the problem of the nature of the authority of the dictionary, I will now present an analysis of a concrete case of how a Spanish speaker relates to the Spanish monolingual dictionary. I have chosen Pablo Neruda as a symbol because for most Spanish speakers poets are the incarnation of the best of their language.

4. Spanish parenthesis: Pablo Neruda's Oda al Diccionario

Spanish lexicography, like its English counterpart, has its origins in medieval glossaries of difficult Latin words, but by the beginning of the seventeenth century it had reached a maturity that English lexicography was still far from coming close to. The 1611 **Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española** is a full-fledged modern monolingual dictionary which also determined the basic features of the dictionaries to come, especially the monumental **Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana** of 1726, by the Real Academia Española de la Lengua. This book, generally known as **Diccionario de Autoridades** because of the citations on which it is based, has the historical importance of having set up the lexicographic foundations for the manifestation of the properties and functions of standard Spanish in a way that has remained practically-unchallenged in its basic form, both in Spain and in Spanish-speaking America. (A detailed analysis of the **Diccionario de Autoridades** in its more technical aspects can be found in Salas, 1964.) For the purposes of the present study, its is important to mention the strength with which literary language-usage models and the language-as-a-national-treasure attitude manifest themselves in the **Diccionario de Autoridades**. The structural properties of Spanish and the concomitant frame-of-reference function find their expression in the literature of the past, which is also the basic source of prestige and therefore pride. Even the power aspect of the participatory and prestige functions, quite alive in eighteeth-century Spain, is linked to literary achievements and not to a glorious imperial past (thanks to this, among other things, the participatory and the unifying functions have been always present in Spanish-Speaking America, as suggested in the preceding chapters of this study). In a typical eighteenth-century statement, the Royal Academy states its purpose:

> El principal fin que tuvo la Academia para su formación,
> · fue hacer un diccionario copioso y exacto, en que se viese

la grandeza y poder de la lengua, la hermosura y fecundidad de sus voces, y que ninguna otra la excede en elegancia, phrases y pureza, siendo capaz de expresarse en ella con la mayor energía todo lo que se pudiere hacer con las lenguas más principales; en que han florecido las ciencias y las artes: pues entre las lenguas vivas es la Española, sin la menor duda, una de las más compendiosas y expresivas, como se reconoce en los poetas cómicos y lyricos, a cuya viveza no han podido llegar nación alguna: y en lo elegante y pura es una de las más primorosas de Europa, y tan fecunda que se hallan en ella entre otras obras de singular artificio, cinco novelas de bastante cuerpo. (**Diccionario de Autoridades,** p. I)

Dr. Johnson, thirty years later, could have said the same things, and he almost did, just substituting English for Spanish.

The **Diccionario de Autoridades,** like Johnson's, did not care very much for what I have called long-range etymologies, because the rootedness of the language was linked to the great properly-Spanish literary productions, and like Johnson the Spanish Academy considered the quotations from those literary productions to be the very heart of the dictionary, to the point of justifying them sometimes almost for their own sake. A minor difference that shows how serious this linking of rootedness to the indigenous cultural heritage was for the Spanish Academy, is that the Diccionario de Autoridades also includes, and makes a point of it, lists of traditional proverbs and sayings, especially those that appear in literary productions such as Cervantes' **Don Quijote de la Mancha** . Also like in the case of Johnson, the separatist function manifests itself in the **Diccionario de Autoridades** as a reaction against the invasion of gallicisms in 'pure' Spanish. The unifying function does not really find an overt manifestation in the **Diccionario de Autoridades** for the simple reason that by then it was not an issue: the political unification of Spain had already been attained and Castille was the undisputed center of gravity of the language, for Spanish-American speech communities were still non-existent from the standpoint of the establishment of language-usage models. This is precisely one of the reasons why the **Diccionario de Autoridades** appears today as a book of the most definite past, a classic. Nevertheless, the deeply-rooted way of conceiving of the standard language, and therefore the function of the dicionary found in the **Diccionario de Autoridades** still can be found, as said, latent in today's users of the language. The fact that a poet could take the dictionary and make it a poetic object by writing an ode to it is in itself a symbol of this attitude. Pablo Neruda did that: he wrote an **Oda al Diccionario** ——and a beautiful ode, at that——, which is reproduced below as it appears in Neruda's **Obras Completas**

ODA AL DICCIONARIO

Lomo de buey, pesado
cargador, sistemático
libro espeso:
de joven
te ignoré, me vistió
la suficiencia
y me creí repleto
y orondo como un
melancólico sapo
dictaminé: 'recibo
las palabras
directamente
del Sinaí bramante.
Reduciré
las formas a la alquimia.
Soy mago'.

El gran mago callaba.

El Diccionario,
viejo y pesado, con su chaquetón
de pellejo gastado,
se quedó silencioso
sin mostrar sus probletas.

Pero un día,
después de haberlo usado
y desusado,
después
de declararlo
inútil y anacrónico camello,
cuando por largos meses, sin protesta,
me sirvió de sillón
y de almohada,
se rebeló y plantándose
en mi puerta
creció, movió sus hojas
y sus nidos,

movió la elevación de su follaje:
árbol
era,
natural,
generoso
manzano, manzanar o manzanero,
y las palabras,
brillaban en su copa inagotable,
opacas o sonoras,
fecundas en la fronda del lenguaje,
cargadas de verdad y de sonido.

Aparto una
sola de
sus
páginas:
Caporal
Capuchón
qué maravilla
pronunciar estas sílabas
con aire,
y más abajo
Cápsula
hueca, esperando aceite o ambrosía,
y junto a ellas
Captura Capucete Capuchina
Caprario Captatorio
palabras
que se deslizan como suaves uvas
o que a la luz estallan
como gérmenes ciegos que esperaron
en las bodegas de vocabulario
y viven otra vez y dan la vida:
una vez más el corazón las quema.

Diccionario, no eres
tumba, sepulcro, féretro,
túmulo, mausoleo,
sino preservación,
fuego escondido,
plantación de rubíes,
perpetuidad viviente
de la esencia,
granero del idioma.

y es hermoso
recoger en tus filas
la palabra
de estirpe,
la severa
y olvidada
sentencia,
hija de España,
endurecida
como reja de arado,
fija en su límite
de anticuada herramienta,
preservada
con su hermosura exacta
y su dureza de medalla.
O la otra
palabra
que allí vimos perdida
entre renglones
y que de pronto
se hizo sabrosa y lisa en nuestra boca
como una almendra
o tierna como un higo.

Diccionario, una mano
de tus mil manos, una
de tus mil esmeraldas,
una
sola
gota
de tus vertientes virginales,
un grano
de
tus
magnánimos graneros
en el momento
justo
a mis labios conduce,
a hilo de mi pluma,
a mi tintero.
De tu espesa y sonora
profundidad de selva,
dame,
cuando lo necesite,

un solo trino, el lujo
de una abeja,
un fragmento caído
de tu antigua madera perfumada
por una eternidad de jazmineros,
una
sílaba,
un temblor, un sonido,
una semilla:
de tierra soy y con palabras canto.

It appears evident that Neruda's attitude towards the dictionary is conditioned by his system of attitudes toward the language at large and toward the lexicon in particular. Spanish lexicon is conceived of by Neruda in terms of a cultural treasure, and this fact generates at least two types of attitudes which are of crucial significance from the standpoint of standard-language theory, since thay are, in a way, the mirror image of the prevalent attitudes found among American-English speakers:

First, the lexicon is viewed not as much as a handy instrument which can be used when needed, but rather as a legacy of a cultural tradition. As a result, Neruda, just like the **Diccionario de Autoridades** two centuries before, has a past-rather than present-oriented view of the lexicon. If the words of the language have any degree of validity, it is not so much for the synchronic information they convey, but mostly because they are ingrained in the legacy of tradition, waiting to act up when called by the speaker: they have a meaning potential because of their rootedness, and thus the word **cápsula** 'capsule' us just **hueca** 'hollow' in itself, although

esperando aceite o ambrosía

waiting to be picked out from that tradition and fulfill its potentiality. In this sense, it is but reasonable that the lexicon be repeatedly conceived of by the poet as a barn where the words wait for the user of the language to bring them out:

palabras
que se deslizan como suaves uvas
o que a la luz estallan
como gérmenes ciegos que esperaron
en las bodegas del vocabulario
y viven otra vez y dan la vida.

The strength of this tradition-oriented view of the lexicon is such, that the words acquire a prestige dimension of their own (the counterpart of

word power!), their historical reality literally loading them with the truth and
echoes of the past, thereby making them fertile carriers of significance,

> fecundas en la fronda del lenguaje,
> cargadas de verdad y de sonido.

A very important consequence of this is that, since the historical
roots of the lexicon are so relevant for Neruda, he has a harmonious view of
the unifying and separatist functions of the language. In a typical Spanish-
speaker's attitude, for him the tradition that goes back to Spain is his own
tradition as well, with no trace of disfrut, for he , like Andrés Bello over a
century before, is an active member of that tradition:

> ... es hermoso
> recoger en tus filas
> la palabra
> de estirpe,
> la severa
> y olvidada
> hija de España;

the only condition being that the word be truthfully rooted in the heritage,
that is to say

> preservada
> con su hermosura exacta
> y su dureza de medalla

A second attitude concomitant to the national-treasure attitude is
that, since the lexicon is tradition, it cannot be approached as an act of indi-
vidual creation but as a manifestation of collective wisdom. Therefore the par-
ticipatory function of the language cannot act just to enhance individual
achievements but rather to install him as a rooted member of the speech
community. Thus any speaker, even a poet, who pretends to master the lexicon
all by himself is a ridiculous figure 'vain as a melancholy toad', for only
within the framework of collectively assumed rootedness does the individual
acquire worthiness. This is also the sense in which the metaphor of the lonely
speaker as frustrated alchemist must be understood: no one can be a real
magician of the language severed from his tradition and his community, for the
only real alchemist of the lexicon, the only one who can claim that he has
the secret of words' elixir, is the dictionary, by its very nature a collective
product. And here is precisely the function that Neruda assigns to the dic-
tionary: that of being the repository of collective wisdom stored in the 'barn'

of the lexicon or, in a more intellectualized version, and incarnation of the root-edness of the language. Neruda's youthful boldness, unaware of the tradition-oriented attitude prevalent within his speech community, could think of the dictionary as semething ineffective and antiquated, but when collective respon-sability is accepted, the dictionary is no longer an 'anachronistc camel' but a tree, a nest, a mine of emeralds and rubies, all metaphors that highlight produc-tive capacity or permanence. Thus the dictionary, as a repository of tradition, acquires a quite positive dimension:

> Diccionario, no eres
> tumba, sepulcro, féretro,
> túmulo, mausoleo,
> sino preservación,
> fuego escondido,
> plantación de rubíes,
> perpetuidad viviente
> de la esencia,
> granero de idioma.

The remaining metaphors related to the dictionary insist upon the creative energy that underlies its colums: bird songs, allusion to the poetic capacity of the language; bees, allusion to the laborious nature of tradition; wood, allusion to the stregth of tradition; and seed, allusion to the productive force of rootedness.

In conclusion, Pablo Neruda, through the dictionary, discovers and expresses his attitudes as a member of the Spanish speech community. He sees the lexicon as a live product of a tradition that he treasures because it is the ground where he will work himself. Thus the three functions of the standard language that have to do with the speech-community's cohesion ——unifying, separatist, participatory—— are embodied in a harmonious way in the dic-tionary as a symbol of the basic property of rootedness. It is a clear case of a language-as-a-national-treasure attitude in its highest manifestation. Here is where the 'authority' of the dictionary lies for traditional Spanish speakers: in the symbolic role of preserving and presenting the historical dimension of the lexicon more than in offering an accurate rendition of meanings. That is why Spanish speakers have to look elsewhere ——the Academy, school grammars, teachers, writers—— for synchronic guidance concerning lexical usage[9]. This tradition— oriented view of the lexicon also explains why Spanish dictionaries in general are so reluctant to record new words not sufficiently rooted in the literary tradition; unlike their American counterparts, which are so much into the instrumental approach to the lexicon that will tend to record ephemeral items as if they were totally assimilated. The American dictionary, present-

oriented, is expected to serve more as a tool than as a reassurance that the past does indeed exist. Of course, when either attitude is pushed too far, speakers will shows their uneasiness. The current Spanish Academy dictionary is too anachronistic a camel, to use Neruda's own expression, to be really useful, and **Webster's Third International Dictionary** is too 'scientific' to be felt by cultured speakers as truly rooted.

5.   The authority of the dictionary, II

The technological approach to culture has indeed affected all aspects of American society. At the linguistic level, technological models set up the pattern for language usage as well as language scholarship, so that for long time experts and not humanists or gentlemen have been the ones with the final say in language matters. Dictionaries, as seen, have faithfully paralleled this trend, both reflecting it and influencing it. (A typical American, dictionary, **Webster's New World Dictionary,** is consistently advertised as 'the expert's dictionary'.) Along these lines, lexicographers have increasingly interpreted the technological-model approach to language in the sense that dictionaries, to be truly scientific, should not contain value judgments of any kind about usage. This attitude, which had Noah Webster as its first articulate precursor, found its theoretical culmination in Leonard Bloomfield's structuralist linguistic school and the lexicographic practice it inspired. The most radical structuralists ——Bloomfield in the first place—— made a sharp distinction between prescriptive and descriptive linguistics, the latter being, to be sure, the only acceptable one. Within this Bloomfieldian framework, Ronald A. Wells wrote a whole book to mercilessly attack the

> tradition which has associated conservative and authoritarian attitudes with dictionaries of English, and which has perpetuated the fiction that the dictionary establishes the standard of usage for the language. (Wells, 1973, p. 7).

The leitmotiv of Well's book is precisely that only experts ——in this case, structural linguists—— are entitled to make valid statements about language, just like atomic physicists are the only people whose statements about the ultimate structure of matter are worth listening to. The idea is that scientific ——i.e. structural—— linguistics represents improved solid knowledge, progress; and non-scientific linguistics, that is, any approach other than the descriptive one, represents conservatism, ultimately medieval obscurantism. Patrick E. Kilburn, another supporter of this type of scientific approach to language as applied to lexicography, complains that

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time and again the establishment has risen in righteous wrath against the iniquity of new knowledge—in medicine against human dissection, in astronomy against a heliocentric solar system, in biology against evolution, in geology, psychology, anthropology. (Onward to Agincourt: or once more unto the breach, dear friends, in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 265)

And of course structural linguists also get their share of the establishment's wrath in their struggle for scientific truths:

I suppose it would be too much to hope that structural linguistics might be able to take its place as a scientific discipline without having to fight for recognition and acceptance. (ibid)

The above quotation gives a good idea of the intellectual climate structural linguists surrounded themselves with, and their attitude towards the community of which they themselves were members. It is within the framework of this ideology of progress-above-all-that Wells analizes the lengthy polemic that followed the publication of **Webster's Third International Dictionary** in 1961. The theoretical base underlying the making of this dictionary had been precisely the so-called American structuralism linked to Bloomfield's works, and thus its editors made it a point not to be prescriptive but descriptive and to present just lexical facts without the interference of value judgments. Many critics, though, reacted indignantly, claiming that a dictionary should provide usage guidance in addition to sound definitons of words, thus creating a split in the literate heart of the American-English speech community. Wells analizes these critics' negative reactions to the dictionary using another of Bloomfield's notions, namely, that of 'tertiary responses' to language. To put it bluntly, 'tertiary responses' means that speakers of standardized languages do not like or do not relate to what expert, scientific scholars have to say about language, and stubbornly stick to those folk attitudes and beliefs prevalent in their speech community —— the secondary responses to language. Of course, Bloomfield makes it sound very reasonable:

if, giving in to a natural impulse (or else, by way of experiment), he /the linguist/ tries to enlighten the speaker, he encounters a TERTIARY RESPONSE to language. The tertiary response occurs when the conventional secondary response is subjected to question. The tertiary response is hostile; the speaker grows contemtuous or angry. He will impatiently reaffirm the secondary response, or, more often he

will resort to one of a few well-fixed formulas of confutation. (Bloomfield, 1944, quoted in Wells, 1973, p. 75)

Considering today the 1944 American speaker's refusal to be enlightened by structural linguistics, one is tempted to think that, perhaps, structural linguistics was not the most adequate approach to understand how language works, for the 'secondary responses' are still very much alive and structural linguistics in a strict sense is an endangered species. The lesson to be learned here is that linguistics is as much a cultural product as language is, and therefore is subject to changes and revisions. Also, language being a complex bahavior system, language sttitudes are an integral part of that system and not an accidental appendix to it. This means that a linguistic theory should take into consideration the speech community's attitudinal system when making statements about how its language works. The very notion of 'tertiary responses to language' is naive and misleading, because it implies that experts or scientists are always right, even if they go against the people's feelings. The standard-language theory presented in this study provides a more enriching way to understand this apparent contradiction between linguists and ordinary speakers of the language. Apart from fully incorporating the community's system of attitudes into the totality of the standardization process, the crucial distinction between structural properties and cultural properties affords a frame of reference to put in its right place what belongs to the abstract linguistic system and what belongs to the society-contrained setting in which this system manifests itself. Conflict is likely to occur when the equilibrium between the two types of properties is tampered with. The most radical structural linguists largely ignored the cultural properties and the community's attitudes, and thought that, as long as intellectualization and flexible stability were understood, enhanced, and described, the speakers should be satisfied. It was not so. The fact is that all speech communities are organized around usage models, even if those models are of a non-literary, techonological nature. In other words: all speech communities have a built-in system of guidelines for language usage. In the standardized situation, one thing is the expert language user and another thing is the expert language scholar, a grammarian, a linguist, or a lexicographer, as the case may be. To be sure, the expert user and the expert scholar can coincide in the same individual. That happens when the scholar becomes also a respected user of the language —Dr. Johnson is perhaps the first conspicuous case for the English language. What all this boils down to is that speakers of perhaps all languages make a basic contrast between what can be termed 'good' language and 'bad' language. The scholar's task is to try to uncover the significance of that contrast for particular speech communities and how the speakers' value system manifest itself. As Sledd (1972) points out, goodness and badness are little understood but are anything bu artifical' (p. 26)

Lexicography has everything to do with the above discu-

ssion: **Webster's Third International Dictionary,** a legitimate offspring of American structural linguistics, purported to be a scientific dictionary based on the idea that the scientific approach to language ruled out even the recognition that the need for usage guidance is an integral part of a speech community's life. Sheridan Baker's lucid essay on the sociology of dictionaries sums up the best point of departure for an adequate perspective to underspand the normativeness problem posed by **Webster's Third International Dictionary:**

> For some time, linguistic lexicographers have been denying that the dictionary is prescriptive. Its authority lies only in its empirically accurate description, they say. You may take your pick, and use it as you like. But readers will continue to go to the dictionary primarily as a cognitive aid ——to tell them what the words really mean, and to tell them the social parameters of the words they are thinking of writing. This testifies for the need for permanency and certainty, even in modern man. (Baker, 1972, pp. 150-151)

There seems to be a contradiction in the fact that the authority of the dictionary purports to be in the fact that the dictionary disclaims authority. Nevertheless, **Webster's Third International Dictionary** was a serious enterprise and it was a very good dictionary which by and large survived the linguistic school of thought that provided so much of its theoretical foundations. Moreover, it is indeed an extremely influential dictionary even today, and, in the spirit of English lexicographic tradition, it has both reflected and influenced the identity of the speech community it serves. It is thus worth to look at it closely from the standpoint of standard-language theory.

In the purest spirit of Websterian tradition, Dr. Phillip Gove, editor of **Webster's Third International Dictionary,** wanted to produce a sicentific dictionary. In this sense, it must be said from the onset that the impressive amount of scholarship put in this dictionary was more of a technical than of a cultural nature. As a matter of fact, by the time it was prepared, the language-usage models operating in the American-English speech community were definitely established, so that the editors only had to live up to this situation and represent it adequately. Noah Webster had had to fight primarily to impose certain language-usage models and convince his contemporaries that it was important to develop the language in a certain direction. **Webster's Third International Dictionary** inherited the original Webster's approach and can thus be conceived of as a true symbol of modern standard American English. Just as Noah Webster had prepared his 1806 **Compendious Dictionary** 'for the benefit of the merchant, the student, and the traveller', the Third International was

prepared with a constant regard for the needs of the high

school and college student, the technician, and the periodi-
cal reader, as well as of the scholar and professional. (**Webs-
ter's Third International Dictionary**, p. 6 a)

And thus the dictionary is definitely not linked to literary or vaguely
humanistic concerns, but rather to the expression of a technology-based,
progress-oriented society:

The dictionary more than ever is the indispensable instru-
ment of understanding and progress.(ibid)

This being so, it is obvious that the staff that put **Webster's Third International
Dictionary** together was a team of professionals, of experts in different areas
of contemporary knowledge. It is but consistent that no writers ——literary
writers, that is—— be part of that staff of experts. For language-usage matters,
the final word belongs to a Language Resarch Service that clarifies obscure
or unsettled points in a scientific way, that is to say, with no prescriptive in-
tentions.

Another important consequence of the non-literary, technology-
oriented language-usage models that shaped the Third International, is that the
view of the lexicon was present-day-oriented. Along these lines, the definitions
are based on an impressive collection of about 10.000.000 quotation slips
taken mostly from modern sources, and overwhelmingly non-literary ones,
such as popular magazines, newspapers, political addresses, and technical pu-
blications. The updating of the lexicon rather than the probing into the tradi-
tion conveyed by it seems to be the main concern of Merriam-Webster Co.
When they compiled **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary** in the early
seventies, one of the things its editor insisted on was that the 10.000.000
—citation collection that made up the Third International had been enlarged by
1.000.000 more samples of actual contemporary usage. This complete
acceptance and assimilation of technological language-usage models has an
extremely important effect on the way the properties and functions of the
lexicon are approached, namely, that the structural properties and dependent
functions are enhanced above all, and the cultural properties are taken for
granted. Thus the first function of the dictionary is to be an accurate exponent
of the high level of intellectualization reached by the lexicon, as well as a
reliable expositor of the flexible-stability property, for only in this way can
the dictionary be a useful carrier of the most important function, the frame-of-
reference function. All the other properties and functions are —or should be—
subordinated to the ones just mentioned, and this is the only way in wich
the dictionary   can be thought of as an authority , as mentioned above.
Of   the   three   basic   qualilties   of   a   dictionary   Gove   considers
—accuracy, clearness, comprehensiveness—, accuracy is the most important

one, 'for without accuracy there would be no appeal to **Webster's Third New International** as an authority' (ibid). It is, then, obvious that for him

> the principal reason for the existence of a general monolingual dictionary is its definitions. All the art and all the scholarship and all the scientific method that the editors can command are required to study meaning and write definitions. (Gove, 1961. See also Gove, 1972, for an articulate exposition of his view of the lexicon and its relationship to lexicography).

Consequently , in the name of accuracy ——the lexicographic correlate of the intellectualization property—— all the meanings and shades of meanings appear clearly organized in **Webster's Third New International Dictionary.** To be sure, technicalities prevail over cultural considerations. The famous definition of 'door' provides a good example. The cultural familiarity with this object makes the reader feel somewhat uneasy when faced with a definition that sounds so technical as to obscure, at first sight, the simple thing that it tries to describe, thus appearing as a cultural monstrosity:

> a movable piece of firm material or a structure supported usu. along one side and swinging on pivots or hinges, sliding along a groove, rolling up and down, revolving as one of four leaves, or folding like an accordion by means of which an opening may be closed or kept open for passage into or out of a building, room, or other covered enclosure of a car, airplane, elevator, or other vehicle. (**Webster's Third New International Dictionary,** s.v. 'door')

From the standpoint of an accurate rendition of the intellectualization of English lexicon, though, this is a valid definition. As Bergen Evans, half jokingly, half seriously, points out, such definition properly reflects the fact that in contemporary American-English usage the meaning of 'door' does include a device that folds like an accordion to communicate or separate two spaces, a fact that as recently as in the 1934 **Webster's Second International Dictionary** had not been recorded. (Cf. his review in Atlantic, May 1962, reproduced in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962)

The property of flexible stability also receives careful consideration in the Third International. The editors record the most important geographical variations and the most relevant levels of usage, but faithful to their view that a dictionary should avoid value judgments, systematically kept away from lebels such as **vulgar, slang,** and the like. An important thing to notice is that, since

technological language-usage models are so deeply assimilated, the editors do not feel the need to point out when a word is a restricted technical term for, after all, technical terms seem to be the very soul of the lexicon. The editor -in-chief's statement about the treatment of pronunciation is a good summary of the way models and variation are handled in **Webster's Third International Dictionary:**

> This edition shows as far as possible the pronunciations prevailing in general cultivated conversational usage, both informal and formal, throughout the English-speaking word. It does not attempt to dictate what that usage should be. (p. 6 a)

The importance attached by this dictionary to the structural properties of standard American English and to the frame-of-reference function has its counterpart in a certain neglect for the cultural properties of the language. The property of urbanization is just taken for granted. For instance, the fact that Emglish is, and has been for a long time, a written language, appears so evident to the editors that they simply ignore most deviant spellings. In the name of flexible stability, they acknowledge the fact that some spellings are chiefly British (something not recorded in the collegiate edition). But since spelling is theoretically considered non-linguistic by the editors of Third International, here is an area where they can be, in practice at least, authoritarian. The dictionary will record the fact that some speakers pronounce 'nuclear' as 'n(y)ük l r (their transcription), but it will not record the fact that many will write 'nucular' for 'nuclear', or 'accessable' for 'accessible', and so on. Actually, the only relevant thing when it comes to urbanization seems to be the efficient availability of the standard language that the dictionary facilitates.

In the name of a scientific, i.e. structuralist, approach to language, **Webster's Third New International Dictionary** relegates the rootedness property to a secondary place. The most visible consequence of this view is that the so-called encyclopedic material is simply left out: no proper names, no historical or anecdotal information finds its way into this dictionary: just so-called lexical facts. It seems that encyclopedic information is considered 'shreds of information which no discriminating linguist would (stuff a dictionary with)', just 'realia', a 'hybrid genre' with no place in a scientific dictionary (Malkiel, 1972, p. 15).[10]

The other important aspect of the dictionary's concern with the rootedness property, etymology, did find its way into Third International, mainly because etymological research is a well-established aspect of modern linguistics. Nevertheless, the etymological information offered does not include the dating of the words nor documentation on how and when they were first

used; in short, it does not link the lexicon to the cultural past of the English speech community. Once again, **Webster's Third International Dictionary** appears as truly Websterian.

Of all functions associated with he cultural properties of the standard language, the power-oriented participatory function finds its highest expression in **Webster's Third International Dictionary,** which, as the title implies, is no longer 'American' but of a wider currency. As we are informed in the preface, the G. & C. Merriam Co.

> offers Webster's Third New International dictionary to the English-speaking world as a prime linguistic aid to interpreting the culture and civilization of today, as the first edition served the America of 1828. (p. 6 a)

The way contemporary world is served is through an accurate, clear, and comprehensive dictionary in the first place, but also through a reflection of the power and riches of the language in the form of half a million entries backed by ten million citations and hundreds of experts. This, more than a valuable cultural heritage, is what will generate loyalty, pride, and desire to participate:

> It is by now fairly clear that before the twentieth century is over every community of the world will have learned to communicate with all the rest of hummanity. In this process of intercommunication the English language has already become the most important language on earth. This new Merriam-Webster unabridged is the record of this language as it is written and spoken. (p. 7 a)

Clearly, then, this dictionary is 'international' in the sense that it is a solid product of American scholarship that intends to be useful to the rest of the English-speaking world. It is thus not the English language, but by and large the standardized version of the language as it exists in the United States that is made available at an international scale. It is not an international dictionary in the sense that it is the product of an international effort. A truly international English lexicography, which would consequently fulfill an unconstrained participatory function, is yet to appear, although the longing for it can now and then be heard:

> At a time when the making of a good dictionary demands the efficient collection, storage, and retrieval of enormous and constantly growing masses of material, lexicographeres of Oxford and Edinburgh and Ann Arbor and Madison and Victoria and Sydney continue to work separately; and scho-

lars elsewhere must still content themselves with expensive lexicons which record only a fragment of the available experience and which can never be economically or efficiently revised. (Sledd, 1972, p. 130)

Given what we know about the structure and function of English-language dictionaries, it is perhaps impossible, by the time being, to have a truly international lexicography. Especially in the case of American English, the separatist and unifying functions of the language have always played a role in the making of dictionaries. In the final analysis, the better the dictionary reflects the particular way in which American English is cultivated ——its efficiency, its spread, its power——, the better it will set apart the American-English speech community as more modern, more prestigious, and more influential than the rest of the English-speaking world. In the traditional absence of other organized and overtly accepted standardizing agencies, dictionaries are bound to maintain the function of enhancing the identity of English speech communities for years to come.

So far in this section, I have tried to present an analysis of the significance of **Webster's Third International Dictionary** from the standpoint of standard-language theory. It has been my point that this book reflects presented-day basic standardizing tendencies of American English. All the same, the critics' reactions to it were anything but sober. As a matter of fact, they comprise a collection of surprisingly passionate statements, being as they are reviews of a seemingly unbiased, scientific piece of mature scholarship. The study of this heated polemic will indeed help to further refine our understanding of the nature of the process of standardization undergone by American English.[11]

The critiques and reviews of **Webster's Third International Dictionary,** favorable and negative, show at lest three things: first, the great depth to which technological, non-literary language-usage models have been assimilated at all levels by the American-English speech community; second, and as a counterpart to first, how important the cultural properties and functions of the standard language still are; and third, there is an attitude of longing for an authority even in a speech community that rejects academies and holds experts as the final master of the language.

Let us begin with the favorable reviews.

Basically, what commendatory critics say is that Webster's Third is a good dictionary because it is a science-based dictionary and not a prescriptive dictionary. As Millicent Taylor put it in **The Christian Science Monitor** (11,

29, 1961, reprinted in Sledd and Ebbit,, 1962, pp. 99-101), 'this dictionary is the result of a scientific or 'test tube' approach, an impersonal photographing of English speech', which seems to be enough to consider it fully acceptable. A similar view is found in Edward Bliss, who states that the great value of the dictionary lies in its ability to treat technical language, seemingly the most relevant aspect of language:

> No other dictionary has so forcibly brought me to the realisation of the extraordinary gulf now existing between the words of the scientist and the writer. In this dictionary, language takes on new wealth, but it is a wealth of specialised words which can only be explained by specialised words. (Books of the Month, March, 1962; repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 144-146)

Bliss is obviously somewhat frightened by the language and its power, and only subsequently astounded by the power of the dictionary, which merely reflects that power.

Apart from the already mentioned study by Wells (1973), Bergen Evans is perhaps the most articulate favorable reviewer of Webster's Third. Like Wells, Evans thinks that this is a good dictionary because of its solid, i.e. structural-linguistics-inspired, base, and because it accurately captures the on-going trends of the language, which 'has become more utilitarian', and thus

> new dictionaries are needed because English has changed more in the past two generations than at any other time in its history. It has had to adapt to extraordinary cultural and technological changes, two world wars, unparalleled changes in transportation and communication, and unprecedented movements of populations. (In Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 240)

Evans also believes that the best way for a dictionary to reach authoritativeness is to tell the 'whole truth' about word usage, and this means to give a scientifically sound statement about the meaning of a word and how it is used by native speakers of the language, without letting the lexicographer's own feelings interfere with objetivity. In this way, the dictionary becomes something like the avant-garde of a highly literate speech community. The impressive technical quality of Webster's Third makes Evans think that

> there has been even more progress in the making of dictionaries in the past 30 years than there has been in the making of automobiles. (Ibid, p. 239)

The symphatetic views of **Webster's Third New International Diction-ary** can be summarized in Norman E. Isaacs' review (appeared in the Louis-ville Times, Oct. 18th, 1961, reprinted in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 79-80):

> This is simply a dictionary from A to Z, and whether some ivory tower double-domes like it or not, it is the new authority of our language,

The notion of authority inevitably appears every time Englishspeak-ers refer to the dictionary. It is thus not surprising that unsympathetic critics of Webster's Third center their unsatisfaction mainly around the -disclaimed-authority of this dictionary. Wells (1973) agrees with Isaacs in his contempt for the 'ivory tower double-domes' who dared attack Webster's Third. He discards the validity of such criticisms because

> each ... affirms the invalid corollary that the dictionary has a normative function as guardian of the standards of the language, (p.80)

a non-scientific function. Wells also discards the critics because they were not, in general, expert lexicographers or linguists but mostly journalists. This fact is quite revealing, for it confirms that Webster's Third was really a scholar-ly product that thoroughly satisfied most scholars ——structural linguists, that is—— but somehow created an uneasy feeling among non-scholars. Dwight McDonald, one of the reviewers most harshly rebuffed by Wells, refers to this issue and points out how in this clash between scholars and lay critics, actual-ly the latter better represent the speech community al large:

> I hazard that what has happened is that the academic es-tablishment has gone overboard for structural linguistics ——nothing an American scholar likes more than a really impressive system with academic pretensions—— while the lay critics, being so to speak on the firing line of actual usage since they make their living by writting for the public, are more aware and concerned about the vul-garization of the language that is going on in this country. (In Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 262)

McDonald's review is important because, in spite of Wells'analysis, he is not reacting against a scientific approach to lexicography ——in fact, not even agains those well-established technological language-usage models—— but rather against the adoption of that type of approach at the total detri-ment of the cultural properties of the standard language, especially that of

rootedness. Behind his external irony there is a serious critique of the exce-
sees of the cult of technology. He sees the impresive list of experts
consulted by Webster's Third as something positive, but considers its
unrestricted use as a blatant attack against the more rooted aspects of the
language, because in this attempts at being objetive, updated and progressive,
it seems to lack an adequate frame of reference to establish some type of
hierarchy of consultants in conformity with the relative relevance of their
areas of expertise for American culture in general and for the shaping of
standard American English in particular. In fact, lack of hierarchy is what
McDonald calls 'vulgarization', and not the technological approach per se:

> One can see why James W. Perry had to be consulted on
> non-numerical computer applications and Margaret
> Fulford on Mosses and Liverworts, but it seems overdoing
> it to have **two** consultatnts on both Hardware and Salva-
> tion Army, and some people might even question the one
> a piece on Softdrinks, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and
> Girl Guiding, as well as the enrolling of Mr. Arthur B.
> Lafar, formely president of the Angostura-Wuppermann
> bitters company, as consultant on cocktails. Such
> padding is all the more odd, considering that the editors
> of 3 (Webster's Third) have forgotten to appoint anybody
> in Philosophy, Political Theory, or Theatre... (In Sledd
> and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 168)

In fact, the gist of McDonald's complaint is that Webster's Third
failed to recognize and respect what there is of settled tradition ——rooted-
ness—— in English, for 'the past of a language is part of its present', and
'tradition is as much a fact as the violation of tradition' (p. 172). This does
not mean, as an article in **The St. Louis Post Dispatch** (Dec. 17, 1961, repr.
in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 103) wants, that 'people are linguistically more
conservative in theory than in practice'. What it really means is that the
members of the American-English speech community, regardless of deeply-
assimilated non-literary, technological language-usage models and the
language-as-a-powerful-instrument attitude, are aware that the process of
language standardization is a quite complex one, that the delicate balance
between structural and cultural properties of the standard language can be
tilted only so much in either direction. The critics of Webster's Third were
reacting precisely against this. As one of them summarizes, 'the editor had
paid his debt to science more fully than to general culture' (Graham Du
Shane, **Science,** Nov. 10, 1961, repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 91).
Actually, there is no need for opposing science to general culture as contexts
for the standardization process, except when one of them tries to take over
at the other's expense. Within this framework, the criticisms of Webster's

Third appear quite legitimate and justified culturally. Let us take the case of citations from different writers used by the editors of the dictionary. No critic attacks the fac that the dictionary uses citations, for they have been for generations a handy way to exhibit meanings, variations of all kinds, and to assert the cultural validity of words as well. What critics attacked was the lack of hierachy and the disregard for rootedness behind the principle of selection of quotations:

> Who will deny that the use of judicious quotations makes a valuable reinforcement of definitions? The new Merriam-Webster quotes from about 14,000 writers. Many of them, however, are anonymous, many of them writers of third rate quality, authors whose books need the blue pencil of a competent editor. Of those quoted, more than a major-ity are writers of the mid-twentieth century. (The New York Times Book Review, Feb. 11, 1962; in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 130)

Wilson Follet, another of the critics disregarded by Wells as a non-scientific attack against the science-based Webster's Third, also reacts, in fact, against the alleged failure of the dictionary to adequately manifest the property of rootedness of the language. Follet feels that a lexicocographic approach that in the name of a theoretical apprach to the lexicon leaves out all encyclopedic material, is betraying one of the basic cultural services of a dictionary. That is why he called his review 'sabotage in Springfield':

> Think, if you can, of an unabridged dictionary from which you cannot learn who Mark Twain was (though **mark twain** is entered as a leadman's cry), or what were the names of the apostles, or that the Virgin was Mary the mother of Jesus of Nazareth, or what and where the District of Columbia is. (In Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 112)

According to Follet, **Webster's Third New International Dictionary** had the obligation of being not only a sound scientific dictionary but also a rooted dictionary and, along these lines, a 'book that was to crown cisatlantic scholarship with a particular glory' (ibid.). One again, the idea behind this that the standard language exists as part of a culture. Even so, it should be noted that none of the American criticisms of Webster's Third was addressed in the name of the national-treasure attitude.

An extremely interesting source of evidence that confirms the

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analysis so far presented comes from the reception of Webster's Third among English critics, for it helps to further understand the standardizing trend that has been differentiating American English from British English, especially at the level of attitudes. One point in common is that British critics, like their American counterparts, seem to be very much appreciative of the technology-oriented direction the language is taking, and therefore of the updated and descriptive approach of Webster's Third (see, for instance, Milton R. Bar's review in the Berkshire Eagle, March 3, 1962, reprinted in Sledd and Ebbit, 1962. pp. 159-160). But British critics are also quire wary about the way in which this technological, non-literary usage model has taken over the dictionary's view of the lexicon. For instance, John Levit (John O'London, March 8, 1962, repr. in Sledd and Ebbit, 1962, pp. 156-158) finds too extreme the technical information provided by the dictioanry, which is not, after all, a treatise on any particular discipline but an exponent of the total lexicon of the language:

> Who except a colour chemist, for instance, would need the column after column of the table of dyes give here? And would not a colour chemist have other books to look in, instead? (p. 157).

Levitt sees this exaggeration of technical information as a threat to the rootedness of the language, because one of the consequences of its present-day rendition of the lexicon has as its counterpart a reduction of the importance of the history of words, whose appearence in the language is not dated by Webster's Third. Levitt also links this disdain for information about early documentation of words to a manifestation of an American-centered separatist function of the language, and aptly notices its relationship to the Websterian origins of militant American lexicography, thinking that it might be 'a last flickering of Noah Webster's rabid hostility' toward British tradition (p. 157). Randolph Quirk's review (in The Statesman, March 2, 1962, repr. in Sledd and Ebbit, 1962, pp. 151-154) voices a similar regret in the sense that Webster's Third does not reveal the date of a word's earliest recorded reference (to be found, of course, in old English texts in most cases). It is obvious that Levitt and Quirk, like most British critics, understand the historical dimensión of the lexicon in terms of a national-treasure attitude. Along these lines, they do not seem to be convinced of the international character of Webster's Third, for they feel it is too American-English centered, and therefore displaces the natural center of gravity of the language, namely, the British Isles. What this means is that the participatory function is not strong enough to completely neutralize the effect of the unifying or separatist functions. Quirk seems to accept with resignation that 'British' is only a part of a major entity ——English—— but makes it clear that so is 'American', a fact

not quite conveyed by Webster's Third:

> It is true that converage of specifically British and Common-
> wealth words is fairly good ... but the editor seems not to
> have grasped that for international use it is equally necessary
> to label as American the words and uses that are restricted
> in this way, too. (p. 153)

Christopher Small goes even beyond that in his patriotic zeal when
he states that in fact, by calling this dictionary 'international',

> the claim is squarely made, and can readily be substantiated,
> that American is an international language; 'British English'
> usages are recorded, but that, it may be felt, is now almost
> as much a matter of courtesy as utility. (In The Glasgow
> Herald, Feb. 2, 1962, repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962,
> p. 136)

British critics seem quite articulate in their concern about the
unifying function and the participatory function of the English language in its
broadest sense, and at the same time they seem cereful as to maintain the
proper unifying and separatist functions of 'British' English as well, as the
above quotattions show. The situation is extremely complex, in fact, when
one looks at it within the framework of the diverse sub-speech communities
that integrate the abstract entity called the English language. One example
will clarify this. A Scottish critic, Noray McLaren (The Scottsman, March
10, 1962, repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 161-162), confesses that he is
very pleased that Webster's Third treats the British version of the common
language just like one more version of it, no better, for instance, than the
Scottish version of the language. Since Webster's Third does incluse Scottish
words suspiciously ignored by the Oxford English Dictionary, McLaren
concludes that 'there is less provincialism, it appears, in America than in
Oxford' (p. 162). The separatist function of Scottish English works in relation
to British English, just like the separatist function of British English seems to
work, today, in relation to American English. Actually, the nature of the
balance between the unifying and separatist functions is quite subtle, and
everything depends on the perspective adopted in each cultural situation.

+ + +

By far the majority of the negative critiques of **Webster's Third
New International Dictionary** have to do with the problem of the authority of
the dictionary and the contrast between prescriptive vs. descriptive lexicography.
The fact that all speech communities whose language has undergone the
standardization process manifest a need for usage guidance is a clear correlate

of the availability aspect of the urbanization property: for the frame-of-reference function to act properly the structural properties of the language must by known and maintained through overt and systematic channels ——the standardizing agencies. This is the most conspicuous aspect of the standard language (cf. Garvin, 1973). As it is evident by now, the American-English speech community expects the dictionary to fulfill this mission of exposing and maintaining good standards of usage[12]. This is what lies at the heart of the harsh criticisms suffered by Webster's Third and of its overt refusal to assume its expected guiding role. There is no anti-science sttitudes in such criticisms, as Wells and others think[13]. The point which I want to further elaborate here, in connection with the negative reviews of Webster's Third, is the several-times mentioned gap between language experts —— linguists and lexicographers—— and language users. The former, in the name of a particular scientific theory, separated themselves from the speech community they were members of and could not represent it any longer. The users of the language resented that and reacted violently. American speakers expect specialists on language to be also something like language leaders, for they do not seem to conceive of 'authoritative' attitudes as necessarily anti-scientific. The speakers know that usage-models ——this is what authority means in the final analysis—— are an integral part of the standardization process, for even the authors the dictionary takes citations from subject their language behavior ——or defiently do not—— to certain canons, and in any case have notions about good and bad English, beautiful and ugly words, and the like; to make the long story short: they know their usage models and can, in turn, become usage models for others to come. Thus the reaction against Webster's Third took place because the dictioanry appeared

> unable to handle the evidence that is not present in the surface of its citations ——precisely those ideas of correctness and superiority that subjectively inhere in our perception of words, especially as the written word forces the writer to think about ideas of correctness, to make his choice, to seek his meanings, to seek his emotive effects. (Baker, 1972, p. 144)

The simple historical fact is that the attempt at objectivity and scientific lexicography on the part of the editors of Webster's Third was consistently misinterpreted as permissiveness. In the name of the already commented on notion of 'dictionary status', the critics of Webster's Third thought the dictionary was just preaching the disturbing 'anything goes' attitude attributed by laymen to structural linguistics. (Cf. the names of some of the reviews: 'The string untuned', by Dwight McDonald; 'Sabotage in Springfield', by Wilson Follet, '100,000 words become legal' in the **Chicago-**

Sun-Times, etc.) The **New York Times,** also in the belief that the dictionary somehow legalizes the words it records, especially if value-judgment labels are dropped, composed the following contraption to show what 'good English' would become if one were going to take Webster's Third as one's source for lexical information:

> A passel of double-domes at the G. and C. Merriam Company joint in Springville, Mass., have been confabbing and yakking for twenty-seven years —–which is not intended to infer that they have not been doing plenty work—– and now they have finalized Webster's Third New International Dictionary, a new edition of that swell and esteemed word book. (Repr. in Sledd and Ebbit, p. 78)

Dr. Gove's articulate response to the New York Times, saying that by avoiding value-judgments, the dictionary was not advocating monstrosities like that paragraph as standard English, did not do much good against a strongly based popular attitude toward the function of the dictionary as a leader in the standardization process. Is this just a stubborn, conservative, prejudiced attitude on the part of some members of the speech community? Or is it rather that the need for authority is an integral part of a speech community? The fact is that, so far, 'objectivity' has proven to be mostly an illusion when it comes to deliver 'facts' about language usage. The critiques of Webster's Third we have examined are witness to it: a dictionary is an ideological statement, and the speakers know it:

> The fact that the compilers /of Webster's Third/ disclaim authority and piously refrain from judgments is meaningless: the work itself, by virtue of its inclusions and exclusions, its mere existence is a whole universe of judgments, received by millions as the Word from on high. (Wilson Follet, 'Sabotage in Srpringfield', repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 118-119)

This discussion is obviously related to the cultural reality of lexical items. This means that all words of the language have different types of values attached to them, as much as they are clustered around lexical domains or are current among different sectors —–geographic, professional, economic, ethnic, etc.–– of the speech community. In the final analysis, this is perhaps the key component behind the notion of 'authority': the speakers' need for information about the status of words. To be sure, the status of words will be determined by the types of language-usage models that effectively shape the speech community. Moreover, in the case of standardized

languages current in highly complex and diversified societies, no individual can possible keep track, all by himself, of the social status of each lexical item (actually not even of the basic meaning of most lexical items), and therefore he expects ——and badly needs—— some specialized agencies to keep him informed. In the case of the lexicon, the most efficient device so far invented to keep an increasingly expanding and specialized lexicon available to all is the dictionary. Without it, it would be difficult to speak of the cultural property of urbanization. Over again, this idea reccurs among the critics of Webster's Third, and is always linked to the notion of dictionary authority. B. Hunter Smeaton's review (**The Library** Journal, Jan. 15, 1962, repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 123-125) points in this direction when referring to the prescriptive mission of the dictionary:

> The great mass of dictionary users **want** and **need** a dictionary to prescribe for them ('prescribe' not in the authoritarian sense, or in that of any effort to arrest the perpetual change inherent in language, but in the sense of bold-facing those forms most widely acceptable to current generations' custodians of preferred usage /ultimately, teachers and editors/. (p. 123)

To sum up the lesson learned through the study of the polemic surrounding the publication of **Webster's Third New International Dictionary:** the notion of language authority, as applied to this type of books, implies that dictionaries are expected by the speech community to represent the standard language by keeping three important principles in mind:

—— in a standard-language situation, the function of maintaining and enhancing the availability of the lexicon must include information about the social and cultural status of words, as well as meaning distinctions and geographic variation;

—— in a speech community where non-literary language-usage models are prevalent, it is important to give language experts their proper place; especially, language experts should not be confused with experts in other domains;

—— the delicate equilibrium that exists between the structural and cultural properties of the standard language, and the functions and attitudes associated with them, must be carefully respected.

The first point requires no further explanation. The New York Times' barbarous paragraph quoted above shows, in its deformity how

important it is that the dictionary give some guidance about the status of words. A paragraph equally gortesque could be concocted by using contextually inapropriate scientific terms. This does not mean, then, that labels such as 'colloquial', 'vulgar', 'substandard', 'barbarism', 'illiterate', and the like, are the best ones: more adequate research should be conducted that would better reflect the speakers' system of values, just like better ways to label regional variation have been looked for and proposed at different times (for instance, Read, 1972). If the speakers themselves are not neutral about the lexicon, somehow the dictionary should find a way to exhibit this lack of neutrality. It is indeéd extreme to say, as a review in **The Richmond News Leader** (Jan. 1962; repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 121-122) does, that Webster's Third editors 'have abidcated their role as arbiters of better usages and worse', even though the dictionary is itself an element of the speech community. More realistically, what the reviewers expected, as already noted, was that information about value-judgments wich can be elicited from the linguistic behavior of the accepted language-usage models within the speech community. A first task, of course, would be that of determining where the usage models are. It is not an impossible task, and the polemic about Webster's Third itself offers revealing hints. For instance in the **Chicago Daily News** (Sept. 9, 1961; repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 54-55) we read:

> In the main we believe it the function of an unabridged dictionary to deal realistically with a world that has, after all, buried John Bryden and Alexander Pope and elevated Mickey Spillane and Miss /Polly/ Adler to best-sellerdom. (p. 55)

This leads us to the second point regarding the notion of authority as applied to the dictionary: the need for ascertaining language-usage models. In a technology-oriented society where an abstract character that we have called 'the expert' is 'the ideal speaker-hearer', to paraphrase a famous line, it is not suprising to find a whole class of experts whose field of expertise is language itself. Linguistic scholarship, in the United States, is not traditionally linked to literary studies but rather to the social sciences in their most technical aspects. But these language experts are not the ones that make up the group that actually serves as usage model for the speakers of American English: the real models are those members of the speech community who are expert users of the language, in contrast to those who are expert theoreticians and exponents and recorders of language facts. (Noah Webster, who always understood the importance of models, was the one who set up the criteria for language expertise, as seen. Perhaps his only flaw was that he thought that he was not only an expert in language but an expert user of the language as well.) The only problem with Webster's third, in this sense is that it failed to establish a good hierarchy of experts: expert language

scholars do not have to emit value judgments, but expert users do, and expert scholars have to account for it. Who are the expert language users according to the critics of Webster's Third? The problem is quite complex. On the one hand, not all experts in different fields of human activity seem to qualify, but only those who have made a profession of expressing themselves and their thoughts and findings, especially in writing. Moreover, the standard language being as diverse as it is, those experts should be followed as models only ——or mainly—— in their own fields. A sports writer, for instance, is an authority on the lexicon of sports, but not in other areas, so that if he says 'irregardless' instead of 'regardless', that fact does not raise 'irregardless' to the category of 'standard American English' of, if you want, 'good English'. The model for this type of general, non-specialized lexicon is provided by those members of the speech community who have reached that misterious condition called prestige. This is a notion extremely difficult to define, but at the same time clearly present in the criticisms addressed at Webster's Third. There is an awareness among members of the American speech community that, even though technological usage models have been adopted very deeply, traditional literary concerns have not been abandoned altogether, for they are part of a still-valued tradition. J. Harris (**Chicago Daily News,** Oct. 20, 1961; repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 80-87) offers a good example of this attitude:

> What's the point in any writer's trying to compose clear and graceful prose, to avoid solecisms, to maintain a sense of decorum and continuity in that magnificent instrument, the English language, if that peerless authority, Webster's Unabridged, surrenders abjectly to the permisive School of speech? (p. 81)

This is connected with the third aspect of the nature of the authority of the dictionary highlighted by the critics of Webster's Third, namely, the many times insisted upon need for an equilibrium between the structural and cultural properties of the standard language. The disproportion between the attention given to the structural properties and the cultural properties has already been mentioned. Let us now add one more point to the issue. One of the most widely recognized functions of the dictionary is to implement the availablity of the standard language, thereby facilitating the spread and knowledge of the structural properties throughout the speech community. Without this, the frame-of-reference function could not exist. But not everything that is made available is equally standard, for it might lack, for instance, participatory interest or prestige strength. The critics of Webster's Third felt that the editors made available everything in a non-discriminating way. An anecdote told by Dwight Mc Donad clearly illustrates this: a group of members of certain agency in New York city compiled a list of commonly confused an misused words, according to

established notions about standard status (e.g. deprecate/depreciate; infer/ imply) and sent it off to the Merriam-Webster Company headquarters, hoping to be useful in what they thought was a need for maintaining standards of usage. The answer from the company frustrated them: 'a letter of thaks that made it clear that their researches showed that people often confused these words and that, therefore, they would be listed in W 3 (Webster's Third) as synonyms' ('3 questions for structural linguists'; in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 258-259). The editors of Webster's Third did not seem to acknowledge that in the process of standardization there are social forces operating together with purely linguistic forces. The critics of the dictionary, on the other hand, seemed to insist on the fact that not everything everybody says anytime or anywhere has the same currency, and therefore to establish hierarchies is not necessarily anti-scientific. A review by Gary Wills (**The National Review,** Feb. 13, 1962; repr. in Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, pp. 131-134) speaks for the non-structural-linguistics section of the critics who saw this problem:

> There is madness in this editorial method. No one is allowed to improvise or speak with a purely personal stamp. Let 'to pearl harbor' once slip through Times's presses, and the voracious editors of this dictionary have added it to their catalogue. Shaw used words like 'unoverlookable' precisely because they were not in any dictionary. It is a luxury he would not enjoy now, or not for long. Tomorrow his whimsy of the evening would be fixed behind those five formidable pages of consulting scholars ... (p. 132)

What Wills is trying to tell the editors of Webster's Third is that the standard language is, by definition, not all the language, but a form of the language characterized by planned codification and its ability to serve as a non-controversial usage model.

+ + +

In 1969, partly as a lexicographic answer to **Webster's Third New International Dictionary,** partly as a scholarly-business-enterprise, a new dictionary appeared that purported to be, since the title page, a more thorough lexical guidebook for the American-English speech community: **The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.** This dictionary attemped the risky task of offering an authoritative guide to word usage without ceasing to be a sound scientific work. In the words of William Morris, the editor, the dictionary

> would faithfully record our language, the duty of any lexicographer, but it would not, like many others in this

permissive times, rest here. On the contrary, it would add the essential dimension of guidance, that sensible guidance toward grace and precisión which intelligent people seek in a dictionary. (Introduction, p. VI)

Along these lines, the American Heritage dictionary offers overt models for standard language usage, but it makes the crucial difference between experts in particular disciplines, experts in language matters, and expert language users. Only the latter qualify as models and judges for usage. The language experts ——a team of lexicographers and linguists—— collect the lexical items, determine meanings and variations, research etymologies, and arrange the expert-users' practice and opinions in a scholarly coherent way, backing them, in the relevant cases, with the advise of experts in specific areas; in short, they compile the dictionary. General value-judgments are requested from a usage panel of expert language users. It is important to call the members of this 'usage panel' expert language users, because it is in this capacity that they were selected by the editors of American Heritage , who as lexicographers operate as recorders of usage and meaning, and clearly within the well-established American tradition of non-literary, technology-oriented language-usage models. Out of the more than one hundred members of the panel a minority could be classified primarily as writers in the 'belles lettres' sense of the expression[15]. The majority are, as Morris put it, 'out-standing speakers and writers' with professional and technical qualifications as language users. The fact that they are all contemporary intellectuals makes it evident, also, that even American Heritage's normative rendering of the English lexicon is present-day oriented[16]. Also, the way in which the diction-ary handles its notmative function tries to be in line with an efficiency-oriented methodology: in relevant cases the expert users of the language are asked their opinion ——the value-judgment aspect—— but immediately after that the technical aspect ——the language experts— takes over: the judges' replies are tabulated and transferred to standardized usage-notes with the final function of serving speaking and writing effectiveness, and thus the claim is made that

as a consequence, this dictionary can claim to be more precisely descriptive, in terms of current usage levels, than any heretofore published ——especially in offering the reader the lexical opinions of highly sophisticated fellow citizens. (p. VIII)

How does the labeling of the degree of standardization in The American Heritage Dictionary differ from the sober or non-existing labeling in Webster's Third? Let us consider a few examples. An entry like bimonthly is defined in Webster's Third in two separate numbers: '1. once every two

months', and '2. twice a month', with no comment. American Heritage also records the meaning 'twice a month', but attaches a 'usage warning' to it:

> Bimonthly is rigidly restricted to the sense of **once in two months**, and biweekly to that of **once in two weeks,** according to 84 percent of the Usage Panel. The remainder also accept the corresponding secondary senses of **twice a month** and **twice a week,** which are more properly expressed by **semimontly** and **semiweekly.**

The word **irregardless** has, in Webster's Third, the label **substand (ard)** and an etymological note that, to the less alert reader, might look like a sign of approval: 'prob(ably) a blend of **irrespective** and **regardless'.** American Heritage, on the other hand, also lists **irregardless** as **nonstandard,** but in a usage note sets up a clear constraint on its use: '**irregardless,** a double negative, is never acceptable except when the intent is clearly humorous'.

In one case the editors of Webster's Third felt the need for overt information about the fact that a lexical item is overwhelmingly considered 'bad' by English speakers: the case of **ain't,** which is, the dictionary says, 'though disapproved by many, and more common in less educated speech, used orally in most parts of the U.S. by many educated speakers, especially in the phrase **ain't I'.** In this comment we find the two basic contraints that make up a lexicographic normative statement: a social warning and a contextual warning. All the same, the critics of Webster's Third found that that was not enough and insisted upon condemning **aint't** in harsher terms[17]. American Heritage simply echoed these condemnations by labeling **ain't nonstandard** and adding a usage note:

> **Ain't**, with few exceptions, is strongly condemned by the Usage Panel when it occurs in writing and in speech that is not deliberately colloquial or does not employ the contraction to provide humor, shock, or other special effect.

The editors of American Heritage thought that their treatment of **ain't** was so opportune that they used it in their advertising campaign to show that 'all dictionaries ain't the same', the best one being, of course, the one that offers usage guidance, authority. By doing so, the dictionary sets up limits to the degree of currency of lexical items and establishes hierarchies of availability; in short, it offers as a model of standard American English the language of the 'educated adult'. The notion of 'educated adult' is interesting because it reflects the attempts of the editors at being comprehensive and present all the aspects of language considered 'standard'. As Morris says,

the 'educated adult'... is... a kind of ideal person, for he has at his fingertips a most comprehensive lexicon, not only for the conduct and discussion of everyday affaires, but also for all the arts and all the sciences. (p. VI)

As a proof of American Heritage's interest in the property of rootedness, the traditional American lexicographic practice of offering encyclopedic material is abundantly maintained. A sense of national identity, and thus the unifying function, is enhanced by the large amount of U.S. -related information, which ranges from established historical tradition to folksy or semifolsky aspects of American life (cf. the entries Hiawatha, Humpty, Dumpty, Mount Rushmore, etc.). The etymologies, in line with the separatist-function-related Websterian tradition, avoid a documentary (necessarily British-centered) history of words. Instead, the editors present as more sophisticated (scientific tendency!) a research into long-range etymological roots that gets closer to 'the prehistoric origins of the language' (p. VII). This transferring of the roots of the language to its Indo-European origins has a scholarly backing: an article by Calvert Watkins which is part of the theoretical apparatus that precedes to body of the dictionary ('The Indo-European origins of English, pp. XIX-XX). Another article on 'Dialects of English', by Henry Lee Smith, Jr., in the same section, has a similar function, for it deals only with dialects of American English. All this means that linguistic scholaship, sound as it might be, is ideologically conditioned, and can be at the service of the enhancement of the unifying and separatist functions of the standard language. In the present case, the prestige function is also greatly favored.

It is important to insist that **The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,** by assuming a normative position and by enhancing the cultural properties of American English along with is structural properties, is not necessarily doing so in the name of a language-as-a-national- treasure attitude. As a matter of fact, this dictionary presents as a model a cultured form of the language not in the name of a literature to be proud of, or in the name of a cherished cultural past that should be kept alive, but rather in the name of a present-day-oriented attitude (a future-oriented attitude, even) which requires that a most-powerful language be kept efficiently functioning.

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There are many other dictionaries of the English language which have not been mentioned here. They all try to be authoritative, basing their authority on a lexicographic practice that aspires to live up, scientifically as well as socially, to the expectations of a technology-oriented speech

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community that has been led to assume, for whatever reasons, that the dictionary is indeed the outstanding exponent and guardian of the standard language.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1

The expression 'Modern American Dictionary' and a good description of it are found in Whitehall, 1958.

2

In 1702, a misterious lexicographer, known to us only as J.K., published

> A New English Dictionary: Or, a Compleat Collection of the Most Proper and Significant Words, Commonly Used in the Language; with a Short and Clear Exposition of Difficult Words and Terms of Art.
>
> The Whole digested into Alphabetical Order; and chiefly designed for the benefit of Young Scholars, Tradesmen, Artificers, and the Female Sex, who would learn to spell truely; being so fitted to every capacity, that it may be a continual help to all that want an Instructor.

In spite of the fact that J.K. designed his dictionary for the benefit of, among others, tradesmen, he did not depart from the language-usage models commonly accepted in the works of his time.

3

It does not matter that there was a lexicographic tradition in England when Johnson made this statement . He was aware that even the most successful of the previous dictionaries, that of Bailey's, lacked the most important feature of his own: the link to English literature.

4

In spite of the polemics it generated, the **American Dictionary** became almost immediately a source of authority and was respected ——if not loved—— by most Americans, and outside the United States it reached very early popularity. In Germany it was adopted as the standard dictionary of English tor all types of translations (Warfel, 1936, p. 361), and even the British

> overlooked its yankee peculiarities because of its wealth of definitions ——especially in the fields of science, manufacturing, trade, and commerce—— which were available in no other dictionary of the time. Even before the English edition was published (in 1830-32) the British

> courts had begun to cite the yankee work as an authority
> on points not covered by Johnson. (Leavitt, 1947, p. 35)

5

Hulbert's (1955) reflection that

> it is improbable that any such cooperation from umpaid
> readers could be obtained now

because

> people are 'too busy', actually too much engaged in their
> way in a hard world to have the leisure to extract quo-
> tations from a work which will not contribute to their
> fame or prestige (p. 40),

is only in part justified. It is not only that those were 'better times', or just different times, but above all that the very plan of the Oxford English Diction-ary did represent the interests of the British speech community in their language-as-a-national-treasure attitude.

6

A a matter of fact, American English had become so much a valid version of the English language that by the time the OED was begun it was a common thing to talk about British English, by contrast with the American version. As a symbol of this, when the dictionary was finished, the first two copies were presented to King George of the United Kingdom, and to Mr. Calvin Coolidge, president of the United States, 'as the highest represent-atives of the two great English-speaking nations' (OED, Historical Intro-duction).

7

It should be noted here that by the middle of 19th century, when the dictionary war began, 'Webster's Dictionary' was already a product of the Merriam-Webster Publishing Co., and no longer the original 1828 **American Dictionary of the English Language.** It is true, though, that the Merriam-Webster dictionaries remainded quite faithful to the spirit that originated them.

8

Naturally, subsequent Merriam-Webster dictionaries have gone through changes. For obvious reasons, the separatist function of the language has progressively become less of an issue. It is interesting to point that these dictionaries, although relaxing the manifestation of the separatist function,

have not tended towards the unifying function; instead, they have leaned towards an upgrading of the participatory function, becoming 'international' rather than 'American' or 'English' with no adjetives. This is the sense in which modern Merriam-Webster dictionaries are indeed Websterian. By the same token, the 'dictionary war' has never really ended: lexicographic competition is still very much alive.

9

It should be understood that this statement is valid only as it refers to a generalized attitude. Neruda seems to have built his ode based upon the **Diccionario de la Lengua Española** by the Real Academia Española. To be sure, there are 'scientific' modern Spanish dictionaries. Let us mention María Moliner's **Diccionario de Uso del Español** (Editorial Gredos), **Diccionario General e Ilustrado de la Lengua Española** (Editorial Vox), and Julio Cesares' **Diccionario Ideológico de la Lengua Española** (Editorial Gustavo Gili).

10

To be sure, not all linguistis in the U.S. share the view that culture and lexicon are clearly separate. Mathiot (1967 and 1973) has made a formalized type of lexical-ethnograpic interviewing the fundamental first step in the discovery of the structure of the lexicon.

11

Sledd and Ebbitt, 1962, collected a representative sample of this polemic, consisting of more than 60 reviews published in the English-speaking press.

12

As early as in 1781, the Reverend John Witherspoon complained in the **Pennsylvania Journal** that Dr. Johnson's dictionary was not authoritarian enough, that is to say, did not satate clearly what was acceptable or desirable English and what was not, and thus

> it is a book of very great value on several accounts, yet it may lead ignorant persons into many mistakes. He has collected every word, good or bad, that was ever used by any English writer; and though he has... given us his authorities in full, yet that is not sufficient to distinguish them. (In Mathews, ed., 1931 /1973/, p. 28)

13

This lack of historical perspective can very often be found among linguists. Williams (1975), for instance, claims that

what the controversy /around Webster's Third/ attests
to is a linguistic insecurity very little different from that
recognized by the eighteen century grammarians and
lexicographers. (p. 98)

14

Cf., in this respect, John Simon's articles in **Esquire,** esp. 'Pressure
from the above. Academics wreck English by making it highfalutin and
obscure' (July 18, 1978), quite close in spirit to Newman's **Strictly speaking,**
mentioned earlier in this study.

15

This is typical of the non-literature-oriented approach to the
standardization process. Along these lines, to emphasize that American
Heritage offers clear usage guidance, the editors published a series of adverti-
sements in the press to show how their judges ——i.e. the expert users of the
language—— handle subtle meaning distinctions. Here is a sample:

Are you anxious when Edwin Newman is eager?
Are your parameters within Isaac Asimov's limits?
Do you enthuse when Red Smith applauds?
Do you finalize what David Ogilvy completes?
Do you have less when Cleveland Amory has fewer?

None of the mentioned judges could be considered prima-
rily a poet or anything like that, and their authoritativeness does not proceed
from literary excelence but from their qualifications in other areas. Who
could know better than Isaac Asimov about parameters and limits ——and
how to write about them?

16

Kilburn's (1970) hostile critique of American Heritage seems to
imply that the dictionary in the name of a language-as-a-national-treasure
attitude, which is not the case, as I try to show. Kilburn does not recognize,
for instance, the real function of the Usage Panel:

The Usage Panel is only a gimmick, a linguistic guide to
pinky-pointing, for what it comes down to in actuality is
that each of the pundits is asked, in essence, 'Do you use
this word or expression? Are you offended when you hear
the expression or read it in print?' And then, God save
the mark, once there was unanimity on only one usage ('in
favor of **simultaneous** as an adverb'),the results are reported

in percentages, which must represent the absolute triumph
of useless information reported in numbers. (p. 5)

17

In the **Chicago Daily News** (Sept. 9, 1962; repr. in Sledd and Ebbit,
1962, p. 55), we find out that **ain't** 'Still makes its user stand out like Simple
Simon in a roomful of nuclear phisicists' (note the example of high language
sophistication); in the **Chicago Sun Times** (March 30, 1962; repr. in Sledd and
Ebbitt, 1962, p. 201), Hooke Norris claims that **ain't,** when used by more
sophisticated speakers, is 'condescending and patronizing', and the strongest
condemnation comes from **The Toronto Globe** (Sept. 8, 1961; repr. in Sledd
and Ebbitt, 1962, p. 53), according to which

> Webster's to the contrary, ain't is not acceptable, except
> when used ironically, in any educated conversation. What
> Webster's has done is to cast the mantle of its approval
> over another example of corrupted English.

CONCLUSION

Some languages posses a set of structural properties (intellectualization and flexible stability) and a set of cultural properties (rootedness and urbanization) which are at the base of a set of functions (frame of reference, unifying and separatist; prestige, participatory). The latter generate a set of speakers'attitudes that complement an indeed complex picture. We call these standardized languages.

The standardization process is characterized by its openness: on the one hand, properties, functions, and speakers' attitudes are fuzzy-edged notions integrated in an ill-defined system; on the other hand, they have many possible ways to manifest themselves. Such openness has two relevant consequences: first, that highly formalistic models are inadequate to account for the standardization process ('undue emphasis on elegance and/or simplicity may easily lead to a distortion of reality' ——Garvin, 1978, p. 332); and second, that a language can be a standard language in more than one way.

In the preceding pages I presented a rather lengthy discussion of the way in which American English became a standard language. I centered my attention on Noah Webster (1758-1843). He is more than the symbol of the early years of American English and more than a trademark of famous dictionaries. He did indeed draw the lines along which American English was going to undergo the standardization process. Up to Webster's time, the unchallenged usage model for cultured English was British literary usage. Webster substituted an American, science-oriented usage model as the best one to follow. From then on, experts and not literati have been the undisputed leaders for language matters in America. (Sometimes, this is rather misleadingly called anti-intellectualism.) To give a solid foundation to this new approach to the standard language, Webster gave a new dimension to the English dictionary. This is true to the degree that today it is necessary to speak of the Modern American Dictionary to differentiate it from the traditional wordbook whose symbol can be said to be the justly-respected Oxford English Dictionary.

Webster could have worked on standardizing agencies other than the dictionary and he actually did raise the issue. Why not a language academy, for instance? After all, French, Spanish, and many other cultured European languages were ruled by academies. Why not English? Webster, faithful to a deep-rooted English tradition, rejected the idea. The first reason lies in the very nature of language academies. Guitarte and Torres Quintero aptly define the Spanish Academy in a way taht is basically valid for all these institutions.

The Academy, they say, is

> an organization representative of the most outstanding part
> of the country's literary life and is protected by the state so
> that it can guide the linguistic activity of the country after
> the manner of a supreme tribunal. (Guitarte and Torres
> Quintero, 1974, p. 316-317)

It is, thus, obvious that academies are a sort of centralized normative power, which is something that English-speaking societies have always distrusted. Moreover, in the American case,

> the language academies of Spain and France, well known to
> many U. S. leaders, provoked images of crowned heads and
> royal courts dictating cultural norms. (Heath, 1977, p. 11)

Thus, even if some American leaders (for instance, John Adams) did give serious consideration to the idea of an American language academy, and even though many short-lived academies did pass through early American life, the fact is that they did not prosper. (Read, 1936)

Noah Webster had additional reasons to reject the idea of an academy for the English language. To begin with, he seems to have identified a centralized language-ruling agency with a centralized orthodox cultural ——chiefly religious—— power, which as a devote Lutheran he could not accept. But also there was the type of language development he stood for. It has been noticed (for instance, Rabanales, 1965) that it is a literature-based linguistic normativeness which gives theoretical and cultural coherence to academic action. The non-literature-oriented usage models Webster developed were thus incompatible with the existence of a language academy. At best he could think of a sort of scientific-seminar gathering of experts to deal with language matters. He was an old man when he wrote to William Chauncey Fowler:

> The more I think on the subject of your agency, the less
> inclined I feel to encourage it. The utmost that you could
> do, would be, I think, to call on literary gentlemen and
> teachers and converse with them on the subject of attempt-
> ing to bring about more uniformity on our language.
> (Letters of Noah Webster, p. 509)

But Webster knew that it would have been a loss of time to try to turn language academies into scientific societies. He needed a more efficient agency to bring about standardization for his American language according to

its own dynamics. As he wrote to William S. Cardell:

> Such an institution /a language academy/ would be
> of little or no use, until the American public should have
> a dictionary which should be received as a standard work.
> (Quoted in Read, 1936, p. 1164)

Eight years later, he published **An American Dictionary of the English Language,** which made an academy altogether unnecessary...

The fact that the dictionary had attained such a relevant role in the process of standardization of American English does not mean that this is the only important standardization agency. In modern times especially the media seem to have reached crucial importance. It could be a rewarding work to study the American media from the standpoint of standard-language theory. That is not all. If literature has not been too relevant for American culture, it has indeed been the unifying force behind language civilization throughout Spanish-speaking America. Standard-language theory would be greatly enriched if the study of this literature-oriented language culture were to be undertaken.

In reach the end of my work and have the disturbing feeling that everything is yet to be done, that I have merely pointed to a number of interesting facts and relevant problem areas. I do not wish to be too pessimistic. Perhaps uncovering problems and suggesting solutions means something, af ter all. The process of language standardization is complex. May having hinted a way to account for it not have been in vain.

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