Chapter II

METAPHORS AND SPEECH ACTS

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

The creation of a text wavers between speech & narrative. Since speech & writing are functional manifestations of 'Language', they are necessarily located within the social context in which language functions. The very word function implies a certain action, that language not only refers to and tells but also performs. The other vital function that language performs is to impose an order on chaos or reality. The Rhetoric of language not only explains and explicates reality but shapes and fashions it, gives it a perspective and a construct which raw reality lacks.

Because culture constitutes an endless series of possibilities of action and interaction and reaction, and because language is culture bound, and therefore context bound, the use of language, whether in speech or in writing, constitutes choices. Linguistic choices are culture bound and decoding of a text in terms of these choices, can lead to a better understanding of the organizing principles in the making of a novel. Since choices are continuously made
by language users, it would be interesting to closely look at the strategies that inform, persuade or dictate the making of their choices by writers of fiction. Since Rhetoric is a persuasion technique that influences us to make socio-cultural, political or linguistic choices, a look at some of the key components of rhetoric like metaphor or speech acts would be useful.

The Speech Act theory has not only been a vital issue in theories of linguistics but has also aroused interest in various other fields of inquiry. Literary critics too have referred to the speech act theory for decoding textual subtleties or for a greater understanding of the nature of literary genres (Ohmann 1971, Levin 1976). Philosophers like Searle 1969 (h-8) perceived its potential application to the status of ethical statements. Linguists too have adopted the notion of speech-act theory as applicable to problems in Syntax (Saddock, 1974), semantics (Fillmore 1971a and second language learning (Jakobvitz and Gordon) 1974). In pragmatics, speech acts constitute along with presupposition and implicature, one of the central phenomena that any general theory can account for.

Like all other theories, this theory too has evolved from philosophical origins can be traced back to issues in the truth conditional
analysis of sentence meaning. Logical positivism of the 1930s adopted the extreme position that unless a sentence can, at least in principle, be verified (i.e. tested for its truth or falsity) it was strictly speaking meaningless, thereby rendering meaningless, considerable everyday utterances, as well as several ethical, aesthetical and literary discourse. This doctrine was not only pervasive in philosophical circles but strongly supported by Ayer (1936) and stimulated by Wittgenstein in his Tractatus Logico Philosophicus (1921). But ironically it was Wittgenstein again, who in 1958, in his philosophical investigation, attacked the logical positivists with his "meaning in use" and the stance that utterances are only explicable in relation to the activities in which they play a role.

When inaccuracies and vacuities of ordinary language were vigorously debated, Austin set forth his theory of speech acts. Like Wittgenstein he too endorsed that a speech act in a speech situation is the only actual phenomenon (1962:147). In his "How to do things with words" he displaced truth conditions as central to language understanding. The speech act theory asserts that sentences do not merely say things but do things: i.e. describe, declare, promise, apologize, warn, christen, bequeath, etc. The utterances realized by these sentences, Austin refers to as, performatives and contrasts them with statements and
assertions with constatives. While Austin did not allow truth or falsehood to affect performatives he did grant that the acts could go wrong. He brought forth a typology of conditions which performatives had in order to succeed or be "happy". Felicity by him into three main categories: whether their felicity conditions are met or not. Utterances can only be assessed as felicitous or infelicitous. In "How to do things with words" Austin begins with the theory of some special and peculiar utterances- performatives and evolves a general theory that pertains to all kinds of utterances. He shifts from the view that performatives are a special class of sentences with peculiar syntactic and pragmatic properties, to the view that there is a general class of performative utterances that include both explicit performatives and implicit performatives (includes other kind of utterances too). A further sea-change occurs when he moves from the dichotomy of performative/constatives to the general theory of illocutionary acts. Statements as truth bearers, and performatives, as action-performers, can no longer be perceived or understood separately but taken as components of generalized theory of speech acts. According to this all utterances, in addition to meaning what they mean, perform specific actions (or 'do things') through
having specific forces. In 1970a Austin explained, "what we need besides the old doctrine about meanings is a new doctrine about all the possible forces of utterances, towards the discovery of which our proposed list of explicit performative verbs would be a very great help". (251).

Austin identifies three basic kinds of acts or senses by which in saying something, an act is performed.

1) The locutionary act: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference.

2) Illocutionary act: the making of a statement, offer, promise, in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it (or with its explicit performative paraphrase).

3) The perlocutionary act: The bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance.

The focus of Austin's interest is the illocutionary act and the term speech act has come to refer exclusively to that kind of act.

Searle's systematization of Austin's work has maximum impact on the speech act theory. Searle appeals to the distinction between regulative rules and constitutive rules.
The former controls existing activities while the latter constitutes the activity itself, i.e. the rules of the game. To Searle, felicity conditions are not merely dimensions on which utterances can go wrong but are jointly constitutive of the various illocutionary forces. His felicity conditions form a grid on which to compare different speech acts. Searle suggests a classification into four kinds of conditions depending on how they specify propositional content, preparatory preconditions, conditions of sincerity, and the essential condition (Searle 1969-66-7).

Faced with the inadequacy of this procedure as a classificatory method, Searle falls back on a more abstract scheme based on felicity conditions. According to him there are just five basic kinds of action that one can perform in speaking (Searle 1976) by means of five types of utterances. a) representatives, b) directives c) commissions d) expressions e) declarations. Neither definitive nor exhaustive, Searle's typology does not stand in any systematic way on felicity conditions. Austin and Searle's views could be reduced to the irreducibility thesis. According to this all utterances express propositions and perform actions.

One of the pragmatic theories of speech acts is the context change theory. According to this, speech acts are
treated as operations (in the set-theoretic sense) on context i.e. as functions from contexts into contexts. Understood as a set of propositions, a context describes the beliefs, knowledge, commitments of the participants in a discourse, built on the promise that much more takes place when a sentence is uttered, than merely the expansion of its' meaning. The contribution that an utterance makes to this change in the context is its speech act force or potential, not all speech acts add propositions to the context, some remove them — e.g. permissions, recantations, abolitions disavowals.

Since the study focuses on the writings of India-born writer of narrative and dialogue a social framework has been adopted.

Language of course is an essentially social phenomena and therefore all aspects of linguistic activity can be interpreted as social practice and all linguistic forms and processes can be treated and accounted for in terms of social forms and social processes.

Like other social and cultural processes, fiction writing is also a social, cultural, and linguistic process. Fictional texts too, transmit cultural values and social meanings but in a much more subtle, tangential manner.
Fiction involves displays of power. Thelectedness of linguistic and social form of the genre of fiction. Global existence today, and works of fiction that recreate this existence, reveal a close homology between the two.

Works of fiction that I have chosen to examine are by writers who increasingly straddle many cultures and diverse social backgrounds. They are instances of psycho-social products of rapid globalization. The forms and meanings of their linguistic enterprise are as varied as the choices (socio-linguistic - socio-cultural) which they are confronted with and choose from.

While traditional views on language regarded the individual as inert user (writer or speaker) of the language I should like to endorse the more recent stance of the individual as user and shaper of the language. The individual increasingly becomes instrumental in the continuous process of language change, in the shaping of it. As social and psychological agent, the user today is instrumentally and causally involved, specially the writer
and modes of expansion are constantly in a state of flux. Confronted with an immense field of choices, the user of the language psychologically and socially, turns more fecund in the exercise and negotiation of choices. He is no longer helpless and impotent in the face of language as a monolithic structure. A characteristic mode of coping by the modern, global, fiction writer with experimental overload, is to reduce the "new" and the unknown to familiar categories. Labeling "the new" phenomena which takes place around them is a mode of controlling their lives and preserving their sanity. Making metaphors is one such mode adopted by India-born writers of the 80s to deal with the enigma of global existence. As Halliday asserts in his Introduction to Functional Grammar (1985), metaphors enable users to elaborate, extend and not merely enhance. Lexico-Semantic processes, metaphors are essentially transfers that enable writers and speakers to encode experiences differently. Lexical variations in the expression of meaning, metaphors encode diversely to contribute and create new meaning. In so doing they offer new insight and new hypothesis, and successfully mediate between mind and cultures in flux. New metaphors are instrumental in changing the ways in which writers perceive and understand the global situation today. Therefore, in a way metaphors change language and play a part in cultural evolution. In
brief, it becomes an integral ingredient of evolutionary epistemology.

Metaphors of transmigration and genetic mutation, in the writings of India-born writers, not only make the unknown, known, but serve to pollinate varied cultures of the occident and the orient, of the arts and the sciences. By bringing into view resemblances between things which appear on the surface as dissimilar, metaphor enhances our cognition of the world around us. Metaphors enable these writers to cross the bounds of narrow categories and concepts by acting as paradigmatic devices by pointing out analogies and making comparison. By juxtaposing ideas and experiences which are distinct and incongruent, metaphors enhance and distill diversities into new unities of meaning. Contextual relations which pertain to one semantic field are transferred on to an other distinct content domain.

Metaphor as Cognition

Alternatively, tolerated for its rhetorical efficacy, and rejected for its effective power, metaphor has taken a long time in being recognized for its power of cognition and its considerable contribution to the concept of meaning. Earlier dismissed as beautiful but not useful, metaphor is resurrected today more for its utility than its beauty! Philosophers and linguists are once again putting metaphor
to work, investing it, or recognizing its potential to bring about an evolution in culture and language itself. This change in focus from metaphor as embellishment and attribute, to metaphor, as cognition and reconceptualization, reformulation of reality and self was neither sudden nor self-conscious but a gradual perception building over several centuries. The beginning can in fact be traced all the way back to Aristotle who in his Poetics and Rhetoric, asserted that, "..... the greatest thing by for, is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others, it is also a sign of genius since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of similarity of dissimilars. Through resemblance, metaphor makes things clearer".

Very early, Aristotle had perceived that metaphor is born of analogy and performs the function of creating or bringing about clarity of perception or thought. By calling the rising sun a sowing-god-created-flame, he reveals a quality of the sun which was never perceived in that manner until then: the rays of the sun are yellow corn that are scattered on the ground to bring forth new life, new light. Until conceived as an act, by the metaphor, the act of the shining sun, sowing new life, was nameless. Thus Aristotle early pointed out that metaphor could provide a way of learning something new about the world, or that it could
enable man to perceive and understand the world in various ways. To Aristotle, metaphor as a mode of perception was logical and useful in the examination of likenesses: "...... it is by induction of particulars on the basis of similarities that we infer the universal'.

To Aristotle metaphor was a conceptual tool of much power, because he granted the perception of similarity an important cognitive role. Analogy to him was a basis of classification and selection, applicable to various fields of inquiry from philosophy to science. 'Examining likenesses' is useful for hypothetical reasoning because it is a general opinion that among similars what is true of one is also true of the rest'. For Aristotle these metaphors that are based on analogy partake of the intellectual virtues that he affords to analogy itself.

Aristotle believed that discerning analogical uses of language can help us to discern analogical states of reality. Today, modern day thinkers like Kittay maintain and confer immense importance to analogical thinking for diverse areas of cognition, viewing it as indispensable.

Later developments of the Aristotelian tradition treated metaphor as decoration or comparison. In either case metaphor was reduced to an option or an explicit statement of similarity. Philosophers who viewed metaphor
thus, viewed language as a passive conduit of perceptions, an imperfect and indispensable, vehicle; Locke speaks of language as a conduit that may "corrupt the fountains of knowledge which are in things themselves and even 'break or stop the pipes whereby it is distributed to public use!' The stance that metaphor was embellishment and therefore sparingly used, dominated the texts of Rhetoric in the 18th and 19th centuries.

With his "Essay on the origin of languages" (1781) Rousseau foreshadowed the view of language which treats metaphor as more than ornament. To him literal language is a pruning away and a rationalization of our figurative thought. He cites the analogy of the stranger who appears as giant when first and awe. As he asserts "Man's pri are magical and metaphorical and bec only later. This view was modified an ter, by Coleridge. He believed that lan and creative agent that formed precepts and concepts, continually engaged in unifying the diversity of existence. To him imagination is: "The power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others and by a sort of fusion to force many into one............. Combining many circumstances into one moment of thought to produce that ultimate end of human thought and human feeling, unity'.
Metaphor therefore is the linguistic realization of this unity. Instead of recording pre-existing similarities in things, metaphor, shaped through the imagination, is the linguistic means by which we bring together and fuse into a unity diverse thoughts and thereby reform our perceptions of the world.

An explicit contemporary position, that metaphor is more than implicit comparison and ornament, was first taken up by Max Black. In his interaction theory of metaphor Black first asserted the irreducibility of metaphor as well as its distinct cognitive content. Black of course was a student of Richards and borrows heavily from him, and therefore is indirectly influenced by Coleridge and Romanticism. An exploration into Richards theory of metaphor would be incomplete without examining the question of meaning. In his 'Meaning of Meaning' (1923), in conjunction with C.K. Ogden and in "Philosophy of Rhetoric", 1936, Richards has extensively inquired into the impact which language and symbols have on human relationships. According to him language is an extension of and refinement of one's sense organs, capable of introducing new concepts into the contexts of our signs and extending our sense organs.
Predicated on the ideas of Francis Bacon concerning perception, ["For it is by discourse that men associate, and words are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar. And therefore the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding ........."]

Richards' theoretical bias can be discussed in his definition of Rhetoric, "Rhetoric, I shall argue, should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies. We struggle all our days with misunderstandings and no analogy is required for any study which can remove them". Richards' discussion of the context theorem of meaning is launched by the above statement. He believes that our reactions to and interpretation of environmental stimuli or data are dependent on past confrontations and experience with similar stimuli. Thus our responses get their character and meaning from effects of happiness in the past. Thus, meanings that we make of present environmental stimuli are rooted in and grow out of the past. As Richards puts it himself "our interpretation of any sign is our psychological reaction to it, are determined by our past experience in similar situations and by our present experience. If this is stated with due care in terms of causal contexts or correlated groups we get an account of judgment, belief and interpretation which places the psychology of thinking on the same level as the other industries, sciences". 

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Therefore our reactions to the here and now world are directly correlated to our individual and collective histories. Categories of contexts are thus created and maintained by each individual.

Richards states that when any part of a context appears (a context is "a set of entities - things or events - related in a certain way........") the possibility exists that the entire context will be remembered and the organism will act as if the total context were present. In other words the part has the power to elicit the whole.

This ability to "abridge" from the immediate external context to previous and similar contexts when only one segment or part of the whole is perceived is also the basis of forming metonomic and metaphoric connections. Thus an understanding of rhetorical behaviour rests primarily on the understanding of man's sorting activity. However, to Richards, words and symbols are also important stimuli. Words are symbols and unique, says Richards, in that they are "substitutes exerting the powers of what is not there".

Parallel to how stimuli come to mean, the meaning attached to words also depend on past encounters with the word and what it correspondingly stands for. The summation of past experience with a symbol, together with the present instance of the word, determine meaning. Thus the immediate
external context together with past psychological contexts determine meaning. Richards labels this total of past and present experience the technical context. Thus in Richards terms, words attain meaning through the technical context which surrounds them. Thus meaning is delegated efficacy. It is the virtue of words to be substitutes exerting the power of what is absent. They achieve this, in complex fashion, through their contexts.

Thus Richards' theory of how words mean is based on the concept of context and the sorting process. Richards, unlike G. Campbell, insists that meanings are in people, not words or symbols. As he asserts, "A chief cause of misunderstanding, I shall argue, is the proper meaning superstition...... that a word has a meaning of its own, (ideally only one) independent of and controlling its use and the purpose for which it should be uttered ............. that the stability of the meaning of a word comes from the constancy of the contexts that give it its meaning". Therefore contexts determine and shape the meanings of words and symbols. Since each individual operates from personal unique contexts, meaning becomes individualized precisely because it is context dependent. And yet meanings are agreed upon mutually, according to Richards', because "the familiar sense of context can be extended further to include the circumstances under which
anything was written or said ......... wider still finally to include anything whatever about the period, or anything else which is relevant to our interpretation of it". 10

Thus words are dependent upon one another and their interaction (inter in animation) provides the literary context. While words refer to things, words are not the thing itself. Ogden and Richards are against the one to one correspondence or a necessary connection between the word and reality object (referent). Since the word or symbol is merely an observation of reality, there is only an indirect relationship between symbol and reference. Ogden and Richards' favourite semantic triangle of symbols, referent and thought explains how individual thoughts or contexts create misunderstanding in communication. In human communication an identical symbol or word does not always evoke identical meanings from two or more participants. Richards' culminates his context theorem of meaning by defining metaphor as the heart of language systems; "The view that metaphor is omnipresent in speech can be recommended theoretically. If you recall what I said in my 2nd lecture about the context theorem of meaning, about meaning as the delegated efficacy of signs by which they bring together into new unities the abstracts, or aspects which are missing parts of their various contexts, you will recollect some instances that a word is normally a
substitute for (or means), not one discrete past impression but a combination of general aspects. Now that is itself a summary account of the principle of metaphor ....... When we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word or phrase whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction".\(^{11}\)

Within Richards' theory of abstraction metaphor "is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison and the metaphor of language derive therefrom".\(^{12}\)

Daniel Fogarty sums up Richards' thinking on metaphor and its centrality to social relationships, "Since metaphor is just abstraction for the purpose of clearer and more vivid communication, since it seems to be the nature of our thinking to be perceptually busy with sorting and classifying references and compassing contexts and their parts, and since our language symbolizes their thinking, it seems to Richards that our language must be highly, habitually, and even naturally metaphoric".\(^{13}\)

Richards' aim was to portray metaphor not as "an added power of language" but as its 'constitutive form', as "the omnipresent principle of language". This has its basis in Richards' contextual conception of meaning; signs are efficacious as they bring together into new unities the
abstracts, or aspects, which are the missing parts of their various contexts".  

Based on IA Richards' 'perspective' stance, Black's essay (1962) on metaphor has generated the thesis that metaphor has an irreducible cognitive force. Because metaphor provides a perspective from which to gain an understanding of that which is metaphorically portrayed it has a distinctive cognitive role. As Kittay says, 'metaphor provided the linguistic realization for the cognitive activity by which a language speaker makes use of one linguistically articulated domain to gain an understanding of another experimental or conceptual domain, and similarly, by which, a hearer grasps such an understanding'.

Unlike Richards, Black claims that metaphor is not isolated (a word) but a sentence which he calls the 'frame' and the words, specifically, "focus": the frame imposes "extension of meaning upon the focal word". Richards' use of 'vehicle' remains unclear: whether the term refers to the idea signified by the focal word or to the contextual and conceptual inferences relating to the focal word. While Richards was the first to talk about the two ideas active together in metaphor as vehicle and tenor, Richards believed in a contextual conception of meaning, presented as a relational theory of meaning, and was convinced that
language is a bringing together of diversities into a unity of meaning which is contextually supported. Ideas which are distinct and incongruent are juxtaposed to create metaphorical meaning.

No longer dismissed as similarities between two ideas, metaphor is a tool for pointing out analogies by crossing categorical and conceptual boundaries. Instead of describing pre-given similarities, metaphors create the similarities which they bespeak. (Kittay, 1982). Thus metaphors are not restricted to words or sentences but can take the form of larger texts too. Moreover they are not restricted to absolutes but are in fact relating to a set of beliefs and to linguistic usage which may change through time and place - they are relative to a given linguistic community. This relativization enables us to observe the dynamic inherent in language by which the metaphorical becomes literal and the literal becomes metaphorical.

Writers find reality a plurality, which needs to be constantly structured to recreate new environments in which to survive. They bring this about by rearranging the linguistic configurations to recreate new meanings. Their metaphorical moves disrupt a given order and utilize a feature of the old order in the creation of a new one. The
experienced superiority of a new order allows it to be entrenched and to replace the old ordering. In so doing they offer varied conceptual schemes: a chosen order which will both reflect and shape the true and meaningful without precluding the fact of alternate schemes. By bringing about alterations and conflicts in localized parts of general schemes, these writers introduce a new partial reordering which is in conflict with the order as it currently coheres with the general scheme. Kittay says, "some (re)orderings serve a need which is transient, easily accomplished by a temporary rearrangement, and are disorder only relative to a chosen order which was established relative to some fixed and some alterable constraints. Others are more global. The most significant changes force us to reorder permanently parts of our conceptual systems, as in the case of the important social, economic, or scientific upheavals. These in turn become literal truth". Thus metaphor introduces partial reorderings of our conceptual scheme. Writers continually improvise through metaphor. They balance losses in heuristic power against gains in definite precision. It is the work of metaphor to fashion or give voice to conceptual needs. "The conceptual orders from which the metaphor originates will serve to model further rearrangements in the furniture of our mind", as Kittay says. The alteration in the conceptual organisation of the
Kittay maintains that truth is relative to an accepted system of concepts and beliefs which reflects a given set of relations, a language community has, to the world it occupies. What language expresses, means, and refers to at once shapes and dialectically is shaped by such a conceptual frame - one which is itself in a dialectical relation to language. It is a frame which must be adaptable both to our world's temporary, imaginary and permanent alteration and to our understanding of that world; it must be a frame which will allow us to adapt our lives and our circumstances to change. To Kittay language exists as an expressive form in a dialectical relation to our purposes, our conceptual systems and what we hold to be true. Primarily it is not a conveyer of truth and falsity. Metaphors provide terminology for features of the world whose existence seems probable, but many of whose fundamental properties have yet to be discovered. Metaphor is pervasive in language and therefore occupies a permanent place in the structure of thought itself. As Nietzsche asserts, "The drive towards the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive ......... It is not truly vanquished by the fact that a regular and rigid new world is constructed as its prison from its own ephemeral products, the concepts ......... It
continually manifests an ardent desire to refashion the world which presents itself to waking man ........... 19

Metaphors reflect and shape the writers' beliefs and desires. It enables writers to remain in touch with the sources of their creativity and to keep their surroundings and minds adaptable to the changing circumstances of their lives and their worlds. It is within a carefully conceived chaos that metaphors attain an irreducible cognitive content and a special meaning.

Writers increasingly seek to recreate the global identities and the failure of the encounter culturally constructed personal between culturally created through the verbal exchanges in the fiction of these writers. Since interacting characters no longer belong to socially and linguistically homogeneous groups, they are unable to share linguistic and cultural knowledge and therefore unable to negotiate interpretation in conversation.

An analysis of the socio-cultural differences and their linguistic reflection in dialogues enables a deeper insight into the context of situation and the characters. The analysis will highlight that language differences play an
important role in signaling information and in creating and maintaining the subtle boundaries of power, status and position that make up the fabric of social life. The writings of India-born authors seek to recreate the complexities and breakdowns in communication between socially and linguistically heterogeneous global populations.

This thesis attempts to interpret verbal exchanges as strategy in the writings of India-born writers, from a sociolinguistic approach. In order to investigate and interpret dialogues the model of conversational analysis (Gumperz 1982) provides a useful frame of reference.

Modern urban societies, across the world, are seen to be multiethnic, and heterogeneous culturally. A phenomenal increase in migrations and movements of people across cultures generates complexities and breakdowns in interpersonal and in social communication. India-born writers have very perceptively focused on verbal exchange as the key factor of misunderstanding and grief resulting from cross cultural encounters.

Participants in an exchange frame assess the other's intentions and base their responses, by means of conversational inference. Their interpretation is a context bound process.
In addition to grammatical and lexical knowledge in the interpretation process, the personal background knowledge, socio-cultural assumptions, concerning role and status relationships as well as social values all play an important role. These contextual factors have been consciously recreated by India-born writers, linguistically, to artistically show, instead of tell, of the recent change and development in the composition of urban societies all over the world. This thesis attempts to show the role of social knowledge in the writer’s interpretation of the world.

Verbal and non verbal signs communicate the social input to conversation, that channel the progress of an encounter in order to affect the interpretation of intent. To analyze the ongoing process I wish to study interpretations as a function of the dynamic pattern of moves and counter moves that constitute a conversation frame. Verbal and non verbal responses in an ongoing conversation, indirectly, implicitly, signal the process of inference. The intent of an utterance can be evaluated not independently for meaning or truth, but through the nature of these responses within the context.

In the act of conversation, social knowledge interacts with grammatical and lexical knowledge and guides the interpretation of utterances and responses.
Major research trends, so far, have dealt with contextual factors in interpretation, ethnography of communication and discourse analysis.

According to the anthropological tradition of ethnography of communication, socio-cultural knowledge is perceived as sequences of speech events defined as sequences of time and space, and characterized by cultural values and norms that constraints both the form and content of what is said. On the other hand discourse analysis, deriving from speech act theory, linguistic pragmatics, frame semantics (Fillmore 1977) and artificial intelligence posits abstract semantic constructs called frames or schemata by means of which participants apply their knowledge of the world to the interpretation of what goes on in an encounter.

Existing grammars prove inadequate in providing information about the social functions of language. Theoretical writing suggests categories of inquiry that seek to fill new types of data. The ethnographer in studying language use, examines the "means of speaking", as Hymes calls it, i.e. the genre or art forms in terms of which verbal performances can be characterized, as well as the various acts of speaking (functions such as questions, response, request) and "frames" (Austin) that serve as
instructions on how to interpret a sequence of acts' (Baumann & Sherzer 1975). The means of speaking are put into practice and related to cultural norms in the performance of particular speech events. An enormous range of signaling resources available in various cultures, as well as many culturally specific ways that rules of speaking vary with context, are cited by ethnographers. They tend to see speech events as bounded units functioning like social systems when norms and values constitute independent variables, separate from language proper.

Sociolinguistics seeks to analyze the interrelationship of such variables in events characteristic of particular social groups. In discourse analysis the cognitive functioning of contextual and other knowledge becomes the primary concern. This tradition attempts to linguistically substantiate Wittgenstein and Austin's philosophical writings which have opposed the logician's concept of meaning as the relationship of words and sentences to things and ideas and assert that meaning ultimately resides in human action. The key notion is Grice's (1957) definition of meaning as, "The effect that a sender intends to produce on a receiver by means of message". Speech acts defined in terms of illocutionary force, i.e. sender's communicative intent, become the main unit of linguistic analysis (Grice 1957, 1971).
Analysis presumes that speech act interpretation relies on extralinguistic presuppositions, along with grammatical knowledge; in attempting to specify what the presuppositions are, research increasingly focuses on text comprehension rather than on sentence 1977) iconic view, where meaning is chiefly, rather than in terms of lexical seq (1977) -ual the signaling load which the particula s bear in depicting scenes varies from language to language so that referentially similar messages can be interpreted differently by individuals who approach the message with differing presuppositions.

Though dissimilar in theory and approach, the two research traditions agree on notions as to what linguistic signaling mechanisms are. Both share the basic theoretical stance that extra linguistic knowledge is called forth in speech situations, as reflected in cognitive or social structures that exist independently apart from communication. That interpretation is context bound and that human knowledge is best treated as situation specific has been extensively proved by structural analysis or interpretive schemata. But since situated interpretations are problematic and not as easily available to those who are familiar with the context and can decode isolated sentences, structural constructs cannot do sufficient justice in
interpreting everyday verbal exchanges. This calls for a separate academic tradition of inquiry which can focus on the actual discourse mechanisms of speaking, to negotiate changes of speaking, to negotiate changes in the flow of interaction, to manage and direct the flow of interaction. His experiments demonstrate that social knowledge be sufficiently characterized in the form of statistically countable abstract categories such as scalar ratings of role, status or personality characteristics. According to him social knowledge is revealed in the process of interaction itself, that interactants create their own social world by the way in which they behave. These mechanisms can be described by focusing on "naturally organized activities rather than in staged experiments".

Sacks and his collaborators (Garfinkel & Sacks 1970, Sacks 1972, Schegloff 1972, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, Turner 1974) first systematically focused on conversation as the simplest instance of a naturally organized activity. Their research concentrated on isolating strategies of affecting speaker change, opening and closing conversations, establishing semantic relations between utterances, signaling asides and sequences, and otherwise controlling and channeling the course of an interaction.
Conversation emerges as a dynamic interactive exchange shifting from informal chat to serious discussion, from argument to narrative, incorporating the witty and the humorous and the comic. Perceived as independent wholes in speech act terms, these speech routines are interpreted as part of the larger strategy of conversational management. Over the last few years conversational analysis has proved that speech events, formal or casual are role governed. Issues of sequentiality or commencement, as well as positioning or location of message are extremely vital in interpreting daily conversation.

By examining recurrent strategies and the responses that they elicit, it is possible to study the mechanism which underlie speaker listener coordination. Differentiating principles of conversational inference from rules of grammar, Sack's (1975) notion of implicature and suggest that interpretation take the form of preferences rather than obligatory rules. At the conversational level, alternative interpretations are more than at the level of sentence grammar. Constrained by speaker intentions as well as expectations about reactions and assumptions, restricts the choice. Rather than unilaterally conveyed, interpretations are negotiated, prepared and altered through interactive processes. The perspective developed by conversational analysis is crucial
to the study of verbal encounters. They provide systematic evidence for the cooperative nature of conversational processes and give interactional substance to the claim that "words have both relational and ideational significance".

While conversational analysts take for granted referential meanings that assume sharing of contextualization strategies, they fail to account for the inter speaker differences in background knowledge and the knowledge of how speakers use verbal skills to create contextual conditions that reflect particular culturally realistic scenes. Conversation cooperation requires that interactional synchrony be maintained so that speakers can not be interrupted at random although overlap is an integral part of interaction.

Since the traditions of ethnography of communication, discourse and conversational analysis are inadequate, Gumperz suggests a way of utilizing the insights provided by these traditions to build a more comprehensive theory of conversational inference. Gumperz asserts that suprasegmental and other surface features of speech are often crucial to identifying what an interaction is about. They add expressive overtones to basic meanings conveyed by core, linguistic processes. The identification of specific conversational exchanges as representatives of socio-

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cultural familiar activities is the process of contextualization. The process by which message meanings and sequencing patterns are evaluated in relation to aspects of the surface structure of the message are called 'contextualization cues'. The linguistic basis for this matching procedure resides in "Co-occurrence expectations" which are learned in the course of previous interactive experience and form part of our habitual and linguistic knowledge. Co-occurrence expectations enable us to associate styles of speaking with contextual presuppositions.

Conversation is primarily a co-operative, interdependent process. All participants contribute individually into an overall theme roughly corresponding to a culturally identifiable activity, or a combination of these, and agree on relevant behavioral norms. Thus signaling of frames by a single speaker is not sufficient. "Back channel signals" as Yngve (1970) calls them are a mode of conversational cooperation: another is the manner in which speakers formulate responsibilities i.e. whether they follow shifts in style, agree in distinguishing new from old or primary from secondary information or in judging the quality of interpersonal relationships implied in a message, and know how to fill in what is implied but left unsaid or what to emphasize or de-emphasize.
Thus at the level of ethnographic description, verbal behaviour in all societies can be categorized in terms of speech events: units of verbal behaviour bounded in time and space. All verbal behaviour is governed by social norms specifying participant roles, rights and duties, vis-a-vis each other, permissible topics, appropriate ways of speaking and ways of introducing information. Such norms are context and network specific. Events also serve as labels for the conservation of norms by which verbal behaviour is evaluated. Moreover, conversational co-operation is always for some purpose, with participants having some idea of the likely outcomes. Where potential outcomes are not agreed upon in advance they must be negotiated through talk. It is suggested that a discourse approach to conversation is useful in interpreting abstract cognitive concepts embedded in interactions. But again schemata cannot simply refer to knowledge of the physical world. Therefore a cognitive approach to discourse must build on interaction, and account for the fact that background knowledge changes as the interaction progresses, that interpretations are multiply embedded and as Goffmann (1974) shows several quite different interactions are carried on at the same time.

Levison's "speech activity" (1974) is closest to the semantic concept of event terms of communication goals. Def
relationships, in relation to some communicative goals, speech activity implies thematic progression, turn taking rules, and outcomes of interaction as well as constraints on context. Speech activities are the means through which social knowledge is stored in the form of constraints on action and on possible interpretation. In verbal interaction social knowledge is retrieved through co-occurrence expectations. Speech activities are realized in action and their identification is a function of ethnic and communicative background. In modern society when communicative backgrounds are not identical because people possess widely varying communicative and cultural backgrounds, problems arise regarding signaling of activity. Thus the signaling of speech activities is not a matter of unilateral action but of speaker listener coordination involving rhythmic interchange of verbal and non-verbal signs.

Once a frame of interpretation is successfully negotiated by participants the "parsimony principle (Sacks 1972) takes over. Speakers continue to assign negotiated meanings to contextualization cues, until there is a perceptible break in rhythm or until a mismatch between content and cues suggests a misunderstanding. Therefore the ability to maintain, control and evaluate conversation is a function of communicative and ethnic background. Thus
appropriate perception of contextualization cues, and their relationship to other signaling channels, are vital to the interpretation of conversation. The ultimate meaning of a message can only be derived by perceiving systematic patterns in the relationship of perception of surface cues. The linguistic character of contextualization cues is uninterpretable apart from concrete situations. What distinguishes effective from less effective interpretations are not absolute, context free criteria of truth value or appropriateness but rather what happens in the interactive exchange itself.

Since the focus of their texts, thematically and linguistically, is on the interpersonal characters who are in the process of migration and enculturation into continuously newer societies, it would be enriching to study the frames of their fictional verbal structure are linguistically sensitive to the break down of cultural encounters of modern globalized.
creative competence as well as the creative competence of these writers and can contribute to the creative competence sought from a socio-linguistic angle.

Increasingly composed of socially and linguistically heterogeneous groups, conversational involvement, or the cooperation of interlocutors can no longer be taken for granted in the verbal exchanges of modern day fiction by India-born writers. The diverse socio-cultural groups present in the interpretive conventions or the contexts of culture, conflicts and breakdowns are more the rule than the exception. Indian acts or verbal exchanges not only theoretically serve to embody intricate disputes and record failures, but artistically, linguistically serve to recreate a realistic portrait of the times. They serve as instances of the various characters' inability to attract and sustain the others' attention, in verbal as well as other kinds of interaction. In the fictional writings of these authors, the verbal exchanges are modes of elucidating the modern global predicament. Conversation, whether in real life situations or in literary texts is a man process, an analysis of which calls for an understanding of the functions of verbal signs. Positivist-empiricist approaches and scientists so far. Enriched by contributions from a number
of disciplinary perspectives, conversational analysis is a growing field of inquiry.

Sociologists and psychologists, dissatisfied with existing grammatical theories, have began to look for new approaches to the study of conversational processes. Many have become increasingly concerned with the analysis of communicative processes involved in human learning, social co-operation and underlying social evolution. Linguistic anthropologists are convinced that language usage, norms of speech behaviour, vary from culture to culture and context to context. They are increasingly moving away from established grammarians' practice of concentrating on the referential meaning or truth value of isolated propositions. Increasingly viewed as units of human action, speech acts should be made the study of linguistics, not words or sentences.

A new tradition of conversational analysis emerges with the critical writings of Harold Garfinkel (1967) that seeks to concentrate directly on verbal strategies of speaker/listener coordination as revealed in turntaking and other practices of conversation management.

In their discussions of social norms of language use, linguists build on the macro-sociologists' notion of groups, status, role and social function in their discussions of
social norms of language usage. On the other hand, in their discussions of interactive strategy, sociologists draw on the theoretical linguistic sentence level categories of referential semantics and syntax and are an index to the interactive goals and interpersonal relations that create and sustain the text.

These verbal exchanges are so skillfully recreated that they themselves contain internal evidence of whether the participants share interpretive conventions or fail to do so. The inferential and negotiating processes and skills of the interlocutors become an index to character and capability. Equipped with inherent dialogic properties, verbal exchanges tell the story differently from the narrative or the written text. Verbal exchanges in text are an index to the character's cognitive and linguistic capabilities to battle with or merge with changing, fluctuating socio-cultural scenarios.

Though speaking the same language, characters show significant differences in background knowledge, specially in modern urbanized societies where social boundaries are diffuse, where interaction with speakers of differing backgrounds is the rule, rather than the exception and signaling conventions vary from situation to situation. The recreation of interethnic verbal encounters in urban/ rural
settings, enables the writers to indirectly recreate the contextual setting, the frames or schemata of the text. These exchange frames additionally, create and maintain the subtle boundaries of power, status, role and occupation that make up the fabric of the social life of the characters. Value differences associated with these boundaries generate communication strategies of survival in alien cultures and largely influence mobility, power and social control.
FOOT NOTES

4. "Biographia Literaria" (1817) Ch.2. Coleridge.
7. I.A. Richards, "Meaning of Meaning". pp. 244-245.
9. I.A. Richards, "Philosophy of Rhetoric".