

## DAVID CRYSTAL

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I was brought up in Holyhead, a port town in the north-west corner of Wales, in the 1940s, and some of my earliest memories are of the linguistic consequences of being part of a bilingual culture. Trilingual even, for Holyhead was the port for Dun Laoghaire, and perhaps a third of the townspeople were Irish, several of whom larded their speech with Irishisms

(as they still do) and visited the west of Ireland regularly. My family straddled the divide: I had both Irish and Welsh uncles and aunts, and heard both languages spoken – though chiefly *at* me, for the language of my home was English. Uncle Joe, who was as Welsh as the hills, used to call me ‘Dafydd y Garreg Wen’ – ‘David of the White Rock’, a character in Welsh mythology – and from him I picked up a basic sense of what Welsh was all about, and began to speak it a bit. Then in primary school, it was introduced as a second language. By 10 I was confidently semilingual, and fascinated with the language mystery. Is this perhaps an inevitable consequence of being raised in a monolingual home in a bilingual culture?

A move to Liverpool in 1951 brought me into contact with another language, Scouse, and an initial experience of what one might call ‘expedited accommodation’. My Welsh accent was so strong that I was immediately dubbed ‘Taffy’ – a nickname which lasted throughout my secondary schooling, long after the accent was beaten out of me by my newfound classmates. I picked up Liverpoolian perforce, as a matter of survival, and in a matter of days. And I recall enjoying the process, acquiring the aggressive yet jocular verbosity which characterizes so much Liverpool speech. It was very different from the lilting Anglo-Welsh I had previously been used to. We would go back to Holyhead for holidays a couple of times each year, and I remember making my speech change, round about Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, on Anglesey, where the close encounter with its 57 letters acted as an injection of linguistic benzedrine. On the way back, the change worked the other way. I must say I didn’t see much difference, at the time, between bidialectism and bilingualism. Identity was everything.

Secondary school brought a varied language experience. There was French, from the outset, and Latin from the second year – the latter taught by a Christian Brother whose methods had a great deal in common with those used by the teachers reported in Aelfric’s *Colloquy*, a thousand years before. But they worked, and I learned my cases and genders with an accuracy and confidence that far exceeded the corresponding progress derived from my much gentler French teacher. In the third year, the ‘choice’ was Greek or German, the former automatic if you were in the alpha stream, the latter in the beta: we were left in no doubt that Greek was a higher class of language. Each lesson our teacher would arrive and make us recite in unison, ‘*Dei graphein kata tous nomous*’ (‘It is necessary to write according to the laws’), and we would then go through the laws of concord, one by one. ‘Concord’ was a familiar notion, as those were the days of English language O-level, and that was just one of many grammatical terms and rules which I, along with everyone else in my year, was beginning to dislike thoroughly. The best bit about English was the literature – and also the elocution, which was taught by an inspiring lady who made her voice – and also ours – do things I never dreamed possible.

By the fourth year, the various language experiences had somehow

combined to make me a linguist-in-waiting. I know this, because I recall inventing an artificial language in woodwork class (a domain where I had no competence) and forcing classmates who were smaller than me to speak it. It was an amalgam of everything I knew – chiefly, Latin and Greek, with a proliferation of cases and tenses. During that exercise, I began noticing the similarities – some with French and English, some even with Welsh. Might not all these languages have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists? However, the advice given for choosing subjects at A-level was to do the subjects you were best at – which for me were English, history and geography. I regret now not going into at least one of my other languages in greater depth. But I was never in any doubt about which subject to follow at university – it had to be English, and it had to be a course where there was a language element alongside the literary. I very much wanted both. Apart from anything else, I had started to write primitive fiction, and I was a voracious reader of literature. I loved the set texts we had worked through. I had been to Stratford and seen several plays. I had to find a course which would give me a chance to develop both strands. The syllabus of the English Department at University College, London, was ideal, and I was lucky enough to be accepted, in 1959.

From a linguistic point of view, the first year was a virtual disaster. I studied Old English, Old Norse, Gothic and several other fascinating languages, but they were taught in a curiously distant manner, as purely written texts. The nearest you got to speaking them was through a notion described as ‘sound changes’. I remember a dialogue with my tutor when I asked him how the Anglo-Saxon word for ‘king’, *cuning*, would have been pronounced. He basically refused to say, and gave me a mini-lecture about the antecedents of the high front rounded vowels of Old English. But I had already read the description: what I wanted to hear was how it all sounded – not just the vowel values, but the rhythms and rhymes as well. No one would oblige. ‘We know very little about the phonetic realization of the Old English phonemes’, was the typical reply. John Dodgson was different, in his approach to linguistic history: he taught us about English place-names the best way, by arranging meetings in country pubs where appropriately oiled locals would be interrogated about the names in their vicinity. His course brought home to me the possibility that the history of the language could be made real. But on the whole, I felt my language interests slipping away during that first year. The matter was clinched when I followed an introduction to Linguistics taught in the third term, in which we were taken through several of the classics at a rate of knots. *The Meaning of Meaning*, Saussure’s *Cours*, Bloomfield, and others, one a week. I understood little, and found it a million miles away from what I thought languages were about. The course was assessed by an essay, and I got a D – a fail. That clinched it. Literary options for me from now on.

But the history of the language class in the second year was obligatory. I

remember sitting there not looking forward to it, when in came the lecturer, Randolph Quirk, and one hour later I was a born-again linguist. I can remember very little about that hour, except one thing. He spoke a sentence, then told us to write it down in phonetic transcription. We all looked at each other. What was phonetic transcription? We were harangued. How can anyone study language without being able to do phonetics? Anyone serious about it should get themselves over to the Phonetics Department and sign on for that option right away. This is what I had, without realizing it, been waiting to hear. By the end of the day I was signed up. I found myself, a lone (it turned out) English Department emigré, in the hands of A. C. Gimson and J. D. O'Connor, in a tiny year of three students. The benefits from that small class-size, and the focused teaching (for timetable clashes with my colleagues meant that I was often on my own), were incalculable. By the end of my degree I wanted only to use my phonetics in some way.

That opportunity came through Quirk, who in 1960 was putting together the Survey of English Usage. I graduated in 1962, and – having followed every linguistic option I could find in my three years – had become something of a buff, with my superior phonetics knowledge at a high premium among my more literary-minded classmates (I exchanged it for hints about how to handle the nineteenth-century novel). The UCL English Department turned out to be an excellent linguistic nurturing ground. It was home to the English Place-Name Survey, for example, and it had specialists in palaeography and stylistics, and nearby there were courses in comparative philology (Oswald Szemerényi) and communication theory. I became a denizen of the linguistics section of the library, and revisited all the books I had found so difficult in my first year. Now that I knew some phonetics, Bloomfield began to make sense. I would never forget that lesson. Theory unrelated to practice can stifle the linguistic spark that I believe is within everyone. I have never met anyone who was not fascinated by some aspect of language – local accents, place-names, children's acquisition, etymologies. . . . The world is full of potential linguists, but it does not take much to put them off. Long before I encountered the phrase in Henry Sweet, I knew that phonetics was the 'indispensable foundation'.

Quirk was looking for research assistants for his Survey, and I was one of two appointed that year. I arrived late, due to an unanticipated bout of TB which had kept me in a north Wales sanatorium for several months. (I had actually taken my finals in the san – including my phonetics oral, fortunately made possible by the nearby arrival on holiday of SOAS's Eileen Whitely.) My role was indeed to use my phonetics – to develop the Survey prosodic transcription so that it would cope with the wider range of intonation patterns and tones of voice that the speech samples were bringing to light. Working closely with Quirk was a formative experience. It involved long hours intensively listening to a range of spoken styles on tape-repeaters, lengthy discussion of phonetic differences, and a parallel track of in-depth

grammatical description and debate, as it became increasingly apparent just how different were the realities of everyday spoken English from the traditional grammars on which we had all cut our teeth. I learned how to put a book together, as we slowly hammered out the approach which would be published the next year as Crystal and Quirk, *Systems of Prosodic and Paralinguistic Features in English*. Quirk was insistent that my name should be first, even though I was the least in his kingdom.

The Survey world opened innumerable intellectual doors. As a member of staff, albeit the most junior, I was made immediately welcome by those whom I had previously looked upon with student-like awe. I got to know all the other phoneticians, at the time led by Dennis Fry, and a merrier bunch of academics I have never since met. Gimson asked me to write up the Survey approach for *m.f.* (*Le Maître Phonétique*, distinctive at the time for having all its articles in phonetic transcription), and I reviewed the Daniel Jones memorial volume in its pages (which brought me a treasured thank-you card, in tiny spidery writing, from the great man). The Quirk postgraduate seminars were a high point of the week, attended by students from all over the world, and led by a variety of visiting scholars as well as himself. I learned my generative grammar from one of them, Jim Sledd, whose orientation to linguistics – best described as sceptical enthusiasm – has stayed with me. Michael Halliday was in town, at the time, and I worked through scale-and-category grammar, thinking it the coolest approach to linguistic theory I had so far encountered.

The Survey opened doors of opportunity, too. It gave me the chance to do some teaching, both inside and outside the university, and I realized I liked it, and was apparently quite good at it. I had my first EFL tutoring job, on the London University summer school. That was an intriguing, tempting world, with its immediate involvement with diverse cultures. Quirk pushed us to do some writing, whenever we could, and I found I liked that too. The Survey had to fight its way for recognition, and we all had a mandate to be clear and forceful in our explanations about language matters to the outside world. Invitations to lecture would come in to the Survey, and I would take my turn along with the others in responding to them. 'What is linguistics and is it useful?' was one of the commonest requests. As the person with the widest range of general linguistic interests in the English Department, I often found myself in the back of beyond, cobbling together an answer to this question. By the end of the year, I knew how to answer it, and had tried out the arguments on a variety of audiences. So, when I saw an ad for an Assistant Lecturer in Linguistics at the University of Bangor, it seemed like a sensible move. But having been on the Survey for less than a year I was reluctant to go for it, feeling a sense of immense loyalty to Quirk. He was in no doubt. Go for it. I did – and later that year found myself the latest arrival in Frank Palmer's group at Bangor.

The two years I spent at Bangor were for me an immense broadening of

intellectual linguistic horizons. From Frank himself I got a sound sense of descriptive principles in practice. Here, and afterwards at Reading, his insistence on real-language analysis, using informants, put me in intimate touch with a wide range of disparate languages. Never did I bless my phonetics training more. I tried out my newfound thoughts about scales and categories with Peter Matthews, not long returned from a stay in the USA, and retired licking my wounds. This linguistic theory business was going to be more complicated than I had thought. Alan Thomas, the dialectologist, was building up the Survey of Welsh Dialects, and this brought me a welcome renewed contact with Welsh – though a curious one. Having missed out on 10 years of teenager usage since leaving Holyhead, and all the vocabulary learning that goes on in the teenage years, I realized I had become genuinely semilingual, fluent in nursery rhymes and linguistic metalanguage, but precious little else!

My evolving lecturing abilities had not gone unnoticed, and I found myself repeatedly used for introductory courses. For instance, the Department took on an ELT group from South America, but then found that it could not integrate their needs with other courses. I was made their course tutor, with the remit of introducing them to the whole of linguistics. I taught 33 hours a week that term, and by the end of it, there was hardly any topic in linguistics that I had not had to work up. As would happen later so often, I found that the best way of learning a subject is to teach it. The immediate result was an irritation that I had had to do so much work for such an apparently straightforward job. But there were no books to do the job for me. I was not going to fall into the trap of getting my new-to-the-subject students reading Bloomfield, et al. Why were there no motivating introductions to linguistics, to phonetics, to stylistics, to grammar, to semantics – to anything? Why should I feel discomfited when students came up and asked for something easy to read on my subject, and I could not help them? There were introductions to psychology, sociology and other subjects around. Why not linguistics?

Serendipitously, my first chance to try introducing the subject in book form came in 1964, when at a conference I bumped into a representative of the firm of Roman Catholic publishers, Burns and Oates, who wanted a book on religious language for one of their series. The 1960s was a decade of great linguistic turmoil for religious studies, with controversies over biblical translation, theological language (the bishop of Woolwich), the introduction of the Catholic vernacular liturgy (Vatican II), and stylististical analysis (the St Paul letters), as well as ongoing waves from earlier controversies, notably those initiated by A. J. Ayer. When my *Linguistics, Language and Religion* came out, it was given a Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur – I think, the only book in linguistics to have such commendations! It was good experience, proving to me that it was possible to reduce linguistics to its bare essentials in a coherent way, and to take linguistic principles and findings

and apply them to an entirely different domain. Certainly some very naive notions of language permeated religious thinking of the time, and one did not have to do much to provide a fresh perspective. The welcome I received (in terms of reviews and reactions) for my theolinguistics (as it would later come to be called) was heart-warming. On the other hand, with the enthusiasm of youth I failed to see that it might not be such a good idea to include a chapter critiquing logical positivism, given the influence which proponents of that approach still held at the time. I'm told it cost me two senior jobs later on.

The Bangor experience was a perfect grounding for the move to Reading when it came, two years later (see Palmer's chapter below). With new single-subject and combined degrees to be taught, as well as MA and EFL Diploma courses, it was important to be able to make contributions over a wide range of subject matter at various levels, from first year to postgraduate. The importance of applied linguistics grew. The institutionalization of linguistics as a discipline became more evident during the mid-1960s. I found myself playing an increasingly active role in the newly formed Linguistics Association, first as Assistant Secretary, then as Secretary, and thus came to meet all the country's linguists. The arrival of the *Journal of Linguistics* in our department gave me a first experience of journal (assistant-)editing, and my first introduction to a major publisher, Cambridge University Press. Having completed my PhD (from London) in 1966, on English prosodic systems, and having been advised to publish it, it was a useful contact, for it eventually appeared as the opening volume in the 'blue-backed' Cambridge Studies in Linguistics.

Publishers had begun to realize that Something Was Up, as far as linguistics was concerned. All the leading publishers were sensing the potential of the new subject, especially in ELT, and all wanted introductory material. With relatively few professional linguists about, and only a subset of them willing or able to write at this level, the news that there was a linguist who not only had a hobby-horse about the need for introductory texts but had actually written one (albeit in a somewhat marginal domain) travelled around the publishing stands at the various conferences. Soon, reps were prowling the departmental corridors. In my case, the first outcome was *What is Linguistics?*, the consequence of visit to Edward Arnold, where I had my first experience of what is sometimes euphemistically called a publisher's 'lunch'. I staggered towards Paddington in the late Friday afternoon, having apparently agreed to write an introductory book for schools. There was a train strike, and with several hours available, I started to write it on the platform. Then the project obsessed me, as so many later would do, so that I could not think of anything else, and when that happens there is nothing you can do but finish it as quickly as possible, so that you can get on with something else. I sent a draft off to Arnold's on the Monday, along with my thank-you note for the wine.

I think it was that weekend which convinced me that my first love was writing. I was never happier than when sitting in front of a typewriter. A day passed without something written to me was a wasted day – whether it was a lecture outline, a review, an article, a radio script or a bit of a book. I was rarely proactive. My fault was that I couldn't say no – and there were so many ideas and opportunities around not to say no to. The need to make use of Survey of English Usage materials was an early priority, hence the collaboration with Derek Davy, who had become assistant director of the Survey, to write *Investigating English Style* (1969), which is surprisingly still in print. A collaboration with Whitney Bolton, then professor of English at Reading, produced an edited collection of essays on the history of the language. I think it may have been the coincidental publication in 1969 of three books (these two plus the prosody monograph) which gave me the reputation for being a 'prolific' author. It gained me a Readership, in both senses, anyway. But prolificness has its down side: at the readership panel, I was told quite firmly that my future academic career would be jeopardized if I continued to publish so much. No one was attacking the quality of the work. It was evidently my penchant for popularization which the panel found disturbing. (But times change. And at a later promotions panel, in an increasingly cash-strapped and public-conscious academic world, it was those books and other activities – such as broadcasting – that had achieved the highest public profile for which I was especially commended.)

There was nothing I could do about it, whatever the outcome. These things have a habit of developing a momentum of their own. In 1968 I had been approached by Penguin, who wanted to launch a new domain on linguistics, to parallel their very successful series on psychology. There would be three strands: a series of introductory Pelicans, a series of monographs, and a series of readings. 'How many in each?', I remember asking. No limit, I was told! I still have the outline I made for this vast project, based closely on the psychology one, with over 100 books in it, on all aspects of linguistics. The series was launched, and the first few did actually appear – but then Penguin Education ceased to exist, and with it the grand plans. The Pelican series, however, was robust, and as Editor I had the difficult task of trying to persuade colleagues to take time out from their busy course-planning and teaching schedules (for new courses were proliferating in the late 1960s) to write an introductory text on this or that. I find it impossible to act credibly as a Series Editor without having had a writing role myself, and so here, as in several later series, I took on an authorial as well as an editorial involvement, the result being *Linguistics* (1971). That series taught me a Great Truth, which all journal Editors know – that editing work is just as time-consuming and intellectually challenging as authorial work. That is why it is criminal that editorial tasks are not given greater credit by quality assessment bodies.

I am very proud of those introductory series, with contributions from

Palmer, Trudgill, Corder, Leech, O'Connor, Bolinger, Householder and others. The fact that many of the books are still in print, 30 years on, albeit in later editions, suggests that they met a need, and continue to do so. I saw editing as an academic duty, and still do – but it is a rewarding role. Apart from anything else, it makes you read material more closely even than in book-reviewing, because you are in a real interchange with an author. And I had several later opportunities to repeat the editorial role – an applied language studies series for Academic Press, a clinical linguistics series for Edward Arnold (later Whurr Publishers), and the Language Library series for André Deutsch (later Blackwell), where I took over from Simeon Potter as Co-Editor with Eric Partridge, and then as Editor. Some 40 books would emerge as part of the last series, mostly as a result of my invitation, and some of them have given me more pleasure to see in print than anything I have written myself.

The editing had an academic dimension too. At the Florence Child Language Symposium in 1972, Charles Ferguson came up with the idea of a journal to provide focus for that rapidly emerging field of study, and as the person present with most publishing contacts I was asked to find an outlet. The result was the *Journal of Child Language*, which I launched in 1975. A decade later, and a similar groundswell of interest in the clinical and remedial domain resulted in *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*; and the remarkable proliferation of linguistics subjects and journals during the 1970s and early 1980s led to the foundation of *Linguistics Abstracts*. Each of these journals I edited for a dozen years or so. I think it is bad for an Editor to stay with a journal for more than about a decade: journals need to be regularly refreshed from the top, if they are to avoid becoming too narrowly focused.

Although I kept my research interests in English grammar, intonation and stylistics alive during the 1970s, it is I think the growth of my clinical linguistic interests with which I would later come to be most associated. This was never premeditated. I was teaching the child language acquisition course at Reading, and had done some research in the development of infant vocalization and prosody, but the clinical dimension was not a major part of it. Then one day the phone rang and it was Kevin Murphy, from the Audiology Department of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, wondering if I would come and see a 3-year-old whom they were puzzled about. She wasn't deaf, and had no obvious physical problems, and yet she wasn't talking properly. This sounded interesting. I went down, sat in on some sessions, recorded a sample of speech, did a developmental analysis, and all kinds of interesting linguistic patterns emerged. In language acquisition terms, the child was delayed, but was obviously having particular difficulty with certain constructions. I wrote a report, sent it off, and thought no more about it. Then there was another phone call. Before long I found myself down at the hospital almost as much as I was in the department. It transpired that the

kind of linguistically oriented report I had been writing was precisely the kind of orientation which the Department's speech therapists needed. On the other hand, there was a problem. Because I was using the terminology of linguistics, not everything was being understood. As I learned more about the profession, I discovered that although speech therapists had phonetics training, they had little or no background in linguistics.

The point had already been noticed higher up. A government report on Speech Therapy Services appeared in 1972, chaired as it happens by Randolph Quirk, and this recommended that linguistics should be a core discipline of that profession's expertise. But there were no course books integrating the two subjects, no in-service courses applying linguistics to the clinical domain, no diploma or degree courses in the subject with the requisite biases, and hardly any linguistically oriented research. The contrast with the established field of foreign language teaching was notable. During the mid-1970s, accordingly, I found myself increasingly involved in meeting these needs: the first thing was to develop the research foundation, to demonstrate that there was a systematically applicable connection between linguistics and the clinical domain – that is, between all areas of linguistics and all areas of speech therapy. It meant a lot of clinical observation, during those years, and a steep learning curve which took in such medical specialities as pediatrics, neurology, ENT and audiology, as well as the various relevant branches of psychology, education and social science. The result was a series of clinical linguistic assessment procedures and associated in-service training courses which kept me and my colleagues Paul Fletcher and Mike Garman heavily involved for a decade, and sparked off a series of research studies. It also resulted in the BA in Linguistics and Language Pathology, hosted by the Linguistics Department, and the arrival of an in-house observation and assessment clinic, and the appointment of full-time speech therapists within the Department. Later, I planned an analogous course for teachers, the Diploma in Remedial Language Studies. And, as it emerged that there was little written in these areas, I found myself writing again, in monograph and introductory publications, beginning with the write-up of our first clinical procedure, LARSP (Language Assessment, Remediation, and Screening Procedure), in *The Grammatical Analysis of Language Disability* (1976), then *Clinical Linguistics* (1981a) and *Introduction to Language Pathology* (1980a).

I had never expected the clinical domain to take over my life so much. But there were personal reasons as well as academic ones. My third child was born with a cleft lip and palate, and suddenly I found myself an anxious parent working with the same range of people who had previously been only colleagues. That gave me an empathy with the parents of language-disordered children, and indeed with the children themselves, which kept my linguistic feet firmly on the ground. Indeed, when it came to the kind of simplifications of complex linguistic positions which I found it necessary to

introduce in order to make an applied linguistics model work in the clinical context, I often found myself in conflict with my theoretical linguistic colleagues in the Department. It was not all plain sailing, by any means. Then, in the mid-1970s, my link with the profession was consolidated once and for all, when I married a speech therapist.

The early 1980s were the beginning of the difficult times, for academics, especially for someone who had accreted as many editorial, authorial and extra-mural roles as I had. I had been spending a lot of time giving courses to teachers, in the wake of the Bullock Report (1975); I had been doing my bit on the ELT side abroad, with the Reading Department building up important teacher-training connections in several parts of the world; and the BBC had finally twigged that language issues were of general interest, which resulted in my devising several radio series. The new clinical courses were just taking off, new dimensions (such as sign language studies) were being added, and doctoral students were emerging. So when the first of the three, annual, 'Thatcher cuts' letters arrived in 1981, inviting me (and everyone else) to consider early retirement, I was not interested. I felt there was far too much going on in the department on the clinical and remedial side that I was personally responsible for. I had already turned down two professorial job offers at other places. I was going to stay at Reading for ever.

But by 1984 the situation had deteriorated: secretarial cuts and other constraints of a kind that today need no exposition were piling up. I had been commissioned by Cambridge University Press in 1980 to write a book (which eventually became the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*), and had managed a few dozen pages only in three years. The day I decided to leave was when I had spent half a week working out whether it was cheaper to send my speech therapy students to their clinics by bus or by train. At the end of it, I had saved the university, I estimated, about £100. But nobody had entered my salary into the equation. Was this what a Professor of Linguistics should be doing? There was no likelihood of the situation getting any better. I went to the VC clutching my file of letters inviting me to retire early, said 'yes please', and was turned down flat. Apparently those letters were not really meant for members of successful (i.e. money-earning) departments, such as Linguistics. If I left, I would have to be replaced, and that would save no money. But by that time I had made up my mind, and I resigned anyway. (When I was replaced, it was at a junior level, which I have always felt was a bit of a dirty trick.)

The first year out, without a salary, was tough, but some part-time teaching and the availability I now had to write, edit and advise, as an 'independent scholar' (as the Japanese decided to call me, horrified at my self-description as a 'freelance linguist'), meant that we survived. Bangor offered me an honorary association, which kept me in touch with the profession. Then in 1986, I was asked to plan and edit the new *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, which, with its associated family of general encyclopedias, has

been the half-time basis of my existence ever since. In the other 'half time', I try to do as much linguistics as I can. There seems to be no end to the number of subjects which need to be written about in the kind of introductory yet academically responsible way which I have tried to make my forte. I have a permanent obsession over terminology, which has led to various dictionary-type projects. I have aimed to maintain a writing schedule of one book a year. I miss some features of full-time academic life, such as doctoral supervisory work; on the other hand, I have visited so many departments and centres around the world in the past 15 years that I have never felt far away from the profession. None the less, I am aware that my self-removal from the orthodox academic world made me something of a maverick figure, in the eyes of some, and actually am somewhat surprised, although delighted, to be part of this volume!

Every subject needs its responsible popularizers, and I have aimed to fulfil that role for linguistics. I doubt whether, quantitatively, anyone could match the amount of time I have devoted to putting linguistics before general audiences or audiences of language professionals (such as teachers and speech therapists), in such varied contexts as literary festivals, sixth form conferences, and radio and television programmes (the latter still notoriously reluctant to give linguistics the profile it deserves), or writing articles for newspapers and general interest periodicals. Half my year is routinely spent away from home, engaging with audiences in this way. So I suppose this is where my main 'significance' lies. In terms of conventional research activities, I would like to think that I made a few small contributions to thinking in phonology, grammar and stylistics, chiefly in relation to English, and it seems I was in the right place at the right time in relation to clinical linguistics. I have never been much of a theoretical innovator, and look in awe at the achievements of my contemporaries in taking the subject forward in that way so significantly during the twentieth century. At the same time, I hope my efforts at communicating their thinking and findings to a larger professional and public world have been of value in their own right, and that I have done them no disservice. Lastly, I know from the letters I have received that many people have begun to study linguistics after reading one of my books (I have no data on how many were put off by the same experience), and it is through them that I hope I have been able to make some sort of long-term contribution to this remarkable subject.

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