ive called this talk

                              tuning

  and you probably have no very good idea of what im going to
  talk about   and it gave me a certain freedom from expectation
    as it gave to you   for it is part of my generosity and
  self indulgence   simultaneously   that what i will take for
myself i will allow to others   which seems only fair
                                                  now i gave
  a title to this piece long before coming here   and   if the
   title i gave was not intended to offer you a very precise image
   of what i was going to do and if you see me fiddling with
  this tape recorder   its mainly because i have no very precise
image of what im going to say   though i have a considerable
  notion of the terrain   into which i tend to move and
  the only way im going to find out whether it was worth doing
    or not   is when i hear what ive got   which has been
  my way of entrapping myself   and the reason ive chosen to
entrap myself rather than to prepare in advance   a precise set
  of utterances   has been that i felt myself   ive written
    things   before this   in the natural vacuum that is the
  artificial hermetic closet that literature has been in for some
    time   and the problem   for me   is in the closet
   confronting a typewriter and no person   so that for me
    literature defined as literature   has no urgency   it has no
  need of address   there are too many things   no there are
    not too many things there are only a few things you may want
     to talk about but there are too many ways you could talk
  about them   and no urgency in which way you choose to talk
about them   there are too many ways to proceed   too many
  possibilities for making well crafted objects   none of which
seem particularly necessary
                              i dont think im unique in feeling the
  absence of urgency   in constructing a literary object   its
  in fact   i think a fairly recent aberration   the existence
of literature   conceived in a tight framework   there is
    some sense of urgency out there   a passing police car
   they have an audience   they have an audience and a
     need   and they may respond to it badly   but they

have their sense of urgency   the most exotic example i can
think of   and the most striking example i can think of
  which i have thought about recently   and which is not
 something i want to spend a great deal of time thinking about
    here   is a kind of post napoleonic commitment   to
producing an amazingly important object   balzac say
                                        i dont
really want to talk about balzac except that hes an example of
 incredible arrogance and ambition   with nothing to say a man
 goes into a closet in order to say it   a half baked kid decides
  to be a great writer   to be like napoleon to take over the
 empire of letters   what would he do?   whatever was going
  to be great   what would be great?   classical tragedies
  that was what was great in paris   what else would be great
   in paris?   racine   what else?   he would write plays
  now its very difficult   you go with nothing in your
 mind   in particular   except your own future greatness
  you go there   to paris   to write great plays   because
 thats where they write them   you go there   mainly to
   exercise your dominion   balzac is a good example   he
 couldnt speak   he had nothing to say
                              coffee   black coffee
was the answer   self intoxication late at night   what
 came out   presumably
                  ive never seen an autograph manuscript
 of balzac and i dont know anybody who has   but ive seen
  early proof sheets
                he obviously managed to achieve
   finally   utterance a string of clichés   an incredible
  propulsion of garbage   an incredible group of commonplaces
flowing one after another
                   but they flow   after endless
 cups of coffee   which   presumably finally killed him
 second proof sheet third proof sheet i never saw a second or
third proof sheet   presumably i saw eleventh proof sheets
  or something of that order   theyre filled with literary
high class   the flow of clichés the flow of platitudinous
  trash is interrupted primarily by   self conscious   reflexive
   high class prose   that enters into the flow   one thing
 was flowing and it was nonsense   but it was at least flowing

after that   there were second thoughts   and third
  thoughts and fourth thoughts   balzac criticizing balzac
getting smarter learning little bits and pieces of junk
  embedding a mosaic of   early 19th century   cleverness
  going   swedenborgianism   going sociology   going
real worldism   going whatever   to take away the
embarrassment of this fluent trash   which flowed all the way
  through unrealized and absurd clichéd scenes   followed
  largely by modifications that add respectability and slow down
the pace of the prose   till finally   in what?   the
  22nd proof sheet we have the brokenbacked mosaic of a balzac
  novel   a monster
                    what we have is   a fluency of utterance
    and energy broken and restrained in a disastrous mosaic
  which is an image of what   an image of class an image
of mentalism an image of whatever   it was the now nearly
worthless currency of 19th century hip that had value then
  for that reason   that it was their currency   and there are
     strata in balzac and all the strata appear together
pressed in various sized fragments onto the surface of the
  text   a balzac novel is an archeological trove   its not so
much a work   as it is a series of self conscious reflections on
his inability to let his talk fall where it fell   because he
 wanted to be great
                   its very bad to want to be great   because
  theres no reason in the world why you should be great until
the world decides that you are great   which is all that
  greatness consists of   now i didnt start from a critique
of balzac and im not interested in laying balzac open to this
 critique   that could apply almost as well to so many other
  writers   but balzac is an enormously interesting case
 for the reason that he is so typical of the arrogance of
 literature   as a construction that will eventually claim to
  equal the career of a progressively accumulated intelligence
 that the world had just come to call science   and this new
career would be something like a science   a quasi science of
  the real world
                what "real world"   the world of common
  sense made to seem as if it was more than common sense?
   or less than common sense?   the world of if A then B

the truth table   its the plausible world of the marriage novel
the plausible world of the money accumulating novel   the
plausible world of the success story   its all plausible   but
its plausible   but its plausible only afterwards   because
before that what is it   its an opera or a fairy tale   because
balzac writes   basically   a romance or an opera which he then
subjects to a somewhat cynical critique   a 19th century
critique of this romance   and the critique is called realism
now theres a
kind of comedy to this   because the critique is a kind of
afterword   its as though balzac expects to be judged   why
does he expect to be judged   its an interesting question
he expects to be judged because hes going to have an object
in front of the world and the world will have the leisure and
the desire to examine it   once   and then examine it
again   and then examine it again   and then again   and
its as if he was back in school and he was preparing to face
a board of examiners   and he was turning in his examination
booklet that this board of examiners was going to scrutinize
over and over slowly turning its pages to see if they pass
now theres one
issue in a book   its that a book is always reinspectable
when you recall a passage it is always the same   which is
unlike talk   which you can also recall but is never the
same   and is never reinspectable   except in your
memory   that is   you may believe that its the same
but you have no certainty that its the same   and the talk
goes out into the world and its gone   and its not worth
any more   than anyones confidence in you   or confidence in
their ability to perform the interpretive act   upon the discourse
with you   because the discourse   is the one thing
that youre sure of   theres a situation and you respond to it
now   this
lust to produce this unassailable object   this examination
passing book   is a common enough lust   and balzac is
only an early example of the lust to produce such a thing
and there is this book and it is produced as an object   which
becomes an object of scrutiny   and if it passes this
examination it becomes an objet d'art   and you know its
there and becomes precious   it becomes valued and winds up

in libraries   a critical apparatus discusses this thing as if
it were more than the provisional activities of a man   the
provisional talk of balzac in some situation   and balzac is a
very interesting man in spite of the fact that it is a tissue of clichés
that emerges from his mouth   because clichés are the
commonplaces by which we begin a discourse
                              there is no way to
put down cliché   in the beginning   because if there was
nothing in common in the utterances with which we addressed
each other thered be no way that we could understand what we
were saying   in some sense there is no adequate theory of how
we understand what we say to each other   one of the most
depressing things about the present attempts at knowledge
is the array of formal machines we have for explaining how we
know what we say   and how poorly they explain it
                              for a while
i was involved in formal linguistics   chomskyan linguistics
and i gave it up when it became apparent that chomskyan
linguistics promised no intelligent rationale for dealing with
semantics   because all of chomskys proposals   and thats
all they are is proposals   and all of roland barthes proposals
suggest and sometimes even claim that the troops in back of
them will soon come in and mop up all the details   in the
beginning there is a brilliant proposal   and it has this form
                              there is a
sudden flash of illumination that is quite brilliant and momentary
and it is all dazzling virtuosity   you see we have this set
of rules that will describe the fundamental basis for the
understanding of language by all of its speakers   now you
may realize that these rules that were writing are in themselves
provisional   the particular rules that were writing are to be
sure only baby examples of the real rules   we are setting out
to write rules that are part of the fundamental grammar and we
happen to be using the real words of english to apply them to
and this shouldnt really be done that way   because our rules
apply to much more general formatives because you see we are
really beginning by referring to a universal phonetics
a universal phonetics is moderately well established   it
begins to break down only at the neurological level   but there is
a universal phonetics   a fundamental set of phonic classes that

we have characterized by a set of features   these are universal
 features that we have derived in part from their manner of
   articulation   generation in the mouth say   and partially
   acoustical   features derived from the way they seem to sound
 or seem to sound to instruments devised to characterize certain
   aspects of the way they sound   to the human ear   anyway
 we have these features   which we may not entirely agree upon
   that nevertheless constitute the reservoir of the moderately
    well grounded universal phonetics   that are more or less
   agreed upon   and which the men in back of me are very busily
 in the process of working out the details of the agreement of
    and these are to be mapped by a set of phonological rules that
   have not been entirely formulated   but the men in back of
 me are about to finally formulate them into a systematic set that
    will provide for all the significant distinctions that are made
   among sound classes in all of the languages of the earth   that
 will allow us to map these distinctions into a set of formatives
   which you may be more familiar with when they are called
   morphemes   or even more colloquially   words   which
     are then mapped into sets of possible and distinguishable
   arrangements   we could call the syntax of the language
       and while these are also not yet quite worked out   quite
   satisfactorily   the men in back of me are busily working this
 out also   all we then have to do is map this entire system into
    a thorough and sufficiently abstract lexicon   that will contain
 all of the rules for relating the possible lexemes   words
    these formatives that point toward anything in the world
     to the range of their possible meanings   references and
   senses   which should all be found in this lexicon   also to
 be prepared by the people in back of me   some of whom have
    yet to be born
                    now they are working away at this   i suppose
 at m.i.t.   which is relatively close   or theyre working
   away at it at the university of california perhaps   which is
 not so close to you but a lot closer to me
                                    are they really?   are
  they really working away at it?   in what sense?   in what
 sense is it possible to write a systematic semantics?   in what
    sense do we understand language that we could write a
 fundamental and systematic semantics

presumably we would use
a feature theory because it worked so well in phonetics   or
has almost worked so well in phonetics   and is about to work
perfectly in phonetics   and   there would be for any word
lexeme   sounds good   technical lexeme   high class
twenty third proof sheet   lexeme   basically we ought to
be able to reduce the lexicon   to a presumably finite set of
lexemes   though there are problems in that   because at the
same time that it will have to be finite it will have to be potentially
nonfinite   because you can always coin new words   from
old ones or parts of old ones or merely from new arrangements
of phonemes   by a set of rules from the word generating
system   which would have to be a part of the systematic lexicon
this would be the word generating part of the lexicon and
this set of words would presumably have new meanings different
from the collection of old meanings   which they might
well   so that as the world filled up with distinguishable
new things or new states or new acts or modalities   the lexicon
would have to fill up with new meanings to distinguish them
but this is only the potentially nonfinite part of the lexicon
what we would expect to find would be a finite if fairly large
set of quite general or abstract features and some kind of rules
for combining and partitioning these into all the words that have
been and may have to come to be
though this might sound overly
ambitious even to a language scientist at m.i.t. or to a structuralist
at the ecole des haute etudes   though there is no accounting
for what would sound overly ambitious to them since there are
so many people standing in back of them working out just these
problems
still more modestly you might want to ask of this
lexicon that it lay out at least a fairly compact set of features to
generate the system of references and senses of a significant
segment
of the words currently used in a particular natural language
like english
now how would they do this   by a feature
theory that proved so successful in phonetics
now the nucleus of
the lexicon will consist of a set of features   and what kind

of features will they be   you know they will be binary
contrasting features   sets of opposing pairs   like hot and
cold   or hard and soft   but much more abstract perhaps
so they could apply to a great variety of words to some
degree   and form a kind of feature system thesaurus of the
language   and each feature would be two poles of a kind of
axis   with one end positive and the other negative   or one
end zero and the other one
                            oddly enough it will resemble
somewhat machine computer language   and that may
surprise you   but it shouldnt be too surprising   because so
many things now are analyzed in this way   which is clear and
unequivocal   and convenient for the machines which we now
have so many of   and which seem so reasonable now that we
have so many people acclimated to working with these machines
and it is of course easy to distinguish zero and one   the
empty set and the full set   that it might seem simple   even
reasonable to approach the lexicon this way   marking each
lexeme as a bundle of features that are scored   zero when they
are absent and one when theyre present   and say you only
bother to mark features that are present   otherwise these
features are absent
                            now lets take a pair of words   like
"generous" and "thrifty" say   we could probably find an axis
that ran through them   unfortunately we could find many more
than one axis   but lets take an axis   an axis is a good
word   it suggests so much   a kind of space through with
it runs   a kind of semantic globe   domain?   hyperspace?
anyway lets call it an axis   because this axis is like a line
that will be determined by two points   like any other straight
line   thats nice   straight lines are convenient and
friendly from our days in geometry and they are all so nicely
determined by two points   and these two points are its poles
one at each end of the line   and one pole   lets say the
positive pole   is called "open"   and the negative pole
the one on the other end of this axis line   is called "closed"
        "open"/"closed"   thats our feature   we call it "1"
when its "open" and we call it "0" when its "closed"
                                        ok   this
is one of our features say and weve got two words we happen

to want to deal with   "generous" and "thrifty"   now im
sure you can see how easy it will all be   "generous" will be
"open" and we will mark it "1" and "thrifty" will be "closed"
and well mark it "zero"   what could be easier   unless you
want to ask what happens to "stingy"   which might seem to
lie a lot closer to the "closed" end of this axis of meaning
closer to "zero" so to speak
                        but what could that mean that
a word could lie closer to the same axis than another   it could
mean that we will have to find only pure opposites or antonyms
lying at ends of feature axes   and that all the words in the
system will have to be plotted by the intersection of various axes
their spatial coordinates in some kind of hyperspace so that
we know just how far off the axis of "closed" and "open"
"generous" and "thrifty" may really be   and how close they lie
to an axis of "big" and "small" for example   or "soft" and
"hard"
            how many features will we need to map any lexeme
how many features are there   is there a feature axis that
can be constructed by drawing a line between any two words
that can be regarded as opposites   seen from some point of
view   will we have to connect   every word with every
other word   in practice in principle   dollars and doughnuts
                        if not   will
there be a finite set of such contrasts?   and how will we select
them   and is this finite set potentially infinite?   will we
have to have a rule system for feature construction as there is
a system for word building?   and supposing this is so   will
we be able to determine the distances   angular or other
that separate words that are not opposites from the polar
positions   that separate   "thrifty" from "generous" and
"stingy"   which may happen to lie on an axis   and will we
know if a word is intersected by more than two axial lines   for
two lines determine a plane   and if whether the three or
four or five lines lie in one or two or three different planes
still its a terrific idea   if we have all of those people there
in back of us working away   the way they always seem to be
in the marvelous flashy and ultimately trivial proposals made by
transformational grammarians and french structuralists
                        now trivial in

what sense   for these are all glamorous proposals backed up
by regiments of intelligence and diligence packing away facts
all over the world and subordinating them to the wonderfully
clear and commonsensical ideas   and yet   and yet how
could you ever use them these great unclosing enterprises
supported by equally unending granting institutions
i remember
once commenting on the rather similar theory that i.a. richards
held for language contrasts within something as commonplace
as a poem   now richards held a fairly commonsensical
notion that a poem was constructed of a series of utterances that
you could consider as a series of pushes or pulls in one direction
or another   which certainly had the advantage of being a
dynamic theory of a poem   but what he was offering was a
kind of vector analysis of a poem   and this is very similar
to a binary contrast analysis   because a vector is a directed
magnitude   a line of a certain magnitude moving in a particular
direction   and what you mean by a magnitude is the force
of the utterance and the direction is the sense of the line   and
that sounds reasonable enough
and from that it might follow
that a poem is a composition of forces   but unfortunately
to deal with this   even in an uncomplicated way   you need
to be able to specify certain things   whether all the statements
utterances of the poem lie in a single plane   and if not how
these planes are related to each other   and how these forces
lines are measured off against a specified set of coordinates
which is all that will allow you to measure them anyway   and
what means you will take to compose all these
fortunately for
richards he was not so thoroughgoing and seemed to suggest
that all of these lines lay pretty much in one plane   that they
were merely a matter of push and pull   one line or image for
or against another   which sounds terrific unless you try to do
it   so suppose we take a poem by auden say   and imagine
he said "they lived in houses that were colloquial and blue"
we could
probably say that "blue" lies closer to the pole of an axis called
"concrete" and "colloquial" lies closer to its other pole "abstract"
and that part of the energy of that line   its dialectic

arises from the collision of these two differently directed
adjectives directed at their "houses"   maybe   at least that
axis makes some kind of sense to us   because   after all
"blue" constitutes an experiential fact   it is an outcome of
vision it marks their houses when we look at them   and
"colloquial" well   its an overall judgment of the style in which
they live   so it seems further from the physical reality
                                    now there are
other axes that run through "colloquial" and "blue"   probably
too many to do this conveniently   and   presumably richards
would never have undertaken this   without the help say
of fodor and katz or a variety of other generative semanticians
whose help richards probably never know he was about to receive
and probably never would   except that i am in a generally
helpful frame of mind and will provide it
                                now for the sake of the
provisional convenience that is the universal characteristic
of this approach let us pretend that these are the two most
important features   that this is the axis that counts
                                                    so in
what sense is "blue" concrete   only in the sense that you
suppose "blue" to be some kind of physical phenomenon
the name of a particular range of electromagnetic frequencies
or the like   which it is not   or more naturally that it is
the name of a physical experience   and that "colloquial" is a
loose denomination for a kind of behavior   for a kind of act
somewhere on the scale of deviation from a notion of "propriety"
say or "formality"
                        all this seems quite obvious   and yet
and yet even here   it is not so simple   for if blue is the
name we give to a particular physical experience   a particular
visual experience   an experience of looking   it is not the
name of a single particular experience "blue"   it is more like
the name of a class of experiences to which it applies somewhat
loosely as to a range of blues   and even there is it not so
simple because this experience   this class of physical
experiences to which this name properly applies is really only
a part of an experience   or part of a part of an experience
because it is very uncommon to experience color alone   in
fact we have to learn than name "color"   which is seldom

encountered alone to determine that there is a part of the visual
experience that we can call "color"   and that within that
experience or part of an experience   there is a set of
alternatives that cover a range   or divide it into the colors
we know
          so "blue" is a subset of the conception color and the
conception "color" is a conceptual extraction we make from the
experience of looking
                         for example you look around the room
i look around the room   and youre wearing pants   that
somebody might say are "blue" on some days of the week
      and they say "hes wearing blue jeans"   his pants are
colloquial and blue
                      now "blue"   for an american
a european   which is about the same thing here   is part
of a vernacular color system with about 8 terms   you know
nonspecialized   you say visual experience subset color subset
nonspecialized   youve got red and blue and yellow and white
and black and green and purple maybe   which is really seven
and maybe brown and grey to throw in the two commonest
tertiaries   and there you are and it adds up to nine   and
you could be a sport and add orange   and it gives you ten
common terms into which you can divide the whole world of
color experience   more or less and in a nonspecialized way
and what i mean by this is that they constitute a range in the
sense that these names shouldnt cross   so you couldnt confuse
blue with yellow say or red with blue or black or white or green
and this is nonspecialized color in the sense that "vermilion" is
not part of this system because there youre moving into
specialized color
                    for example   i wouldnt say that those are
turquoise pants   theyre not   but thats not why i wont
say it   azure? ultramarine?   think of the term
"cerulean"   "he wore a pair of cerulean colloquial pants"
"cerulean" is perhaps somewhat more concrete than "blue"
       or at least it seems so   but now "blue" is not so
concrete anymore   because we have had to remove it by a
process of conceptual abstraction   from an aspect of a visual
experience   "color"   and its only within "color" that
"blue" has any meaning at all   and "blue" occupies a space

within this system   or by jakobsonian theory is one of a set
of possible substituents that form the range of the color paradigm
in this system
"cerulean"   if it is fitted into it   may come to occupy a
narrow portion of the space occupied by "blue"   where it may
come to serve as one of a set of possible substituents within the
subparadigm "blue"   along with a whole set of other
alternatives like "azure" "turquoise" "ultramarine" "prussian"
"sky" "cyan" "royal" "navy" "powder" "baby" "midnight"
but i
think not   they are not part of this system at all   just
pressed up against it in a crush resulting from the collision of
several other systems of color naming within the english
language
but within the simple vernacular system of nine or ten
colors the important thing is that there should be no crossing
if it is blue it will not cross red or yellow or green
no   my
wife and i have a difference of opinion every time we look at
bluish green   or greenish blue   i always think its blue she
always think its green   its true   she looks at a car   the
car is driving in the street she says o look at that green car and
i say   its blue   she says no no its green   i say no no
its blue   really we dont argue about it at all   i have come
to expect that when she sees a certain kind of car that i would
call blue she will call it green as well as she knows that when i see
that same car i will call it blue   though she calls that green
and that is a
kind of language understanding too   that we speak   each
of us   somewhat different color dialects and understand
them both   though only using one ourselves
but   to the
australian aborigine   an aranda say   among the aranda
there is i take it   a different way of looking at all this   or at
least a different way of talking about what we have just been
looking at   for in aranda   in the vernacular aranda system
as it existed in the 19th century   there were according to the
people familiar with them   four   or actually five
fundamental color terms   two blacks   white   red
and one other term for all the rest   one black was purka

used of charcoal   and the other was urupulla   which included
brown and a fair range of greys   white was churungura
red tutuka   and the other was tierga   the sky was tierga a
green leaf was tierga   and yellow ocher was also tierga
                                        now this is a
very different system for talking about seeing than ours   one
for red   and one for the range of blue yellow and green
                                        i have no doubt
that we could persuade any reasonable aranda gentleman or lady
to distinguish between sky color leaf color and the color ocher
and they could do this very handily   this gentleman or lady
an aranda painter maybe   they could say that of course
one was sky tierga the other was leaf tierga and the last was
ocher tierga but that they were merely three different shades of
the same color   tierga   that is   that they were all the
same color but modified by some other aspect of vision that
weve chosen to call "shade"   which would be somewhat similar
to our "light" and "dark" or "deep" or "thin" or "saturated" or
"not"   but we really wouldnt have any appropriate name for
this feature of vision that we have just called "shade" but which
applies to a somewhat different range of visual experiences
because their word "color" would also not apply to quite the
same visual experiences of looking as ours   or would apply in
a different way   so their word "shade"   which would
depend for its significance on their word "color"   as our word
"shade" depends on our word "color"   would not be at all
the same and we would simply not have any word for it that
came conveniently to hand though we might very well know what
they mean by it
                    and this leads to interesting conclusions
because it seems that "blue" occupies a different semantic space
to use our old formalist conception of word meaning   a
different semantic space than our word "blue" and that not only
that   their conception of "color" probably has a different
spatial configuration in the semantic domain of aranda looking
than our notion "color"
                        what interesting effects this should have
upon an aranda critic of a fauve painting   an aranda critic of
a fauvist painting   what a terrible idea   because it is
virtually a certainty that where a fauve painter would have placed

blues and greens next to each other with deliberate assertiveness
an aranda would not see two colors placed edge to edge   just
one color   the aranda critic would surely reduce the fauve
color system to a smaller numbered system with wider ranges
so it would come to pass that a painting which consists of five
colors for us could consist of three for an aranda   an aranda
painter   hes looking at a different painting   provided that
what hes looking at is the color   it will be an entirely
different painting because the space will be partitioned entirely
differently within the world of color   this semantic space
it seems then
from this analysis   that blue is a very abstract term that it is
very far from being the name of a concrete physical experience
but it is based on a very elaborate system of inferences and
abstractions   and that the physical act of seeing intersects
with a socially preserved   historically developed   set of
partitioning devices   that will facilitate us and hinder us
selectively in our seeing   and so blue   lies very close to the
abstraction pole of the feature axis concrete/abstract   when
it is seen from this point of view   which is a consideration
when youre considering how close something seems to be to
something else   and even then we dont know how close
but forget that
how close   the question that is more important is where
we are standing
im standing   were standing   youre
standing somewhere facing somewhere in this semantic space
if there is such a thing as semantic space we are standing in it
because there is no looking without standing   sitting?
somewhere with your eyes looking out of the front of your head
and not behind it
now youre standing somewhere and im
standing somewhere in semantic space   and theyre not the
same place   because i find it hard to imagine us all or any of us
standing in precisely the same place even in semantic space
now supposing from where im standing "blue" looks pretty
close to abstract   and from where youre standing it looks
pretty close to concrete   i can imagine your position and you
can imagine mine   how can we each get to imagine the others
position   how come i can imagine your position as well

as mine?   how do you get to imagine my position as well as
yours?
         if auden had written this poem in which he said "their
houses were colloquial and blue" we would feel that "blue" was
intended to be a concrete term   that from audens position in
semantic space "blue" looked fairly close to the pole marked
concrete   that it was intended to be a concrete term   a
primitive term perhaps such as one familiar to the experience
of children one of the five hundred basic words of english or
1000   and that colloquial is not such a term   belongs to
the social world of adults or linguists or university graduates
   and therefore abstract
                         now how do we do this come to
understand each other?   now this may be a bad term   to
understand   but let us use it for the moment   because we
will know what we mean by it here   now anyone who is going
to have a theory of language will have to have a theory of how we
use it to come to understand each other   how we come to an
understanding   how we may not be at an understanding when
we begin to talk and how we may arrive at an understanding
when we are through   or something of the sort
                                   they dont
have to have merely a grammar   they have to know to what the
grammar applies   and when to apply it that way   or the
grammar is a fairly meaningless construct if you cant propose some
set of rules   though thats a bad term rules   some system for
orienting ourselves to understand other peoples uses of
language   what they are saying and its relation to some kind
of practice   you don't understand their language   you and an
aranda cannot have a conversation at all until you somehow
learn what an aranda uses those words for   and under what
conditions
            now theres no grammar in the world that can provide
for that   nor is there any theory of grammar that will do
that for you   nor is there any theory of language that will
do that for you
              now the reason i chose to talk about tuning
i was proposing   a way of looking at how we understand
things   how we come to understand things   come to an
understanding   with each other about things   through

language   has something to do with a notion   process
i would like to call tuning

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