Part Two

The Centrality of Language

The centrality of language in the interpretation of literature may at first appear to be obvious. It is not. Language is the medium of creative expression, but what sort of medium? It lacks the corporeal solidity of the sculptor's marble and the sensual purity of the musician's sound waves. Modern aestheticians, following the lead of nineteenth-century philosophers, have tended to argue that language paradoxically partakes of both the corporeality of stone and the incorporeality of sound, but this is a metaphorical way of speaking indicating only that language, as a medium for artistic expression, should be defined by its own characteristics.

A THEORY OF LITERARY LANGUAGE

A major contribution to the theory of language as a medium for creative expression was developed in the 1930s and 1940s by the American New Critics. Parallel, though not always identical, attitudes were also presented by the Russian Formalists, the Prague Linguistic Circle, and the French promoters of explication de texte. Yet the New Criticism provides the most available and instructive model on which we may begin our analysis of the problems of language and its artistic uses. Metaphorically, the New Critics argued that language is a vital medium—living, not dead. In the creative process language, by its own peculiar characteristics, contributes to the making of the poem. It is not a mere vehicle or form into which one pours content or meaning.

The source of this doctrine lies in nineteenth-century romantic aesthetics. Coleridge's long response to Wordsworth in the Biographia Literaria revolved essentially on the point that language is an integral part of the poem. The form of poetic
language, particularly its meter, is its distinguishing characteristic, and Coleridge claimed, “I write in meter, because I am about to use a language different from that of prose.” Actually, he means that he is going to use language differently than does the prose writer, and this leads to his emphasis on meter. The rhythmic qualities of poetic language do not merely embellish the poem’s content; they are the vital characteristics of the poem itself—it’s life. They reflect the energy of aesthetic creativity and beyond that the creative vitality of natural life, the natura naturans. Thus, for Coleridge, poetry is tied to the creative life of the universe, is an echo of the creative spirit of God, and is qualitatively unlike the mere prosaic use of language.

The difference between poetry and prose in this theory, I would emphasize, is how the writer uses language, for Coleridge argues that “a poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed.” This different combination is not so mechanical as it sounds; it is not merely the working over of a dead medium or a clever use of words. The poet revitalizes language; he restores it to its essentially creative function of infusing life into lifeless objects, of creating wholly new combinations springing from new and individual intuitions. “[The poet] diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends and (as it were) fuses, each [part] into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination.” It is the imagination that fuses form and content into the organically self-sufficient poem. All the rest is mere fancy, the mechanical use of language as already fixed and definite, the production of prose. This essentially Kantian idea leads to the theory of the poem or symbol as a dynamic object to be contemplated for its own sake, with “disinterested interest.” The New Critical formalism that follows from this tradition assigns to poetry a unique status in being, but it, too, was not a theory of static form and always implied the affective dimension that involved the reader in the dynamism of the aesthetic object itself.

After Coleridge’s rather eloquent defense, it has never been easy to break down the barriers between poetry and prose. Among the later romantics, Verlaine summarized this doctrine
for the French Symbolists by extolling the "art poetique." He disparaged other uses of language claiming "tout le reste est litterature." Henri Bergson argued that the prosaic use of language is symptomatic of man's separation from the vital flux of life. Language had, in its general use, fallen to the level of "fixities and definites" that could not express reality. Bergson urged that we turn away from this "counter" language toward a truly poetic, or metaphoric, expression that is more nearly in tune with the vital energy of reality—with the natura naturans.\textsuperscript{11} Benedetto Croce, and his disciple R. G. Collingwood, went so far as to collapse the mode of expression (language) into the act of perception itself, calling the entire process "intuition" and grounding it in man's epistemological capacities.\textsuperscript{12}

At this point, however, the exact nature of poetic language seems to disappear into the mystery of human consciousness. Croce's radical idealism reduces the creative function of language to a wholly internal operation of the mind. This necessitates another order of language, a prosaic order, to externalize the internal perceptions, and for the literary critic this raises the question: Where is the poem? Internal or external? The New Critics, although influenced by romantic idealism, never went this far. They admitted that the creative use of language was the defining characteristic of the artistic imagination, but poetic language was not wholly internal. It had an external form, an ontic status.\textsuperscript{13} As Coleridge argued, the poem contains the same elements as prose but combines them in different ways for different purposes.

The New Critical approach to poetic language was not without opposition. With its debt to idealism it came under the direct attack of logical positivism for its tendency to lapse into metaphysical speculation. For mathematicians and logicians like Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege language was a system for logical communication, and an imperfect system at that. As a result, they sought to develop a language that would be logically valid, that would avoid what Gilbert Ryle later called the "systematically misleading expressions" of normal language usage.\textsuperscript{14} Philosophy's first order of business was to build an adequate philosophical language based on logico-mathematical structures (which were themselves fundamentally linguistic).
Questions of aesthetics were ignored or generally pushed aside as wholly subjective, even mystical.

There was opposition as well from traditional historians of language like F. W. Bateson. Repeatedly Bateson argued that "To discover [the meanings of words in the poem] we have to ask what they meant to their author and his original readers." For Bateson the culturally determined meanings of words delimited their meaning-functions in the context of the poem; and, with this emphasis on historical relativism, Bateson sought to return literary criticism to its old scholarly tradition. Rejecting the New Criticism and the claim that poetic language is the product of a peculiar, creative use of language, Bateson argued that the proper interpretation of a poem is historical. The distinction between poetry and prose—the New Critical distinction in "kind"—he could not accept.

This has been, from the beginning, the central problem of radical New Critical aesthetics: to explain the relationship between historically determined language (prose) and the unique poetic object wrought out of this language. Often the New Critics made the distinction so severe that no relationship could be described; poetry and prose appeared to be opposed. Croce warned against this very absolutism when he rejected the prose-poetry dichotomy developed by Hegel. He attacked Hegel for seeing all "distincts" as "opposites"; the Hegelian triadic dialectic, he claimed, tends to make anything that is distinct appear to be opposed. Croce's idealism led him to emphasize the unifying element of human consciousness; distincts operate in matters of degree—where one may be part of another though the second is not identical with or part of the first. "Poetry can exist without prose (although it does not exclude it), but prose can never exist without poetry; art does not include philosophy, but philosophy directly includes art."16

With this a very practical question emerges. In the study of "poetic" language, do we begin with the poetic use of language seen as the generating principle of all other language uses (as Croce's theory implies), or with the general system of language within which the peculiar poetic use can be defined as a deviation (as the positivists argue)? These two views have effectively separated the disciplines of literary criticism and linguistics, for
the literary critic takes the first option defining poetry as a unique and originating use of language, whereas the linguist takes the second option defining poetry as a special, even aberrant, use of normal language functions.

The New Critics were firmly in the first tradition. This arose largely from their promotion of the organicist doctrine and their stand on the related question of the form-content dichotomy. They saw the poem as a discrete and timeless object, meaningful in its own right as an individual and irreducible act of speech. The essence of poetry was metaphor. I. A. Richards argued that the language of poetry is "non-referential"; that is, there is no separable "content" for which the word-structure of the poem functions as a "sign." But for prose, the form-content dichotomy is its defining characteristic; prose seeks to convey information, and words function as "signs" pointing to an unambiguous content. The nature of prose is linear and metonymic because its structure sets up logical relationships between words, and between their contents.

The form-content dichotomy, in its many ramifications, is finally part of a more general and pervasive philosophical dilemma: the result of Cartesian rationalism and the mind-body dualism. The New Critics could reject the separation of form and content because Coleridge defined poetry for them by defining the characteristic operation of mind that produces it: the imagination. This is the implication of his claim that the poet and his poem are the same. Poetry is neither thought encased in language nor the Crocean externalization of the artist's intuition. Poetic language "fuses" thought and form, giving the poem its own peculiar ontic status. Language, at least in its poetic usage, has a unique and exalted function, for it is intimately involved in the actual process of human consciousness. It is not merely a conventional system of signs (Bergsonian "counters") for the communication of preformed perceptions of the world. Poetry is part of the activity of comprehension, inseparable from the operations of the faculty of understanding itself. It is in poetry, in the poetic act of mind, that the gap between inner and outer worlds is bridged. The objects of poetic imagination become the immediate and present objects of aesthetic experience. Inevitably, therefore, New Critical aesthetics, with its basis in Kantian idealism, becomes entangled in psychology and epistemology,
and language in this theory must be seen as both dynamic form and static substance.

For the more radical followers of Coleridge, this active dimension of poetic discourse provides the basis for a distinction between the creative and the instrumental uses of language. Creative language is more than the instrument for carrying messages through a system of neurological impulses, from one mind to another mind, but how much more? Creative language usage emphasizes the process of forming messages, calls attention to that process and thereby activates a special kind of awareness in both speaker and hearer, an awareness not only of the message as message but also of the context or occasion of its formation and transmission, of characteristics such as motivation, will, and intention. The importance of this dimension of linguistic activity has even been noticed by Jacques Derrida, whose philosophy of language is militantly anti-idealistic, anti-creative. Form is, for Derrida, “force”; the poetic utterance is a strategy of words expressing the effort of the artist to express. There is no reason why Derrida should not extend this idea of force to the more traditional sense of poetic language as creative, as grounds for the utterance of individual (we might call them original) ideas (or perceptions). Unfortunately, he is more inclined to exert his energy toward the debunking of the ideas of originality and privileged poetic perception. Nevertheless, it is my contention that Derrida does not stumble upon the idea of force without reason; in fact, I will go further: the sending of messages of any kind necessitates some such idea and thereby provides us with an insight into a startling kind of communication, the blending of the very processes of thinking in two separate minds.

To reduce language to mere instrumentality, to a system of signs functioning as content-carrying vehicles, is to deny the possibility of this form of true communication. Rather than drawing author and reader together the instrumentalist function distances them—and distances both, by the process of abstraction, from the world. Derrida’s temperament leads him, not without anxiety, in this direction, into what might almost be called the worldlessness of words. On the other hand, poetry, as its most eloquent apologists claim, mediates this distance and draws closer together the author’s world as he knew it and the reader’s world as he is coming to know it. Poetry gives life to the
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world, to its dead objects, by involving the author, the reader, and the world in the act of creative perception. It is this unique power that Poulet describes when he says that literature deals with objects, but objects that are "subjectified." "In short, since everything [described in a literary text] has become part of my mind, thanks to the intervention of language, the opposition between the subject and its objects has been considerably attenuated. And thus the greatest advantage of literature is that I am persuaded by it that I am freed from my usual sense of incompatibility between my consciousness and its objects."20

AN OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

This is, admittedly, a romantic, a phenomenological, and perhaps an illusory, solution to the mind-body problem, but it rests squarely on a theory of language that, if it can be developed, provides interesting solutions to many of the problems faced by linguists and literary critics alike. I will outline here briefly the course to be followed in my progress toward the construction of a theory of literary hermeneutics. In the succeeding sections I propose to focus on the poetry-prose dichotomy as a convenient heuristic device. The precise division between them is not likely to be so radical as the New Critics seemed to claim; but we may find them to be distinct even if they are not opposed. The central question of the form-content dichotomy will also be redefined and will be useful in raising certain essential points for discussion. If Coleridge is correct and poetry differs from prose because it proposes for itself different ends, and poetry is structured by the peculiar power of the imagination to achieve these ends, then three basic and traditional areas of interest to literary criticism emerge: (1) We must explain the so-called creative act of structuring that gives form and existence to the poem and the relationship of this act to the poet's own individual perception of reality, to his "world;" (2) We must explain the nature of the poem's structure as poem; and (3) Finally, we must explain the effects of this structure on the reader. That is, we must explain the "act of interpretation" as it is involved in the process of understanding.

In my effort to arrive at these explanations, I will be concerned with the relationship of the poet's individual expressive act
(parole) and the linguistic system within which he works (langue). I will consider also the relationship between the poem as an individual expression and the general linguistic system that envelops the reader. This inevitably leads me to the historical problem of the relation between the general systems of language of the author and reader, for I may safely assume that the farther author and reader are separated across space and time the more difficulties one encounters in comparing the general language systems of each. Thus, we are finally confronted with the most crucial of all aesthetic questions: How does the poet communicate with his reader through the medium of the poem across vast periods of time? Is such communication possible?

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE: WITTGENSTEIN

"What is language?" This question has been asked and answered so often, and from so many perspectives, that it is difficult to know where to begin. In general, we may say that language comprehends a system of meaningful utterances utilized for the communication of thoughts and feelings between particular speakers (writers) and particular listeners (readers). Language, because it is both written and spoken, tends to bifurcate itself, and this problematic duality will need to be treated at some length below, but for the moment we must focus on more general issues. If language, written and spoken, is "systematic," one might begin a discussion of it by analyzing the system into basic rules that govern its operation as a whole. This approach is traditional, but it is often misleading. Of the many efforts to do this, few of them agree upon the basic nature or scope of the system that is being studied. They have produced a multiplicity of rules, many of which are contradictory. Thus a second level of analysis has arisen that might be labeled "meta-linguistics," the attempt to go behind the superficial manifestations of the language system to the very core of man's linguistic capacities. Linguists and philosophers of language have searched for a descriptive schema of language by studying the mental operations that seem to be most intimately involved in language usage. The nature of language has become embedded in the study of man's cognitive capacities, a more abstract or philosophical endeavor that focuses on questions that we might generally
designate as "humanistic." It is necessary to distinguish between this philosophical study and another level of language analysis that I will refer to as "stylistics"; the latter presupposes the former, for it is the general functioning of language as an act of mind that defines the limits of stylistic meaningfulness. Style will be the primary subject of part 3.

For our present discussion, we can find a most instructive example of the problematics of the relationship between language and cognition in the early philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein belongs, at least in this early phase, in the camp of the logical positivists. He thereby seems to be removed from my interest in the aesthetic dimension of language, but even when he is nearest the positivism of Russell and Frege, Wittgenstein is not wholly unmindful of the broader implications of his own逻辑-mathematical theory. There is the hint of both phenomenalism and idealism in his philosophy, and this provides a convenient opening for my development of a general literary theory that extends beyond Wittgenstein's own goals.

Max Black characterizes Wittgenstein's affinity for logical positivism in a way that provides an escape from the narrow strictures imposed by Russell.

Distrusting the ambiguity and formlessness of ordinary language, [Russell and Frege] had hoped for a symbolism that would perfectly reflect logical form. Although Wittgenstein also demands "a sign-language that is governed by logical grammar" (Tractatus, 3.325a) he thinks that ordinary language, just as we know it, is "in perfect logical order" (5.556a). So the ideography is for him merely an instrument in the search for the essence of representation that is present in all languages and in all symbolisms.21

The distinction is crucial; for it does not split apart man's logical capacities from language as we know it, but rather weds the two together by claiming that the logical, cognitive operations of the human mind and the underlying structure of language in general are the same. Hence to study one is to study the other; to understand the logical form of language is to understand the cognitive capabilities and limitations of man. The theory, even at this level, has a definite Kantian dimension.

Wittgenstein begins his study of language, in the Tractatus, at what he considers its most basic level: the relationship between words and things. This is, of course, a complex relationship and
an important one for literary theory, for it reactivates one of the oldest principles of aesthetics, the doctrine of mimesis. How language relates to reality is the focal problem, for example, of Plato's Sophist, where it is part of a larger metaphysical question that must explain the relationship between a world of (false) appearances and the realm of (Real) Ideal Forms. Plato's attention here is specifically on false statements, on the use of language to "say that which is not." By saying the "unreal" the sophist (or poet) utters false representations; but saying the "unreal" is saying something, and thus the "unreal" paradoxically is both real and unreal. It is a false picture of reality, an imitation that is a mere semblance, a phantasma, both like and unlike reality.

The metaphysical problems here are less interesting to a modern reader than the extraordinary idea that falsehood always has about it the aura of truth, for to "say that which is not" implies: (1) that falsehood is a species of truth, and (2) enormous power in the hands of a clever "user" of language. The former proposition is at once Platonic and anti-Platonic and must be elaborated. To "say that which is not" is necessarily to misuse reality (Truth). Plato's example is as follows: a true statement, "Theaetetus sits," is composed of a name, "Theaetetus," which has reference to an identifiable being, to a perceptible fact, and of a separate term, "sits," which refers to an identifiable state of affairs, "sitting," which is also a separate perceivable fact. In addition, the state of affairs, "sitting," is a specific case of an Ideal Form, "Sitting," from which the specific case derives its meaning. There is a similar relationship to be established between Theaetetus as being and the Ideal form of Being, although this is more of a Heideggerian concept than a Platonic one. On the other hand, a false statement, "Theaetetus flies," is also composed of two terms, the same name with the same reference functions as the name in the true statement, and the term "flies," which corresponds to a state of affairs, "flying," which is a specific case of an Ideal Form, "Flying," from which the specific case derives its meaning. The false statement is as meaningful as the true statement. The false statement is logically composed of separate and meaningful terms, and even if we ignore Plato's transcendental Idealism and argue that the false statement is composed of terms that are meaningful in many different contexts, we are left
to say, as is Plato, that "falseness" or "that which is not" is something that distorts or is "different" from that which "is."  

"Difference" here has to do with the relationship between separate and meaningful terms; we might say that the true statement is composed of a logical ordering of terms that defines or "pictures" a possible relationship of things in the world. The false statement, conversely, is composed of a logical ordering that pictures an impossible state of affairs in the world. Both statements are logically meaningful. As a result, we must distinguish between two kinds of meaning, what Frege called Sinn and Bedeutung; the former or "sense" reflects logical meaningfulness irrespective of empirical verification; the latter is "referential" meaningfulness that "indicates" (points toward) actual things or states of affairs in the world. The sophist and the poet, for Plato, have the power to misuse reality by falsely picturing the world in meaningful statements. This is, in Platonic philosophy, a misuse of Knowledge and is the basis for Plato's general distrust of language. But the examples imply the necessity of a world of empirical fact as a ground for the idea of truth and falsehood, a ground that traces all verbal propositions through the realm of empirical fact, "that which is (not)," to the level of the Ideal, "that which can(not) be." Meaning and truth (Sinn and Bedeutung) are different matters that meet in the function of mimesis. One can imitate the world truly or falsely, but in both there is imitation.

This unique feature of language allows Aristotle to focus on imitation without regard to questions of Truth. Aristotelian mimesis posits an analogy of form between work and world that allows for "probable impossibilities," or logical presentation of "that which is not." The mimetic theory after Aristotle was generally corrupted into a much narrower doctrine, simplistically into a naive realism under the rule of ut pictura poesis, and, finally, by displacement, into the doctrine of "imitate the ancients" for, as Pope proclaimed, "Homer and nature are the same." In these corruptions a barrier is raised between language and world (subject and object) and all of the Platonic/Aristotelian complexity is lost. The necessary mutuality of Sinn and Bedeutung is destroyed, and it is not until Kant's "Copernican revolution," that a new and revitalized relationship between language and world emerged.
Wittgenstein’s opening propositions in the *Tractatus* are part of this post-Kantian reawakening; clearly no simple restatement of the narrow doctrine of *ut pictura poesis*, his “picture theory” revitalizes the Platonic problematics of “saying that which is (not)” by affirming Frege’s *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* interplay.

The proposition is a picture of reality.
The proposition is a model of reality as we think it is. [*Tractatus*, 4.01]²⁷

Here he is not far from Ernst Cassirer, who describes the basic structure of Kantian idealism in the following passage.

The metaphysical opposition between subjectivity and objectivity is replaced by . . . transcendental correlation. In Kant the object, as “object in experience,” is not something outside of and apart from cognition; on the contrary it is only “made possible,” determined and constituted by the categories of cognition. Similarly, the subjectivity of language no longer appears as a barrier that prevents us from apprehending objective being but rather as a means of forming, of “objectifying” sensory impressions. Like cognition, language does not merely “copy” a given object; it rather embodies a spiritual attitude which is always a crucial factor in our perception of the objective. Since the naive-realistic approach lives and moves among objects, it takes too little account of this subjectivity; it does not readily conceive of a subjectivity which transforms the objective world, not accidentally or arbitrarily but in accordance with inner laws, so that the apparent object itself becomes only a subjective concept, yet a concept with a fully justified claim to universal validity.²⁸

Because Wittgenstein’s picture theory forms the basis for his more comprehensive idea that the essential structure of language is identical with the innate structuring capacities of cognition, he can claim that logical thought gives objective validity to our world via the medium of language. Moreover, in *Tractatus*, 3.221 he makes a most important distinction between “asserting” and “speaking of” objects. “A proposition can only say how a thing is, not what it is,” and the “how” is, not wholly unlike Cassirer’s constitutive perception, neither the presentation of an object nor the copy of an object, but rather a rendering of objects in the world.

Once this claim has been made we can no longer see Wittgenstein’s theory as proposing a naive epistemological
realism. His argument that “In the picture and the pictured there must be something identical in order that one can be a picture of the other at all” (Tractatus, 2.161) should be read in the light of his earlier statement that the “form” of a linguistic picturing is no more than “the possibility that things are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture (Tractatus, 2.151). This implies an important distinction between mere “naming” (where one word refers to one thing) and “picturing” (which gives us not things but combinations, not objects but states of affairs).\(^{29}\) Clearly, then, we can distinguish between language as Sinn, meaning as logical relationship, and language as Bedeutung, meaning as naming. Naming, nevertheless, is a necessary basis for the higher level function of cognition in picturing, and Wittgenstein’s failure to develop this idea is perhaps the weakest portion of the Tractatus. He merely assumes (as his own Kantian a priori) that a formal correspondence exists between language as a logical structure and the world as states of affairs; his approach narrows to “instrumentalism” as he proposes to analyze only what he calls “complex propositions,” the more sophisticated utterances that are composed of “elementary propositions.” The latter may derive from a primal system of words as names, but this is, as Max Black claims, no more than a “metaphysical inference.”\(^{30}\) So limiting himself, Wittgenstein sets out to demonstrate that within the system of language there is a logical order. It is this logical structure that enables language to give us our world as states of affairs, but the logical basis of language is “hidden” (Tractatus, 4.002) as is the formal relationship between “elementary propositions,” “names,” and the world of objects. Because of this, Wittgenstein’s study of language is bracketed between extremes, between the general, but hidden, logical structure (which in the Tractatus is solidified into an “essentialist” philosophy, into the positing of a single, unified essential core for all language usage) and the fundamental basis of picturing seen as naming. In the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein further restricts his focus by seemingly abandoning both the picture theory and the essentialism of the Tractatus; in this later work he argues that the structure of language is nothing more than a series of communal ratifications, a specific set of “games.”\(^{31}\) By moving further into instrumentalism Wittgenstein escapes some of the more pressing problems of the Tractatus.
But the early and late approaches are not wholly incompatible. Wittgenstein's later study of language games, of systems within systems established by communal ratification, need not force us to see language again as a barrier between the subject and the objective world, as a denial of some form of picturing. If games are in any way situational, if they are controls placed on group actions, they must also be seen as controls, communally ratified, placed on, and thus involving, individual experience. Just as language games militate against, and repress, "private languages," they also order and control private contact with reality. The boundaries between individual and communal expression, private and communal experience are necessarily vague and allow each extreme to encroach upon the other; there is no communal experience that does not imply individual participation. Following the same logic, there cannot be any propositional arrangement of particular things into states of affairs without the implication of a concomitant level of picturing or naming that situates the particulars to be so arranged. Language, therefore, is ambiguously both a barrier between us and reality and a means of bridging the gap, and it is both communal and individual.

Similarly, Wittgenstein's later theory does not necessarily deny the hidden functioning of language's logical structure. We must remember the argument of the *Tractatus* that puts that structure beyond the powers of descriptive language use. To talk about the hidden structure would be tautological, for it would necessitate the use of language to describe the essence of language. "To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves with the propositions outside logic ..." (*Tractatus*, 4.12). And since "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (*Tractatus*, 5.6), this would mean that to discuss the essential logic of language one would have to transcend the limits of one's own world.

That which expresses itself in language, we cannot express by language.

The propositions show the logical form of reality.
They exhibit it. [*Tractatus*, 4.121]
What can be shown cannot be said. [*Tractatus*, 4.1212]

It is not unjustifiable, I think, to see this as no more than an argument to bracket questions of essentialism even as Aristotle
bracketed questions of Truth by narrowing Plato's concept of imitation. Wittgenstein does not in his later philosophy abandon his search for logical structures even though he does abandon his early focus on essentialism.

Reading the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* together allows us to draw from the differences between the two texts certain inferences about the nature of language. Between the functions of (hidden) logical meaningfulness and referential naming, language is a complex structure of many structures. It ranges between solipsism, as broadly defined in the *Tractatus*, and the discontinuous series of communal games described in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and it is this range of possibilities that Richard Kuhns uses to give Wittgenstein a curious but interesting link with the phenomenologists.\(^3^2\) Wittgenstein's claim that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" involves him in a revitalized and neo-Kantian sense of solipsism, and here he is not all that far from the phenomenology of Husserl.

In fact what solipsism means is quite correct, only it cannot be said, but it shows itself.

That the world is my world, shows itself in the fact that the limits of language (the language which I understand) mean the limits of my world. [*Tractatus*, 5.52]

We are confronted here with the phenomenological problem of explaining how the personal, inner or private, world of the individual user of language relates to the broader, outer, social or cultural context—the collective or communal world. Wittgenstein's solipsism sounds too much like romantic egoism. Yet we should note Jean Piaget's observation that this solipsism is actually an extension of logical positivism that was dominated by the desire "to reduce mathematics and logic to linguistics and the entire life of the mind of speech."\(^3^3\) In many ways this is the reverse of Kantian idealism, which wanted to reduce speech to the basic operations of the mind, and we should, therefore, be struck by the similarity of goals. When Wittgenstein defines solipsism, it is impossible to tell whether it is radically idealistic or positivistic.

Solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism.

The "I" in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point [one could
as easily say it expands to an infinite circumference] and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it.

The philosophical “I” is . . . the limit—not a part of the world.

[Tractatus, 5.64]

Thus we have in Wittgenstein’s philosophy a series of oscillations between several sets of poles: between views of language as logical order and as naming; between solipsistic idealism and positivistic (picture theory) realism; between transcendentalism and instrumentalism. None of these sets is quite congruent one with another, and each seems logically to involve all of the others. At this point Kuhns provides us with an insight that leads to a better understanding of Wittgenstein’s complex theory. He suggests a most instructive comparison of Wittgenstein with the French Symbolists. “Valéry’s idea that a poem is a machine for producing poetic states is analogous to Wittgenstein’s idea that logic is a machine for making sense, that there exists a structure which is the structure of possible meanings.”

Wittgenstein’s concept of logische Raum (the logical space of language) is analogous to the Symbolists’ idea “that the internal, self-referring ‘poetic form’ defined the linguistic world.” The relationship between an individual text (utterance) and the hidden logical structure of all language is also not unlike the Platonic relationship of shadow-image, “phantasma,” to Ideal Form (also hidden), only Wittgenstein is more certain of a correspondence between the two and thereby trivializes Plato’s transcendental problematics. The individual text is never about the logic of logische Raum but shows it. The Tractatus itself is not about the logical form of linguistic propositions, but it is a form that shows logical form. Wittgenstein’s “zettelistic” method of writing (“the inscribing of propositions on slips of paper” to be later arranged into a text) makes “any order . . . a possible order where a text is concerned, and therefore whatever order is established can stand for any order,” or for order in general, as long as what is expressed are probable states of affairs. Every proposition, indeed every utterance, presupposes the totality of all utterances, presupposes the “world” without saying anything about it.

A writer’s (solipsistic) world, his individual picturing of states of affairs, is his world even as it silently shows worlds that are not his yet to which he belongs. We may speak of a system of dependencies. The individual’s world, asserted in a Saussurian
parole, stands for and within the communally ratified world of Saussurian langue, which in turn stands for and within the hidden logical form of logische Raum (seen as the world/space of logical possibilities, as language in its most encompassing form, which we have designated by the term langage).

Form, in any of these manifestations or inferences, can never be static and can never be seen as either wholly inner (private) or wholly outer (communal). Comparing Mallarmé's Un coup de dés with the Tractatus, Kuhns says, "the movement of the poem on the page is the movement of thought in the speaker and reader; the text is an imitation of itself." This involves the reader in a demanding "act of interpretation," an active engagement with text and world (in its multiple inferences). The means of ordering the text produces meaning, stands for the writer's world and the reader's world, and for the potential world that binds writer and reader in a very complex kind of dialogue. Paralleling Wittgenstein once more with the Symbolists, speaking particularly of Valéry, Kuhns argues: "His poetry might be thought of as an incantation, a linguistic evocation of the self, bringing it into its reality from the edges of the world where it resides. The self comes out of negation and nothingness . . . and lives, if at all, in the poetry created by its violent fight against the negativity of existence." Language begins to take on a life of its own, and the concept bears striking resemblance to the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt who in good romantic fashion proclaimed that language "is something persistent and in every instant transitory. Even its maintenance by writing is only an incomplete, mum­mified preservation, necessary if one is again to render perceptible the living speech concerned. In itself language is not work (ergon) but an activity (energia)." Humboldt's priority of speech over writing and his romantic subjectivism will ultimately prove to be more problematic than he suspected, but his emphasis on the "transitory persistence" of language is of crucial importance when seen in connection with his insistence that language is motion and not fixed structure. Once more we confront the echoes of Coleridge's dynamic natura naturans as well as Derrida's "force."

I can now make a series of preliminary observations about the nature of language based on Wittgenstein's claim that a language
system has a logical structure which defines the limits of our world.

1. Language as total verbal system (langage) refers to that hidden, logical system that comprehends all of the possibilities for meaningful utterances; within that system are codified (through use) worlds within worlds, both individual and communal. The term system here is no more than the potential for order because it is hidden and is not a thing that can be described. Langage is that surplus of cognitive power that I described in part 1.

2. The individual writer creates a text within this system of systems, but the text does not tell us what the world is but how it is.

3. Within the logical system of langage language usage is dynamic expression; langage is energia not ergon. Energia must not be seen as an expression of the subject; it is the gift of langage.

4. As energia, langage must be seen as a process that gives meaning to our experience. It acts upon the listener or reader as a kind of incantation, involving that person in an act of interpretation.

5. By means of the structure of the text our world takes on meaning. It can be argued that langage gives us our world, our place of being and dwelling, by means of its "energy" of knowing.

6. Language usage, consequently, is a way of knowing, and the study of langage belongs to the discipline of epistemology.

7. Below the logical structure of langage, in the realm of the constitutive function of consciousness (naming) langage itself cannot venture; for langage cannot discuss its own origins; it may only show us its nature.

8. Conversely, langage also cannot transcend itself to describe its own hidden structure.

9. This leads Wittgenstein to conclude that "Logic is transcendental" (Tractatus, 6.13).

10. Furthermore, as with the French Symbolists, Wittgenstein's theory of language eventuates in the mystical, for ethics and aesthetics are also transcendental (Tractatus, 6.421). "There is indeed the inexpressible. . . . This shows itself; it is mystical" (Tractatus, 6.522).
Wittgenstein ends the *Tractatus* at this point, having moved from the lower limits of *language* (the level at which he must posit a necessary relationship between words or "elementary propositions" and real things) to the upper limits of *language* (where the logical form of *language* transcends *language* itself). True to his own philosophy he stops there by declaring: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (*Tractatus*, 7), although we may now see that the text of the *Tractatus* itself stands for, albeit silently, that hidden ordering that is the logical basis of *language* and the potential for all propositional statements seen as picturing states of affairs. Language (in its most familiar usage) is, therefore, always characterized by a powerful drive toward the real, not as a condition for the verification of meaningfulness but as (reminiscent of Plato) the ground of the logic of all propositional knowledge of the world (the meeting place of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* in mimesis). For Plato, the sophist's black art is his creation of a meaningful illusion, made possible by the malleability of language and the inconstancy of the world of appearances. Wittgenstein trivializes Plato's transcendental problematics, but the lure of the empirical remains a necessary projection, for the possibility of logical meaningfulness in the utterance of propositions as states of affairs implies the concomitant function of referential meaningfulness. States of affairs are propositions about the world, and "The World is all that is the case," according to Wittgenstein. Even the proposition seen as tautology, which needs no empirical justification with regard to its logical meaningfulness (its grammatical "truth"), cannot ignore its thrust toward the world as referential meaningfulness subject to empirical grounding.

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE: CASSIRER**

If in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein limits the scope of his philosophical analysis of language and cognition, Ernst Cassirer admits of no such limitation. Fundamentally agreeing with Wittgenstein that language systems have a logical basis, Cassirer emphasizes (in contradistinction to the general "creativity" of Wittgenstein's "show" theory) the peculiar "creative" dimension of poetic language. For literary theory this is crucial, but the two men, taken together, give us an expanded sense of poetry and
language that finally provides us with a much deeper insight into problems of literary interpretation.

Cassirer is avowedly Kantian and a student of Humboldtian linguistics. For Cassirer (as for the logical positivists and for Cassirer's New Critical followers) there is a meaningful distinction between the language of poetry and the language of philosophy or science. But this distinction is not absolute. It is derived from Cassirer's sense (based on Kantian faculty psychology) that we may distinguish between "aesthetic universality" and "the 'objective validity' which belongs to our logical and scientific judgments." The former describes our peculiarly aesthetic involvement with creative works, a Kantian "disinterested interest" in the object of aesthetic contemplation—an involvement with its form or structure for its own sake. The latter belongs to our world of operational values (to philosophy or science) whose objects are "used" and even "consumed" but not contemplated. Both eventuate in a particular version of truth. For aesthetics it is an "understanding" of things in themselves; for science it is a "theoretical description or explanation," a propositional or conventional truth that expresses "Knowledge." Not unlike Wittgenstein, Cassirer has outlined here a distinction between "showing" and "saying" (between the "how" a thing is and the "what" it is). The truly creative dimension of language for both men is that of showing.

At this point Cassirer and Wittgenstein sharply diverge. Wittgenstein's Augustinian sense of language as logical order, as langue, leads him to see all language systems as potentially creative (giving us our world) on the level of logical structure. This, of course, necessitates his a priori assumption of a "picture" function. The aesthetic dimension of language he pushes into mysticism, and beyond the logic of langue. Cassirer's theory somewhat rearranges these relations. The logical structure of language, for Cassirer, belongs to the sophisticated development of language usage that reflects man's conceptualizing urges toward his world. It is a system of classifications that aims toward the accurate explanation of life, as, for example, in conceptual classifications like the pair: edible/inedible. For Cassirer, as for Wittgenstein, this is in its own way creative; but as it creates a rational world, a world of causes and effects and hence a world of temporal or linear
relationships, it grows away from the immediate, atemporal, intuitive creativity of the aesthetic uses of language. At the level where Wittgenstein merely posits the necessity of a referential or naming function for language, Cassirer founds his theory of language's "constitutive" intuition. Clearly both men realize the force of language reaching toward the world of things; but whereas Wittgenstein concerns himself (in both his early and late writings) with states of affairs, the relations between things pictured in language, Cassirer concerns himself with things themselves, with, as he says, objects in experience.

The difference is a reflection of Cassirer's idealism as opposed to the positivism and instrumentalism of Wittgenstein. Cassirer sees the aesthetic use of language as a more rudimentary creativity that is the basis of language in general—its psychological and historical genesis. One might say that for Wittgenstein "logic is prior to all experience," whereas for Cassirer priority is given to man's originary experiences, to the very foundations of human consciousness. Unlike Wittgenstein, then, Cassirer attempts to lay bare the very origins of language before explaining man's more sophisticated linguistic skills. The connection between these two levels is clear. The scientific use of language grows out of man's primitive consciousness as he strives to posit "the limits of things," and "this is accomplished as man's activity becomes internally organized, and his conception of Being acquires a correspondingly clear and definite pattern." Prior to this conceptualization of Being, man's cognition of his world consists of what Cassirer calls "mythical thought." This primitive activity of mind manifests itself in the forms of "mythical invention" that "reflect, not the objective character of things, but the forms of human practices." That is to say, the forms that mythical invention takes do not conceptualize Being into patterns of things, do not describe or explain; rather the forms reflect the process of human cognition itself, the dynamic interrelation of man's consciousness and his world. Not unlike the theory of Bronislav Malinowski, Cassirer sees language as originating in a magical realm of functioning. The relationship between word and thing is, therefore "productive" rather than merely referential; to speak to reality (the world) is a mode of bringing the world into presence. For Wittgenstein "things" in the world apparently come into presence only in the operation of
their being arranged into states of affairs, yet we must ask if Wittgenstein and Cassirer are really very far apart in this particular concern with the power of language to call forth and situate man in his world?

The epistemological origin of consciousness and language is what Cassirer calls a "violent act of individuation." Apparently this falls into two stages. The first is the most basic act of self-awareness, the separation of the perceiving subject from the undifferentiated flux of objective Being, a negative act of existential consciousness. The second is characterized by the assertion of the subjective will upon the separate world of objective Being, breaking the undifferentiated flux into categories and particulars, grouping reality into logically meaningful patterns. This twofold process seems to find an analogy in the developmentalist theory of Jean Piaget outlining the two fundamental structuring activities of every individual's epistemological growth. The first, which Piaget calls "simple abstraction," describes how the mind derives knowledge from the object itself; the second, "reflective abstraction," is knowledge that results from the perceiver's action upon objects, from his sense of abstract relations among objects. These two modes of abstraction have, for Piaget, both a logical and a temporal relationship: simple abstraction is a primary function of the most rudimentary level of human consciousness, man's primitive (infantile) awareness of himself as a separate entity in the manifold. "Reflective abstraction" is a secondary function that builds upon this primitive awareness by arranging objects of the outer world into logical systems, states of affairs. This reflective function asserts the individual's control over the world, or, perhaps with reference to Freud, at least it marks man's desire for such mastery.

For Cassirer, although not quite so directly for Piaget, language is integrally a part of this consciousness and partakes of these two stages; we can, therefore, extend Cassirer's insights to make the following distinctions. The first stage of language is a form of mythical thought constructed on the I-thou relationship: the first person pronoun is opposed to a series of individual and discontinuous proper nouns that function as names for things. But these names are not empty signs. In the primitive
consciousness they are conceived as an identity of word and object; they are, in the purest sense, metaphors because they assert a transcendental correspondence between the perceiving subject and the outer or perceived world. They assert a magical “at-oneness” even as they necessarily affirm the newly awakened self-consciousness that divides self and other. The primitive consciousness of self is, as we said, negative; but the metaphorical dimension of language is, for Cassirer, both negative and positive in that its assertion of transcendental at-oneness must contain also a self-conscious awareness of a fundamental apartness, a “lack,” which motivates such an articulate reaching out toward the world. Cassirer’s debt to Romantic language philosophy, and particularly to Humboldt, is most clearly revealed in the primacy he gives to the function of the “shifters” “I” and “you.” They are treated as very primitive, cognitively originating, elements of all language. This concept has been challenged by modern linguists whose primary concerns have drifted away from the romantic fascination with the origins of human consciousness, but such is the thrust of Cassirer’s philosophy. He argues that the birth of consciousness and the origins of verbal systems of communication are one and the same. “Mythic ideation and primitive verbal conception [have as a function] a process of almost violent separation and individuation. Only when this intense individuation has been consummated, when the immediate intuition has been focused and . . . reduced to a single point, does the linguistic form emerge, and the word or the momentary god is created.”

The second stage of language is dominated by man’s will, for it reveals logical relationships between the previously unrelated proper nouns. It works by a process of abstraction to categorize man’s infinitely expansive individual perceptions. Thus language begins to take on a metonymic quality where elements are grouped according to types, and the relationship between these grouped elements is one of part to whole. The elaboration of a logical grammar emphasizes the part/whole relationship by transforming the immediacy and singularity of metaphor into the sequentiality (or linearity) and multiplicity of metonymy. On this level—the level of logical grammar—it is easier to perceive the relation between language and cognition. It is the study of this level that forms the limits of Wittgenstein’s analysis of language
and, Cassirer claims, led John Stuart Mill to assert "that grammar is the most elementary part of logic because it is the beginning of the analysis of the thinking process. According to Mill the principles and rules of grammar are the means by which the forms of language are made to correspond to the universal forms of thought."\

On the secondary level of consciousness and language usage man transforms the primary opposition of self and other into the more sophisticated opposition between particularities (the fragmented parts of objective Being). Here man begins to make the primal cognitive separations that Lévi-Strauss, in his study of mythical thought, calls "binary oppositions," distinctions like night and day (which Cassirer cites) or raw and cooked (the most familiar example used by Lévi-Strauss). On the primary level Cassirer sees mythical thought and language as "two diverse shoots from the same parent stem," and apparently Lévi-Strauss would concur. But Cassirer temporalizes the theory as Lévi-Strauss does not, in order to seek the source of the "parent stem" in an originary act of human consciousness. This returns language theory once more to the essentialist camp, and Cassirer's posited "essence" lies in the genetic foundations of human thought, a primitive thought that is subject to development as well as sophistication. Wittgenstein's and Lévi-Strauss's "essentialism" is, contradictorily, a "metaphysical inference" positing a full-blown logical structure for language systems.

At this point it is necessary to pause in order to consider a rather crucial distinction between Cassirer's idealism and the positivism of Wittgenstein (along with its near kin in Lévi-Strauss's structuralism). Cassirer's theory, like Piaget's, is developmentalist; it emphasizes the evolution of complex, logical language systems out of rudimentary, primitive cognitive awareness. Wittgenstein, who deliberately cuts himself off from genetic speculations, treats language as a systematic whole, complete in itself and not as a development from some more basic origins. The latter theory parallels specifically Lévi-Strauss's sense that man's emergence into culture, and into consciousness, was marked by a cataclysmic appearance of a cognitive structure (and, consequently, a full-blown linguistic structure) that was whole and complete at the moment of its
birth. Of course, this structure exists in any one man or any single culture only in potential; it defines a surplus of explanatory power that is the "ghost" of perfect knowledge. As such, it is what Jacques Derrida called a "centerless" system, describable only through the approximation of abstract models (such as those posited by Noam Chomsky for language) and not limited by a single, "visible" explanatory law.

The evolutionary theories of Cassirer and Piaget and the static structure theories of Wittgenstein and Lévi-Strauss are in direct conflict, but all are predicated on rather general hypotheses. The immediate results for a theory of literary interpretation are that the idealist emphasizes the unique, individual, "original" source of language usage in defining poetry, whereas the positivist emphasizes the general, systematic, and collective structure that defines language as a totality. We are returned here to the debate between the literary critics who see poetry as the "father" of instrumental language and the linguists who see poetry as an aberration of general, normal language usage. I am convinced, however, that a theoretical reconciliation of these two opposed and heavily armed camps is possible. The oppositions here must not be seen as mutually exclusive even though the lure of polemics has led the combatants to state their positions as if nothing were possible but either/or commitments. The debate between critics and linguists, geneticists and structuralists, idealists and positivists reflects a crucial tension in language itself, a tension between logical system and individual utterance, langage and parole, and, consequently, between prose and poetry. Significantly, Cassirer's developmentalism does not indicate that the rudimentary linguistic origins of language and thought have been wholly eclipsed by the sophisticated cultural or scientific structures that developed from them. Thus poetry is always possible—within or in opposition to the system. Despite the developmentalist hierarchy in Piaget's description of simple and reflective abstraction, the relationship between the two is not only temporal; it is also and importantly logical—each necessitating the other. So, too, Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on general, collective structures has never denied the force of the individual who lives consciously and unconsciously within the system. As I outlined in part 1, the collective myth structure, thinking its way into the minds of men who live within its province, does not eradicate the
fundamental individuality of the members of that culture, nor even negate the privileged individualism of the myth singer. It is the singer who "shows" the myth. The primary result of this tension between system and individual is to redefine our concept of cultural, linguistic, and literary history, to emphasize the interplay of forces that conserve the energy of the individual will in the holistic system while risking in this conservatism the ever-present possibility of revolution that would restructure the collective system in order to respond to different awarenesses or to delimit a different meaningful reality.

Cassirer, then, adds another dimension to Wittgenstein’s proposition: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." The general creativity of language as a system gives way to the privileged creativity of poetry that exists within the system but is not wholly determined by it. Which came first, the unique poetic expression or the hidden logic of the full-blown system, is a question that we need not answer. In his haste to deconstruct the ontotheological bias of Western metaphysics toward "poetic expression" (what he generalizes under the term, speech), Derrida teaches us that the question of primacy is always and everywhere problematic. Derrida’s torturous analysis of Rousseau’s essay on the “origin” of language convinces us that speech cannot precede the logic of systematic discourse (which he generalizes under the term writing). “Writing precedes and follows speech, it comprehends it.”57 In effect, Derrida confirms my broad reading of Wittgenstein. If “writing,” seen as a hidden logical system, as logische Raum or langage, as potential for arrangement of states of affairs, defies description or explanation because it encompasses (transcends) all such description and explanation, then any utterance is, as Derrida says, a “trace” of the totality of all other utterances past and future; any text stands for all texts. “The trace itself,” as potential for order, as spacing, “does not exist.”58 Yet its logic is not effaced by articulation, nor, I would argue against Derrida, by the thrust of an articulation toward the expression of experience. The logic of the system that always remains hidden is displaced into utterances of states of affairs, into arrangements of particulars that have presence, if only in those arrangements. Moreover, this relationship between writing (langage) and speech (parole) must not be seen as a simple contest for power, as simple dialectics. If writing “comprehends” speech, it does so only as it
“shows” itself in speech. Writing does not come into existence through speech any more than speech dies under the diffusive nonbeing of writing, although Derrida is certainly convincing in his argument that Western humanism has frequently employed a life versus death or being versus nonbeing metaphors to describe the interplay of speech and writing.

It is possible, therefore, that Jean Piaget’s model of epistemological development, wherein he claims that ontology recapitulates phylogeny, that the development of the individual is a paradigm for the development of the race, is also a model for linguistic history, but Piaget’s concept of the eternal tension between particular and system, the struggle for “equilibrium” between what he calls “assimilation” and “accommodation,” is much more significant. It is better, I submit, to assume that man has always been possessed by his structures but not determined by them. But if the collective structure is not determinative it is necessary; it is the ground of human culture, of “belonging”; it is the context of communication, and it also guarantees to man an individual freedom. The two extremes define our “collective individuality,” the structure that is expressed by difference and not sameness. Thus we can be satisfied with neither radical romantic, existentialist individualism nor with classical, universal orderliness.

Language has enormous capabilities. It can be explained neither by speculating merely on its primitive origins nor by positing only Wittgenstein’s logische Raum. To be sure, Cassirer, through his concept of symbolic thought, attempts to define language as somehow both of these extremes. Language, like myth, is at one level an expression of man’s rudimentary awareness: “at this point, the word which denotes . . . thought content is not mere conventional symbol [or sign], but is merged with its object in an indissoluble unity.” The poetic function of language so defined is fundamentally human, and even though Cassirer explains it in terms of a primitive emergence (man’s unsophisticated sense of mysterious “powers” surrounding him, of “momentary gods”), it is an abiding form of consciousness in all men. Such a function springs from and points up the general structure of language capabilities in man. Communication is predicated upon the existence of a linguistic structure shared by both speakers and hearers. Language as a whole, therefore, must
encompass both of these extremes, ranging between the particular, personal response to discrete and familiar experience and the whole, collective system of perfect Knowledge, between a "surplus of experience" and the "surplus of explanatory structure." When Cassirer defines the limits of language, he is far more expansive than was Wittgenstein in his ever-narrowing instrumentalism, and Cassirer here puts little emphasis on the idea of developmentalism.

Language moves in the middle kingdom between the "indefinite" and the "infinite"; it transforms the indeterminate into a determinate idea, and then holds it within the sphere of finite determinations. So there are "ineffables" of different order, one of which represents the lower limit of verbal expression, the other the upper limit; but between these bounds, which are drawn by the very nature of verbal expression, language can move with perfect freedom, and exhibit all the wealth and concrete exemplification of its creative power.60

Between the extremes lies the realm of meaningful discourse, in the mutual relationship of defamiliarization (seen as constitutive intuition) and demystification (seen as activation of the potentials of language); the articulation of meaning fixes the indefinite within the "sphere of finite determinations," holds the extremes in a tensional or balanced relationship and marks the limits of literature in its metaphor/metonym functions. The tension between these functions defines the distinction between pure poetry and pure prose, but this raises severe problems in the area of literary criticism. For the philosopher who wishes, like Cassirer, to describe the aesthetic dimension of language this problem can be defined in two ways: (1) he cannot transcend language in order to speak of language itself, and (2) he must use the metonymic tendencies of prose to describe the metaphoric tendencies of poetry.61 Thus the philosopher and the literary critic frequently find themselves breaking out of the limitations of prose and into the realm of poetry. This is most certainly the fate of Wittgenstein in the Tractatus and is the basis for Richard Kuhns's association of Wittgenstein's "zettelistic" method of composition with the poetic theory of French Symbolists like Valéry. So much more problematic is the fate of the literary critic whose task becomes that of achieving a balance between the prosaic reduction of the poem to metonymy (the New Critical
“heresy of paraphrase”62) and the poetic transformation of his prose analysis into metaphor (where criticism becomes a poem about a poem). It is truly problematic because we cannot assign privileged status to either poetry or prose; they are not different languages but different functions of language. More importantly, the dynamic tension between the two (between metaphor and metonym, assimilation and accommodation, defamiliarization and demystification) “shows” us that we cannot have one without the other; for example, to defamiliarize experience is at once to demystify conceptual understanding. The philosopher, whose thrust is toward the latter, is forever constrained by the necessities of logic, the need to demystify his system by speaking it to indeterminate experience. The poet, who risks absorption into the indeterminate, must draw defamiliarized experience outward toward the determinate idea. Great philosophy, therefore, is always somewhat poetic, whereas great poetry is to some degree philosophical. Moreover, to speak of a distinction, even merely a functional one, between poetry (metaphor) and prose (metonymy) is a conceptualizing reduction of a relationship that in itself can only “show” itself.

With these insights it is necessary to revise the preliminary propositions about language that I listed at the end of the discussion of Wittgenstein.

1. The term langage refers to the system of utterances that gives us the world of both our individual and communal experience. The term system indicates a potential for order rather than an existential shape and, therefore, as system langage cannot be explained or described. Langage embodies worlds within worlds, utterances that do not tell us what the world is but how it is.

2. The metaphoric use of langage is represented by the poetic tendency of literature; it is the immediate, atemporal engagement of subjective experience, emphasizing the act of articulation or the paradigmatic function of language as the expression of meaningfulness. The metonymic use of langage is represented by the prosaic tendency of literature; it asserts the relationship between objects in a logical series thereby emphasizing the syntagmatic function of language as logical (grammatical) meaningfulness.
3. The two uses of language are distinct but not antithetical. They characterize the difference between poetry and prose, a tensional relationship that is the basis for all utterances and defines the limits of langage (as logische Raum) and, therefore, man's capacity for signification. Poetry and prose, however, must be thought of as functions and not objects. The term poetry is closely allied with what traditionally has been called the "creative" function of language, but there is, as I have stated above, reason to say that in prose there is a specific kind of creativity seen as Wittgenstein's manipulation of "states of affairs" with its attendant metonymic presencing of things. The issue here is that poetry as creativity uses the potentialities of langage (as logische Raum) in order to defy and reform those culturally ratified linguistic systems (Wittgenstein's "games" or, more broadly, Saussure's langue) that have become static or repressive. This is possible because metaphor always lurks within metonymy, because simple abstraction is the "logical" basis of reflective abstraction, because if langage is to give us the relations of our world it must also give us the particulars of relationship.

4. All language functions as a dynamic medium of expression, as energia, not ergon, but in poetry and prose there is a functional distinction between the metaphoric and metonymic uses.

5. As energia, langage gives meaning to our experiences. Energia is the gift of langage to man, the gift of a dwelling place, of belonging, to all humankind. In literature the metaphor/metonym tensions reproduce the drive toward the flux of familiar experience, the strange or typical.

6. As energia, langage acts on the attention of the listener or reader, involving him in an act of interpretation.

7. Language, consequently, is a way of knowing, and the study of langage belongs to the discipline of epistemology.

8. Within the system of langage metaphor and metonymy exist in a tensional relationship. Neither metaphor nor metonymy may adequately explain one another; each may only "show" its nature.

9. There are, therefore, limits beyond which metonymic prose and metaphoric poetry cannot go, but that need not be seen
as severe restrictions on the freeplay of language as a dynamic system.

10. Language as a system can neither describe its own origins nor its hidden structure. These, however, "show" themselves through usage, through the interplay of individual articulations (parole) and culturally ratified subsystems (langue).

THE METHODOLOGY OF LINGUISTICS: CHOMSKY

Having come this far in the development of a philosophy of language it is necessary to do some backtracking—even at the risk of being repetitious. My focus will shift accordingly, and in this section I will turn to the formal study of language known as linguistics, specifically to methodological problems arising from the study of language. My focal figure will be the very influential Noam Chomsky who echoes both the essentialist and instrumentalist tendencies of Wittgenstein. Chomsky is a self-declared rationalist, an opponent of transcendental idealism in linguistic studies, and in many ways dominated by a positivistic temperament. But if these are more or less characteristic of his general philosophy, there are variations on these tendencies that are instructive and necessary to the development of his methodology.

If I may begin my study of Chomsky in medias res, perhaps the single, most important observation to be made concerns his division of language into two broad categories: "deep" and "surface" structures. Roughly speaking he bases this distinction on his belief that "language has an inner and outer aspect. A sentence can be studied from the point of view of how it expresses a thought or from the point of view of its physical shape, that is, from the point of view of either semantic interpretation or phonetic interpretation." These two aspects are related on the level of structure.

The former [deep structure] is the underlying abstract structure that determines its semantic interpretation; the latter [surface structure] is the superficial organization of units which determines the phonetic interpretation and which relates to the physical form of the actual utterance, its perceived or intended form. . . . Deep and surface structures need not be identical. The underlying organization of a
sentence relevant to semantic interpretation is not necessarily revealed by the actual arrangements and phrasing of given components.64

Yet if the connection between the two is not "necessary," then how can we study "deep structure"; what is its value to linguistics?

This problem is crucial to the development of a methodology of language study, for that methodology must reflect the nature of language itself. Chomsky here is being careful to remain faithful to the Cartesian rationalism that he defines as the basis for his own linguistic theory. He wants to avoid the trap of neo-idealistic aestheticism, like that of Croce, which collapses language into the inner operations of the mind, surface structure into deep structure. Thus he holds firmly to Cartesian dualism, which keeps separate the inner mental processes and the outer sensuous manifestations of those processes in language. This leads him to flirt dangerously near a form-content dichotomy that, ironically, is much like that of Croce. The external physical form of language serves as mere clothes for an inner semantic concept—or for meaning.

The mind-body dualism of Descartes is problematic here. John Lyons, in his study of Chomsky, refers to a radio interview in which the linguist simply dismissed the mind-body dualism as an illusory dilemma; yet this answer is unsatisfactory. As Lyons says, Chomsky is sufficiently within the "mentalist" school of Descartes to believe that the internal operations of the mind are at least partly free from the determining influence of either external or physiological stimuli. "On the other hand, he differs from Descartes and most philosophers who would normally be called 'mentalists' in that he does not subscribe to the ultimate irreducibility of the distinction between 'body' and 'mind.'65 This wavering dualism is troublesome for his linguistic theory when he asserts that there is some relation—but not a relation of identity—between deep semantic and surface phonological structures. The methodology of linguistic analysis that he develops depends upon the use of the outer "physical forms" of language to determine the inner "abstract structure" of meaning. Moreover, if the relationship of inner and outer structures is
vague or only intermittent, Chomsky cuts himself off from the profound communicative dimension of language that is so crucial to his linguistic theory. Speaking on this matter, he borrows from Humboldt, reflecting both Cassirer and Wittgenstein, a definition of a "dialogistic" relationship between speaker (writer) and hearer (reader) that defies the absolutism of a mind-body dualism. "The received signs activate within the listener a corresponding link in his system of concepts ... causing a corresponding, but not identical, concept to emerge." Dialogue here sounds more mechanical than what Cassirer proposed, and the term corresponding is appropriately more conservative, but the relationship between the physical form of the language and the deep structure of thought must be a "necessary" one even to achieve "correspondence."

I have belabored this point in order to take issue with Chomsky's own characterization of his linguistic theory as a development of Cartesian rationalism. For his methodology to work—and to support his faith in Humboldt—he might better describe himself as a Kantian rationalist; the possibility of transcending the subject-object (or mind-body) dualism is essential to his deep structure-surface structure theory. This is not an unjustified suggestion, since Chomsky himself traces Cartesian philosophy directly through Kant to romantics like Humboldt. The enemy, it would seem, is not post-Kantian romanticism but nineteenth-century British empiricism with its "passive mind" philosophy.

Chomsky, therefore, brings in a covert idealism by arguing for an attempt, like that of the Port-Royal school, to discover a grammaire generale, a general grammar. "The discovery of universal principles would provide a partial explanation for the facts of particular languages in so far as these could be shown to be simply specific instances of the general features of language structure formulated in the 'grammaire generale.' Beyond this, the universal features themselves might be explained on the basis of general assumptions about human mental processes or the contingencies of language use..." The methodology described here is "inductive," positivistic or scientific. The discovery of the general grammar is made by a process of simple abstraction from particular instances—or "facts." But we should note that the
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explanatory power of the general grammar is limited, partial; it works only where specific instances of language usage can be clearly shown to derive from the general grammar. Since the general grammar is itself abstracted from specific instances, its explanatory power is tautological.

To escape this vicious circle, Chomsky pushes beyond the general grammar to an even higher—a metalinguistic—level of abstraction. He posits the possibility of an explanatory power based on “general assumptions about human mental processes”; these assumptions give us not merely a general grammar but a universal grammar. In order to avoid becoming tangled in purely descriptive linguistics—the tautological limitations of the abstract general grammar—Chomsky is forced, by his own methodology, to a Kantian metaphysical assumption, to an essentialism not unlike Wittgenstein's. He must, therefore, affirm as strongly as both Wittgenstein and Cassirer the intimate relationship between language and cognition. And against the empiricist tradition he does defend the “active mind theory” of the romantics and its implications for the dynamic quality of language usage itself. He drives all the way into the epistemological basis of language. “In approaching the question of language acquisition and linguistic universals in this way, Cartesian linguistics reflects the concern of seventeenth-century rationalistic psychology with the contribution of mind to human knowledge.”

Once the leap into essentialism has been made, Chomsky articulates a general justification of his theory. He borrows from Charles Peirce the argument that human knowledge is not simply a random development. Quoting Peirce he argues that “the history of early sciences shows that something approximating a correct theory was discovered with remarkable ease and rapidity, on the basis of highly inadequate data, as soon as certain problems were faced. . . .” By analogy, Chomsky applies this insight to his theory of language acquisition. “A fortiori, the chances are even more overwhelming against the true theory of each language ever having come into the head of every four-year-old child.” Reviving the rationalist argument from first causes, he concludes that a universal grammar is “necessary.” “Knowledge of a language—a grammar—can be acquired only by an organism
that is 'preset' with a severe restriction on the form of grammar. This innate restriction is a precondition, in the Kantian sense, for a linguistic experience. . . .

The original, hesitating step into essentialism has now been rigidified into a universal law that is a "severe restriction" on both cognition and the structure of grammar—that determines the forms of thought and linguistic expression and makes language learning and communication possible. "It is because of the virtual identity of this underlying system in speaker and hearer that communication can take place, the sharing of an underlying generative system being traced, ultimately, to the uniformity of human nature." At this point, Chomsky has moved very near the structuralist essentialism of Lévi-Strauss's innate reason.

The relationship between deep and surface structure that I cited at the beginning of this section can now be more tightly drawn. This relationship depends on certain "transformational rules" that are potentially discoverable through analysis of the specific, physical, utterances of native language users. They differ from language to language, but the principle of transformation itself is universal. It is the active process of language generation that is grounded in the innate powers of human cognition—indeed, is determined by them. Although there are no empirically determinable limitations on the number of individual linguistic utterances that might be formulated, there is a severe restriction on the grammatical form of such utterances. Chomsky's search is for a finite grammar that will explain an infinite (or apparently infinite) number of individual speech acts.

Chomsky has, in his battle against an abstract Cartesian dualism, attempted to bridge the gap between the inner, or private, world and the outer, or communal, world, and the relationship between deep and surface structure is instructively problematic. If deep structure is the expression of a thought, if it is described as "the underlying abstract structure that determines . . . semantic interpretation," it seems bound to the subjective world of the individual mind, what we might describe as the speaker's "intention to mean." Deep structure is, we remember, also nonidentical with surface structure seen as the "phonetic" or "physical shape" of an utterance that Chomsky calls its "intended form"—what is clearly the outer, or communicative, dimension of language. Nevertheless, the inner is also the outer
insofar as a correspondence exists between them. More crucially, the outer is also the inner in the identity of those universal rules of grammar, in the uniformity of the generative system. It is this tangle of possibilities that leads Chomsky to trivialize the problematics of Cartesian dualism despite his struggle with that philosophy.

There is, we should now note, no room in Chomsky’s theory for a traditional poetry/prose distinction. The determinative nature of the universal grammar rules all linguistic utterances. If a use of language is meaningful to a native speaker, it apparently must fall under the universal grammar. Unlike Wittgenstein, Chomsky refrains from pushing the aesthetic outside normal language usage; he refuses to give it, as Wittgenstein does, an exalted, transcendental value. Nor does he see language, as does Cassirer, as the product of the primitive transcendental consciousness, as a fundamentally poetic act of mind. Chomsky’s “universal grammar” or innate reason reflects his concern with the “hidden” logical system of generative potentiality posited as a logical necessity and inductively derived. Consequently, Chomsky develops a more detailed conception of how the logical system of language gives us, as Wittgenstein argued, the limits of our world.

But Chomsky’s Cartesian problematics offers much more than this if we risk extending the theory in the light of my previous discussions. The interchangeable nature of inner and outer worlds and the different orders of “intentionality” associated with deep and surface structures introduce a complex language system that is not reducible to either mere transcedental systematicity nor mere constitutive intuition. In his concept of universal grammar Chomsky emerges as a theorist of cognitive structures parallel to Lévi-Strauss. Together (although Chomsky’s sense of innate reason seems more rigid than Lévi-Strauss’s logic of binary oppositions) they have described the ideal of a systematic and wholly adequate (more than adequate!) structure of Knowledge. The completeness or holistic nature of the system would appear to restrict any possibility of “change” or “history” or “creativity.” The regularity of the system tends to close out temporality by explaining change as mere transformation. Yet, following a lead from Derrida, the system must be thought of as a nonentity, as in potentia, as unrealized.
Also, transformational rules do not, one must suspect, move by themselves; for just as Wittgenstein's logic, which gives us states of affairs, necessitates an active articulation toward particulars in order to arrange the particulars into states, a system of transformations shows itself as a system only through the intentions of men to produce meaning, to speak the inner thoughts via the outer, communal structure. This intentionality, furthermore, is circumscribed by conditions that are themselves both of the world and of the human mind, and we might return here again to the wisdom of Aristotle's concept of tragedy for an instructive example. It is the actions of men in the world (particularities or historical events) rendered through the intentional act of the tragedian (a performative act of communication externalized in the spectacle of stage production) into a form of universal validity, into probable impossibilities (the logic of things that cannot be experienced) that defines the limits of the art of imitation. But these limits are broad. Imitation is far from copying, for that which is imitated is subject to the constitutive intuition of man's mind, as the image of an image, or as true or false imitation. Nor is this an individual or private activity, for the shared cultural logic of probable orders has, as Lévi-Strauss argues, always already thought its way into men's minds, even into the local structures of their languages (langue) as potential for order.

The surplus adequacy of Lévi-Strauss's myth-logic, of Chomsky's universal grammar, of Wittgenstein's logische Raum, even of Derrida's "writing," necessitates intentionality and the empirical realm of individual activity. The vastness, comprehensiveness, and incorporeal nature of the logic of potentials, of probable states of affairs, does not merely leave room for the particular; it requires particular incidents of expressiveness, requires corporeality, in order to show itself in the first place. Without consciousness, without the inner that is both a dwelling place for and a tool of the outer, the distinction between self and world, between mind and things, between the world as chaos and as order, cannot be made; the questioning nature of these states cannot even be raised. On the other hand, to ask the question brings this whole problematic world into being. Perhaps this is why Derrida, the most demanding critic of the Western bias toward the inner, himself despairs of escaping its claim to
privilege. It is, he confesses, a need; we may call it a "passion" that is, if nothing else is, definitive of Man.

It is in this context of need, of an emptiness at the soul of man, that we must interpret the term intentionality. To intend meaning is productive, an expression of desire extending beyond the individual, as the transformation of materials into products. Very much like the relation between deep structure thoughts and their surface, phonic structures, intentionality is an articulation of an inner emptiness (seen as a given potential for movement) that attempts to fill the void by expressing it, in a physical form, to an-other. At the same time this is an opening of the inner to the invasion of the outer as the promise of plenitude, as, in fact, energia. That which is beyond us, which is not the same as us, is also an absence within us, what Derrida calls the "trace." To speak of an "absence" that "is" within us places us again in the Platonic dilemma of saying "that which is not."

This somewhat tangled set of relationships, true to the idea of language as hidden logic, can best show itself in a series of paradigms. Consequently, I shall briefly outline one such structure in the following section. It is a multivalent model, however, that implies several others.

A PSYCHOANALYTIC MODEL

One of the major traditions in post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory has concerned itself with the primacy of "ego development." This is a multifaceted movement, filled with internal polemics, but the general focus on ego strategies for dealing with the world (society) brings the problematics of inner/outer interplay into the foreground as the principal concern of this tradition. For the most part, the ego psychologists have emphasized the process of individual adaptation to social demands, and this has produced both a theory and a therapy of the status quo. The argument against this movement charges that "ego adaptation" serves the interests of society's power structure by exploiting individual needs in the name of some sort of social "cure." For example, commercial marketing procedures are designed to both create (false) needs and provide products for the satisfaction of those needs. But this creation of need is more insidious than it may at first appear, for
the need to "consume" products is a negative displacement of deeper psychic energies of creativity or production. What the commercial establishment does, in fact, is intensify the sense of inner lacking by diverting energies (drives, desires) to socially acceptable ends. This Freud saw as "repression." The displacement of created need onto the level of conscious or preconscious human activity (material consumption) collapses inner and outer by superimposing collective need (social self-preservation or commerce) onto individual desire. In particular, advanced industrial society protects itself from entropic disintegration through self-generated overconsumption, giving this the name of "progress." The difficulty is that such progress depends upon a shifting inequality within the system in order to create the drive of need and justify overproduction; it can be argued that unemployment, inflation and ecological waste are the inevitable by-products.

My purpose here is not primarily to draw forth a moral or political argument; rather, I am proposing a simplified model that expresses the means whereby the psychology of ego adaptation becomes a tool of social repression. The breakdown on one level of the gap between inner and outer worlds produces a false sense of equilibrium, of psychic well-being. This cure is expressed as a sense of wholeness, completeness, or, most suggestively, as togetherness (a term displaced from its sense of social integration to serve as a metaphor for individual, inner, mental health). Ego adaptation therapy tends, in its many popularized versions, to serve the ends of social stability by creating pockets of "acceptable," and also commercial, "deviant" behavior. Art has traditionally been considered such an area of permissive self-indulgence, but a more familiar form of social permissiveness can be found in the equally ancient function of the carnival. The carnival, viewed as a privileged time and place, serves as a sanctioned release of socially destructive energies, as an orgiastic Walpurgisnacht where "everything goes." It is also an event easily (perhaps inevitably) adapted to economic ends, and it serves as an analogy for all the privileged times and places of a host of so-called primal scream therapies. Perhaps a more sophisticated version, ego adaptation theory has established a similar form of privileged time and place for psychoanalytic treatment. In the analytic session the psychoanalyst plays the role of objective,
nonjudgmental listener and thereby creates an atmosphere of permissiveness that seems to allow the release of socially destructive drives in a harmless way. This is, however, merely a displacement and not a cure. Such sessions are endlessly repetitive; they are, in fact, repressive and economically exploitative.

Recently, a revisionist Freudianism has faced this ego-adaptation theory squarely, but not simply by charging that the adaptationists have misinterpreted the master. In fact, the argument takes quite another direction. The adaptationists are seen as “repressive” agents who divert us away from the true depth of Freud’s theory; they are, therefore, more Freudian than they know. The attack moves generally in the following pattern:

1. Freud’s texts revealed (showed) the unconscious as hidden, as a primal lack at the soul of man.
2. The ego adaptationists have substituted Freud’s texts themselves, as writing, for the unconscious that the texts merely showed.
3. This substitution is the same as a repressive displacement, for it allows the act of interpretation of texts to take the place of a more threatening confrontation with the unconscious that the texts only show.
4. Freud’s “talking cure” (the analytic session) becomes an endless act of self-interpretation that displaces or represses the unconscious.

To write about or interpret Freud’s texts allows us to repress what his texts show as the lack or absence of the unconscious; to speak about our personal needs with an objective analyst allows us to repress those needs in the illusion that repetitive self-expression satisfies those needs.

The very fact of repetitiveness belies the “cure,” and the exploitativeness of the analytic session belies the “objectivity” of the analyst. Displacement serves the interests of socioeconomic self-preservation, confining psychoanalysis largely to the affluent, upper middle class and providing this class with a paradigm, in the model of Oedipal authoritarianism, for its own general self-preservation as power elite. The “talking cure,” it is clear, depends upon the power of language (more accurately, langage) to generate endless expressions, on the surplus of
signifying capacity, on what Derrida would call language’s power to “defer” fulfillment. Thus language, as a structure of Saussurian differentiation whose overriding logic is hidden, never expresses fully, in any individual text or utterance, that hiddenness. Yet because of this Freud’s texts cannot be interpreted in order to domesticate the unconscious into a onesided form of Oedipal lacking. Language, seen as wholeness-deferring langage, is both plenitude and lacking, gives us both a world of logical order, satisfaction, well-being and a world of desiring and emptiness. In this way langage is always the locus of the encroachment of the outer on the inner, possessed of both the power toward domestication, social homogenization, repression and the power of showing the depths of individual, socially destructive desire.

Derrida’s remarkable analysis of Husserl’s phenomenology provides us with a vivid example of this encroachment through its focus on the special status of the first person pronoun I. The signifier I has an ambiguous functioning in language usage, an “ideal” status, although not a romantic “idealistic” status like that assumed by Cassirer or Humboldt. When a speaker says “I” he expresses to himself his intuition of his own unique, immediate selfhood, an irreducible self-identity or self-presentation. But the same “I” as signifier has quite a different functioning for the hearer; it indicates for the hearer the “otherness” of the speaker’s self-intuition. It indicates a presence that is absent to the hearer. We must define the function of the signifier I, therefore, as “ideal,” as more than any one of these functions and thus comprehending both: the one inner-directed, the other expressing absolute outwardness. The signifier I has a status wholly apart from any consideration of subject or object. Thus Derrida can say, “hearing oneself speak is not the inwardness of an inside that is closed upon itself; it is the irreducible openness in the inside; it is the eye and the world within speech.” Derrida’s aim is to decenter man’s consciousness of the world, to argue that the outer world’s encroachment on the inner world demystifies the primacy of the romantic constitutive intuition, the “privilege” of speech, and even the claims of phenomenology to be the irreducible basis of the philosophy of knowledge. But by damaging phenomenology at the heart of its reductive methodology in order to pry open the inner world, Derrida has
not abolished the inner world entirely. Nor is it clear that he wants to do so, for his technique, borrowed from Heidegger, of writing sous rature, of inscribing a privileged term ("Being," or "essence," or "presence," or "I," or "is") and then crossing it out, does not, in fact, erase so much as it indicates the absence of the term's privileged signification. The term, then, must be written in order to be crossed out, it must be seen (be present) as a necessary trace of an always deferred (absent) meaningfulness. There is, as Heidegger would argue, a necessary falling away from every appearing that marks the degeneration of being, or presence, or ego into the "other-than." Derrida, in this discussion of Husserl, sets aside the simple dialectic of inner and outer seen as a struggle for superiority and argues for the vision of an inevitable encroachment of one world on the other. Unless we read Derrida this way his concept of freeplay is reduced to a meaningless "interplay of presence and absence."

We are justified here in defining a radically new concept of intentionality: as the expression of an inner desire that is a given of our outer world. Language's inner/outer interplay "shows" us self and other not as competitors but as mirror images of one another. Each "shows" the other, and this emergence of self into and out of the cultural context makes possible both an existential self-awareness and the motivating force of historical change. The vision of the literary artist, self-reflexive and acculturated throughout, is manifest in his intention to mean; vision and meaning are "occasional," showing themselves at the historical moment of inward will to speak but also showing the trace of always-deferred fulfillment.

For literary studies this is a profound nondualism, one that Gerald Bruns has recently confronted with admirable boldness. Quoting Paul Ricoeur, Bruns situates man as apart from and yet a part of his world, as defined by the interdependent yet conflicting impulses of assimilation to the cultural/linguistic system and the effort to accommodate that system to individual experience. "Man's adoption of language is in general a way of making him absent to things by intending them with 'empty' intentions, and correlatively, of making things present through the very emptiness of signs." Ricoeur's correlation here, recalling Heidegger's emphasis on man's being in the world, leads Bruns to propose a dialectical relationship between Derrida's demystified
metaphysics of presence (the nonprivilege of "speech") and his metaphysical antimetaphysics of absence (the comprehensive differntiality of "writing"). But I would suggest that a dialectic is not quite enough. A dialectic describes only the motive of intentionality, the why of a thrust, which has ambiguous psychological implications, toward an outer reality. The act of intentionality in its use of "empty intentions" drives a wedge between the self and the other in order to confirm the noncontingent integrity of the self. Yet it also makes reference to the other as object of desire in experience, as potential for fulfillment, as the other of myself, thereby affirming the self's contingent "belonging" to the world. Is this, then, far from Cassirer's conception of metaphor, or from the general, romantic idea of metaphor as ineffable, as beyond writing, "absent," fleetingly "suggested" through poetic articulation? Language, as langage, comprehends the possibility for intentionality even as it shows itself through intentionality. Langage is the context for dialogue, for imitation and constitutive intuition, for culturally ratified langue and individual parole. Langage is the hidden space of logische Raum that fragments into both solipsism and realism, allowing for the transformation of the one into the other, for an extension of Wittgenstein's baffling tautological proposition:

Solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The "I" in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinate with it.

The philosophical "I" is . . . the limit not a part of the world.

[Tractatus, 5.64]

The "philosophical 'I,'" of course, is not the same as the "I in solipsism." The "philosophical 'I'" is the Derridian "I" that must be seen as both inner and outer; it is the "ideal" that comprehends both the "solipsistic I" and, if you will, the "realistic I"; it is the possibility of inner/outer, the possibility of that intentionality that shows itself as the illusion of dialectics.

No longer the romantic self-conscious Being, present to itself in the expression of the "I," the first person pronoun nevertheless has about it the lingering ("longing") trace of romantic idealism. "I" refers not to a person but, according to Émile Benveniste, "je se réfère a l'acte de discours individuel où il est prononcé." Thus, subjectivity arises in the act of discourse as
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The product of the ideality of the pronoun "I," which marks the here and now of the utterance. "Le discours provoque l'émergence de la subjectivité." That emergence, predicated on the functioning of the "I" as both personal and communal, as endlessly repeatable, opens the space for what we call "intentionality" or what John Searle sees as a "speech act." Speaking directly of Derrida's theory of the endless iterability of language, Searle correctly speculates that such "freeplay" necessitates "the particular forms of intentionality that are characteristic of speech acts." Searle fails to develop this idea and seems to misread badly Derrida's, admittedly somewhat obscure, appropriation of "speech act theory." There is no real communication between the two. But the importance of intentionality as will (desire) to articulate, and hence as emergence of the self in and through discourse (communication, communion, community) cannot be denied even as Derrida struggles to deconstruct every last vestige of romantic "presence."

The multifunctioning of the pronoun I permits the emergence of the "self," moreover, not only in the familiar romantic guise of self-conscious subjectivity but also in a variety of other masks. If I may call attention once more to the discussion of Faulkner's Go Down, Moses in part 1, the three principal characters of that novel all may be seen as "emergent" subjects (as "I's") whose various characteristics reflect quite different cultural/linguistic functionings. The traditional romantic "I" is the "I" of Ike McCaslin, the reflection of egoistical, self-conscious, and nostalgic yearnings for a primitive I/thou dichotomy and its promise of apocalyptic transcendence. The Derridian "I" is the "I" of Lucas Beauchamp, the expression of self as both individual and archetype (familial/communal), as both center and circumference. Lastly, the "I" of Sam Fathers we may call Lévi-Straussian as it derives personal "identity" through "typicality," through belonging. This latter emergence is directly opposed to the egoistical "I" of Ike McCaslin and is perhaps better written as a "we."

The significance of these three "figures" (characters, signifiers) lies in our overall reading of the novel, a reading that goes beyond the simplistically historical observation that Faulkner is writing about the passing away of one culture and the emergence of another. History is more cataclysmic than that. The three
characters described above, furthermore, do not represent Faulkner's effort to think like an Indian (Sam), or like a black slave (Lucas). They are all expressions of Faulkner's culture, traces of three sets of defining human relationships (Ike's pattern of dominance and withdrawal, Lucas's inversion of the master/slave roles, Sam's immersion in an idyllic/pragmatic "nature") that subsist in Faulkner's South long after the disappearance in fact of slavery and the frontier. It is accurate to say that Go Down, Moses tells the story of the death of one culture and the birth of another; there is a chronology, a history, in the plot or narrative structure. But at the juncture of the three "I's" we see a very different order of time and history, not a chronology that erases its past, rather one that bears traces of that past. The key, therefore, is an interaction of cultures through the interaction of characters, and this interaction forms an interface that shows an opening for a revolutionary rupture in the historical chronology. What emerges is necessarily unexpressed; it is neither the sum of these worlds (they are irreducible to one another) nor the displacement of a weaker culture by a stronger, more progressive, one through which "time" is defined. This unarticulated context of the novel opens outward in order that we may discern the limits of Faulkner's problematical white southern world, a somewhat confusing and confused society driven by economic necessity and religious guilt. The contradictions of this culture are terrifying for its members, who, like Faulkner, have been forced into a position of critical self-consciousness. Ideals of egalitarian brotherhood, it seems, must be generated out of the materials of racial repression, that is, out of the interweaving of incest and miscegenation, but this is no less than a wilful act of cultural and personal self-destruction. Faulkner's history, therefore, contains no easy transitions; it is revolutionary, disruptive, and, finally, virtually inconceivable, for it posits a new cultural (linguistic, cognitive) structure, a new set of human relationships radically unlike all of those the traces of which show through the characters of Sam, Lucas, and Ike.

Clearly this reaffirms the crucial importance of the very act of self-emerging, of intentionality, that takes place in and for the sake of culture. The assertion of "I-presence" reveals the potentials of collective cultural identity both in the sense of belonging to a determinate system (a potential loss of self) and in
the sense of critically, revolutionarily, deconstructing that system and the "self" it defined. Derrida's demystification of "presence" may, therefore, inevitably return us to the western metaphysical tradition it was designed to explode. If we no longer puzzle about the origins of man's "poetic" self-consciousness, nor about the "priority" of speech over writing, poetry over prose, it is because these traditional questions have been rewritten. If the essentialism of Wittgenstein's logische Raum or Chomsky's universal grammar, and the essential unreality of Derrida's trace, can only "show" themselves, we must wonder as does Derrida, about the "force" (what we once called "origin") of this showing. This question of motivation, perhaps of individual will, we now call "intentionality," seen as a form of displacement directed toward some end, something. The encroachment of outer on inner, the mirroring one of the other, does not collapse the two, any more than Saussure's langue and parole may be collapsed, into inarticulateness, silence. The separation of inner and outer, self and culture, presupposes the entire, hidden system of differentiation in a way that an individual speech act presupposes Derrida's system of "writing." It is, in fact, Derrida who shows us this, as his highly articulate critical texts (like Wittgenstein's Tractatus) stand for (stand forth, stand before) that hidden system. At this juncture Cassirer enters again, at the point where we can say that particular texts show themselves as articulations of the moment, as the presentation of an experience that may well melt away into deferred fulfillment, but that nevertheless "activates" the system, divides inner and outer, and manifests the richness (if fleetingness) of experience of time and place, of history. Cassirer calls this a violent act of individuation (metaphor). Heidegger calls it "speaking being." Vico metaphorically concentrates it into the thunderclap, and a modern interpreter of Vico, Edward Said, labels this a "beginning intention." 89

THE POSSIBILITY OF HISTORY: PIAGET

It is to the problem of history, the diachronic dimension of man's cognitive capacities, that Jean Piaget addresses himself, and it is Piaget who most clearly of all recent students of language ties
linguistics to epistemology. In this very general sense he furthers
the tradition of linking language to those operations of mind that
give us our world. He does not, as does Cassirer, speculate about
a primal or innate origin of man's capacities for logical thought.
He apparently rejects the various essentialist attitudes of
Cassirer, Chomsky, and Wittgenstein, preferring to argue that
there are several logical systems, not just one, and that a universal
or innate core for these systems is little more than idle specula-
tion. This releases him from the confining stasis of Chomsky's
theory (as well as from that of Lévi-Strauss) and allows him to
argue for what he calls a "developmentalist" theory of human
knowledge.

Piaget rejects the idea defended by logical positivists that logic
is fundamentally a kind of language. "The position in general is
that logical and mathematical reality is derived from language.
Logic and mathematics are nothing but specialized linguistic
structures. [But] if . . . we find logical structures in the coordina-
tions of actions in small children even before the development of
language, we are not in a position to say that these logical
structures are derived from language." Illustrating his claims
with laboratory-controlled studies of the development of reason-
ing power in children, Piaget concludes that "intelligence pre-
cedes language," both "ontogenetically" in each individual child
and, a fortiori, "phylogenetically" in the human race.

The theory that logical capacity precedes the development of
linguistic skills seems to counter Cassirer's argument that
language emerges along with man's most primitive cognitive
development—as a product of his violent act of individuation.
But Piaget, in fact, does not specifically refute Cassirer, nor does
he devote much time to what he calls "unnecessary" speculation
about the primal source of human consciousness. There is no
clear evidence, as we shall see, that Piaget's theory is in all ways
incompatible with that of Cassirer. Piaget does, however, directly
reject Chomsky's position (just the opposite of logical positiv-
ism) that "language is based on logic, on reason," and that this
reason is innate. "I deny that these structures are innate. I think
that we have been able to see [in laboratory observations] that
they are the result of development. Hence the hypothesis that
they are innate is . . . unnecessary." Piaget's developmentalism
in this sense helps us situate the concept of language as a total
system, helps us place the "givenness" of language as the horizon of man's being but as in no way really "innate."

There are, we should recall, two stages in Piaget's developmentalist theory: "simple abstraction" and "reflective abstraction." The first is remarkably close (although not the same as) Cassirer's sense of the dawning of primitive consciousness, the violent act of existential awareness based essentially on a dialectics of struggle between a "self" and an "other." "Reflective abstraction," also reminiscent of Cassirer, is a sophisticated development of the first stage, which exercises a kind of control over the outer world by grouping objects into logically meaningful categories (states of affairs). Moreover, for Piaget there are "many different logics, and not just a single logic." "Any one Logic . . . is too weak, but all the Logics taken together are too rich to enable logic to form a single value basis for knowledge." One might say that there is an individual logic for each experiential system, each way of confronting the world; but this would lead to a form of solipsism, and Piaget finds himself very much in Wittgenstein's dilemma of showing that one logic and many logics necessitate one another just as "my" language/world presupposes "our" language/world. By rejecting the innate reason of Chomsky and Lévi-Strauss, Piaget hopes to gain the possibility of real novelty in the evolution of the individual's (and Man's) capacity for knowing. Moreover, without making the relationship between language and cognitive development as intimate as does Cassirer, Piaget opens the door for individual, creative activity. Knowing, he claims, is active (though unlike Cassirer he means that it is "operational" or "instrumental"). "Knowing an object does not mean copying it—it means acting upon it. It means constructing systems of transformations that can be carried out on or with this object. Knowing reality means constructing systems of transformations that correspond, more or less adequately, to reality. Knowledge, then, is a system of transformations that become progressively adequate."

The phrase "more or less" adequate here is disappointing, but we must recognize the difficulty of the problem. Piaget will not go so far as to accept a naive "picture theory" even from a sophisticated philosophy like that of Wittgenstein. What is important for our purposes in this essay is Piaget's sense of an active engagement with reality by the knowing subject.
The idea of “adequation” also is troublesome, requiring some sense of final goal or norm as a measure of “more-or-lessness.” The norm, of course, is cultural, the many systematic logics, cultural *langue*, that tend to force adequation into ego adaptation. But since these subsystems or logics do not project an all-inclusive logic that determines the individual systems, the individual is free to restructure even the most recalcitrant logic of adequation. What we are given is not a universal grammar or innate structure but the potential for assertive transformations, the too rich signification of *langage*. Piaget is interested only in that cognitive phase that has begun to move beyond Cassirer’s primitive consciousness of “momentary gods.” On this level he makes use of the mathematical principle of transformation to describe a truly active principle of cognition.

The nativist or apriorist maintains that the forms of knowledge are predetermined inside the subject and thus again, strictly speaking, there can be no novelty. By contrast, for the genetic epistemologist [Piaget himself] knowledge results from continuous construction, since in each act of understanding, some degree of invention is involved; in development, the passage from one stage to the next is always characterized by the formation of new structures which did not exist before, either in the external world or in the subject’s mind.95

“Some degree of invention” is crucial to Piaget’s developmentalism. Observable on the ontogenetic level, it also, by extension, characterizes the phylogenetic level and gives a historical dimension to man’s structuring capacities. We may, therefore, extend Piaget to argue that man is not bound by his “uniform nature,” and in the process of his cognitive development he continues to restructure the meaningful systems of his world. Lucien Goldmann, drawing sociological implications from similar psychological insights, expresses this interchange between self and world most clearly; “tout comportement humain est un essai de donner une réponse significative à une situation particulière et tend par cela même à créer un équilibre entre le sujet de l’action et l’objet sur lequel elle porte, le monde ambiant.”96 So it is also in the realm of language, and here we must once more align language with cognition although without speculating on the origins of either. In the development of language capabilities a complex process emerges whereby the
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given system of adequation is tested by the individual’s articulation to experience. Thus all cultural systems are subject to Piaget’s “continuous construction” (to the freeplay of language), to the resistance that articulation itself expresses toward too repressive logics of adequation.

There can be no reconciliation between Cassirer and Piaget on the question, “Which comes first, logic or language?” But we must recognize that each man directs his attention to a very different dimension of cognition and language usage: Cassirer to poetry or noncasual utterances, Piaget to prose or casual utterances, and we may, I think, justifiably question whether the two theories are exclusive on all levels. Cassirer defines a version of creative language use based on a prelogical emergence of self-consciousness: the vital separation of self and other that activates the contradictory drives to maintain and dissolve that separation. At this unlocatable moment, which is the origin of human history and yet itself not historical, man’s self-awareness is contingent; the inner and outer worlds are flickering mirror images of one another. It is the moment of metaphor in Cassirer’s philosophy, a probable impossibility, the unity of difference. This moment is dissolved into difference itself or deferred fulfillment by Derrida; it is a repeated and repeatable moment that Derrida wants to see as the enduring and ahistorical condition of man, and for which he coins the term “differance.”

But this condition, as I have argued, can only “show” itself, and that best in the tenuousness of Cassirer’s metaphor, as presence and absence. Thus metaphor can be seen either as creating its own presuppositions or as self-destructing into those presuppositions. Moreover, Piaget’s first stage of logical development, simple abstraction, necessitates its own presupposition in something like the violent individuation of Cassirer’s metaphor (or, for that matter, Derrida’s differance). One cannot act upon objects without individuation, without affirming its violence and reaching out to close the gap. Nor can this act be repeated—each repetition being different and, perhaps in one sense, psychologically more adequate (as proof of mastery or belonging to culture)—without affirming Derrida’s vision of deferral (differance). As this rudimentary stage gives way to “reflective abstraction,” man transforms himself into the user (consumer) of his world. But here too abstract systems fail to reach complete
adequacy; by their very nature they cannot, for they are the developments of the more rudimentary forms of consciousness, showing themselves in individual actions, subject to constant revision as a result of man's fundamental drive toward a deferred fulfillment.

If we may speak at all of the "history" of man, we cannot oversimplify it (as, for example, readers of Cassirer tend to do) into a linear evolution from primitive to sophisticated thought, from metaphoric poetry to metonymic prose, or from a state of nature to a condition of culture. The developmental process, Piaget argues, is repeated in every generation, ontogenetically in every individual. The rudimentary metaphoric expressiveness, Cassirer shows, remains within all men at all times. The systematic possibilities of prose ("writing") and logical thought, Derrida teaches, are not strictly developments from, but also are the "given" conditions of, all individuation, poetry, and knowledge. Perhaps the most adequate explanation of this complex system is to be found in Cassirer's theory of the human condition that everywhere and always ranges between "ineffables" of different orders, between rudimentary (self)consciousness and abstract collective systematicity. History, therefore, is a human projection (is man-made); it is no more and no less than the record of man's struggle for adequation and is itself (as historiography) a struggle for such adequation. Observable in the acts of the individual, history marks the interpenetration of the outer on the inner, but does not evidence the collapse of the one into the other else history would be silent; language would not show itself.

Modern, perhaps better designated "post-modern," literary theory has been obsessed with the idea of "silence," but from two very different perspectives. I give only extreme examples. In the radical theory of Ihab Hassan, based on the neo-Freudian utopianism of Norman O. Brown, a militant antiformalism leads to an overemphasis of the experiential, the sensual, the corporeal, or immediate at the expense of defending inarticulateness. Language as a formal and limiting system is associated with society, with repression and sublimation so that it is

no wonder that language, which is traditionally man's largest repository of private as well as public meaning, should be held in discount. . . . By minimizing the role of sublimation in the future
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... The prophets of our time also minimize the role of language... The modern revolt against verbal discourse may be thus seen, at bottom, as a revolt against authority and abstraction: the civilization that Apollo sponsored has become totalitarian, and the tools he gave man to live by have become machines fueled on abstractions. Because all meaning is ultimately rooted in the flesh—assertions may be regarded as affirmations of the body—meaninglessness is a correlative of abstraction.\(^96\)

Hassan, in the sixties one of the many voices of intellectual revolt in the United States, now seems himself to have been silenced, but not by his own strategies. Rather he is the victim of a social/political revolution that moved diametrically away from his idea of the sensuous inarticulate to what we might term the structural inarticulate. This is the realm of Derrida's "deferred meaningfulness" and Lévi-Strauss's "surplus of signifier." This philosophical shift moves away from the existential by means of a remarkable extension of Saussure's idea of the "arbitrary" relationship between signifier and signified, between the diacritical system of potential meaningfulness and the realm of individual experience.\(^99\) This, as Fredric Jameson points out, is what Lévi-Strauss has in mind when he argues, with Kantian overtones, for being aware of the "discontinuity" between "experience and reality"; "to reach reality one has first to reject experience, and then subsequently to reintegrate it into an objective synthesis devoid of any sentimentality."\(^100\) Derrida, of course, finds Lévi-Strauss not antiempirical enough to support his theory of signification as "freeplay," as the "disruption of presence."\(^101\) For Derrida, and even appropriately for Michel Foucault, the result of this thrust away from the existential is a tendency toward antisubjectivism, antihumanism, and anti-historicism. With an emphasis on deferral and anonymity, on a meaningfulness that is not articulated but that dwells in the gaps of articulation, comes another version of the writing of silence. It is not necessary, however, to opt for either of these extremes.

Hassan and Derrida, through their very different fascinations with silence, have both hypostatized the arbitrary "bar" that Saussure rather innocently drew between signifier and signified, \(\frac{\text{signified}}{\text{signifier}} \) or \(\frac{\text{thought (concept)}}{\text{accoustical image}}\). But perhaps no one has treated Saussure's formula with more suggestive violence than Jacques...
Lacan. For Lacan the relation between signifier and signified (S/s) does not so much describe a discrete state of affairs (the arbitrary association of one set of sounds with a thought, like the Saussurean example where the sounds of the word "tree" embody the concept of "treeness") as it signifies a "function." That is, the formula (S/s) does not itself transcend language to describe it; it rather functions as a sign of the condition of language use. Saussure's formula, literally inverted by Lacan, signifies the problematics of the relationship:

\[
\text{Conscious and Preconscious} \quad \text{Unconscious}
\]

where the "bar" is "arbitrary" only in the sense that its existence as Freudian "censor" or "repression" is real enough but unlocatable. The reason for this problematics is that for Lacan the "unconscious is structured like a language," and like a language is apparently neither wholly inner nor outer, neither wholly conscious nor unconscious, neither wholly individual nor communal. The unconscious for Lacan is remarkably within and outside the individual as "the discourse of the Other," and this, I suggest, "necessitates" the Saussurean bar as a sign of the struggle, both inner and outer, between the individual and collectivity. The "continual" formation of the ego (which process comprehends the echo-relationship of ontogenesis and phylogenesis in Piaget's theory, the struggle for equilibrium) is an expression of "need" both as individual desire for fulfillment and as collective (linguistic) deferral of fulfillment.

The necessity of the bar for Lacan is not unlike the necessity of some conception of the emergence of man from Nature into Culture in Lévi-Strauss's philosophy, the positing of an originary moment that nevertheless, as Lévi-Strauss realizes and Derrida emphasizes, must also be scandalously violated. The bar is a bar between Nature and Culture, between conscious and unconscious, between individual experience and collective signifying structures only because we "need" it as a presupposition for its own denial. The bar for Lacan is seen as repression in two interdependent ways. The first is "metonymic," a form of Freudian displacement, in which the movement from signifier to signifier "hides" the location of the unconscious desire and thereby situates the bar of repression. The metonymic movement that will not allow the emergence of the repressed desire into the consciousness nevertheless expresses that desire through the
movement from signifier to signifier as a form of voracious consumption, a repression of a fundamental psychic need seeking fulfillment, which in turn is both promised and deferred by the diacritical nature of the signifying system itself. It is this "linear" flow that characterizes what I described in part 1 as the metonymic drive of narrative, the seeking for an ending that is perpetually deferred. It is, of course, echoed in Faulkner's hero Ike McCaslin, whose desire to end the flow of his family history conflicts directly with his desire to father his own son, to begin the family once again in innocence. Ike's seeking to pay off the family's debts returns on him in that devastating repetition where his dreams of a world of plenitude, of homogeneity (the union of white and black) are shattered by his own shouts of deferral: "Maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America, he thought. But not now! Not now! He cried, not loud, in a voice of amazement, pity, and outrage: 'You're a nigger!'") (Go Down, Moses, p. 361). Such "debts" are never paid; desire and need turn, through repetition, into exploitation.

Ike's cry, furthermore, brings us to the other function of the bar of repression in Lacan's theory: metaphor. It is metaphor that expresses the very emergence of the process of signification from the unconscious into the conscious. Metaphor, as Jakobson argued, calls attention to itself as metaphor. It is, for Jakobson, the function of the selective activity of language usage that emphasizes both difference and similarity and is, for Lacan, both conscious and unconscious. Ike's cry "in a voice of amazement, pity, and outrage" marks the violence of such a "crossing of the bar" in Lacan's theory, but rather than the simple expression of repressed racial hatred, Ike's cry, "'You're a nigger,'" is metaphoric, signaling the repression of an unvoiced signifier even as the voiced signifier, "'nigger,'" forces us to see that repressed signifier as a signified, as, very simplistically stated, "personal."

What is repressed, a most typical Faulknerian theme, is the entire history of the McCaslin family so tangled in the scandal of incest and here manifest again for Ike in the child of the white Roth Edmonds and the unnamed yet "related" black woman. Ike's cry is at once a condensation of this history into the metaphor of racial "otherness" and a division that shatters his dream of fulfillment; it is a metaphor that allows us to see the metonymic flow of eternal deferral, a metaphor the "presence" of which
reveals the "absence" that makes its showing forth possible. In this, metaphor serves a profound function, perhaps an essential one. It at once affirms the necessity of the bar in order that it be violated; it speaks in the momentariness of its articulation to experience that mutuality of presuppositions that makes every metaphor both the force that shows the structure of the signifying system and an assertion of itself over against that system.

To some extent, my view of the bar as necessary explains Derrida's distrust of the idea of "arbitrariness"; Lacan's shift away from Saussure is justifiable in terms of Derrida's argument against those dualisms between Nature and Culture, experience and signifying structure, speech and writing that almost always eventuate in the metaphysical elevation of the former over the latter, the treating of Culture, structure, writing as "fallen" or "deadening degenerations" of Nature, experience, speech. But Derrida's powerful argument in his Of Grammatology, taken within its own terms, must not be seen as simply inverting this traditional metaphysics; Derrida does not simply privilege writing over speech. In his analysis of Rousseau he arrives at a position of mutual presuppositions. The bar is necessary as that which "shows" itself, in its transgressions, as repression, as that primal Faulknerian repression/transgression of the taboo of "incest."

Even that which we say, name, describe as the prohibition of incest does not escape play. There is a point in the system where the signifier can no longer be replaced by its signified, so that in consequence no signifier can be so replaced, purely and simply. For the point of nonreplacement is also the point of orientation for the entire system of signification, the point where the fundamental signified is promised as the terminal-point of all references and conceals itself as that which would destroy at one blow the entire system of signs. It is at once spoken and forbidden by all signs. Language is neither prohibition nor transgression, it couples the two endlessly. That point does not exist, it is always elusive or, what comes to the same thing, always already inscribed in what it ought to escape or ought to have escaped, according to our indestructible and mortal desire.

For Ike McCaslin the promised but unarticulated signified which must be repressed only to violently erupt is that tangled
experiential realm of incest and miscegenation, but this opening is culturally and personally destructive.

We must not, of course, privilege any sign, even one so profoundly descriptive as “incest,” for the signifier incest, as we have seen in the discussion of Go Down, Moses, is merely metaphoric, an expression of the activity of language engaged with experience. It is a term that may well have only the function of a “rhetorical” strategy, divided from the world of things even as it reaches toward that world and teaches us the use of things. Thus even as metaphor (desiring) presupposes metonymy (consumption) it disrupts it (it does not replace it) in order to show it. Émile Benveniste, describing the function of the sentence as a fundamental unit of language usage, puts emphasis on the active force of “showing.” “C'est dans le discours, actualisé en phrases, que la langue se forme et se configure.”

Perhaps this same idea has been more expressively and inclusively put by Kenneth Burke. Literature, like proverbs, Burke suggests, might well be seen as “strategies for dealing with situations. Insofar as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them. Another name for strategies might be attitudes. One tries to change the rules of the game until they fit his own necessities.”

Changing the rules of the game, as I have argued, is what langage as inclusive system, as deferred fulfillment, and as the potentiality of all games makes possible. It is the function of the game to “fit” necessities, to “show” itself in strategies or in “attitudes” toward experience and specific occasions. These rule changes describe the limits of history.

Just as there is no one logic, for Piaget, that is adequate to all experience, so too there is no one system (game) that remains adequate for all men at all times. We have, therefore, a history comprised not of neat homogeneous evolution, of universal sameness, but a series of emergences that form the cultural, cognitive, and linguistic contexts for those individual members who in their everyday activities continue to ratify their operational, explanatory powers. On its abstract level history is not unlike that “series of series” described by Foucault, the emergence of cognitive systems at certain places and times that draw an ordered set of propositions into the limits of
But a countering extension of Piaget's theory allows us to remain mindful of the ever-present individual within the collectivity. Beyond the level of "simple abstraction" is an admittedly more mysterious form of prelogical cognition that tends to fragment experience into Cassirer's "momentary gods." Herein we confront the essence of what Derrida calls "freeplay," for it is this movement counter to mere stereotypical collectivity, yet, in acculturated man, always within collectivity, that threatens to recenter any static, culturally ratified system. Derrida's claim that there are no universal a priori centers is correct; man's history is a constant series of overlapping systems each holding to its elusive hegemony for its space and time. But this is not far removed from Piaget's idea of man's constant struggle toward equilibrium, a basic human condition that resists on the one hand a lapse into primitive apocalypticism (the sin of Ike McCaslin) and on the other hand the loss of individual being through absorption into the tyrannous collectivity of stereotype (the fate of Roth Edmonds).

The relation of language and thought that gives us our world makes language itself a model of human culture. The very structure of language contains within it the limits of a temporal, collective, and static system (though not a universal system as "sameness") and the possibility of an individualistic and dynamic freedom. The tension between the two makes possible a revitalized concept of history. This extensive characteristic is manifest in the concept of "style" (which will occupy us in the next part) through the metonymic and metaphoric functions of language. Thus we might argue that language is composed of both poetry and prose, although apparently there is no absolute separation between them. The old New Critical radical organicism, itself a metaphor, fails to fully acknowledge this relationship and, as a result, fails to define the full power of language as both system and individual utterance. To some extent, the old form/content dichotomy also must be refocused, for the relation of language and thought forces us to see the relation of form to content in terms of a broader spectrum of possibilities. Again, at the extremes (where distinctions are clearer but not absolute) metonymy must be seen as a process of structuring content in terms of linear, logical sequences;
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metaphor structures content in terms of immediate, spatial, symbolic identities. The content of each is functionally different because of the cognitive formalizations called into activity; that is, the content of each impinges upon our minds as content only because it is structured as it is. There is, effectively, no way to separate the two.

Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* once more serves us as an instructive example. If history as "collectivity" shows itself only through individual acts of consciousness, "intentions"; if, as I have argued through Derrida, the inner and outer worlds interpenetrate and mirror one another; then each individual is at once the totality and the possibility of history. Ike McCaslin's fate is the result of an internalization of the more romantic ideal of inner/outer confrontation; this internalization is, I believe, what Lionel Trilling meant by the "opposing self." Ike's fear of the ledgers (what Derrida would call his "phonocentric" fear of writing) drives him to defy his own history by constantly seeking immediate experience, by reaching for an ever-receding Nature. Faulkner's story is a powerful and devastating vision of modern life, particularly of the American dream. The death of the frontier, the exploitative violence that European man wrought on the new world, the collapse of the hope for rebirth into innocence, all are themes of *Go Down, Moses*. The narrative of Isaac McCaslin tells the "real" story of the death of Natty Bumpo, the end of the dream of natural plenitude; only Faulkner will not allow Ike to die. He lives as the constant echo of our American heritage, giving the lie to the dream of innocence. The American myth is vitiated by language because the innocence of experience is corrupted by the "commonness" of utterance; the delusion of bountifulness is exploded by the twin images of scarcity and desire.

It is "Pantaloon in Black" that draws into focus the complexity of Faulkner's novel and the philosophy of language that the novel shows. We have seen to what extent the story pits its hero Rider against the nameless sheriff, and how in this confrontation are juxtaposed the idea of "individuality" and the idea of "stereotype." Rider's continual seeking for some relief from his personal sense of loss drives him into stereotype. His questioning violates his individuality; his self-doubt, fear, and hallucinations inevitably force the outer world, the "others," to encroach upon
the sanctity of his inner being. We are confronted again by Freud’s paradox of the interplay of life and death instincts, for Rider is never so alive as in his headlong plunge toward death. More significantly, Rider is never more individual, never more the “named” person, than when he confronts the white world, forcing the sheriff to un-name him as an-other, as “Boy” or “nigger” (to echo Ike McCaslin’s epithet from a different but related context). The sheriff’s instinctive retreat into stereotype shows the inadequacy of that stereotype to deal with experience. “Pantaloon in Black” plays itself out on a stage of very complicated interactions, revealing the unlocatable point of intersection between parole and langage; between individual experience and the myth of the human condition. But these relationships are askew, turning back upon themselves as each mirrors or reflects the others, spiraling inside/outside and outside/inside like the twisting of DNA chains. I offer the following diagram as a poor two-dimensional representation.

One must see this diagram as an illusion of perspective, for the figure is “actually” twisting on itself so that parole and langage are in some way on the same level as will then be also myth and experience. There are, therefore, no levels, and the pivotal point of crossing is an imaginative point where inner becomes outer. What matters is the idea of a point where langue and horizon appear to intersect. It is here that the critic situates himself, observing that “nigger,” as the displaced fragment of a differential system, as the mere possibility of distinction, as
"otherness," flows through the cultural horizon of the sheriff where it signifies "nonwhite" to force its way into the particularity, individuality, of the realm of parole and do battle with the proper name "Rider." But this flow is, as the arrows indicate, reversible, just as is the flow along the horizon axis. Moreover, each axis apparently deflects into the other, for Rider's personal experience as "named" individual mirrors the impersonal myth of the human as primordial lack, as desire for the always deferred fulfillment of the Word made flesh. There are, therefore, no clear limits to a cultural horizon and the langue that expresses that horizon—and no points of contact except those of cultural ratification; they are merely revealed, as langage and myth show themselves in parole and experience.

The cultural functioning of langue, as opposed to the hidden logic of langage, is always on the edge of appearing as fixed and delimited. But langue fluctuates between the limits of national character and local color, and, therefore, is a ghostly cultural system, not unlike a cultural code. If langage tends toward the wholly arbitrary, langue tends toward the highly motivated—at its most stultifying, toward the stereotypical. Langage is capable of many langue, sometimes overlapping or in conflict. We might borrow from information theory a definition of this idea of langage as a "situation of maximum information," as the ideal of perfect freedom of choice poised to generate specific messages. The problem is, of course, that this maximum or ideal state is essentially nonfunctional. Umberto Eco argues that we produce meaningful communication in part by delimiting choices, by designing (culturally) subsystems within the maximum state of perfect freedom. "A message selected from a very large number of symbols (among which an astronomical number of combinations may be possible) would consequently be very informative, but would be impossible to transmit because it would require too many binary choices." Represented by the formula \( I = N \log_2 h \), where \( I \) is information, \( N \) is the number of possible choices, and \( h \) is the number of symbols available, Eco states that "in order to make it possible to form and transmit messages, one must reduce the values of \( N \) and \( h \)."

Such a reduction is essentially a limit placed on the expressive power of the system, and for all practical purposes it is a limit placed on the experiential field to be encoded (a limit imposed by
the design of the subsystem). The experiential field is not part of the semiotic subsystem, but limits placed on the semiotic subsystem tend to censor or repress the field of experience by limiting the range of what may be truthfully articulated. Thus the experiential field remains in fact unlimited, and as such is always an anarchical threat to any delimited system (langue). Referentiality, as Eco describes it, is a necessary condition for the design of any semiotic system because the semiotic system is constructed to control the flow of information from the experiential field, and this is so even if referentiality is not a part of the system's "semiotic functioning." We have, then, here come full circle to repeat the Platonic and Wittgensteinian paradox that language can produce meaningful statements about states of affairs in the world regardless of the empirical truth or falsity of those statements. It is always possible to subdivide, to specify an experience below the range of a semiotic system's permissible functioning; to do so is to redesign the system; to do so reveals the desire to break through the culturally sanctioned limits of meaningfulness by allowing the infinite potentiality of langage to intrude upon the cultural historical functioning of langue. This desire, a response to the discovery of absence, the discovery of something missing in all subsystems, also can be designated as "invention" (the intention to produce change, creativity as revitalization). Invention is largely a matter of mapping from experiential stimuli to perception to expression; radical invention is a new way of seeing the world, a revolutionary articulation to experience that is prelude to "new semiotic conventions."

The literary critic must be ever-mindful of these complex distinctions and interrelations as he engages in the interpretation of an individual literary work. But before I move on toward more specific discussions of literary hermeneutics, it will be helpful to revise once more the ten preliminary observations about language made earlier in this part.

1. Langage, as logische Raum or myth, comprehends the systematic interpenetration of langue and parole (cultural horizon and personal experience). Langage gives us our world, the "how" it is.
2. *Langage* shows itself as *langue* only through intentional acts, through *parole*, through "articulation to experience." *Langage* (myth) comprehends richness of meaning as both a surplus of empty signifying power and a surplus of immediate experience.

3. These are surpluses of different orders: (1) that of a signifier showing itself in metonymy as arrangements of states of affairs, as deferral of completeness, as narrative flow; (2) that of immediate experience showing itself in metaphor as intuition of the particularity of things, as the inexpressible desire for (hence, absence of) completeness, as momentary and lyrical arrest. Neither metonymy nor metaphor exhausts the other. We can say either: (1) "metonymy cannot replace one metaphor with another without loss" or (2) "metaphor cannot identify one metonym with another metonym with out loss."

4. *Langage* functions as a dynamic medium of expression, as *energia* not *ergon*, but in poetry and prose there is a functional distinction between the metaphorical and metonymic uses.

5. As *energia*, *langage* gives meaning to our experiences. *Energia* is the gift of *langage* to all humankind. It may be corrupted into repressive *langue*, but it may never be wholly appropriated to the ends of personal authority. In literature the metaphor/metonym tensions reproduce the drive toward the equilibration of defamiliarization and demystification. Metaphor disrupts the metonymic flow of prose by raising out of the flux of familiar experience the strange or typical. This is the form of narrative history as a discontinuous series of emergences. Prose is metonymic, the logical or causal arrangement of perceived reality into patterns, the subsuming of the part under a general category of the whole (Knowledge). This is the mode of systematic philosophy.

6. As *energia*, *langage* acts on the attention of the listener or reader, involving him in an "act of interpretation," and through its own dynamic structure as text it structures his perceptions. This is not a passive activity, for the particular
instance always opens out onto historical systems; the immediate experience opens outward to the encroachment of the mythical.

7. Language, consequently, is a way of knowing; the study of langage belongs to the discipline of epistemology.

8. Below the logical structure of metonymic language, into the realm of metaphor, metonymic language itself cannot easily venture. This is the basis for the traditional struggle between literary criticism and poetry, philosophy and art. This struggle is, however, necessary; it shows the energy of man’s human condition.

9. There are, therefore, limits beyond which metonymic prose and metaphoric poetry cannot go, but that need not be seen as a severe restriction on the creative freeplay of langage as individual articulation or dynamic system.

10. Langage as system can neither describe its own origins nor its hidden structure. These, however, show themselves through usage, through the intentionality of articulation to experience (parole) and through the repressive, delimiting possibilities of culturally ratified subsystems (langue). It is necessary to say that langage does not exist; it is itself necessary.