Modern LITERARY THEORY

EDITED BY

PHILIP RICE & PATRICIA WAUGH

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A READER

Fourth Edition

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Philip Rice
and
Patricia Waugh

A member of the Hodder Headline Group
LONDON

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Contents

Preface

The first edition of this anthology appeared in 1989 at the end of a decade when literary theory became established as an important if not yet essential ingredient in the discipline of literary studies. Since then, of course, literary theory has shaped the discipline in far-reaching and unforeseen ways. The success of the first three editions of the anthology has fulfilled original hopes that it would form the basis for a pedagogic introduction to and clarification of the immense volume and diversity of theoretical writing that, over the past thirty years, has so radically questioned our understanding and construction of literature as an object of critical study and of criticism as an organon of methods and reading practices. When Philip Rice and I wrote the first Preface together (in 1988), it was evident that the rapid growth of literary theory since the mid-1960s, and the mass of work devoted to the theoretical discussion of literature, had already transformed literary studies. Critics and philosophers have always theorized about literature and literary criticism, but the sudden erosion of boundaries across philosophy, political theory, psychoanalysis, social theory and literary criticism seemed to represent something of a 'paradigm shift' in literary studies.

Like it or not, a terrible beauty had been born. The very foundations of the Anglo–American tradition had been irrevocably challenged and displaced. Since then, all foundations of Western thought and knowledge have increasingly been held up to critical gaze. The concept of criticism born with modern rational scepticism was always poised to turn introspective, refocusing upon its own discursive constructions. Yet literary theory hardly stands alone as a single instance of such tendencies. What is now often referred to as 'theory' has been part of a more pervasive intellectual movement which has seen modern doubt turn on the instruments of its own articulation and analysis, so that all objects of knowledge seem to be more artefacts constructed through and within language (what Richard Rorty has called 'texts') than they seem to be entities (what he calls 'lumps') on which language reflects. In literary criticism, the notion of the text as an 'object' to be analysed methodically by the empiricist critic has given way to a situation where distinctions between truth and rhetoric, literature and philosophy, history and text, have become increasingly obscure. English has become the site of a new multidisciplinarity which has challenged the methods and assumptions of an earlier literary tradition and those of philosophy and science too.

The crisis in epistemology and controversies about the constitution of literature have brought with them a crisis in value. The postmodern critique of 'grand narratives' has spread its nets over the controversial issue of the canon and the idea that aesthetic value is essential and universal and self-evidentially reflected in a broadly stable tradition of great works of art. Epistemological relativisms have seemed to reinforce cultural relativisms. Recent developments in feminist criticism, in the various new historicisms and in postcolonial criticism have further 'exploded' English and decentred the previously dominant moral–aesthetic and humanist traditions. There has been an increasingly explicit retreat from totalities since the first publication of this book: most explicitly perhaps in the postmodern resistance to universalization, but also in the methods of the new historicists and in postcolonial criticism. Critical practice at the beginning of the new millennium has shifted towards an eclectic mix of methods and positions which tends to avoid any single paradigm or the search for any one systematically explanatory model. Many of the newest schools of criticism, like the New Historicism, for example, are more practices of reading which have assimilated earlier theoretical paradigms than they are 'theories of literature', though they usually aim to be explicit about their theoretical origins and ideological assumptions.

In compiling this fourth edition, the aim has been to retain and to add to those essays and documents which now seem to have a canonical place in the history of modern literary theory; to include for the first time some seminal essays by earlier writers such as Marx and Freud which have helped to shape many of the underlying assumptions of later theorists; and to represent more recent critical material which reflects some of the issues emerging from the retreat from theoretical holism. A new third Part has been added, on critical debates and issues which cut across particular 'schools' and which have engaged critics of many and various intellectual persuasions. Earlier sections have been revised and expanded and new and emerging trends such as the relations between literature and science, the question of ethics and criticism, the issue of the epistemological status of literature and criticism, are now represented. The task of selection has been harder than ever for the field of literary theory is constantly shifting its boundaries and yet, in the last decade, it has become possible to stand back a little and to distinguish clear patterns of influence, intellectual trajectories and hybrid affiliations. The aim of this book is a modest one, however: to introduce a broad and diverse selection of works which might be seen as intellectual 'keys' to the theory 'revolution'; to draw out some of the implications of the theoretical positions represented and to begin to test and sort out their various legacies; and, in particular, to offer an anthology through which the reader might obtain a foothold on the diverse practices which go to make up modern literary theory and become acquainted with some of the principal approaches and theorists.

The book is divided into three Parts. The first two Parts introduce the major movements in modern literary theory and are subdivided into sections,

each one representing a major approach or position or set of preoccupations. The aim was to include both purely theoretical statements but also, and where appropriate, contributions which draw on particular theoretical positions to offer interpretations or readings of individual literary texts. Editorial commentary has been kept brief in order to devote as much space as possible to the source material, but commentary is required for the field only partially organizes itself, and then as much on the basis of history as nature. If contemporary theory teaches us anything, it is that the orders of the world are not natural but 'constructed'. Commentary is offered more as an attempt to rationalize the organization of the material rather than to provide a comprehensive intellectual history. It is hoped that the experience of reading the excerpts and essays collected in this book will stimulate further interest and help to clarify the major theoretical positions and their relations to each other. But beyond that (and in the best spirit of contemporary theory) it is hoped that it will encourage readers to contest and challenge the very structures of knowledge and understanding used in its compilation.

The first edition of this reader was initially conceived by myself and Philip Rice in the late eighties and this fourth edition constitutes the most substantial revision and updating since publication of that first edition. Sadly, Philip Rice died shortly after the publication of the second edition. This is the first time that the reader has been extensively revised and I have been very conscious of having to rely on my own judgements about the significant developments in theory and criticism in the last ten years. I very much hope though that Phil would have given his approval. His spirit still shines through the book and as I rewrote and added and subtracted and re-edited I was always conscious of the echoes of all those long conversations we had back in the eighties when the project was first conceived.

1 General Introduction

As far back as the mid-1950s, and at the height of the revival of positivist scholarship in the Anglo–American tradition, René Wellek and Austin Warren put forward a plea in their seminal text *The Theory of Literature*, for a properly developed theory of literature: 'literary theory, an organon of methods, is the great need of literary scholarship today'.[1] The rapid growth, indeed explosion, of 'theory' since the mid-1960s could hardly have been foreseen in 1956, and since then the mass of work devoted to theoretical discourse about and around literature has produced a radical transformation of the discipline. But is literary theory simply an 'organon of methods', a way of 'doing criticism'? Can there be a pure 'method' which does not imply a substantive account of the nature of literariness, of the function of criticism, and of the very constitution of culture? In its inevitably metacritical relation to the act of criticism itself, theory is more than a method or way of reading: theories carry world-views and 'theory' lays down a challenge to existing or normative views of culture, human nature and existence.

What has most characterized contemporary literary theory has not only been its methodological heterogeneity, but also its fundamental attack on the grounding assumptions of the previously dominant humanistic tradition of Anglo–American criticism and letters. Literary theory, now often simply 'theory', has developed as a curiously hybrid and unstable mix of aesthetics, intellectual history, linguistics, social and political philosophy, anthropology and, most recently, science studies. 'Theory', in this sense, is more than simply speculation or hypothesis, is often analytic, and yet is not subject to the same degree of verificationist or falsificationist rigour, of testing and inference and formulation of laws, which is assumed in the development of any scientific theory. At worst, therefore, 'theory' can degenerate into substantive dogma or an inflexible and *a priori*, pseudo-scientific framework whose interpretative results become as predictable as a well-confirmed scientific explanation: that all texts are 'about' their own condition of indeterminacy, for example, or all texts contain their own subversive strategies, or all texts can be explained as the determined outcome of economic relations–just as water always boils at 100 degrees Centigrade. This is of course to caricature 'theory' in terms which are now the commonplace judgements of its enemies and detractors. Alternatively, and at best, theory is tentative and provisional, self-reflexively critical and cautious, functioning as a thoroughgoing challenge to unexamined common-sense assumptions, those invisible dogmas we inherit from cultural tradition and which close

down other possible questions about the world, other ways of seeing and understanding.

Literary studies has always been a pluralistic discipline. The various practices that constituted the Anglo–American tradition, such as literary history, literary biography, moral–aesthetic criticism, and even the New Criticism managed, during the middle decades of the twentieth century, to co-exist in a state of fairly 'stable disequilibrium' based on a broad consensus about the relationship between texts and authors, the nature of the literary work and the purpose of criticism. Critics might argue about the inclusion of this or that piece of writing in the canon of literature or the most effective method of excavating or constituting the meaning or significance of the text, but the notion that a category called 'literature' might have no essential being was never seriously accepted by more than a handful of renegades; nor was the assumption seriously questioned that the author was the expressivist source of the text (whether or not 'his' intentions could be recovered); nor that the act of criticism should serve any other than an explicatory function, as a handmaiden to the text. By the 1980s, of course, each of these assumptions had been thoroughly challenged and re-evaluated from a variety of theoretical positions. The terms of their challenge and repudiation would become the critical commonplaces of the 1990s.

Contemporary critical theory has now established itself comfortably in the everyday life of literary studies, refusing to accept its earlier marginalization by critics such as F.R. Leavis as a peripheral concern more akin to philosophy and inevitably destructive of the plenitudinous and unmediated realization of the meaning and value of the literary text. Contemporary literary theorists now regard their practices as existing at the heart of the critical enterprise, insisting that there is no critical act that can transcend theory. As numerous theorists have pointed out, the traditional forms of criticism through which literature is and has been studied are not 'theory-free' responses to great literary works, nor are they pure scholastic endeavours. All forms of criticism are founded upon a theory, or an admixture of theories, whether they consciously acknowledge that or not. Theory suggests that what are often taken to be 'natural' and 'commonsensical' ways of studying literature actually rest upon a set of theoretical injunctions which have been naturalized to the point at which they no longer have to justify their own practices. And once literary criticism is in dispute or disagreement about the nature, function and constitution of literary criticism itself, then inevitably questions are opened up about the construction of aesthetic values, about the professional and institutional role of criticism and about the kinds of cultural and ideological pressures on canon formation as well as on literary interpretation.

It is surely no coincidence that such metacritical reflections begin to emerge within literary studies at precisely the same moment, the early 1960s, which saw the publication of Thomas Kuhn's immensely influential *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).[2] Kuhn sought to demonstrate how all knowledge is produced within communities which implicitly provide the boundaries and the vocabularies within which investigation may take

place and also condition the kinds of questions which might be posed. Kuhn referred to such frameworks as 'paradigms'. Every so often, there occurs some revolution in knowledge where an entire paradigm shifts and involves a radical reconstitution of 'facts' within the terms of the new paradigm. According to Kuhn, therefore, even within the scientific institution, facts exist within models agreed by the community and change occurs when the pressure from anomalies in observation and theorizing become so insistent that eventually it forces a revolutionary shift in the entire paradigm: Kuhn's axiomatic example is the shift from Newtonian to post-Einsteinian physics. Kuhn introduced the concept of incommensurability as an account of the way in which, as an entire world-view has shifted, scientific vocabularies regarded as exact and universal, terms such as 'mass', for example, come to carry radically different, indeed incommensurable, meanings within different paradigms. In effect, Kuhn asserted that scientific paradigms constitute irreconcilable 'language games' and non-reconcilable world-views. Furthermore, he argued that there can be no theory-free observation, for there are always underlying and ultimately inarticulatable belief systems and presuppositions which determine the interpretation of the object under observation. Moreover, scientists too inevitably express their 'discoveries' through metaphors and models which help to constitute the object under investigation. Finally, if no theory can be tested against theory-independent facts, then it would seem to be impossible to offer final proof that theoretical constructions are actually in contact with what they set out to explain. It becomes hard to say in what sense one theory is more true than another. Ultimately what is implied here is the notion that even science cannot arrive at knowledge of a mind-independent reality, that its methods are relative to shifting and heterogeneous theoretical frameworks and that the 'objects' of scientific knowledge are thus as intentional as those of the literary text.

If even scientific knowledge began to be subjected to these kinds of metacritical questions, then it is hardly surprising that precisely the same kinds of issues began to be raised in the 1960s about the relationship between the literary text as an 'object' of knowledge in the modern academy and literary criticism as its investigative discourse. One of the tensions which surfaced was between the inherited assumptions of humanist criticism (that literature exemplified in performative mode an experience of concrete particularity, of embodiment and sensuous form, increasingly denied and marginalized by a capitalist and utilitarian culture) and the demands of the professionalized academy where literary criticism is required to conform to a model of systematized knowledge largely derived from the scientific disciplines. Just at the moment when criticism begins to reflect upon such tensions, however (in the various retrospective accounts of the contradictions of the New Criticism with its rigorous and 'scientific' epistemological methods and its ontology of the poem as an organic and irreducible whole), the model of scientific knowledge itself began to be subjected to various kinds of scepticism and relativization. The moment was surely ripe for that explosion

within the literary academy of what has come to be referred to (in Kuhnian terms) as the 'theory revolution' and 'English in crisis', the moment when most of the prevailing assumptions about the nature and function of criticism as a means of excavatory interpretation began to be questioned, to be laid bare, made strange, subjected to various kinds of radical critique.

The way that theory subsequently became inflected into the everyday workings of the literary discipline has often proved a source of passionate debate. Responses have taken many forms, from irate dismissal to enthusiastic development. If theory seems to some critics to be deeply implicated in the everyday pursuits and routines of the discipline, to others it seems not to be addressing the object of study directly at all and to be operating in the realms of the abstract and the abstruse, divorced from that close reading and intimate study of literary works that has so characterized the history of the discipline since the early years of the New Criticism. Much literary theory is, of course, highly abstract, confusingly appropriated from a bewildering diversity of other disciplines and discourses which defy mastery, and may be of no pragmatic value in terms of an immediate interpretation of a particular text. Is it worth the sheer effort often involved in trying to understand its often arcane and convoluted grammars and vocabularies? Well, of course, the first thing that theory has taught us is that although literary criticism is largely founded on the assumption of an ideal and immediate relation with its objects of study, this assumption itself is historically determined and not inevitable or natural. Much of the focus of attack on earlier critical orthodoxies has been the undermining of that sense that there is a 'natural' way to study literature. And if literary theory sometimes appears to caricature the tradition it attacks, and to make it seem more singular than it is, that is because the attack has been targeted not so much at the manifest plurality of critical practices which constitute the tradition but at its underlying assumptions which criticism has often obdurately refused to acknowledge as anything other than the 'natural' and 'sensible' way of criticism.

Literary criticism has always been a hybrid mix of practices (literary history, literary biography, myth criticism, psychoanalysis, moral–aesthetic criticism) despite the New Critical attempt to place 'close reading' at its core. Before the advent of 'theory', however, this plurality appeared to be grounded in a broadly consensual conception of relations between authors, texts and readers and upon the aesthetic qualities of the text which constituted its 'literariness' (structural and formal equivalences, fictionality, organic relatedness between parts and whole). Each mode of critical practice tended to foreground a particular feature of the various formal and existential relations constituting the literary experience. Psychoanalytic and biographical approaches emphasized the expressiveness of the author; historical and sociological approaches, the contexts of production and reception; New Criticism, the text-in-itself; moral–aesthetic criticism, the text as a reflection on life or on the question of how one ought to live. However, all accept a broadly mimetic view of the text where literature, in various ways, reflects

upon and delivers up truths about life and the human condition (and this is true even when, as with New Criticism, the mimetic view appears to be explicitly repudiated in the name of formal or poetic 'autonomy'). The task of literature is to render life, experience and emotion in a potent way; that of criticism is to reveal the true meaning and value of such a rendition – a rendition at once contained within the literary work and yet requiring the exposition of the critic to reveal and unlock its essential being.

The mimetic perspective is dependent in the end upon a view of language which literary theory would thoroughly challenge: the idea of language as a transparent medium, a medium through which reality can be transcribed and re-presented in aesthetic form, and of reality as self-contained and coherent, always transcending its formulation in words. This is probably the single most important assumption which has been challenged from numerous perspectives within theory. Indeed, the repudiation of the mimeticist premise is the founding move of most contemporary literary theories: deconstructionist, postmodernist, feminist, postcolonialist, New Historicist. It is a view of language related to what Catherine Belsey in 1980 characterized as an 'empiricist–realist' epistemology and which carries with it significant assumptions about the nature of the world and human functioning within it:

> Common sense urges that 'man' is the origin and source of meaning, of action and of history (humanism). Our concepts and our knowledge are held to be the product of experience (empiricism), and this experience is preceded and interpreted by the mind, reason or thought, the property of a transcendent human nature whose essence is the attribute of each individual (idealism).[3]

In this view, the grounding assumptions of humanism presuppose that experience is prior to its expression in language and conceive of language as a mere tool used to express the way that experience is felt and interpreted by the unique individual. Literature thus becomes the expression of especially gifted individuals who are able to capture the elusively universal and timeless truths of the human condition through the sensitive and sensuous use of language. Contemporary literary theory can be seen to begin as an interrogation of this founding assumption, though the critique and challenge has taken a number of forms and orientations.

Probably the key figure in the linguistically sceptical turn which has been at the core of literary theory during the past thirty years, is the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Language, according to Saussure, is not simply a tool devised for the re-presentation of a pre-existing reality. It is rather, a constitutive part of reality, deeply implicated in the way the world is constructed as meaningful. Language is never 'transparent' in the way that correspondence or mimetic theories require it to be. Saussure's ideas about language give rise to an entirely different epistemology which has informed structuralist and post-structuralist theory and, more recently, practices such as the New Historicism or performative theories of gender and sexuality. The implications of this reading of Saussure in the 1970s have been far-reaching and have fed into the political and cultural preoccupa-

tions of theory in the last decade or so. If language is constitutive and not simply descriptive, then language is fundamentally unstable, meaning endlessly deferred, and final truths always some form of delusion or ideological power move. T.S. Eliot's observation in the *Four Quartets*, that words, slip, slide and perish, is the informing principle not only of post-structuralism, but of most contemporary political criticism. The capacity to name and thus fix and define the real confers power and suggests that discourse and ideology are intimately bound up with each other. For the contemporary theorist, literature is fascinating in its negotiation of distance from and insight into the relations between ideology, rhetoric and relations of power, but also in the way in which it is unavoidably blind to much of its own ideological complicity.

Part One of this book deals with the attempt to establish a methodological ground for literary studies and with the subsequent and early attempts to break with those founding premises which had been supplied by formalist and structuralist, feminist and Marxist theorizing. Part Two represents the diverse forms taken by literary theory as the implications of post-structuralist challenges to correspondence are assimilated into a variety of cultural and formal perspectives. Part Three presents some long-established but vigorously ongoing debates and controversies within literary studies by offering contrasting and important essays on topics such as ethics and criticism, the literary canon and aesthetic value, criticism and epistemology, and the institutionalization of criticism. Each of the critics gathered together in this section draw substantially on theoretical assumptions developed by writers and critics represented in Parts One and Two. In its most recent manifestations, of course, theory as coherent 'grand narrative' has begun to break down. Instead, a hybrid and shifting mix of models and insights from earlier, often more 'totalizing', theoretical systems are brought together in a new practice of textual criticism or analysis of cultural meaning. In New Historicism and postmodernism or in queer theory or postcolonialism, there is a noticeable shift away from the pleasures of pure and coherent systematizing to an engagement with contingency, plurality, fragmentation and contestation. There is a loss of clear distinction between text and context, depth and surface. Postcolonialism, for example, has drawn extensively on the post-structuralist critique of the centred Subject, on the Gramscian understanding of the concept of hegemony, on Lacanian psychoanalysis, narrative theory, Foucauldian analyses of power and knowledge, feminist critiques of difference and postmodernist challenges to the discourses of the Enlightenment. There is a new emphasis on situatedness, on the provisional and perspectival nature of knowledge, on the problematic relations between the desire for a 'critical' knowledge and the tendency towards an ironist self-subversion of all assumed positions or grounds. The transcendental theoretical 'view from nowhere' has largely disappeared as the object of critical enquiry is seen increasingly to be a discursive construction arising out of specific cultural and institutional practices. The field of literary studies is currently a heterogeneous configuration of competing practices and epistemologies

ranging from traditional humanist approaches (and their more formal equivalents such as 'close reading' or their revamped manifestation in, for example, new forms of 'moral criticism') to the newest forms of feminist, postcolonialist and postmodernist critique, and with an ongoing core of scholarly endeavour which has nevertheless been shaped and coloured by the theoretical preoccupations of the last three decades. Indeed, individual critics themselves often occupy multiple, varying and sometimes contradictory positions that go a long way beyond simple disagreements over the interpretation of particular texts. As Terry Eagleton has remarked, 'Literary theory is less an object of intellectual enquiry in its own right than a particular perspective in which to view the history of our time.'[4]

Notes

1 Austin Warren and René Wellek, *Theory of Literature* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956), p. 19.
2 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, 1970).
3 Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London, Methuen, 1980), p. 7.
4 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1990), pp. 194–5.

Part 1

Origins and Foundations

Section 1

Seminal Texts

The essays collected in this section, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Sigmund Freud, Ferdinand de Saussure and Simone de Beauvoir, may be regarded as foundational discourses for much of the literary theory which emerged in the early 1970s. Collectively, the Marxist analysis of ideology, the Freudian concept of the unconscious, Saussure's notion of the signifier, and de Beauvoir's analysis of the constructedness of gender, have been conceptual planks upon which the modern edifice of literary theory has been built. Though the concepts of ideology, the unconscious, the signifier, and the sex-gender distinction, are often simply assumed as givens in contemporary theory, it is important to recognize their historical emergence and to appreciate the intellectual significance of the writers represented in this introductory section.

Marx and Engels published *The German Ideology* in 1846, shortly before the appearance of *The Communist Manifesto* and some twenty years before the publication of *Capital*. The central thesis of *The German Ideology* for later literary theory is the idea that culture is materially produced. The work constituted a preliminary statement of their later and more developed theory of historical materialism: that consciousness and its products are determined by material conditions. Ideas are not innate or transcendental or universal, but arise out of specific material circumstances. Materialism was not in itself a radically new account of culture or consciousness; nor did Marx and Engels invent the idea that human beings may only realize their full selfhood and freedom through a community. What is new in *The German Ideology*, however, is that a materialist epistemology is developed on a foundation of economic analysis and used to provide the basis for a theory of social relations and of ideology. Relations of production determine social relations which condition the forms of consciousness.

Materialism accounts for events in the world through causal explanation but, again, what is original in Marx and Engels' analysis is their argument that empiricism alone cannot fathom or uncover the true economic relations which determine the forms of culture. These are relations of dominance and inequality which capitalism endeavours to conceal. The epistemological claims of empiricism are thus identified by Marx and Engels as part of the legitimating ideology of capitalism. Marx and Engels believed their work to be 'scientific' but a science grounded in rationalism rather than empirical observation. Their abiding interest in the early work was in the question of why, given that consciousness is historically shaped, there should be so

much concern to deny that historical process. Marx and Engels offer an account of ideology as the attempt to deny the material and historical basis of systems of belief and thought and of their own work as that science which might uncover the true historical relations in the foundation of economics. In their view, the dominant ideology serves to legitimate a particular social formation and to confirm the power of the ruling class by making its provisional and particular economic order seem universal or absolute or written into the nature of things. Under capitalism, the working class sells its labour to an entrepreneurial class and such relations of production which arise out of this economic mode of production shape a culture of competition, alienation, control, reification and anomie: people too become commodities, possessions, objects. Ideology functions to disguise the fundamental economic inequalities which give rise to competitive and possessive individualist societies and to legitimate the social order by presenting human nature as eternally competitive and nature as an unjust and survivalist conflict.

Probably the most famous assertion in *The German Ideology* is the belief that under a communist form of social organization–one which would be grounded in the redistribution of wealth, the abolition of private property and the end of class relations–man could be hunter, fisherman, shepherd and critic, and all in the same day. In other words, man could realize his full potential, emancipate his true qualities, and build a world based on co-operation and not competition. *The German Ideology* has little specifically to say about art and certainly does not offer an explicit 'Marxist aesthetics'. It does, however, criticize liberalism as the legitimating ideology of capitalism with its assertion of a universal human nature, of the autonomy and freedom of the individual, and the rational and unencumbered transcendence of mind. Marx and Engels thus provided a foundation for the later development of a Marxist literary theory which would begin to critique the claims of idealist and liberal humanist aesthetics in very much the same terms: repudiating ideas such as autonomy, pure disinterestedness, aesthetic transcendence. Marxists would address the ways in which art is both implicated in and critically distanced from cultural ideologies, recognizing that art is a powerful political force, capable of organizing what Kant referred to as the 'rabble of the senses' through its capacity to give pleasure and to present ideas in the form of embodied experience. Art can encourage conformism with desired models of social cohesion or it can be seized upon as a site for disruption, subversion and challenge. Marx and Engels' account of ideology would be critiqued, developed, finessed by later theorists, but there is no doubt that it is one of the foundation stones of later modern literary theory.

The second essay in this section is Freud's 'The Dream Work' of 1916 which forms lecture 11 of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Though published some sixteen years later than *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the lecture essentially offers a summary of Freud's seminal work on the relationship between dreams and the unconscious and is a useful short

introduction to his pre-1920 account of the unconscious. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud had not only offered a new mythology of the mind and symbols through which to represent human behaviour, but also, as he suggested more explicitly in 1915, dealt the third blow to man's naïve self-love and hubristic sense of his relation to himself and nature. The first blow was delivered in the Copernican displacement of earth from the centre of the cosmos, and the second in the Darwinian critique of Creationism and the demonstration of man's ineradicable animal nature. Freud pro-claimed that psychological research (which he defended as a science) had now proved that the human ego is not even master in its own house, that each of us carries a stranger within, the unconscious, which is only partially accessible by the conscious mind and over which we have only limited control. Freud's revolutionary thesis in fact dealt a double blow, first, to that Cartesian rationalist tradition which had attempted to ground all epistemology in the certainty of self-knowledge, and, second, to a naïve empiricism whose assumption was that we might extrapolate from surface manifestations and infer the underlying structures and causes of human behaviour. Freud presents a human self tragically divided and, in addressing the question of how one might know the self, he provided a potent symbolism which must stand in for the inadequacies of empiricist and rationalist accounts of the mind. It is hardly surprising that imaginative writers and literary critics would find in Freudian psychoanalysis, first, a seductive account of the human psyche which grounds it in fundamental biological processes and thus challenges the duality of mind and body and, second, an epistemology which, though claiming to be a science, seems closer to aesthetic practice and mythopoeic symbolism.

Psychoanalysis offered both a new account of representation and a new theory of human subjectivity, though Freud modestly declared on his seventieth birthday that he was not the discoverer of the unconscious for that honour must be accorded to artists and imaginative writers before him. In many ways, Freud's writings on art and literature are highly contradictory for, though he saw the artist as far ahead of the scientist in psychic knowledge, he also saw art as an expression of displaced neurotic conflict: a consoling illusion, symptom, socially acceptable phantasy or substitute gratification which compensates us for the inevitable renunciation of desire involved in the necessary accession to the 'reality principle'. More than his explicit writings on the aesthetic, therefore, it is Freud's general writing on the psyche and, in particular, his work on dreams and sexuality which have most appealed to later literary theorists.

Freud's earliest work on hysteria developed his notion of psychoanalysis as a 'talking cure' which might unlock repressed and painful memories and allow negative energies to be cathartically released. It was this work, conducted before the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which led him to formulate the idea of the unconscious. Freud began by positing a dynamic factor in the mind which pushes the original painful material out of consciousness, disguising and displacing it so that the hysteric seems to

resist all efforts at recall. Psychoanalysis then becomes a dialogic and symbolic method of interpretation which works with a 'manifest' narrative (talk, dream, phantasy) in order to uncover its latent and buried source of meaning. Psychoanalysis is about reading gaps in the text as significant omissions; about understanding how the mind disguises painful material; about how the logic of the primary processes, the basic drives and desires, might be understood through suspending the everyday logic of causality and non-contradiction.

Freud developed two basic models of the mind. The earliest, represented in the essay reprinted here, understands the mind as organized into: (1) consciousness which orders the world and is related to the 'reality principle'; (2) the preconscious, which can be recovered and willed into consciousness; and (3) the unconscious, consisting of instinctual representations regulated by the primary processes and repressed material driven out of consciousness. Freud later (1923) revised this model and posited id, ego and superego as he began to explore the mechanisms of cultural control and the manufacture of morality. Both models, however, posit the idea of a 'pleasure principle' arising out of the biological drives as fundamental to the unconscious and requiring regulation as a condition of entry into human culture. The human infant seeks biological gratification but the 'reality principle' insists that the original psychic energy must be redirected, either through sublimation or repression. In repression, a psychical representative—an idea attached to an instinct—is denied entry into the conscious mind because its impact would be too disturbing, too painful, and the idea then becomes fixated as a measure of energy in the unconscious. At those times when the regulative pressure of the ego is weakened—during sleep or stress, for example—then the unconscious may find a pathway into consciousness but always in disguised form. In the lecture reprinted here, Freud offers an account of the ways in which such material is disguised—through condensation, displacement, symbolization and narrative revision—and develops an interpretative framework for unlocking the dream text.

The earliest forms of psychoanalytic criticism tended to focus on the literary text as a manifestation of unconscious drives rather than focusing on conscious authorial strategies or generic or sociocultural textual determinants. In this sense, psychoanalysis became incorporated into a kind of New Critical reading but where the emphasis is on the expressive source of meaning in the latent structures of the mind rather than on the rhetorical manifestations readily observable in the text as purely stylistic relations. Later psychoanalytic criticism would move away from this expressive model (which draws on Freudian methods in an attempt to locate the 'true' meaning of the text) and towards the recognition of linguistic indeterminacy and the sociocultural and not simply biological construction of the unconscious. Like Marx, Freud posits a model of interpretation where a latent and disguised but 'true' structure may be recovered by a special process of reading through the manifest surfaces of culture. Both regard their practices of reading as forms of scientific enquiry and confer on their own discourses

the authority and capacity to stand as metanarratives which can account for the object forms of history and the universal structure of the human mind. Whereas earlier literary criticism largely accepted such claims on their own terms, later appropriations and developments of the ideas of Marx and Freud have subjected them to the kinds of postmodern scepticism turned upon all metanarrative claims. The essays in Part Two of this anthology suggest some of the ways in which this has been achieved.

The work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure has played a crucial and formative role in the recent transformation in literary theory. Saussure's influence rests on a single book which records his seminal theory of language, the *Course in General Linguistics*. This was compiled by students and colleagues, after his death in 1913, from notes taken at lectures he delivered between 1907 and 1911 when he taught at the University of Geneva.

Though not as well known as Marx or Freud, Saussure has been ranked with them in terms of the influence he has had on systems of thought developed in the twentieth century. Like Freud and Marx, Saussure considered the manifest appearance of phenomena to be underpinned and made possible by underlying systems and structures: for Marx, it was the system of economic and social relations; for Freud, the unconscious; for Saussure, the system of language. The most radical implications of their work profoundly disrupt the dominant, humanist conception of the world for they undermine the notion that 'man' is the centre, source and origin of meaning. Saussure's influence on literary theory came to the fore in structuralism and post-structuralism, though his work had significant influence prior to that, notably on the structural linguistics of the Prague Circle and on the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss.

It is worth reviewing the main tenets of Saussurean theory since they form the necessary grounding for much of the theory represented in this book. Saussure argued that the object of study for linguistics is the underlying system of conventions (words and grammar) by virtue of which a sign (word) can 'mean'. Language is a system of signs, the sign being the basic unit of meaning. The sign comprises a signifier and signified, the signifier is the 'word image' (visual or acoustic) and the signified the 'mental concept'. Thus the signifier *tree* has the signified *mental concept of a tree*. It is important to note that Saussure is not referring here to the distinction between a name and a thing but to a distinction between the *word-image* and the *concept*. The signifier and signified, however, are only separable on the analytic level, they are not separable at the level of thought – the word-image cannot be divorced from the mental concept and vice versa.

The first principle of Saussure's theory is that the sign is arbitrary. It is useful to consider this at two levels: first, at the level of the signifier; second, at the level of the signified. At the level of the signifier, the sign is arbitrary because there is no *necessary* connection between the signifier *tree* and the signified *concept of tree*; any configuration of sounds or written shapes could be used to signify *tree* – for instance, *arbre, baum, arbor* or even

fnurd. The relation between the signifier and the signified is a matter of convention; in the English language we conventionally associate the word 'tree' with the concept 'tree'. The arbitrary nature of the sign at this level is fairly easily grasped, but it is the arbitrary nature of the sign at the level of the signified that is more difficult to see and that presents us with the more radical implications of Saussure's theory.

Not only do different languages use different signifiers, they also 'cut up' the phenomenal world differently, articulating it through language-specific concepts—that is, they use different signifieds. The important point to grasp here is that language is not a simple naming process: language does not operate by naming things and concepts that have an independently meaningful existence. Saussure points out that 'if words stood for pre-existing entities they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next, but this is not true'. One of the most commonly referred-to illustrations of this is the colour spectrum. The colours of the spectrum actually form a continuum; so, for instance, that part of the spectrum which runs from blue through to red does not consist of a series of different colours—blue, green, yellow, orange, red—existing independently of each other. The spectrum is, rather, a continuum which our language divides up in a particular way.

Just as there is nothing 'natural' about the way we divide up the colour continuum (indeed, other languages divide it up differently), so there is nothing natural or inevitable about the way we divide up and articulate our world in other ways. Each language cuts up the world differently, constructing different meaningful categories and concepts. It is sometimes difficult to see that our everyday concepts are arbitrary and that language does not simply name pre-existing things. We tend to be so accustomed to the world our language system has produced that it comes to seem natural—the correct and inevitable way to view the world. Yet the logic of Saussure's theory suggests that our world is constructed for us by our language and that 'things' do not have fixed essences or cores of meaning which pre-exist linguistic representation.

Returning to the colour spectrum, we can see that orange is not an independently existing colour, not a point on the spectrum but a range on the continuum: we can also see how the colour orange depends, for its existence, on the other colours around it. We can define 'orange' only by what it is not. There is no essence to the colour, only a differentiation. We know that it is orange because it is not yellow and not red. Orange depends for its meaning on what it is not, i.e. orange is produced by the system of difference we employ in dividing up the spectrum.

For Saussure the whole of our language works in this way. It is a system of difference where any one term has meaning only by virtue of its differential place within that system. If we consider the sign 'food', it could not mean anything without the concept of *not* food. In order to 'cut up' the world, even at this crude level, we need a system of difference, i.e. a basic binary system—food/not food. Language is a far more complex version of this

simple binary system. This led Saussure to emphasize the *system* of language, for without the system the individual elements (the signs) could not be made to mean.

An important distinction follows from this: that between *langue* and *parole*. Langue is the system of language, the system of forms (the rules, codes, conventions), and parole refers to the actual speech acts made possible by the langue. Utterances (paroles) are many and varied and no linguist could hope to grasp them all. What linguists could do was to study what made them all possible—the latent, underlying system or set of conventions. Saussure then adds a further distinction, that between synchronic and diachronic aspects. The synchronic is the structural aspect of language, the system at a particular moment; the diachronic relates to the history of the language—the changes in its forms and conventions over time. Because signs do not have any essential core of meaning they are open to change, however, in order to 'mean' the sign must exist within a system that is complete at any one moment. This led Saussure to assert that the proper object of study for linguistics was *langue* (the system which made any one act of speech possible), in its synchronic aspect.

The extract chosen to represent the work of Saussure deals, for the most part, with the arbitrary nature of the signified and with that aspect of a sign's meaning which is given by virtue of its place in the system.

First published in French in 1949 and in an English translation by 1953, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* offered the first sustained analysis of the construction of woman as 'other'. Borrowing the term from earlier phenomenological and existentialist thought, de Beauvoir developed the implications of situating woman as 'other' within a pervasive dialectic of immanence and transcendence which she saw as structuring the fundamental dualistic codes of Western societies: mind/body, reason/feeling, man/woman, public/private. Her analysis provided the touchstone for much of the feminist theory which followed.

The main thesis of *The Second Sex* is that women are made and not born but, drawing on Marx's account of ideology, she then explores how the powerful myth of the 'Eternal Feminine' has concealed the ways in which woman is defined by her sex always in relation to man. Man is never marked as 'masculine', but is simply the norm and always defined independently of his relation to woman. Her desire is for a world in which all human beings are defined independently of each other but, in a culture where man is the subjective centre, the norm, transcendent and self-defining, woman remains immanent, defined, the 'Eternal Feminine' unable to transcend her discursive imprisonment.

De Beauvoir drew on Sartrean existentialism for her understanding of the fundamental relations between self and other. Like Sartre and Hegel before him, de Beauvoir emphasizes that although each individual desires independence and autonomous self-definition, the simultaneous need for recognition of that independent status paradoxically and inevitably acts to subvert its perfect containment. Human relations therefore inevitably involve

an unavoidable struggle for mastery of the gaze and independent self-determination and yet, in a society where men have power, where they occupy the subjective centre, women are inevitably fixed as objects of the gaze, immanent, embodied, opaque and ultimately mysterious as subjects in their own right. If women have never occupied the subjective centre of the gaze, then they have always been named in the terms of exteriority, the terms of the 'Eternal Feminine': Virgin, Whore, Earthmother, Madonna. To resist such naming is to appear to be 'unfeminine' and thus lacking, to conform is to render oneself utterly powerless to resist the gaze and to seek alternative subjectivities.

In its attention to the psychological investments involved in cultural stereotypes, de Beauvoir's analysis provided an enormous incentive for the development of early feminist criticism and a comprehensive examination of the cultural construction of 'Woman' in literary and other kinds of cultural discourse. Like that of Freud, Marx and Saussure, her work also served to challenge the concept of the autonomous Subject, drawing attention to the constructedness of apparently natural categories such as sex. Again, too, it highlighted the inadequacies of naïve empiricist epistemologies in their assumption of a direct correspondence between names and those entities in the world which are named. Although the work of each of these seminal thinkers has a different focus, what unites them and constitutes their most important legacy to modern literary theory is precisely this assault on traditional humanism, on naïve empiricism, and on an earlier rationalism which had failed to take adequate account of the determining pressures of culture and the body.

1 | Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,

From *The German Ideology* (1846), pp. 70–8

Communism: The Production of the Form of Intercourse Itself

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of individuals united. Its organization is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the real basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist

independently of individuals, in so far as things are only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves. Thus the communists in practice treat the conditions created by production and intercourse as inorganic conditions, without, however, imagining that it was the plan or the destiny of previous generations to give them material, and without believing that these conditions were inorganic for the individuals creating them.

The difference between the individual as a person and what is accidental to him, is not a conceptual difference but a historical fact. This distinction has a different significance at different times–e.g. the estate as something accidental to the individual in the eighteenth century, the family more or less too. It is not a distinction that we have to make for each age, but one which each age makes itself from among the different elements which it finds in existence, and indeed not according to any theory, but compelled by material collisions in life. Of the elements handed down to a later age from an earlier, what appears accidental to the later age as opposed to the earlier, is a form of intercourse which corresponded to a less developed stage of the productive forces. The relation of the productive forces to the form of intercourse is the relation of the form of intercourse to the occupation or activity of the individuals. (The fundamental form of this activity is, of course, material, from which depend all other forms–mental, political, religious, etc. The various shaping of material life is, of course, in every case dependent on the needs which are already developed, and both the production and the satisfaction of these needs is an historical process, which is not found in the case of a sheep or a dog [perversity of Stirner's principal argument *adversus hominem*], although sheep and dogs in their present form certainly, but *malgré eux*, are products of an historical process.) The conditions under which individuals have intercourse with each other, so long as the above-mentioned contradiction is absent, are conditions appertaining to their individuality, in no way external to them; conditions under which these definite individuals, living under definite relationships, can alone produce their material life and what is connected with it; are thus the conditions of their self-activity and are produced by this self-activity. The definite condition under which they produce, thus corresponds, as long as the contradiction has not yet appeared, to the reality of their conditioned nature, their one-sided existence, the one-sidedness of which only becomes evident when the contradiction enters on the scene and thus only exists for the later individuals. Then this condition appears as an accidental fetter, and the consciousness that it is a fetter is imputed to the earlier age as well.

These various conditions, which appear first as conditions of self-activity, later as fetters upon it, form in the whole evolution of history a coherent series of forms of intercourse, the coherence of which consists in this: that in the place of an earlier form of intercourse, which has become a fetter, a new one is put, corresponding to the more developed productive forces and, hence, to the advanced mode of the self-activity of individuals–a

form which in its turn becomes a fetter and is then replaced by another. Since these conditions correspond at every stage to the simultaneous development of the productive forces, their history is at the same time the history of the evolving productive forces taken over by each new generation, and is therefore the history of the development of the forces of the individuals themselves.

Since this evolution takes place naturally, i.e. is not subordinated to a general plan of freely combined individuals, it proceeds from various localities, tribes, nations, branches of labour, etc., each of which to start with develops independently of the others and only gradually enters into relation with the others. Furthermore, it takes place only very slowly; the various stages and interests are never completely overcome, but only subordinated to the interest of the victor, and trail along beside the latter for centuries afterwards. It follows from this that within a nation itself the individuals, even apart from their pecuniary circumstances, have quite different developments, and that an earlier interest, the peculiar form of intercourse of which has already been ousted by that belonging to a later interest, remains for a long time afterwards in possession of a traditional power in the illusory community (State, law), which has won an existence independent of the individuals; a power which in the last resort can only be broken by a revolution. This explains why, with reference to individual points which allow of a more general summing-up, consciousness can sometimes appear further advanced than the contemporary empirical relationships, so that in the struggles of a later epoch one can refer to earlier theoreticians as authorities.

On the other hand, in countries which, like North America, begin in an already advanced historical epoch, their development proceeds very rapidly. Such countries have no other natural premises than the individuals, who settled there and were led to do so because the forms of intercourse of the old countries did not correspond to their wants. Thus they begin with the most advanced individuals of the old countries, and therefore with the correspondingly most advanced form of intercourse, before this form of intercourse has been able to establish itself in the old countries.[1] This is the case with all colonies, in so far as they are not mere military or trading stations. Carthage, the Greek colonies, and Iceland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, provide examples of this. A similar relationship issues from conquest, when a form of intercourse which has evolved on another soil is brought over complete to the conquered country: whereas in its home it was still encumbered with interests and relationships left over from earlier periods, here it can and must be established completely and without hindrance, if only to assure the conquerors' lasting power. (England and Naples after the Norman Conquest, when they received the most perfect form of feudal organization.)

Thus all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse. But also, to lead to collisions in a country, this contradiction need not

necessarily come to a head in this particular country. The competition with industrially more advanced countries, brought about by the expansion of international intercourse, is sufficient to produce a similar contradiction in countries with a backward industry (e.g. the latent proletariat in Germany brought into view by the competition of English industry).

This contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse, which, as we saw, has occurred several times in past history without, however, endangering its basis, necessarily on each occasion burst out in a revolution, taking on at the same time various subsidiary forms, such as all-embracing collisions, collisions of various classes, contradiction of consciousness, battle of ideas, etc., political conflict, etc. From a narrow point of view one may isolate one of these subsidiary forms and consider it as the basis of these revolutions; and this is all the more easy as the individuals who started the revolutions made illusions about their own activity according to their degree of culture and the stage of historical development.

The transformation, through the division of labour, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but only by the action of individuals in again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour. This is not possible without the community. Only in community with others has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the State, etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only in so far as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association.

It follows from all we have been saying up till now that the communal relationship into which the individuals of a class entered, and which was determined by their common interests over against a third party, was always a community to which these individuals belonged only as average individuals, only in so far as they lived within the conditions of existence of their class–a relationship in which they participated not as individuals but as members of a class. With the community of revolutionary proletarians on the other hand, who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control, it is just the reverse; it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. It is just this combination of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control–conditions which were previously abandoned to chance and had won an independent existence over against the

separate individuals just because of their separation as individuals, and because their combination had been determined by the division of labour, and through their separation had become a bond alien to them. Combination up till now (by no means an arbitrary one, such as is expounded for example in the *Contrat Social*, but a necessary one) was permitted only upon these conditions, within which the individuals were at the mercy of chance (compare, e.g. the formation of the North American State and the South American republics). This right to the undisturbed enjoyment, upon certain conditions, of fortuity and chance has up till now been called personal freedom: but these conditions are, of course, only the productive forces and forms of intercourse at any particular time.

If from a philosophical point of view one considers this evolution of individuals in the common conditions of existence of estates and classes, which followed on one another, and in the accompanying general conceptions forced upon them, it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species, or 'man', has evolved, or that they evolved 'man'–and in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear.[2] One can conceive these various estates and classes to be specific terms of the general expression, subordinate varieties of the species, or evolutionary phases of 'man'.

This subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished until a class has taken shape, which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against the ruling class.

Individuals have always built on themselves, but naturally on themselves within their given historical conditions and relationships, not on the 'pure' individual in the sense of the ideologists. But in the course of historical evolution, and precisely through the inevitable fact that within the division of labour social relationships take on an independent existence, there appears a division within the life of each individual, in so far as it is personal and in so far as it is determined by some branch of labour and the conditions pertaining to it. (We do not mean it to be understood from this that, for example, the rentier, the capitalist, etc., cease to be persons; but their personality is conditioned and determined by quite definite class relationships, and the division appears only in their opposition to another class and, for themselves, only when they go bankrupt.)

In the estate (and even more in the tribe) this is as yet concealed: for instance a nobleman always remains a nobleman, a commoner always a commoner, apart from his other relationships, a quality inseparable from his individuality. The division between the personal and the class individual, the accidental nature of the conditions of life for the individual, appears only with the emergence of class, which is itself a product of the bourgeoisie. This accidental character is only engendered and developed by competition and the struggle of individuals among themselves. Thus, in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental; in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are more subjected to the violence of things. The difference from the estate comes out particularly in the antagonism between

the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. When the estate of the urban burghers, the corporations, etc., emerged in opposition to the landed nobility, their condition of existence–movable property and craft labour, which had already existed latently before their separation from the feudal ties–appeared as something positive, which was asserted against feudal landed property, and therefore in its own way at first took on a feudal form. Certainly the refugee serfs treated their previous servitude as something accidental to their personality. But here they only were doing what every class that is freeing itself from a fetter does; and they did not free themselves as a class but separately. Moreover, they did not rise above the system of estates, but only formed a new estate, retaining their previous mode of labour even in their new situation, and developing it further by freeing it from its earlier fetters, which no longer corresponded to the development already attained.[3]

For the proletarians, on the other hand, the condition of their existence, labour, and with it all the conditions of existence governing modern society, have become something accidental, something over which they, as separate individuals, have no control, and over which no *social* organization can give them control. The contradiction between the individuality of each separate proletarian and labourer, the condition of life forced upon him, becomes evident to him himself, for he is sacrificed from youth upwards and, within his own class, has no chance of arriving at the conditions which would place him in the other class. Thus, while the refugee serfs only wished to be free to develop and assert those conditions of existence which were already there, and hence, in the end, only arrived at free labour, the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, will have to abolish the very condition of their existence hitherto (which has, moreover, been that of all society up to the present), namely, labour. Thus they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, individuals have given themselves collective expression, that is, the State. In order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the State.

References

1 Personal energy of the individuals of various nations–Germans and Americans–energy merely through cross-breeding–hence the cretinism of the Germans–in France and England, etc., foreign peoples transplanted to an already developed soil, in America to an entirely new soil–in Germany the natural population quietly stayed where it was.

2 The statement which frequently occurs with Saint Max (Stirner), that each is all that he is through the State, is fundamentally the same as the statement that the bourgeois is only a specimen of the bourgeois species; a statement which presupposes that the *class* of bourgeois existed before the individuals constituting it.

3 N.B. It must not be forgotten that the serfs' very need of existing and the impossibility of a large-sized economy, which involved the distribution of the allotments among the serfs, very soon reduced the services of the serfs to their lord to an average of payments in kind and statute-labour. This made it possible for the serf to accumulate movable property and hence facilitated his escape out of the possession of his lord

and gave him the prospect of prospering as an urban citizen; it also created gradations among the peasants, so that the runaway serfs were already half burghers. It is likewise obvious that the serfs who were masters of a craft had the best chance of acquiring movable property.

2 | Sigmund Freud,

From 'The Dream-Work.'[1] *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1916), pp. 204–18

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—When you have thoroughly grasped the dream-censorship and representation by symbols, you will not yet, it is true, have completely mastered the distortion in dreams, but you will nevertheless be in a position to understand most dreams. In doing so you will make use of both of the two complementary techniques: calling up ideas that occur to the dreamer till you have penetrated from the substitute to the genuine thing and, on the ground of your own knowledge, replacing the symbols by what they mean. Later on we shall discuss some uncertainties that arise in this connection.

We can now take up once more a task that we tried to carry out previously with inadequate means, when we were studying the relations between the elements of dreams and the genuine things they stood for. We laid down four main relations of the kind: the relation of a part to a whole, approximation or allusion, the symbolic relation and the plastic representation of words. We now propose to undertake the same thing on a larger scale, by comparing the manifest content of a dream *as a whole* with the latent dream as it is revealed by interpretation.

I hope you will never again confuse these two things with each other. If you reach that point, you will probably have gone further in understanding dreams than most readers of my *Interpretation of Dreams*. And let me remind you once again that the work which transforms the latent dream into the manifest one is called the *dream-work*. The work which proceeds in the contrary direction, which endeavours to arrive at the latent dream from the manifest one, is our *work of interpretation*. This work of interpretation seeks to undo the dream-work. The dreams of infantile type which we recognize as obvious fulfilments of wishes have nevertheless experienced some amount of dream-work—they have been transformed from a wish into an actual experience and also, as a rule, from thoughts into visual images. In their case there is no need for interpretation but only for undoing these two transformations. The additional dream-work that occurs in other

dreams is called 'dream-distortion', and this has to be undone by our work of interpretation.

Having compared the interpretations of numerous dreams, I am in a position to give you a summary description of what the dream-work does with the material of the latent dream-thoughts. I beg you, however, not to try to understand too much of what I tell you. It will be a piece of description which should be listened to with quiet attention.

The first achievement of the dream-work is *condensation*.[2] By that we understand the fact that the manifest dream has a smaller content than the latent one, and is thus an abbreviated translation of it. Condensation can on occasion be absent; as a rule it is present, and very often it is enormous. It is never changed into the reverse; that is to say, we never find that the manifest dream is greater in extent or content than the latent one. Condensation is brought about (1) by the total omission of certain latent elements (2) by only a fragment of some complexes in the latent dream passing over into the manifest one and (3) by latent elements which have something in common being combined and fused into a single unity in the manifest dream.

If you prefer it, we can reserve the term 'condensation' for the last only of these processes. Its results are particularly easy to demonstrate. You will have no difficulty in recalling instances from your own dreams of different people being condensed into a single one. A composite figure of this kind may look like A perhaps, but may be dressed like B, may do something that we remember C doing, and at the same time we may know that he is D. This composite structure is of course emphasizing something that the four people have in common. It is possible, naturally, to make a composite structure out of things or places in the same way as out of people, provided that the various things and places have in common something which is emphasized by the latent dream. The process is like constructing a new and transitory concept which has this common element as its nucleus. The outcome of this superimposing of the separate elements that have been condensed together is as a rule a blurred and vague image, like what happens if you take several photographs on the same plate.[3]

The production of composite structures like these must be of great importance to the dream-work, since we can show that, where in the first instance the common elements necessary for them were missing, they are deliberately introduced—for instance, through the choice of the words by which a thought is expressed. We have already come across condensations and composite structures of this sort. They played a part in the production of some slips of the tongue. You will recall the young man who offered to *'begleitdigen'* (*'begleiten* [accompany]' + *'beleidigen* [insult])', ... a lady. Moreover, there are jokes of which the technique is based on a condensation like this. But apart from these cases, it may be said that the process is something quite unusual and strange. It is true that counterparts to the construction of these composite figures are to be found in some creations

of our imagination, which is ready to combine into a unity components of things that do not belong together in our experience–in the centaurs, for instance, and the fabulous beasts which appear in ancient mythology or in Böcklin's pictures. The 'creative' imagination, indeed, is quite incapable of *inventing* anything; it can only combine components that are strange to one another. But the remarkable thing about the procedure of the dream-work lies in what follows. The material offered to the dream-work consists of thoughts–a few of which may be objectionable and unacceptable, but which are correctly constructed and expressed. The dream-work puts these thoughts into another form, and it is a strange and incomprehensible fact that in making this translation (this rendering, as it were, into another script or language) these methods of merging or combining are brought into use. After all, a translation normally endeavours to preserve the distinctions made in the text and particularly to keep things that are similar separate. The dream-work, quite the contrary, tries to condense two different thoughts by seeking out (like a joke) an ambiguous word in which the two thoughts may come together. We need not try to understand this feature all at once, but it may become important for our appreciation of the dream-work.

But although condensation makes dreams obscure, it does not give one the impression of being an effect of the dream-censorship. It seems traceable rather to some mechanical or economic factor, but in any case the censorship profits by it.

The achievements of condensation can be quite extraordinary. It is sometimes possible by its help to combine two quite different latent trains of thought into one manifest dream, so that one can arrive at what appears to be a sufficient interpretation of a dream and yet in doing so can fail to notice a possible 'over-interpretation'.

In regard to the connection between the latent and the manifest dream, condensation results also in no simple relation being left between the elements in the one and the other. A manifest element may correspond simultaneously to several latent ones, and, contrariwise, a latent element may play a part in several manifest ones–there is, as it were, a criss-cross relationship [...]. In interpreting a dream, moreover, we find that the associations to a single manifest element need not emerge in succession: we must often wait till the whole dream has been interpreted.

Thus the dream-work carries out a very unusual kind of transcription of the dream-thoughts: it is not a word-for-word or a sign-for-sign translation; nor is it a selection made according to fixed rules–as though one were to reproduce only the consonants in a word and to leave out the vowels; nor is it what might be described as a representative selection–one element being invariably chosen to take the place of several; it is something different and far more complicated.

The second achievement of the dream-work is *displacement*.[4] Fortunately we have made some preliminary examination of this: for we know that it

is entirely the work of the dream-censorship. It manifests itself in two ways: in the first, a latent element is replaced not by a component part of itself but by something more remote–that is, by an allusion; and in the second, the psychical accent is shifted from an important element on to another which is unimportant, so that the dream appears differently centred and strange.

Replacing something by an allusion to it is a process familiar in our waking thought as well, but there is a difference. In waking thought the allusion must be easily intelligible, and the substitute must be related in its subject-matter to the genuine thing it stands for. Jokes, too, often make use of allusion. They drop the precondition of there being an association in subject-matter, and replace it by unusual external associations such as similarity of sound, verbal ambiguity, and so on. But they retain the precondition of intelligibility: a joke would lose all its efficiency if the path back from the allusion to the genuine thing could not be followed easily. The allusions employed for displacement in dreams have set themselves free from both of these restrictions. They are connected with the element they replace by the most external and remote relations and are therefore unintelligible; and when they are undone, their interpretation gives the impression of being a bad joke or of an arbitrary and forced explanation dragged in by the hair of its head. For the dream-censorship only gains its end if it succeeds in making it impossible to find the path back from the allusion to the genuine thing.

Displacement of accent is unheard-of as a method of expressing thoughts. We sometimes make use of it in waking thought in order to produce a comic effect. I can perhaps call up the impression it produces of going astray if I recall an anecdote. There was a blacksmith in a village, who had committed a capital offence. The Court decided that the crime must be punished; but as the blacksmith was the only one in the village and was indispensable, and as on the other hand there were three tailors living there, one of *them* was hanged instead.

The third achievement of the dream-work is psychologically the most interesting. It consists in transforming thoughts into visual images.[5] Let us keep it clear that this transformation does not affect *everything* in the dream-thoughts; some of them retain their form and appear as thoughts or knowledge in the manifest dream as well; nor are visual images the only form into which thoughts are transformed. Nevertheless they comprise the essence of the formation of dreams; this part of the dream-work is, as we already know, the second most regular one [...], and we have already made the acquaintance of the 'plastic' representation of words in the case of individual dream-elements [...].

It is clear that this achievement is not an easy one. To form some idea of its difficulties, let us suppose that you have undertaken the task of replacing a political leading article in a newspaper by a series of illustrations. You will thus have been thrown back from alphabetic writing to picture writing.

In so far as the article mentioned people and concrete objects you will replace them easily and perhaps even advantageously by pictures; but your difficulties will begin when you come to the representation of abstract words and of all those parts of speech which indicate relations between thoughts–such as particles, conjunctions and so on. In the case of abstract words you will be able to help yourselves out by means of a variety of devices. For instance, you will endeavour to give the text of the article a different wording, which may perhaps sound less usual but which will contain more components that are concrete and capable of being represented. You will then recall that most abstract words are 'watered-down' concrete ones, and you will for that reason hark back as often as possible to the original concrete meaning of such words. Thus you will be pleased to find that you can represent the 'possession' of an object by a real, physical sitting down on it.[6] And the dream-work does just the same thing. In such circumstances you will scarcely be able to expect very great accuracy from your representation: similarly, you will forgive the dream-work for replacing an element so hard to put into pictures as, for example, 'adultery' ['*Ehebruch*', literally, 'breach of marriage'], by another breach–a broken leg ['*Beinbruch*'].[7] And in this way you will succeed to some extent in compensating for the clumsiness of the picture writing that is supposed to take the place of the alphabetic script.

For representing the parts of speech which indicate relations between thoughts–'because', 'therefore', 'however', etc.–you will have no similar aids at your disposal; those constituents of the text will be lost so far as translation into pictures goes. In the same way, the dream-work reduces the content of the dream-thoughts to its raw material of objects and activities. You will feel pleased if there is a possibility of in some way hinting, through the subtler details of the pictures, at certain relations not in themselves capable of being represented. And just so does the dream-work succeed in expressing some of the content of the latent dream-thoughts by peculiarities in the *form* of the manifest dream–by its clarity or obscurity, by its division into several pieces, and so on. The number of part-dreams into which a dream is divided usually corresponds to the number of main topics or groups of thoughts in the latent dream. A short introductory dream will often stand in the relation of a prelude to a following, more detailed, main dream or may give the motive for it; a subordinate clause in the dream-thoughts will be replaced by the interpolation of a change of scene into the manifest dream, and so on. Thus the form of dreams is far from being without significance and itself calls for interpretation. When several dreams occur during the same night, they often have the same meaning and indicate that an attempt is being made to deal more and more efficiently with a stimulus of increasing insistence. In individual dreams a particularly difficult element may be represented by several symbols–by 'doublets'.[8]

If we make a series of comparisons between the dream-thoughts and the manifest dreams which replace them, we shall come upon all kinds of things

for which we are unprepared: for instance, that nonsense and absurdity in dreams have their meaning. At this point, indeed, the contrast between the medical and the psychoanalytic view of dreams reaches a pitch of acuteness not met with elsewhere. According to the former, dreams are senseless because mental activity in dreams has abandoned all its powers of criticism; according to our view, on the contrary, dreams become senseless when a piece of criticism included in the dream-thoughts – a judgement that 'this is absurd' – has to be represented. The dream you are familiar with of the visit to the theatre ('three tickets for 1 florin 50') [...] is a good example of this. The judgement it expressed was: 'it was absurd to marry so early.'[9]

Similarly, in the course of our work of interpretation we learn what it is that corresponds to the doubts and uncertainties which the dreamer so often expresses as to whether a particular element occurred in a dream, whether it was this or whether, on the contrary, it was something else. There is as a rule nothing in the latent dream-thoughts corresponding to these doubts and uncertainties; they are entirely due to the activity of the dream-censorship and are to be equated with an attempt at elimination which has not quite succeeded.[10]

Among the most surprising findings is the way in which the dream-work treats contraries that occur in the latent dream. We know already [...] that conformities in the latent material are replaced by condensations in the manifest dream. Well, contraries are treated in the same way as conformities, and there is a special preference for expressing them by the same manifest element. Thus an element in the manifest dream which is capable of having a contrary may equally well be expressing either itself or its contrary or both together: only the sense can decide which translation is to be chosen. This connects with the further fact that a representation of 'no' – or at any rate an unambiguous one – is not to be found in dreams.

A welcome analogy to this strange behaviour of the dream-work is provided for us in the development of language. Some philologists have maintained that in the most ancient languages contraries such as 'strong–weak', 'light–dark', 'big–small' are expressed by the same verbal roots. (What we term 'the antithetical meaning of primal words'.) Thus in Ancient Egyptian *'ken'* originally meant 'strong' and 'weak'. In speaking, misunderstanding from the use of such ambivalent words was avoided by differences of intonation and by the accompanying gesture, and in writing, by the addition of what is termed a 'determinative' – a picture which is not itself intended to be spoken. For instance, *'ken'* meaning 'strong' was written with a picture of a little upright man after the alphabetic signs; when *'ken'* stood for 'weak', what followed was the picture of a man squatting down limply. It was only later, by means of slight modifications of the original homologous word, that two distinct representations were arrived at of the contraries included in it. Thus from *'ken'* 'strong–weak' were derived *'ken'* 'strong' and *'kan'* 'weak'. The remains of this ancient antithetical meaning seem to have been preserved not only in the latest developments of the

oldest languages but also in far younger ones and even in some that are still living. Here is some evidence of this, derived from K. Abel (1884).[11]

In Latin, words that remained ambivalent in this way are *'altus'* ('high' and 'deep') and *'sacer'* ('sacred' and 'accursed').

As instances of modifications of the same root I may mention *'clamare'* ('to cry'), *'clam'* ('softly', 'quietly', 'secretly'); *'siccus'* ('dry'), *'succus'* ('juice'). And in German: *'Stimme'* ['voice'], *'stumm'* ['dumb'].

If we compare related languages, there are numerous examples. In English, 'to lock'; in German *'Loch'* ['hole'] and *'Lücke'* ['gap']. In English, 'to cleave'; in German, *'kleben'* ['to stick'].

The English word 'without' (which is really 'with–without') is used today for 'without' alone. 'With', in addition to its combining sense, originally had a removing one; this is still to be seen in the compounds 'withdraw' and 'withhold'. Similarly with the German *'wieder'* ['together with' and *'wider'* 'against'].

Another characteristic of the dream-work also has its counterpart in the development of language. In Ancient Egyptian, as well as in other, later languages, the order of the sounds in a word can be reversed, while keeping the same meaning. Examples of this in English and German are: *'Topf'* ['pot'] –'pot'; 'boat'–'tub'; 'hurry'–*'Ruhe'* ['rest']; *'Balken'* ['beam']–*'Kloben'* ['log'] and 'club'; 'wait'–*'täuwen'* ['tarry']. Similarly in Latin and German: *'capere'–'packen'* ['to seize']; *'ren'–'Niere'* ['kidney'].

Reversals like this, which occur here with individual words, take place in various ways in the dream-work. We already know reversal of meaning, replacement of something by its opposite [...]. Besides this we find in dreams reversals of situation, of the relation between two people–a 'topsy-turvy' world. Quite often in dreams it is the hare that shoots the sportsman. Or again we find a reversal in the order of events, so that what precedes an event causally comes after it in the dream–like a theatrical production by a third-rate touring company, in which the hero falls down dead and the shot that killed him is not fired in the wings till afterwards. Or there are dreams where the whole order of the elements is reversed, so that to make sense in interpreting it we must take the last one first and the first one last. You will remember too from our study of dream-symbolism that going or falling into the water means the same as coming out of it–that is, giving birth or being born [...], and that climbing up a staircase or a ladder is the same thing as coming down it [...]. It is not hard to see the advantage that dream-distortion can derive from this freedom of representation.

These features of the dream-work may be described as *archaic*. They are equally characteristic of ancient systems of expression by speech and writing and they involve the same difficulties, which we shall have to discuss again later in a critical sense.[12]

And now a few more considerations. In the case of the dream-work it is clearly a matter of transforming the latent thoughts which are expressed in words into sensory images, mostly of a visual sort. Now our thoughts originally arose from sensory images of that kind: their first material and

their preliminary stages were sense impressions, or, more properly, mnemic images of such impressions. Only later were words attached to them and the words in turn linked up into thoughts. The dream-work thus submits thoughts to a *regressive* treatment[13] and undoes their development; and in the course of the regression everything has to be dropped that had been added as a new acquisition in the course of the development of the mnemic images into thoughts.

Such then, it seems, is the dream-work. As compared with the processes we have come to know in it, interest in the manifest dream must pale into insignificance. But I will devote a few more remarks to the latter, since it is of it alone that we have immediate knowledge.

It is natural that we should lose some of our interest in the manifest dream. It is bound to be a matter of indifference to us whether it is well put together, or is broken up into a series of disconnected separate pictures. Even if it has an apparently sensible exterior, we know that this has only come about through dream-distortion and can have as little organic relation to the internal content of the dream as the façade of an Italian church has to its structure and plan. There are other occasions when this façade of the dream *has* its meaning, and reproduces an important component of the latent dream-thoughts with little or no distortion. But we cannot know this before we have submitted the dream to interpretation and have been able to form a judgement from it as to the amount of distortion that has taken place. A similar doubt arises when two elements in a dream appear to have been brought into a close relation to each other. This may give us a valuable hint that we may bring together what corresponds to these elements in the latent dream as well; but on other occasions we can convince ourselves that what belongs together in the dream-thoughts has been torn apart in the dream.

In general one must avoid seeking to explain one part of the manifest dream by another, as though the dream had been coherently conceived and was a logically arranged narrative. On the contrary, it is as a rule like a piece of breccia, composed of various fragments of rock held together by a binding medium, so that the designs that appear on it do not belong to the original rocks imbedded in it. And there is in fact one part of the dream-work, known as 'secondary revision',[14] whose business it is to make something whole and more or less coherent out of the first products of the dream-work. In the course of this, the material is arranged in what is often a completely misleading sense and, where it seems necessary, interpolations are made in it.

On the other hand, we must not over-estimate the dream-work and attribute too much to it. The achievements I have enumerated exhaust its activity; it can do no more than condense, displace, represent in plastic form and subject the whole to a secondary revision. What appear in the dream as expressions of judgement, of criticism, of astonishment or of inference—none of these are achievements of the dream-work and they are very rarely expressions of afterthoughts about the dream; they are for the most part

portions of the latent dream-thoughts which have passed over into the manifest dream with a greater or less amount of modification and adaptation to the context. Nor can the dream-work compose speeches. With a few assignable exceptions, speeches in dreams are copies and combinations of speeches which one has heard or spoken oneself on the day before the dream and which have been included in the latent thoughts either as material or as the instigator of the dream. The dream-work is equally unable to carry out calculations. Such of them as appear in the manifest dream are mostly combinations of numbers, sham calculations which are quite senseless *quâ* calculations and are once again only copies of calculations in the latent dream-thoughts. In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the interest which had turned to the dream-work soon tends to move away from it to the latent dream-thoughts, which are revealed, distorted to a greater or less degree, by the manifest dream. But there is no justification for carrying this shift of interest so far that, in looking at the matter theoretically, one replaces the dream entirely by the latent dream-thoughts and makes some assertion about the former which only applies to the latter. It is strange that the findings of psychoanalysis could be misused to bring about this confusion. One cannot give the name of 'dream' to anything other than the product of the dream-work–that is to say, the *form* into which the latent thoughts have been transmuted by the dream-work. [...]

The dream-work is a process of quite a singular kind, of which the like has not yet become known in mental life. Condensations, displacements, regressive transformations of thoughts into images–such things are novelties whose discovery has already richly rewarded the labours of psychoanalysis. And you can see once more, from the parallels to the dream-work, the connections which have been revealed between psychoanalytic studies and other fields–especially those concerned in the development of speech and thought. You will only be able to form an idea of the further significance of these discoveries when you learn that the mechanism of dream-construction is the model of the manner in which neurotic symptoms arise.

I am also aware that we are not yet able to make a survey of the whole of the new acquisitions which these studies have brought to psychology. I will only point out the fresh proofs they have provided of the existence of unconscious mental acts–for this is what the latent dream-thoughts are–and what an unimaginably broad access to a knowledge of unconscious mental life we are promised by the interpretation of dreams.

But now the time has no doubt come for me to demonstrate to you from a variety of small examples of dreams what I have been preparing you for in the course of these remarks.

Notes

1 The whole of Chapter VI of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (over a third of the entire book) is devoted to the dream-work.
2 Condensation is discussed, with numerous examples, in Section A of Chapter VI of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

3 Freud more than once compared the result of condensation with Francis Galton's 'composite photographs', e.g. in Chapter IV of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
4 Displacement is the subject of Section B of Chapter VI of *The Interpretation of Dreams*; but it comes up for discussion at a great many other places in the book.
5 The main discussion of this is in Section C of Chapter VI of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
6 The German word '*besitzen*' ('to possess') is more obviously connected with sitting than its English equivalent ('*sitzen*' = 'to sit').
7 While I am correcting the proofs of these pages chance has put into my hands a newspaper cutting which offers an unexpected confirmation of what I have written above:

'DIVINE PUNISHMENT

'A Broken Arm for a Broken Marriage

'Frau Anna M., wife of a militiaman, sued Frau Klementine K. for adultery. According to the statement of claim, Frau K. had carried on an illicit relationship with Karl M., while her own husband was at the front and was actually making her an allowance of 70 Kronen [about £ 3.50] a month. Frau K. had already received a considerable amount of money from the plaintiff's husband, while she and her child had to live in hunger and poverty. Fellow-soldiers of her husband had informed her that Frau K. had visited taverns with M. and had sat there drinking till far into the night. On one occasion the defendant had asked the plaintiff's husband in the presence of several other soldiers whether he would not get a divorce soon from "his old woman" and set up with her. Frau K.'s caretaker also reported that she had repeatedly seen the plaintiff's husband in the house most incompletely dressed.

'Before a court in the Leopoldstadt [district of Vienna] Frau K. yesterday denied knowing M., so that there could be no question of her having intimate relations with him.

'A witness, Albertine M., stated, however, that she had surprised Frau K. kissing the plaintiff's husband.

'At a previous hearing, M., under examination as a witness, had denied having intimate relations with the defendant. Yesterday the Judge received a letter in which the witness withdrew the statements he had made on the earlier occasion and admitted that he had a love-affair with Frau K. up till the previous June. He had only denied his relations with the defendant at the former hearing because she had come to him before the hearing and begged him on her knees to save her and say nothing. "Today", the witness wrote, "I feel compelled to make a full confession to the Court, for I have broken my left arm and this seems to me to be a divine punishment for my wrong-doing."

'The Judge stated that the penal offence had lapsed under the statute of limitations. The plaintiff then withdrew her claim and the defendant was discharged.'

8 In philology the term is used of two different words with the same etymology: e.g. 'fashion' and 'faction', both from the Latin '*factio*'.
9 Absurdity in dreams is discussed in Section G of Chapter VI of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
10 Doubt as a symptom of obsessional neurosis is discussed in Lecture 17.
11 Freud returns to this subject in Lecture 15.

12 See Lecture 13.
13 The subject of 'regression' is discussed at length in Lecture 22.
14 This is the subject of Section I of Chapter VI of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

3 | Ferdinand de Saussure,

From *Course in General Linguistics* (1915), pp. 111–19, 120–1

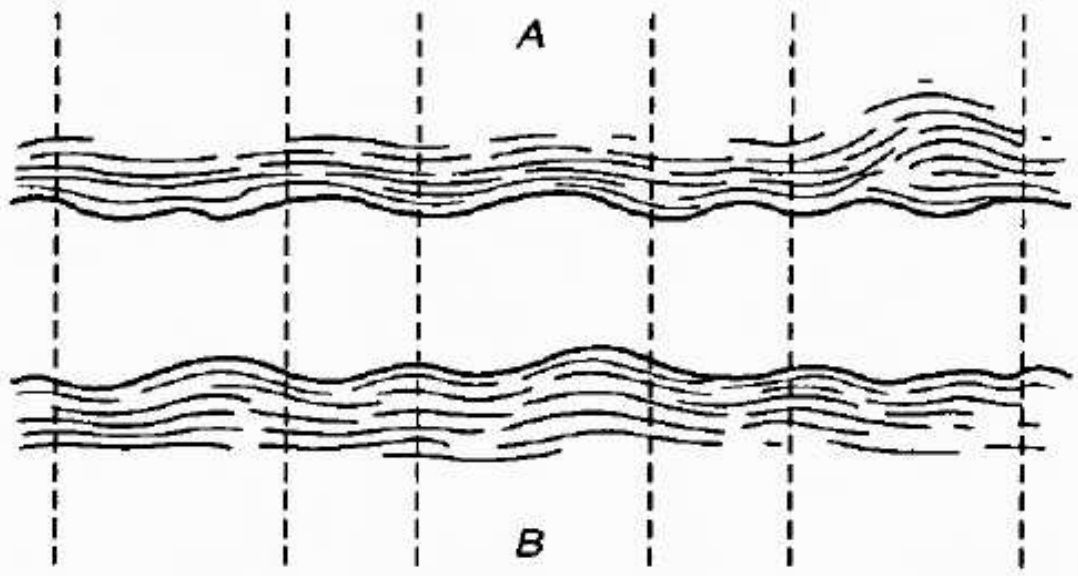
1 Language as Organized Thought Coupled with Sound

To prove that language is only a system of pure values, it is enough to consider the two elements involved in its functioning: ideas and sounds.

Psychologically our thought – apart from its expression in words – is only a shapeless and indistinct mass. Philosophers and linguists have always agreed in recognizing that without the help of signs we would be unable to make a clear-cut, consistent distinction between two ideas. Without language, thought is a vague, unchartered nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language.

Against the floating realm of thought, would sounds by themselves yield predelimited entities? No more so than ideas. Phonic substance is neither more fixed nor more rigid than thought; it is not a mold into which thought must of necessity fit but a plastic substance divided in turn into distinct parts to furnish the signifiers needed by thought. The linguistic fact can therefore be pictured in its totality – i.e. language – as a series of contiguous subdivisions marked off on both the indefinite plane of jumbled ideas (*A*) and the equally vague plane of sounds (*B*). The diagram below gives a rough idea of it.

The characteristic role of language with respect to thought is not to create a material phonic means for expressing ideas but to serve as a link between thought and sound, under conditions that of necessity bring about the reciprocal delimitations of units. Thought, chaotic by nature, has to become ordered in the process of its decomposition. Neither are thoughts given material form nor are sounds transformed into mental entities; the somewhat mysterious fact is rather that 'thought sound' implies division and that language works out its units while taking shape between two shapeless masses. Visualize the air in contact with a sheet of water; if the atmospheric pressure changes, the surface of the water will be broken up into a series of divisions, waves; the waves resemble the union or coupling of thought with phonic substance.



Language might be called the domain of articulations, using the word as it was defined earlier. Each linguistic term is a member, an *articulus* in which an idea is fixed in a sound and a sound becomes the sign of an idea.

Language can also be compared with a sheet of paper: thought is the front and the sound the back; one cannot cut the front without cutting the back at the same time; likewise in language, one can neither divide sound from thought nor thought from sound; the division could be accomplished only abstractedly, and the result would be either pure psychology or pure phonology.

Linguistics then works in the borderland where the elements of sound and thought combine; *their combination produces a form, not a substance.*

These views give a better understanding of what was said before about the arbitrariness of signs. Not only are the two domains that are linked by the linguistic fact shapeless and confused, but the choice of a given slice of sound to name a given idea is completely arbitrary. If this were not true, the notion of value would be compromised, for it would include an externally imposed element. But actually values remain entirely relative, and that is why the bond between the sound and the idea is radically arbitrary.

The arbitrary nature of the sign explains in turn why the social fact alone can create a linguistic system. The community is necessary if values that owe their existence solely to usage and general acceptance are to be set up; by himself the individual is incapable of fixing a single value.

In addition, the idea of value, as defined, shows that to consider a term as simply the union of a certain sound with a certain concept is grossly misleading. To define it in this way would isolate the term from its system; it would mean assuming that one can start from the terms and construct the system by adding them together when, on the contrary, it is from the interdependent whole that one must start and through analysis obtain its elements.

To develop this thesis, we shall study value successively from the viewpoint of the signified or concept (Section 2), the signifier (Section 3), and the complete sign (Section 4).

Being unable to seize the concrete entities or units of language directly, we shall work with words. While the word does not conform exactly to the

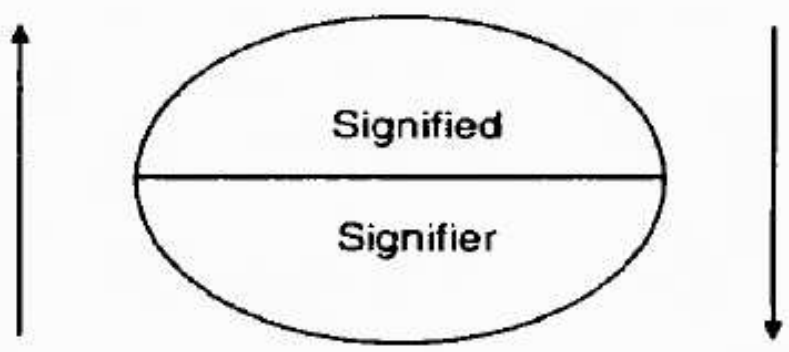
definition of the linguistic unit, it at least bears a rough resemblance to the unit and has the advantage of being concrete; consequently, we shall use words as specimens equivalent to real terms in a synchronic system, and the principles that we evolve with respect to words will be valid for entities in general.

2 Linguistic Value from a Conceptual Viewpoint

When we speak of the value of a word, we generally think first of its property of standing for an idea, and this is in fact one side of linguistic value. But if this is true, how does *value* differ from *signification*? Might the two words by synonyms? I think not, although it is easy to confuse them, since the confusion results not so much from their similarity as from the subtlety of the distinction that they mark.

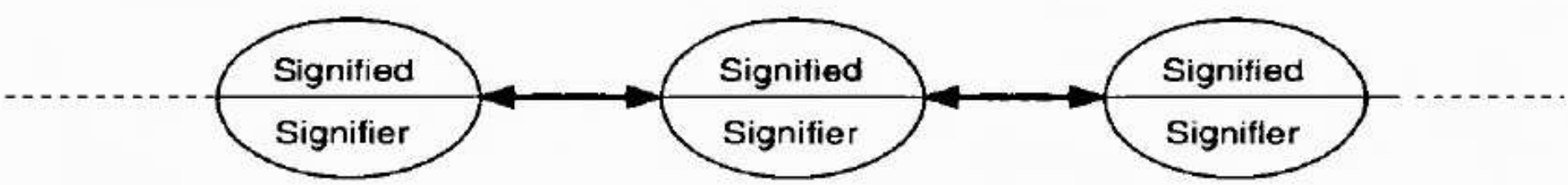
From a conceptual viewpoint, value is doubtless one element in signification, and it is difficult to see how signification can be dependent upon value and still be distinct from it. But we must clear up the issue or risk reducing language to a simple naming-process.

Let us first take signification as it is generally understood. As the arrows in the drawing show, it is only the counterpart of the sound-image. Everything that occurs concerns only the sound-image and the concept when we look upon the word as independent and self-contained.



But here is the paradox: on the one hand the concept seems to be the counterpart of the sound-image, and on the other hand the sign itself is in turn the counterpart of the other signs of language.

Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others, as in the diagram:



How, then, can value be confused with signification, i.e. the counterpart of the sound-image? It seems impossible to liken the relations represented

here by horizontal arrows to those represented above by vertical arrows. Putting it another way–and again taking up the example of the sheet of paper that is cut in two [...]–it is clear that the observable relation between the different pieces A, B, C, D, etc. is distinct from the relation between the front and back of the same piece as in A/A′, B/B′, etc.

To resolve the issue, let us observe from the outset that even outside language all values are apparently governed by the same paradoxical principle. They are always composed:

1. of a *dissimilar* thing that can be *exchanged* for the thing of which the value is to be determined; and
2. of *similar* things that can be *compared* with the thing of which the value is to be determined.

Both factors are necessary for the existence of a value. To determine what a five-franc piece is worth one must therefore know: (1) that it can be exchanged for a fixed quantity of a different thing, e.g. bread; and (2) that it can be compared with a similar value of the same system, e.g. a one-franc piece, or with coins of another system (a dollar, etc.). In the same way a word can be exchanged for something dissimilar, an idea; besides, it can be compared with something of the same nature, another word. Its value is therefore not fixed so long as one simply states that it can be 'exchanged' for a given concept, i.e. that it has this or that signification: one must also compare it with similar values, with other words that stand in opposition to it. Its content is really fixed only by the concurrence of everything that exists outside it. Being part of a system, it is endowed not only with a signification but also and especially with a value and this is something quite different.

A few examples will show clearly that this is true. Modern French *mouton* can have the same signification as English *sheep* but not the same value, and this for several reasons, particularly because in speaking of a piece of meat ready to be served on the table, English uses *mutton* and not *sheep*. The difference in value between *sheep* and *mouton* is due to the fact that *sheep* has beside it a second term while the French word does not.

Within the same language, all words used to express related ideas limit each other reciprocally; synonyms like French *redouter* 'dread', *craindre* 'fear', and *avoir peur* 'be afraid' have value only through their opposition: if *redouter* did not exist, all its content would go to its competitors. Conversely, some words are enriched through contact with others: e.g. the new element introduced in *décrépit* (un vieillard *décrépit*) results from the co-existence of *décrépi* (un mur *décrépi*). The value of just any term is accordingly determined by its environment; it is impossible to fix even the value of the word signifying 'sun' without first considering its surrounding: in some languages it is not possible to say 'sit in the *sun*'.

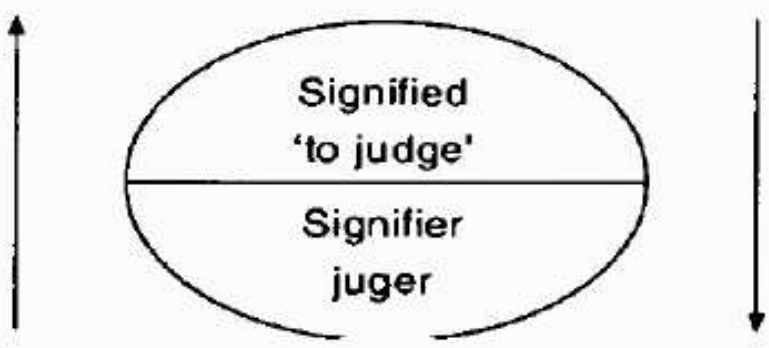
Everything said about words applies to any term of language, e.g. to grammatical entities. The value of a French plural does not coincide with that of a Sanskrit plural even though their signification is usually identical;

Sanskrit has three numbers instead of two (*my eyes, my ears, my arms, my legs*, etc. are dual);[1] it would be wrong to attribute the same value to the plural in Sanskrit and in French; its value clearly depends on what is outside and around it.

If words stood for pre-existing concepts, they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next; but this is not true. French uses *louer* (*une maison*) 'let (a house)' indifferently to mean both 'pay for' and 'receive payment for', whereas German uses two words, *mieten* and *vermieten*; there is obviously no exact correspondence of values. The German verbs *Schätzen* and *urteilen* share a number of significations, but that correspondence does not hold at several points.

Inflection offers some particularly striking examples. Distinctions of time, which are so familiar to us, are unknown in certain languages. Hebrew does not recognize even the fundamental distinctions between the past, present, and future. Proto-Germanic has no special form for the future; to say that the future is expressed by the present is wrong, for the value of the present is not the same in Germanic as in languages that have a future along with the present. The Slavic languages regularly single out two aspects of the verb: the perfective represents action as a point, complete in its totality; the imperfective represents it as taking place, and on the line of time. The categories are difficult for a Frenchman to understand, for they are unknown in French; if they were predetermined, this would not be true. Instead of pre-existing ideas then, we find in all the foregoing examples *values* emanating from the system. When they are said to correspond to concepts, it is understood that the concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively by their relations with the other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is in being what the others are not.

Now the real interpretation of the diagram of the signal becomes apparent. Thus it means that in French the concept 'to judge' is linked to the sound-image *juger*; in short, it symbolizes signification. But it is quite clear that initially the concept is nothing, that it is only a value determined by its relations with other similar values, and that without them the signification would not exist. If I state simply that a word signifies something when I have in mind the associating of a sound-image with a concept, I am making a statement that may suggest what actually happens, but by no means am I expressing the linguistic fact in its essence and fullness.



3 Linguistic Value from a Material Viewpoint

The conceptual side of value is made up solely of relations and differences with respect to the other terms of language, and the same can be said of its material side. The important thing in the word is not the sound alone but the phonic differences that make it possible to distinguish this word from all others, for differences carry signification.

This may seem surprising, but how indeed could the reverse be possible? Since one vocal image is no better suited that the next for what it is commissioned to express, it is evident, even *a priori*, that a segment of language can never in the final analysis be based on anything except its noncoincidence with the rest. *Arbitrary* and *differential* are two correlative qualities.

The alteration of linguistic signs clearly illustrates this. It is precisely because the terms *a* and *b* as such are radically incapable of reaching the level of consciousness–one is always conscious of only the *a/b* difference–that each term is free to change according to laws that are unrelated to its signifying function. No positive sign characterizes the genitive plural in Czech *žen;* still the two forms *žena*: *žen* function as well as the earlier forms *žena*: *ženb*; *žen* has value only because it is different.

Here is another example that shows even more clearly the systematic role of phonic differences: in Greek, *éphēn* is an imperfect and *éstēn* an aorist although both words are formed in the same way; the first belongs to the system of the present indicative of *phēmī* 'I say', whereas there is no present *stēmi;* now it is precisely the relation *phēmī*: *éphēn* that corresponds to the relation between the present and the imperfect (cf. *déiknūmi: edéikūn*, etc.). Signs function, then, not through their intrinsic value but through their relative position.

In addition, it is impossible for sound alone, a material element, to belong to language. It is only a secondary thing, substance to be put to use. All our conventional values have the characteristic of not being confused with the tangible element which supports them. For instance, it is not the metal in a piece of money that fixes its value. A coin nominally worth five francs may contain less than half its worth of silver. Its value will vary according to the amount stamped upon it and according to its use inside or outside a political boundary. This is even more true of the linguistic signifier, which is not phonic but incorporeal–constituted not by its material substance but by the differences that separate its sound-image from all others.

The foregoing principle is so basic that it applies to all the material elements of language, including phonemes. Every language forms its words on the basis of a system of sonorous elements, each element being a clearly delimited unit and one of a fixed number of units. Phonemes are characterized not, as one might think, by their own positive quality but simply by the fact that they are distinct. Phonemes are above all else opposing, relative, and negative entities.

Proof of this is the latitude that speakers have between points of convergence in the pronunciation of distinct sounds. In French, for instance, general use of a dorsal *r* does not prevent many speakers from using a

tongue-tip trill; language is not in the least disturbed by it; language requires only that the sound be different and not, as one might imagine, that it have an invariable quality. I can even pronounce the French *r* like German *ch* in *Bach, doch,* etc., but in German I could not use *r* instead of *ch,* for German gives recognition to both elements and must keep them apart.

4 The Sign Considered in its Totality

Everything that has been said up to this point boils down to this: in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences *without positive terms*. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system. The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it. Proof of this is that the value of a term may be modified without either its meaning or its sound being affected, solely because a neighboring term has been modified [...].

But the statement that everything in language is negative is true only if the signified and the signifier are considered separately; when we consider the sign in its totality, we have something that is positive in its own class. A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas; but the pairing of a certain number of acoustical signs with as many cuts made from the mass of thought engenders a system of values; and this system serves as the effective link between the phonic and psychological elements within each sign. Although both the signified and the signifier are purely differential and negative when considered separately, their combination is a positive fact; it is even the sole type of facts that language has, for maintaining the parallelism between the two classes of differences is the distinctive function of the linguistic institution.

Note

1. The use of the comparative form for two and the superlative for more than two in English (e.g. *may the* better *boxer win: the* best *boxer in the world*) is probably a remnant of the old distinction between the dual and the plural number. [Tr.]

4 | Simone de Beauvoir,

From *The Second Sex* ([1953] 1972), pp. 282–5

The myth of woman plays a considerable part in literature; but what is its importance in daily life? To what extent does it affect the customs and conduct of individuals? In replying to this question it will be necessary to state precisely the relations this myth bears to reality.

There are different kinds of myths. This one, the myth of woman, sublimating an immutable aspect of the human condition–namely, the 'division' of humanity into two classes of individuals–is a static myth. It projects into the realm of Platonic ideas a reality that is directly experienced or is conceptualized on a basis of experience; in place of fact, value, significance, knowledge, empirical law, it substitutes a transcendental Idea, timeless, unchangeable, necessary. This idea is indisputable because it is beyond the given: it is endowed with absolute truth. Thus, as against the dispersed, contingent, and multiple existences of actual women, mythical thought opposes the Eternal Feminine, unique and changeless. If the definition provided for this concept is contradicted by the behaviour of flesh-and-blood women, it is the latter who are wrong: we are told not that Femininity is a false entity, but that the women concerned are not feminine. The contrary facts of experience are impotent against the myth. To pose Woman is to pose the absolute Other, without reciprocity, denying against all experience that she is a subject, a fellow human being.

As group symbols and social types are generally defined by means of antonyms in pairs, ambivalence will seem to be an intrinsic quality of the Eternal Feminine. The saintly mother has for correlative the cruel step-mother, the angelic young girl has the perverse virgin: thus it will be said sometimes that Mother equals Life, sometimes that Mother equals Death, that every virgin is pure spirit or flesh dedicated to the devil.

Thus the paternalism that claims woman for hearth and home defines her as sentiment, inwardness, immanence. In fact every existent is at once immanence and transcendence; when one offers the existent no aim, or prevents him from attaining any, or robs him of his victory, then his transcendence falls vainly into the past–that is to say, falls back into immanence. This is the lot assigned to woman in the patriarchate; but it is in no way a vocation, any more than slavery is the vocation of the slave. The development of this mythology is to be clearly seen in Auguste Comte. To identify Woman with Altruism is to guarantee to man absolute rights in her devotion, it is to impose on women a categorical imperative.

Few myths have been more advantageous to the ruling caste than the

myth of woman: it justifies all privileges and even authorizes their abuse. Men need not bother themselves with alleviating the pains and the burdens that physiologically are women's lot, since these are 'intended by Nature'; men use them as a pretext for increasing the misery of the feminine lot still further, for instance by refusing to grant to woman any right to sexual pleasure, by making her work like a beast of burden.[1]

Note

1 Cf. Balzac: *Physiology of Marriage*: 'Pay no attention to her murmurs, her cries, her pains; *Nature has made her for our use* and for bearing everything: children, sorrows, blows and pains inflicted by man. Do not accuse yourself of hardness. In all the codes of so-called civilized nations, man has written the laws that ranged woman's destiny under this bloody epigraph: "*Vae victis*! Woe to the weak!"'

Section 2

Formalism and Structuralism

Introduction

Terry Eagleton has argued in his 1983 introduction to literary theory that if one wanted to put a date on the beginings of modern literary theory, then 1917, the year in which the Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky published his pioneering essay 'Art as Device', might be as good a date as any. Though formalist work predates the recent theoretical revolution by some 40 years, its stress on the systematic study of literature links it with the work which initially broke with the traditional critical orthodoxy in the 1960s. Indeed, Formalist work only became more widely available and influential in the post-1960s period.

Russian Formalism is the name now given to a mode of criticism which emerged from two different groups, The Moscow Linguistic Circle (1915) and the Opojaz group (The Society for the Study of Poetic Language) (1916). The main figures in the movement were Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Boris Tomashevsky and Yuri Tynyanov. Jakobson was also involved in the later Prague Linguistic Circle (1926–39), which developed some of the Formalist's concerns. Influenced by Futurism and futurist poetry, and reacting against Symbolism's mystificatory poetics (though not against its emphasis on form), they sought to place the study of literature on a scientific basis; their investigation concentrated on the language and the formal devices of the literary work.

Although Russian Formalism is often likened to American New Criticism because of their similar emphasis on close reading, the Russian Formalists regarded themselves as developers of a science of criticism and were more interested in the discovery of a systematic method for the analysis of poetic texts. Russian Formalism emphasized a differential definition of literature, as opposed to the New Critical isolation and objectification of the single text; they were also more emphatic in their rejection of the mimetic/expressive account of the text. Indeed, Russian Formalism rejected entirely the idea of the text as reflecting an essential unity which is ultimately one of moral or humanistic significance. The central focus of their analysis was not so much literature *per se*, but literariness, that which makes a given text 'literary'. In this sense they sought to uncover the system of literary discourse, the systematic arrangement of language which makes literature possible. Their interest in literary texts tended to centre on the functioning of literary devices rather than on content; literariness was an effect of form.

Shklovsky's essay 'Art as Technique' was one of the first important

contributions to the movement. In it he develops the key concept of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*–making strange). Literary language 'makes strange' or defamiliarizes habituated perception and ordinary language. The key to defamiliarization is the literary device, for the device impedes perception, draws attention to the artifice of the text and dehabituates automatized responses. (Formalists tend to be more interested in texts which 'lay bare the device' and which eschew realistic motivation, hence their privileging of difficult or modernist texts.)

One of the most important implications of this view of the literary text is that it logically entails a view of literature as a relational system rather than an absolute or self-contained one, and a system that is bound to change through history. Literary devices cannot remain strange for all time; they too become automatized, fail to retard and break up ordinary perceptions, so that literature continually has to produce new raids on the inarticulate, new defamiliarizational devices to avoid habituated perception. Such a view must see literary tradition not as a seamless continuity, but as discontinuity, where breaks and displacements in form and formal devices continually renew the system. This aspect of the work of the Russian Formalists has proved to be very fertile ground for later transformations in critical practice, influencing later Marxists, for example, in their analysis of literature as a means of defamiliarizing ideologies, and structuralists and post-structuralists in their explorations of intertextuality. In defining the object of enquiry as that of 'literariness', they gave a systematic inflection to the study of literature, one that went beyond intrinsic study of the individual text.

Whereas Russian Formalism aspired to be a 'science' of literature, New Criticism began by explicitly opposing itself to the scientisms of a utilitarian age and arguing that as science reduces the world to types and forms, art must reinvest it with body, the concrete particular, the plenitudinous experience. Although New Criticism also focuses on the formal properties of the literary text, therefore, it parts company with the methods of Russian Formalism in its adherence to an organicist and humanist conception of the function of the literary work which is ultimately derived from Romantic aesthetics. The poem is an object, a formal autonomous entity which, in its unique existence as a for-itself, can restore the world to us. Accordingly, Cleanth Brooks in 1947 attacked the 'heresy of paraphrase' as that critical practice which simply restates the poem in the terms of something else and thus destroys and negates its formal uniqueness. The New Criticism called for a critical practice which could respect the autonomy of the work of art and offer a formal explication which was more than an act of rhetorical transposition.

The New Criticism evolved out of the preoccupations of a group of poets. The Fugitives, writing in the 1930s in the Southern states of America and finding an outlet for their views in two journals of the time, *The Kenyon Review* and *The Sewanee Review*. One of the central early figures in the New Criticism was John Crowe Ransom, perhaps the leading theoretician

of the group, who held an almost magical view of poetry as an organization of signs which stood in an iconic relation with nature and offered a concrete and immediate experience which might escape the abstractions of science and the reductionism of the 'Platonic Censor'. Ransom was adamant that literature must be regarded as an object in the world, an entity or for-itself, which criticism must never subjugate to philosophical or scientific systems and reductions. Art preserves the world in its particularity, whereas science looks for universals and works by reduction. Brooks argued similarly that poetry is experience and never simply a statement about or abstraction from experience. Poetry exists to give us back a more refractory original world and thus constitutes an ontologically distinct experience which, nevertheless, can offer a simulacrum of experiential fullness in the world.

In its adherence to an organicist and ultimately expressivist aesthetics, the New Criticism clearly has its origins in Romantic poetics, in the Coleridgean idea of the poem as an organic resolution of oppositions and contradictions and in the Crocean idea of art as a unique and particular way of knowing through embodied and participatory experience. In this sense, therefore, the New Criticism is very different in focus from the work of the Russian Formalists but, like the Formalists, the New Critics too believed that the actual practice of criticism should involve close attention to the formal properties of the work, to those unique structures and organizations of language which conferred upon the literary text its ontological properties. The essay reprinted here, Cleanth Brooks's 'The Language of Paradox', the first chapter of his important book of 1947, *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, demonstrates both the New Critical adherence to close reading and its concern to differentiate literary from scientific language. Developing the Coleridgean emphasis on organicist resolution, each of the New Critics sought to define a mode of the language of poetry which might adequately define its linguistic otherness: for Brooks, the language of science is a language purged of paradox whereas the truths of poetry may exist in no other form. Poetry is a mode of performance and therefore resists paraphrase. In this essay, Brooks seeks to offer a formal analysis of a variety of poems in order to demonstrate that, whether they flaunt the condition of paradox (as in the poetry of John Donne) or quietly arise out of it (as in Wordsworth's sonnet), poems are always an expression of contradictory truths which may not be apprehended through any other formal arrangement of language.

Structuralism

Though Structuralism developed out of Saussure's pioneering work on language, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that it found its most widespread influence and application. Generally recognized as 'arriving' in France in the mid-1960s, it gradually made an impact on Anglo–American investigation in the human sciences, including literature. This mode of investigation has been called semiotics as well as Structuralism and though

these terms are virtually synonymous some difference in orientation is apparent. Literary Structuralism of this period finds its most powerful advocates in such figures as Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Tzvetan Todorov, A.J. Greimas and Gérard Gennette. Saussure's influence is readily apparent in the terms and concepts literary Structuralism deploys, however, the impetus for its development was also provided by such work as the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson's studies of language.

In the *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure had proposed, in a couple of programmatic statements, a 'general science of signs' based on his theory of language. He called this putative science 'semiology' and suggested that the method it inaugurates could be applied to more than just the language system. Recognizing that verbal language, although the most important, was only one among many sign systems, semiology would be widely applicable. Indeed, Saussure's suggestions are taken up in Structuralism, where his theory of language is used as the basis for a critical model which investigates a diverse range of cultural phenomena.

However, Structuralism is more than a methodology; its debt to Saussure goes beyond an analytic model, for inscribed in his theory is the potential for a radical epistemology. Saussure viewed the linguistic sign as arbitrary and as having meaning only because it participates in a system of conventions. Meaning is dependent upon differential relations among elements within a system, i.e. it is *diacritical* not *referential*. In fact, structuralism is not particularly interested in meaning *per se*, but rather in attempting to describe and understand the conventions and modes of signification which make it possible to 'mean'; that is, it seeks to discover the *conditions* of meaning. So *langue* is more important than *parole*– system is more important than individual utterance. Concentration on the system led Todorov to advocate a 'poetics' which would provide a general grammar of literature, or a 'langue' of which the individual work is a 'parole'. Barthes, in *Elements of Semiology* (1964) and *Système de la Mode* (1967), working on broader cultural phenomena, assumes that an individual utterance–whether the wearing of clothes or the articulation of verbal sounds in a conversation–presupposes a system (of fashion or of language) which generates the possibility of meaning for those utterances. The first task of Structuralism is to describe and analyse that system so Structuralists usually begin their analysis by seeking general principles in individual works, though there is also a tendency to explain/interpret individual works by referring to those general principles.

Like Russian Formalism, Structuralism believes in the possibility of a 'science' of literature, one based on form rather than content. For Structuralism, such a science means it could potentially master and explain the world of signs through exhaustive detailing and analysing of the systems that allowed those signs to speak. Though this science would itself have to be carried out in language (the dominant sign system) the language of criticism was deemed to be a 'metalanguage'–that is, a language that can speak about and explain the workings of 'object' languages (languages

that seem to speak directly about the world). Structuralism's claim to be operating through a metalanguage cannot, however, overcome the criticism that it is actually no more than a powerful interpretive schema for analysing texts. Moreover, while rejecting the idea of a unified meaning occupying the text, Structuralism still seeks unity or unification in the literary system as a whole, recourse to which can then 'explain' the individual work. It also tends to treat the text as a function of the system of literature, divorcing it from historical and social context.

One focus of this idea of a 'science' of literature was the development of a systematic poetics which could account for the underlying structures of poetic form and narrative. It was Gérard Genette who popularized the term 'narratology' and gave it a structuralist emphasis which moved the study of narrative away from earlier Aristotelian accounts, which emphasize plot or character, and towards the analysis of problems of voice and temporal ordering which develop some of the preoccupations of earlier Jamesian critics such as Percy Lubbock (whose book, *The Craft of Fiction* (1922) was an important attempt to begin to formalize narrative poetics). Genette's work picks up a distinction developed in earlier Russian Formalist writing between the idea of discourse as a connected sequence of narrative statements and the idea of story as an order of events which we extrapolate from discourse in the reading process. Although his work largely focused on the rhetorical uses of voice and temporal ordering in narrative, rather than on questions about the ontology of the text, it did raise the question, seized upon by later post-structuralists and postmodernists, of the extent to which, if the world itself in some sense consists of stories, then narrative might be a fundamental mode of knowledge. For the most part though, Genette's work has been important for its systematic analysis of the complex relationship between the situation of narration and what is narrated. Genette was fascinated by the incredible flexibility of the narrative form of the novel which he saw as inhering in the multiple possibilities of temporal presentation and in the relationship between who speaks (voice) and who sees (perspective or point of view) and the characteristic use of 'focalizers' who blend narratorial voices with characterological perspectives.

The first question raised by Genette is who speaks? He develops the analysis well beyond those theorists of the Anglo–American tradition, deriving from critics such as Lubbock in the 1920s, who offered a breakdown of kinds of narrators (first, third, omniscient, limited omniscient, frame, frame observer, frame participator, camera eye, multiple narrators, unreliable, reliable, etc.) but failed to provide any systematic analysis of the relationship between who speaks and who sees, of who speaks when and to whom and with what authority. The concept of point of view actually conflates voice and perspective and its earlier imprecise use in the analysis of narrative had impeded a full understanding of narrative discourse and the relations between story and discourse. Genette saw that the formal flexibility of the novel rests on its capacity to combine the voice of the narrator (from outside the story) with the perspective or voice (as in free indirect discourse)

of the characters (from within the story) who bring the story as discourse into focus. Voice and perspective are, however, only one crucial element in the rhetoric of fiction, for the relations between story and discourse also involve the temporal values of order, duration and frequency, and control effects such as the relationship between the time taken to tell the story and the time taken up by the events narrated (summary, ellipsis, scene, stretch, are some of the possibilities analysed by Genette) or the relationship between the order of events as narrated and the chronology of events in the story. Genette's analyses provided an extremely precise formal vocabulary for trying to understand issues of authority, pace, significance, irony, suspense and curiosity in the reading and interpretation of narrative and they also offered a formal way of understanding related issues such as the differences between realist and modernist texts or between novels and other kinds of narrative.

Like Genette's, the two other essays in this section, Roland Barthes' of 1966 and David Lodge's of 1980, are interesting for the implications they carry about the relations between Structuralist theory as a formal method of reading and Structuralism as a world-view which raises epistemological and ontological questions about the condition of textuality. In the initial break with earlier critical traditions, Structuralism tended to be caught between critical use as a method for the formal analysis of literary texts and adoption as an epistemology, a way of understanding the mode of existence of literature and the text. Genette's writings point in both directions.

Barthes' essay, 'To Write: An Intransitive Verb?', was written at the beginning of the period when his work was undergoing transformation from a Structuralist to a post-structuralist orientation. Its significance lay in the fact that it foregrounded explicitly epistemological questions which began to signal a more radical break with traditional humanist criticism. The essay repudiates mimetic theories of language and correspondence theories of truth, arguing that the modern trajectory has gradually seen the substitution of the 'instance of discourse for the instance of reality' and that 'the field of the writer is nothing but writing itself'. In Barthes' terms, literature is not so much a reflection of the real as an exploration of language. The essay points to the epistemological orientation of structuralism and the way in which the preoccupations of poststructuralism seem inevitably to arise from such reflections. David Lodge's retrospective piece of 1980 has been chosen because its emphasis is explicitly on the formal usefulness of the methods of Formalism and Structuralism as tools for the critical interpretation of texts. Lodge's essay provides a clear and concise summary of the methods and approaches of narratological Structuralist criticism and shows how the tools provided may enhance traditional practices of close reading.

5 | Viktor Shklovsky,

From 'Art as Technique', in L.T. Lemon and M.J. Reis, tr. and ed. *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (1917), pp. 11–15; 18

If we start to examine the general laws of perception, we see that as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic. Thus, for example, all of our habits retreat into the area of the unconsciously automatic; if one remembers the sensations of holding a pen or of speaking in a foreign language for the first time and compares that with his feeling at performing the action for the ten thousandth time, he will agree with us. Such habituation explains the principles by which, in ordinary speech, we leave phrases unfinished and words half expressed. In this process, ideally realized in algebra, things are replaced by symbols. Complete words are not expressed in rapid speech; their initial sounds are barely perceived. Alexander Pogodin offers the example of a boy considering the sentence 'The Swiss Mountains are beautiful' in the form of a series of letters: *T, S, m, a, b.*[1]

This characteristic of thought not only suggests the method of algebra, but even prompts the choice of symbols (letters, especially initial letters). By this 'algebraic' method of thought we apprehend objects only as shapes with imprecise extensions; we do not see them in their entirety but rather recognize them by their main characteristics. We see the object as though it were enveloped in a sack. We know what it is by its configuration, but we see only its silhouette. The object, perceived thus in the manner of prose perception, fades and does not leave even a first impression; ultimately even the essence of what it was is forgotten. Such perception explains why we fail to hear the prose word in its entirety (see Leo Jakobinsky's article[2] and, hence, why (along with other slips of the tongue) we fail to pronounce it. The process of 'algebrization', the overautomatization of an object, permits the greatest economy of perceptive effort. Either objects are assigned only one proper feature—a number, for example—or else they function as though by formula and do not even appear in cognition:

> I was cleaning a room and, meandering about, approached the divan and couldn't remember whether or not I had dusted it. Since these movements are habitual and unconscious, I could not remember and felt that it was impossible to remember—so that if I had dusted it and forgot—that is, had acted unconsciously, then it was the same as if I had not. If some conscious person had been watching, then the fact could be established. If, however, no one was looking, or looking on unconsciously, if the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been.[3]

And so life is reckoned as nothing. Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. 'If the whole complex lives of

many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been.' And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects *'unfamiliar'*, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*

The range of poetic (artistic) work extends from the sensory to the cognitive, from poetry to prose, from the concrete to the abstract: from Cervantes' Don Quixote–scholastic and poor nobleman, half consciously bearing his humiliation in the court of the duke–to the broad but empty Don Quixote of Turgenev; from Charlemagne to the name 'king' (in Russian 'Charles' and 'king' obviously derive from the same root, *korol*). The meaning of a work broadens to the extent that artfulness and artistry diminish; thus a fable symbolises more than a poem, and a proverb more than a fable. Consequently, the least self-contradictory part of Potebnya's theory is his treatment of the fable, which, from his point of view, he investigated thoroughly. But since his theory did not provide for 'expressive' works of art, he could not finish his book. As we know, *Notes on the Theory of Literature* was published in 1905, thirteen years after Potebnya's death. Potebnya himself completed only the section on the fable.[4]

After we see an object several times, we begin to recognize it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it[5]–hence we cannot say anything significant about it. Art removes objects from the automatism of perception in several ways. Here I want to illustrate a way used repeatedly by Leo Tolstoy, that writer who, for Merezhkovsky at least, seems to present things as if he himself saw them, saw them in their entirety, and did not alter them.

Tolstoy makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object. He describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, an event as if it were happening for the first time. In describing something he avoids the accepted names of its parts and instead names corresponding parts of other objects. For example, in 'Shame' Tolstoy 'defamiliarizes' the idea of flogging in this way: 'to strip people who have broken the law, to hurl them to the floor, and to rap on their bottoms with switches', and, after a few lines, 'to lash about on the naked buttocks'. Then he remarks:

> Just why precisely this stupid, savage means of causing pain and not any other–why not prick the shoulders or any part of the body with needles, squeeze the hands or the feet in a vice, or anything like that?

I apologize for this harsh example, but it is typical of Tolstoy's way of pricking the conscience. The familiar act of flogging is made unfamiliar both by the description and by the proposal to change its form without changing its nature. Tolstoy uses this technique of 'defamiliarization', constantly. The narrator of 'Kholstomer', for example, is a horse, and it is

the horse's point of view (rather than a person's) that makes the content of the story seem unfamiliar. Here is how the horse regards the institution of private property:

> I understood well what they said about whipping and Christianity. But then I was absolutely in the dark. What's the meaning of 'his own', 'his colt'? From these phrases I saw that people thought there was some sort of connection between me and the stable. At the time I simply could not understand the connection. Only much later, when they separated me from the other horses, did I begin to understand. But even then I simply could not see what it meant when they called me 'man's property'. The words 'my horse' referred to me, a living horse, and seemed as strange to me as the words 'my land', 'my air', 'my water'.
>
> But the words made a strong impression on me. I thought about them constantly, and only after the most diverse experiences with people did I understand, finally, what they meant. They meant this: In life people are guided by words, not by deeds. It's not so much that they love the possibility of doing or not doing something as it is the possibility of speaking with words, agreed on among themselves, about various topics. Such are the words 'my' and 'mine', which they apply to different things, creatures, objects, and even to land, people, and horses. They agree that only one may say 'mine' about this, that, or the other thing. And the one who says 'mine' about the greatest number of things is, according to the game which they've agreed to among themselves, the one they consider the most happy. I don't know the point of all this, but it's true. For a long time I tried to explain it to myself in terms of some kind of real gain, but I had to reject that explanation because it was wrong.
>
> Many of those, for instance, who called me their own never rode on me—although others did. And so with those who fed me. Then again, the coachman, the veterinarians, and the outsiders in general treated me kindly, yet those who called me their own did not. In due time, having widened the scope of my observations, I satisfied myself that the notion 'my', not only in relation to us horses, has no other basis than a narrow human instinct which is called a sense of or right to private property. A man says 'this house is mine' and never lives in it; he only worries about its construction and upkeep. A merchant says 'my shop', 'my dry goods shop', for instance, and does not even wear clothes made from the better cloth he keeps in his own shop.
>
> There are people who call a tract of land their own, but they never set eyes on it and never take a stroll on it. There are people who call others their own, yet never see them. And the whole relationship between them is that the so-called 'owners' treat the others unjustly.
>
> There are people who call women their own, or their 'wives', but their women live with other men. And people strive not for the good in life, but for goods they can call their own.
>
> I am now convinced that this is the essential difference between people and ourselves. And therefore, not even considering the other ways in which we are superior, but considering just this one virtue, we can bravely claim to stand higher than men on the ladder of living creatures. The actions of men, at least those with whom I have had dealings, are guided by *words*—ours, by deeds.

The horse is killed before the end of the story, but the manner of the narrative, its technique, does not change:

> Much later they put Serpukhovsky's body, which had experienced the world, which had eaten and drunk, into the ground. They could profitably send neither his hide, nor his flesh, nor his bones anywhere.

> But since his dead body, which had gone about in the world for twenty years, was a great burden to everyone, its burial was only a superfluous embarrassment for the people. For a long time no one had needed him, for a long time he had been a burden on all. But nevertheless, the dead who buried the dead found it necessary to dress this bloated body, which immediately began to rot, in a good uniform and good boots; to lay it in a good new coffin with new tassels at the four corners, then to place this new coffin in another of lead and ship it to Moscow; there to exhume ancient bones and at just that spot, to hide this putrefying body, swarming with maggots, in its new uniform and clean boots, and to cover it over completely with dirt.

Thus we see that at the end of the story Tolstoy continues to use the technique even though the motivation for it (the reason for its use) is gone.

The technique of defamiliarization is not Tolstoy's alone. I cited Tolstoy because his work is generally known.

Now having explained the nature of this technique, let us try to determine the approximate limits of its application. I personally feel that defamiliarization is found a almost everywhere form is found. In other words, the difference between Potebnya's point of view and ours is this: An image is not a permanent referent for those mutable complexities of life which are revealed through it; its purpose is not to make us perceive meaning, but to create a special perception of the object—*it creates a 'vision' of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it*.

Notes

1 Alexander Pogodin, *Yazyk kak tvorchestvo* (*Language as Art*) (Kharkov, 1913), p. 42. (The original sentence was in French, *'Les montaignes de la Suisse sont belles'*, with the appropriate initials.)
2 Jakubinsky, *Sborniki*, I (1916).
3 Leo Tolstoy's *Diary*, entry dated 1987 February 29. (The date is transcribed incorrectly; it should read 1897 March 1.)
4 Alexander Potebnya, *Iz lektsy po teorii slovesnosti* (*Lectures on the Theory of Language*) (Kharkov, 1914).
5 Victor Shklovsky, *Voskresheniye slova* (*The Resurrection of the Word*) (Petersburg, 1914).

6 | Cleanth Brooks,

From 'The Language of Paradox, *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947), pp. 292–304

Few of us are prepared to accept the statement that the language of poetry is the language of paradox. Paradox is the language of sophistry, hard,

bright, witty; it is hardly the language of the soul. We are willing to allow that paradox is a permissible weapon which a Chesterton may on occasion exploit. We may permit it in epigram, a special subvariety of poetry; and in satire, which though useful, we are hardly willing to allow to be poetry at all. Our prejudices force us to regard paradox as intellectual rather then emotional, clever rather than profound, rational rather than divinely irrational.

Yet there is a sense in which paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry. It is the scientist whose truth requires a language purged of every trace of paradox; apparently the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox. I overstate the case, to be sure; it is possible that the title of this chapter is itself to be treated as merely a paradox. But there are reasons for thinking that the overstatement which I propose may light up some elements in the nature of poetry which tend to be overlooked.

The case of William Wordsworth, for instance, is instructive on this point. His poetry would not appear to promise many examples of the language of paradox. He usually prefers the direct attack. He insists on simplicity; he distrusts whatever seems sophistical. And yet the typical Wordsworth poem is based upon a paradoxical situation. Consider his celebrated

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free
> The holy time is quiet as a Nun
> Breathless with adoration . . . .

The poet is filled with worship, but the girl who walks beside him is not worshipping. The implication is that she should respond to the holy time, and become like the evening itself, nunlike; but she seems less worshipful than inanimate nature itself. Yet

> If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
> Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
> Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
> And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
> God being with thee when we know it not.

The underlying paradox (of which the enthusiastic reader may well be unconscious) is nevertheless thoroughly necessary, even for that reader. Why does the innocent girl worship more deeply than the self-conscious poet who walks beside her? because she is filled with an unconscious sympathy for *all* of nature, not merely the grandiose and solemn. One remembers the lines from Wordsworth's friend, Coleridge:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small.

Her unconscious sympathy is the unconscious worship. She is in communion with nature 'all the year', and her devotion is continual whereas that of the poet is sporadic and momentary. But we have not done with the paradox yet. It not only underlies the poem, but something of the paradox informs

the poem, though, since this is Wordsworth, rather timidly. The comparison of the evening to the nun actually has more than one dimension. The calm of the evening obviously means 'worship', even to the dull-witted and insensitive. It corresponds to the trappings of the nun, visible to everyone. Thus, it suggests not merely holiness, but, in the total poem, even a hint of Pharisaical holiness, with which the girl's careless innocence, itself a symbol of her continual secret worship, stands in contrast.

Or consider Wordsworth's sonnet, *Composed upon Westminster Bridge.* I believe that most readers will agree that it is one of Wordsworth's most successful poems; yet most students have the greatest difficulty in accounting for its goodness. The attempt to account for it on the grounds of nobility of sentiment soon breaks down. On this level, the poem merely says: that the city in the morning light presents a picture which is majestic and touching to all but the most dull of souls; but the poem says very little more about the sight: the city is beautiful in the morning light and it is awfully still. The attempt to make a case for the poem in terms of the brilliance of its images also quickly breaks down: the student searches for graphic details in vain: there are next to no realistic touches. In fact, the poet simply huddles the details together:

> . . . silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields . . .

We get a blurred impression—points of roofs and pinnacles along the skyline, all twinkling in the morning light. More than that, the sonnet as a whole contains some very flat writing and some well-worn comparisons.

The reader may ask: Where, then, does the poem get its power? It gets it, it seems to me, from the paradoxical situation out of which the poem arises. The speaker is honestly surprised, and he manages to get some sense of awed surprise into the poem. It is odd to the poet that the city should be able to 'wear the beauty of the morning' at all. Mount Snowdon, Skiddaw, Mont Blanc—these wear it by natural right, but surely not grimy, feverish London. This is the point of the almost shocked exclamation:

> Never did sun more beautifully steep
> In his first splendour, *valley, rock,* or *hill* . . .

The 'smokeless air' reveals a city which the poet did not know existed: man-made London is a part of nature too, is lighted by the sun of nature, and lighted to as beautiful effect.

> The river glideth at his own sweet will . . .

A river is the most 'natural' thing that one can imagine; it has the elasticity, the curved line of nature itself. The poet had never been able to regard this one as a real river—now, uncluttered by barges, the river reveals itself as a natural thing, not at all disciplined into a rigid and mechanical pattern: it is like the daffodils, or the mountain brooks, artless, and whimsical, and 'natural' as they. The poem closes, you will remember, as follows:

Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

The city, in the poet's insight of the morning, has earned its right to be considered organic, not merely mechanical. That is why the stale metaphor of the sleeping houses is strangely renewed. The most exciting thing that the poet can say about the houses is that they are *asleep*. He has been in the habit of counting them dead–as just mechanical and inanimate; to say they are 'asleep' is to say that they are alive, that they participate in the life of nature. In the same way, the tired old metaphor which sees a great city as a pulsating heart of empire becomes revivified. It is only when the poet sees the city under the semblance of death that he can see it as actually alive–quick with the only life which he can accept, the organic life of 'nature'.

It is not my intention to exaggerate Wordsworth's own consciousness of the paradox involved. In this poem, he prefers, as is usual with him, the frontal attack. But the situation is paradoxical here as in so many of his poems. In his preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth stated that his general purpose was 'to choose incidents and situations from common life' but so to treat them that 'ordinary things should be preserved to the mind in an unusual aspect'. Coleridge was to state the purpose for him later, in terms which make even more evident Wordsworth's exploitation of the paradoxical: 'Mr Wordsworth . . . was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us . . .' Wordsworth, in short, was consciously attempting to show his audience that the common was really uncommon, the prosaic was really poetic.

Coleridge's terms, 'the charm of novelty to things of every day', 'awakening the mind', suggest the Romantic preoccupation with wonder–the surprise, the revelation which puts the tarnished familiar world in a new light. This may well be the *raison d' être* of most Romantic paradoxes; and yet the neo-classic poets use paradox for much the same reason. Consider Pope's lines from *The Essay on Man*:

In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his Reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much . . .

Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great Lord of all things, yet a Prey to all;
Sole Judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd;
The Glory, Jest, and Riddle of the world!

Here, it is true, the paradoxes insist on the irony, rather than the wonder. But Pope too might have claimed that he was treating the things of every day, man himself, and awakening his mind so that he would view himself in a new and blinding light. Thus, there is a certain awed wonder in Pope

just as there is a certain trace of irony implicit in the Wordsworth sonnets. There is, of course no reason why they should not occur together, and they do. Wonder and irony merge in many of the lyrics of Blake; they merge in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. The variations in emphasis are numerous. Gray's *Elegy* uses a typical Wordsworth 'situation' with the rural scene and with peasants contemplated in the light of their 'betters'. But in the *Elegy* the balance is heavily tilted in the direction of irony, the revelation an ironic rather than a startling one:

> Can storied urn or animated bust
> Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
> Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust?
> Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of Death?

But I am not here interested in enumerating the possible variations; I am interested rather in our seeing that the paradoxes spring from the very nature of the poet's language: it is a language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations. And I do not mean that the connotations are important as supplying some sort of frill or trimming, something external to the real matter in hand. I mean that the poet does not use a notation at all – as the scientist may properly be said to do so. The poet, within limits, has to make up his language as he goes.

T. S. Eliot has commented upon 'that perpetual slight alteration of language, *'words perpetually juxtaposed in new and sudden combinations'*, which occurs in poetry. It is perpetual; it cannot be kept out of the poem; it can only be directed and controlled. The tendency of science is necessarily to stabilize terms, to freeze them into strict denotations; the poet's tendency is by contrast disruptive.

The terms are continually modifying each other, and thus violating their dictionary meanings. To take a very simple example, consider the adjectives in the first lines of Wordsworth's evening sonnet: *beauteous, calm, free, holy, quiet, breathless*. The juxtapositions are hardly startling; and yet notice this: the evening is like a nun breathless with adoration. The adjective 'breathless' suggests tremendous excitement; and yet the evening is not only quiet but *calm*. There is no final contradiction, to be sure: it is *that* kind of calm and *that* kind of excitement, and the two states may well occur together. But the poet has no one term. Even if he had a polysyllabic technical term, the term would not provide the solution for his problem. He must work by contradiction and qualification.

We may approach the problem in this way: the poet has to work by analogies. All of the subtler states of emotion, as I. A. Richards has pointed out, necessarily demand metaphor for their expression. The poet must work by analogies, but the metaphors do not lie in the same plane or fit neatly edge to edge. There is a continual tilting of the planes; necessary overlappings, discrepancies, contradictions. Even the most direct and simple poet is forced into paradoxes far more often than we think, if we are sufficiently alive to what he is doing.

But in dilating on the difficulties of the poet's task, I do not want to leave the impression that it is a task which necessarily defeats him, or even that with his method he may not win to a fine precision. To use Shakespeare's figure, he can

> . . . with assays of bias
> By indirections find directions out.

Shakespeare had in mind the game of lawn bowls in which the bowl is distorted, a distortion which allows the skilful player to bowl a curve. To elaborate the figure, science makes use of the perfect sphere and its attack can be direct. The method of art can, I believe, never be direct–is always indirect. But that does not mean that the master of the game cannot place the bowl where he wants it. The serious difficulties will only occur when he confuses his game with that of science and mistakes the nature of his appropriate instrument. Mr Stuart Chase a few years ago, with a touching naïveté, urged us to take the distortion out of the bowl–to treat language like notation.

I have said that even the apparently simple and straightforward poet is forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument. Seeing this, we should not be surprised to find poets who consciously employ it to gain a compression and precision otherwise unobtainable. Such a method, like any other, carries with it its own perils. But the dangers are not overpowering: the poem is not predetermined to a shallow and glittering sophistry. The method is an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it.

I should like to refer the reader to a concrete case. Donne's *Canonization* ought to provide a sufficiently extreme instance. The basic metaphor which underlies the poem (and which is reflected in the title) involves a sort of paradox. For the poet daringly treats profane love as if it were divine love. The canonization is not that of a pair of holy anchorites who have renounced the world and the flesh. The hermitage of each is the other's body; but they do renounce the world, and so their title to sainthood is cunningly argued. The poem then is a parody of Christian sainthood; but it is an intensely serious parody of a sort that modern man, habituated as he is to an easy yes or no, can hardly understand. He refuses to accept the paradox as a serious rhetorical device; and since he is able to accept it only as a cheap trick, he is forced into this dilemma. Either: Donne does not take love seriously; here he is merely sharpening his wit as a sort of mechanical exercise. Or: Donne does not take sainthood seriously; here he is merely indulging in a cynical and bawdy parody.

Neither account is true; a reading of the poem will show that Donne takes both love and religion seriously; it will show, further, that the paradox is here his inevitable instrument. But to see this plainly will require a closer reading than most of us give to poetry.

The poem opens dramatically on a note of exasperation. The 'you' whom the speaker addresses is not identified. We can imagine that it is a person,

perhaps a friend, who is objecting to the speaker's love affair. At any rate, the person represents the practical world which regards love as a silly affectation. To use the metaphor on which the poem is built, the friend represents the secular world which the lovers have renounced.

Donne begins to suggest this metaphor in the first stanza by the contemptuous alternatives which he suggests to the friend:

> . . . chide my palsie, or my gout,
> My five gray haires, or ruin'd fortune flout . . .

The implications are: (1) All right, consider my love as an infirmity, as a disease, if you will, but confine yourself to my other infirmities, my palsy, my approaching old age, my ruined fortune. You stand a better chance of curing those; in chiding me for this one, you are simply wasting your time as well as mine. Why don't you pay attention to your own welfare—go on and get wealth and honour for yourself. What should you care if I do give these up in pursuing my love.

The two main categories of secular success are neatly, and contemptuously epitomized in the line:

> Or the Kings reall, or his stamped face . . .

Cultivate the court and gaze at the king's face there, or, if you prefer, get into business and look at his face stamped on coins. But let me alone.

This conflict between the 'real' world and the lover absorbed in the world of love runs through the poem; it dominates the second stanza in which the torments of love, so vivid to the lover, affect the real world not at all—

> What merchants ships have my sighs drown'd?

It is touched on in the fourth stanza in the contrast between the word 'Chronicle' which suggests secular history with its pomp and magnificence, the history of kings and princes, and the word 'sonnets' with its suggestions of trivial and precious intricacy. The conflict appears again in the last stanza, only to be resolved when the unworldly lovers, love's saints who have given up the world, paradoxically achieve a more intense world. But here the paradox is still contained in, and supported by, the dominant metaphor: so does the holy anchorite win a better world by giving up this one?

But before going on to discuss this development of the theme, it is important to see what else the second stanza does. For it is in this second stanza and the third, that the poet shifts the tone of the poem, modulating from the note of irritation with which the poem opens into the quite different tone with which it closes.

Donne accomplishes the modulation of tone by what may be called an analysis of love-metaphor. Here, as in many of his poems, he shows that he is thoroughly self-conscious about what he is doing. This second stanza he fills with the conventionalized figures of the Petrarchan tradition: the wind of lovers' sighs, the floods of lovers' tears, etc.—extravagant figures with which the contemptuous secular friend might be expected to tease the

lover. The implication is that the poet himself recognizes the absurdity of the Petrarchan love metaphors. But what of it? The very absurdity of the jargon which lovers are expected to talk makes for his argument: their love, however absurd it may appear to the world, does no harm to the world. The practical friend need have no fears: there will still be wars to fight and lawsuits to argue.

The opening of the third stanza suggests that this vein of irony is to be maintained. The poet points out to his friend the infinite fund of such absurdities which can be applied to lovers:

> Call her one, mee another flye,
> We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die . . . .

For that matter, the lovers can conjure up for themselves plenty of such fantastic comparisons: *they* know what the world thinks of them. But these figures of the third stanza are no longer the threadbare Petrarchan conventionalities; they have sharpness and bite. The last one, the likening of the lovers to the phoenix, is fully serious, and with it, the tone has shifted from ironic banter into a defiant but controlled tenderness.

The effect of the poet's implied awareness of the lovers' apparent madness is to cleanse and revivify metaphor; to indicate the sense in which the poet accepts it, and thus to prepare us for accepting seriously the fine and seriously intended metaphors which dominate the last two stanzas of the poem.

The opening line of the fourth stanza,

> Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,

achieves an effect of tenderness and deliberate resolution. The lovers are ready to die to the world; they are committed; they are not callow but confident. (The basic metaphor of the saint, one notices, is being carried on; the lovers, in their renunciation of the world, have something of the confident resolution of the saint. By the bye, the word 'legend'–

> . . . if unfit for tombes and hearse
> Our legend bee–

in Donne's time meant 'the life of a saint'.) The lovers are willing to forego the ponderous and stately chronicle and to accept the trifling and insubstantial 'sonnet' instead; but then if the urn be well wrought, it provides a finer memorial for one's ashes than does the pompous and grotesque monument. With the finely contemptuous, yet quiet phrase, 'halfe-acre tombes', the world which the lovers reject expands into something gross and vulgar. But the figure works further; the pretty sonnets will not merely hold their ashes as a decent earthly memorial. Their legend, their story, will gain them canonization; and approved as love's saints, other lovers will invoke them.

In the last stanza, the theme receives a final complication. The lovers in rejecting life actually win to the most intense life. This paradox has been hinted at earlier in the phoenix metaphor. Here it receives a powerful

dramatization. The lovers in becoming hermits, find that they have not lost the world, but have gained the world in each other, now a more intense, more meaningful world. Donne is not content to treat the lovers' discovery as something which comes to them passively, but rather as something which they actively achieve. They are like the saint, God's athlete:

> Who did the whole worlds soule *contract*, and *drove*
> Into the glasses of your eyes . . . .

The image is that of a violent squeezing as of a powerful hand. And what do the lovers 'drive' into each other's eyes? The 'Countries, Townes', and 'Courts', which they renounced in the first stanza of the poem. The unworldly lovers thus become the most 'worldly' of all.

The tone with which the poem closes is one of triumphant achievement, but the tone is a development contributed to by various earlier elements. One of the more important elements which works towards our acceptance of the final paradox is the figure of the phoenix, which will bear a little further analysis.

The comparison of the lovers to the phoenix is very skilfully related to the two earlier comparisons, that in which the lovers are like burning tapers, and that in which they are like the eagle and the dove. The phoenix comparison gathers up both: the phoenix is a bird, and like the tapers, it burns. We have a selected series of items: the phoenix figure seems to come in a natural stream of association. 'Call us what you will', the lover says, and rattles off in his desperation the first comparisons that occur to him. The comparison to the phoenix seems thus merely another outlandish one, the most outrageous of all. But it is this most fantastic one, stumbled over apparently in his haste, that the poet goes on to develop. It really describes the lovers best and justifies their renunciation. For the phoenix is not two but one, 'we two being one, are it'; and it burns, not like the taper at its own cost, but to live again. Its death is life: 'Wee dye rise the same . . .' The poet literally justifies the fantastic assertion. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to 'die' means to experience the consummation of the act of love. The lovers after the act are the same. Their love is not exhausted in mere lust. This is their title to canonization. Their love is like the phoenix.

I hope that I do not seem to juggle the meaning of *die*. The meaning that I have cited can be abundantly justified in the literature of the period; Shakespeare uses 'die' in this sense; so does Dryden. Moreover, I do not think that I give it undue emphasis. The word is in a crucial position. On it is pivoted the transition to the next stanza,

> Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,
> And if unfit for tombes . . .

Most important of all, the sexual submeaning of 'die' does not contradict the other meanings: the poet is saying: 'Our death is really a more intense life'; 'We can afford to trade life (the world) for death (love), for that death is the consummation of life'; 'After all, one does not expect to live by love, one expects, and wants, to die *by* it'. But in the total passage he is also

saying: 'Because our love is not mundane, we can give up the world'; 'Because our love is not merely lust, we can give up the other lusts, the lust for wealth and power'; 'because', and this is said with an inflection of irony as by one who knows the world too well, 'because our love can outlast its consummation, we are a minor miracle, we are love's saints'. This passage with its ironical tenderness and its realism feeds and supports the brilliant paradox with which the poem closes.

There is one more factor in developing and sustaining the final effect. The poem is an instance of the doctrine which it asserts; it is both the assertion and the realization of the assertion. The poet has actually before our eyes built within the song the 'pretty room' with which he says the lovers can be content. The poem itself is the well-wrought urn which can hold the lovers' ashes and which will not suffer in comparison with the prince's 'halfe-acre tomb'.

And how necessary are the paradoxes? Donne might have said directly, 'Love in a cottage is enough'. *The Canonization* contains this admirable thesis, but it contains a great deal more. He might have been as forthright as a later lyricist who wrote, 'We'll build a sweet little nest,/Somewhere out in the West,/And let the rest of the world go by'. He might even have imitated that more metaphysical lyric, which maintains, 'You're the cream in my coffee'. *The Canonization* touches on all these observations, but it goes beyond them, not merely in dignity, but in precision.

I submit that the only way by which the poet could say what *The Canonization* says is by paradox. More direct methods may be tempting, but all of them enfeeble and distort what is to be said. This statement may seem the less surprising when we reflect on how many of the important things which the poet has to say have to be said by means of paradox: most of the language of lovers is such–*The Canonization* is a good example; so is most of the language of religion–'He who would save his life, must lose it'; 'The last shall be first'. Indeed, almost any insight important enough to warrant a great poem apparently has to be stated in such terms. Deprived of the character of paradox with its twin concomitants of irony and wonder, the matter of Donne's poem unravels into 'facts', biological, sociological, and economic. What happens to Donne's lovers if we consider them 'scientifically', without benefit of the supernaturalism which the poet confers upon them? Well, what happens to Shakespeare's lovers, for Shakespeare uses the basic metaphor of *The Canonization* in his *Romeo and Juliet*? In their first conversation, the lovers play with the analogy between the lover and the pilgrim to the Holy Land. Juliet says:

> For saints have hands, that pilgrims' hands do touch
> And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Considered scientifically, the lovers become Mr Aldous Huxley's animals, 'quietly sweating, palm to palm'.

For us today, Donne's imagination seems obsessed with the problem of unity; the sense in which the lovers become one–the sense in which the

soul is united with God. Frequently, as we have seen, one type of union becomes a metaphor for the other. It may not be too far-fetched to see both as instances of and metaphors for, the union which the creative imagination itself effects. For that fusion is not logical; it apparently violates science and common sense; it welds together the discordant and the contradictory. Coleridge has of course given us the classic description of its nature and power. It

> reveals itself in the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order

It is a great and illuminating statement, but is a series of paradoxes. Apparently Coleridge could describe the effect of the imagination in no other way.

Shakespeare, in one of his poems, has given a description that oddly parallels that of Coleridge.

> Reason in it selfe confounded,
> Saw Division grow together,
> To themselves yet either neither,
> Simple were so well compounded.

I do not know what his *The Phoenix and the Turtle* celebrates. Perhaps it *was* written to honour the marriage of Sir John Salisbury and Ursula Stanley; or perhaps the Phoenix is Lucy, Countess of Bedford; or perhaps the poem is merely an essay on Platonic love. But the scholars themselves are so uncertain, that I think we will do little violence to established habits of thinking, if we boldly pre-empt the poem for our own purposes. Certainly the poem is an instance of that magic power which Coleridge sought to describe. I propose that we take it for a moment as a poem about that power;

> So they loved as love in twaine,
> Had the essence but in one,
> Two distincts, Division none,
> Number there in love was slaine.
> Hearts remote, yet not asunder,
> Distance and no space was seene,
> Twixt this *Turtle* and his Queene;
> But in them it were a wonder. . . .
>
> Propertie was thus appalled,
> That the selfe was not the same;
> Single Natures double name,
> Neither two nor one was called.

Precisely! The nature is single, one, unified. But the name is double, and today with our multiplication of sciences, it is multiple. If the poet is to be true to his poetry, he must call it neither two nor one: the paradox is his only solution. The difficulty has intensified since Shakespeare's day: the timid poet, when confronted with the problem of 'Single Nature's double

name', has too often funked it. A history of poetry from Dryden's time to our own might bear as its subtitle 'The Half-Hearted Phoenix'.

In Shakespeare's poem, Reason is 'in it selfe confounded' at the union of the Phoenix and the Turtle; but it recovers to admit its own bankruptcy:

> Love hath Reason, Reason none,
> If what parts, can so remaine. . . .

and it is Reason which goes on to utter the beautiful threnos with which the poem concludes:

> Beautie, Truth, and Raritie,
> Grace in all simplicitie,
> Here enclosde, in cinders lie.
>
> Death is now the *Phoenix* nest,
> And the *Turtles* loyall brest,
> To eternitie doth rest. . . .
>
> Truth may seeme, but cannot be,
> Beautie bragge, but tis not she,
> Truth and Beautie buried be.
>
> To this urne let those repaire,
> That are either true or faire,
> For these dead Birds, sigh a prayer.

Having pre-empted the poem for our own purposes, it may not be too outrageous to go on to make one further observation. The urn to which we are summoned, the urn which holds the ashes of the phoenix, is like the well-wrought urn of Donne's *Canonization* which holds the phoenix-lovers' ashes; it is the poem itself. One is reminded of still another urn, Keats's Grecian urn, which contained for Keats, Truth and Beauty, as Shakespeare's urn encloses 'Beautie, Truth, and Raritie'. But there is a sense in which all such well-wrought urns contain the ashes of a phoenix. The urns are not meant for memorial purposes only, though that often seems to be their chief significance to the professors of literature. The phoenix rises from its ashes; or ought to rise; but it will not arise for all our mere sifting and measuring the ashes, or testing them for their chemical content. We must be prepared to accept the paradox of the imagination itself; else 'Beautie, Truth, and Raritie' remain enclosed in their cinders and we shall end with essential cinders, for all our pains.

The Canonization

> For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love,
> Or chide my palsie, or my gout,
> My five gray haires, or ruin'd fortune flout,
> With wealth your state, your minde with Arts improve,
> Take you a course, get you a place,
> Observe his honour, or his grace,
> Or the Kings reall, or his stamped face

Contemplate, what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who's injur'd by my love?
What merchants ships have my sighs drown'd?
Who saies my teares have overflow'd his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veines fill
Adde one more to the plaguie Bill?
Soldiers finde warres, and Lawyers finde out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, wee are made such by love;
Call her one, me another flye,
We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die,
And wee in us finde the Eagle and the Dove.
The phoenix ridle hath more wit
By us, we two being one, are it.
So to one neutrall thing both sexes fit,
We dye and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tombes and hearse
Our legend bee, it will be fit for verse;
And if no peece of Chronicle wee prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty roomes;
As well a well wrought urne becomes
The greatest ashes, as halfe-acre tombes,
And by these hymnes, all shall approve
Us Canoniz'd for Love:

And thus invoke us; You whom reverend love
Made one anothers hermitage;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
Who did the whole worlds soule contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes
(So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize,)
Countries, Townes, Courts: Beg from above
A patterne or your love!

7 | Gérard Genette,

From *Narrative Discourse*, J. Lewin tr. (1980), pp. 212–27.

Voice

The Narrating Instance

'For a long time I used to go to bed early': obviously, such a statement–unlike, let us say, 'Water boils at one-hundred degrees Celsius' or 'The sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles'–can be interpreted only with respect to the person who utters it and the situation in which he utters it. *I* is identifiable only with reference to that person, and the completed past of the 'action' told is completed only in relation to the moment of utterance. To use Benveniste's well-known terms again, the *story* here is not without a share of *discourse*, and it is not too difficult to show that this is practically always the case.[1] Even historical narrative of the type 'Napoleon died at Saint Helena' implies in its preterite that the story precedes the narrating, and I am not certain that the present tense in 'Water boils at one-hundred degrees' (iterative narrative) is as atemporal as it seems. Nevertheless, the importance or the relevance of these implications is essentially variable, and this variability can justify or impose distinctions and contrasts that have at least an operative value. When I read *Gambara* or *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, I am interested in a story, and care little to know who tells it, where, and when; if I read *Facino Cane*, at no time can I overlook the presence of the narrator in the story he tells; if it is *La Maison Nucingen*, the author makes it his business to draw my attention to the person of the talker Bixiou and the group of listeners he addresses; if it is *L'Auberge rouge*, I will undoubtedly give less attention to the foreseeable unfolding of the story Hermann tells than to the reactions of a listener named Taillefer, for the narrative is on two levels, and the second–*where someone narrates*–is where most of the drama's excitement is.

This kind of effect is what we are going to look at under the category of *voice*: 'the mode of action', says Vendryés, 'of the verb considered for its relations to the subject'–the subject here being not only the person who carries out or submits to the action, but also the person (the same one or another) who reports it, and, if need be, all those people who participate, even though passively, in this narrating activity. We know that linguistics has taken its time in addressing the task of accounting for what Benveniste has called *subjectivity in language*,[2] that is, in passing from analysis of statements to analysis of relations between these statements and their

generating instance—what today we call their *enunciating*. It seems that poetics is experiencing a comparable difficulty in approaching the generating instance of narrative discourse, an instance for which we have reserved the parallel term *narrating*. This difficulty is shown especially by a sort of hesitation, no doubt an unconscious one, to recognize and respect the autonomy of that instance, or even simply its specificity. On the one hand, as we have already noted, critics restrict questions of narrative enunciating to questions of 'point of view'; on the other hand they identify the narrating instance with the instance of 'writing', the narrator with the author, and the recipient of the narrative with the reader of the work:[3] a confusion that is perhaps legitimate in the case of a historical narrative or a real autobiography, but not when we are dealing with a narrative of fiction, where the role of narrator is itself fictive, even if assumed directly by the author, and where the supposed narrating situation can be very different from the act of writing (or of dictating) which refers to it. It is not the Abbé Prévost who tells the love of Manon and Des Grieux, it is not even the Marquis de Renoncourt, supposed author of the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*; it is Des Grieux himself, in an oral narrative where 'I' can designate only him, and where 'here' and 'now' refer to the spatio-temporal circumstances of that narrating and in no way to the circumstances of the writing of *Manon Lescaut* by its real author. And even the references in *Tristram Shandy* to the situation of writing speak to the (fictive) act of Tristram and not the (real) one of Sterne; but in a more subtle and also more radical way, the narrator of *Père Goriot* 'is' not Balzac, even if here and there he expresses Balzac's opinions, for this author-narrator is someone who 'knows' the Vauquer boardinghouse, its landlady and its lodgers, whereas all Balzac himself does is imagine them; and in this sense, of course, the narrating situation of a fictional account is *never* reduced to its situation of writing.

So it is this narrating instance that we have still to look at, according to the traces it has left—the traces it is considered to have left—in the narrative discourse it is considered to have produced. But it goes without saying that the instance does not necessarily remain identical and invariable in the course of a single narrative work. Most of *Manon Lescaut* is told by Des Grieux, but some pages revert to M. de Renoncourt; inversely, most of the *Odyssey* is told by 'Homer' but Books IX–XII revert to Ulysses; and the baroque novel, *The Thousand and One Nights*, and *Lord Jim* have accustomed us to much more complex situations.[4] Narrative analysis must obviously take charge of the study of these modifications—or of these permanences: for if it is remarkable that Ulysses' adventures are told by two different narrators, it is proper to find it just as noteworthy that the loves of Swann and of Marcel are told by the same narrator.

A narrating situation is, like any other, a complex whole within which analysis, or simply description, cannot *differentiate* except by ripping apart a tight web of connections among the narrating act, its protagonists, its spatio-temporal determinations, its relationship to the other narrating

situations involved in the same narrative, etc. The demands of exposition constrain us to this unavoidable violence simply by the fact that critical discourse, like any other discourse, cannot say everything at once. Here again, therefore, we will look successively at elements of definition whose actual functioning is simultaneous: we will attach these elements, for the most part, to the categories of *time of the narrating*, *narrative level*, and *'person'* (that is, relations between the narrator–plus, should the occasion arise, his or their narratee[s][5]–and the story he tells).

Time of the Narrating

By a dissymmetry whose underlying reasons escape us but which is inscribed in the very structures of language (or at the very least of the main 'languages of civilization' of Western culture), I can very well tell a story without specifying the place where it happens, and whether this place is more or less distant from the place where I am telling it; nevertheless, it is almost impossible for me not to locate the story in time with respect to my narrating act, since I must necessarily tell the story in a present, past, or future tense.[6] This is perhaps why the temporal determinations of the narrating instance are manifestly more important than its spatial determinations. With the exception of second-degree narratings, whose setting is generally indicated by the diegetic context (Ulysses with the Phaeacians, the landlady of *Jacques le fataliste* in her inn), the narrating place is very rarely specified, and is almost never relevant:[7] we know more or less where Proust wrote the *Recherche du temps perdu*, but we are ignorant of where Marcel is considered to have produced the narrative of his life, and we scarcely think of worrying about it. On the other hand, it is very important to us to know, for example, how much time elapses between the first scene of the *Recherche* (the 'drama of going to bed') and the moment when it is evoked in these terms: 'Many years have passed since that night. The wall of the staircase, up which I had watched the light of his candle gradually climb, was long ago demolished'; for this temporal interval, and what fills it up and gives it life, is an essential element in the narrative's significance.

The chief temporal determination of the narrating instance is obviously its position relative to the story. It seems evident that the narrating can only be subsequent to what it tells, but this obviousness has been belied for many centuries by the existence of 'predictive' narrative[8] in its various forms (prophetic, apocalyptic, oracular, astrological, chiromantic, cartomantic, oneiromantic, etc.), whose origin is lost in the darkness of time–and has been belied also, at least since *Les Lauriers sont coupés*, by the use of narrative in the present tense. We must consider, further, that a past-tense narrating can to some extent be split up and inserted between the various moments of the story, much like a 'live' running commentary[9] – a common practice with correspondence and private diary, and therefore with the 'novel by letters' or the narrative in the form of a journal (*Wuthering Heights, Journal*

d' un curé de campagne). It is therefore necessary, merely from the point of view of temporal position, to differentiate four types of narrating: *subsequent* (the classical position of the past-tense narrative, undoubtedly far and away the most frequent); *prior* (predictive narrative, generally in the future tense, but not prohibited from being conjugated in the present, like Jocabel's dream in *Moyse sauvé*); *simultaneous* (narrative in the present contemporaneous with the action); and *interpolated* (between the moments of the action).

The last type is *a priori* the most complex, since it involves a narrating with several instances, and since the story and the narrating can become entangled in such a way that the latter has an effect on the former. This is what happens particularly in the epistolary novel with several correspondents,[10] where, as we know, the letter is at the same time both a medium of the narrative and an element in the plot.[11] This type of narrating can also be the most delicate, indeed, the one most refractory to analysis, as for example when the journal form loosens up to result in a sort of monologue after the event, with an indefinite, even incoherent, temporal position: attentive readers of *L'Etranger* have not missed these uncertainties, which are one of the audacities – perhaps unintentional – of that narrative.[12] Finally, the extreme closeness of story to narrating produces here, most often,[13] a very subtle effect of friction (if I may call it that) between the slight temporal displacement of the narrative of events ('Here is what happened to me today') and the complete simultaneousness in the report of thoughts and feelings ('Here is what I think about it this evening'). The journal and the epistolary confidence constantly combine what in broadcasting language is called the live and the prerecorded account, the quasi-interior monologue and the account after the event. Here, the narrator is at one and the same time still the hero and already someone else: the events of the day are already in the past, and the 'point of view' may have been modified since then; the feelings of the evening or the next day are fully of the present, and here focalization through the narrator is at the same time focalization through the hero. Cécile Volanges writes to Mme. de Merteuil to tell her how she was seduced, last night, by Valmont, and to confide to her her remorse; the seduction scene is past, and with it the confusion that Cécile no longer feels, and can no longer even imagine; what remains is the shame, and a sort of stupor which is both incomprehension and discovery of oneself: 'What I reproach myself for most, and what, however, I must talk to you about, is that I am afraid I didn't defend myself as much as I could have. I don't know how that happened: surely I don't love M. de Valmont, very much the opposite; and there were moments when I acted as if I did love him . . . .'[14] The Cécile of yesterday, very near and already far off, is seen and spoken of by the Cécile of today. We have here two successive heroines (only) the second of whom is (also) the narrator and gives her point of view, the point of view – displaced just enough to create dissonance – of the immediate *post-event* future.[15] We know how the eighteenth-century novel, from *Pamela* to *Obermann*, exploited that narrative situation propitious to

JE VOIS TOUT - Aliam

the most subtle and the most 'irritating' counterpoints: the situation of the tiniest temporal interval.

The third type (simultaneous narrating), by contrast, is in principle the simplest, since the rigorous simultaneousness of story and narrating eliminates any sort of interference or temporal game. We must observe, however, that the blending of the instances can function here in two opposite directions, according to whether the emphasis is put on the story or on the narrative discourse. A present-tense narrative which is 'behaviorist' in type and strictly of the moment can seem like the height of objectivity, since the last trace of enunciating that still subsisted in the Hemingway-style narrative (the mark of temporal interval between story and narrating, which the use of the preterite unavoidably comprises) now disappears in a total transparency of the narrative, which finally fades ways in favor of the story. That is how the works that come under the heading of the French 'new novel', and especially Robbe-Grillet's early novels,[16] have generally been received: 'objective literature', 'school of the look' – these designations express well the sense of the narrating's absolute transitivity which a generalized use of the present tense promotes. But inversely, if the emphasis rests on the narrating itself, as in narratives of 'interior monologue', the simultaneousness operates in favor of the discourse; and then it is the action that seems reduced to the condition of simple pretext, and ultimately abolished. This effect was already noticeable in Dujardin, and became more marked in a Beckett, a Claude Simon, a Roger Laporte. So it is as if use of the present tense, bringing the instances together, had the effect of unbalancing their equilibrium and allowing the whole of the narrative to tip, according to the slightest shifting of emphasis, either onto the side of the story or onto the side of the narrating, that is, the discourse. And the facility with which the French novel in recent years has passed from one extreme to the other perhaps illustrates this ambivalence and reversibility.[17]

The second type (prior narrating) has until now enjoyed a much smaller literary investment than the others, and certainly even novels of anticipation, from Wells to Bradbury—which nevertheless belong fully to the prophetic genre—almost always postdate their narrating instances, making them implicitly subsequent to their stories (which indeed illustrates the autonomy of this fictive instance with respect to the moment of actual writing). Predictive narrative hardly appears at all in the literary corpus except on the second level: examples, in Saint-Amant's *Moyse sauvé*, are Aaron's prophetic narrative (sixth part) and Jocabel's long premonitory dream (fourth, fifth, and sixth parts), both of which are connected with Moses' future. [18] The common characteristic of these second narratives is obviously that they are predictive in relation to the immediate narrating instance (Aaron, Jocabel's dream) but not in relation to the final instance (the implied author of *Moyse sauvé*, who explicitly identifies himself with Saint-Amant): clear examples of prediction after the event.

Subsequent narrating (the first type) is what presides over the immense majority of the narratives produced to this day. The use of a past tense is

enough to make a narrative subsequent, although without indicating the temporal interval which separates the moment of the narrating from the moment of the story.[19] In classical 'third-person' narrative, this interval appears generally indeterminate, and the question irrelevant, the preterite marking a sort of ageless past:[20] the story can be dated, as it often is in Balzac, without the narrating being so.[21] It sometimes happens, however, that a relative contemporaneity of story time and narrating time is disclosed by the use of the present tense, either at the beginning, as in *Tom Jones*[22] or *Le Pére Goriot*,[23] or at the end , as in *Eugénie Grandet*[24] or *Madame Bovary*.[25] These effects of final convergence (the more striking of the two types) play on the fact that the very length of the story gradually lessens the interval separating it from the moment of the narrating. But the power of these final convergences results from their unexpected disclosure of a temporal isotopy (which, being temporal, is also to a certain extent diegetic) between the story and its narrator, an isotopy which until then was hidden (or, in the case of *Bovary*, long forgotten). In 'first-person'narrative, on the other hand, this isotopy is evident from the beginning, where the narrator is presented right away as a character in the story, and where the final convergence is the rule,[26] in accordance with a mode that the last paragraph of *Robinson Crusoe* can furnish us with a paradigm of: 'And here, resolving to harrass my self no more, I am preparing for a longer Journey than all these, having liv'd 72 Years, a Life of infinite Variety, and learn'd sufficiently to know the Value of Retirement, and the Blessing of ending our Days in Peace.[27] No dramatic effect here, unless the final situation should itself be a violent denouement, as an *Double Indemnity*, in which the hero writes the last line of his confession-narrative before slipping with his accomplice into the ocean where a shark awaits them: 'I didn't hear the stateroom door open, but she's beside me now while I'm writing. I can feel her./The moon.[28]

In order for the story to overtake the narrating in this way, the duration of the latter must of course not exceed the duration of the former. Take Tristram's comic aporia: in one year of writing having succeeded in telling only the first day of his life, he observes that he has gotten 364 days behind, that he has therefore moved backward rather than forward, and that, living 364 times faster than he writes, it follows that the more he writes the more there remains for him to write; that, in short, his undertaking is hopeless.[29] Faultless reasoning, whose premises are not at all absurd. Telling takes time (Scheherazade's life hangs by that one thread), and when a novelist puts on his stage an oral narrating in the second degree, he rarely fails to take that into account: many things happen at the inn while the landlady of *Jacques* tells the story of the Marquis des Arcis, and the first part of *Manon Lescaut* ends with the remark that since the Chevalier spent more than an hour on his tale, he certainly needs supper in order to 'get a little rest'. We have a few reasons to think that Prévost, for his part, spent much more than an hour writing those some one-hundred pages, and we know, for example, that Flaubert needed almost five years to write *Madame Bovary*. Nevertheless–and this is finally very odd–the fictive narrating of that

narrative, as with almost all the novels in the world except *Tristram Shandy*, is considered to have no duration; or more exactly, everything takes place as if the question of its duration had no relevance. One of the fictions of literary narrating—perhaps the most powerful one, because it passes unnoticed, so to speak—is that the narrating involves an instantaneous action, without a temporal dimension. Sometimes it is dated, but it is never measured: we know that M. Homais has just received the cross of the Legion of Honor at the moment when the narrator writes that last sentence, but we do not know what was happening while the narrator was writing his first one. Indeed, we even know that this question is absurd: nothing is held to separate those two moments of the narrating instance except the atemporal space of the narrative as text. Contrary to simultaneous or interpolated narrating, which exist through their duration and the relations between that duration and the story's subsequent narrating exists through this paradox: it possesses at the same time a temporal situation (with respect to the past story) and an atemporal essence (since it has no duration proper).[30] Like Proustian reminiscence, it is rapture, 'a moment brief as a flash of lightning', a miraculous syncope, 'a minute freed from the order of [T]ime'.[31]

The narrating instance of the *Recherche* obviously corresponds to this last type. We know that Proust spent more than ten years writing his novel, but Marcel's act of narrating bears no mark of duration, or of division: it is instantaneous. The narrator's present, which on almost every page we find mingled with the hero's various pasts, is a single moment without progression. Marcel Muller thought he found in Germaine Brée the hypothesis of a double narrating instance—before and after the final revelation—but this hypothesis has no basis, and in fact all I see in Germaine Brée is an improper (although common) use of 'narrator' for *hero*, which perhaps led Muller into error on that point.[32] As for the feelings expressed on the final pages of *Swann*, which we know do not correspond to the narrator's final conviction, Muller himself shows very well that they do not at all prove the existence of a narrating instance poir to the revelation;[33] on the contrary, the letter to Jacques Rivière quoted above[34] shows that Proust was anxious to tune the narrator's discourse to the hero's 'errors', and thus to impute to the narrator a belief not his own, in order to avoid disclosing his own mind too early. Even the narrative Marcel produces after the Guermantes soirée, the narrative of his beginnings as a writer (seclusion, rough drafts, first reactions of readers), which necessarily takes into account the length of writing ('like him too, . . . I had something to write. But my task was longer than his, my words had to reach more than a single person. My task was long. By day, the most I could hope for was to try to sleep. If I worked, it would be only at night. But I should need many nights, a hundred perhaps, or even a thousand')[35] and the interrupting fear of death—even this narrative does not gainsay the fictive instantaneousness of its narrating: for the book Marcel then begins to write *in the*

story cannot legitimately be identified with the one Marcel has then almost finished writing *as narrative* – and which is the *Recherche* itself. Writing the fictive book, which is the subject of the narrative, is, like writing every book, a 'task [that] was long'. But the actual book the narrative-book, does not have knowledge of its own 'length': it does away with its own duration.

The present of Proustian narrating–from 1909 to 1922–corresponds to many of the 'presents' of the writing, and we know that almost a third of the book–including, as it happens, the final pages–was written by 1913. The fictive moment of narrating has thus *in fact* shifted in the course of the real writing; today it is no longer what it was in 1913, at the moment when Proust thought his work concluded for the Grasset edition. Therefore the temporal intervals he had in mind–and wanted to signify–when he wrote, for example apropos of the bedtime scene, 'Many years have passed since that night', or apropos of the resurrection of Combray by the madeleine, 'I can measure the resistance, I can hear the echo of great spaces traversed' – these spaces have increased by more than ten years simply because the story's time has lengthened: the signified of these sentences is no longer the same. Whence certain irreducible contradictions like this one: the narrator's *today* is obviously, for us, later than the war, but the 'Paris today' of the last pages of *Swann* remains in its historical determinations (its referential content) a prewar Paris, as it was seen and described in its better days. The novelistic *signified* (the moment of the narrating) has become something like 1925, but the historical *referent*, which corresponds to the moment of the writing, did not keep pace and continues to say: 1913. Narrative analysis must register these shifts–and the resulting discordances–as effects of the actual genesis of the work; but in the end analysis can look at the narrating instance only as it is given in the final state of the text, as a single moment without duration, necessarily placed several years after the last 'scene', therefore after the war, and even, as we have seen,[36] after the death of Marcel Proust. This paradox, let us remember, is not one: Marcel is not Proust, and nothing requires him to die with Proust. What is required, on the other hand, is that Marcel spend 'many years' after 1916 in a clinic, which necessarily puts his return to Paris and the Guermantes matinée in 1921 at the earliest, and the meeting with an Odette 'showing signs of senility' in 1923.[37] That consequence is a must.

Between this single narrating instant and the different moments of the story, the interval is necessarily variable. If 'many years' have elapsed since the bedtime scene in Combray, it is only 'of late' that the narrator has again begun to hear his childhood sobs, and the interval separating the narrating instant from the Guermantes matinée is obviously smaller than the interval separating narrating instant and the hero's first arrival in Balbec. The system of language, the uniform use of the past tense, does not allow this gradual shrinking to be imprinted in the very texture of the narrative discourse, but we have seen that to a certain extent Proust had succeeded in making it felt, by modifications in the temporal pacing of the narrative:

gradual disappearance of the iterative, lengthening of the singulative scenes, increasing discontinuity, accentuation of the rhythm – as if the story time were tending to dilate and make itself more and more conspicuous while drawing near its end, *which is also its origin*.

According to what we have already seen to be the common practice of 'autobiographical' narrating, we could expect to see the narrative bring its hero to the point where the narrator awaits him, in order that these two hypostases might meet and finally merge. People have sometimes, a little quickly, claimed that this is what happens.[38] In fact, as Marcel Muller well notes, 'between the day of the reception at the Princess's and the day when the Narrator recounts that reception there extends a whole era which maintains a gap between the Hero and the Narrator, a gap that cannot be bridged: the verbal forms in the conclusion of the *Temps retrouvé* are all in the past tense.[39] The narrator brings his hero's story – his own story – precisely to the point when, as Jean Rousset says, 'the hero is about to become the narrator';[40] I would say rather, *is beginning to become* the narrator, since he actually starts in on his writing. Muller writes that 'if the Hero overtakes the Narrator, it is like an asymptote: the interval separating them approaches zero, but will never reach it', but his image connotes a Sterneian play on the two durations that does not in fact exist in Proust. There is simply the narrative's halt at the point when the hero has discovered the truth and the meaning of his life: at the point, therefore, when this 'story of a vocation' – which let us remember, is the avowed subject of Proustian narrative – comes to an end. The rest, whose outcome is already known to us by the very novel that concludes here, no longer belongs to the 'vocation' but to the effort that follows it up, and must therefore be only sketched in. The subject of the *Recherche* is indeed 'Marcel becomes a writer', not 'Marcel the writer': the *Recherche* remains a novel of development, and to see it as a 'novel about the novelist', like the *Faux Monnayeurs* [*The Counterfeiters*], would be to distort its intentions and above all to violate its meaning; it is a novel about the future novelist. 'The continuation', Hegel said, precisely apropos of the Bildungsroman, 'no longer has anything novelistic about it.' Proust probably would have been glad to apply that formulation to his own narrative: what is novelistic is the quest, the *search* [*recherche*], which ends at the discovery (the revelation), not at the use to which that discovery will afterward be put. The final discovery of the truth, the late encounter with the vocation, like the happiness of lovers reunited, can be only a denouement, not an interim stopping place; and in this sense, the subject of the *Recherche* is indeed a traditional subject. So it is necessary that the narrative be interrupted before the hero overtakes the narrator; it is inconceivable for them both together to write: The End. The narrator's last sentence is when – is *that* – the hero finally reaches his first. The interval between the end of the story and the moment of the narrating is therefore the time it takes the hero to write this book, which is and is not the book the narrator, in his turn, reveals to us in a moment brief as a flash of lightning.

Notes

1 On this subject see Gérard Genette, *Figures II*, pp. 61–9.
2 Benveniste, 'Subjectivity in Language', *Problems*, pp. 223–30.
3 For example Todorov, 'Les Catégories du récit littéraire', pp. 146–7
4 On the *Thousand and One Nights*, see Todorov, 'Narrative-Men', in *Poetics of Prose*: 'The record [for embedding] seems to be held by the narrative which offers us the story of the bloody chest. Here

Scheherazade tells that
Jaafer tells that
the tailor tells that
the barber tells that
his brother (and he has six brothers) tells that . . .

The last story is a story to the fifth degree' (p. 71). But the term 'embedding' does not do justice to the fact precisely that each of these stories is at a higher 'degree' than the preceding one, since its narrator is a character in the preceding one; for stories can also be 'embedded' at the same level, simply by digression, without any shift in the narrating instance: see Jacques's parentheses in the *Fataliste*.
5 This is what I will call the receiver of the narrative, patterned after the contrast between *sender* and *receiver* proposed by A.J. Greimas (*Sémantique structurale* [Paris, 1966], p. 177).
6 Certain uses of the present tense do indeed connote temporal indefiniteness (and not simultaneousness between story and narrating), but curiously they seem reserved for very particular forms of narrative (joke, riddle, scientific problem or experiment, plot summary) and literature does not have much investment in them. The case of the 'narrative present' with preterite value is also different.
7 It could be, but for reasons which are not exactly spatial in kind: for a 'first-person' narrative to be produced in prison, on a hospital bed, in a psychiatric institution, can constitute a decisive element of advance notice about the denouement.
8 I borrow the term 'predictive' from Todorov, *Grammaire du Décaméron* (The Hague, 1969), p. 48, to designate any kind of narrative where the narrating precedes the story.
9 Radio or television reporting is obviously the most perfectly live form of this kind of narrative, where the narrating follows so closely on the action that it can be considered practically simultaneous, whence the use of the present tense. We find a curious literary use of simultaneous narrative in Chapter 29 of *Ivanhoe* where Rebecca is telling the wounded Ivanhoe all about the battle taking place at the foot of the castle, a battle she is following from the window.
10 On the typology of epistolary novels according to the number of correspondents, see Rousset, 'Une forme littéraire: le roman par lettres' *Forme et signification*, and Romberg, *Studies*, pp. 51 ff.
11 An example is when, in *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, Mme. de Volanges discovers Danceny's letters in her daughter's writing desk – a discovery whose consequences Danceny is notified of in letter 62, typically 'performative'. Cf. Todorov, *Littérature et signification* (Paris. 1967). pp. 44–6.
12 See B.T. Fitch, *Narrateur et narration dans 'l'Etranger' d' Albert Camus*, 2d rev. ed. (Paris, 1968) pp. 12–26.
13 But there also exist *delayed* forms of journal narrating: for example, the 'first notebook' of the *Symphonie pastorale*, or the complex counterpoint of *L'Emploi du temps*.
14 Letter 97.
15 Compare letter 48, from Valmont to Tourvel, written in Emilie's bed, 'live' and, if I may say so, *at the event*.

16 All written in the present tense except *Le Voyeur*, whose temporal system, as we know, is more complex.

17 An even more striking illustration is *La Jalousie*, which can be read *ad libitum* in the objectivist mode with no jealous person in the narrating, or purely as the interior monologue of a husband spying on his wife and imagining her adventures. Indeed, when this work was published in 1959 it played a pivotal role.

18 See my *Figures II*, pp. 210–11.

19 With the exception of the passé composé, which in French connotes relative closeness: 'The perfect creates a living connection between the past event and the present in which its evocation takes place. It is the tense for the one who relates the facts as a witness, as a participant; it is thus also the tense that will be chosen by whoever wishes to make the reported event ring vividly in our ears and to link it to the present' (Benveniste, 'The Correlations of Tense in the French Verb', *Problems*, p. 210). *L'Etranger*, of course, owes a great deal to the use of this tense.

20 Käte Hamburger (*The Logic of Literature*, trans. Marilynn J. Rose 2nd edn. [Bloomington, Ind., 1973]) has gone so far as to deny any temporal value to the 'epic preterite'. In this extreme and strongly contested position there is a certain hyperbolic truth.

21 On the other hand, Stendhal does like to date, and more precisely to antedate, for reasons of political prudence, the narrating instance of his novels: *Le Rouge* (written in 1829–1830) at 1827, *La Chartreuse* (written in 1839) at 1830.

22 'In that Part of the western Division of this Kingdom, which is commonly called *Somersetshire, there lately lived (and perhaps lives still)* a Gentleman whose Name was *Allworthy*' (*Tom Jones*, Book I, chap. 2 [Norton, p. 27]).

23 'Madame Vauquer, whose maiden name was De Conflans, *is* an elderly woman who for forty years *has* kept, in Paris, a family boardinghouse' (*Pére Goriot*, trans. J.M. Sedgwick [New York: Rinehart, 1950], p. 1).

24 'Her face *is* very pale and quiet now, and there *is* a tinge of sadness in the low tones of her voice. She *has* simple manners' (*Eugénie Grandet*, trans. E Marriage [Philadelphia: Gebbie, 1899], p. 223)

25 'The devil himself *doesn't have* a greater following than [M. Homais]: the authorities *treat* him considerately, and public opinion *is* on his side. He *has just been awarded* the cross of the Legion of Honor' (*Madame Bovary*, trans. F. Steegmuller [New York: Random House, 1957,], p. 396). Let us remember that the opening pages ('*we were* in study-hull . . .' [Steegmuller, p. 3]) already indicate that the narrator is contemporary with the hero, and is even one of his fellow students.

26 The Spanish picaresque seems to form a notable exception to this 'rule', at any rate *Lazarillo*, which ends in suspense ('It was the time of my prosperity, and I was at the height of all good fortune'). *Guzman* and *Buscon* also, but while promising a continuation and end, which will not come.

27 *Robinson Crusoe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1928), III, 220. Or, in a more ironic mode, *Gil Blas*: 'It is three years since then, my friend the reader, that I have been leading a delightful life with such dear people. As a crowning satisfaction, heaven was pleased to bestow on me two children, whose upbringing will become the pastime of my old age, and whose father I dutifully think I am.'

28 James M. Cain, *Double Indemnity*, in *Cain X3* (New York: Knopf, 1969), p. 465

29 Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Book IV, Chap. 13.

30 Temporal indications of the kind 'we have *already* said' and 'we will see *later*', etc., do not in fact refer to the temporality of the narrating, but to the space of the text (= *we have said above, we will see further on* . . .) and to the temporality of reading.

31 RH II, 1001 and 1002/P III, 872 and 873.

32 Muller, p. 45; Germaine Brée, *Marcel Proust and Deliverance from Time*, trans. C. J. Richards and A. D. Truitt, 2nd edn. (New Brunswick, N J, 1969), pp. 19–20.
33 Muller, p. 46
34 Pp. 199–200.
35 RH II, 1136/P III, 1043.
36 P. 91
37 This episode takes place (RH II, 1063/P III, 951) 'Less than three years' – thus more than two years – after the Guermantes matinée.
38 In particular Louis Martin-Chauffier: 'As in memoirs, the man who writes and the man whose life we see are distinct in time, but tend to catch up with each other in the long run; they are moving towards the day when the progress of the hero through his life stops at the table, where the narrator, no longer separated from him in time nor tied to him by memory, invites him to sit down beside him so that both together may write: the End' ('Proust and the Double I', *Partisan Review*, 16 [October 1949], 1012).
39 Muller, pp. 49–50. Let us remember, however, that certain anticipations (like the last meeting with Odette) cover a part of that 'era'.
40 Rousset, p. 144.

8 | Roland Barthes,

'To Write: An Intransitive Verb?', in R. Macksey and E. Donato, ed. *The Structuralist Controversy* (1966), pp. 134–45

To Write: An Intransitive Verb?[1]

For centuries Western culture conceived of literature not as we do today, through a study of works, authors, and schools, but through a genuine theory of language. This theory, whose name, *rhetoric*, came to it from antiquity, reigned in the Western world from Gorgias to the Renaissance – for nearly two thousand years. Threatened as early as the sixteenth century by the advent of modern rationalism, rhetoric was completely ruined when rationalism was transformed into positivism at the end of the nineteenth century. At that point there was no longer any common ground of thought between literature and language: literature no longer regarded itself as language except in the works of a few pioneers such as Mallarmé, and linguistics claimed very few rights over literature, these being [limited to] a secondary philological discipline of uncertain status – stylistics.

As we know, this situation is changing, and it seems to me that it is in part to take cognizance of this change that we are assembled here: literature and language are in the process of finding each other again. The factors of this *rapprochement* are diverse and complex; I shall cite the most obvious.

On one hand, certain writers since Mallarmé, such as Proust and Joyce, have undertaken a radical exploration of writing, making of their work a search for the total Book. On the other hand, linguistics itself, principally following the impetus of Roman Jakobson, has developed to include within its scope the poetic, or the order of effects linked to the message and not to its referent. Therefore, in my view, we have today a new perspective of consideration which, I would like to emphasize, is common to literature and linguistics, to the creator and the critic, whose tasks until now completely self-contained, are beginning to inter-relate, perhaps even to merge. This is at least true for certain writers whose work is becoming more and more a critique of language. It is in this perspective that I would like to place the following observations (of a prospective and not of a conclusive nature) indicating how the activity of writing can be expressed [*énoncée*] today with the help of certain linguistic categories.

This new union of literature and linguistics, of which I have just spoken, could be called, provisionally and for lack of a better name, *semio-criticism*, since it implies that writing is a system of signs. Semio-criticism is not to be identified with stylistics, even in a new form; it is much more than stylistics. It has a much broader perspective; its object is constituted not by simple accidents of form, but by the very relationships between the writer [*scripteur, not écrivain*] and language. This perspective does not imply a lack of interest in language but, on the contrary, a continual return to the 'truths'—provisional though they may be—of linguistic anthropology. I will recall certain of these truths because they still have a power of challenge in respect to a certain current idea of literature.

One of the teachings of contemporary linguistics is that there is no archaic language, or at the very least that there is no connection between simplicity and the age of a language: ancient languages can be just as complete and as complex as recent languages; there is no progressive history of languages. Therefore, when we try to find certain fundamental categories of language in modern writing, we are not claiming to reveal a certain archaism of the 'psyche'; we are not saying that the writer is returning to the origin of language, but that language is the origin for him.

A second principle, particularly important in regard to literature, is that language cannot be considered as a simple instrument, whether utilitarian or decorative, of thought. Man does not exist prior to language, either as a species or as an individual. We never find a state where man is separated from language, which he then creates in order to 'express' what is taking place within him: it is language which teaches the definition of man, not the reverse.

Moreover, from a methodological point of view, linguistics accustoms us to a new type of objectivity. The objectivity that has been required in the human sciences up until now is an objectivity of the given, a total acceptance of the given. Linguistics suggests, on the one hand, that we distinguish levels of analysis and that we describe the distinctive elements of each of these levels; in short, that we establish the distinctness of the fact and not

the fact itself. On the other hand, linguistics asks us to recognize that unlike physical and biological facts, cultural facts are always double, that they refer us to something else. As Benveniste remarked, the discovery of the 'duplicity' of language gives Saussure's reflection all its value.[2]

These few preliminaries are contained in one final proposition which justifies all semio-critical research. We see culture more and more as a general system of symbols, governed by the same operations. There is unity in this symbolic field: culture, in all its aspects, is a language. Therefore it is possible today to anticipate the creation of a single, unified science of culture, which will depend on diverse disciplines, all devoted to analyzing, on different levels of description, culture as language. Of course semio-criticism will be only a part of this science, or rather of this discourse on culture. I feel authorized by this unity of the human symbolic field to work on a postulate, which I shall call a postulate of *homology*: the structure of the sentence, the object of linguistics, is found again, homologically, in the structure of works. Discourse is not simply an adding together of sentences: it is, itself, one great sentence. In terms of this hypothesis I would like to confront certain categories of language with the situation of the writer in relation to his writing.

The first of these categories is *temporality*. I think we can all agree that there is a linguistic temporality. This specific time of language is equally different from physical time and from what Benveniste calls 'chronicle time' [*temps chronique*], that is, calendar time.[3] Linguistic time finds quite different expression and *découpages* in various languages. For example, since we are going to be interested in the analysis of myths, many languages have a particular past tense of the verb to indicate the past time of myth. Once thing is sure: linguistic time always has its primary center [*centre générateur*] in the present of the statement [*énonciation*]. This leads us to ask whether there is, homological to linguistic time, a specific time of discourse. On this point we may take Benveniste's explanation that many languages, especially in the Indo-European group, have a double system of time. The first temporal system is that of the discourse itself, which is adapted to the temporality of the speaker [*énonciateur*] and for which the *énonciation* is always the point of origin [*moment générateur*]. The second is the system of history or of narrative, which is adapted to the recounting of past events without any intervention by the speaker and which is consequently deprived of present and future (except periphrastically). The specific tense of this second system is the aorist or its equivalent, such as our *passé simple* or the preterite. This tense (the aorist) is precisely the only one missing from the temporal system of discourse. Naturally the existence of this a-personal system does not contradict the essentially logocentric nature of linguistic time that I have just affirmed. The second system simply lacks the characteristics of the first.

Understood thus as the opposition of two radically different systems, temporality does not have the morphological mark of verbs for its only sign; it is marked by all the signs, often very indirect, which refer either to

the a-personal tense of the event or to the personal tense of the locutor. The opposition in its fullness permits us first to account for some pure, or we might say classic, cases: a popular story and the history of France retold in our manuals are purely aoristic narratives; on the contrary, Camus' *L'Etranger*, written in the compound past, is not only a perfect form of autobiography (that of the narrator, and not of the author) but, what is more valuable, it permits us to understand better the apparently anomalous cases.[4] Being a historian, Michelet made all historical time pivot around a point of discourse with which he identified himself–the Revolution. His history is a narrative without the aorist, even if the simple past abounds in it; inversely, the preterite can very well serve to signify not the objective *récit*, but the depersonalisation of the discourse–a phenomenon which is the object of the most lively research in today's literature.

What I would like to add to this linguistic analysis, which comes from Benveniste, is that the distinction between the temporal system of discourse and the temporal system of history is not at all the same distinction as is traditionally made between objective discourse and subjective discourse. For the relationship between the speaker [*énonciateur*] and the referent on the one hand and that between the speaker and his utterance [*énonciation*] on the other hand are not to be confused, and it is only the second relationship which determines the temporal system of discourse.

It seems to me that these facts of language were not readily perceptible so long as literature pretended to be a transparent expression of either objective calendar time or of psychological subjectivity, that is to say, as long as literature maintained a totalitarian ideology of the referent, or more commonly speaking, as long as literature was realistic. Today, however, the literature of which I speak is discovering fundamental subtleties relative to temporality. In reading certain writers who are engaged in this type of exploration we sense that what is recounted in the aorist doesn't seem at all immersed in the past, in what has taken place, but simply in the impersonal [*la non-personne*], which is neither history, nor discursive information [*la science*], and even less the one of anonymous writing. (The *one* is dominated by the indefinite and not by the indefinite and not by the absence of person. I would even say that the pronoun *one* is marked in relation to person, while, paradoxically, *he* is not.) At the other extreme of the experience of discourse, the present-day writer can no longer content himself with expressing his own present, according to a lyrical plan for example. He must learn to distinguish between the present of the speaker, which is grounded on a psychological fullness, and the present of what is spoken [*la locution*] which is mobile and in which the event and the writing become absolutely coincidental. Thus literature, at least in some of its pursuits, seems to me to be following the same path as linguistics when, along with Gustave Guillaume (a linguist not presently in fashion but who may become so again), it concerns itself with operative time and the time proper to the utterance [*énonciation*] itself.[5]

A second grammatical category which is equally important in linguistics

and in literature is that of *person*. Taking linguists and especially Benveniste as my basis once more, I would like to recall that person (in the grammatical sense of the term) certainly seems to be a universal of language, linked to the anthropology of language. Every language, as Benveniste has shown, organizes person into two broad pairs of opposites: a correlation of personality which opposes person (*I or thou*) to non-person, which is *il* (*he or it*), the sign of absence; and, within this first opposing pair, a correlation of subjectivity (once again in the grammatical sense) which opposes two persons, the *I* and the *non-I* (the *thou*). For our purposes we must, along with Benveniste, make three observations. First, the polarity of persons, a fundamental condition of language, is nevertheless peculiar and enigmatic, for this polarity involves neither equality nor symmetry: *I* always has a position of transcendence with respect to *thou*, I being interior to the *énoncé* and *thou* remaining exterior to it; however, *I* and *thou* are reversible–*I* can always become *thou* and vice versa. This is not true of the non-person (*he or it*) which can never reverse itself into person or vice versa. The second observation is that the linguistic *I* can and must be defined in a strictly a-psychological way: *I* is nothing other than 'la personne qui énonce la présente instance de discours contenant l'instance linguistique *je*' (Benveniste ['the person who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance *I*']).[6] The last remark is that the *he* or the non-person never reflects the instance of discourse; *he* is situated outside of it. We must give its full weight to Benveniste's recommendation not to represent the *he* as a more or less diminished or removed person: *he* is absolutely non-person, marked by the absence of what specifically constitutes, linguistically, the *I* and the *thou*.

The linguistic explanation provides several suggestions for an analysis of literary discourse. First, whatever varied and clever forms person may take in passing from the level of the sentence to that of discourse, the discourse of the literary work is rigorously submitted to a double system of person and non-person. This fact may be obscured because classical discourse (in a broad sense) to which we are habituated is a mixed discourse which alternates–very quickly, sometimes within the same sentence–personal and a-personal *énonciation*, through a complex play of pronouns and descriptive verbs. In this type of classical or bourgeois story the mixture of person and non-person produces a sort of ambiguous consciousness which succeeds in keeping the personal quality of what is stated while, however, continuously breaking the participation of the *énonciateur* in the *énoncé*.

Many novelistic utterances, written with *he* (in the third person), are nevertheless discourses of the *person* each time that the contents of the statement depend on its subject. If in a novel we read *'the tinkling of the ice against the glass seemed to give Bond a sudden inspiration'*, it is certain that the subject of the statement cannot be Bond himself–not because the sentence is written in the third person, since Bond could very well express himself through a *he*, but because of the verb *seem* which becomes a mark of the absence of person. Nevertheless, in spite of the diversity and often even

the ruse of the narrative signs of the person, there is never but one sole and great opposition in the discourse, that of the person and the non-person; every narrative or fragment of a narrative is obliged to join one or the other of these extremes. How can we determine this division? In 're-writing' the discourse. If we can translate the *he* into *I* without changing anything else in the utterance, the discourse is in fact personal. In the sentence which we have cited, this transformation is impossible; we cannot say *'the tinkling of the ice seemed to give me a sudden inspiration'*. The sentence is impersonal. Starting from there, we catch a glimpse of how the discourse of the traditional novel is made; on the one hand it alternates the personal and the impersonal very rapidly, often even in the course of the same sentence, so as to produce, if we can speak thus, a proprietary consciousness which retains the mastery of what it states without participating in it; and on the other hand, in this type of novel, or rather, according to our perspective, in this type of discourse, when the narrator is explicitly an *I* (which has happened many times) there is confusion between the subject of the discourse and the subject of the reported action, as if – and this is a common belief – he who is speaking today were the same as he who acted yesterday. It is as if there were a continuity of the referent and the utterance through the person, as if the declaring were only a docile servant of the referent.

Now if we return to the linguistic definition of the first person (the one who says 'I' in the present instance of discourse), we may better understand the effort of certain contemporary writers (in France I think of Philippe Sollers's latest novel *Drame*) when they try to distinguish, at the level of the story, psychological person and the author of the writing. When a narrator recounts what has happened to him, the *I* who recounts is no longer the same *I* as the one that is recounted. In other words – and it seems to me that this is seen more and more clearly – the *I* of discourse can no longer be a place where a previously stored-up person is innocently restored. Absolute recourse to the instance of discourse to determine person is termed *nyn-egocentrism* by Damourette and Pichon (*nyn* from the Greek *nun*, 'now').[7] Robbe-Grillet's novel *Dans le labyrinthe* begins with an admirable declaration of nyn-egocentrism: 'Je suis seul ici maintenant.' [I am alone here now.][8] This recourse, imperfectly as it may still be practiced, seems to be a weapon against the general 'bad faith' of discourse which would make literary form simply the expression of an inferiority constituted previous to and outside of language.

To end this discussion of person, I would like to recall that in the process of communication the course of the *I* is not homogenous. For example, when I use [*libére*] the sign, *I*, I refer to myself inasmuch as I am talking: here there is an act which is always new, even if it is repeated, an act whose sense is always new. However, arriving at its destination, this sign is received by my interlocutor as a stable sign, product of a complete code whose contents are recurrent. In other words, the *I* of the one who writes *I* is not the same as the *I* which is read by *thou*. This fundamental dissymmetry of language, linguistically explained by Jespersen and then by Jakobson under